

VOICES



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TO YOU ...**
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OXFAM
Australia

Connections

with Lyn Morgain, Chief Executive

It's always a pleasure to present this uplifting collection of stories that we call *Voices* – and this latest edition is no exception. It comes amid a tumultuous time in world affairs. India is grappling with a deadly fourth wave of Covid-19. Gaza is in ruins. Conflict in Ethiopia has deepened the region's food crisis. Protests in Colombia have ended in bloodshed. But the tales of success and survival on the pages of *Voices* are not an escape from this reality. Rather, they are a timely affirmation of the reality that great things can and do happen – even in the wake of tragedy.

This edition of *Voices* highlights just a few of the great things that have happened in recent months, with your support. On these pages, you'll meet some of the many people around the globe whose lives have been uplifted thanks to the kindness and generosity of people like you. From Zimbabwe to Lebanon to Papua New Guinea, the positive impact of your donations is felt right across the world, and also here at home.

As you'll read in these pages, your amazing support also enables us to develop exciting new forms of innovation in our work tackling poverty. The photo essay from page 10 highlights our world-first UnBlocked cash transfer program, which is helping communities in Vanuatu survive and recover from extreme weather events caused by the climate crisis. As you read this edition of *Voices*, I hope that, like me, you'll be inspired and deeply moved by the important work we are doing, together.



Photo: Eddie Carbonell/OxfamAUS



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



Australian Government
Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

Oxfam Australia acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples as the original custodians of the land, and respects the rights they hold as the Traditional Custodians. We also recognise the dispossession of the land and its ongoing effects on First Nations Peoples today.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander readers should be aware that this publication may contain images or names of people who have since passed away.



ACFID
MEMBER

Timor-Leste: Since joining an Oxfam-supported savings group, Amelia is more in control of her finances. She says, "I feel happy, because if you try to save money at home, you will spend it. But when I save it in the group, it is safe." Photo: Kate Bensen/OxfamAUS.

Cover photo: Vanuatu: Ananeth shows the UnBlocked card she used to buy nails, timber and electrical cable to repair her home, which was damaged by Tropical Cyclone Harold. She says Oxfam's UnBlocked cash transfer program has been a blessing from God. Photo: Arlene Bax/Oxfam.



Thanks to you ...

We're working around the clock to help vulnerable communities survive the pandemic. Worldwide, we've reached more than **14 million people** with vital aid. Find out more on page 4.

We reached more than **6,000** people affected by the tragic explosion in Beirut on 4 August 2020. Learn more about the ongoing recovery effort on page 20.

In Timor-Leste, our Hakbiit project is **empowering women** like Amelia (pictured) to engage in economic and political spheres, and lift themselves out of poverty. See page 6 for more.

YOU & OXFAM
TACKLING POVERTY TOGETHER

Stopping the spread

From refugee camps in Bangladesh to the streets of India, the pandemic continues to wreak havoc right across the globe. But thanks to huge-hearted people like you, we are working against time to stop the spread.

In the last year, the word “unprecedented” has been used by many politicians and medical experts to make sense of the chaos that is Covid-19. This unprecedented global crisis needs an unprecedented global response — and that’s exactly what Oxfam is doing.

With your support, we are working with 694 partners in 68 countries to save lives and defeat this insidious disease.

In Cox’s Bazar — a crowded refugee camp in Bangladesh that’s home to more than 855,000 people — we have stepped up our hygiene promotion work and scaled up activities like soap distribution.

Oxfam volunteer Zahid (pictured) works in the camp. He says, “I am happy to provide support for my community. If we do not provide our services and [we] stop spreading message how to fight against coronavirus, there will be more cases of Covid in the camp — and more people will die.

“This is why I am working in the field. Every day, we are helping our community with soap, water and by providing valuable information during this crisis.”

Bangladesh is one of 58 countries where



Oxfam is working to stop the spread by providing clean water and hygiene support, as well as safer sanitation.

Alongside this immediate aid, Oxfam — with a coalition of allies — is advocating for a people’s vaccine to be made available to all, in all countries, free of charge. In recent weeks, this fight for more equitable access to a Covid-19 vaccine has gained real momentum.

We’re in this together and together we can stop the spread. Find out more about our global Covid-19 response and how you can help at www.oxfam.org.au/pandemic





More than **14 million people** in vulnerable communities around the world have received direct support from Oxfam partners.

We've shared vital information about the public health risks of Covid-19 with more than **42 million people**.

With your help, we've supplied water for around **2 million people**.

More than **965,000 people** have received emergency hygiene kits.

Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh: Oxfam volunteer Zahid Hossain works with caution to help contain Covid-19 outbreaks in the crowded Rohingya refugee camp. Photos: Fabeha Monir/Oxfam.

Realising their dreams

Before she put pen to paper, Natalia's dream for a new house may have seemed unattainable. But her happy new home is proof that if you can see it, you can be it.

Like many women in Timor-Leste, Natalia always did the lion's share of work at home. That all changed after she and her husband Norberto took part in Hakbiit, an Oxfam gender justice and savings project that is kindly funded by people like you.

Through the project, they mapped out a Vision Journey on paper (pictured). This planning and visualisation activity helps couples identify and address gender norms that disempower women.

Natalia and Norberto figured out the steps to achieve their dream of building a new house by plotting the journey, together. They set timebound milestones and targets, and identified obstacles that might keep them from achieving that dream. Then, they found a clear way forward.

Natalia says, "When my husband and I were introduced to [the project], we shared our gender balance tree with each other, and did the Vision Journey together to finalise building our house. My husband realised he spent too much time on himself, rather than help me with household tasks."

Norberto adds, "I never did any domestic work at home, everything was done by my wife. But now, we share responsibilities. We try to work together to use our time more effectively to achieve our vision."

In Timor-Leste, around 42% of people live below the poverty line. This inequality disproportionately

affects women, particularly those in rural areas or with disabilities. Women in Timor-Leste have uneven access to education and work opportunities.

But the Hakbiit project — in the local language, "hakbiit" means empowerment — is changing that. The project empowers women to take part in social, economic and political spheres, so they have more control over their own lives, can earn a living, and are heard in public spaces.

Natalia and Norberto are farmers and members of an Oxfam-supported Savings for Change group. The group has helped them better manage their finances.

Natalia says, "Our income increased from selling animals and our agricultural production. Now, our savings per week has tripled [from AUD \$3.30 to AUD \$9.90]."

The boost in savings has made a big difference for the couple. Natalia explains, "We invested in livestock, which now brings in most of our family's income."

Business is now booming for Natalia and Norberto's betel leaf and nut plantation, which means they can save even more.

Smiling proudly, Natalia says, "Last year, we used [our savings] to buy a pig and a goat."



Photos: Ismenio Pereira/Oxfam



Fighting for change

The Oxfam community is a tapestry of passionate and purposeful people who are changing the world for the better with every donation — LadySarah is one such person.

LadySarah is an activist, community worker and philanthropist who first raised money for Oxfam — then known as Community Aid Abroad (CAA) — at the age of 12 in the Walk Against Want event at school. And they've been walking the talk ever since.

"I walked for CAA all those decades ago, and I support Oxfam Australia today because I know they have the best team members, partner organisations and community activist relationships," says LadySarah.

Like Oxfam, LadySarah believes in community-based empowerment and development, with a focus on women and families.

"I choose Oxfam because I want to create lives worth living, on a planet worth living on, with full acknowledgment and respect for all First Nations Peoples."

LadySarah recalls the origins of their philanthropy: "When I was working at a youth refuge in 1989, a woman donated 10% of her annual income to us as her 'personal tithe' to our community!

"I'd only ever known of tithes as being forcibly taken from poor people by the Church and aristocracy — so this was life-changing. I decided to donate 10% of my annual income to my chosen causes from then on.

"Real success is sharing the wealth. Real happiness and prosperity is buying 100 self-sustaining, chicken-poo-fed fish farms for people living in villages in Timor-Leste. These provide a year-round source of protein for

families — just over the sea from us — who don't have enough to eat."

Over the last decade, LadySarah has supported Oxfam projects in Timor-Leste.

"I know what the Indonesian soldiers did to the children, women and men of Timor-Leste in some detail, as I worked at the Victorian Foundation for Survivors of Torture during the struggle for independence.

"When I visited Timor-Leste in 2016, as an Oxfam Key Supporter, I was shocked, saddened and triggered to see the dirt-poor existence of the people living in the villages. And in the space where a whole generation of men should have been standing, only an old bloke in his Fretilin cap. The harsh mediaeval roads, the unpassable rivers, the shit health care ... the unreliable above-ground electricity infrastructure of wires and poles.

"It is so sad and hard to know that the unbeaten democratic heroes of Timor-Leste are forced to live like this."

LadySarah shares Oxfam's vision for a just, sustainable world without poverty. And so, throughout their life, they've fought for change.

Citing Patti Smith, they say, "People have the power to dream, the power to rule, the power to wrestle the earth from fools.

"And this," LadySarah adds, "is the change I want to see."



*Sugar, Spice &
Human Rights.*

"I choose Oxfam because I want to create lives worth living, on a planet worth living on, with full acknowledgment and respect for all First Nations Peoples."

— LadySarah, Australia

On the frontline

Vanuatu is just a few hours from Australia; but our Ni-Vanuatu neighbours face challenges that you and I can only imagine. They live with the constant threat of disasters.

The World Risk Index ranks Vanuatu as the most vulnerable country in the world to natural disasters, including earthquakes and cyclones. Vanuatu lies on top of the Pacific Ring of Fire, a region that's prone to deadly earthquakes, tsunamis and volcanic eruptions. The people of Vanuatu are on the frontline of the global climate crisis — severe cyclones and extreme weather are their new normal.

Three quarters of the population live off the land in Vanuatu, so the harsh, changing climate poses a major threat to their subsistence farming livelihoods. And as sea levels rise, the impact of natural disasters is set to worsen for our friends in the Pacific.

But thanks to innovative use of blockchain technology by Oxfam and partners, vulnerable ni-Vanuatu communities are now better equipped to withstand the crisis. Our UnBlocked cash transfer program is a world-first, using blockchain to empower vulnerable communities with immediate cash transfers when disasters strike.

Meet some of the individuals taking part in the program.



Tanna, Vanuatu: While Vanuatu's largest volcano, Mount Yasur, smoulders in the distance, Oxfam staff Keith and Sirius test cards and phones that will be distributed to local community members for use within Oxfam's UnBlocked cash transfer program.

Photos: Arlene Bax/Oxfam in Vanuatu





1. Sanma province, Vanuatu: Jevlyn William (in blue), Delilah Martin and her grandchild carry goods that they purchased with their UnBlocked e-cards. Jevlyn used the card to buy food supplies for her elderly parents. Delilah bought a few items for her small kiosk. She says, “We are a long way from town, so the kiosk helps me make a little money.” **2.** Tanna, Vanuatu: Oxfam staff member Harry and volunteer Latika conduct a survey with local community member Pita to assess his cash transfer needs in the event of an emergency.



3. Sanma province, Vanuatu: Mele Rara runs a successful fish market in Tassiriki, where he accepts UnBlocked card payments. He says that the UnBlocked cash transfer program has been a big help to his business and the local community. **4.** Tanna, Vanuatu: Oxfam staff Jeffrey and Joshua test the UnBlocked tap-and-pay technology at Mount Yasur, one of Vanuatu's nine active volcanoes. As legend has it, the glow of the volcano attracted Captain James Cook on the first European journey to the island of Tanna in 1774. For those who live on the island today, volcanic activity is a constant reminder of the dangers they face as the climate crisis unfolds.



5. Tanna, Vanuatu: Eliamas Riman is a vendor at Lenekel market. Her customers can use their UnBlocked cards — issued through Oxfam’s UnBlocked cash transfer program — to pay for fresh produce. **6.** Tanna, Vanuatu: Nawiwa Meri lives on the island of Tanna. She received a card through Oxfam’s UnBlocked cash transfer program. Next time disaster strikes, she’ll be ready and able to pay for emergency supplies at the tap of a card.



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7. Tanna, Vanuatu: Oxfam staff register local community member Margaret Karun in the UnBlocked cash transfer program. When Margaret's community is next affected by disaster, she will get credit on her UnBlocked tap-and-pay card so she can buy emergency supplies from local vendors.

Saving every drop

It's easy to take water for granted if it's always on tap, but there's no such luxury at Dorothy's home in the highlands. So we're delivering smart, sustainable solutions to remote communities in Papua New Guinea (PNG), thanks to you.

Since Oxfam installed a new rain catchment tank in her village, Dorothy (pictured) and her family can access clean water, year-round.

Dorothy used to travel long distances each day, across mountains, to get water for her family.

"I used to carry my children and the dirty things to the river to wash them," she says, "then come to the well and collect water, and then come home and cook.

"Three times I go to the river in one day. It's far."

From sun-up to sun-down, this never-ending quest for water consumed most of Dorothy's days. And to make matters worse, the water she brought home was not fit for drinking, so her kids were often sick with diarrhoea and other illnesses.

She explains, "It's not good but we just use it. People use it as their toilet and throw rubbish into it."

In PNG, women and girls usually bear the burden of fetching water for their families. But with your support, we're improving

access to water in PNG's far-flung villages — because equality begins with clean water.

Dorothy says, "Now, the tank is here, there are five families that use that tank. We use water from the tank to cook and drink."


When Oxfam installed the tank for Dorothy and her neighbours, her husband Nicodemus joined a committee that received training in how to manage water use and hygiene practices.

Dorothy explains, "[Oxfam] came and educated the committee members who then taught us — and we are now teaching our children.

"We tell them to wash in the morning and in the afternoon and to wash their hands before they eat. I've been teaching them as they grow. The bigger children are doing it. They are learning slowly, and I am seeing small improvements along the way."

"The children are getting water from the tank to drink. They don't get sick like before."





“The children are getting water from the tank to drink. They don’t get sick like before.”

— Dorothy, Papua New Guinea

A life of sharing and caring

For longstanding Oxfam supporter Liz, leaving a Gift in her Will is the natural thing to do: "I suppose it's always been part of my philosophy and belief system."

"I came to Australia as a baby. My parents were refugees after the Second World War," Liz says.

"I grew up in Collingwood, which was a pretty working-class suburb back then."

"My family was very strong on being aware that there were people in the world that didn't have enough. They had gone through periods of starvation themselves, so they understood well about that sort of deprivation."

Liz remembers the Community Aid Abroad collection tin her parents kept on the counter of their deli.

"That was my introduction to what's later become Oxfam," she says.

"The idea of giving was something that was part of my family values, particularly my mother — she was particularly strong on that. Even when she didn't have much, she would feel as though she had to share what little she did have with other people."

Liz keeps the sharing spirit alive: "I've tried to engender that in our children and now our grandchildren."

Liz is leaving a gift to Oxfam in her Will. She says, "I like the fact that [Oxfam] do both emergency relief but they also do the long-term, helping communities become more resilient and empowering women in those communities. Providing the basics so that the community can help itself."



Photo: Keith Parsons/OxfamAUS

"I would hope that my bequest would give a family an opportunity, whether it's for their children to be educated [or] for them to have medical help when they need it — reasonable quality medical help. I mean, women die in childbirth. It doesn't really happen here but is a common thing in some parts of the world."

Liz hopes her grandchildren will inherit a fairer world, without the inequalities that keep people in poverty. "I believe that as a world we have enough — if it were just distributed more equitably."

Join a community of like-minded, kind-hearted people like Liz today. Learn how to leave a Gift in your Will at www.oxfam.org.au/wills And if we're already in your Will, let us know so we can thank you.



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Hawkesbury to the Harbour
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8-10 October 2021



Photos: Sam Tarling/Oxfam

After the blast

If you saw the images of the blast that tore Beirut apart on 4 August 2020, you can't unsee them — it was devastating. But thanks to the generosity of people like you, we're on the ground in Lebanon, helping people pick up the pieces.

The explosion claimed 180 lives, left thousands of people injured and displaced thousands more. About 40,000 buildings were damaged, many beyond repair. And in the weeks that followed, more than 70,000 people lost their jobs.

Even before the blast, Lebanon was at breaking point — people were struggling to cope with a collapsing economy and a global pandemic. Bachir Ayoub at Oxfam

Lebanon said this "crisis on crises" will create huge challenges for people for years to come.

Thanks to the many kind people like you who gave to Oxfam's emergency appeal, we are working with 14 local partners in Lebanon to help those who lost their homes and livelihoods in the blast. Together, we've reached more than 6,000 people so far with vital aid — and the recovery effort is ongoing.



Celine (pictured) is a social worker with Oxfam partner KAFA, a feminist organisation that defends women's rights. She is the supervisor at KAFA's support centre, where staff and volunteers packed hundreds of boxes of food for distribution to families affected by the blast.

"Our centre provides aid to women and children, that includes psychological and legal support," Celine says. "The port explosion affected all of us, including the vulnerable women who live in the area.

"After identifying vulnerable women in the damaged area, we provided food items and cleaning materials, as well as cash assistance for people who lost their jobs or their houses. [We also provided] psychological support, which is essential for those impacted by the blast."



When tragedy strikes, we respond – and that's made possible by generous people like you. Learn more about our current emergency responses and get involved at www.oxfam.org.au/emergency



Zimbabwe: Sifiso reads a text message detailing weather conditions in her area. An Oxfam-supported weather station was installed at a local school to provide important weather reports to the community so they can protect their crops and lives. Photo: Cynthia Matonhodze/Oxfam.

One step ahead

In drought-wracked Zimbabwe, the climate crisis has arrived. But thanks to you, we armed Sifiso's community with the information they need to stay one step ahead of the unpredictable climate — so they can farm smarter, not harder.

Like all farmers, Sifiso's livelihood depends on the weather. She says, "I get my income from farming ... We farm vegetables, peanuts, sorghum and cowpeas. Sometimes, we grow millet and maize.

"In the past four years, our harvest has reduced — we've experienced a lot of drought. We've had dry spells for up to two months. It has affected me a lot.

"My husband doesn't work so it's hard sending my children to school ... We can't pay the fees.

"At times, we have no food and we have to ask for help from others.

"Most of us [in this community] face some challenges ... Oxfam has supported us with sorghum seed, but

the lack of water is affecting us."

Sifiso is hoping for rain. When the rains finally come, she'll be ready to spring to action.

"The Oxfam weather station helps us to know when to plant. We get messages on our phone with weather alerts, for example, 'Take note of rains to come. Watch children don't roam too far. Move to higher ground.'

"It greatly assists us — we can react immediately. I'm grateful for the knowledge in relation to the amount and consistency of rains.

"The alerts have made a difference. I have more solid information of rain to come. I'm grateful. Now, I'm more aware. I need to hold onto the little I have."

YOU & OXFAM

TACKLING POVERTY TOGETHER

Do you want to change the world
and have a lasting positive impact?
A regular monthly donation is the
perfect way to do it.

We hope you know how important and valued you are, as a regular giver to Oxfam. You're part of an amazing community that empowers vulnerable women, men and children around the world to lift themselves out of poverty and thrive.

Each monthly gift to Oxfam helps make a difference for people living in poverty — not just today, but well into the future too. No matter how big or small, your regular gifts bring to life our shared vision of a just and sustainable future without the inequalities that keep people in poverty.

We simply couldn't do it without your ongoing kindness and generosity — so thank you.



Photo: Patrick Moran/OxfamAUS

Contact us on 1800 088 110 today to find out how you can become a regular giver, or sign up at www.oxfam.org.au/donation and choose the monthly option that's best for you.



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