

# AFAP

## Action on Poverty Winter Newsletter July, 2013



### AFAP Partnership Workshop Just Around the Corner...

AFAP's annual Partnership Workshop is coming up Sat 31st of August- Sunday 1st Sept. with key note speaker Mark Purcell, Executive Director of ACFID, and sessions on Good Development Practice and Partnership Development. The workshop will be held at the Atlassian Offices in Sydney and is open to



Photo by Nicola Bailey

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### AFAP Through the Lens of a Photojournalist

#### A Night with Nicola Bailey

Recently

photojournalist,  
Nicola Bailey and  
Rebekah Enoch,  
AFAP's Education &  
Communications  
Manager, travelled



to Timor Leste and Vietnam in order to see AFAP and partner programs in action. Through interviewing and taking photographs of the program participants, Nicola and Rebekah were able to know more about the personal face of AFAP's work and how it is helping participants find solutions to the challenges they face around food security, climate change and access to education. On their return AFAP hosted "AFAP Through the Lens of a Photojournalist", an exhibit of Nicola's work on July 5th. Here, Nicola displayed her stunning photos and shared the inspiring stories of some of the people she and Rebekah met on their trips. Afterwards guests were invited to talk with Nicola and the AFAP staff in order to learn more about AFAP's approach and how the communities themselves are part of the solutions. Attendees walked away knowing more about AFAP's programs and the real

the public. [Click here](#) for a detailed agenda, speaker bios and to purchase tickets.

## From the Other Side of the Spreadsheet

### Thoughts from the field



Christine Pollard, AFAP's Finance Director, recently travelled to Cambodia to work with AFAP partners and support them in

maintaining good finances . Her recent meetings with the partners have allowed her to work from "the other side of the spread sheet" as she put it. Christine said she felt face to face meetings like this were so valuable, coming from an Australian based organisation that works globally, as it allowed her to see "the human side, the compassionate side, and the side of passionate staff (both finance and non-finance) who are working to empower the poor of their own countries."

An organisation AFAP is working with stated, "reducing poverty (acts) as a means of reducing vulnerability. Poverty entails fear, stress, sometimes depression; it means a thousand petty humiliations and hardships...we are totally committed to ensuring good lives for children, both as responsible parents and in honour of our parent's legacy of putting love for others in our hearts." After her trip Christine said she holds this quote as a true reflection of the time she spent in Cambodia, everyone involved shared a professional and inspired view of the projects and their goals. "For me, it was a very humbling and emotional week in meeting and working with many kind, selfless and compassionately purposed folk who are working to better the lives of poor Cambodians, especially children. Such an experience puts my own small worries into true perspective."

people involved.

If you attended and still have not filled out the survey [click here!](#)

## City2Surf: Spotlight Kate

On August 11, AFAP will be part of Sydney's City2Surf for the second year in a row. The funds raised will support climate change adaptation projects in Vietnam. Our amazing team this year had been working very hard to fundraise and train for the event. Towards that we would like to introduce you to one of our star runners, **Kate!**

Kate ran her first City2Surf in 1999. During the day she works as a GP and breast physician, so she spends time every day encouraging people to exercise. She says, "It is good to practice what you preach"! This year Kate is running the City2Surf for AFAP with some friends and family. "Without a group of friends it is not the same", she says.

The team has worked on some great fundraising efforts, including a BBQ and selling flowers on Mother's day. AFAP also has an tireless volunteer, Linda Van der Torre, who is organising the pre-run events and training and post run party! We still have two charity spots left for Team AFAP. Join our team; get behind the cause and party with us at the finish line and our post-run barbecue.

[Click here to meet the runners and donate to their fundraising efforts!](#) Or email Linda to find out about joining the team [info@afap.org](mailto:info@afap.org)

## In Memory of Father Hosie

On June 23, Father Stanley Hosie passed away at age 91. He was a founder of the Foundation for the South Pacific network of which AFAP is a part. Father Hosie dedicated his life to a mission of poverty alleviation and touched the lives of many people through his work with FSP and other organizations. Counterpart Internations, the American branch of FSP, has created a video in his memory.

[Click here to watch the video](#)



## **AFAP and SEACO Build School Dormitories in Vietnam**

The only way to reach Da Bac in Northern Vietnam is along the rocky roads that wind through soaring mountains and cross meandering rivers. Da Bac is a rural district where hillsides and lakeshores are sprinkled with tranquil villages and, farmers work the fields alongside their water buffalo. The area's remoteness supports an enchanting feast of natural and cultural beauty. It also exacerbates Da Bac's poverty. The district is one of the poorest regions in Vietnam, in which 52% of the population live below the poverty line. It is also home to large numbers of ethnic minority peoples such as the Dao and Muong, who have become accustomed to political, economic and geographic marginalization.

But there is hope in the villages: hope that education will help the children of these communities to break free from the shackles of poverty and lead them towards a more sustainable future. As the Chinese proverb says, *"If you are planning for a year, sow rice; if you are planning for a decade, plant trees; if you are planning for a lifetime, educate people."*

Perched on a mountain ledge overlooking the Hoa Binh reservoir, and framed by karst rock formations, sits Tien Phong School, an unassuming building of concrete construction. This humble school is the key to the future of the local children and the reduction of poverty in the commune. However, for those children who lack adequate accommodation at the school or in the nearby village, a long and arduous journey by foot or boat between home and school awaits them each day, a journey that can take up to four hours return. For these students, the bitter cold of winter, the brutal heat of summer and the dangerous thunderstorms of the flooding seasons can be life threatening. But in the summer of 2013, when a team from AFAP Vietnam chose Tien Phong school for an exciting new project, things began to change for children in the district.

One part construction project and one part corporate leadership activity, the project saw SEACO, one of the world's leading shipping container companies, join forces with AFAP Vietnam to build a new dormitory at Tien Phong School. United under the scorching summer sky, SEACO's executive board and AFAP staff constructed walls and ceilings for the dorm using "Rice Husk Wood"; a sustainable resource that is resistant to water, fire or pestilence. Under the giggling gazes of curious Muong and Dao children, the executives worked alongside the people of Tien Phong to construct the dormitory, assemble bunk beds, and install a water pump and a filtration system, all while experiencing the highs of being an active part of the solution. After work they lived, ate and celebrated with the locals; enjoying customs such as stick dancing and rice wine ceremonies, local delicacies like wild boar and fresh fish, as well as the pristine waters of the lake. The project had a profound impact on SEACO's executive team, giving them insight into development work and the issues faced by vulnerable groups in developing countries like Vietnam. One of SEACO's sales executives, Peter, stated: "This was a tremendous experience and life-lesson for me. I will carry it with me to my grave."

Yet, even more profound was the impact the project had on the local community itself. Thirty-two students that live farthest from Tien Phong School now have a safe place to sleep during the

school week. The improvement in their quality of life and learning conditions could sow rewards for many generations to come. Mrs Nhu, a parent from Tre village said, "I am very happy to know there is a new dormitory equipped with bunk beds and study tables for the children. I hope my son can stay there in the next school year, and even my grandson when he grows up!"

According to Mr. Hung, the Vice Director of Tien Phong School, the students themselves are extremely happy with the dormitory. Although students are not scheduled to move into the new dormitory until the beginning of the new school year in August 2013, the dorm is already fully booked and students are playing and relaxing in the building during their free time until school starts. SEACO's CEO Mr. Jeremy Matthew shared, "I have no idea how AFAP managed to arrange this project so well. AFAP's staff designed the project so that by the time we got there, it took exactly one full day of work to complete it. It was amazing." The outcome of this project was a heartfelt success for all parties involved. In the future, AFAP program officers hope it will influence planning in the region and be replicated in other remote and disadvantaged areas throughout Vietnam. AFAP Vietnam invites international businesses to consider taking other socially responsible retreats in Vietnam, acting as both team-building experiences and providing hands on opportunities to take to Action on Poverty.

*The project was initiated thorough collaboration between SEACO, Concern Universal and AFAP, and was financed for the most part by SEACO with additional support from AFAP and the Da Bac District People's Committee.*

Please visit our website at [www.afap.org](http://www.afap.org).