

VOICES



**THANKS
TO YOU ...**

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SHORT:
CLIMATE
ACTION**

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OXFAM
Australia

Connections

with Lyn Morgain, Chief Executive



Photo: Keith Parsons/OxfamAUS

Thank you to everyone who sent Letters to Lyn over the past few months. There was a common theme running through the letters – that many of you can only afford to give a small amount. Well, I want to say thank you. Every single gift, no matter how small, when added together with each other’s contributions can make a life-changing difference. We say that Oxfam is “a global movement of people working together to eliminate

poverty by tackling inequality”. And it’s the working together that counts. So, please know that you are making a difference today, and that we are honoured to share this work with you.

In this edition of Voices, I am pleased to share some reflections on my trip to the Kimberley region of Western Australia. I was invited by the Kimberley Aboriginal Women’s Council, many of whom have participated in Oxfam’s Straight Talk program. I’d like to thank the women of the Council, who welcomed us warmly and who were so hospitable. I hope you enjoy the photos and the message from Council Chairperson Janine Dureau.

You’ll also hear from Milena in Timor-Leste, who doesn’t mind getting a bit of dirt under her fingernails when she’s cleaning up after ducks, and from Yati in Indonesia whose involvement with Oxfam’s business training program means she’s now heading up a women’s collective in her village. And there’s so much more to read, thanks to you.



If you’d like to share your story, drop me a line at enquire@oxfam.or.au, scan this QR code or use the enclosed form and Reply Paid envelope.



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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.



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.

Letters to Lyn

Dear Lyn,

I read "VOICES" eagerly, enjoying the info shared and Oxfam's participation in many worthy causes. I will contribute when financial resources allow and I'm sad that I cannot contribute more. – Marcus.

Dear Lyn,

I have had some involvement with CAA [Community Aid Abroad] and then Oxfam since 1971. In 1973, I went with a group to Java and Bali, visiting some CAA projects. It was a great experience. My support has not been enormous, but fairly regular for more than 20 years, I think. Why support Oxfam? Why not? Rich countries should help people work towards eliminating poverty and aiding recovery from natural disasters. May the good work continue. – Pauline.

Dear Lyn,

The excerpts included in the material you circulate indicate the variety of people who support your work and the range of work in which you are involved. I am convinced that my donations, though small, contribute to some minor part of such work. You work in different locations, dealing with specific issues, as indicated in the pages of VOICES. Thank you. – Lucy.

Dear Lyn,

The reports you send me encourage me to keep donating because of the difference they make around the world. I don't miss the money myself and it is good to know that it is helping someone, somewhere. – Anon.

Dear Lyn,

I have been fortunate to be associated with Oxfam for many years. When Oxfam and Community Aid Abroad were together, I took 3 trips with them: 1. Sth America and Easter Islands – June 1982; 2. Vietnam – Jan 1999; 3. Cuba – Jan 2002. These trips were well researched, small groups enabling alternative choices to be made, group leaders who knew their stuff and getting up close and personal with the locals. – Anon.

Dear Lyn,

My idea of giving is to help (people) have clean water. Things we take for granted here in Australia and everybody deserves to be able to use for themselves is my key wish. – David.

Thanks to you ...

Women in Central Lombok, Indonesia, are developing their business skills and marketing healthy snacks full of locally sourced ingredients. They're joining forces through women's cooperative groups and successfully selling their products in shops and online.

Young people in Timor-Leste are advocating for diversity in the economy and a greater focus on agriculture. Not only are they raising poultry and growing vegetables, they are also learning how to secure a place at the table when decisions that affect them are made.



Dreaming big in Bangladesh

Neha is an ambitious young woman who plans to make the most of her job-skills training.

Neha, from Mymensingh, Bangladesh, lives with her family, and while her two sisters didn't get the opportunity to study, she finished high school and has big dreams of starting her own business.

Thanks to your generous support, Neha participated in the Oxfam-supported Resilient, Inclusive and Innovative Cities project, implemented by the NGO Forum for Public Health. The project trains young people on how to become entrepreneurs and earn a sustainable income, with trainees focusing on producing environmentally friendly products to sell.

When project staff went to Neha's district to identify young people to join the job-skills training, Neha stood out. Her enthusiasm and determination were obvious from the outset, and she was thrilled to have an opportunity to realise her dreams.

"I cannot ever tell you in words the difference getting chosen for this training made in my life already. Before, I only had a dream but now I feel I would be able to actualise it," Neha said.

Neha is now making and selling products made from jute – a sustainable fibre that grows easily in Bangladesh and is spun into coarse threads.



Mymensingh, Bangladesh: Neha proudly displays her work. The training she receives helps her earn a sustainable income.
Photo: Mehedi Hasan Didar.

She believes that if she teams up with the other trainees, they could apply the skills they have learnt through the project to start a business and sell a variety of products, and her dream of being an entrepreneur will be realised.

The Resilient, Inclusive and Innovative Cities project is supported by the Australian Government through the Australian NGO Cooperation Program (ANCP).



West Nusa Tenggara, Indonesia: Yati is part of a women's group supported by Oxfam. Photo: M. Nugie and Andito Wasi/Oxfam. Oxfam acknowledges the support of the Australian Government through the Australian NGO Cooperation Program (ANCP).

Skills training with tasty results

There's good news for people in Central Lombok who feel like a healthy, locally produced snack. Thanks to the generosity of supporters like you, Yati (pictured) was able to fine tune her existing product development and business skills through a training course with Oxfam's local Indonesian partner, Adara. Yati is now the treasurer of a women's cooperative group in her village.

The women all make snacks, which they sell online and locally, and since training with Adara, they've seen their profits rise. Adara worked with the group as part of Oxfam's Women in Leadership program to increase their use of local ingredients and resources in their snacks. Yati hopes the group can continue to grow, and that more women will be empowered to work and take on leadership roles.

"We can take in more ladies, not limited to the group," Yati said. "If there is more demand, if we can recruit more ladies outside of the group who need jobs, then why not?"

Yati is the treasurer and has been involved from the ground up, even creating the recipe for the group's crackers.

"I experimented at home," she said. "We made them, distribute them, gave testers. We asked for input, that became our point of adjustment. We got some training from the consortium (Adara) for these foods. To make the crackers from natural healthy ingredients."

Yati says customers are queuing up to get their hands on the snacks. "So many say, 'I want to try some'," she said. Yati said the Adara training taught the women important skills such as how to calculate revenue, production costs, profit and loss, and how to sell goods online.

"We're people purely who had never done business before," she said. "We had never done group business. We're gathered by consortium (Adara) to make economy group. We learned from zero."

Farming for the future

As a university graduate and member of a youth organisation that's advocating for a more diverse economy with a greater focus on agriculture, Milena (pictured) is well-versed in the art of raising chickens and ducks – and cleaning up after them! While her friends can't quite see the attraction, Milena isn't afraid to get her hands dirty.

"When we clean the chickens, we take care of the chickens or when removing the manure, most of the times my female friends would ask why would I do such thing? 'Why would you go to the university to clean manure? This type of work is done by people who don't go to school.' I don't respond, I just smile at them," Milena said.

The Timor-Leste economy has traditionally depended on oil and gas, but this is not considered sustainable. With 70% of the population relying on farming, advocates believe greater government investment in the agricultural sector would open up employment opportunities, create a more inclusive economic environment and lead to sustainable growth.

Thanks to generous supporters like you, Milena was able to join Oxfam's partner organisation, Youth Empowerment for Future (YEFF). YEFF is training young people to work in the agriculture sector and to advocate for more public funding to support development in rural, agricultural communities.

"I'm grateful to join [YEFF] because when I studied, when I did my study, we learned about the theory, learned on how to raise animals," Milena said. "I learned...how to interact with the government and how to get involved in a group, international group, or international NGO. I had zero knowledge of this."

Milena and the other young members of YEFF say that as a direct result of raising chickens and



Hera, Timor-Leste: Milena from YEFF. Photo: Keith Parsons/Oxfam. Oxfam acknowledges the support of the Australian Government through the Australian NGO Cooperation Program (ANCP).

growing vegetables, they're now able to pay for their own school fees and cover other essentials.

"I don't want to be like other youths that keep saying there are no jobs available," Milena said. "So, I thought that I better approach my friends that are involved in this area...so I can get involved in the development of this country."



Honiara, Solomon Islands: Harry, who lives along the Mataniko River near Honiara, has seen the river rise in the 20 years he has lived there. Photo: Collin Leafasia/Oxfam.

Falling Short

Our neighbours in the Pacific are fighting for justice as their homes continue to come under threat from climate change.

Thanks to kind supporters like you, in September 2022, Oxfam Australia, along with ActionAid Australia and partners from the Climate Action Network Australia launched an important report, *Falling Short: Australia's Role in Funding Fairer Climate Action in a Warming World*.

The report, which was released in the lead up to the November 2022 Conference of Parties (COP27) in Egypt, makes the urgent case for Australia to increase its

climate finance contributions. Climate finance helps countries reduce greenhouse gas emissions, for example by funding renewable power like wind or solar. It also helps communities adapt to the impacts of climate change.

The *Falling Short* report supported calls from Pacific nations to establish a dedicated fund for loss and damage. Campaigners were rewarded in the closing hours of the conference, with the announcement that



a loss and damage fund would be established. It's expected that the fund will support low- and middle-income countries that have suffered losses as a result of droughts, floods, rising seas and other climate-induced disasters.

As Australia is a major polluter and a high-income country, the Falling Short report calculates our fair share of climate finance as \$4 billion dollars. Our government currently pays one-tenth of that. Oxfam Australia and its partners working on the climate crisis believe Australia can and should give more.

The report gives an in-depth explanation on how

Australia can ensure that funding is transparent, and does not draw from existing international aid. What's most important is reaching local and marginalised communities where they are. It's a "to-do list" for key decision makers to walk the talk of "supporting our Pacific family" and represents a platform that Oxfam is using to secure meetings and advocate to government.



You can read the full report at
oxfam.org.au/climate-finance-report
or scan the QR code to view the PDF



Sydney, Australia: Long-time Trailwalker participant and volunteer, MO, on the trail. Photo: Patrick Moran/Oxfam.

M0 to hit the trail again

After Trailwalker legend Michael Osborne, better known as M0, had completed a colossal 10 Trailwalker events, he thought it was time for a break. But he couldn't tear himself away completely, so he signed up as a volunteer.

M0's beaming smile and encouraging words greeted teams along the trail of the 2022 Sydney event, and with all that experience under his belt he knew just what to say and do to keep morale high.

Doubling down on his commitment to cheer on the teams, M0 made sure he was everywhere by jumping in his car after a check point shift and scooting over to the next check point to welcome the walkers again.

With comments like, "How did you get here so quickly, M0?" and "M0's here again", M0 knew his strategy was working, and teams were buoyed on by his presence.

"I had an absolute ball," M0 said. "I think I loved it as much as doing the event itself, having done 10 of them."

M0 has a simple message for anyone considering volunteering for Trailwalker: "I think you have to be passionate! Love the people!!! You've got to love these people who have committed, planned, raised funds to prevent poverty, trained hard, and nervously and anxiously come together as a team to kick this thing, to sweat it out, to endure.

"They're all champions and they deserve every bit of our energy, motivation and encouragement!"

And the good news is, M0 is looking forward to Melbourne 2023, where he will be donning his walking shoes once again and heading back out to the trail, aiming to clock up his 11th walk.

Can't wait to hear all about it, M0!



Photo: Sam Biddle/OxfamAUS



Sign up for Trailwalker Melbourne

24-26 March 2023 | 100km, 55km, 30km
trailwalker.oxfam.org.au



Photo: Sam Biddle/OxfamAUS



Volunteer for Trailwalker Melbourne

24-26 March 2023
trailwalker.oxfam.org.au/volunteer

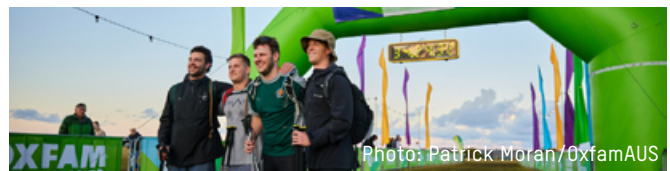


Photo: Patrick Moran/OxfamAUS



Sign up for Trailwalker Sydney

25-27 August 2023 | 100km, 55km, 30km
trailwalker.oxfam.org.au





Photo: Patrick Moran/Oxfam AUS

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Mike's lasting gift to Oxfam

Retired engineer Mike Evans has kindly supported Oxfam for over 40 years, so it wasn't a difficult decision for him to leave a gift to Oxfam in his Will.

Mike now lives in Australia, but he grew up in a town called Much Wenlock in England. A fun fact about him is that when was young, he had the same tutor as Prince (now King) Charles, which surprises many people given his "unrefined accent".

Mike's expertise in engineering was called upon after the 1975 collapse of the Tasman bridge in Hobart, when it was struck by a bulk ore carrier, the Lake Illawarra, tragically killing 12 people.

"At the time the ship hit the bridge, I had just finished a study on how to widen the bridge, so had some particular knowledge about its design," he said. "Working out whether the rest of the bridge was on the point of collapse or safe to work on and put in temporary supports was one of the more interesting projects I worked on as an engineer."

Mike's decision to leave a gift to Oxfam in his Will was driven by his core values.

"The aspiration, of course, is for a fairer world free of poverty in which everyone can reach their potential," he said. "Whilst there is no single thing to change to bring this about, the work of Oxfam and other similar agencies in educating and changing attitudes and empowering communities to lift themselves out of poverty are key to addressing it."

Mike views making a gift in his Will as a "kind of extension of the giving one makes on a regular basis".

"As Oxfam is one of the charities I support monthly, it follows that I would include it in my will.



Loyal supporter Mike Evans has chosen to leave a gift in his will to Oxfam. Photo: supplied.

"I choose to leave money to Oxfam as, having been involved with them for over 40 years, I support their purpose and values and trust that the gift will make a difference where it is needed."

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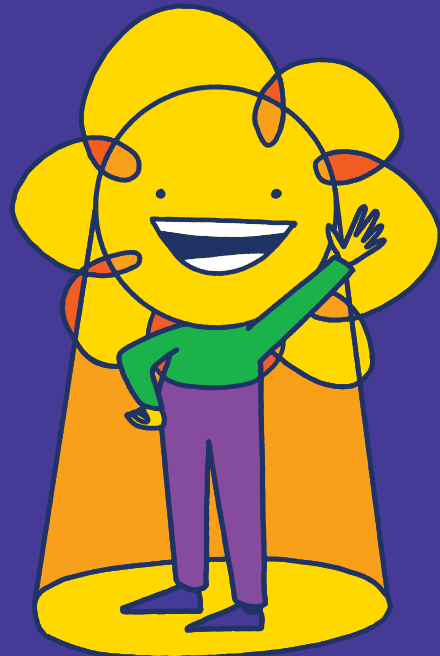


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Adelaide, Australia: Con is celebrating 10 years of volunteering at the Oxfam bookshop in Adelaide. Photo: Aimee Han/Oxfam.

A decade of dedication

Con Apostolopoulos is a “strong believer” in social justice, and his volunteer position at the Oxfam second-hand bookshop in Adelaide allows him to put these beliefs into practice. Volunteering gives Con the opportunity to connect with people who sometimes might not talk to anyone else all week.

“Some [people] come in here, this is the only social contact they have with people with a common interest — books — and they come here, they talk. If I go out the back and get a biscuit, I’ll give them one as well, then they start telling me jokes. So, there’s that idea of connecting with the regulars.

“We were economic refugees,” Con said. “So, I can empathise with people who have struggled for some sort of sense of social justice.”

This year, Con will celebrate a decade of volunteering at the shop. “I’ve been here since the beginning of about 2013. It’s getting onto 10 years. I should be getting a certificate of something...long service leave. I’m kidding,” he said.

The bookshop has evolved over many years, having started life as a series of second-hand book sales at church halls or street stalls in the 1960s and 70s, when Oxfam was known as Community Aid Abroad.

Today, at its permanent home in Hutt Street on the city’s eastern fringe, the shop stocks over 20,000 titles, which are available online as well as in-store.. As the only Oxfam bookshop in Australia, it is staffed solely by volunteers and, since 1986, has raised almost \$2.59 million!

Con remembers the interesting way he was introduced to the shop. “I was going out with a beautiful lady and her mother used to volunteer here, and their family was one of the greenest families that I knew. She said, ‘Why don’t you go and volunteer at the Oxfam book shop, I think you’d like it.’ And I thought, ‘What a good idea.’ And so, I did.”

Con loves getting to know the people who come through the shop each week, including some who are going through hard times.

“We trust the buyers, many of whom select books, are low on money, and come back another time to pay.”

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Photo: Chevanon Photography

Reflections of a loyal Oxfam supporter

By the early 1970s, Derek and Valerie Minter were already part of the fabric of what's now known as Oxfam, having first become involved in 1961, when the organisation was known as Food for Peace, and later Community Aid Abroad (CAA).

So, it comes as no surprise that in 1972, after spending 14 months working in England and Europe, they included a stopover in East Africa on their way home to Australia. The couple took their four children, then aged between 7 and 13 years, to Egypt, Kenya and Rhodesia, as Zimbabwe was then known.

"We visited three or four projects which CAA sponsored," Derek said. "We went to out-of-the-way spots and saw a little bit of the successful work CAA had been doing in Africa. It really was a highlight."

The trip, coupled with the example set by their parents, instilled a strong sense of social justice in their children. "They are all socially conscious and politically aware," Derek said.

Sadly, Valerie passed away in 2020, but Derek is continuing the couple's commitment and remains a loyal and regular Oxfam supporter.

Derek said Valerie was hugely enthusiastic and committed to CAA. When the family moved to Ballarat in 1961 for Derek's job, Valerie became secretary of the Ballarat Food for Peace group. Derek remembers her organising a "massive white elephant sale at the local church hall, raising a fair few dollars in those days".

The couple kept up their commitment when they moved back to Melbourne in 1973, with Derek becoming the secretary of the Box Hill CAA "for three to four years", organising the annual Walk against Want and other fundraisers.

"We organised walks and the usual fundraising, but no white elephants," he said. "In the late 70s I had to give up, as work got in the way. I still remained active, but then a young bloke took over as secretary."

While no longer a young bloke himself, at 91 Derek has plenty of spark in him. "I'm 91, coming up to 92 in March," he said. "And I'm very fit."



Melbourne, Australia: Long-term Oxfam supporter Derek Minter at home in Melbourne. Photo: Aimee Han/Oxfam.

Kimberley Aboriginal Women's Council

In late 2022, Oxfam Australia and the Kimberley Aboriginal Women's Council (KAWC) formalised an agreement to work towards gender equality for First Nations women and girls in the Kimberley region of Western Australia. Oxfam has been working with Australia's First Peoples for more than 40 years and we're honoured to be extending our relationship with the women of the Kimberley.

In November 2022, the KAWC invited Oxfam Australia Chief Executive Lyn Morgain and members of the Oxfam Australia Board to meet in the Kimberley. This was an extraordinary opportunity and a privilege for everyone on the trip. Here, Lyn shares some of her memories of the visit.

"Well, that was exciting. It was an opportunity for us to come together with the Aboriginal women of the Kimberley, to support the new Council that they've established. The Council is an exciting move on their part, and it comes after much work and developmental thinking. We are conscious that the move to establish the Council was very much driven by a number of women who were inspired by their participation in Straight Talk; women who returned home and thought about what else they could do.





Broome, Australia: Oxfam CE Lyn Morgain, left, and KAWC Chairperson Janine Dureau pictured after signing the new partnership between the two organisations. Photos: Aimee Han/Oxfam AUS.

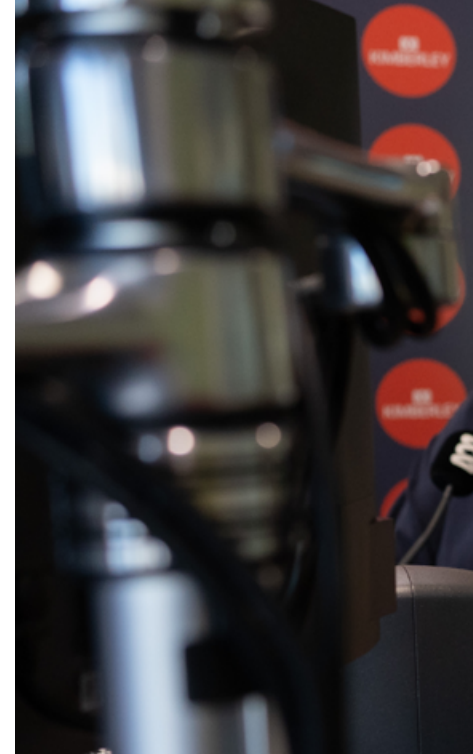
From Oxfam's point of view, this is really important. It tells us that the work we are doing with Straight Talk to support women in change making produces very concrete results in areas that are of concern to us, and certainly of concern to these women.

The invitation was for me to come myself. We know that these days you could do all of that electronically. But the women of the Council felt that they wanted me to have some insight to their context, and specifically the country from which they're speaking, the context in which they're working. Their wisdom was proven every day that I was there; that there's an insight you can gain from being present and being part of a conversation.

Oxfam is passionate about First Nations justice, gender justice and ultimately, the inequality that causes poverty. We have learnt over a very long time, that the way to address those things is through the deep and genuine participation of folks whose communities we're working in. Straight Talk is based on that premise, it's based on the premise that political emancipation is what will drive equity.

We're seeing now with Straight Talk that it's not just a case that individual women gain skills they might not have had previously. It's what they do with those skills that really takes us to the purpose that Oxfam has – the purpose that our supporters are behind.

The reason that Straight Talk matters so much for us as an organisation is the relationship between the impact we want to achieve and those who can make that happen. The more women are supported as change makers, the greater the probability that they will create the change they want."





Broome, Australia:
Oxfam CE Lyn Morgain
and KAWC Chairperson
Janine Dureau during
a radio interview.



Broome, Australia: Pat
"Mamanyjun" Torres, a
Djugin/Jabirr-Jabirr
Elder, performed
a Welcome to Country
and Smoking Ceremony.

My name is Janine Dureau. I'm a Nyikina woman from the Martuwarra, in the Derby region, and I'm the Chairperson of the Kimberley Aboriginal Women's Council, or KAWC. The KAWC is a newly incorporated organisation that we – a group of women – set up through a process of engagement. We set it up to be an advocacy platform around gender justice and equality for Kimberley Aboriginal women.

I believe that the partnership between the KAWC and Oxfam will help us as Kimberley Aboriginal women to further empower and build the capacity of our local change agents across the region, and provide them with skills and tools around political engagement and lobbying. It will also assist us to engage at a local level, so when policies are being made or programs are being developed, we have enough confidence and self-esteem to demand to sit at the table, to be part of the co-designing, and to advocate for our people, in particular our women and children.

In 2013, I was fortunate enough to be selected to attend the National Straight Talk Summit in Canberra. For me, it was a bit of a scary opportunity, my first time in Canberra, and being amongst amazing, inspiring women from all around the country. What I learnt in that week participating in the summit was new skills around political engagement and what the

political system is, and it gave me strength and further confidence and self-esteem, so when I returned home, I was able to be a stronger advocate for my people.

Ever since then, I knew I had to convince Oxfam to come to the region. Because I had benefitted so much, I knew the women in the Kimberley would also be able to benefit. And it would empower them, give them skills and tools, which is so important for us. Government is constantly changing the policies and systems that are supposed to benefit us – but they don't. The KAWC gives us an opportunity to be true, strong advocates for women, children and the community.

If we can work with the next generation of young women now, whether they are in the education system, whether they are young community leaders coming into the work environment, I think it's really important that we look at building capacity from young people right through to my age group.



Broome, Australia:
KAWC Chairperson
Janine Dureau.

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Broome, Australia: Women from the Kimberley Aboriginal Women's Council reflecting with Oxfam staff. Photo: Aimee Han/Oxfam AUS.



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