

VOICES

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TO YOU ...**

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OVER THE
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OXFAM
Australia

Connections

with Lyn Morgain, Chief Executive



Photo: Keith Parsons/OxfamAUS

I hope this finds you and your loved ones well, as we prepare to enjoy some warmer weather and the holiday season. In March, we moved to our new home in West Melbourne. We were given the privilege of naming the building 'Ngapa', which translates as grandfather, in honour of William Cooper. Mr Cooper was a Yorta Yorta man, one of the world's first humanitarians and known as the original Truth Teller.

In this edition, we celebrate the news that Myer has committed to pay a living wage to the women who make our clothes. This is a huge achievement after five years of engagement and thousands of emails from supporters like you.

You'll meet Nooreja from Bangladesh, who was able to build a thriving business after doing a skills development course as part of our REE-CALL program. And we hear from Kimberley, a proud Nyikina woman who joined our Straight Talk summit in August.

Sadly, we learnt of the passing of Jeremy Hobbs in July. Jeremy served as the Executive Director of Oxfam Australia and Oxfam International and remained a true friend and loyal supporter throughout his life. We extend our sincere condolences to Jeremy's family.

Thank you for connecting with me through your 'Letters to Lyn'. I've shared a snapshot of these letters here and would love you to keep sharing your stories with me.



Use the enclosed form and Reply Paid envelope to share your story. You can also drop me a line at enquire@oxfam.org.au or scan this QR code to send your letter.



OXFAM
Australia

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ISSN 1446-0521

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
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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,

Thank you for letting us be a part of helping the world be a better place. Knowing my few dollars gather together with a few others' small (and big) gifts reminds me we are all in this together. There is something bigger than all of us that needs our few dollars, our thoughts and good vibes (or prayers). Thanks for letting us be a part of the work you and Oxfam do. Hannah.

Dear Lyn,

I am so glad that Oxfam can reach so many people and help in such a wide range of situations. I am particularly concerned about the effect of climate change and distressed that the Australian Govt is so inept at dealing with it and helping those countries so near to us dealing with rising sea levels.

I am sorry that I am not in a position to donate more. Peggy.

Hi,

In a world that is inching towards self-destruction, it is uplifting to read about your organisation's efforts to "give hope" rather than take it away.

Hope my small contribution can help. Leonard.

Dear Lyn,

I'm happy to contribute to the Oxfam family as even as my small donation will help one of the under privileged; it must improve their outlook on life and make their daily life easier. It helps me feel better about my own life. I hope more people will donate to your organization and so feel better about themselves. Sincerely, Judy.

Dear Lyn,

It is really inspiring to read about Oxfam's achievements, and seeing the outcomes are a humbling experience for me. Continue to keep "fighting the good fight" and improving the lives of so many people. You are doing an amazing job!! Thank you!! Wishing you and your loved ones every happiness and success. Best wishes, Linda.

Dear Lyn,

My idea of giving is to help victims to have clean water and to educate how to use bathrooms and to drink clean water and to wash using 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 ...

The women who make our clothes are a step closer to being paid a living wage. Our What She Makes campaign secured commitments from Myer and the Just Group throughout the year to pay a living wage, publish their factory lists and make wages transparent.

Grassroots climate activists in the Pacific received a boost to their campaign to achieve an advisory opinion from the International Court of Justice when Pacific Nations leaders supported their claim. An advisory opinion could protect the rights of present and future generations to be protected from climate change.

Dhaka, Bangladesh: Portrait of Parvin* who has been working in the textile industry for 18 years. Photo: Mohammad Rakibul Hasan/OxfamAUS.

*Name changed to protect identity.



Jeremy Hobbs

It was with great sadness that we learnt of the passing of Jeremy Hobbs in July this year. Jeremy was an important person in Oxfam's history, serving as the Executive Director of Oxfam Australia for nine years, and Oxfam International for 12 years.

Jeremy represented Oxfam on key global development and security issues at the United Nations, the World Trade Organization, the G8 and G20, as well as other multi-lateral institutions, on trade, aid effectiveness, climate change and humanitarian issues, including arms control.

Jeremy was a founding director of Oxfam International in 1995 and was involved in designing the organisation and developing the Constitution, Rules and Code of Conduct.

Jeremy served as the Executive Director of Oxfam Australia (formerly Community Aid Abroad) from 1993 until 2001, having worked in a variety of roles in the organisation for 10 years. He led the merger process between Community Aid Abroad and the Australian Freedom From Hunger Campaign in the early 90s, and initiated the rebranding of the merged organisation to Oxfam Australia.

Jeremy provided a strong focus on Indigenous Peoples' rights and race issues in Australia, as well as on the campaign for the rights of the people of Timor-Leste, including supporting the emergency response in 1999. He also represented Oxfam on the Board of the Australian Council for Overseas Aid (now the Australian Council for International Development) from 1997 to 2001.



Photo: Oxfam

Jeremy remained a true friend and advocate of Oxfam's work, and in recent years supported Oxfam International and other Oxfam entities on a range of strategy-related projects, bringing his passion for our work, his keen mind for what could be new ways of being, and a challenging mindset to remind us all not to accept or be complicit in the status quo.

He will be sorely missed and fondly remembered, not just by those who knew him but by all who continue to strive for an end to poverty and inequality. Vale Jeremy Hobbs.



Bakshiganj, Jamalpur, Bangladesh: Oxfam Australia's Chief Executive Lyn Morgain during her trip to see the Australian Government funded REE-CALL program. Photo: M R Hasan/OxfamAUS.

Celebrating REE-CALL

This year, we celebrate one of Oxfam's longest-standing projects, REE-CALL. Supported by Australian Aid, REE-CALL, or Resilience through Economic Empowerment, Climate Adaptation, Leadership and Learning, has operated in Bangladesh for 12 years and impacted hundreds of thousands of people.

We want to take this opportunity to thank you, our supporters, for your commitment to REE-CALL. Your constant presence over the past 12 years has helped lift people out of poverty, increased communities' resilience to the impacts of climate change, made it easier for people living in some of the most climate-vulnerable areas of Bangladesh to prepare for and mitigate the effects of weather events, and enabled smallholder farmers to practise climate-resilient farming.

The program has helped young people and people with disabilities to access skills training, empowered women to raise their voices in civil society, enabled women to take their place in the workforce by sharing the burden of care and home duties with their partners, and helped smallholder farmers form savings groups and food banks.

A new start for Nooreja

Meet Nooreja Begum, a self-employed businesswoman who is single-handedly supporting her two sons and her mother with the money she earns selling sweets from her 'mobile sweet shop'.

Thanks to supporters like you, Nooreja, from the district of Jamalpur in Bangladesh, has been able to build a thriving business. She took part in a skills development training program as part of the Oxfam-supported REE-CALL project.

When her husband left the family several years ago, Nooreja was the sole income earner, scraping together a living as a day labourer. But it wasn't enough to feed and educate her children and care for her mother.

"Working as day labourer could never provide me the money I need to maintain a large family," Nooreja said. "My sons were growing up and I wish to continue their schooling."

Nooreja was always interested in cooking, and through the skills development program she learnt how to turn her hobby into income.

"I had an interest for cooking from my early age," she said. "So, when I got to know about sweetmeat making training Oxfam was going to provide, instantly I registered myself as a participant. I received the training and felt confident enough to start a small business."

As part of the REE-CALL project, Oxfam partnered with local community organisations like Gonochetona.

"I shared my thought with the staff of Gonochetona and they agreed to provide me a 'mobile shop' under project intervention to start my business," Nooreja said.

"Meanwhile I had borrowed some money from relatives. My total capital invest was BDT 25,000 (AUD \$380)."



Photo: Supplied

Now, when the school bell rings for 'tiffin break' at the Kushol Nagar primary school, children come running to buy Nooreja's sweets.

"My sweetmeats brings sweetest smile on these little kids' face and what can I expect more!"

Each morning, Nooreja parks her mobile shop in front of the primary school, and she spends her evenings at the local market selling her mouth-watering sweets.

"The students like my sweets very much," she said. "Sometimes they eat more than two or three at a time. In local market also my sweetmeat has high demand because there is no other sweetmeat shop in our locality. So, my food sells very well during the market hours."

"Nowadays I'm getting order for wedding event too and selling the sweets 140 taka per kilogram."

Nooreja is now able to save between \$75 and \$90 per month and recently reconstructed her home.

GIFTS THAT DO GOOD

Make your loved ones smile with a truly thoughtful gift. Whether it's a birthday, wedding, or just because, Oxfam has a range of gifts to suit everyone.

Your lucky recipient will receive a clever card explaining how their gift is helping others, and you'll both feel good knowing that you're tackling poverty together.



Photo: Artur Francisco/Oxfam NZ

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A living wage for workers

Five years of consistent engagement by Oxfam's What She Makes campaign, along with thousands of emails from loyal supporters like you have paid off!

In June this year, we welcomed the announcement by retailer Myer that they would commit to pay a living wage to the women who make their clothes, and to publish their factory lists.

Our What She Makes campaign is living proof that your support can change lives. More than 140,000 people have taken the What She Makes pledge, and thousands of you have emailed major brands to demand a living wage, the publication of factory lists and transparency in the wages that garment factory workers are paid.

Myer has now published its factory list for its brands, including Miss Shop, Basque and Wayne by Wayne Cooper, and made a commitment to ensure that the women who make their clothes are paid a living wage. This is a genuine move towards more ethical sourcing and better wages throughout Myer's supply chain.

Oxfam Australia Chief Executive Lyn Morgain was delighted with the announcement.

"All the emails you have sent, conversations you had with friends and posts you shared are working," Lyn said. "Together we are building a movement that can't be ignored and we won't stop until we see the lives and wages of the women who make our clothes improved."

A Myer spokesperson said the retailer understood that its customers supported the campaign.

"We know how important ethical sourcing is to Myer customers and team members and that is why we continue to deliver against, progress and improve our established sourcing program," the spokesperson said. "This includes outlining our ongoing work in this area



Dhaka, Bangladesh: Portrait of Parvin* who has been working in the textile industry for 18 years. Photo: Mohammad Rakibul Hasan/OxfamAUS. *Name changed to protect identity.

with our commitment to a living wage and factory information, ensuring an even more transparent supply chain."

It's been a big year for the campaign. Brands including the Just Group have moved in the right direction, and we have seen a tangible shift from convincing brands that this is something they must do, to them accepting it and beginning to work on the logistics of making it happen.

Oxfam's Economic Justice Strategic Lead, Nayeem Emran, commended Myer for its commitment.

"By taking this important step towards transparency, Myer has demonstrated a commitment to ensuring the payment of living wages – a universal human right for every working person around the world, including the women who make our clothes," Nayeem said. "Brands that fail to ensure the payment of a living wage are perpetuating a system that keeps women in poverty."



Canberra, Australia: Kimberley Hunter, a proud Nyikina woman who took part in Oxfam's Straight Talk summit in Canberra.
Photo: Jillian Mundy/OxfamAUS.

Telling it like it is: Straight Talk heads to Canberra

More than 50 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women from across Australia gathered in Canberra in August for Oxfam's annual Straight Talk summit. The summit teaches women about the federal political system, allows women to develop important networks and aims to empower them to engage in the political sphere, creating change in their communities. We sat down with one participant, Kimberley Hunter, to hear her views on civic participation.

Tell us a little about yourself.

My name is Kimberley Hunter. I'm a Nyikina woman from the west Kimberley region of Western Australia. I grew up in Kurna Country in Adelaide and I also have strong family ties up in Larrakia Country, so I have a strong connection to all three of those places.

I'm an occupational therapist by background, but for the last, just over four years, I've been working at the Australian Human Rights Commission in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander justice team. My work has focused largely on the Wiyi Yani U Thangani (Women's Voices) project, which has been led by Commissioner June Oscar and looks at elevating the voices of First Nations women and girls right across the country.

What are you passionate about?

Looking at gender equality from a First Nations lens, elevating voices of First Nations across issues of social justice impacting our mob, and recognising the strengths of our women, as a backbone and front line of our communities.

What motivates you?

From a young age, surrounded by incredible leaders within my family and extended community who have really instilled that fight for social justice in our mob, and just building off of the work and pathways that they have created for me to follow in. That's what gets me up in the morning, just continuing the fight that they have fought so hard for.

How has Straight Talk empowered you?

Firstly, being a program that invests in First Nations women is a strength in itself. And recognising the strength we carry as women in our communities and providing us with some of the tools that disrupt the systems and political institutions that weren't made for us. Just giving us some of the tools to be change makers in our communities.

I think for me personally, I've been working at the national level for a couple of years now, and some of the tools even just today have reminded me of some of the personal changes, and tips or tools, that I can use in my everyday life and share with my community. (It) just reinforces that all of us are change makers, no matter how big or small our contributions are, that they matter.

As drought ravages his herd of cattle, Abdulahi fights for his family's survival

"There have been drought problems since I was born, but within my lifetime, this is the worst drought I have ever experienced."

Abdulahi Farah Isse, 27, is a farmer in Puntland, Somalia. This is the fourth year that his farm has gone without rain. Abdulahi raises livestock to earn a living and feed his family, but the worsening drought has killed 40 of his camels in the last five months.

Without the meat, milk and money that his livestock provide, Abdulahi is worried about how he will continue to take care of his family.

Years of drought, conflict and inflation have created a hunger crisis in East Africa, pushing 26 million people to the verge of extreme hunger.

Climate change has caused three consecutive droughts in the past decade, which have destroyed crops and livestock. Today, the region is in the middle of its longest drought in 40 years.

Ongoing conflict and political instability have disrupted local economies and displaced countless families. In Somalia, more than 100,000 people, half of which are young children, have fled their homes.

Thanks to supporters like you, Oxfam is on the ground in South Sudan, Ethiopia, Somalia and Kenya responding to the hunger crisis. We are focusing on the immediate needs of people like Abdulahi and his family, but we are

also working towards long-term recovery, and towards building the resilience of communities to help prevent future crises.

We are working with local partners in local communities because these are the people who know best what support is needed and how it should be delivered.

Our emergency response is covering food security, gender protection, water, sanitation and hygiene in four countries, and we aim to reach more than one million people over the next 12 months with cash and vouchers. This means families can purchase food in a way that meets their own needs, while keeping local markets operating. We are supplying livestock feed, drought-resistant seeds, tools and training on climate-resistant farming methods, and we are providing safe, clean water and adequate hygiene facilities to stop the spread of disease.

As usual, we are working with community-led committees to ensure that women and girls have equal access to our humanitarian response, because we know that women and girls are those most impacted when food is scarce.

You can read more about the crisis in East Africa here <https://www.oxfam.org.au/east-africa-food-crisis> and what we, together, are doing to help.



Budunbuto, Puntland: Abdulahi lost 40 head of cattle in five months due to drought. Photo: Petterik Wiggers/Oxfam Novib.



Lilisiana village, Malaita province, Solomon Islands: Patricia Geli, a canteen owner, is worried about the seawater inundating her village and its impact on her food security. Photo: Collin Leafasia/Oxfam.

Working together with our Pacific neighbours

Oxfam has been on the ground in Solomon Islands, tackling the climate crisis every step of the way with local communities.

Patricia Geli has spent her whole life in Lilisiana village, Malaita province, Solomon Islands. Her four children keep her busy, and she runs a local canteen. Patricia worries about what the future holds for her homeland, having experienced first-hand the effects of climate change.

The kakake, a giant swamp taro, is a source of food for the villagers, but sea level rises have meant that it is becoming harder to grow.

“We are badly affected by the sea level rise because it has ruined our kakakes,” Patricia said.

Thanks to your generous support, Oxfam has been working with people like Patricia in Solomon Islands and right across the Pacific to tackle the challenges of climate change. We have been working hand-in-hand with local partners to educate and train people on how to plant crops in a climate-resilient way, and we have collaborated with grassroots campaigners and civil society organisations who are determined to get their message out to the world.

With the right knowledge and tools, and with your support, the people of the Pacific can be better prepared to tackle climate change.

Vanuatu leads on climate justice

A grassroots campaign aiming to protect future generations in the Pacific from the impacts of climate change is gaining momentum on the global stage.



Photos: supplied



Campaigners are seeking an advisory opinion from the International Court of Justice (ICJ) on the rights of present and future generations to be protected from climate change. The Vanuatu Government is supporting the campaign through a request to the 2022 meeting of the United Nations General Assembly.

Your support has meant that Oxfam's PACCCIL project has been able to assist the campaigners – an alliance of grassroots and youth-led organisations – to lobby for this action. PACCCIL stands for the Pacific Climate Change Collaboration Influencing and Learning project. It is supported by Australian Aid and delivers campaign and advocacy skills to activists.

While there are still many hurdles to jump, if an advisory opinion supports a link between human rights and climate change it will redefine international law on this issue. The next step will be to get more countries to stand up and show their support to the General Assembly.

During the 2022 Pacific Islands Forum leaders' meeting, the Vanuatu Climate Action Network and other members of the alliance delivered mobilisation training to Vanuatu climate activists keen to generate support for the ICJ advisory opinion. They also supported events held in tandem with the leaders' meeting to focus attention on getting all Pacific Island states to endorse the campaign – and they were successful! The leaders' final communique showed that Pacific nations, including Australia and New Zealand, stand in solidarity with Vanuatu as it seeks global support.

The saying "from little things, big things grow" couldn't be more apt, and your support has helped these grassroots movements develop to the point where they are on the cusp of international action.

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



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.



Photos supplied



Toni's gift

For Toni Pollard, retiring from a 50-year career in teaching didn't mean slowing down.

The loyal Oxfam supporter and former volunteer maintains a dizzying schedule, translating literature from Indonesian to English, and attending book clubs, literary lectures and writers' festivals. It's no surprise then that she's also a regular at her local pool.

"I took up swimming in middle age during the Sydney Olympics, inspired by Ian Thorpe," Toni said. "I have been swimming laps of 500 metres at least once, usually twice a week, ever since. I do wild aqua aerobics too to try and keep age and stiffness at bay."

Toni's passion for life is equalled by her passion for social justice, instilled in her by her father at an early age. As a young adult, Toni travelled through Indonesia, India, Sri Lanka and Nepal.

"I joined a CAA [Community Aid Abroad] study tour to India in 1978, which reinforced my desire to contribute. I was especially motivated by CAA's stand against the Indonesian invasion of East Timor."

From the mid-1970s to the early 1990s, Toni ran the CAA group of the eastern suburbs in Sydney, while also volunteering in the early 1980s in the Sydney office. She was also very active through monthly donations, regular street stalls and attending events.

Toni believes compassionate leadership is the key to tackling poverty.

"Leadership in the form evinced by (New Zealand Prime Minister) Jacinda Ardern is what I would like to see in every part of the world. With such leadership based on compassion and respect for the entire community in all its diversity and for the fragile planet on which we live, the world will surely change for the better," she said. "Ukraine's Zelenskyy is an extraordinary leader for his times, and we are now experiencing the optimism of a new approach to Australian leadership in Albanese."

When Toni inherited some money in 2008, the decision to leave a gift to Oxfam in her Will came easily.

"I am not so naïve as to think that my gift will drastically change many lives. I just know that Oxfam's projects and its policy of minimising overhead costs means that most of it will be put to good use somewhere. A few more children able to go to school, a drinking well built in a village which will keep children healthy and women free from the arduous task of carting water long distances, a micro-finance business set up somewhere providing livelihoods to a few families."

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Photo: Chevanon Photography



Five-time Trailwalker Stefan in action. Photo supplied.

A Trailwalker legend

Stefan Krakowiak loves to walk. In fact, Stefan believes walking saved his life. A veteran of five Oxfam annual Trailwalker events, Stefan walks 10km every day and adds a 70km walk on weekends.

For many years, Stefan struggled with social anxiety, depression and suicidal thoughts, but he now credits hiking, especially Oxfam's Trailwalker event, with turning his life around.

"Hiking literally saved my life," he said. "Over the years, Oxfam Trailwalker has helped me to build really strong connections within the community. It has given me purpose whilst keeping me in great physical and mental shape."

Stefan, who lives in Victoria's Yarra Ranges, first heard about Trailwalker through his uncle, who is currently on top of the family's leader board, with six Trailwalkers under his belt.

"My uncle who is now in his late 60s has completed Trailwalker six times. He was the first one to introduce me to it, and I plan on doing it every year for the rest of my life, I love it that much."

Stefan has grand plans to bring his baby into the Trailwalker fold as soon as he's old enough, ensuring that the family tradition will continue.

"I really hope one day when my baby, Leo, is 18 he will be able to join me too," he said.

And no doubt little Leo will be proud of his dad. In the 2022 walk, Stefan and his team finished an impressive 28th out of 845 teams, passing the finish line in 21 hours and 35 minutes. As this was Stefan's fifth walk, he was sporting Oxfam's Yellow Buff, indicating that he is now officially a Trailwalker Legend.

A film of Stefan's 2022 walk is on his Healing Hikes Australia YouTube channel, and he plans to film every Trailwalker he does.

It's thanks to supporters like Stefan and thousands of other committed Trailwalkers that Oxfam can continue to fight poverty and injustice.



Photos supplied

Activism over the decades

What do a group of local fundraisers, an AFL legend and a Nobel Peace Prize winner all have in common? Oxfam.

Back in the 1970s, when Oxfam was still Community Aid Abroad, a collection of like-minded people came together to join the fight against poverty. Action for World Development began in the Melbourne suburb of Berwick as a discussion group to raise people's awareness of crises in the developing world. Some years later, it evolved, changed its name and became a local Community Aid Abroad group.

Some of the remaining group members recently reflected on their achievements, and their brushes with fame, difficult politicians and Christmas tree branches.

"Quite early on, this Berwick branch initiated a Walk Against Want, which was becoming a popular way to

achieve fundraising for community groups," said one of the group members. "We contacted many schools for support and won a very enthusiastic and faithful following of young people."

One of these enthusiastic supporters was a young Michael Tuck, who would go on to play in 11 AFL grand finals, winning seven of them, for the Hawthorn Football Club. Even back then "publicity was at a high level".

"We also had Dave Sweeney, showing his youthful desire to help people in need and make the world a safer place," one member said. "This developed into his passion for nuclear disarmament, becoming a



co-founder of the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN)." In 2017, ICAN was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize.

The faithful group members, Mary and Gordon, Marcus, Mary, Brenda and John, Bill, Barbara, Glo, Margaret, Robyn, Judy, Fred, Peggy and June, carried on the activities for several decades, running street stalls, concerts, sausage sizzles and annual dinners. One of their biggest "crowd-pleasers" was the Christmas tree sale, which led to Mary and Gordon's lawn "becoming a seasonal forest of pine-scented conifers minus the snow and reindeer".

The Berwick group's activism didn't always suit everyone, but they weren't afraid to defend their beliefs.

"There was intense interest in our group on the East Timor issue," one group member said. "One highlight of this time was a modest photo exhibition at a Dandenong art gallery, focusing on many examples of

the trauma and disastrous times the country and people had been through and were still enduring.

"An astonishing moment during the setting up of this was the sudden 'instruction' from a certain politician's office that we should dismantle the show. We were told, 'You can't do this'.

"Several of us were there, and very pleased that our president disregarded the message. 'How dare they' was our collective response, and so, another successful and memorable activity ensued!"

The friends put the group's longevity down to teamwork. "We were the epitome of 'team effort'," they said. "Shared work and decision-making; members did not dwell on personal, religious and political views, but only served to steer us towards the right and fitting actions to take in a democratic society, as is the basis of CAA/Oxfam's existence."

Along the Mekong with Sai

The Mekong River Basin is home to millions of people who rely on the waterway for food, water and transport. But the river, and these people's livelihoods, are under threat from the harmful effects of hydropower that is generating energy, sand extraction that is being used for development in urban centres, water that is being extracted for irrigation, and industrial pollution and waste disposal. These are all exacerbated by climate change.

With your support, in March 2022, Cambodian singer and Goodwill Ambassador Oun Batham, known as Sai, was able to travel down the river as part of the Oxfam campaign, 'Along the Mekong with Sai'.

Sai's mission was to raise awareness of the need to protect this precious river for future generations. Sai captured the beauty of the Mekong, highlighted the diverse cultures and local practices he saw, and gave voice to the women, men, families, indigenous and vulnerable communities who call the river home. By promoting ecotourism in the region, the 'Along the Mekong with Sai' campaign is helping these communities to build up their livelihoods, and to thrive.

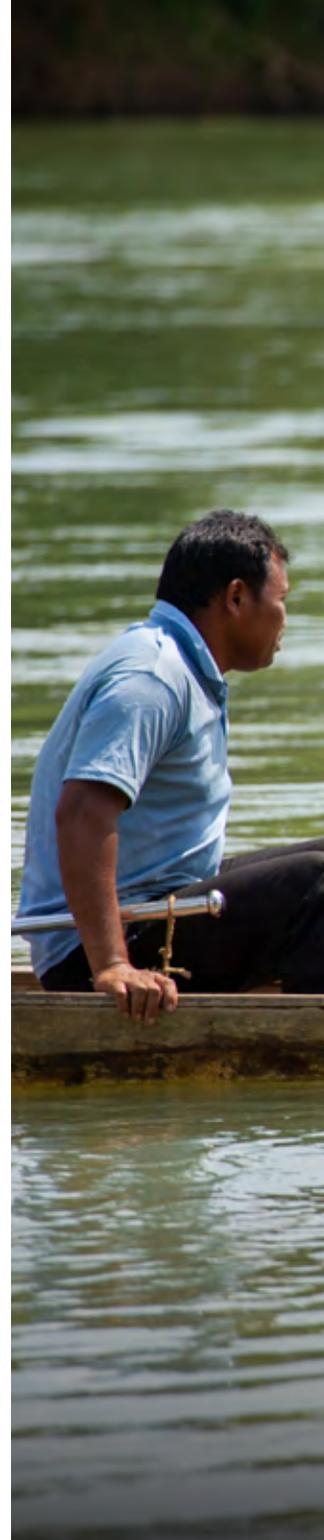
A video of Sai's trip called, 'The Face of the Mekong' was selected for the 2022 Cambodian International Film Festival, Cambodia's largest film and cultural event, ensuring the campaign's messages reached thousands of potential ecotourists.

Sai was keen to link young people to the campaign and encourage them to engage with members of affected communities, especially people with disabilities and indigenous people.

"My message to young people to join force to protect the river together. It does not belong to anyone but all of us. River is our life," Sai said after his journey.

"Rivers carry water and nutrient to all around the world and it is human life especially those dependent community. After the boat trip, I feel deeply connected to river. Thank Oxfam for allowing me the opportunity to explore the richness of our Mekong River and the life of the community especially those indigenous and vulnerable group whose life and culture are connected to the river and forest," he said.

This project is part of Oxfam's Mekong Regional Water Governance Program and the International Rivers South East Asia Program. The Inclusion Project Phase 2 is supported by the Australian Government through the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation.





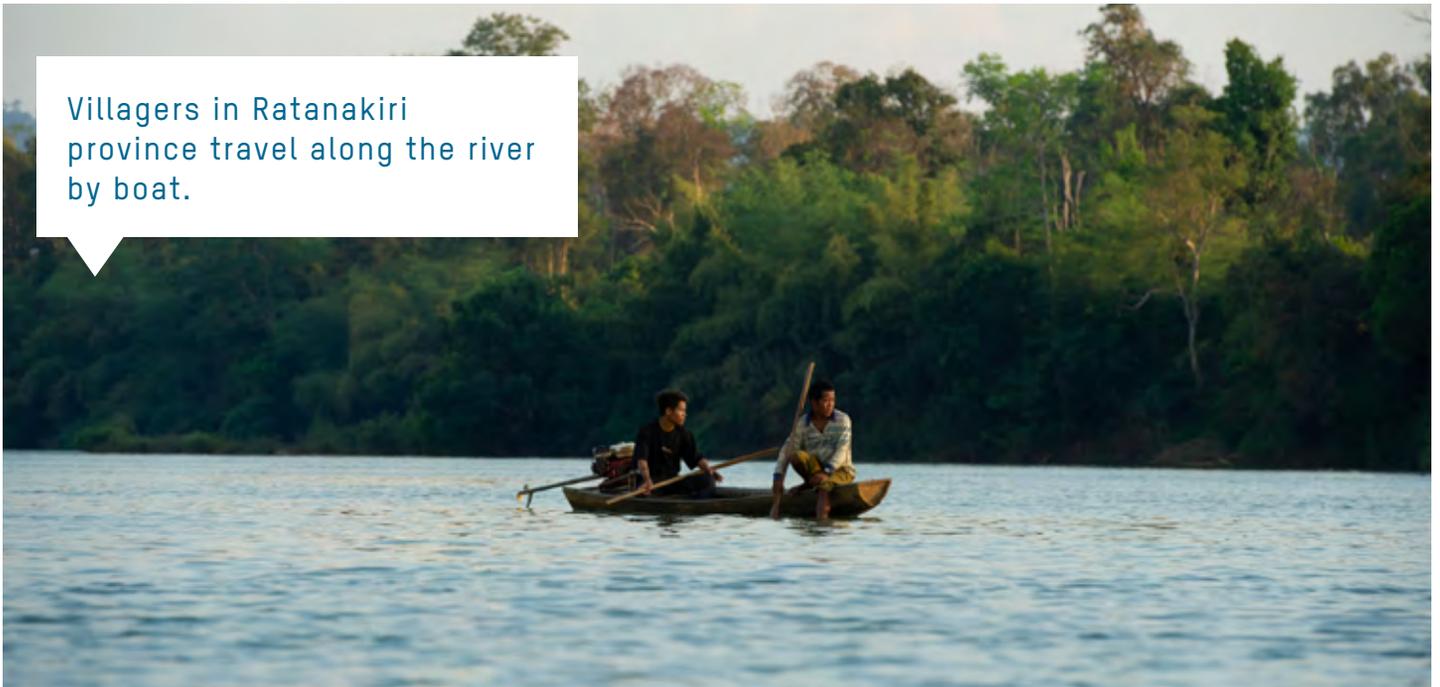
People from the Brao Indigenous group travel by boat to join a traditional ritual ceremony. Oxfam's 'Along the Mekong with Sai' campaign encouraged people to protect the mighty waterway.

All photos: Bandiddh Prum/Oxfam

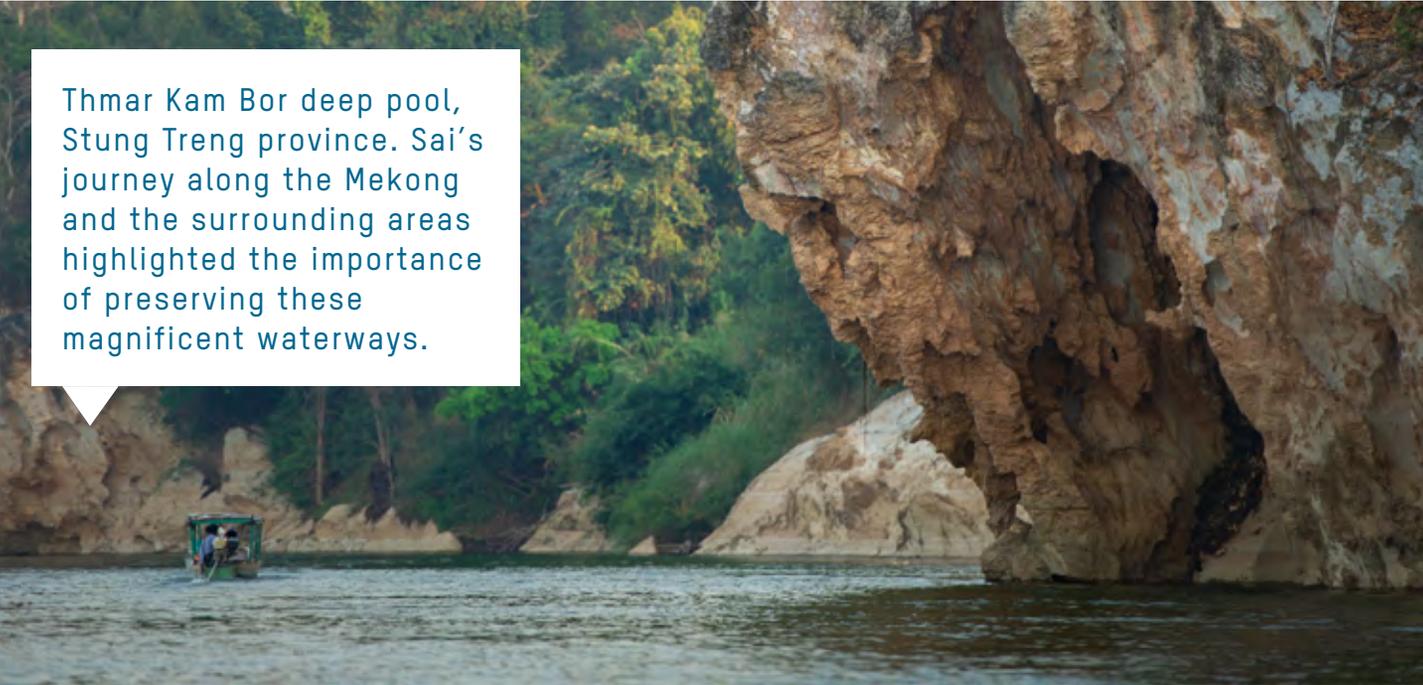
Local men fishing on the Sesan River in Koh Pang, Ratanakiri province. Oxfam's campaign shed light on the challenges these people face to their livelihoods.



Villagers in Ratanakiri province travel along the river by boat.



A group of indigenous women of Jarai ethnicity in Padol village, Ratanakiri province, prepare traditional food.



Thmar Kam Bor deep pool, Stung Treng province. Sai's journey along the Mekong and the surrounding areas highlighted the importance of preserving these magnificent waterways.



A Jarai woman smokes traditional tobacco on Koh Krom, Ratanakiri province. The province is home to many Indigenous groups, who rely on the river and surrounding forests for their livelihoods.

The daily commute for the people of Padol village, Ratanakiri province. The river is a lifeline for the communities who live along its shores.



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Voices is printed with vegetable inks on an unbleached, uncoated paper that is made from 100% recycled post-consumer waste and is carbon neutral.



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