



**OXFAM**  
Australia



**MONASH**  
University



# The Oxfam-Monash Partnership Annual Report 2013-2014

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**Cover image:**

A community member participates in a group awareness program in Limpopo Province, South Africa

**Photo:**

Matthew Willman/Oxfam Australia

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Photo: John Sones/Oxfam Australia 2014

# Introduction

## 1. Vision, mission and objectives

Development organisations and academic institutions both play key roles in global development and poverty reduction. Yet their impact can be much greater when these efforts are combined. Recognising this, the Oxfam-Monash Partnership was established with the vision of forging new solutions to development challenges, and enhancing the contributions of both Oxfam and Monash to positive global change.

### Mission

The mission of the Oxfam-Monash Partnership is to improve development practice and its outcomes for communities. More specifically, the Partnership aims to bring together the differing yet complementary resources of the NGO and academic sectors, and combine these resources to achieve greater development impact than would otherwise be possible.

### Objectives

- To facilitate action research projects that empower people living in poverty to improve their lives and livelihoods.
- To communicate the evidence generated through these initiatives to influence and inform the policy and practice of Oxfam and the development sector.
- To conduct programs that equip the next generation of development activists with the skills necessary to promote positive social change.

### Strategic direction

Our last annual report shared the findings of the Partnership's Mid-Term Review, which produced a series of recommendations to strengthen the Partnership and its impact. The Partnership has since implemented these recommendations by developing a set of strategic objectives to guide our activities. These objectives are:

- To improve the dissemination and sharing of research findings and program experiences to key stakeholders.
- To further embed the Partnership within both institutions.
- To review and further align programs with the strategic objectives of both Oxfam and Monash.

In pursuit of these objectives, the OMP's Governance Committee has also driven a new management approach, with a stronger focus on enhanced engagement and networking across both Oxfam and Monash, and with a range of strategic external actors. The following report includes information on further ways in which the Partnership has been working towards achieving these objectives.

## 2. A message from the Oxfam-Monash Partnership

Over the past year, the Oxfam-Monash Partnership has continued to provide high quality programs, improve and refine its activities, and achieve important outcomes for the communities it works with. The Partnership has also continued to capture, share and learn from the rich experience gained through six years of close collaborative work. Throughout this time, the Partnership has benefited greatly from the donation provided by the Empowerment Charitable Trust to support our work, and this funding, now in its final year, has been instrumental in enabling the activities and achievements detailed in this report.

The Partnership is a truly unique cross-sectoral collaboration in the development sector, focused both on improving development practice and strengthening development research. Through these efforts, the Partnership has produced demonstrable impacts for people and communities in developing countries; and has provided tangible benefits to both Oxfam and Monash. It has also established a body of best practice methods for conducting collaborative programs and research. In sum, the Partnership that has evolved over the course of its funding term is a “nimble”, action-oriented entity, conducting projects of a nature that few others are able to undertake, and drawing explicitly on each partner’s unique resources, global reach and wide influencing abilities. Significant achievements for the Partnership include:

- **Major participatory action research projects** conducted in Bangladesh, South Africa and Cambodia, which have generated important learnings for development policy and practice, and which have contributed to positive change at the community level.
- **Student engagement programs** that have empowered students to contribute meaningfully to positive social change, and that have allowed them to share their fresh ideas and innovations with the sector. Over 150 students have been directly engaged in the Partnership’s student engagement programs, which have also included volunteering placements and opportunities.
- **Practitioner development opportunities** that have promoted ongoing learning and knowledge-sharing within the development sector. The Partnership has hosted over 50 public and practitioner learning events, including guest lectures from Oxfam staff to Monash courses, Development Effectiveness Talks at Oxfam, public events and workshops, conference submissions and research presentations.
- **Strengthened ties and engagement** between Oxfam and Monash, including through Monash Workplace Giving and the Oxfam Shop at Monash Clayton.
- **Sharing partnership learnings and ways of working** in a genuine and open way, by documenting our learnings and contributing to the evidence base on managing NGO-academic partnerships.

As we look to the future, we see many exciting opportunities to further build on and expand the Partnership’s work. In the year to come, we will therefore be conducting a comprehensive evaluation of our Partnership experience, documenting and sharing the best practice models that we have built, and working to secure a strong, embedded and sustainable partnership between our two great organisations.

Dr Helen Szoke  
Chief Executive  
Oxfam Australia



Prof. Rae Frances  
Dean of Arts  
Monash University



### 3. The year at a glance



- Refreshed operational plan
- Revised management structure
- New external engagement strategy
- Moved to the Monash Faculty of Arts
- Expanded Governance Committee
- New website and communications strategy



45 Students engaged in unique OMP programs and learning experiences

14 New strategic partnerships



156%

Growth in engaged social media followers, reaching 29 countries



Photo: Oxfam Australia 2014

# Research

The Oxfam-Monash Partnership conducts research with a difference. Given our unique ability to combine the research rigour of Monash academics with the ground-level expertise and networks of Oxfam staff, the Partnership is able to accomplish innovative action research projects that directly improve development outcomes around the world.

The OMP's research model employs an action research methodology that empowers communities and local NGOs, and supports them to achieve positive community-driven change. Action research is a dynamic and cyclical process, in which researchers work with communities to identify the issues or challenges they are experiencing, engage further with communities to fully understand these challenges, and then develop and implement strategies to help address them. Ideally, the impacts of these strategies are then continuously

observed and documented, and lessons learnt are used to further improve and refine policy and practice. Finally, the tools and strategies that have been developed may be shared more widely to support development efforts in other communities and locations. As a partnership, we see ourselves as uniquely placed to conduct this challenging and rewarding form of research, and to share our findings to contribute to and improve development efforts.

## Thematic areas

The Partnership's research focuses on three thematic areas:

**Accountability:** Supporting communities to provide feedback to development agencies and governments, and in doing so hold these actors to account

**Climate change:** Supporting communities to adapt to climate change

**Gender equality:** Promoting gender equality with the aim of improving women's lives, family wellbeing and community development outcomes

In the past year, we have supported five action research projects in four different countries. These include our continuing research projects in Bangladesh, Cambodia and South Africa, as well as a new research project, recently commenced, in Sri Lanka. Our Research Fellow, Dr. Larry Stillman, has also continued his work on the 'Empowering Community Voices' project.

Many of these projects are currently drawing to their close, allowing us to now report on a number of the key findings, outcomes and impacts that have been generated by each of the research projects.

## 4. Developing a people's policy for health in South Africa



For many disadvantaged people in South Africa, quality health services are unaffordable and inaccessible. While a privileged few are able to access high quality private health services, more than 80% of the population is forced to rely on an under-resourced, substandard public health system.

To address this issue, the South African government has been developing a National Health Insurance scheme (NHI), to be rolled out over a period of 14 years. The NHI aims to ensure universal access to efficient, high quality health services, through restructuring the national healthcare system. There is however, some concern that disadvantaged communities have not been properly consulted or included in the drafting and implementation of the NHI, and that the new system may ultimately fail to meet the needs of those that need it most.

### The project

In light of these concerns, the research team has been actively working with a number of communities to help ensure that South Africa's vulnerable and disadvantaged populations will benefit from the proposed health sector reforms. To achieve this aim, the team has worked to help communities:

- Identify and understand their health service needs.
- Better understand the proposed NHI reforms, as well as how they can voice their feedback, through developing and disseminating plain language information booklets, and by hosting informational workshops.
- Engage in the public consultation process around the design and implementation of the NHI, and thereby improve government accountability for the delivery of a health system that adequately meets community needs.

### Outcomes

Following the initial phase of community engagement, the research team worked in collaboration with local partner organisations to assess how successful the NHI information booklets and workshops had been in enhancing community understanding of the NHI process, as well as how effectively they had enhanced community capacity to participate in the NHI drafting process.

Through these consultations, the research teams were able to identify a number of key outcomes:

- The team's creation and dissemination of plain language education materials has markedly increased the level of knowledge and awareness among communities about the NHI and what it involves.
- The action research methodology employed in this project has led to enhanced community participation in the drafting and implementation of the National Health Insurance (NHI) reform scheme.
- The sessions with communities have provided a forum through which communities have been able to discuss their questions and concerns regarding the NHI, and an open forum has now been planned to share these questions and concerns directly with the Minister for Health.
- The capacity of local community-based organisations (CBOs) to deliver accountability programs has been enhanced.
- Evidence generated as a result of this project has informed the development of an Essential Services Program for Oxfam South Africa.

## **Partnership Funding**

**\$100,000 for two years**

## **Research Team Members**

### **Katherine Lay**

Essential Services Program Coordinator,  
Oxfam Pretoria Office

### **Dr. Ravayi Marindo**

Senior Lecturer, Epidemiology,  
Monash South Africa

### **Prof. Brian Oldenburg**

Chair of International Public Health,  
Monash Australia

### **Kevin Roussel**

Advocacy and Campaigns Manager,  
Oxfam Cape Town Office

### **Urvashi Rajcoomar**

Senior Program Coordinator – Advocacy,  
Policy and Humanitarian, Oxfam South Africa

### **Prof. Geoffrey Setswe**

Head of Health Sciences,  
Monash South Africa

## **Outputs**

### **Academic publications**

Setswe, G., and Witthuhn, J. (2013). Community Engagement in the Introduction and Implementation of the National Health Insurance in South Africa. *Journal of Public Health in Africa*, 4(1), pp. 27-31.

Setswe, G., Witthuhn, J., and Marindo, R. (2013). *User Guide: National Health Insurance in South Africa: Get Informed and Participate!*. Durban: Oxfam South Africa.

### **Presentations**

Setswe, G. and Rajcoomar, V. (2013, June). *Participatory Action Research and Community Participation: Developing a People's Policy for Health in South Africa*. Presented at the Learning Through Partnership, Oxfam-Monash Partnership Research Symposium, Melbourne.

Setswe, G., and Rajcoomar, V. (2013, June). *Community Consultations in the Development and Implementation of the National Health Insurance in South Africa*. Presented at the Learning Through Partnership, Oxfam-Monash Partnership Research Symposium, Melbourne.

Setswe, G., and Rajcoomar, V. (2012, August). *Governance and Accountability in the Health Sector: Developing a People's Policy for Health in South Africa*. Presented at the Oxfam-Monash Round Table, Monash University, Johannesburg.

Setswe, G., and Rajcoomar, V. (2011, November). *The New National Health Insurance in South Africa: How it Will Affect You*. Presented at Research Day, Monash University, Johannesburg.

Setswe, G., and Rajcoomar, V. (2012, September). *Governance and Accountability in Implementing the National Health Insurance in South Africa*. Presentation to staff and students, Monash University, Johannesburg.

## 5. Gendered impacts of climate variability in Bangladesh



Climate change is exacerbating the scale, frequency and intensity of extreme weather events in Bangladesh, including a heightened occurrence of floods, cyclones and storm surges. There is also increasing evidence of slow-onset climatic changes, such as droughts and salinisation of land and water resources. These events are causing ongoing losses of lives, homes and livelihoods throughout the country, yet there is poor understanding of how these changes are affecting men and women differently. This is of particular concern given that there is evidence to suggest that women are most acutely affected by the changes occurring. There is therefore a pressing need to better understand these patterns, and to identify strategies that may support both men and women to improve their lives and livelihoods in response to climate variability.

### The project

Working across three communities in Bangladesh, the research team has conducted focus groups and interviews with the aims of better understanding how livelihoods currently differ by gender within these communities; and of identifying how slow-onset climate change is affecting these dynamics. In particular, they have investigated how climate change is influencing the food security, migration, employment, education and health of men and women within the communities studied.

### Outcomes

In all three geographic areas studied, climate change and slow-onset events have been shown to have a range of detrimental impacts on livelihoods, and have exacerbated existing gender inequalities. In particular, slow-onset climate change has reduced the availability of food and fresh water, and the resulting shortages have been felt disproportionately by women. Declining agricultural yields have also driven significant male out-migration, and this has led to changed family relationships and increased incidences of family breakdown. Further, girls' access to education has been compromised by the financial hardship increasingly experienced by families, with some families pulling their daughters out of school in favour of early marriage. These

findings form just a small segment of the rich and broad data set that the team has collected throughout the term of the research project, which in its totality provides valuable in-depth information on an incredibly wide spectrum of climate change impacts on these communities.

The team is continuing to analyse these findings, and is working in close collaboration with Oxfam Bangladesh's policy and advocacy team to ensure that they have maximum impact. In particular, they are actively identifying ways in which the evidence they have generated can inform effective policy and advocacy responses to the challenges that they have identified.

Specific outcomes of the project to date include:

- Enhanced understanding of the impacts of climate change on gender relations and gender equality.
- Production of evidence to inform advocacy, policy and programming around gender and climate change in Bangladesh.
- Identification of gaps in current NGO strategies and programmatic approaches to promoting women's health, safety and wellbeing in the context of climate change.



Photo: Alexandra Haynes/Monash University 2014

## Partnership Funding

\$300,000 for three years

## Research Team Members

### Md Badi Akhter,

Program Manager, Bangladesh, Oxfam Great Britain

### Prof. Margaret Alston,

Director of GLASS Research Unit and Head of the Department of Social Work, Monash University

### Tania Cass,

Program Manager, India and Bangladesh, Oxfam Australia

### Henna Hasina,

Program Officer, Bangladesh, Oxfam Great Britain

### Alex Haynes,

Program Manager, Oxfam-Monash Partnership Project, Monash University

### Sonia Sarder,

Program Co-ordinator, Bangladesh, Oxfam Great Britain

### Dr. Kerri Whittenbury,

Senior Research Fellow, GLASS Research Unit, Monash University

### Julia Ahmed,

Gender Program Co-ordinator, Oxfam Australia

### Cinzia Pedrotti,

South Asia Program Support Officer, Oxfam Australia

## Outputs

### Presentations

Cass, T., and Whittenbury, K. (2013, June). *Action Research: Being Flexible and Responsive*. Presentation at the Learning Through Partnership, Oxfam-Monash Partnership Research Symposium, Melbourne.

Alston, M., and Akhter, B. (2013, June). *Gendered Impacts of Climate Variability and Climate Events in Bangladesh: Project overview and initial findings*. Presentation at the Learning Through Partnership, Oxfam-Monash Partnership Research Symposium, Melbourne

Haynes, A. (2011, November). *Women, Research and Action: The Oxfam-Monash Partnership in Bangladesh*. Presentation at the International Council of Women, Asia Pacific Conference and Workshop, Fiji.

Haynes, A. (2011, September). *Women, Research and Action: The Oxfam-Monash Partnership in Bangladesh*. Presented at the Gender and Climate Change International Conference, Prato.

## 6. Steering multi-level accountability systems from the ground up in Cambodia



Many communities in Cambodia are being displaced and their livelihoods threatened by large scale infrastructure and development projects that they have very little knowledge of, or control over. In this context, there is a need to find ways of better supporting communities to exert influence over these projects before they occur, and to help them hold developers, businesses and governments to account for the negative effects on their communities and the environment.

### The project

The research team has worked with three communities in Cambodia, each of which has been affected by large scale infrastructure or development projects, or has experienced NGO intervention in their area. In each community, the research team has sought to map out the community's existing understanding of accountability processes, the techniques used by the community to seek accountability, and their sense of entitlement to influence different forms of decision-making. The team has also explored how the activities of NGOs, including Oxfam, have had an impact on these dynamics.

Across the three case studies, the team has worked to strengthen the ability of communities to hold external actors to account, by improving their understanding of development projects and how to affect them, by identifying and addressing the barriers that currently prevent communities from engaging in accountability processes, and by identifying the factors that enable some communities to develop stronger accountability processes than others.

### Outcomes

Over the course of the research, the team found that communities often had little or no knowledge of the processes involved in demanding accountability of external actors, and were therefore unaware of where to direct their questions, concerns and

grievances. Furthermore, communities often felt a lack of entitlement to influence decision-making, and were frequently unable to identify the actors responsible for the developments of concern. All of these factors present major barriers to the success of community-driven accountability systems.

The research team responded to these issues by developing educational tools for community use, and by sharing their findings and recommendations directly with Oxfam and its affiliates. In these ways, the research project is helping to enhance the support that is provided to communities in Cambodia as they seek accountability. The team is currently conducting a cross-case analysis of the research findings, which will provide further insight into this critical issue for many Cambodian communities. To date, the research team has produced a number of important outcomes:

- Enhanced community awareness of accountability mechanisms and processes.
- Identification of gaps in NGO strategies and programmatic approaches to accountability in the context of large scale infrastructure development.
- Identification of strategies for NGOs to assist communities in holding external actors to account.
- Enhanced capacity of local NGOs to support community-driven accountability processes.
- Production of evidence to better inform advocacy work relating to land grabs and community relocation.

## Partnership Funding

\$298,754 for two and a half years

## Research Team Members

### Dr. Shelley Marshall,

Senior Lecturer, Economics and  
Commerce, Monash University

### Dr. Adam Mcbeth,

Associate Professor, Law,  
Monash University

### Dr. Kate Macdonald,

Lecturer, Political Science,  
University of Melbourne

### Michael Simon,

Advocacy Manager,  
Oxfam Australia

### Pauline Taylor McKeown,

Mekong Regional Program  
Manager, Oxfam Australia

### Ruth Bottomley,

Research Co-ordinator

### Chheong Sotheavann,

Development Watch Research  
Officer, Equitable Cambodia

### Virak Net,

Senior Research Officer,  
Equitable Cambodia

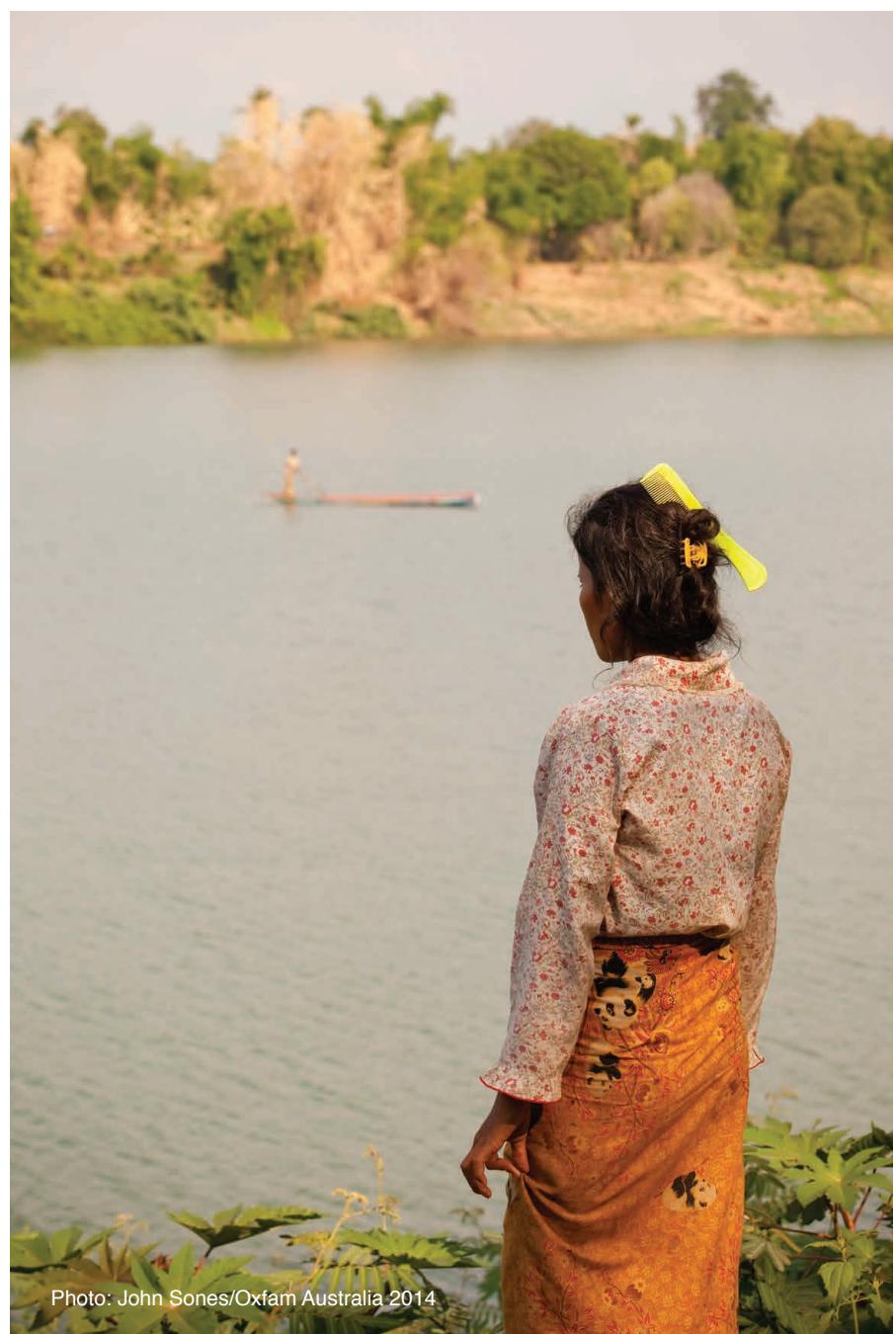


Photo: John Sones/Oxfam Australia 2014

## Outputs

### Academic publications

Bottomley, R. (2013). Capacity, Sustainability and Accountability in the Face of Modern Development: Lessons from Oxfam Australia's development model in Cambodia. In Brennan, L., Parker, L., Watne, T.A., Fien, J. Hue, D. T. and Doan, M.A. (Eds.). *Growing Sustainable Communities: A Development Guide for Southeast Asia* (pp. 210-225). Melbourne: Tilde University Press.

McBeth, A., and Bottomley, R. (2013). Mapping Accountability Processes in Cambodia. The Development Bulletin, 75, pp. 115-118.

### Articles and Reports

Bottomley, R. (2014, May 19). *Seeking Accountability: Boeung Kak Lake and the Role of the World Bank*. Mekong Commons. Retrieved from <http://www.mekongcommons.org/seeking-world-bank-accountability-boeung-kak-lake/>.

## Outputs (continued)

### Briefing papers

- Bottomley, R. (2014, April).  
*Strengthening Community-Driven Accountability.*  
Briefing paper, Oxfam Cambodia
- Bottomley, R. (2014, April).  
*Strengthening the Accountability of NGOs.*  
Briefing paper, Oxfam Cambodia
- Bottomley, R. (2014, April).  
*Approaches to Seeking Accountability.*  
Briefing paper, Oxfam Cambodia
- Bottomley, R., Net, V., and Chhoeng, S. (2014, March). *Social Issues, Consultation and People's Participation with Respect to the Lower Sesan 2 Dam.*  
Briefing paper, Oxfam Cambodia.

### Presentations

- Bottomley, R. (2013, June).  
*Community-driven Accountability in Cambodia: an Oxfam-Monash Partnership Research Project.*  
Presentation to the Learning Through Partnership, Oxfam-Monash Partnership Research Symposium, Melbourne.
- Bottomley, R. (2013, June).  
*Participatory Action Research.* Presentation to the Learning Through Partnership, Oxfam-Monash Partnership Research Symposium, Melbourne.
- Bottomley, R. (2013, September).  
*CDA Research Project: Challenges of Putting Research Into Action.* Presentation to Oxfam Australia, Siem Reap.
- Bottomley, R. (2013, December).  
*Rapid Sustainability Assessment Tools and their Relation to Social Issues and Stakeholder Consultation, using the Case Study of the Lower Sesan Dam.* Presentation to an NGO RSAT training session, World Wildlife Fund, Phnom Penh.
- McBeth, A. (2012, November).  
*Mapping Accountability Processes in Cambodia.*  
Presentation at the Challenges of Participatory Development in Contemporary Development Practice, ANU Conference, Canberra.
- McBeth, A. (2013, November).  
*Forced Eviction for Urban Poverty Development: Boeung Kak Lake Cambodia.* Presentation at the Dislocation and Cultural Space, New Zealand Asian Studies Conference on Environment, Auckland.
- Net, V. (September, 2013).  
*Strengthening Accountability and Inclusiveness in Economic Development Projects: The Case of the Lower Sesan II Dam.* Presentation to the Rivers Coalition of Cambodia, Phnom Penh.

## 7. Facilitating rural women's participation and recognition in sustainable livelihoods in post-war Sri Lanka



Women make a highly significant contribution to agricultural production in Sri Lanka, yet this contribution is largely unrecognised and undervalued. In addition, commercialisation of agriculture in Sri Lanka has meant that women's contribution to the industry is more in demand, while remaining unappreciated, leaving women unseen in policy, and often subject to dangerous working conditions.

In a post-war context, the Sri Lankan government has embarked on a range of ambitious development programs to stimulate livelihoods in rural areas. However, rural women continue to be overlooked in the design and implementation of these policies and projects. There is therefore a pressing need for improved understanding of women's role in the Sri Lankan agriculture industry, as well as of the barriers that they currently face to attaining safe and sustainable livelihoods, and for strategies to be developed that may help to overcome these barriers.

### The project

The research project, commenced in 2014, will work with women from three communities to identify current barriers to sustainable livelihoods, and to identify strategies to overcome them. In April this year, the research team worked with a number of Oxfam Sri Lanka's local partners to conduct preliminary informal interviews. These interviews then informed the design of a survey that has been used to collect data in June this year. The team have started to analyse the data that has been gathered so far, and plan to work and consult further with the communities on their findings. The expected outcomes of this project include:

- Production of an evidence base that will allow women and relevant organisations to advocate strongly for greater recognition of women's role in the rural economy, and for policy that more directly responds to their needs.
- Increased awareness of individual and collective agency in overcoming barriers to sustainable agricultural livelihoods.
- Development of an action plan to empower women in their pursuit of greater participation and recognition in agricultural production.

#### Partnership Funding

\$130,877 for one year

#### Research Team Members

**Dr. Samanthi Gunawardana,**  
Co-Chief Investigator, Project Lead  
and Lecturer, Monash University

**Thiagi Piyadasa,**  
Project Lead and Gender Co-ordinator,  
Oxfam Australia

**Balasingham Skanthakumar,**  
Co-Chief Investigator,  
Oxfam Australia in Sri Lanka

## 8. Empowering community voices

One of the fundamental goals of international development work is to empower communities on the ground. Yet in the long and complex development chain, the voices of communities are often neglected or inadequately represented in decision-making, advocacy and policy processes. Furthermore, there is often poor information flow to communities, including on the issues that affect them most, which can result in ‘informational poverty’, isolation and disempowerment. As such, there is a need for the international development community to find new and practical means of bringing community voices into relevant decision-making processes, and to improve the delivery of information that affects their lives.

This important research issue is being investigated by Dr. Larry Stillman; the Senior Research Fellow for the Partnership, and for the Faculty of Information Technology at Monash University. Dr. Stillman’s research specialises in the interaction between technology and community empowerment in both developed and developing countries.

### The project

The Empowering Community Voices Project aims to empower communities in developing countries by designing projects that allow their voices to be better included in the decision-making processes that affect them, and that improve the delivery of relevant information to the community level. In 2013-14, the project has been carried out across two field study sites; South Africa and Bangladesh.

### South Africa

In 2013, Dr Stillman worked with the Pietermaritzburg Agency for Community Social Action (PACSA), South Africa, along with a number of community co-researchers, to better understand how PACSA empowers communities and amplifies their voices, needs and interests. Through this process, the project sought to identify methods and strategies that might be applied elsewhere to strengthen community development efforts.

Interviews were conducted in October with staff members and community researchers associated with PACSA. Many of these individuals had also been involved with the OMP’s South Africa research project (discussed previously in this report), and the project was thereby able to capitalise on the goodwill and strong working relationships that the OMP’s work had established in these circles.

### Impact and outcomes

The research interviews revealed powerful insights and lessons into how NGOs and other development actors can practice radical community-based research that produces strong community outcomes, and into methods by which communities can act as empowered educators, facilitators and co-researchers in driving community action from the ground up. PACSA’s approach was found to be a truly instructive model of participatory development action, with the organisation’s work focused strongly on building the capacity of the communities they work with, and demonstrating a clear and deep commitment to privileging the voices and interests of communities in this process.

Through documenting and sharing these findings, the research is producing a valuable resource that may be referred to by Oxfam and other NGOs that have an interest in conducting genuinely participatory, community-driven development research and programs.

### Bangladesh

Earlier this year, Dr. Stillman conducted a scoping tour in Bangladesh to investigate the potential for mobile technologies to be used in innovative ways to promote community empowerment in international development settings.

During this visit, he conducted an evaluation of local academic staff, NGO and community views of Information and Communications Technologies,



Photo: Jane Beesley/Oxfam Australia 2014

such as mobile phones, SMS, internet and radio, and of community capacity to use these for the purposes of emergency disaster alerts, domestic violence reporting, and agricultural information.

Evaluative interviews were conducted with individuals in 3 different locations, and yielded a number of important findings that will guide the pursuit of future research. In particular, the interviews found that mobile phone access and use is widespread (notwithstanding traditional power and gender relations), and that there is significant potential for a research project that would explore the use of mobile technology to improve community information flows. Indeed, local communities and Oxfam's partner organisations expressed clear interest in a project that would integrate mobile phone technology with other forms of community media and information sources, and that would thereby enhance the delivery of information to and from community members.

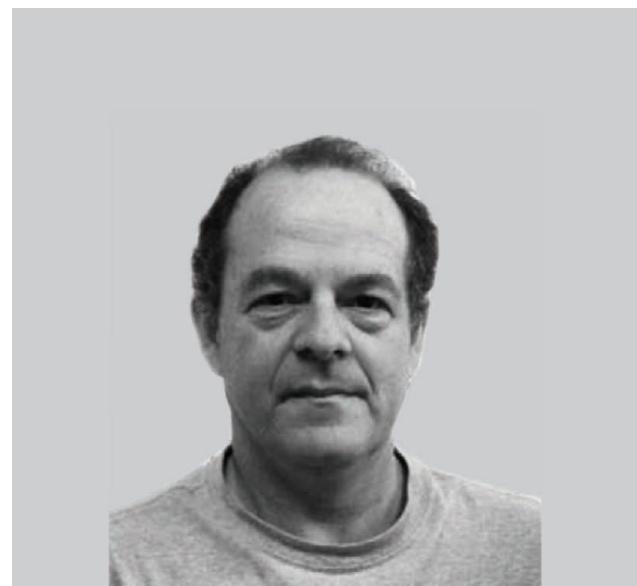
## Impact and outcomes

Building on these findings, Dr. Stillman will be constructing a proposal for further research over the coming months, to take action on the possibilities identified through the scoping visit. The project is envisaged as involving a close collaboration between Oxfam, partner NGOs and communities in Bangladesh, and is expected to provide important

insights into the way that Oxfam and other NGOs make use of community information processes, as well as providing examples of new technologies and techniques that could be employed to support community-driven development.

## Outputs

Stillman L. (2014). *Empowering Community Voices Project: Research studies from South Africa and Bangladesh*. Centre for Community and Social Informatics, Faculty of Information Technology, Monash University Australia.



Dr. Larry Stillman, OMP Research Fellow  
Photo: Monash University, 2014

# Student engagement

The Oxfam-Monash Partnership believes in building meaningful connections between students, Oxfam and the development sector more broadly. Firstly, because we believe that by doing so, we help to build a generation of aware, informed and inspired development activists, ready to drive positive global change into the future. And secondly, because we know that by mobilising their energy, creativity and commitment, young people can help to drive positive global change *today*.

With this philosophy in mind, we run a number of programs that connect students with the development sector, build their commitment to development action, and allow them to make real contributions to the work of Oxfam and its partners around the world.

## 9. South Africa Student Placement Program

In its sixth consecutive year, the South Africa Student Placement Program (SASPP) continues to offer Monash students an invaluable first-hand experience of community and international development work, through the provision of placement opportunities with Oxfam and its partner organisations in South Africa. The aims of the SASPP include deepening student awareness and understanding of international development issues, inspiring students to pursue further work or study

in this area, and facilitating skill development and personal growth. The program also aims to provide Oxfam and its partners with access to the skills and capabilities of participating students, who contribute to their work in a range of important ways. This year, participating partners included Oxfam South Africa, Hillcrest AIDS Centre Trust, Refugee Social Services and Woza Moya.



Photo: Katherine Sievert/Monash University 2014

Five capable and enthusiastic students took part in this year's program, with one student taking advantage of a new opportunity made available for the 2013-14 program; the chance to stay on for a semester-length placement - an extension on the traditional six-week program. This semester-length placement was initiated to expand the contribution of students, as well as to deepen learning and enhance student outcomes from the program. After receiving extremely positive feedback from the student who took part in the semester placement this year, we look forward to offering the longer placement again in the program's next iteration.

This year's participants came from a range of academic backgrounds, including social work, social science, education, science and public health. Throughout their placements, students performed a range of tasks, including organising community programs and events, responding to refugee claims for emergency support, participating in government consultations, and providing administrative assistance to the ongoing establishment of an independent Oxfam South Africa office.

An evaluation conducted with students upon their return indicated a unanimously high level of satisfaction with the program, with all of the students reflecting positively on their experience, and recommending the program to future students.

As we look to next year's placement program, the Partnership is building on the strong relationships that underpin the placement program to further enhance its delivery of clear and mutual benefits to students and partner organisations. This is a valued and important program, which continues to be strongly supported by staff across Oxfam South Africa, Monash University and the Oxfam-Monash Partnership. We are excited about the possibilities for its future.



Photo: Katherine Sievert/Monash University 2014

*"This experience was really amazing for me and I've learnt things that far surpassed my expectations: the dichotomous task of NGOs as service providers and advocacy organisations, and the stresses they can face in filling these roles, or even just one of them. The balance and benefit of both qualitative and quantitative monitoring and evaluation methods, what each of them look like on the ground, and how they are achieved. The nature and concept of gender identity and how that plays an important part in development... and I'm sure there are many more learnings which have become integrated into my ongoing thinking regarding development work... I would happily recommend this program to anyone interested, and have had my understanding of Oxfam grow immensely over the last few months"*

Participant Daniel Licher, placed with Woza Moya and Oxfam South Africa

## 10. Oxfam-Monash Innovators

In 2013, we were thrilled to launch an exciting new student program; ‘Oxfam-Monash Innovators’. The Innovators program provided a unique opportunity for Monash students to engage with the fields of international development, social justice and sustainability, and to catalyse positive social change through developing and implementing their own creative ideas and initiatives.

Open to all Monash students, the program gave participants the opportunity to tackle issues that they felt passionate about, through designing their own original social change project. Working in teams, students pitched their idea to a panel of experts from a number of NGOs, and the team chosen as the winner received \$5000 in start-up funding and ongoing mentoring to help bring their project to life.

The proposed initiatives considered issues as diverse as sustainability in Australia, labour rights in Bangladesh, sanitation in Nepal, and supporting social innovation in developing countries.

The program was extremely well received, with students providing glowing feedback on their experience. Indeed, in addition to experiencing a unique opportunity to make their own distinct impact on an issue that they felt strongly about, participants in the program benefited from exposure to a number of innovation mentors, and developed skills in program development, proposal writing, budgeting, pitching, teamwork, and more. They also gained greater insight into the workings of the community and development sector, and learnt more about how development and social change happens in practice.

Information on the winning project team, ‘Sustain Me’, as well as the runners-up, ‘My T-Shirt Didn’t Cost a Life’, is provided on the following pages.

2013 Program Participant

*“I hope the program continues. It was a great opportunity and truly inspiring... I would definitely recommend the program to others. Thank you!”*





# The Sustain Me mobile app

Team leaders: Eleanor Meyer and Stephen Halpin

Team members: Bethany Kleverlaan, Sachini Munasinghe, Natalie Studdart, Alex Porter

The Sustain Me Mobile phone application aims to make recycling easy. In Melbourne, recycling services are split between the 30 different councils, and a single item may be recyclable in one council but not another. What's more, information about each council's recycling capacity is often unclear or not easily accessible. To resolve this problem, the Sustain Me app will provide easy access to information on what can be recycled, and how, in each council. It will seek to improve the recycling behaviour of users, and thereby make recycling more efficient, reduce waste, and enable people to live more sustainably.

The project's objectives include:

1. To provide a clear and easy-to-use platform that allows individuals to find the recycling information they need.
2. To provide a resource that allows individuals to self-educate and change their recycling behaviours.
3. To reduce the amount of waste going to landfill, and in turn reduce Melbourne's carbon footprint.
4. To provide a platform that allows for effective communication and dialogue between councils and their constituents.

Since winning first prize in the 2013 Innovators program, team leaders Stephen and Eleanor have worked with the OMP to refine their concept and project plan, and have engaged app developers and web designers to help build their mobile app. They have also consulted extensively with a number of metropolitan councils, many of which are now keen to invest in the application upon its release.

The team now embarks on an exciting new phase of their project, with the release of a prototype app in late July, which will then be shared for testing and feedback with a large focus group, including Oxfam staff. After gathering feedback and user data from the trial stage, the app will be fully developed into its final form, with the full involvement of metropolitan councils. Finally, the app will be released to the app market in late 2014.

As the Sustain Me team aptly puts it, '*the Sustain Me app marries an ambitious idea with a carefully planned project*'. We congratulate the team on their fantastic achievements so far, and look forward to watching the project come to life.



Photo: Hamzah Ramadan/Monash University 2013



# My T-Shirt Didn't Cost a Life

Team leaders: Siti Munafiah Walker, Rachel Nowotnik  
Team members: Dalia al Khunaizi, Anthony Hadjiantoniou, Emily Sterling, Shejuti Hossain

The tragic collapse of the Rana Plaza factory in Bangladesh in 2013, in which 1,138 workers were killed, sparked this team's desire to take action on working conditions in the Bangladeshi garment industry. As team leader Fia Walker explains, "we wanted to be part of the global movement to make sure that this type of tragedy would never happen again... and that all garment workers in Bangladesh work in safe and healthy working conditions, which comply with basic international Occupational Health and Safety standards".

To achieve this goal, the project team designed an initiative with two stages:

1. Selling branded, ethically produced T-shirts to raise funds for the survivors of the Rana Plaza factory collapse.
2. Raising public awareness in Australia of the working conditions in Bangladesh's garment industry, through inviting public participation in a 'simulated sweatshop' installation.

The simulated sweatshop will provide participants with a better understanding of the conditions of garment workers in Bangladesh, as well as encourage them to sign petitions and actively campaign for Australian companies and government to sign and uphold the Bangladesh Fire and Building Safety Accord.

To launch the first stage of the project, the team has produced and sold ethical, branded T-shirts at an Oxfam public event, 'Bangladeshi Women Speak Out', and at the Oxfam-Monash Partnership Futures Series launch event. They are continuing to explore other avenues for continuing the sales and fundraising, and are currently planning for the sweatshop simulation.



Photo: Anna Donaldson/Monash University 2014

As we prepare to launch the 2014 round of the Innovators program, we are building on our experience from 2013, as well as working with a number of external partners, to further enhance the program. In particular, we will be restructuring Innovators 2014 to ensure that the projects students design can be directly taken on by Oxfam Australia, thereby strengthening Oxfam's work, and enhancing the potential impact of the students' ideas. The program will run again in November 2014, and ongoing updates will be available through our website.

## 11. Depth Unit: improving health futures in a global world

The Monash Depth Unit, '*Improving Health Futures in a Global World*', was developed in collaboration with the OMP, and gives Monash undergraduate students of any discipline the opportunity to explore the critical interrelationship between global health challenges and global development. Throughout the unit, Monash students hear first hand from a number of Oxfam Australia guest speakers, who share their direct expertise in a range of development and global health areas. With their extensive on-ground experience, Oxfam speakers bring invaluable practical perspectives to the course, and facilitate a unique opportunity for students to move beyond theory in their studies towards developing a real understanding of how development issues are tackled in practice. Students also consider the importance of multidisciplinary approaches to development research, policy and practice, including the need for evidence-based approaches to tackling complex global health challenges.

The 2013 program was deemed highly successful, receiving positive student feedback that has cemented the unit's place within the university. As course coordinator Brad Crammond observes:

*"Success is ultimately determined by the student ratings of the subject, and the ratings last year were incredible. The practical lectures given by Oxfam staff were undoubtedly the highlights of the subject. The role of Oxfam was fundamental in the subject being as successful as it was"*

## 12. Student interns and volunteers



Marlene Millott, OMP Communications Intern  
Studying Masters of Journalism at Monash  
Photo: Anna Donaldson/Monash University 2014

In 2013-14, the Partnership engaged several Monash students as interns and volunteers. Through their appointments, these students have had the opportunity to engage with the work of Oxfam, the Partnership and the development sector more broadly, providing them with invaluable professional and personal experience. Volunteer placements with the OMP equip students with a range of practical skills that help to prepare them for the workforce and for careers in the development sector. Students learn about the work of the sector, and contribute their own fresh ideas, energy and skills.

Over the coming year, the Partnership will be actively increasing the contribution of volunteers and interns across all areas of its work. In particular, we will be working closely with the new Master of International Development Practice at Monash, through the provision of research internships that will add even greater depth to the academic experience of enrolled Masters students.

# Practitioner development

The work we do has greater impact when it's shared. For that reason, the Partnership hosts a range of regular practitioner development and learning events that enable knowledge sharing throughout the international development sector. By sharing what we and others have learnt, and by working more closely together, we believe that our collective ability to forge positive global change is strengthened.

## 13. The Futures Series

Building on the success of the OMP's research symposium in June 2013, this year we launched 'The Futures Series: Building Collaborations for Change'. The series opened with an engaging public event, which reflected on and explored the possible future of the Australian development sector. Helen Szoke (Chief Executive, Oxfam Australia), Marc Purcell (Executive Director, ACFID), Joanna Hayter (CEO, IWDA) and Jacqui True (Deputy Dean of Research (Arts), Monash University) discussed how greater collaboration between INGOs and with academic institutions might further the success of development efforts, and how such collaborations might be more effectively fostered and encouraged.

The event will be followed by three targeted workshops, which will seek to identify concrete strategies for strengthening collaboration within the sector. One of these workshops will be hosted in collaboration with the ACFID University Network.

## 14. Afghanistan at a Crossroads

In May this year, the Partnership collaborated with Oxfam Australia and the Castan Centre for Human Rights Law to deliver 'Afghanistan at a Crossroads: Women's Rights in Afghanistan'. The event hosted three Afghani speakers, who discussed the prospects for women's rights and security through the withdrawal of international military forces from the country, and into the country's future.

## 15. DETalks

Development Effectiveness Talks (DETalks) are a series of internal and external discussions, hosted by Oxfam Australia, that aim to share learning and knowledge within Oxfam, with other actors and organisations in the development sector, and with the general public. In 2014, the OMP has held a number of DETalks to share and build awareness of our work:

### Meet the Innovators

On the 28<sup>th</sup> of January, participants in the 2013 Innovators program presented the project ideas they had developed during the program, and discussed their progress towards bringing them to life. The talk generated significant interest in the program among Oxfam staff, and connected students with a number of Oxfam staff members keen to assist them in further developing their projects.

### Cambodia research presentation

With the entire research team together in Melbourne for the very first time, the Cambodia research team joined us at Oxfam on the 1<sup>st</sup> of May to share the emergent findings of their research project. The event was an excellent opportunity to share the significance of the research with Oxfam staff, who showed clear interest in how the research could be applied to Oxfam's programming work.



Photo: Carla Gottgens/Oxfam Australia 2014

# About us

## 16. Governance

The Governance Committee is the governing body of the Oxfam-Monash Partnership, made up of six nominated members. The Governance Committee establishes policies and procedures for the Partnership, evaluates and sets the strategic direction, reviews and approves proposals for funding, and provides ongoing monitoring and support for funded proposals. The Governance Committee meets bimonthly to discuss applications for funding and the strategic direction of the Partnership.

The Governance Committee at June 30, 2014:

Chair: Mark Clisby

Members: Alexia Huxley Natalie Gray  
Chrisanta Muli Jacqui True  
Sue McKemmish

The Partnership would specifically like to acknowledge the contribution of long-standing chair, Professor Adam Shoemaker, who left Monash University at the beginning of 2014. Professor Shoemaker's contribution to the

## 17. Management team

The Operational Team consists of two staff members that manage the daily operations of the Oxfam-Monash Partnership:

Program Lead: Lisa Elford (Jun-Oct)  
Alexandra Kennedy (Oct-Jun)

Program Officer: Anna Donaldson

## 18. Volunteers

Our dedicated volunteers support the Partnership's communications, events and research work.

The following people kindly volunteered their time and expertise in the past year:

Marlene Millott	Siti Munafiah Walker
Stephanie O'Leary	Stephen Halpin
Hamzah Ramadan	Eleanor Meyer
Alushka Rajaram	

Partnership has been invaluable, and we acknowledge and appreciate his exceptional commitment to the Partnership over the six years since its inception.

## 19. Communications

In January of 2014, the Partnership conducted a thorough assessment of its existing communication platforms and stakeholder engagement strategy. As a result of this assessment, the Partnership has constructed a new communications strategy, which sets out a bold new approach to both internal and external communications. This strategy focuses on creating a clear web identity and presence for the Partnership, conducting regular communication of project outcomes and impacts, and providing regular updates to key stakeholders through a range of mediums.

The Partnership has also continued to offer an ongoing communications intern role to competitively selected Monash students, drawn from the Monash Masters of Journalism. The contributions of our communications interns have been invaluable to the implementation of the Partnership's communication strategy. Interns work directly on producing the Partnership's monthly e-newsletter, updating our web and social media platforms, and producing internal communication pieces through *Monash Memo* and *Watch This Space*.

## 20. Fair trade

The Oxfam shops at Monash's Clayton and Berwick campuses continue to promote the sale of Oxfam fair trade items. Fair trade guarantees that workers and farmers in developing countries receive a fair price for their work, and offers consistent wages and sustainable livelihoods that help to combat poverty. By offering fair trade products at Monash University shops, the Partnership contributes to Oxfam's fundraising, and helps lead the movement for ethical consumption and fair trade as tools for sustainable global development.

## 21. Financial statement

The financial year ended 30 May 2014 was a busy year for the Oxfam Monash Partnership. Throughout this time, the generous donation provided to us through the Empowerment Charitable Trust has continued to provide the core of our organisational funding, and has enabled us to deliver on our program goals and objectives. The Partnership has also leveraged other direct and indirect funding sources to derive even greater impact and value from the Trust's funding. This has included considerable in-kind support from staff at both Monash and Oxfam.





Photo: Matthew Willman/Oxfam Australia 2014

# Looking ahead

This year, we have embarked on a targeted series of consultations to help crystallise our vision for the future of the Oxfam-Monash Partnership. Through discussions with staff across Oxfam and Monash, as well as with external stakeholders and partners, we have been actively identifying and exploring a range of exciting opportunities that could be pursued by a future iteration of the OMP; opportunities which promise to further promote the interests of Oxfam, Monash and the communities that they serve. With one year remaining in our current funding agreement with the Empowerment Charitable Trust, we have also been exploring future funding opportunities to ensure the sustainability of the Partnership.

One of the possibilities on which we will be looking to move immediately is the potential for the vast number of Monash staff and students to contribute directly to the strength and sustainability of Oxfam Australia, through establishing a more expansive giving arrangement with the university. Other opportunities are more forward-looking, for implementation in the event of renewed funding:

## Research consultation

Oxfam Australia is currently undergoing a major organisational restructure, within which the role of research has been elevated and reasserted. At the same time, learning tells us that our research model will require some revision to fully meet the needs of Oxfam's ongoing research agenda. The revised model we are therefore exploring has the potential to respond proactively to Oxfam's research needs, by sourcing and engaging Monash's most relevant experts to help fill knowledge and capacity gaps as they arise. This responsive research model will enable research to have a direct and tangible impact on strengthening international development efforts.

## Student 'contractors'

There is also a distinct opportunity to make greater use of one of the central resources Monash has at its disposal; an immense body of students, many of whom have relevant skills that can be mobilised to fill capacity gaps and areas of need at Oxfam. Through integration with existing units and curriculum, Monash students will be able to develop and present high quality work that can aid in the pursuit of Oxfam's strategic goals; for example, the development of innovative social marketing campaign plans, the development of new knowledge management systems, or the construction of mobile apps to assist Oxfam's fundraising and public engagement efforts.

## Innovators abroad

Oxfam-Monash Innovators has proved itself to be a unique and valuable program, yet there is exciting potential for it to be expanded to further assist in Oxfam's overseas development efforts. Indeed, the OMP is exploring potential partnerships with a number of design thinking organisations, as well as with local universities and partner organisations in a number of countries, to develop 'Innovators Abroad'; an international program in which students work with communities, local students, Oxfam staff and design thinking facilitators to co-design unique solutions to some of the challenges facing developing communities. The Innovators Abroad program would provide an amazing opportunity for students to make a real and valuable contribution to development efforts, and to gain first hand understanding of the complexities of development work.

# Thank you

To the individuals who have made our work possible,  
by sharing with us their support, time and expertise:

## Monash University

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Australian Council for International Development  
ACFID University Network  
Australia Indonesia Institute  
Australian Red Cross  
BehaviourWorks  
Care Australia  
Castan Centre for Human Rights Law  
Enable Development

Engineers Without Borders Institute  
International Women's Development Agency  
La Trobe University  
Mayibuye  
Monash Sustainability Institute  
Oaktree Foundation  
School for Social Entrepreneurs  
SDSN Network

<http://artsonline.monash.edu.au/oxfam/>

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