

## WATER IS LIFE

Assisting farmers and pastoralists in Ethiopia to cope with water shortages and develop sustainable livelihoods.



Photo: Poon Waihang / poonwainang@hotmail.com



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樂施會  
**OXFAM**  
Hong Kong

無窮世界  
World  
Without  
Poverty





# WATER IS LIFE

The Somali region, located in the eastern part of Ethiopia, is remote, barren, poverty-stricken and disaster-prone. Irregular weather patterns there have made rainy season more erratic and unpredictable; some villages have even seen no rainfall in over a year. Prolonged droughts have also caused immeasurable suffering for poor and vulnerable communities there.

Since 2011, Oxfam has been working with communities (women in particular) in the Somali region. We have provided emergency water in the worst affected areas, introduced disaster risk reduction measures, and helped to develop livelihoods and ensure food security.



In 2011, people in the Somali region suffered a severe food crisis caused by the worst drought in decades. Oxfam provided emergency clean water, food, cash for work, and livestock support to the affected population.



The Somali region is among the poorest in Ethiopia. Although pastoralists there constantly face water and food shortages, they work together to cope with the hardship and challenges.



The well water here is muddy and salty. However, to drought-affected pastoralists and their livestock, this is like an oasis.

Photo: Poon Wainang





## Oxfam assists farmers and pastoralists to cope with droughts and works to improve their lives.

How we build resilience	How we strengthen livelihoods
Build wells, ponds; drill boreholes; develop and repair water schemes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve irrigation systems to reduce communities' vulnerability to disasters</li> <li>• Build ponds for livestock</li> </ul>
Carry out cash-for-work programmes on rangeland rehabilitation and provide grass seeding to produce more fodder and improve soil conditions	Provide vegetable seeds and support farmers' training on vegetable farming for more food and income
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide villagers with disaster preparedness and early warning systems training</li> <li>• Work with communities, local authorities and governments to prepare and implement drought risk management plans</li> </ul>	Support women to set up self-help groups and business groups to run grocery stores and tea shops; provide business and book keeping training
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Set up water committees to manage natural resources</li> <li>• Promote sanitation and public health</li> </ul>	Set up livestock management cooperatives and provide vaccinations and treatment for livestock



Oxfam has installed water tanks and provided containers in a remote village in the Somali region of Ethiopia. Amina Hussien (left), one of the villagers who benefits from the project, said, 'The water systems are in the village. We no longer have to fetch water from water sources that are miles away; our lives are a lot easier now.'



Oxfam has supported 40 households in a village in Ayesha – a woreda, or small administrative division, in the Somali region – to set up an irrigation system for farming. Kawa Said, 35, told us, 'In the past, our livelihoods depended on our livestock, but five years ago, a severe drought hit the area and we lost almost all our livestock. We had to abandon our village to search for water, and could only come back one year later. Oxfam supported this irrigation facility, trained us in vegetable and fruit farming, and provided us with quality seeds. In just a few months, we will earn an income of 10,000 ETB (about HK\$3,700). This is a huge achievement for us!'



Oxfam supported Ubah Gele and 19 other women to set up a grocery in their village. She told us about how their lives have been changed: 'Over the past few years, serious droughts have made our lives very difficult. As women, we have very few livelihood options, but we don't want to sit here and wait for help – we wanted to do something for ourselves. So, we set up a self-help group and, thanks to Oxfam's support, we opened this shop, and we have learnt some business skills. We can earn about 2,034 ETB (around HK\$750) per month now. We would like to reinvest our income to expand our business to another village.'





Photo: Christina Chan

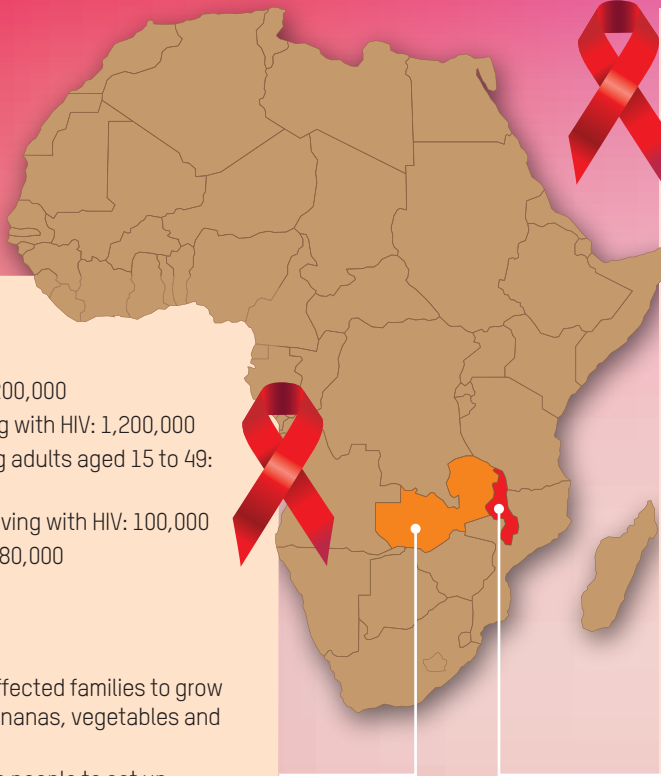
# Fighting HIV/AIDS with people

According to a report by UNAIDS in 2014, there were approximately 36 million people worldwide living with HIV/AIDS. More than 90 per cent of HIV infections are in developing countries, and Sub-Saharan Africa is the epicentre of the epidemic. HIV/AIDS is also a concern in China: there are more than 270 million migrant workers in the country. The high labour and geographic mobility of migrant workers, and lack of public awareness of the disease and sexual and reproductive health education has increased workers' risk of infection. Poverty, drugs and HIV/AIDS also threaten the lives of people who live in remote villages in Yunnan Province, bordering Myanmar.

HIV/AIDS is generally described as the 'disease of poverty'. It reduces productivity and agricultural output, increases food insecurity and health costs, and leaves poor people more vulnerable.

Oxfam has been supporting AIDS-related work and projects in Africa since 1997. Most of our programmes in Africa have integrated HIV and AIDS components through such initiatives as policy advocacy, enhancing community participation, dissemination of information and home-based care services. We also inform and educate people about the risks of HIV and AIDS, and support preventive action to change behaviour patterns.

In China, we began supporting HIV/AIDS and reproductive health projects in coastal cities in 2008. In the southwest provinces of Yunnan and Guangxi, we have also been supporting integrated programmes combining livelihood development and HIV/AIDS prevention.



## Zambia:

HIV and AIDS estimates

- Population: about 15,200,000
- Number of people living with HIV: 1,200,000
- Prevalence rate among adults aged 15 to 49: 12.4%
- Children aged 0 to 14 living with HIV: 100,000
- Orphans due to AIDS: 380,000

(source: UNAIDS, 2014)

## Oxfam's work

- Supporting HIV/AIDS affected families to grow cash crops such as bananas, vegetables and chilli
- Supporting HIV positive people to set up self-help groups
- Training community-based caregivers in HIV/AIDS management
- Working on HIV/AIDS prevention, treatment and advocacy, and advocating safe sex as prevention; promoting awareness of HIV/AIDS prevention among youth

## Malawi

HIV and AIDS estimates

- Population: about 17,280,000
- Number of people living with HIV: 1,100,000
- Prevalence rate among adults aged 15 to 49: 10%
- Children aged 0 to 14 living with HIV: 130,000
- Orphans due to AIDS: 530,000

(source: UNAIDS, 2014)

## Oxfam's work

**At the community level,** we work with people living with HIV/AIDS to promote community solidarity including:

- Setting up self-help groups with people, providing capacity building and training in advocacy and lobbying strategies so that they can fight against discrimination, for better health services and HIV/AIDS treatment
- Training youths to be peer educators to promote awareness of HIV/AIDS prevention among youths

**At the national level,** we work with partner organisations to influence government policies for equitable access to treatment and health services including:

- Lobbying the government for the effective implementation of the World Health Organisation's antiretroviral treatment (ART) guidelines

Photo: Poon Wainang



▲ Oxfam provides platforms for people to discuss issues affecting them by setting up HIV/AIDS self-help groups and through 'Societies Tackling AIDS through Rights' groups at the community level.

Photo: Poon Wainang



Photo: Ricky Wong

▲ In Livingstone, located in Southern Province of Zambia, the high prevalence of HIV/AIDS has affected thousands of families. Many young adults have died of HIV/AIDS-related illnesses, leaving their children in the care of their grandparents. The region also frequently experiences droughts, which has led to serious food shortages. As such, Oxfam has supported 600 vulnerable families in eight communities to grow chilli, generate income and buy food.

◀ In Malawi, people who live with HIV/AIDS are stigmatised and marginalised due to misconceptions and discrimination about the disease. Jenny contracted HIV when she helped a woman, who did not know she was HIV-positive, to give birth. She said, 'After I joined the HIV support group, I found a support system among group members. We meet every week to discuss issues affecting the community. Our village is poor and remote. We don't have a health centre, so we kept lobbying the officials in the district health office and have successfully convinced them to dispatch two health workers to our village. Oxfam also provides us with pigs so that we can support our livelihoods. We will have some income soon.'



## Supporting women in cross-border marriages

Yingwang (not her real name), 42, is an ethnic minority from Myanmar. She married her husband, who is from China, in 2001 hoping for a better life. However, a year after they married, she discovered that her husband took drugs; he would physically abuse her if he had no money to buy drugs, but she put up with it because her daughter was very young at that time. In 2007, Yingwang was even diagnosed with HIV. 'My husband contracted HIV when he shared needles with other drug users, and he infected me. My world began falling apart,' she recalled.

Poverty, low education and a lack of understanding towards drugs are the main reasons why there are so many drug users in villages along the Myanmar-China border. Furthermore, gender inequality hinders women from convincing their husbands to use a condom. Over 80 per cent of women living with HIV/AIDS were infected by their husbands.

Yingwang continued, 'I don't own land, so I cannot borrow loans from banks or village cooperatives. I was poor and ill too. Oxfam helped me through the most difficult time. I have been borrowing loans through Oxfam's micro-credit scheme to buy vegetable seeds and fertiliser. I am growing vegetables for food and some income, and am starting to see the light through the darkness.'

Currently, Oxfam is the only international non-governmental organisation that supports development projects for HIV/AIDS affected families in Ruli, Yunnan. Since 2007, we have worked in five townships and helped 1,600 people reduce their vulnerability to the virus.

## Supporting women-led families

Like Yingwang, Bangguo (not her real name), 30, contracted HIV through her drug-addicted husband, who is undergoing forced drug rehabilitation in Kunming, leaving her to take care of their nine-year old son and their niece. Bangguo said, 'I was very angry and upset when I discovered that he took drugs, but I couldn't stop him. Drugs are cheap and readily available here, and traditionally, villagers use it as a painkiller.'

Bangguo has been borrowing loans through Oxfam's project since 2010: 'With the low interest loans, I can raise pigs and grow bananas for some income to buy food for myself and the children. Last year, I sold three pigs and earned 13,000 yuan.'

If HIV infected people continue their treatments, and have support from their families, they can live long and productive lives. Therefore, Oxfam and its partner organisation support HIV affected people and families to set up self-help groups. We also lobby the Health Department to provide greater support to people living with HIV/AIDS.

## Supporting vulnerable families

One of Oxfam's partners Tang (left) paid a visit to 80-year-old Shimu and her two grandchildren, whose father ran away from home many years ago and mother died when they were very young. Last year, Shimu's youngest son died of HIV/AIDS. Since then, the family lost its sole breadwinner.

Shimu's family is among the most vulnerable families in the remote villages along the Myanmar-China border. Oxfam has been providing livelihood support and counselling services to these families.



Photo: Christina Chan

# OXFAM HIV / AIDS PROJECTS IN CHINA



## Coastal areas: Tianjin, Jinan, Qingdao, Shenzhen

Target: low-income female sex workers and migrant women

### Oxfam's work

- Information and free consultation on HIV/AIDS prevention
- Promoting awareness of HIV/AIDS prevention, and sexual and reproductive health through training and education
- Free blood tests, health checks, and medical referrals
- Building support networks through setting up self-help groups and events

Total number of beneficiaries in 2014 –15: 8,000 people



Oxfam supports low-income sex workers to prevent HIV/AIDS by providing free blood tests, health checks, training and education.

## Southwest provinces: Kunming, Mang City, Ruili City, Hezhou

Target: People living with HIV/AIDS and their families, Burmese women in cross-border marriages, children orphaned by HIV/AIDS, and children affected by and living with HIV/AIDS

### Oxfam's work

#### Livelihood support such as:

- Emergency cash for affected families in extremely difficult situations
- Low-interest rate loans to affected families to engage in income generating activities

#### Psychological support, including:

- Home and hospital visits, telephone consultations
- Gatherings for people living with HIV/AIDS and their families
- Encouraging people infected with HIV/AIDS to continue their treatment and medication
- Explaining the government's policies on HIV/AIDS

#### Supporting children orphaned by HIV/AIDS and children living with HIV/AIDS with:

- Psychological support and counselling
- Nutritious food
- Grants, scholarships and living allowance

#### Raising awareness about HIV/AIDS prevention through:

- Delivering condoms and teaching people how to use them
- Training, seminars and education on HIV/AIDS prevention

#### Others:

- Medical assistance
- Working with the government's health department to provide more support to people living with HIV/AIDS

Total number of beneficiaries (as of July 2015): 8,487 people



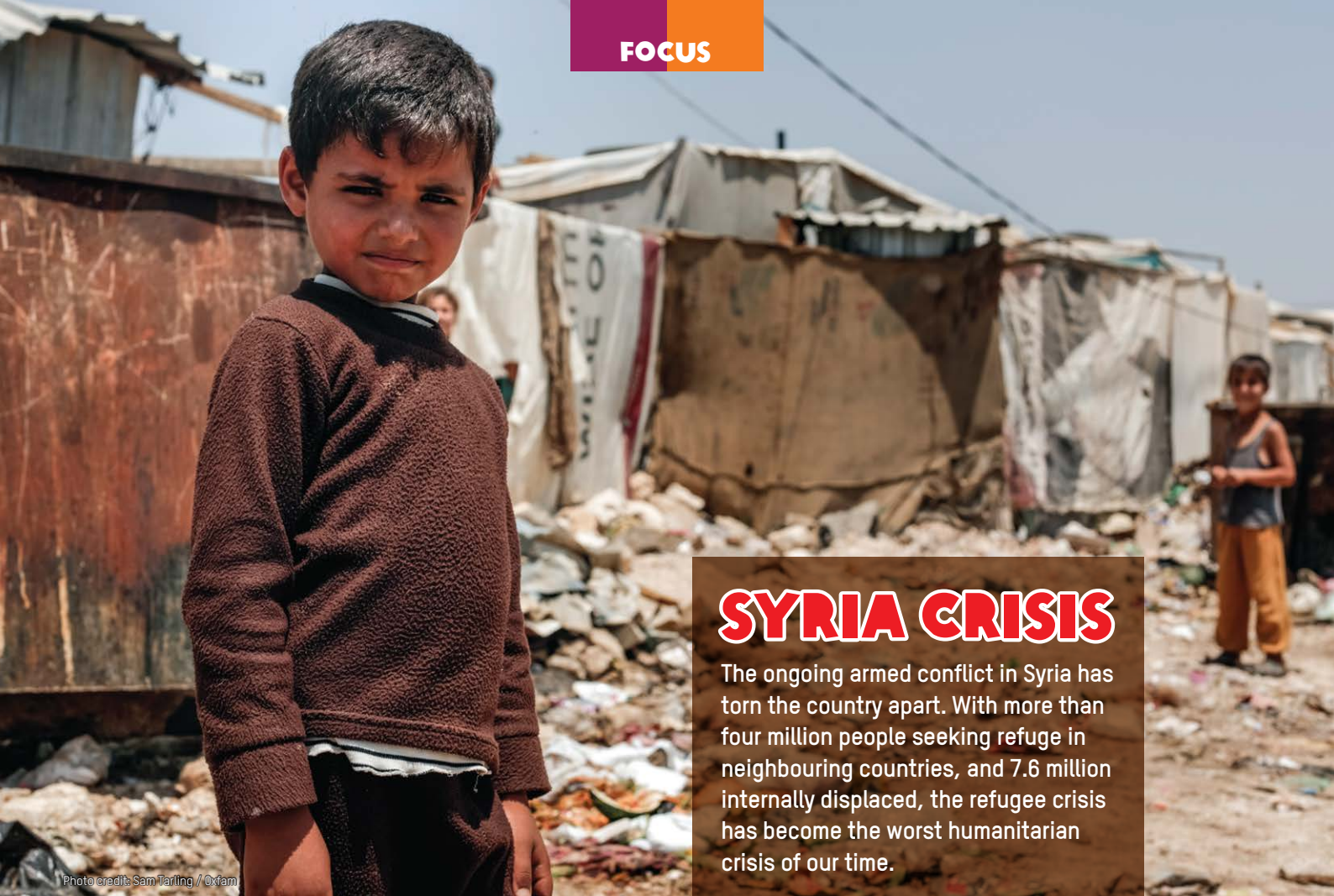


Photo credit: Sam Varling / Oxfam

## SYRIA CRISIS

The ongoing armed conflict in Syria has torn the country apart. With more than four million people seeking refuge in neighbouring countries, and 7.6 million internally displaced, the refugee crisis has become the worst humanitarian crisis of our time.

### OXFAM IS THERE, SAVING LIVES!

#### In Syria, we are providing:

- Clean water to about one million people affected by the conflict
- Hygiene kits and other household items to civilians

#### In Jordan (Zaatari refugee camp) and Lebanon (informal settlements), we are providing:

- Water, cash relief, livelihood support and household items
- Shower and toilet blocks, and promoting hygiene to prevent the spread of life-threatening diseases

#### In Europe, we are providing:

- Clothes, medicine and other basic needs to asylum seekers in Italy

To learn more: [www.oxfam.org.hk/en/syria.aspx](http://www.oxfam.org.hk/en/syria.aspx)



▲ Housam Shayeb, from Ghouta, near Damascus in Syria, fled his home after the chemical attacks in 2014. Now he is part of Oxfam's cash for work programme at the Zaatari camp in Jordan. The programme employs Housam to keep his district clean and to maintain Oxfam's water facilities there.



▲ Zaatari camp is the second largest refugee camp in the world. Oxfam carries out hygiene promotion in the camp to prevent the risk of disease outbreaks. Here in the picture, children learn about the importance of good hygiene and sanitation through games, songs, drama and other activities.





Photo: Jes Aznar / Oxfam

Indra Khadka, 36, carries a sack of rice seeds that he received from Oxfam. 'It's time to prepare the rice seeds for cultivation. Our house collapsed, and our rice seeds got mixed with the rubble. You gave us the seeds right on time.' Indra said.

## NEPAL EARTHQUAKE

The situation:

A powerful magnitude 7.5 earthquake struck Nepal on 12 May 2015, injuring more than 20,000 people and leaving 2.8 million in urgent need of humanitarian aid.



**OXFAM HAS BEEN WORKING IN SEVEN OF THE HARDEST-HIT AREAS TO PROVIDE LIFE-SAVING ESSENTIALS TO MORE THAN 410,000 SURVIVORS IN NEPAL.**



35,000 people received safe water



6,904 latrines and hand washing points



47,000 emergency shelters



24,640 farmers received rice seeds



47,000 hygiene kits

At Oxfam, we see gender equality and the empowerment of women as a significant strategy to eradicate poverty. Our humanitarian and rehabilitation programmes emphasise the needs of vulnerable women and girls. We are supporting women in Nepal with:

- Gender-sensitive hygiene kits and separate toilet blocks for women and girls
- Psychosocial support and counselling
- Centres for women in eight villages of three districts to provide a common platform where women can share and learn about risks
- Cash for work programmes so that they can earn some money to buy food and help rebuild their community

To learn more: [www.oxfam.org.hk/en/nepal2015.aspx](http://www.oxfam.org.hk/en/nepal2015.aspx)

Community members install a metal sheet on an improved temporary shelter. Each shelter stands about six feet tall and can accommodate seven to eight people. Oxfam has distributed more than 6,200 emergency shelter kits and 1,120 improved shelter kits in Sindhupalchok district. ►





# CHINESE AGRICULTURAL FOREIGN INVESTMENT IN LAOS

Text / photo: Zeldia Liang, Programme Officer, Research and Advocacy, International Programme Unit, Oxfam Hong Kong



**Many people in Hong Kong are unfamiliar with Laos – a landlocked country with a population the size of 70 per cent of Hong Kong's and borders China, Vietnam, Thailand, Cambodia and Myanmar. It was not until I joined Oxfam Hong Kong and participated in its China and developing countries projects in Laos that I realised that it not only is a beautiful country, but also has a close relationship with China.**

Laos has been referred to by many people as 'the Switzerland of the East', but it also ranks as one of the least developed countries according to the United Nations Human Development Index. Laos has been actively attracting foreign investment in recent years, leading to dramatic changes in many areas. When I was flying into Louang Namtha, I could see from the plane that rubber and banana plantations, mainly invested by Chinese investors, dominated the upland agricultural landscape of Laos. I studied the financial data I had at hand, which showed amazing economic growth – foreign direct investment (FDI) had enabled the gross domestic product (GDP) to reach 7.5 to 8 per cent over the past 10 years.

FDI has created a window of opportunities for the economic development and poverty reduction of Laos. But to small-scale farmers there, does it actually do more good than harm?

In May this year, I joined Oxfam's research partners – scholars from the National University of Laos (NUOL) and Yunnan Agricultural University – to see the impacts of China's FDI in three provinces in Laos.

## Is growing banana bad for small-scale farmers?

Throughout our busy two-week trip, practically all of the locals we met mentioned to us that Chinese agricultural investors use chemical fertilisers and pesticides. Some even vividly described how the size of the watermelons the Chinese grew could double overnight! This was obviously an unproven rumour, but it did tell us something about the impact of Chinese agricultural investment in Laos.

In recent years, banana plantations have developed rapidly in Laos, which has greatly increased demand for chemical fertilisers. While walking through these plantations, I saw discarded pesticide and chemical fertiliser packaging strewn all over the fields; among them was Paraquat, which has been banned in more than 20 countries because of its high toxicity. If I listed out the other chemicals that were used to grow bananas, I reckon you would not want to eat bananas anymore!

Most small-scale farmers in Laos cannot afford to use chemical fertilisers, so they know very little about how to use and protect themselves from them. Government officials from the Agricultural Department do not know how to regulate these products either because they do not understand the instructions, which are written in foreign language. The overuse of chemical fertilisers and pesticides harms the ecosystem, and hinders

small-scale farmers from developing sustainable livelihoods.

In view of this, some organisations have provided local farmers with training and protection, but these are only short term measures. To get to the root of the problem, we have to change the way agricultural investors grow their products.

On the other hand, the Chinese investors I met complained to me that the misuse of chemical fertilisers was due in part to the Laos government's inability to regulate the use of these chemicals, and partly because of the government's policy to completely ban the import of pesticides made in China when problems occurred because of the use of these fertilisers.

Ten years ago, farmers in Louang Namtha grew rubber because these were the main agricultural investment projects investors or the local government carried out. However, the market price for rubber has dropped in recent years as bananas have become a profit-making crop; naturally, investors have begun to grow bananas instead. Small-scale farmers have very little or no say in this regard.

## So, what is the solution?

Good agricultural investments can benefit small-scale farmers. It can enable them to learn new skills and develop new markets for their products, resulting in sustainable development. To achieve this, local farmers need to be able to obtain useful market information and local governments need to better understand what constitutes a 'good' investment.

In fact, banana plantations are only one part of China's foreign agricultural investment. Sustainable development and investment require a good business environment and sound regulations by local governments, as well as support from the government of investing countries.

## Opportunities and challenges

This trip has enabled me to understand more about the opportunities and challenges in development work. It has demonstrated how the rapid flow of global capital nowadays has created many challenges for traditional community-based development projects. It has also shown that in order to address poverty in this environment, we must do so through changes in cross-border policies and advocacy.

Oxfam has been actively working with community members and other stakeholders to build a world

without poverty and injustice through research, advocacy and integrated community development strategies. In Laos, for example, we have been building platforms for government officials, scholars, representatives from corporate and non-governmental organisations to explore how China's FDI in Laos can benefit small-scale farmers, investors and sustainable development in the country.



Traditional banana trees grown by small-scale farmers.



Discarded chemical fertiliser and pesticide packaging can be found all over the field. Some of these products cause water pollution.



A child helps his family harvest bananas.



## Dr. Trini Leung appointed new Director General of Oxfam Hong Kong

Dr. Trini Leung was appointed Director General of Oxfam Hong Kong, with effect from 1 October 2015. Trini said, 'I hope that by joining Oxfam in the fight against poverty, I will be able to unite the efforts of colleagues, partner organisations and the community at large to bring about change in the world and set a new milestone in the efforts to end poverty.'

Trini was born and raised in Hong Kong, and completed her Doctor of Philosophy in the politics of reform and new social movements in China at the University of Hong Kong. She has been working in local and overseas non-governmental organisations for over 30 years and has been committed to promoting sustainable development and poverty alleviation globally. Her scope of expertise covers labour issues, corporate social responsibility, climate change and international trade practices. She has engaged and led various international advocacy initiatives and development of civil society organisations.

Oxfam thanks Dr. Stephen Fisher for his contribution over the past three years. Under the leadership of Dr. Fisher, we have seen remarkable progress in our poverty alleviation and development work. After years of advocacy and research on our part, the Hong Kong Government set its first official poverty line and introduced the Low-income Working Family Allowance to help working poor families improve their basic standard of living.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS (in alphabetical order)

Charming Gifts Manufacturing Company Limited  
Lokki Lau

### Home for Dinner campaign 2015

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**Oxfam Ambassador:**  
Terence Chui



## PARENT-CHILD ACTIVITY A CLOUD ON THE HORIZON: INTERACTIVE THEATRE ON CLIMATE CHANGE

Adapting the process drama approach – where students and teachers work in and out of role – the workshop allows participants to use their imagination and body language to explore the impacts of climate change.

**Date** : 30 January, 2016 (Saturday)  
**Time** : 2:30 pm – 5:30 pm  
**Venue** : Oxfam Hong Kong Interactive Education Centre, 9/F China United Centre, 28 Marble Road, North Point  
**Language**: Cantonese

For parents and their children aged 9 or above.  
 Please arrive at 2:20 pm.  
 Participants will be asked to sit on the floor. Please remove your shoes before entering the centre.



## SHARING SESSION ON OXFAM'S HUMANITARIAN AND DISASTER RISK MANAGEMENT WORK

In any disaster, impoverished people are affected the most, because they are the most vulnerable and lack the resources to start over. Disasters are unavoidable, but effective disaster preparedness measures and disaster risk reduction work can help communities be better prepared for disasters.

In this sharing session, you will learn more about Oxfam's emergency efforts – from prevention to response to reconstruction – through wars, earthquakes, floods and typhoons.

**Date** : 25 February, 2016 (Thursday)  
**Time** : 7:30 pm–9:30 pm  
**Venue** : 17/F, China United Centre, 28 Marble Road, North Point  
**Speaker**: Kate Lee, Programme Officer – Humanitarian, International Programme Unit, Oxfam Hong Kong



## MEETING ORGANISATIONS IN HONG KONG: ELDPATHY

Eldpathy was established in 2013. It is a social enterprise that aims to help participants better understand the issues poor elderly people face 'first hand' by wearing a specially designed suit and undertaking a series of fun tasks. Eldpathy also invites elderly people who live in poverty to share their experience and interact with participants.

### During the activity, you will:

1. wear a specially designed suit to finish a task
2. experience real scenarios and hardships faced by poor elderly people
3. visit elderly people who live in poverty

**You and your friends are invited!**

**Date and time**: 12 March 2016 (Saturday), 2:30 pm – 5:00 pm  
**Where** : North Point  
**Meeting Point**: 2:15 pm at OHK office (17/F, China United Centre, 28 Marble Road, North Point)

### Oxfam Donor Activities – Reply Form

Please fill and send the form to Oxfam Hong Kong, 17/F China United Centre, 28 Marble Road, North Point, Hong Kong.  
 Please write 'Donor Activities' on the envelope.  
 For enquiries, please contact us by phone:  
**HK: (852) 3120 5000 Fax: (852) 2590 6880 MACAU TOLL FREE HOTLINE: 0800 809 Fax: (853) 2875 7667**

Full Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Age: \_\_\_\_\_ Occupation: \_\_\_\_\_ Donor No. (if any): \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone (Day): \_\_\_\_\_ (Night): \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Please  
tick ✓

#### ☐ Parent-child Activity (30 January, 2016 Saturday)

Name of Participant: \_\_\_\_\_ Age: \_\_\_\_\_ Name of Participant: \_\_\_\_\_ Age: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Participant: \_\_\_\_\_ Age: \_\_\_\_\_ Name of Participant: \_\_\_\_\_ Age: \_\_\_\_\_

#### ☐ Sharing session on "Oxfam's work on humanitarian and disaster risk management" (25 February, 2016 Thursday)

No. of Participants: \_\_\_\_\_

#### ☐ Meeting Organisations in Hong Kong: (12 March, 2016 Saturday)

No. of Participants: \_\_\_\_\_