

IN PARTNERSHIP

May 2019



** The name of this woman has been changed to protect her identity.*

Repairing Home and Health

When dengue fever took the life of her son, it seemed that things could not possibly become more difficult for Yên, living in Binh Phuoc, Vietnam – but a horrific accident changed everything, leaving her with a significant head injury and without a safe place to call home.

After the accident, Yên was hospitalised for some time before being allowed to return home. She had been living with her mother and brother.

While she received advice from a traditional medicine specialist to assist with her rehabilitation, Yên also required ongoing medical attention, including an operation to her injured hand, costing VND 6,000,000 (\$A360) – a huge amount of money for a person in her situation.

When she returned to live at her mother's house, it soon became apparent that it would not be a safe place to recover. Her brother, who was convinced that she should move out, became repeatedly violent towards her and left her no choice but to leave the family home, with nowhere to go.

Because of generous donations from people like you, the Binh Phuoc Association for the Disabled, The Poor and Orphaned (BPADPO) is able to help people such as Yên. When Mr Mon, a BPADPO District Representative, heard about Yên's

situation, he found out that her sister owned a vacant house in the village. With the help of generous supporters, and through BPADPO's Community Support in Health and Self Care project, Mr Mon gained permission from Yên's sister to repair the floor and install a new roof, as well as an inside toilet and a wall to create some rooms.

A toilet and secure shelter may seem simple, but they improve dignity, health, sanitation and societal inclusion for people like Yên. Without access to a toilet, people have no choice but to defecate in the open. This makes the environment unclean, with faeces contaminating water and food. Without proper hygiene, diarrhoeal disease can spread quickly.

It also puts people at risk of being attacked. For people living with disabilities, particularly those that affect mobility, defecating outside can be difficult and unsafe. As a people group already facing social exclusion, this puts them at particular risk. Women and girls face a high risk of being attacked in these situations. So for Yên, to have an indoor toilet means so much.

BPADPO covered the costs to complete Yên's new house, while her family contributed labour. Yên moved in just before Tet (Vietnamese New Year), giving her a sense of independence and, importantly, a safe place to live with her children.

Now, as she sits inside her home in Binh Phuoc, Yên's hair is pulled to one side and evidence of her head injury remains – but things have changed significantly in her life.

"I am very happy. When I got this house, I cried for three days and three nights. My son is also very happy," she said.

While life looks hopeful for Yên, there is still much work to be done in rural Vietnam. Only one third of the rural population has access to adequate sanitation facilities, and the outlook for those living with a disability in the Binh Phuoc Province can be particularly poor.

With your financial support, BPADPO can continue to provide practical help to people like Yên, giving them a new outlook on life and hope for a better future.

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News & Events



Walk for Hope 2019 There is still time to donate!

A huge thanks to everyone who has participated in this year's Walk for Hope. So far we have raised over **\$13,000**. This money will help plant new churches, train pastors, and send evangelists to share Jesus' message of hope to more people.

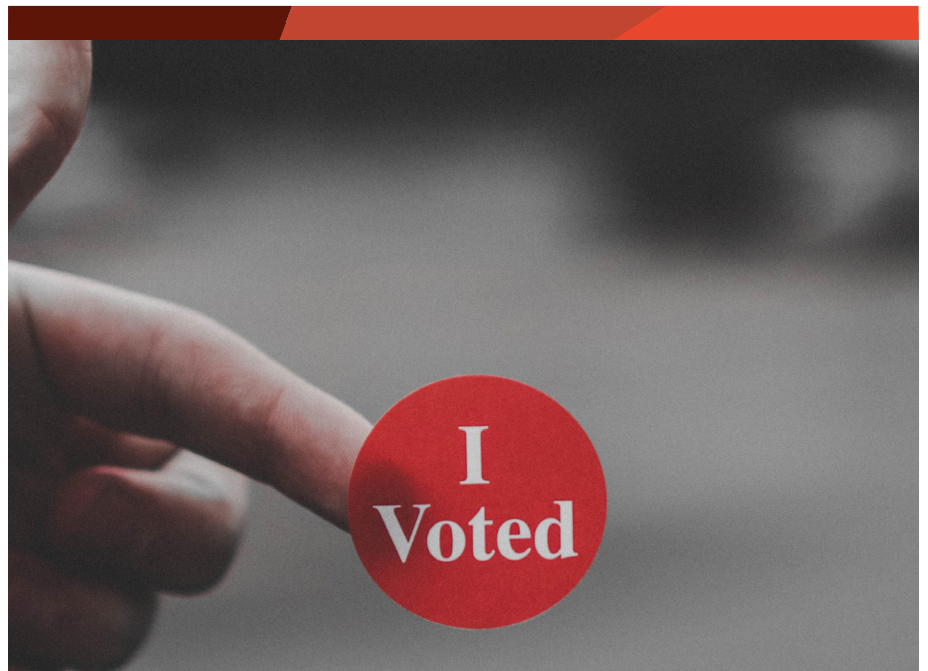
Visit: www.walkforhope.com.au to make a donation before the 19th of May.

Reconciliation Week. May 27 – June 3.

At GMP, through our Indigenous Ministries Australia program (IMA), we're committed to walking the journey of reconciliation with our Indigenous brothers and sisters. We're passionate about helping us all make this journey, as we believe it's an intrinsic part of our identity as Australian Christians who call this wonderful land our home. Contact GMP to receive your resource kit to get involved and learn more about reconciliation.

SYG 2019: MOMENTUM

State Youth Games (SYG) MOMENTUM is a sport, art and camping event like no other for youth and young adults across Victoria. You and your friends are invited to camp for the Queen's Birthday long weekend in June, play sport in a welcoming environment suitable for all skill levels, and explore new ways of looking at life and faith in an inclusive and open Christian community. Register now!
<http://stateyouthgames.com/vic>



Remember the Poor

At the risk of being misinterpreted I want to reflect for a few moments on the current election environment in Australia as we approach voting on May 18th. The election campaign seeks to lock you and me into a position of being on one side or the other! We are being polarised and encouraged to hold fixed opinions about the 'other side' and the risk of trusting them as compared to the other!

Two weeks ago, unnoticed by many of us and with little media attention, the Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade of the Australian Parliament released a report recommending that the federal government, within a year, commit to a set timeframe of no more than five years for increasing Australia's aid funding to at least 0.5 per cent of gross national income (GNI) and 0.7 per cent within 10 years. It is currently 0.21% of GNI.

It is a remarkable and bipartisan report – parliamentarians from both sides together calling for deep change in Australia's foreign aid program, including a change of name to 'Development Partnerships'. There was no dissent. People from across the spectrum of Australian politics presented a new vision and understanding of our collective response to the poor.

I was speechless and even excited as I read the report. I was then left

in limbo as the election arguments boil down to a very different personal cry – 'What about me'? Here lies the greatest challenge for us all. How do we place the reality of the needs of others before what we want or believe we deserve? Vote winning policies hinge on how we are personally impacted. How can such policies instead hinge on the question of benefiting the poor and Australia's Indigenous peoples?

In Galatians, Paul, is confronted by the Council in Jerusalem about the content of his preaching. Those in Jerusalem affirm that what he is proclaiming is orthodox and needs nothing added to it. They ask one thing of him – that he remember the poor! His response – 'I am eager to do that' (Galatians 2:10).

Some ask – which poor did the Council mean? Those in Jerusalem or all the poor? We will never know the answer and debating this misses the point and leads to a lack of sensitivity to the poor. Paul's answer shows that his enthusiasm is directed towards others and not towards himself.

Australia, God asks one thing of us... that we remember the poor. Can we say with Paul 'I am eager to do that'?

John Gilmore,
Executive Officer



Bright Solutions reflects hope for women through empowerment.

Empowering Women, Challenging Poverty

Vietnam is currently focusing on a number of the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), including Sustainable Poverty Reduction. Bright Solutions is focusing particularly on No Poverty; Gender Equality; Decent Work and Reduced Inequalities, as well as Women's Economic Empowerment, for which the Australian Government has a proactive role.

All this means that Vietnam is developing a more comprehensive, multidimensional outlook towards poverty reduction, recognising that underprivileged people not only need income, but access to the necessities of life such as healthcare, education, employment, improved living conditions and information. According to the city's Sustainable Poverty Steering Board, poor households need help developing their finances, and the best way to achieve this is to provide vocational training.

Praise God that Bright Solutions already has a presence and history here, in exactly these strategic areas. We are already active in addressing some of these SDGs. Bright Solutions Vietnam assists marginalised women to learn sewing and handcraft skills, and journeys with them through programs that continually increase their skills and expertise. Women's living conditions have improved due to stable income and savings, house repairs, purchasing a

washing machine, and payment for children's school fees. Women are able to take out loans because of Bright Solutions' backing and work consistency. Women have easier access to healthcare; most can now buy health insurance. They all have mobile phones (not a surprise), but some have been learning how to use and access information on smartphones – they've become more aware of the international world, thus gaining self-confidence. Our vocational training gives them employable skills, with some women involved in Excel training and English communication and, more strategically, all are involved in our Empowerment Program that focuses on professional soft skills (personal attributes that enable someone to interact effectively and harmoniously with other people).

We focus on teams. The joy of our team environment is seeing relationships grow and mature. Living out acts of kindness and compassion are tiny moments of joy when we see ladies share breakfast with someone less well off. Moving to new work premises in 2018 brought renewed struggles in this, as the women had to adjust to an open plan workspace. Learning tolerance is a daily issue through which we highlight forgiveness and acceptance. With God's grace, we've started 2019 with a far better community attitude.

Many of the women delight in sharing firsthand what we do when

people visit. Through the support and encouragement of GMP, they get a new understanding that a world of believers from different cultures care for them. They appreciate that people have an interest in supporting their land and its people, showing them they are not alone. Generosity in hospitality is very important to them. When foreigners try what they offer, and accept their hospitality, it speaks volumes in breaking down barriers. During these visits, the women are also reminded that people are praying for them and financially supporting Bright Solutions. God is at work in and through those connections.

Bright Solutions is gaining recognition, more so amongst INGOs and the international community through media, international markets and referrals. Despite the continued need to expand and share, our nine-year presence is seeing organisations reconnecting with us from several years ago. Bright Solutions' ultimate goal is to pass to local ownership. Please pray for discernment in finding the right people.

Fiona Briers,
Vietnam



Keep up to date with Bright Solutions by liking the Bright Solutions Facebook page:
www.facebook.com/brightsolutionsvietnam/



Equipping and Encouraging the Next Generation

Lillian has been a house parent at Khayelihle Children's Village (KCV) for over 21 years.

Having been a house parent at Khayelihle Children's Village (KCV) for over 21 years, Lillian has faced the joys and challenges of raising many children who may not have otherwise had the loving arms of a mother to guide them through life. She's also faced the joys and challenges of letting go so that they can reconnect with their families.

Lillian was born into a Christian family and knew God from a young age. She also knew that she loved children, and when she found out about KCV through an advertisement at her local church, she was confident that working with the children's village was in God's plan for her.

When she first started working as a house parent, Lillian realised that her main role was to encourage, teach and motivate the children in her care, just as if they were her own children. One of her biggest challenges has been being treated as a worker by relatives of children in her care, when the babies and children she cares for simply see her as a parent.

While Lillian loves and guides all of the children as if they were her own,

she's excited that KCV has made it their goal to reconnect children with their families whenever it is safe to do so. She has seen several children return to live with their families and says that many of them have adjusted well.

"It is good for children to reconnect with their families. I feel happy about it if they are going to be with their parents," Lillian said.

For those that remain in KCV's care, family groups are formed to give children a stable home environment.

Those who remain in KCV's care live in families with up to 10 children of various ages. The goal is for these groups to be a family to those who otherwise would not have one, and people like Lillian make this happen.

"God sets the lonely in families." (Psalm 68:6)

Lillian ensures that the children she looks after are fed, clothed and loved. Thanks to the generous donations of sponsors, the children are able to have a good education and have opportunities to excel in sport, music and other hobbies.

For Lillian, watching the children thrive and grow into capable adults is a joy that will never grow old.

"I feel so proud about my work, especially seeing them grow up and go to university, and some getting married. I have sons and daughters, including grandchildren, and some are well educated and doing great jobs," she said of children she has cared for over the years.

Throughout her time as a house parent, Lillian has also seen children experience great spiritual growth, and has even seen some of the children she's raised go on to pursue full time ministry as pastors.

Without the generous and continued support of sponsors, KCV could not provide for the needs of the children in its care, or pursue the important work of reconnecting children with their families. Lillian is grateful for the impact that sponsors continue to have on the village, whether it is through sponsorship, prayer or a physical visit.

"We are so excited, because we know that these people are the ones who help us," she said.



Happy Mother's Day! May 12.

This edition of In Partnership includes inspiring stories of amazing women across the globe. GMP wishes to celebrate with every spiritual mum, grandmother, mum and mum-to-be this Mother's Day!

