THINK PINK

How pink phones are changing lives in Cambodia
Thanks to your generosity, we have made an impact on the lives of many people over recent months, including those in South Sudan.

In a town called Kurumuk, in what was then southern Sudan, I watched as refugees returned from Ethiopia in 2008. I was struck by the phenomenal strength and personal courage they displayed as they embraced rebuilding their land and lives, despite the many challenges they knew they faced.

Today, just three years after gaining independence from Sudan, it is devastating to see those same forces powered to flee their homes due to violence and fear.

Your support has enabled us to stand in solidarity with the people of South Sudan as the humanitarian crisis there escalated (see page 4). With 1.5 million people displaced and an estimated 4.3 million in need of assistance, we are there providing clean water, food and other basic essentials.

We are also responding to the humanitarian crisis in Gaza (page 5), providing food and sanitation as well as supporting hospitals and health clinics as they struggle to cope with large numbers of injured people.

Your support is vital in times of emergency but also in our long-term development work, like the Pink Phones project in Cambodia supporting female farmers to boost their harvest and their profits as well as helping them to use their voice for good.

Did you know?

Oxfam has been working to change lives in Cambodia since 1979, teaming up with local partners, community groups and the government. Your support is helping to provide clean water and sanitation facilities because poor sanitation causes 6,000 deaths a year in Cambodia. Our work there also focuses on closing the increasing gap between rich and poor by supporting people to earn a fair living and making sure that vital resources and opportunities can be accessed by everybody.

Jim Clarken
Chief Executive, Oxfam Ireland
When Rebecca (aged 25) pictured arrived in Mingkaman camp on a boat from Bor, she had no food, no clothes and no cooking utensils. Rebecca ran from Bor in December when fighting broke out. Since then, she has lost her husband in an ambush and was badly beaten herself. She also almost lost one of her children to measles. She is alone and scared, wondering how she will bring up her children without her husband.

In Mingkaman, Rebecca and her children are no longer hungry and receive a monthly ration from Oxfam and our partners of grain, pulses, salt and oil.

In this time of crisis, your support is saving lives but it is also making a significant impact.

In the city of Juba, the risk of cholera has been reduced by Oxfam’s water treatment programme which makes the melted waters of the Nile safe to drink.

At a camp a few miles away, I met women who received fuel efficient stoves and charcoal from Oxfam, who told me that they no longer have to face the threat of violence by leaving the camp in search of firewood.

In a camp for those displaced in Malakal, we provided solar lamps to some at least might have a food crop this year.

Some 9 months since the outbreak of fighting in South Sudan that caused over a million people to flee their homes, I’d like to thank you for your generosity.

I have been working on our emergency response across South Sudan and have seen first-hand the difference you have made.

Together, we have helped more than 261,000 people across South Sudan - in the capital Juba as well as the towns of Bor, Malakal, Meil, Mingkaman, Waat and Lankien - with clean water, safe sanitation, public hygiene promotion, food, cash and other basic essentials such as soap and water containers. We are also working with our partners in neighbouring Uganda to provide emergency support to 36,000 South Sudanese refugees.

An estimated 4.0 million people are currently in need of assistance and we fear that this could rise to as many as 7 million people (80% of the population) before the end of this year. The fighting has forced 5.5 million people to flee their homes, with 400,000 of those arriving in neighbouring countries.

Grave human rights abuses have been committed against civilians by all sides to the conflict and more than 10,000 have reportedly been killed, but it is likely that figure is much higher. In the meantime, peace talks continue regularly. Slow peace talks have stalled following a fragile ceasefire.

Already one of the world’s most underdeveloped countries, much of its limited health facilities have been damaged and looted and the rainy season has made the dirt roads - which make up the majority of the country’s limited road network - impassable.

Crucially, the conflict has prevented people from planting seeds in time before the rains, which means that for many subsistence farmers there will be no crop and so access to food will likely only deteriorate in the coming months.

Our main aim at the moment is to bolster longer-term support, helping people to rebuild their livelihoods and boosting income so that the people of the Philippines no longer have to rely on emergency aid.

In particular we are helping fisherfolk and coconut farmers by providing fishing nets and kits, seeds and fertilizer as well as start-up capital for small businesses.

We couldn’t do any of this without you. Thank you.
In the last edition, we celebrated a fantastic win for the Behind the Brands campaign: both Coca-Cola and Pepsi listened to calls from Oxfam supporters and committed to a ‘zero tolerance’ for land grabs.

Just months later, the Behind the Brands campaign has secured another brilliant win. In May 2014, we launched a new phase of the campaign asking two of the world’s most powerful food companies to do more to protect the planet.

We were concerned that brands like Kellogg and General Mills were doing business with companies accused of reckless deforestation, overuse of polluting fertilizers, large scale land clearance, burning forests and other harmful production practices.

These kinds of production practices drive dangerous climate disruptions which lead to more hunger. For many farmers around the world this means they are not able to grow enough food to feed their families or that they are unable to earn a decent living.

Thanks to 238,000 consumers all over the world speaking up for climate justice, both General Mills and Kellogg are now doing the right thing for farmers worldwide who are coping with the effects of erratic weather caused by climate change. They’ve agreed to cut emissions from both their operations and their agricultural supply chains. That’s huge!

And we aren’t done yet: we’ll continue to push the Big 10 to make sure that the way they do business is good for people and the planet.

But for now, thank you for helping to stop climate change for climate justice, both General Mills and Kellogg are now doing the right thing for farmers worldwide who are coping with the effects of erratic weather caused by climate change. They’ve agreed to cut emissions from both their operations and their agricultural supply chains. That’s huge!

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But for now, thank you for helping to stop climate change for making room for better things. It reduces stress and makes us feel happier and in control – I hear the words ‘freedom’ and ‘relief’ a lot.”

[By Breda Stack, The Declutter Therapist - www.thedecluttertherapist.ie]

Why not give it a go? Your clutter can help others through donating your unwanted goods to us.

To find your nearest shop or donation bank, go to oxfamireland.org/shops

Let go, feel good, fight poverty

We recently teamed up with declutter therapist Breda Stack for a donation drive with a difference. Breda has made it her mission to raise awareness about the holistic benefits of decluttering, not just in terms of physical space but also in terms of our mental and emotional wellbeing.

Breda defines clutter as ‘anything physical, mental or emotional that doesn’t serve us or make us feel good. By letting go of anything that doesn’t enhance our life, decluttering helps us to make room for better things. It reduces stress and makes us feel happier and in control – I hear the words ‘freedom’ and ‘relief’ a lot.”

[By Breda Stack, The Declutter Therapist - www.thedecluttertherapist.ie]

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75 More years for equal pay? no way!

Women in many countries won’t be paid as much as men for another 75 years. That’s according to a new report released by Oxfam – ‘The G20 and Gender Equality – How the G20 can advance women’s rights in employment, social protection and fiscal policies’ – which shows that women are over-represented in part-time labour and are discriminated against across the G20 countries and beyond. For example, in the countries that make up the G20, women do an average of two to five hours more unpaid work than men per day.

This is an issue that affects not only women, but all of us. Gender inequality is one of the biggest obstacles to ending poverty. That’s why women’s rights are at the heart of everything we do at Oxfam. Our work empowers women to stand up for their rights, have their voices heard and access new life opportunities.

To find out more and download the report visit oxfamireland.org/gender

Country focus: Laos

Did you know that…

• Laos is a landlocked country in Southeast Asia, surrounded by China, Vietnam, Cambodia, Thailand, and Burma.

• It is a mountainous country twice the size of Pennsylvania in the United States.

• Since December 1975, the official name of Laos has actually been “Lao People’s Democratic Republic” – but to this day, the Lao People’s Democratic Republic holds the title of “Kingdom of Laos.”

• The Lao New Year celebration is a 3-day-long festival held from April 13 to 15.

• The Khone Phapheng, which is found in Laos, is the largest waterfall in the whole of Southeast Asia.

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