

PHOTO: ERINI MCKINNON



IWDA and women in the Maldives... see story page 5

Literacy – a window into the future for women

Communications & Education Assistant – Caitlin Ryan

“Literacy unlocks the door to learning throughout life, is essential to development and health, and opens the way for democratic participation and active citizenship.” Kofi Annan

Many of us take literacy for granted. We consider it to be a right not a privilege. But many women are denied this basic right.

Women who have no access to literacy are greatly disadvantaged, missing out on many opportunities that might otherwise be available to them. For these women, access to literacy is a means towards the elimination of poverty and injustice. It works by increasing women's employment opportunities (by reducing women's reliance on informal and un-waged employment), reducing occupational segregation, increasing participation in public life and awareness of human rights, and by improving access to political processes.

In Australia we are currently seeing a resurgence of awareness around gender issues and inequity. With Julia Gillard as our first woman Deputy Prime Minister, and Quentin Bryce to fill the role of Governor General, women are becoming more visible in leadership roles and political life in Australia. There is a feeling of movement towards structural change, where women hold more decision-making positions and are more visibly engaged in political processes. Yet there is a long way to go – there is still no country in the world where women's wages equal that of their male counterparts and women still own only 1% of the world's property. A fundamental way of addressing this global inequity is through literacy.

In East Timor, 65% of women are illiterate.* Generations of occupation and civil unrest have made it very difficult for women to gain access to education. Presently the national focus in East Timor is for children and young people to gain access to literacy and while this is imperative for the future of the nation, current conflict and limited resources mean that adult women will find it difficult to acquire education.

Our annual appeal is focussed on the amazing literacy work of project partner, East Timor Young Women's Association (GFFTL) who are working with women in remote villages of the Eastern Districts. For many of these women this is the first opportunity they have had to learn to read and write.

Over the past 22 years, IWDA has worked with many partners to improve women's literacy. We continue to be committed to progressing with this important issue. Whether it be in Australia or overseas, literacy for women is a fundamental tool that must be harnessed for a future where women can realise their full potential and participate in a world that is just, equitable and sustainable – for everyone.

* <http://www.adb.org/Documents/CSPs/TIM/2003/csp0300.asp>

PHOTO: ERINI MCKINNON



There is still time to donate to our mid-year appeal and enable women in East Timor to access civic literacy training!

Letter from the Executive Director

Like many, I felt both excitement and 'well, of course' at the announcement that Quentin Bryce, Queensland Governor and former Sex Discrimination Commission, will be Australia's next Governor General. Excited that we have a female in the role for the first time, and even more so that it is Quentin Bryce – a woman of such great accomplishment and commitment to gender equality and social justice. But a sense of frustration that this appointment should be so remarkable.

As we celebrate one great woman, we farewell another. I was deeply saddened by the death of crusading journalist Pamela Bone. Voices such as hers are all too rare in the media, and her loss will be felt by many.

IWDA has also seen its own comings and goings. We have moved to our new larger premises in Bourke St and said goodbye to Ross House, our home for some 10 years. We have also farwelled and welcomed staff. Jenny Davidson made a significant contribution as IWDA's External Relations Manager and her energy and élan will be sorely missed. Anna Sargent, Finance Manager, has kept IWDA's finances and reporting on track for some years and we are already missing her humour and corporate memory! We wish them all the very best for the next

stage of their careers. We will shortly announce appointments to the new expanded roles of Strategic Partnerships Manager and Manager, Finance and Administration. We also welcome Gabrielle Halcrow and Claire Rowland and the considerable experience they bring to the Programs team.

Women's participation in leadership and political life generally remains low, in Australia and beyond. I saw this first hand at the UN Commission on the Status of Women in New York in March, where I was one of the non-government representatives on the Australian Government delegation. In the wider UN system, gender balance is unlikely to be achieved until 2120 at the current rate of progress! In Australia, only about one third of positions on Australian Government boards and bodies are held by women.

At a time when the challenges facing our global community are significant, we need all of the skills and diversity in our community. Women's voices are important – for their own sake, and because women's contribution to the economy and to family and community life are vital to our social fabric.



Jane Sloane,
Executive Director

IWDA has moved!

Our new location is:
Level 4, 225 Bourke Street.

Our postal address, phone & fax details remain the same:

PO Box 64, Flinders Lane Melb 8009
Phone + 61 3 9650 5574
Fax + 61 3 9654 987

225 Bourke St was previously used by the Melbourne City Council, and is now home to the City Village project, a new hub for a variety of not-for-profit organisations. Our new office is in the heart of the city, about 7 minutes walk from our previous address at Ross House and close to public transport, including the tram via Bourke St Mall (No.86 or No.96), any tram along Swanston St and Parliament or Flinders St train stations.



IWDA staff at the new office!

Vale Pamela Bone

On 2 May, hundreds gathered at a church in Melbourne to farewell Pamela Bone, Senior Writer and former Associate Editor of The Age and long-time IWDA supporter, who died on 26 April. Tricia Peters, member of the IWDA Trust board and former President of IWDA, represented IWDA at the service.

Pamela's was a big life, marked by contribution and compassion. A highly skilled and passionate journalist, hers was among the most prominent media voices on issues relating to women and equity.

International Women's Development Agency regularly benefited from her skills and support. Her interview with IWDA's then Executive Director and President, for example, featured in our 2002 Annual Report, and in 2003, she moderated a public event for us to mark 25 November, International Day to End Violence Against Women. She mentioned IWDA in dispatches when she could, helping to increase awareness among the wider public.

Pamela Bone's work on issues relating to women and social justice, particularly in development, was recognised in her appointment to the Victorian Honour Roll of Women.

The staff and Board of International Women's Development Agency salute and celebrate Pamela's life and work and extend their deep sympathy to Pamela's family, friends and colleagues. IWDA was profoundly touched by Pamela's request for donations to IWDA in lieu of flowers at her service. Her legacy and her generosity of spirit lives on.

"It is not that women think better than men but they do think differently. It is not that the world would be a better place if women ran it, but that women and men need to work together to achieve the peace and security we all crave." – Pamela Bone

ABOUT INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DEVELOPMENT AGENCY (IWDA)

IWDA is an Australian non-profit organisation that supports positive change for women. Our practical and rights-based projects directly address poverty and inequality in developing countries.

Our projects focus on five key areas of well being: economic empowerment, freedom from violence, participation in

decision-making, reproductive health, and environmental management.

We work in the Asia-Pacific region, in direct partnership with women who work and live in the communities themselves.

*When women benefit,
the whole community benefits*

iwda

PO Box 64 Melbourne VIC 8009
Tel 03 9650 5574 Fax 03 9654 9877
iwda@iwda.org.au

www.iwda.org.au

Donation hotline: 1300 661 812

ABN 19 242 959 685

International Women's Day 2008!

For International Women's Day 2008, IWDA held events in Melbourne, Sydney and Hobart to celebrate every woman's role in developing a better future. Our global partners also marked this important day in their own ways.

Sydney

Guests enjoyed a delicious, plentiful breakfast which was facilitated by IWDA supporter Kathryn Couttoupes and 16 fellow volunteers. Jozefa Sobski did a fantastic job as MC, and guest speaker Katie Richmond, IWDA Overseas Program Manager, discussed current IWDA projects. The breakfast was followed by the annual International Women's Day march through the city which ended at Hyde Park, where a colorful IWDA information stall was set up as part of the celebrations.

Melbourne

A family friendly picnic was held at the welcoming Princes Hill Railway House, where guests relaxed with delicious food and wine, and enjoyed live music from local musicians Shona Honeyhill and Liz Stringer. Both women delighted the gathering with their beautiful music. Picnic-goers were also treated to inspiring and heartening Stories of Strength from IWDA program managers Deb Chapman and Erin McKinnon, who shared with the group stories they had gathered in Sri Lanka, East Timor and Papua New Guinea, from women working with IWDA project partners. The evening was a perfect chance for IWDA supporters and staff to get together and celebrate women's achievements on this important day.

Hobart International Women's Day

Hobart hosted an International Women's Day 2008 Soiree which featured IWDA program manager Erin McKinnon sharing information with guests at Women Tasmania. More about this trip from loyal IWDA supporter and host **Yabbo Thompson**:

Erin McKinnon, Program Manager for IWDA for Sri Lanka, the Maldives and East Timor, was our visitor from IWDA. She spoke to year 8 at Ogilvie High School and an assembly for year 11 and 12 students at the Friends School. That night, Erin addressed a Soiree at Women Tasmania about women and livelihoods, and Merryn Smith from Amnesty International Australia-Tasmania spoke about Amnesty's report on domestic workers in Indonesia. This is the fourth year the organisations have held a combined event.



International Women's Day in Tassie

PHOTO: YABBO THOMPSON

"I held the annual breakfast in my home, where a group of some 30 people enjoyed IWDA supporter Jane Bange talk about the IWDA Challenge for Change cycle ride through Cambodia last October."



IWDA Overseas Program Manager Deb Chapman speaks at the Melbourne Picnic.

PHOTO: KALENE CAFARELLA

GFFTL, Project Partner, East Timor

Rosa Xavier

On 12th March, the East Timor Young Women's Association (GFFTL), together with Rede Feto Timor-Leste, and with the support of United Nations Population Fund, jointly organised a one day seminar in Venilale to celebrate International Women's Day. The seminar discussions were facilitated by Antonieta Rodrigues, a Coordinator of Feto Hametin Unidade, and included members of literacy groups, community leaders and police members. The main topics discussed were "Invest in Women and Children and Invest in Equality", and "Women and Development in Timor-Leste", with the objective of sharing information and learning from one another.

Kantha Shakthi, Project Partner, Sri Lanka

Chaithri Ranatunge & Caitlin Ryan

Over 25 women's organisations united in Colombo this International Women's Day, joining together to celebrate women's rights and advocate for change.

Concerned with growing economic and political crises in Sri Lanka, members of women's groups across the country organised a large and enthusiastic seminar and rally. The day was coordinated by IWDA project partners Kantha Shakthi, and began with a seminar attended by 250 men and women.



Women in Sri Lanka march for International Women's Day

PHOTO: CHAITHRI RANATUNGE

At the seminar, many prominent women addressed the gathering, discussing issues of women's rights and peace in Sri Lanka. The speakers included Rohini Weerasinghe of Kantha Shakthi, who remarked "the broadest possible unity is needed if we are to overcome the challenges."

Following the seminar, participants began a protest march which attracted over 2000 people of different backgrounds and religions, many of whom had traveled from all over the country, marching under banners proudly declaring "Women's Organisations United to Celebrate International Women's Day".

Participants on the day signed an IWD declaration, which recognised that "women have borne the brunt of the political, economic, social and cultural erosion inherent in Sri Lankan society today. Yet it is the labor of women that contributes to the highest percentage of foreign exchange to the country". A participant in the rally noted that "it is really women who should come forward because they suffer the worst. Despite all the traumas they are going through, the women still hold on."

Thai-Burma Border

IWDA Overseas Program Manager – Jose Mott

I always look forward to International Women's Day wherever I am, because it is a time when we can acknowledge and celebrate the important contributions women make to their communities, in both ordinary and extraordinary ways. My recent field trip to visit IWDA partners on the Thai-Burma border coincided with International Women's Day in Chiang Mai. I felt privileged to be part of these celebrations, and was struck by how the so-called ordinary becomes very much about the extraordinary. Women from Burma as migrant workers in Thailand work long hours to feed, clothe and educate their families. It sounds simple but it's not.

Vulnerable working conditions, sexual discrimination and precarious living arrangements in Thailand conspire to make these women's lives extraordinarily difficult. Where there are few safeguards for protection at work, exploitation is rife. Where one's status is either deemed 'illegal' or depends on the regular renewal of a working visa (too costly for most), access to health services and education opportunities let alone decent housing is an aspiration rather than a reality.

I felt humbled by stories of women's resilience in achieving the 'ordinary' tasks of everyday living and looking after families in the face of such extraordinary circumstances. While I may complain back in Melbourne about the tedium of these tasks (both paid and unpaid), I am never in danger or fear for my life in carrying them out, unlike the many women who have had to flee persecution in Burma.

The aptly named 'Working Women Walking Together' was the theme of the International Women's Day Rally in Chiang Mai. A few hundred women from Thailand and Burma, as individuals and as representatives from civil society organisations, gathered to show their solidarity for women and the work they do in all its forms, and to call for an end to discrimination of women and migrant workers. Their strength, resilience and capacity for hope should inspire us all and remind us why there is a need to actively celebrate International Women's Day every year.



International Women's Day Rally in Chiang Mai

Women, chillis and the blue, blue sea: addressing gender inequities in the Maldives.

IWDA Overseas Program Manager – Erin McKinnon

IWDA began a new partnership in 2008 with Live & Learn Environmental Education Maldives. This is IWDA's first opportunity to support women's wellbeing in the Maldives, an opportunity made possible by the fundraising efforts of IWDA Board Member Trisha Broadbridge.

The Maldives is a series of 1,190 coral reef islands situated in the Indian Ocean due south of India. Only 200 of these islands are inhabited by the population of 360,000, with an additional 90 islands adapted as exclusive tourist resorts. Around one quarter of Maldivians live in the capital Male, which at 1.77 square kilometres is one of the most densely populated places on earth.

The devastation wrought in the Maldives by the 2004 Boxing Day tsunami resulted in over 100 deaths and 11,000 people made homeless. The aftermath continues to be felt by many whose islands were rendered uninhabitable, and who are still awaiting re-location to nearby islands once construction of new housing is complete.

The tsunami highlighted the extreme environmental vulnerability of the Maldives, which at only one metre above sea level is expected to almost totally disappear by the end of this century. As in other tsunami-affected countries, Maldivian women were disproportionately affected and many have experienced difficulties regenerating their livelihoods in the years since. Where women do have access to income, they often experience the double burden of income-generation plus domestic responsibilities. While the move towards modernisation and development has resulted in more women accessing paid employment, "there is very little progress in getting men to pour their own water, let alone share in domestic work"¹.

Though the Maldives acceded to CEDAW in 1993, "there is a general unwillingness amongst a large section of the population and many institutions to fully accept the equality of men and women. Many believe women are subordinate to men, and there is a growing movement that threatens to turn back the clock on women's advancement."²

This rising socio-religious movement argues that women's presence in public space threatens the integrity of society. The movement also argues against women's right to contest elections for head of government, and even judiciary and leadership roles such as Island Chiefs, using religion as justification. As it is there are very few women at policy level in the Maldivian government.

It is in this context that IWDA and LLEE Maldives have come together to collaborate



Nolivanfaru woman

PHOTO: ERIN MCKINNON

on a program that will support women farmers growing chillis to process and market chilli sauce, and provide training and awareness on gender and women's rights to women and men at community level. This project aims to give women an opportunity for a sustainable livelihood while caring for their environment. It also hopes to promote women's meaningful participation in community decision-making and leadership roles by challenging gender attitudes and stereotypes.

1. Aishath Velezinee, East Timor, Lonely Planet, 2004
2. NGO Shadow Report on CEDAW, Maldives, November 2006

Feast 2008!

Communications & Education Assistant – Caitlin Ryan



PHOTO: CHLOE GREEN

Thanks to the overwhelming enthusiasm and support from all involved, the sold out IWDA Feast 2008 on Sunday 2nd March was an amazing success, raising over \$60,000 to support future IWDA projects in Papua New Guinea that will address violence against women.

Over 300 guests joined IWDA at the beautiful Grand Hyatt Melbourne as part of the Melbourne Food & Wine Festival, to enjoy delicious food from thirty of Melbourne's leading female chefs, brilliant entertainment and exciting silent and live auctions.

The chefs created mouth-watering meals and were a force to be reckoned with in the kitchen, displaying professionalism, speed, and passion. The chefs received a standing ovation

at the end of the night – a demonstration of unmistakable appreciation from the well fed guests.

The evening went off without a hitch, thanks in no small part to our greatly entertaining MC Lindy Burns, as well as Jessica Harrap, who called the Live Auction. This sparked exhilarating bidding competitions and resulted in many happy winners. For those who missed out on a live auction item there were over 70 prizes generously donated by local businesses in the Silent Auction – everyone went home a winner!

A highlight of the night was the Rhythms of the Pacific dance troupe. Denise Scott's hilarious comedy routine had guests momentarily forgetting their food while getting caught up in the laughter, and the exquisite vocals of a çapella group Akasa accompanied the meals.

IWDA would like to thank our major sponsor Holding Redlich, key sponsor Peters McKeown, supporting sponsors Kelly Fogarty Publicity, Run Forrest and Dig, as well as all of the businesses and volunteers who contributed to a fantastic event. The evening not only raised funds for future projects, but also raised awareness of women's issues and development and was thoroughly enjoyable!

Maree Keating

IWDA is thrilled to welcome the newest member of our Board, Maree Keating.



The newest board member at IWDA, Maree Keating, has had a long association with the organisation. In 1985 IWDA founder Wendy Poussard invited Maree, who was then working in the East Timor Information Office, to take up a research position at the Women and Development Network of Australia (WADNA) office. It was an opportunity she quickly and enthusiastically agreed to, and after 12 months with WADNA, Maree helped to set up the first IWDA office in Brunswick Street in 1986 with Wendy Poussard.

Maree has worked in a range of areas within the education sector, including adult migration education, aboriginal education and general education for adults. She has also worked extensively in the development sector, with organizations including Australian Volunteers International, Community Aid Abroad (now Oxfam) and Oxfam UK. Maree has held the position

of Senior Gender Policy Advisor for Oxfam U.K., has managed development programs internationally and has lived in many of the regions IWDA focuses on currently, including Cambodia, East Timor and Indonesia.

Maree believes that IWDA is currently in a very exciting position which can enable growth and new direction, and that maintaining a program of "sustainable long term support that focuses on strategic empowerment of women at the local, national and global levels" is inherent to this process.

Maree is very excited about the opportunity to come back to IWDA and be a part of the organisation and its current projects.

With her obvious passion for equality of opportunity for all, and her expertise in gender and development, Maree is a fantastic addition to the IWDA board.

Coming soon: One Just World – Think – Talk – Act!

IWDA, World Vision Australia and AusAID are currently finalising plans for an exciting new series of development forums, to be conducted in Melbourne, Sydney, Canberra, Adelaide, Brisbane and Perth, commencing in late July 2008.

Engaging speakers including Federal Government Ministers will focus on topics of particular public interest, such as climate change and its implications for development; poverty and human rights, gender equality, Pacific perspectives on governance and security, and tackling HIV/AIDs. The partners will work with a tertiary institution in each city and draw in additional NGOs for specific topics. A dedicated website will enable ongoing debate between sessions, and provide a platform for reaching out to audiences beyond those who can physically attend. The secretariat will be housed in World Vision and benefit from their scale and reach.

The idea builds on the success of the International Alert series in Adelaide, which IWDA Executive Director Jane Sloane initiated with AusAID and the Hawke Prime Ministerial Centre when she headed World Vision's state office in South Australia.

The aim is to inform, engage and generate public dialogue on how poverty and development affect the wellbeing, freedom, security and livelihoods of all of us. We also want to encourage active participation in development, through volunteering, pro bono support and working in the sector. You can keep up to date via the IWDA website, www.iwda.org.au.

WINTER WARMERS

This August relieve the chill of winter with a Winter Warmers event!

With the support of IWDA, you and your friends can stay in one cold night and raise awareness and funds for the work of IWDA's project partners in Asia and the Pacific. By hosting a Winter Warmer event – be it a movie night, trivia night, wine and cheese night, or a luncheon – you can make a difference to the lives of many women in Asia and the Pacific.

For more information about organising your own Winter Warmers event or to register visit www.iwda.org.au/winterwarmers or contact IWDA at (03) 9650 5574.

6 IWDA news Winter 2008



International Women's Development Agency is a signatory to the Australian Council for International Development (ACFID) Code of Conduct which defines minimum standards of governance, management and accountability for non-government development organisations. Adherence to the Code is monitored by an independent Code of Conduct Committee elected from the NGO community. Our voluntary adherence to the Code of Conduct demonstrates our commitment to ethical practice and public accountability. More information about the ACFID Code of Conduct can be accessed at www.acfid.asn.au

VIOLA Eco-Graphic Design (03) 9654 0402. Printed on 100% recycled, ECF paper with vegetable-based inks.

Yes! I want to assist women in East Timor to achieve literacy...

I'd like to give a donation today of \$

I would like to support **Empower** – the monthly pledge program and give ongoing support.

I will give: \$25 \$50 \$100 \$ per month

I would like my monthly donations to be via:
 Direct Debit An authorisation form will be sent to you. **Credit Card**

All donations of \$2 or more are tax-deductible.

Donation hotline: 1300 661 812



IWDA ABN 19 242 959 685
 PO Box 64 Melbourne VIC 8009
 Tel 03 9650 5574 Fax 03 9654 9877
iwda@iwda.org.au www.iwda.org.au

IWDA endorses the National Privacy Principles. For details please contact IWDA.

Title Name

Address

Postcode

Tel BH Tel AH

email I don't want to receive event emails

I am paying by: Cheque Credit Card

Credit Card* Visa Mastercard Amex Diners

Cardholder* Exp.Date* / /

Card no*

Signature* Date*

* Required information