



CHILDFUND'S SUPPORTER MAG

AUTUMN 2015

# CHILDWORLD

CHILDFUND  
RESPONDS TO  
CYCLONE PAM

EBOLA:  
ONE YEAR ON

LEAVING A  
LIFE-CHANGING  
LEGACY FOR  
LAOS



ChildFund  
Australia



# A FAIR GO FOR EVERY CHILD

We can be immensely proud of Australian Aid and its role in ending poverty – but we need to finish the job

Twenty years ago around 60 per cent of the Vietnamese population was living below the poverty line. This was when ChildFund began working in Vietnam, concentrating its work in the mountainous, northern provinces. These remote communities, mostly families from ethnic minority populations, were among the poorest in the country facing multiple barriers to development.

Fast-forward two decades, and Vietnam is now defined as a lower middle income country, with enormous gains having been made in child health, education, household living standards, water and sanitation.

The number of children dying from preventable disease has reduced dramatically. Schools, health clinics and hospitals have been built. Villages have access to markets via newly tarred roads. Family incomes, on average, have increased from less than \$100 per annum in 1986 to \$1,130 in 2010.

Australian Aid has been an important factor in this transformation. Of course aid is not the only factor. Economic growth across the region has been crucial and the Government of Vietnam has made tremendous progress.

Most of all, the effort of local people in village communities has brought about massive positive change. But aid has been vital, particularly in ensuring that benefits extend to inaccessible and marginalised communities who may have otherwise been left untouched by general economic growth.

Since first visiting Vietnam almost ten years ago, I have seen how the lives of children in even the poorest of communities are improving, with opportunities available to them that would have been unheard of during their parents' childhood. Yet, when I visit I am also reminded of the huge task remaining for the 20 per cent of children in Vietnam who are still living in extreme poverty.

We should be proud of the vital role Australians have played in helping millions of children survive and thrive, not only in Vietnam but throughout our region and beyond. But we have to finish the job.

I am more determined than ever to continue what has been a significant global effort for the past 20 years to end global poverty and ensure every child can realise their right to survive,



to have basic opportunities and to live a decent life.

This is why I encourage you to support the Campaign for Australian Aid (learn how on page 3). Extreme poverty has been halved in our lifetime; let's continue this vital work and create a world fit for children.

*Nigel Spence*

Nigel Spence  
CEO  
ChildFund Australia

ChildFund Australia is an independent and non-religious international development organisation that works to reduce poverty for children in the developing world. ChildFund Australia is a member of the ChildFund Alliance – a global network of 12 organisations which assists more than 15 million children and families in 58 countries.

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**Front cover:** Five-year-old Paloma from Vanuatu plays with toys that survived Cyclone Pam at the remains of her destroyed preschool. Read about ChildFund's Vanuatu emergency response on page 3.



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ChildFund Australia is a member of the Australian Council for International Development (ACFID).

we're for  
*Australian Aid*

## STAY CONNECTED!

We would love you to join us online and stay up to date with our latest news. You can sign up to our blog at [www.childfund.org.au/blog](http://www.childfund.org.au/blog)



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# CHILDFUND RESPONDS TO CYCLONE PAM

ChildFund Australia has launched an emergency appeal to help children affected by Cyclone Pam in Vanuatu



Mother-of-three Margaret says: "We've lost everything; all our crops. All we can eat now is fallen bananas and coconuts but it's not enough for our family."

Vanuatu has been devastated by one of the strongest cyclones to ever hit the South Pacific. Cyclone Pam has affected almost two-thirds of Vanuatu's entire population, including 82,000 children across 22 islands.

The category five cyclone, which hit the country on 13 March, has destroyed homes, wiped out crops and contaminated water supplies.

Tens of thousands of people have been left homeless by the disaster. Ten-year-old James (pictured above), who is currently living under a

temporary tent with his family, says: "I was in a community shelter with my parents. When the strong wind came it was very noisy, I was afraid. Then my sisters and I fell asleep. Next morning we came to our house and it was destroyed. My school was destroyed too. Now I sleep with my parents in the tent and can't attend classes."

Access to clean water is also an immediate concern for families like James'. Most water tanks have been damaged or destroyed by the cyclone and wells contaminated. Some people are forced to walk long distances to

fetch or purchase freshwater, while others are so desperate that they are boiling and drinking seawater.

ChildFund Australia is working with Live & Learn Vanuatu to restore access to clean water to help ensure the health of children in cyclone-ravaged areas. Thank you to our generous supporters who have already donated to help the people of Vanuatu. Your support will make a tremendous difference.



**Please donate now:**  
[www.childfund.org.au/appeal/emergency-response-vanuatu](http://www.childfund.org.au/appeal/emergency-response-vanuatu)

## CHILDFUND AUSTRALIA SAYS: WE'RE FOR AUSTRALIAN AID

ChildFund Australia has united with more than 50 other organisations to launch the Campaign for Australian Aid. Australian Aid has played a major role in alleviating extreme poverty in our region. Unfortunately, this work is now under threat. If you believe in a fair go for every child, stand up for Australian Aid!



Join the campaign today  
[www.childfund.org.au/australian-aid](http://www.childfund.org.au/australian-aid)

## ADVOCATING FOR CHILDREN ON THE WORLD STAGE

ChildFund Australia staffers, Mark McPeak and Sanwar Ali, travelled to Japan in March to present at the Third UN World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR). ChildFund believes children and youth have an important role to play in actively reducing the risk of disasters in their communities.



Learn more about our DRR work  
[www.childfund.org.au/children-drr](http://www.childfund.org.au/children-drr)

## CHILDFUND'S BIG ASK KICKS OFF!

ChildFund's Big Ask is Australia's biggest trivia challenge to fight global child poverty! In April-May, Aussies from all around the country will be hosting trivia events to raise money to help children living in some of the world's poorest communities. We're bringing you the good in a good night out!



It's not too late to register  
[www.childfundsbigask.org.au](http://www.childfundsbigask.org.au)



## EBOLA: ONE YEAR ON

One year after the World Health Organisation officially declared an Ebola outbreak in West Africa, hope is returning

**I** survived through 11 years of war, which impacted me completely because I lost my job, I lost relatives – but what is happening with Ebola is worse,” says Yusufu Kamara, program manager at ChildFund Sierra Leone. “In the war, they would tell you the rebels are coming, so you would move to another village. I moved from one district to the other, until I ended up in [the capital] Freetown.

“But Ebola is like fighting an invisible enemy. Even if you have guns, you cannot fire. And the doctors, the people who were supposed to protect us, they were the ones who were dying first. So the country was scared.”

A year on, Ebola has officially claimed more than 10,000 lives, although the actual number is likely to be far higher. Just as terrible is the fact that an estimated 16,600 children have lost one or both parents, or their primary giver.

### I SURVIVED THROUGH 11 YEARS OF WAR BUT WHAT IS HAPPENING WITH EBOLA IS WORSE

Yusufu says: “I thought the situation was only going to get worse. We didn’t have any hope. But with the international response, with additional testing facilities from all over the world and additional trained personnel, we realised that, in fact, this is something that can be defeated.”

While the worst of the crisis appears to be over, life is far from returning to normal. Pockets of Ebola continue to flare up, keeping everyone on high alert. ChildFund’s response remains focused on the care and support of children orphaned by Ebola.

Through the establishment of interim care centres in Liberia and Sierra Leone, children are provided with food, shelter, medical care and psychosocial support for the 21-day quarantine period. To date, 400 children have



ChildFund is helping children affected by Ebola in Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone

accessed the centres and almost 300 have been reunited with extended family or alternative families. The interim care centres will continue running as long as they are needed.

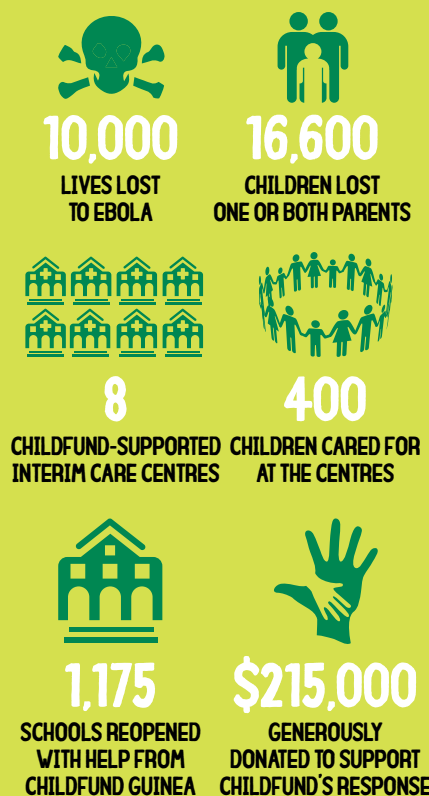
ChildFund’s Ebola response has also recently shifted to supporting the government to reopen schools. In Guinea, ChildFund has helped 1,175 schools reopen since January, setting up hand-washing stations and providing non-contact thermometers to help protect more than 500,000 students and teachers.

In Sierra Leone, ChildFund is helping schools to implement the same infection prevention and control standards used at the interim care centres to ensure schools are disinfected.

“It is getting better,” says Yusufu. “We have not defeated Ebola yet but hope is returning.”

**To help us continue to care for vulnerable children and support recovery efforts, donate today**  
[www.childfund.org.au/appeal/ebola](http://www.childfund.org.au/appeal/ebola)

### EBOLA IN NUMBERS



Figures accurate at 16 March 2015

## DOES SPONSORSHIP REALLY CHANGE LIVES?

In her own words, 17-year-old Manisha explains how sponsorship has transformed her and her family’s lives



Manisha from India has been sponsored through ChildFund since 2005

**I** belong to a poor and humble family. I am studying in 12th grade, and my younger brother is in seventh grade. Both my parents are working hard to give us a decent life. We are now a happy family, and I love my parents the most.

But a few years ago, our family was not what it is today. My father was struggling to meet our basic needs. There have been times when my mother had to sleep with an empty stomach, as there was not enough food for all of us.

Just to add to our family income, we all started making bangles at home. I never liked that work of welding the ends of bangles together with the help of a gas stove. We used to sit for hours, welding and colouring the bangles in a very unpleasant atmosphere.

Though I was going to school, I had to sit with my parents in sorting or colouring the bangles soon after returning home. I was unable to give much time to my studies.

### NOT ONLY DID I START GETTING THE BENEFITS OF BEING A SPONSORED CHILD, BUT OUR ENTIRE FAMILY BENEFITED TOO

Both my mother and father were having health issues because of the smoke they were exposed to during the day-long bangle work. Even I had developed chest pains and was admitted to hospital several times. But we had no other option then but continuing this unhealthy work.

Things started to change when I

became associated with ChildFund India. I was enrolled in the Disha Children’s Program [ChildFund India’s local partner in Manisha’s community] and also got a sponsor in 2005.

Not only did I start getting the benefits of being a sponsored child, but our entire family benefited too. Slowly, we reduced the bangle-making work at home.

In 2010, my mother was selected as a community mobiliser with UNICEF India because of the training she received through ChildFund. Then, we completely stopped bangle-making at home, and my father joined a glass factory as a supervisor. It’s purely our family’s association with ChildFund that helped bring in these changes.

As a sponsored child, I am very active in all program activities conducted in our town. Earlier, I was a member of a ChildFund-supported children’s club. Now I am an active member of a youth club. We have been participating in various training programs designed to develop our skills and leadership qualities.

I was very quiet and shy as a child, but ChildFund’s activities have truly helped me to open up and express my thoughts clearly. I am now an educated and confident girl. I am well aware of my rights as well as my responsibilities.

Now, I have a vision for my life – to become a doctor and serve the deprived and marginalised communities that don’t have access to quality health services even today.

### MEET YOUR SPONSORED CHILD!

Are you one of our 45,000 child sponsors? Do you often find yourself thinking about your sponsored child? Do you love to travel? If this is you, we have your next holiday sorted! Get off the beaten track and meet

your sponsored child in their home community. Lana from Victoria says: “I had such a wonderful day and it really made my sponsorship feel so much more real to me.”

**Start planning today, email**  
[info@childfund.org.au](mailto:info@childfund.org.au)





# AROUND THE WORLD

## BOLIVIA

Guide mothers trained by ChildFund Bolivia help to educate parents in their local villages about early childhood development. Currently, ChildFund is supporting 99 guide mothers who visit families at their homes in 14 isolated, rural communities in Bolivia.



These mobile play units supported by ChildFund Philippines are making a big difference in remote villages that are located too far from established early childhood development centres. With the help of trained volunteers, infants in these communities now have access to early education.



## PHILIPPINES



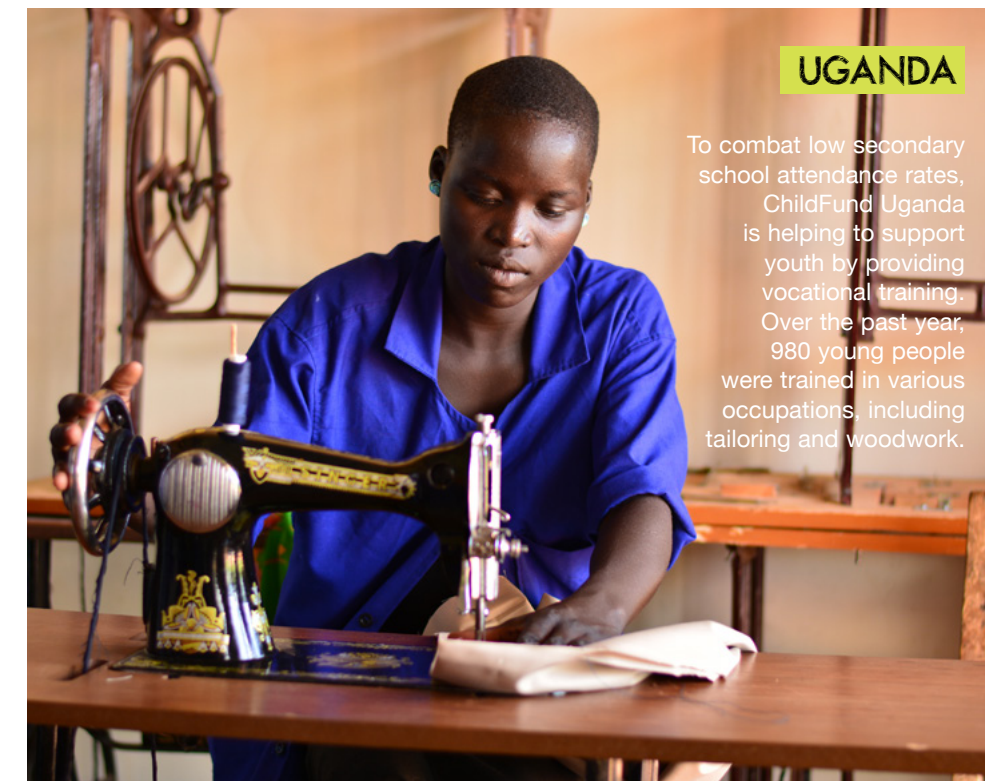
## KENYA

Halima is one of many dedicated community health volunteers working with ChildFund Kenya to support children and their families affected by HIV and AIDS, so they can build a brighter future.

# AROUND THE WORLD

## UGANDA

To combat low secondary school attendance rates, ChildFund Uganda is helping to support youth by providing vocational training. Over the past year, 980 young people were trained in various occupations, including tailoring and woodwork.



Recently, over 2,000 children from one of the poorest communities in Vietnam received fleecy jumpers from ChildFund Vietnam to help keep them warm and healthy throughout the cold winter months.

## VIETNAM



## SRI LANKA



In the past financial year, ChildFund Sri Lanka has supported classroom renovations, improvements to water and sanitation facilities and provided learning materials to 17 rural schools in Sri Lanka, which has benefited over 2,400 children like 11-year-old Pavithra (right) and her friends.



# A LIFE-CHANGING LEGACY IN LAOS

The Rhodes family are ensuring the memories of their loved ones live on in Laos



losing my niece and nephew I wanted to do something that was related to children," says Gavin's brother, Ben.

"Also Lea, our sister-in-law, had a lot of opportunities for education in Laos which many children don't. So being able to give more children better education opportunities will hopefully bring some light from an otherwise dark situation."

**WE WANTED TO DO SOMETHING TO ENSURE GAVIN, LEA, JADE AND MANFRED WOULD ALWAYS BE REMEMBERED**

In October 2013, Gavin Rhodes, his wife Lea, and their children, three-year-old Jade and 17-month-old Manfred (pictured above) tragically perished in a plane crash in Laos – the family's much-loved second home.

"To lose four people from your family is unimaginable. That's the one thing we heard from everyone, 'I can't believe how you must be feeling'," says Melissa, Gavin's sister. "My reply was that, 'I couldn't either'. It was just surreal. It still is to be honest."

The Rhodes family were overwhelmed by the huge outpouring of support they received from their family, friends, neighbours, co-workers, local community and the wider Australian public.

"We decided we wanted to do something to ensure Gavin, Lea, Jade and Manfred would always be remembered. We wanted to ensure they would make a difference," says Melissa.

That's where ChildFund Australia entered the story. The Rhodes family decided to fundraise to support the construction of a four-room preschool in a remote village in Nonghet district in northern Laos, where ChildFund has been working since 2010.

"The project we chose had special meaning to me personally, as after

of Gavin, Lea, Jade and Manfred. This will fund not only the construction of the preschool but also support other parts of the project, including teacher training, bathrooms for the school and learning materials.

This preschool will be the first of its kind in one of ChildFund's newest partner villages in remote Nonghet district in northern Laos.

Now, not only will infants in the village have access to early education for the first time, but their parents will be able to work in the fields without worry and their older siblings will be able to stay in school rather than be forced to drop out of education to care for them. This one preschool really does have the power to transform an entire village.

"I always believe that if you give children a brighter start in life, it will have a much greater effect on their community," says Ben. "In the future, those same children will hopefully be able to give back to their community and add even more benefit to the next generation of children."

*ChildFund Australia would like to thank the entire Rhodes family for their incredible fundraising and the life-changing legacy they have left for children and families in Laos.*



# "I AM NOT AFRAID ANYMORE"

Laos is the most bombed country per capita in the world. More than 270 million cluster munitions were dropped on Laos during the war. Yet 30 per cent of all bombs failed to detonate and remain live today.

Every year, unexploded bombs (UXOs) in Laos still claim dozens of lives, many of whom are children.

"I am afraid young children who don't know the danger [of the UXOs] will dig the land and touch them when playing in the fields. I am also afraid when slashing the fields because bombs can be everywhere," says Mai, a resident of a small rural village close to the Vietnamese border.

For Mai's village the scars of a UXO accident remain fresh. Two children were killed and three others from the same family severely injured whilst farming their plot of land – the main livelihood of families in the village. Mai herself has two children and has been working on her plot of land for more than 20 years.

In 2014, ChildFund Laos supported the clearance of 48,267 m2 of farming land in Mai's village thanks to the support of generous Australians who donated to our Clear Bombs Laos appeal. Sixteen cluster munitions – the main form of UXOs in Laos – were found and removed.



Now, Mai and other families in her village have access to more available farming land and no longer have to worry about the risk of unexploded bombs each day they work.

Mai says: "I am not afraid anymore because the land has been cleared and is safe. I feel happy because we will harvest our produce without risks."

*ChildFund Australia would like to thank all those who donated to this appeal! Over \$54,000 was raised to support families in rural northern Laos. More bomb clearance work will soon be undertaken with these funds.*



## MAKE A CHILD'S DREAM COME TRUE!

The simple gift of a bicycle can change the life of a child living in a remote community. It can be the difference between getting to school and missing out on an education altogether. You can join hundreds of other awesome Aussies who have provided bikes for children in Cambodia, Laos, Indonesia and Ethiopia!

Donate a dream bike today:  
[www.childfund.org.au/dream-bike](http://www.childfund.org.au/dream-bike)

Families from a remote village in Laos can now finally farm their land without fear of unexploded bombs

## GIFTS FOR GOOD

Thanks to your support, here are some of the gifts making a big impact for families around the world!



**188 GIRLS**

IN INDONESIA NOW HAVE ACCESS TO EDUCATION THANKS TO SCHOOL SCHOLARSHIPS



**2,500 CHICKENS**

ARE PROVIDING A SOURCE OF FOOD AND INCOME FOR 850 CAMBODIAN FAMILIES



**3,885 MOSQUITO NETS**

ARE PROTECTING KIDS FROM MALARIA IN THE PHILIPPINES



**83 ORPHANED CHILDREN**

FROM ETHIOPIA ARE BEING PROVIDED WITH FOOD FOR A YEAR



**2,032 CHILDREN**

IN VIETNAM ARE BENEFITTING FROM EQUIPMENT NEEDED FOR THEIR EDUCATION



## HELLO FROM LAOS!



In January 2015, a small group of ChildFund Australia supporters embarked on the Laos Cultural Discovery Tour, where they had the opportunity to meet some of the children their fundraising will support. These inspiring Aussies raised over \$14,000 to help provide infants with the first ever preschool in their village!

## CONQUERING KILIMANJARO

This mother-daughter duo are taking on Africa's Kilimanjaro with ChildFund Australia



After completing ChildFund's Vietnam Trek for Toddlers in 2011, mum-of-two Sheila is again putting on her hiking boots. This time she is gearing up to conquer Africa's Mount Kilimanjaro with her daughter right by her side.

"Vietnam was a life-changing experience. I loved meeting new people who are passionate about social justice," says Sheila. "For me it's all about being involved in something where you are helping to make a real difference."

"When I came back from Vietnam I just wanted to do more," adds Sheila. And by more she means teaming up with her daughter, 15-year-old Taela, and other dedicated ChildFund Australia supporters to take on the world's highest freestanding mountain in the world!

"We are both so excited. Neither of us have been anywhere in Africa before

so it is all brand new. I am getting goosebumps just thinking about it," Sheila says. "Vietnam was wonderful but I missed not being able to share it with my family so I just can't wait for Kilimanjaro!"

This seven day adventure will surely put the whole team to the test. They will trek through grasslands, alpine meadows and across rocky peaks before reaching almost 5,900m above sea level and taking in the sunrise over the East African plains at the summit of the infamous Mount Kilimanjaro.

### FOR ME IT'S ALL ABOUT BEING INVOLVED IN SOMETHING WHERE YOU ARE HELPING TO MAKE A REAL DIFFERENCE

By taking on this mammoth challenge, Sheila, Taela and their fellow trekkers will also help to provide clean water for a rural village in Ethiopia. This will mean the children and families living in the village will no longer be forced to walk up to six hours each day to fetch water.

"I am all for exposing my girls to this type of experience at an early age. I think in Australia we can become a little ignorant of the way other people in the world live," says Sheila. "For me, I don't think there is anything better than to see in your children that they acknowledge what is important in life and appreciate what they have."



### CITY 2 SURF 4 KIDS!

Make this your year to conquer the infamous Heartbreak Hill while making a big difference for children living in poverty. Fundraising for kids is the perfect way to keep you motivated every step of the way until you hit the finish line on beautiful Bondi Beach!

Not in Sydney? Find a run near you: [www.childfund.org.au/fundraising/run-kids](http://www.childfund.org.au/fundraising/run-kids)

### SHARE YOUR BIRTHDAY LOVE

Make your next celebration even more special by celebrating with us! In lieu of gifts this year you could provide a goat for a Kenyan family, books for children in Guatemala or even a sewing machine and training for a woman in Cambodia or Laos!

Learn more here: [www.childfund.org.au/fundraising/celebrate-pledge](http://www.childfund.org.au/fundraising/celebrate-pledge)



### DANCING CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE!

These kindergarten kids from Kingston School in Indonesia used their dancing skills to support their annual fundraiser for ChildFund Australia. This year the school raised almost \$5,000 to support ChildFund Myanmar's programs to stop child trafficking, which means since 2011 they have raised nearly \$15,000 in support of children living in poverty!

Find out how you can help too: [www.childfund.org.au/fundraise-for-us](http://www.childfund.org.au/fundraise-for-us)

### YOU SAID WHAT?

We love connecting with you online! This recent message from Leonie Simpson on Twitter made us smile: "I cannot believe my @ChildFundAU sponsor child is turning 11 this year!! It's so awesome to help my little lady have a bright future :)"

Join us online: [facebook.com/childfundaustalia](https://facebook.com/childfundaustalia) [twitter.com/childfundau](https://twitter.com/childfundau)



# JOIN THE CHILDFUND FAMILY!

THERE ARE SO MANY WAYS YOU CAN MAKE  
LIFE BETTER FOR CHILDREN LIVING IN POVERTY.



[WWW.CHILDFUND.ORG.AU](http://WWW.CHILDFUND.ORG.AU)



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INVOLVED



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ONLINE

MAKE A  
BEQUEST



CHALLENGE  
YOURSELF



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