

## WOMEN'S SPORTING CHANCE

**SOLOMON ISLANDS:** As an important part of community life, more women will be encouraged to take up sport.

It's commonly but incorrectly assumed, especially in post-conflict situations, the needs of women and men are the same. And so it is men tend to take charge of everything. They fill the leadership roles and make the decisions. Women are sidelined. They may be called upon to fulfil minor responsibilities but, by and large, they're excluded from planning and reconstruction stages. The result is in several areas women's needs, opportunities and aspirations are overlooked.

One such area is sport. In several troubled states around the Pacific women's access to sports training and resources – even the chance to play sport or use recreational facilities – is limited.

Yet sport, which is an excellent way to bring communities together and resolve differences, is also an important part of Melanesian life. Not everyone, however, has an equal opportunity to participate.

Giving women a sporting chance is at the heart of a new activity which aims to support annual provincial and national sports carnivals. The plan is to give women the best possible opportunity to join in. A locally-engaged 'women's participation officer' will ease the way by implementing inclusive activities



for women as participants, referees and organisers.

Through support of the sports carnivals it's hoped women will take the chance to improve their skills and consequently grow in confidence as competitors.

Sports carnivals take place in each of the country's nine provinces leading to a culmination – the Solomon Islands National Games – this year on the island of Makira.

Greater participation in sport is a way of raising the profile of women and including women in another important aspect of community life. When women are included in all aspects of

community life, it will not be so easy to overlook their needs in reconstruction initiatives.

**The new sporting activity is to be funded by AusAID and managed through the Australian Sports Commission. The International Women's Development Agency (IWDA) will contribute to the project's gender component.**

**ABOVE: Barefoot soccer. Sister Anester (left) and Sister Janet battle to gain possession of the ball during a friendly match among the Sisters of Melanesia, Guadalcanal. Photo: Torsten Blackwood/AFP**

### THINKING CRITICALLY, RESPONDING COMPASSIONATELY

AusAID's Global Education Program raises awareness and understanding of development issues among Australian primary and secondary school students. It explores themes such as rights and responsibility, peace building, sustainability and global justice. It also promotes positive values and attitudes.

### RETURN VISIT

With the Indian Ocean tsunami and the earthquake in Pakistan fresh in their minds, students from St John the Apostle Primary School in Canberra have been looking at disaster relief.

With a fictitious budget of \$750,000, the students were challenged to respond to the immediate and longer-term needs of a village in the Asia Pacific devastated by a freak wave.

Teacher Berna Simpson kept guidance to a minimum so students could freely explore their own ideas.

Results were impressive. There were some clever ideas, evidence of lateral thinking and, importantly, a compassionate response to circumstances that had wrecked people's lives. Some of the critical issues recognised by students were:

» the logistics of transporting relief supplies to areas where infrastructure was destroyed



## NEW RELEASE



- » the need to consult with village representatives on most urgent requirements
- » how to clean up debris if heavy removal equipment was also destroyed
- » the importance of re-establishing normal routines, such as getting children back to school.

Students presented their findings to an appreciative audience of around 100 AusAID staff. Jim Catchlove, one of AusAID's disaster relief specialists, gave students valuable feedback and was able to answer questions based on personal experience.

Before closing Global Education Coordinator Simon Kaldy noted it was not the first time this grade

6 class had visited AusAID and delivered high calibre responses to a global education task. 'It's very rewarding to see young minds grappling with the challenges and complexities of a humanitarian disaster,' he said. 'The students have applied themselves very thoroughly to the task of how they can best help victims. I'd like to congratulate Berna Simpson for creating some outstanding young global education students.'

Presentations included role plays, powerpoint talks and a guessing competition, 'Which country am I?'  
Photo: Andrew Sheargold /AusAID

**AusAID and Lonely Planet join forces to raise awareness of the Australian Government's overseas aid program.**

Australians love to explore the world and there's no better place to start than in the neighbourhood. The Asia Pacific is home to a variety of rich and diverse cultures.

*See the Real World* is a travel guide with a difference. It lists key travel information but it also presents in pictures a glimpse of Australia's aid – where and how Australian tax dollars are spent improving people's lives.

For many developing countries in the Asia Pacific tourism is an increasingly important industry. By travelling locally, Australians are showing their support. They're helping to create jobs and to boost weak local economies – both of which are essential in the battle against poverty.

**So don't delay**

**Order a free copy of  
*See the Real World***

[www.ausaid.gov.au/lonelyplanet](http://www.ausaid.gov.au/lonelyplanet)