

in alliance



**CHANGE
STARTS WITH
A GIRL**

in this issue

Authentic Global
Experiences

girleffect.org

**The Alliance
of Girls' Schools**

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**in Alliance 2011
Editorial Deadlines**

VOLUME 47
FRIDAY 29 JULY 2011
Theme: *Developing Innovation
and Creativity*

Articles and photographs should
be emailed to the Editor at
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From the President...

Karen Spiller



The last four months have seen unparalleled tragedy befall many of our member schools and their communities. Most recently of course, our colleagues in Christchurch will especially be in our thoughts and prayers.

This edition of *In Alliance* profiles a variety of Service Learning opportunities and stories. I think we all would hold the view that students in our schools are significantly involved in service learning both locally and internationally. This probably reflects our various school Missions and Visions. What I suspect is also the case, is that we all believe that our girls hold onto this commitment well into adulthood.

I recently found this quote which I believe summarises well our views on service learning: *'I slept and dreamed that life was happiness, when I awoke and found out that life was service. I served and I found out that in service, happiness is found.'* Rabindranath Tagore

On another note – our new website will soon be released – this has been a major focus of our efforts and we believe will provide a lively and informative site for members and the broader community.

In May I will complete my term as President and Queensland Branch representative. Thank you to all members of the Executive and Jan Butler for their commitment and support in my term as President.

Karen Spiller

From the Editor...

Jan Butler



This edition of our magazine features some Authentic Global Experiences and the different ways in which schools have integrated the activities into their school curriculum. Eve Mahlab, a previous respected Patron of the Alliance, recently reminded me of how important it is to raise the profile of girls' schools by focussing on the disproportionate impact and importance of educating girls generally. We have all heard versions of the quote attributed to Shashi Tharoor, the former Under-Secretary General, UN: *'If you educate a boy, you educate a person, but if you educate a girl, you educate a family and benefit an entire community.'* Eve quoted Jennifer Buffet, founder of the Novo Foundation who said: *'Girls are half the population and the mothers of the other half.'*

She also asked some interesting and relevant questions:

1. Do girls schools teach any history of women's emancipation or teach general subjects with a gender focus - so girls confidence is strengthened by knowledge of how women have overcome oppression and what still needs to be done?
2. Is there any material used by girls' schools to prepare girls on how to deal with instances of 'put downs', intimidation and even harassment that most of us have had to deal with in the early parts of our careers?
3. Do you have any figures which compare philanthropic donations made to girls' schools as compared to boys' schools?

I hope to follow up some of these questions with members.

On Eve's *Women Donors Network* web site are some interesting statistics relating to Gender Matters: http://www.womendonors.org.au/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=70&Itemid=146

Our Student Leadership Conference in January this year included time for service activities, and one of the Rising Generations team has written a summary of the conference for the magazine.

We have also summarised reports from girls who participated in courses run by the Online School for Girls. The Alliance is investigating ways to continue a partnership with the OS4G.

Our thoughts are with all of our members who are still struggling in the aftermath of the tragedies in Queensland and Christchurch. We have now decided to hold the 2012 Alliance Conference in Melbourne to give our Christchurch colleagues time to rebuild their schools and their lives after the devastating earthquake. Melbourne Girls Grammar will now host the conference and we hope to be able to return to New Zealand for the 2014 conference.

Jan Butler

The Alliance welcomes the following new members since the last edition of *In Alliance*:

Hornsby Girls High School, NSW
Mary MacKillop College, SA
New Plymouth Girls' High School, NZ
St Hilda's Collegiate, NZ
Waitaki Girls' High School, NZ
Worawa Aboriginal College, Vic

This brings the Alliance membership to 136 girls' schools.

Invest in girls – organisations working to provide support and education for girls around the world

Girl Up

<http://girlup.org/>

'Educate a girl, change the world!'

'No matter where they live in the world, girls are bright, talented, and full of dreams. But too many girls growing up in developing countries aren't able to fulfil those dreams because their chances to go to school, stay healthy, and live free from violence are out of reach.

'The United Nations Foundation's Girl Up is a campaign *for* girls, *by* girls. Join us now and transform girls' lives.'

'A new initiative called Girl Up aims to mobilize 100,000 American girls to raise money and awareness to fight poverty, sexual violence and child marriage.

"This generation of 12-to-18-year-olds are all givers," says executive director Elizabeth Gore, the force of nature behind the ingeniously simple Nothing but Nets campaign to fight malaria, about her new United Nations Foundation enterprise. "They gave after Katrina. They gave after the tsunami and Haiti. More than any earlier generation, they feel they know girls around the world."

Read more: <http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,2046045,00.html#ixzz1Gj6OhVKe>

To fight poverty, invest in girls.

'There are countless reasons rescuing girls is the right thing to do. It's also the smart thing to do. Consider the virtuous circle: An extra year of primary school boosts girls' eventual wages by 10% to 20%. An extra year of secondary school adds 15% to 25%. Girls who stay in school for seven or more years typically marry four years later and

have two fewer children than girls who drop out. Fewer dependents per worker allows for greater economic growth. And the World Food Programme has found that when girls and women earn income, they reinvest 90% of it in their families. They buy books, medicine, bed nets. For men, that figure is more like 30% to 40%. "Investment in girls' education may well be the highest-return investment available in the developing world," Larry Summers wrote when he was chief economist at the World Bank. Of such cycles are real revolutions born.'

Plan Australia

www.plan.org.au

Plan Australia is a part of Plan International - one of the world's largest community development organisations.

'We work with communities in 49 developing countries and raise funds to support our work in 21 countries like Australia. By actively involving children, and working at a grassroots level with no religious or political agenda, we unite and inspire people around the globe to transform the world for children.'

Each year, Plan reports on the state of the world's girls and the 2010 Plan Report *Because I am a girl* can be downloaded at <http://becauseiamagirl.com.au/2010/2010-report/>

Read girls' stories here: <http://becauseiamagirl.com.au/2010/category/girls-stories/>

Read stories from the lives of members of the Coalition at <http://becauseiamagirl.com.au/2010/category/coalition-member-stories/>

School Aid

www.schoolaid.org.au/

'Kids helping kids'

'SchoolAid enables and empowers primary school kids to make a tangible difference to the lives of other children - kids helping kids - through commitment and action. By participating in our programs kids learn a sense of personal and social responsibility towards the needs of others, and how the power of their actions does make a difference. Primary school teachers are provided with a full suite of learning and activity resources that readily promote the engagement of students in active philanthropy, as well as reinforcing the values-learning benefits associated with their students' activities.'

International Women's Development Agency

www.iwda.org.au/au/

An Australian-based NGO supporting women suffering from poverty and oppression worldwide.

'International Women's Development Agency (IWDA) is an Australian not for profit organisation that creates positive change for women and their communities. For 25 years, our practical and rights-based projects directly address poverty and oppression in developing countries.

'Over the next five years, IWDA will focus its work on six key areas that are central to gender equality—livelihood and economic empowerment; safety and security; social, physical and mental health; education; environmental sustainability and civil and political participation.'

April 2011	Notification of membership renewals for 1 June 2011 to 31 May 2012
30 May 2011	Membership renewals due
2 June 2011	Alliance Annual General Meeting, Melbourne Girls' College, Richmond, Victoria
21 June 2011	NCGS Advancing Girls in STEM: An NCGS Symposium, Wellesley College, Wellesley, MA
August 2011	Registration information for Student Leadership Conference 2012 on website
October 2011	Registration due for Student Leadership Conference 2012
18 - 22 January 2012	Student Leadership Conference 2012
25 - 27 May 2012	Alliance Staff Conference, Melbourne Girls Grammar School, Victoria

An adventure in Namibia

Anita Sansom, Teacher - Health and Wellbeing, Ogilvie High School, Hobart, Tasmania

An incredible, life changing trip was undertaken by twenty of our Grade 9 and 10 students who travelled to Namibia in Africa, with World Challenge Leader, Bryan Millington, Teacher Anita Welsh and Principal Judith Timbs. Students spent four weeks carrying out a range of activities including sandboarding in Swakopmund, day treks in the Naukluft Range, climbing Dune 45, walking to Deadvlei, and experiencing overnight hiking in the Fish River Canyon... just to name a few highlights! The expedition was split into four different phases which included Acclimatisation, Trekking, Project and Rest and Relaxation. The adventure travel company, World Challenge is a sponsor of The Alliance of Girls' Schools.

Acclimatisation

Two separate day treks were conducted in the Naukluft National Park. The first one was called the Olive Trail and consisted of ten kilometres of ups and downs and walking through dry river beds. We got to a really interesting section where we had to hang on to a chain and move across a rock face. This was our first real taste of what to expect on the Fish River Canyon Trek. The second of our day walks was the Waterkluft Trail, which was much longer - 17km. We got to see lots of water pools, a sociable weaver bird's nest and to climb to about 1900m in elevation. Things were slow moving this day as it was so hot; we had to finish with our head torches, which was an adventure. We also did other shorter training including climbing Dune 45 (second largest sand dune in the world) to watch the sun rise and saw some spectacular sites at Deadvlei.

Trekking

Also considered the Challenge Phase, the trek was a major focus of the trip and something we had been training for. We planned to walk through the Fish River Canyon which is the second largest canyon in the World. To get there we needed to start at the Lowen River Canyon. The scenery at the beginning of our trip was stunning. We were so small compared to the canyon walls. Unfortunately we could not complete our trek but we all found the experience worthwhile. A highlight was spending our last night of the trek setting up our mats and sleeping bags on the rocks and sleeping under the stars. The sky was amazing!

Project

Perhaps the part of the trip that had the most impact on everyone was the volunteering Project. This was the reason that many of us opted to go on the trip in the first place. A whole week was spent at Salmon Boois Junior Primary School in Aranos where we volunteered our time to upgrade their very run down school hall. The school wanted to hire it out to the community for a good price in order to get some income to improve their school. We sanded, plastered, painted and tiled – with the help of some very experienced locals. We also spent time in their crowded classrooms (up to 45 children) helping them with their English, teaching them songs, and learning a bit of Afrikaans ourselves! It was a week of our lives that we will all remember, and it is a link we would like to continue.





Rest and Relaxation

Our Rest and Relaxation Phase was split between the start and end of our trip. We began by travelling to the coastal town of Swakopmund where there are many sand dunes, and what else would you do but go sandboarding! We had so much fun either lying down or standing up and even got to do a tandem run. The dunes varied in distance and steepness and on two of them we got the speed camera out! We were travelling very fast!! If we didn't hold our arms correctly, we finished by getting a face full of sand! Our trip concluded with a safari at the Etosha National Park which was amazing. We saw so many animals and it was special seeing them in their own environment. Two highlights would have to be seeing a lot of lions (apparently very rare!) and witnessing a herd of forty-one elephants coming into the local waterhole at dusk for a drink and wash.



So much more than another overseas trip...

Linda Evans, Principal, Fairholme College, Toowoomba, Queensland

In 2006, almost by chance, Fairholme College's Pastor Richard Jessup and his wife Kerrie stumbled upon a small orphanage, Mizpah Home, in Ootacamund, Southern India. What has emerged from this chance meeting has been a fabulous relationship, strengthened by service, on-going financial support and an annual Christmas holiday trek by groups of Year 11 girls and staff.

The orphanage is home to about 30 children ranging in ages between 18 months and 18 years: children without parents or without a parent able to support them. It is run by two extraordinary people – Mohandes and his wife, Jenny who seek to educate, love and nurture each child within their care. They do so from a Christian faith that is practical, real and inspirational. This is India: a multi-faith country with a large Hindu population.

This year, 14 students travelled to Mizpah, accompanied by four teachers: Pastor Richard Jessup and his wife Kerrie, and College Principal Mrs Linda Evans and her husband Ross. Purportedly, the trip was about distributing the \$16 000 that the College and wider Fairholme community had raised throughout 2010, painting the exterior and interior of the orphanage and spending time playing with the orphans.

What really occurred was an opportunity to learn about faith, humility and the privilege of service. The girls worked hard for a ten day period; whitewashing walls with brushes made of reeds, preparing meals for a food drop for some of Ootacamund's many beggars, exchanging games, craft activities and songs with the children and generally immersing themselves in Indian life, Mizpah style.

A highlight was the opening of the new kitchen at Mizpah – funded entirely by Fairholme College and its wider community. For the past ten

years the kitchen which feeds a minimum of 32 daily, consisted of an open air configuration with no running water, no dishwasher, no sink, no refrigeration, benches or storage as we know it. The most exciting feature, according to the children, is the zip boil heater which will provide running hot water.

Of course this sort of service is not about helping the impoverished and feeling some sort of self righteousness because of it. It is the reverse really. This trip is about the nurturing of faith, the development of humility, valuing people and learning about the things that matter ... so much more than another overseas trip!

“What really occurred was an opportunity to learn about faith, humility and the privilege of service.”

A Student Perspective

Annika O'Sullivan

Naive is the word that best describes the attitudes I held before applying for the 2010 India Discovery Tour at the beginning of last year. I remember thinking that the trip would be a brilliant opportunity and that the experience would alter my confined perspective of the world and enrich my understanding of the importance of charity and compassion.

I was quite unprepared however for the abundant ways in which I would begin to learn, not only these lessons but so many more and their true significance within such a privileged society as our own. The ten days we spent with the children at Mizpah Home was filled with pleas to be pushed higher, chased further and piggybacked longer as firm friendships were quickly made! The love, support and genuine happiness that the children shared with each of us was undeniably a reflection of Mohan and Jenny's tireless care and honest guidance. The selflessness of these two inspirational people was apparent throughout our entire visit as we learnt of the extent of their work within the Ooty community.





This became particularly evident when I was fortunate enough to travel into the slums during one of Mohan's weekly food handouts and witness firsthand Mohan's utter commitment to making a difference. It was during this confronting experience that I realised the true significance of Mohan's tireless determination to educate the children within the beggar colonies in the hope of bringing about change and breaking the vicious cycle of poverty.

Thank you, to everyone involved, for giving me this opportunity. Please be assured that all of the girls on the trip will carry the experience with them forever.



Life-changing experience

Story by Deborah Telford, Diocesan School for Girls, Auckland, NZ

A group of students from Auckland's Diocesan School for Girls, who spent four weeks in Thailand and Cambodia doing humanitarian work and facing several mental and physical challenges, has come home with higher self esteem, stronger leadership skills - and some useful budgeting skills.

The 31 students – in Year 12 and Year 13 last year – gave up half of their summer holidays to take part in a World Challenge Leadership Programme that proved to be a life-changing trip for many of them.

Four Diocesan teachers also went on the trip, but the students, who were divided into two expeditions with separate itineraries, were solely responsible for controlling their tight budgets including booking accommodation, organising transport and buying food.

The trip, which was part of the School's objective to develop students' leadership skills, combined both community service and physical challenge.

The girls spent a week taking part in two humanitarian programmes. One group helped orphans at the New Hope for Cambodian Children Orphanage in Kampong Speu province, which looks after children living with HIV/AIDS. The others helped build a road at The Cambodian Orphan Fund Orphanage in Siem Riep.

They also spent a week trekking through the highlands of northern Thailand. A visit to the mass graves at the Killing Fields, where victims of the Khmer Rouge regime are buried, and the S-21 genocidal museum were the greatest mental and emotional challenges they faced.

'The atmosphere was so intense, heavy and absorbing. No-one could smile,' recalls 2011 Arts Prefect Imogen Wells.

'We went from a group of girls having singalongs on the bus to blubbing messes. You can literally feel the atrocities that were committed there. They hang in the air.'

Imogen said seeing how the children at the orphanage in Siem Riep enjoyed small pleasures despite having so little has helped her to become 'an even more positive thinker and to believe that any situation can be turned around'.

Being a group leader and knowing others were relying on her organisational skills taught her to 'step up' to meet the different challenges that were thrown at her each day.

'There were some days when you'd wake up after a really bad night's sleep after being in a really noisy hotel in Phnom Penh or sleeping in contorted position in a hammock in the northern hill lands of Thailand with porcupines wandering around underneath you.

'But you'd still have to be onto it, organising anything from a bus to Bangkok . . . sussing accommodation . . . deciding what the next meal would be. You had to keep going. You couldn't sit back and let other people do it and you couldn't sleep in.'

The Australian-based World Challenge educational organisation takes expeditions to countries in Asia, South East Asia, South America, Central and North America, Africa and the Pacific to teach students how to overcome adversity,

"Without our parents, we had to find solutions ourselves and be independent."

At the ready with the gear to embark on their road-building project.



cope with new environments and become more self-confident decision makers.

Enviro Prefect, Genevieve Fox, says the trip was the first time she had needed to suddenly deal with a large amount of responsibility, including carrying large sums of money and passports.

'If something went wrong, it was up to you to fix it. The pressure came from the fact that if we made a mistake, the consequences would be so much more serious than normal.

'Without our parents, we had to find solutions ourselves and be independent. For example, if we spent too much money, we couldn't just go and ask our parents for more, or get it out of the bank.'

Genevieve says the trip improved her leadership skills by teaching her that you have to listen to other people's opinions, because there is always a reason for them.

'We noticed very quickly if the leader of the day didn't listen to our suggestions or didn't take action that needed to be taken. To be a good leader, I found out that you have to be very organised and preferably one step ahead at all times.'

Genevieve says what surprised her most on the trip was what individuals can achieve.

'We often think we cannot make a difference to the world around us, but Cathy and John, the two people who started up New Hope, the only orphanage in Cambodia for children with AIDS, proved to me that you can.

'There were 250 children at the orphanage, and they provided money and healthcare for another 1350 children with HIV/AIDS throughout Cambodia. It was amazing to see what two people could achieve, and really brought to life the quote "never doubt that a small group of dedicated people can change the world, indeed it is the only thing that ever did".'

'The children we met would not have been standing there, if it hadn't been for Cathy and John. The average life expectancy when they started the orphanage was 18 years. Now it is 60, and the children are expected to lead normal lives.'

Marianna McEwan, who is studying for a Bachelor of Science degree at Otago University this year, says the experience of visiting The Killing Fields and S-21 will stay with her forever.

'It's difficult to comprehend how a regime could be so brutal to so many innocent people. It has made me appreciate how lucky we are to be living in a free and democratic society.'

Marianna says she did not see herself as a leader before the trip but having the opportunity to lead a group of 20 girls three different times has boosted her self-esteem.

Marianna's mother, Fiona, says her daughter came home with a stronger belief in her own abilities and her personal values.

'Marianna is more confident and now knows she can handle difficult situations with ease. She has also learnt practical skills that will be invaluable in future.'

Olivia Labb, this year's Culture Prefect, says the teachers commented on how she had learnt to step back and let others lead.

'I always used to think I needed to be in charge or at least be involved in



One group of students taught English to children at the orphanage in Siem Riep. Simone Boniface pictured with the children.



Olivia Labb and a small friend at the New Hope for Cambodian Children Orphanage near Phnom Penh.



The trip involved a lot of uphill trekking!

what was happening, but on this trip I learnt how to judge the ability of others around me and to know when to step in and help them and when to back off.

'I learnt to relax and go with the flow, to trust others around me, when to share my opinion and when to stay quiet.'

Deputy Principal, Ms Chris Arthur, says she noticed 'huge changes' in the girls and watching them grow as individuals was a highlight.

'One of the first changes I noticed was their ability to delegate.'

Working in the orphanages also had a big impact.

'I think they've all come home and re-evaluated what's important in life.'

Collegiate's Solomon Islands Cultural Immersion Trip

Scott Sargent, Chaplain, St Michael's Collegiate School, Hobart

Last September twelve Year 9 and 10 students from St Michael's Collegiate left the coldness of early Tasmanian spring to spend a fortnight in heat and humidity serving, working and living beside the poor and the young of the Solomon Islands. This trip was the culmination for the girls of many months' planning, fundraising, learning and bonding, and the beginning of a deeply transformative appreciation of both the privileges and opportunities which growing up in Australia provides, and the needs and poverty of our close neighbours.

The students prepared for their trip by researching and then educating their fellow travellers respectively about the culture, climate, travel risks, history and financial situation of the Solomon Islands. Preparation also included spending two mornings working with Kindergarten children at Collegiate in order to better understand how to impart understanding and knowledge to the children they would work with in the Solomon Islands.

Fundraising for the trip raised \$7000, all of which was handed over directly to our partner village, school and kindergarten in the Solomon Islands. The girls had to think up and implement their fundraising methods which included a day of chopping and delivering firewood in near freezing conditions and making enough cup cakes for every girl in our Junior School to buy. Support for our partners also included the students carrying in over 200 High School Maths, Science and English

text books, four laptops, a printer and a significant quantity of sports equipment.

Highlights for the twelve girls during the trip included spending two days working in the Norman Palmer School, a Kindergarten to Year 10 facility, another two days working with children in a large Kindergarten, St Paul's, and two days living with the locals in a remote village called Buma. The girls in teams had to devise their daily menus, shop in the local markets and then prepare food for the group.

In addition to the two staff who accompanied the students, Collegiate sponsored one of its own teachers to spend a week in the Solomon Islands providing professional development for local village Kindergarten and Prep teachers, most of whom have no formal teacher training. The head teacher of the Buma Village Kindergarten was so inspired by these PD sessions that she has this year begun a two year teachers' course in the Solomon Islands which is being paid for by staff members of St Michaels Collegiate.

Upon return to Tasmania the students presented information about their trip as advocates for our Solomon Islands partners. This included going to local Church and community groups to speak about both the needs of the Solomon Islands and the how the trip had positively influenced them. The students returned with a deeper appreciation of all that they have, with many parents writing to express heartfelt thanks for the trip, noting that it had developed gratitude in their daughter.

"The students returned with a deeper appreciation of all that they have, with many parents writing ... noting that it had developed gratitude in their daughter."



Year 9 students Lizzie Spanjer and Sophie England spend a day in class with their Norman Palmer peers



St Paul's Kindy in Auki

The students also have a better understanding of what it is like to grow up and live in one of the world's less developed countries. This understanding has led some of the students to actively participate in the planning and fundraising of this year's trip, with one girl determined to do a gap year working at Norman Palmer when she leaves Collegiate.

Having conducted a successful inaugural trip in 2010, St Michael's Collegiate is heading to the Solomon Islands this year with a new group of students and another specialist teacher to train more of their teachers. The school has similar expectations that this year's group will not only bless our partners in the Solomon Islands, but that they will be blessed as they come to appreciate their comparatively privileged position and the needs of our regional neighbours. It was Aristotle who said, 'What we have to learn to do, we learn by doing' and how true this is of the learning our students and teachers had. They learnt so much in this wonderful adventure amongst some of the world's most generous people.



New kindergarten, Buma Village, Malaita



ABOVE: St Paul's Kindy in Auki BELOW: Teacher training in Malaita



ABOVE: Teacher training in Malaita BELOW: Buma Village, Malaita



Service Learning in Cambodia

Elizabeth Spielman, Assistant Head of Mathematics, Abbotsleigh, NSW

Cambodia is a country recovering from recent civil war. From 1975-1979 more than 20% of the population was killed during the reign of Pol Pot. Recovering from these horrific years is not possible for many as former Khmer Rouge leaders are still being tried for war crimes against humanity. As a result of the civil war, many Cambodians are affected by extreme poverty, landmines, poor education, extensive illegal logging, rampant HIV/AIDS, child trafficking and widespread corruption.

Tabitha is one of the many excellent non-government organisations working with oppressed people in Cambodia. Tabitha helps individuals, families and whole communities address their needs in a holistic, dignified and sustainable way. All proceeds go directly to the people as it is administered by volunteers. The organisation employs local people encouraging and rewarding personal savings, providing training and employment, and generating regular income through the sale of handicrafts.

That is why we supported this foundation by building six houses for families in a poor, rural community an hour from Kampot as well as contributing to the community development program.

Planning

Planning for the 16 day trip began in October 2009. The tour was estimated to cost \$4,500 for each student and \$1,500 instalments were due in April, June and August. (A substantial amount was refunded after the trip due to the strong Australian dollar.) International and local flights were booked in February and confirmed two months before take-off. Hotels were booked in May once we knew where we would build the houses and the itinerary

was finalised once day tours were secured. The houses and community development donation were paid in September to allow a two month building time for Tabitha staff. The program needed to be very flexible as some of the tours depended on availability of the guides and indoor activities, such as visiting the Royal Palace, could be moved to rainy days if necessary. An extra day in Phnom Penh allowed for spontaneity in the program.

Interested students had to complete a survey describing their reasons for involvement and how they believed they could contribute to the group. In February 2010, 15 girls were selected from Years 9 to 11. We met every fortnight for the year to plan fundraisers, share understandings of the prescribed text *The Gate* and DVD *The Killing Fields*, gather details and passport copies, disseminate information, learn dances and games to teach the village children and orphans, read relevant articles and learn some Khmer language. After numerous cake stalls, pikelet days, barbecues, shirt sales, online donations and chocolate sales, we raised more than \$8,000 for the houses. These regular meetings and purposeful interactions allowed the girls to form a strong bond and develop a genuine interest in Cambodian life before their journey.

Service

The main purpose of the trip was to build six houses through Tabitha in the Kampot region. We left the hotel in Kampot at 7.30 am and arrived in the village at 9 am after the bus negotiated the unstable rice paddy walls and makeshift electric wires along the path. We were greeted warmly by the villagers who were friendly, inquisitive and shy. The girls set to work in two teams on two houses stopping every 20 minutes for water and head



dunking to keep cool. In hindsight we should have had hammering lessons before leaving, as most of the girls had clearly never used one before. Despite this, everyone worked happily for three hours on their respective houses until they were completed. Many of us had black thumbs from hammer blows and cuts from the tin but no-one complained. We were warned not to cry or complain while building the houses as this would cause the new owners to have bad luck when they moved in.

After a lunch of fruit, baguettes and spreads, the girls played games such as 'duck, duck, goose' for an hour. Many children were reluctant at first to join in, but the girls persevered and by the end most of the children were involved in the games. The entire village gathered to watch us and all were enjoying the interaction. We completed another house before departing for the day. Half the group had a well-deserved 'Seeing Hands' massage on return while the others delighted in recalling the day's experiences.

The next day we were greeted by everyone on arrival. Many of the children had taken the day off school so they could watch their new homes being built, join in on the games and pose for photos. The place was electric with excitement and we all had a ball. The house building was much more effective on the second day as we had all worked out our strengths and weaknesses to ensure efficiency on the work site. We had an early lunch and finished the sixth house by 2 pm which left more time to play with the children. The girls used their language books to communicate and the children taught us a few new games. The official handing over ceremony was very moving and there was not a dry eye anywhere to be seen.

Apart from visiting some excellent NGOs such as Friends, L'Artisans and Veterans International, we spent time in two very different orphanages. The first came about through a chance meeting with the director of SCAO (Saving Children in Asia Organisation) on the flight over to Phnom Penh. We decided to visit the Phnom Penh orphanage, and teach the children a few of the dances and games we had practised. The girls enjoyed the interaction and the raw state of this orphanage although child-safe procedures were not fully in place. A high school and boarding house are being built and stricter procedures will be adhered to.

The next visit was to Sunrise Children's Village 2 in Siem Reap. The contrast was extreme. We could not enter the clean, newly renovated village without first signing in and leaving our passports along with a copy for the organisation to keep. No photos were allowed to be taken and no-one was to touch the children. We had an orientation with the director to learn about the daily activities of the children and their various educational and housing facilities. As the children all go to school during the day, the only ones left at the village were two to five year olds and some of the older boys. We used the hall which had a stage on which to perform our two dances. The little children, unlike the SCAO orphanage, were full of confidence and involved themselves in learning the dances straight away. The children then taught our girls the clicking pole dance, hand clapping games and how to play the roneat (Khmer xylophone). The routine of the orphanage only allowed us to visit for two hours but the girls gained much from the interaction.

Reflection

This two week trip was life changing for many of the girls. They experienced extreme poverty in the streets of Phnom Penh and Kampot, were confronted by scenes of torture at Tuol Sleng and The Killing Fields and heard many of our guides and hotel staff tell their stories of survival during the years of Pol Pot and the recent Pich Bridge disaster where nearly 400 people were crushed to death. They were able to reach out



and help by building houses for the poor, donating two wheelchairs to a landmine victim and a 16 year old girl in a remote community and buying T-shirts to support Friends. The girls learned that responsible shopping and eating helped the less fortunate local people, and buying from street children prevented them from attending school. Now many of the girls want to spend a GAP year with one of the organisations we visited or would like to share their experiences with their family and friends by taking them there. This trip was certainly a wonderful experience and well worth repeating.

About Service-Learning at Abbotsleigh

The Kindergarten to Year 12 Service-Learning program links specific learning outcomes with genuine opportunities for service in the community. The School has a vision for each girl to be a courageous, constructive and compassionate world citizen with a will to serve.

Service-Learning is embedded in the School's curriculum, and students apply their classroom knowledge to the planning and implementation of their service activities. The experiential nature of these activities encourages the learner to make connections, often over several subject areas, deepening her understanding of the material and building relationships with community members.

The program aims to:

- Connect student learning to life in the belief that reciprocal service experiences provide powerful opportunities for personal, cognitive and spiritual growth.
- Foster an enriched sense of social responsibility that will extend to all areas of the Abbotsleigh community.
- Develop in students a sense of the connectedness of all living things and provide opportunities to experience that connectedness through service.

Service-Learning focuses on reciprocal benefit and students are provided with opportunities to think critically and creatively as they work with community partners. Reflection activities help to measure students' understanding, allowing them a chance to share their feelings, internalise new concepts and evaluate the impact of the activities.

For further information

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Sunrise Children's Village 2 <http://www.scv.org.au/>

Video conferencing at Abbotsleigh

Naomi Manning, IT Integrator, Abbotsleigh, NSW

At the start of 2009 Abbotsleigh was one of the first schools in the NSW private sector to purchase high definition video conferencing gear. Two units were purchased, one for the Junior School and one for the Senior School. It has been extremely exciting to be part of this new dimension to teaching and learning.

What is video conferencing?

A videoconference involves a set of interactive telecommunication technologies which allow two or more locations to interact via two-way video link. Though this technology has been around in industry and universities for many years, it is now starting to be used more extensively in education and Abbotsleigh has been involved in the early stages of this process in Australia.

Projects at Abbotsleigh

There were a number of ways we used this technology in 2009, including interactive virtual excursions, discussions with experts, collaborations between classes locally, nationally and internationally, in conferences and extracurricular activities and for professional development and teacher collaborations.

There have been a couple of extremely impressive virtual excursions that the students have been involved in. In September, the Year 6 girls were transported to Antarctica to chat to some researchers from New Zealand at Scott Base. The girls asked many interesting questions about what it was like to live in Antarctica and looked at the view out of the window. They also chatted to one of the women working there and were interested in her perspective.

Year 10 Geography students were taken to the Barrier Reef in May. They talked to a 'dry' presenter about how the reef functions and how humans can damage the functioning of the reef.

The students also heard about how valuable the reef is for Australians, from perspectives such as tourism, ecological sustainability and world heritage.

Then the girls crossed to a 'wet' presenter (scuba diver) who took participants on a virtual dive in the coral reef and into the predator tank with sharks and other reef predators.

A Year 7 Science class crossed over to Senior Academic and Astronomer James Sowell at Georgia Institute of Technology, Atlanta, Georgia in the United States in September. He allowed the students to look through the telescope at the night sky in our day time.

We have also had some interesting discussions with experts. In June Year 7 History students had an interactive discussion about archaeology with the archaeologists at the Nicholson Museum at Sydney University. The students looked at some artefacts and discussed the types of questions that need to be asked of archaeological artefacts to help them develop their



questioning technique. These included some artefacts from Ancient Greece and Egypt.

In May Year 9 Science students talked to scientists and researchers at Macquarie University. These included an Astro physicist, the Head of the Department of Earth and Planetary Sciences, a laser physicist, a quality control chemist, a woman from computing and IT, and a biologist. They asked them about real world applications of ideas they had discussed in class, as well as what it is like to make Science your career.

Year 11 Ancient History students had a fascinating look and discussion with the curator at the Anthropology

Museum at Queensland University in August. They delved into issues surrounding the ethics of human remains.

We have also had some ongoing collaboration between classes at local, national and international levels. Year 5 girls and their teacher Ming Urwin have had a regular fortnightly link up with a school in Hong Kong to further the girls' study of Mandarin. Year 11 Geography students also had an interesting debate with the International School in Hong Kong and students in Texas about economic globalisation. They found it very interesting to get the Chinese students' perspectives on the issue.

Ongoing communication via email preceded a video conference between Luke Olley's Year 10 French class and students at St Aidan's in Queensland. Each school interacted via questions to each other and to the guest speakers at both ends as part of a unit about careers.

Students have also been able to participate in various conferences. The Debating Coordinator, Jennie Kelly, has looked at expanding our capacity for debaters to practice with other students by including some virtual debates with other schools via video conferencing. Lynette Clarke's Senior School Concert Band shared music, as well as some information about different cultures, with the Concert Band from Holland Patent Central School District in New York.

Teachers have also used this technology for professional development, meetings and to make connections with educators in other places. We have shared ideas with IT teachers in New York and linked teachers around Australia for a teacher training session where each school showcased some fun IT ideas they had used in their classrooms.

We look forward to seeing where video conferencing can take teaching and learning in the future at Abbotsleigh. In its first year here, the journey has been very exciting and has enabled learners to do things that are hard or impossible to do by other means. This has included linking directly to places and resources that are otherwise not available, collaborating easily and regularly with other students or experts and make learning interactive with the real world.

This article was previously published by Abbotsleigh in Clippings, the professional development journal of AbbSearch, Centre for Education Research in Schools.

Establishing an Authentic Friendship Agreement

Anne Mitchell, Head of Junior School, St Peter's Collegiate Girls' Junior School, Adelaide, SA.

As a successful and contemporary school we were very aware of the many and growing changes that were surrounding us, bringing new responses and direction to our thinking, our discussions and school planning. These included the economic rise of Asia, the growth of international commerce, revolutions in communication, transport, and international migration. Coupled with this came a growing number of families seeking internationalised education on ideological grounds – recognising its value as preparation for the globally integrated future that their children will face.

It was time for change. After broad and extensive discussions across our school community and the publication of our new school strategic plan, the Junior School's teaching and learning direction was set.

'Investigate and evaluate a variety of curriculum philosophies that promote excellence in teaching and learning including the introduction of the International Baccalaureate's Primary Years Program' (2009 strategic plan).

We focused our work around embedding the International Baccalaureate mission statement. This included assisting our students to be inquirers, thinkers, communicators, risk-takers, knowledgeable, principled, caring, open-minded, well-balanced and reflective. Then, as year level team planning continued, and with the inclusion of specialist staff, stronger and more collaborative teams emerged. Teacher professional voice became more articulate. We were using the IB PYP language: displaying central themes, lines of inquiry, student questioning; techniques developed significantly and we felt confident about our progress and journey to date. Information was shared through our school community publications, and parent information evenings and discussion groups were held. With progress visible to our school community we changed the structure of our staff meetings and put some demands on the whole school timetable in order to get shared and extended weekly planning time for all year level teacher teams. This had a dramatic impact on the development of team planning and the quality and reflection of our inquiry units. Our journey was progressing well.

It was at this time we were contacted by Educational Consultant, David Woolnough, who was supporting Huijia Private Primary School in Beijing, as they embarked on their journey to receive IB Primary Years Program accreditation.

The delegation from Beijing arrived at school, and included Ms Ping Yan, Deputy Director of Huijia Primary School, Ms Xiaohua Yang, PYP Co-ordinator and Mrs Lan Wang, Board Member of the Huijia Education Organization. As we commenced our school tour, they were overwhelmed by the greenness of the school, the trees, gardens and surrounding conservation park. Then as we entered the classrooms and met teachers and students, their focus and purpose changed. We looked at student work and observed inquiry in action as teachers and students collaborated, questioned and recorded their findings. We talked with groups of students who confidently explained their lines of inquiry and task work to the visitors. Deep conversations were carried out in English and Chinese, with the support of our Chinese speaking Maths teacher and some of our Mandarin speaking students. They observed language and music lessons and visual art work embedded within the inquiry unit. Questions were asked and extended conversations engaged our



Huijia Private Primary School Beijing

The Chinese delegation from Huijia Primary Private School visit with staff at St Peter's Girls. L-R: Mrs Lan Wang, Ms Min Yang Sun, Mrs Anne Mitchell, Mr David Woolnough, Ms Yang, Mrs Helen Smith (PYP Coordinator St Peter's Girls), Ms Xiaohua Yang

visitors, teachers and students. Of great interest was the Early Learning Centre where the delegation spent time reading, discussing and talking to our staff about the documentation of the children's inquiry

learning, mapped across the walls of the playrooms. The visual drawings and paintings were examined carefully and many questions were asked about the children's lines of inquiry, their visual interpretations and even the materials that had been used. Our Early Learning Centre combines a deep foundation of the Reggio Emilia values and principles with the internationalism of the IB PYP framework. The staff gave a power point presentation for our visitors which presented the rich learning and depth of inquiry learning by our three and four year old students. They were both fascinated and delighted and wanted to know more. The visit extended into hours of communication, unhindered by language barriers and with true understanding and learning evident.

We brought the delegation back to our board room and it was not until this time, that the realisation of just how valuable and authentic this experience had been for our visitors became apparent. It was a true coming together of two cultures through a shared educational understanding, and was a real demonstration of internationalism in action. It was impressive to observe our students communicate and express, through Chinese and English, what they were doing and what their learning meant. I watched as a student spoke in English and one of our visitors scribed her interpretation in beautiful Chinese characters. The delegation had observed, reflected, discussed and were already asking how can Saints Girls help them 'make this happen at their school.'

An invitation has now followed from Huijia Primary Private School to St Peter's Girls to develop 'A Friendship Agreement' between the two schools. After visits by our School Principal, Mrs Fiona Godfrey and our Enrolments Registrar, Mrs Virginia Miller, Junior School staff will go to work along-side the Huijia staff. This authentic global experience will assist our staff to go beyond their own local and linguistic boundaries, engaging them in an authentic global experience, fostering qualities of understanding, responsibility and communication. They will develop their potential to be active and connected global citizens.

Servant Leadership at St Stithians Girls' College

Karen Prinsloo with contributions by the House Directors: Mr Claudio Marangoni, Mrs Cath Dowie, Ms Taryn Schreuder & Mr Tim Schaerer

Whole School Community Service Day

At a chapel led by the Rev Dirk van Doorene our girls were reminded that 'Servant Leadership is leadership for others, and not for oneself. It finds expression in honouring others.'

The Reverend reminded us that we could serve in many different ways:

- By serving as a whole School on a project on the weekend
- By serving our parents and siblings at home
- By serving the wider community in which we live

Servant Leadership is about giving:

'To love is to give and to give is to be happy' (Alan Storey)

Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 13 about love and the kind of love which motivates one to serve another. Moved by compassion, we act in loving ways for others.

It was with this philosophy in mind that the House Directors at St Stithians Girls' College organised another wonderful community service weekend for the 530 girls at the College to participate in acts of service at our two partnership organisations; Ikageng Itireleng and Refilwe.



swings, tennis courts, mini bikes and loads of ball games kept everyone very busy.

Session two comprised of an exciting treasure hunt in the gardens, soccer, netball and basketball. The most exciting activity on the day was the famous waterslide set up by the House Director. Finally the group had to depart and upon their return to their homes, they were given a warm dry towel and a delicious sandwich. The Saints girls generously donated loads of stationery and clothing for the adult facilitators to distribute to the children when they got back to their homes in Soweto.

This year the House Directors embarked on an even greater challenge!

After a four year partnership with Ikageng we decided to get our girls out of their comfort zone and took them to work at two primary schools in Orlando West, Soweto where the children from Ikageng Itireleng attend school. Thabisang Primary and Nka-Thuto in Dube, Soweto educate learners from Grade R to Grade 7. Two of the needs that Thabisang Primary had were to create a functional Media Centre and to demarcate a netball court for the children to practise on. Over two days of weekend service, girls and their tutors cleaned, re-organised and re-arranged their Media Centre. They also sorted numerous donated books and painted

and reconstructed the paving around the netball court as well as designing and painting hop-scotch blocks for the Foundation Phase learners to play on at break times.

Just down the road at another primary school, Nka-Thuto has a feeding scheme which provides the children of the school with fresh vegetables. Over the weekend, girls with their tutors built a tyre vegetable garden for the school. Everyone involved worked exceptionally hard at clearing the hard ground, mixing top soil and compost (courtesy of our Grounds department), cutting old tyres (kindly supplied by the Johannesburg Metropolitan Police Department's by-laws unit) and then placing the tyres as the 'pots' for the vegetable seeds (generously donated by many parents). After many strenuous hours and blistered hands, the job was completed and we had established a tyre vegetable garden with 60 tyres and a wide variety of vegetables. We would like to thank the girls, staff and parents for their overwhelming support for this project. We are excited about this new relationship with Ikageng Itireleng and the community of Orlando West and look forward to many more projects in the area.

Partnership with Ikageng Itireleng

'Ikageng Itireleng is a non-profit organisation which was founded in 2002 by Carol Dyantyi, a well renowned social entrepreneur from Sowelo through the inspiration, hands-on assistance and support from the late Dr Aggrey Klaaste, the former Editor-in Chief of Sowetan. The organisation aims to improve the quality of life for orphaned and other vulnerable children affected by HIV/AIDs on a sustainable basis, and to ensure that they achieve and live a fair and better and quality life like any other child. Ikageng's aim is to help develop orphans into educated, employable adults who could positively contribute to the society.' (www.ikageng.org.za)

Last year two 60 seater buses were organised to transport the children from Ikageng Itireleng to our school. A substantial breakfast was organised by the tutor groups which was shared with the children from Ikageng.

After the breakfast, the children were divided up according to age groups to participate in the first session of activities. Girls from Saints had signed up to serve in various areas and quickly joined the teacher facilitators at their stations. The 15 to 18 year olds attended a Science experiment workshop led by the Head of Department Science and her matric girls. The 12 to 14 year old children went to the gym for a dance workshop facilitated by the Cultural co-ordinator and her team of girls. 8 to 11 year olds made beautiful paper plate masks facilitated by the Art teacher. Those seven and under enjoyed a tractor ride to the Junior Preparatory playgrounds and used the facilities there all morning. The jungle gyms and obstacle courses,

Partnership with Refilwe

Whilst half of the school were in Soweto, the other half went out on buses to Refilwe in Lanseria. 'Refilwe is the Tswana word for "Gift". The Refilwe Community Project is a multi focused registered Non Profit and Public Benefit Organisation serving the communities of Lanseria north of

Johannesburg through Child Care and Sustainable Community Development Initiatives.' (www.refilwe.org)

Girls from these two houses climbed onto buses early on Saturday morning with packed lunches and paintbrushes ready to serve Refilwe Community School. Upon arrival they were divided into groups, according to tutor groups, and sent to various projects.

The computer room was originally a very dark blue colour and the girls spent the morning painting it white to try and brighten up the room. The second group were tasked with finishing painting the bridge. The previous year, the girls sanded, removed the rust and completed the first coat and now the group managed to complete a beautiful second coat, leaving a shining green bridge. They managed to complete the task despite the rain threatening and were fortunate that the weather held out just long enough to dry the paint.

We also had a group of very dedicated matric students who invested their time in tutoring and teaching the Refilwe high school students in maths and English skills. They taught them a maths game and helped them develop comprehension skills. The learners were very positive about this experience and soaked up the knowledge, enthusiasm and commitment shown by the Saints girls.

A larger group of girls assisted with converting an old workroom into a day care centre. The walls were dirty and half painted and a very suitable undercoat was completed by the end of the day. They also came out with new skills as the teachers taught them house painting skills. Several enthusiastic Saints girls committed their morning to playing games with children.

The focus this year was on the vegetable garden that was planned and organised as the major project for the day. Girls worked like Trojans and were able to complete the project by the late afternoon so that there was a real sense of achievement as they looked upon their end product.

Rewards...

We fund these projects with money we collect in the form of 'Civvies Days' during the course of the year. Instead of making cash donations we use the money to transport our girls and buy materials to make something that the community really needs, using our 'girl power' to make a world of difference.

What has become wonderful to witness over the past three years is the increasing numbers of girls and staff who get involved. Without ever making these events compulsory, we had over 90% attendance from our girls. Those who were representing our school at sport on the Saturday signed up for the service project on the Sunday. Staff worked alongside the girls digging and planting, sorting and painting; this was encouraging for our girls who continue to amaze us as they give of themselves and by doing so, are happy.

Thank you to the House Directors for their vision and energy, volunteers at our partnerships, staff, parents and girls - this is true Servant Leadership!



A Service Opportunity

Coral Dixon

My early teaching was with less privileged children. I came later to the private school system and taught in some of the better-endowed schools in Sydney where the daughters of the middle classes and the affluent were educated in an enriched environment. Whilst in Asia and travelling in the region I met with many children for whom education, even the most basic, was seen as an unreachable privilege. They were too poor to pay the small fees for lessons required by the government schools. They begged in the street for biros – and ‘money for school’.

I share this background with you to explain the origin of my dream – to educate girls in developing countries.

The schools of South East and Central Asia are largely characterised by large classes, meager resources, and struggling teachers, usually untrained. And in patriarchal societies such as those of Asia it was the boy, the son, who went to school if only one could go, and it was the son who went on to high school, and the boy who was the parents’ hope for a brighter future for the whole family.

There are two truths, which must be stated.

- It costs very little (for us) to educate a child in a developing country.
- The education of girls is hugely powerful in terms of effecting life changing outcomes.

Worldwide the number of children receiving no education has declined rapidly from about 100 million to 75 million in the period 1999 to 2006. However, girls still constitute 55% of all out-of-school children, (down from 59% in 1999). Worldwide, for every 100 boys out-of-school, there are 122 girls. In some countries the gender gap is much wider. For example, for every 100 boys out of school in Yemen there are 270 girls, in Iraq 316 girls, in India 426 girls, and in Benin 257 girls (UNESCO GMR, 2007). Gender-differential access to school is usually caused by poverty, adverse cultural practices, schooling quality and distance to schools. However, there are some emerging challenges that reduce girls’ enrolment in primary, secondary and tertiary education. These are: HIV/AIDS, orphanhood, conflicts, emergencies and other fragile situations, gender-based violence, race and the information technological gender gap. (World Bank statistics) In many countries AIDS has made girls young carers, and heads of small families, where both parents have died.

*“Educated girls
tend to make
sure their
own children
are educated,
including their
daughters.”*

We read statistics such as these with perhaps scant ability to comprehend what it means that 55% of the 75 million children receiving no schooling are girls. Such figures erode the will.

But I like the story of the man who walked along the sea shore tossing back, one by one, star fish that had been beached in countless numbers. His friend said, ‘Why do you bother? It makes no difference.’ He answered ‘But to that one that I throw back it makes a world of difference.’ And this is how one must proceed, one at a time, one girl at a time.

And it is not just that the girl who goes to school is better able to think, plan, and earn a living for herself. There are many far reaching good reasons to educate girls in developing countries.

Again using World Bank statistics: an educated girl will be more likely to marry later, will use better birth control methods, and have fewer and healthier children. It is estimated that each year of education (especially secondary education) reduces fertility by 10%.

Educating girls lowers the infant and child mortality rates. Educated young mothers are more likely to understand the elements of good nutrition and childcare, and will seek to have their babies vaccinated. They will search out medical attention when necessary, and will have higher standards of hygiene in the home.

The maternal death rate is reduced if girls are educated, as again they will seek medical attention when needed. They will have fewer and better-spaced pregnancies, and seek pre and postnatal care. It is estimated that educating 1000 girls will save the lives of two women from childbirth mortality.

Educating girls lowers the infection rate from HIV AIDS as girls become better informed about how to avoid the disease, and gain economic independence. Economic independence means that there are alternatives to prostitution (and infection) if one is to survive. School experience also means they are less likely to be trafficked or sold into the sex trade. Schooling is the most powerful tool in protecting girls from their own vulnerability.

Of course education for girls means that they become more productive members of society and contribute significantly to the general wealth of a community. Women in small business are the basis of economic growth



and development, for many communities.

And the generational effect is that educated girls tend to make sure their own children are educated, including their daughters. In many countries each additional year of formal education completed by a mother translates into her children remaining in school for an additional one-third to one-half year. Only a mum who has learned to read at school will read to her own children.

We are currently putting some 350 children through school. All of these children have caring mothers – even though mostly the mothers are illiterate – and all of them are so poor that without support they would not be able to attend school. Our sponsorships cover uniforms, text books, and for each child we create a small bank account that can be accessed only when school is completed, and which is intended for tertiary education.

All of this costs 27 Australian dollars a month or \$324 per annum - the equivalent of a muffin and coffee per week. Children come on to the scheme in middle to upper primary years – so the commitment is for 6 to 8 years. Uniquely we deliver 100 cents in the dollar to the recipient child. Students are monitored for school attendance and performance, and our sponsors receive regular letters, photos, school reports, bank statements and teacher's reports on their child.

The streets of Kathmandu and Siem Reap where we work are full of children who should be in school. My dream is to find 3000 sponsors to help 3000 of these girls, who need a life changing opportunity, to be someone, and to create a better life for themselves and their own children.

My dream is that every girls' school will sponsor two girls – write to them, e-mail them, visit them, befriend them and encourage them. My hope is that each staff or common room might put aside \$350 a year to educate a girl in Nepal or Cambodia. I invite each member of the school executive to adopt one girl for sponsorship. I'd be excited if schools could visit Kathmandu or Siem Reap and the amazing temples there - and make contact with their girl and her teachers.

In writing this article I appeal to all readers to sponsor a girl and make a life changing difference – one girl at a time.

Coral Dixon retired after leading Ravenswood School for Girls, NSW, and founded the Australian International School in Singapore. She can be contacted at 9 Hartley Street, Rozelle NSW 2039, email: cozzy@me.com, phone: 0457 880 001



Online School for Girls

From the OS4G web site at <http://www.onlineschoolforgirls.org/>



The Online School for Girls was created by a consortium of nationally recognized girls' schools who believe that online education presents incredible opportunities for girls to learn from and work with girls around the world, to engage in coursework not otherwise available, and to create greater flexibility for students in their daily life.

The Online School for Girls is accepting applications for charter affiliation. There are currently over twenty schools who have joined on this level. Charter Affiliates pay a one time fee. In return, charter affiliate schools receive tuition discounts, an expedited registration process for students, and a seat on our advisory council. Charter affiliation is open to any school that wishes to join.

For information on how your school can become involved with the Online School for Girls, please contact:

Molly Rumsey, Interim Director, Online School for Girls
molly.rumsey@onlineschoolforgirls.org
301.842.4674

Mission Statement

The Online School for Girls provides an exceptional all-girls educational experience by connecting girls worldwide through relevant and engaging coursework in a dynamic online learning community.

Guiding Principles

Guided by current research on how girls learn best, the School has dedicated itself to the following principles:

Connection - Emphasize connection among participants;

Collaboration - Incorporate collaboration into the learning experience;

Creativity - Inspire and reward creativity;

Application - Engage in real-world problems and applications while having students probe the social and ethical dynamics that define and stretch our global society

Courses available

Online School for Girls offers courses to any girl from any school. For 2011-12 there are 7 full year courses, 8 semester courses and 5 summer courses. See table at left.

Free trials

Last year, the OS4G offered free courses as a trial to a small number of girls from Alliance schools. The girls involved were asked to evaluate the courses from an Australian perspective and the Alliance Executive were interested to see if the courses would be relevant to our curriculum and to hear the girls' experiences.

The Alliance is continuing dialogue with the Online School for Girls to investigate further opportunities for Alliance students.

FULL YEAR COURSES

AP Computer Science
AP Music Theory
AP Psychology
AP Statistics
AP Macroeconomics
Environmental Science
Japanese I

SUMMER COURSES

Intro to Computer Programming
Review of Algebra I
Write with Confidence, Clarity & Purpose
Transition from Spanish II to Spanish III
Transitions: French Enrichment Course

FIRST SEMESTER COURSES

Multivariable Calculus
Global Issues
Intro to Animation
Genetics

SECOND SEMESTER COURSES

Differential Equations
AP U.S. Government
Graphic Art
Intro to Human Anatomy, Physiology & Disease



Comments from the girls:

Course taken: Art and Code

Ella, from St Michaels' Collegiate School, Tasmania

'We were required to explore Daniel Shiffman's book Learning Processing and to create our own artworks from knowledge acquired from the book. We then shared our work with the rest of the group.'

'It was very beneficial to be able to communicate with people half way across the world, to share ideas and thoughts, and to see everyone's creative abilities.'

'There was a lot of freedom in what we could choose to do for our work each week, which made the learning side a lot more enjoyable. I was excited each week about what I was going to be able to create using the new knowledge'

'I would definitely do it again. The course was well paced, not too slow but not too fast.'

Course taken: Global Issues

Annika from St Mary's Anglican Girls' School, WA

'I found all aspects of the course to be of great interest to me. The issues chosen for us to study were complex enough to be quite challenging, and we moved from one topic to another regularly, such that each week we would be studying something different. At the beginning of the course we also had the opportunity to suggest what we would like to study in the course by way of a class discussion, ensuring that the topics were generally of interest to the majority of students. There were a number of case studies allowing us to apply our knowledge to real-world situations, and many opportunities for creative thinking. It certainly never got boring!'

'The learning was very enjoyable indeed. I liked the way we were exposed to such a wide range of material, including the TED speeches, our three textbooks and the information provided regarding the case studies, such as the article about the southern African Peace Parks. Although the frequency of due dates was rather stressful and indeed often quite alarming, the topics covered were of such great interest to me I don't think I ever seriously regretted taking the course for a moment!'

'For me, the best part was when we got to express our own opinions

on the issues being discussed (which, fortunately for me, seemed to happen in many of the assignments). I particularly enjoyed Assignment 2.5, in which we created proposals for development projects. The Final Project, in which we were asked to give a persuasive speech (on video) acting as advocates for some particular cause pertinent to our course, was also a great chance for some logical thinking.'

'I would definitely recommend this course to other Australian students, but in my opinion they would probably have to be in Year 10 to get the most out of it—the coursework required an understanding of economics and other Social Sciences which was most likely a little above Year 9 level, but by Year 11 only a very organized student would be able to devote maximum effort to the course without it being of detriment to their academic and other commitments.'

'This course was an amazing experience for me: I became far more confident about writing and expressing an opinion, discovered a whole new range of internet researching tools I would otherwise never have known about, and above all learnt so much about so many of the issues affecting our world today!'

Course taken: Genetics

Laura, Our Lady of Mercy College, Parramatta, NSW

'The course took place over a 'haiku' website, where images, videos and links were posted along with text from the teacher; the homework was available for download, and then we uploaded it into a dropbox, and the following week it was available for us to check with feedback and marks.'

'We used many different forms of technology, and there was a certain amount of work each week, always in different formats, so it remained very exciting.'

'A lot of the homework was in pairs or groups, and we used online chat sites (like msn) and video conferencing (Skype) to communicate.'

'The course was incredibly interesting, and went into a lot of depth about a few different branches of genetics. The way that we all contributed to what we wanted to learn, and how the subject matter of the course was directed by the participants was awesome!'

'I definitely would recommend this course to anyone interested in genetics or medicine. It was a great experience, and the technology you learn to use teaches you heaps of great skills.'

Experience of a lifetime

Abbotsleigh students participate in valuable Online School for Girls program

This article was first published in Abbotsleigh's Clippings magazine, the professional development journal of AbbSearch, Centre for Education Research in Schools.

Sylvia Luo - Year 11 student

Being part of the Online School for Girls community has been an amazing experience that I know I'll cherish for the rest of my life. The opportunities have been amazing and the amount of information and ways to access, communicate and demonstrate this information has really opened my view on the wider world. Technology is often condemned as being a means of distraction in education, but the attractive nature of the course and the excitement whenever I log on has made me realise that there is in fact a huge amount of interesting material on the internet which can substitute my slightly useless forms of entertainment.



This experience allowed me to gain a greater understanding of the online platform and I've learnt a variety of online tools to use in the future. To date, we have had three separate units of work, a debate and a six week assignment.

What information sources did we use?

There was a good range of sources we used. There was an array of websites that we were exposed to through the teacher. During independent tasks, we were required to look into other sources, such as briefing papers, videos, e-newspapers and other websites.

What Web 2.0 tools did we use?

We were exposed to a lot of internet tools, many of which we had never used before. They were always different, depending on the course. For instance, in my course, a good range of tools was used because we were constantly required to provide opinions and reflect our understanding of a specific topic. Some of the tools were:

- HAIKU – a tool we used to organise our classes
- Diigo.com – a bookmarking tool that enables you to look into other sources linking to a URL
- Voicethread – allows you to record a message (voice). It's a good break from typing all the time!
- Google Reader – this allows you to subscribe to different websites and be up-to-date with what they put up daily (RSS feed)
- Wikispaces – This was extremely useful for our group debate, in which we all provided information collaboratively, from two different continents!

Unit 1 – The 21st Century world

This was a course which was a bit of a mix of economics and geography, with a tinge of history. It really allowed us to compile ideas and encouraged us to look at things from a factual perspective, rather than from an obvious perspective. For instance, most people assume that aid is good for developing countries. However, what the public misses out on is what these charities do with the money, how much money goes to the CEOs, etc. It also allowed us to investigate how trade was linked to human rights, the effects of globalisation, and the controversy surrounding the World Bank and IMF. We were often asked to answer questions, provide an opinion and to think creatively, which from my perspective is very appealing, as it doesn't just focus on our academic ability – but rather stimulates our creative minds as well.

Unit 2 – Economic development

This was a very rigorous part of the course. I had a bit of difficulty understanding it because so many of the definitions were part of Year 11 and 12 Economics and Geography. This was the same for Unit 1. This disadvantage wasn't too bad, but it did mean that I had to look up

definitions occasionally. This unit provided many case studies, which really allowed us to look into the outer world and become familiar with what happens in developing countries. We are often only exposed to what the media manipulates for us, so the course was very useful in providing first hand news.

Debate – Fair trade or free trade?

The class debate we did was very entertaining and fun, considering that we don't often get to communicate with the other students because of the time difference. Although it was a little last minute for our group, it was nevertheless very interesting to find out more about my fellow students via Skype. It was a good piece of independent work and allowed us to develop our research skills. I can understand why this course is done on the internet, because so much of it is updated constantly, so the production of books would slow down the process.

The debate involved several different topics, which were listed on the left hand side of the webpage. There were about three different boxes on each debate topic page. They were boxes that we could add onto the Wikipage which could contain text, images or videos, so long as they linked to the topic of that Wikipage, which in one case was 'should new trade agreements include labour and environmental standards?'. On that page, our team had images, a case study and a paragraph containing our team's views.

What was difficult about it?

The biggest challenge from my perspective was the demands of the course. Although I was aware it was going to be challenging, I didn't think that it would be to a degree that would require up to 10 assignments due each week. It was extremely rigorous, especially during the first couple of weeks. There was just so much due every Wednesday and Sunday.

The amount of time needed for the assignments was a little unrealistic. Whilst talking to some of my other classmates, I found that many of them were able to spend class time on the project. In my case though, there was barely any time, especially on top of co-curricular sports and school duties too. However, later in the course, the workload did lessen, so that was much better for me.

There were also some technical issues at times, but the teacher was very understanding and allowed extensions. One suggestion, was an

e-book to store all our work in, just in case the site crashed. While this didn't happen this time, it was convenient to have a copy somewhere (e.g. Word or OneNote).

In terms of difficulty, I think the only main concern is the ability for the students to digest and follow all the information being thrown at us. It is quite a challenging course academically, so students have to be on top of the game at all times.

The material you learn is interlinked with Year 11 and 12 subjects, especially with Economics, Geography and at times History. There is so much information weekly, so students have to have the capability to balance it all and hand in the work on time. Some assignments can be just too difficult to understand. My teacher was very helpful though, as he replied to emails very quickly or was available on Skype any time.

What am I doing now?

I have now completed a third unit of the course, which is titled 'global women's issues' – a unit, I believe, that has shaped the way I look at women immensely. So much of the unit was engrossing and so emotionally involving too.

We had to do a short report on a chapter we read in the book, *Half the Sky*, which looks at the lack of women's rights around the world, as well as proving how 'women aren't the problem, but the solution'.

As I think about it, I can't help but feel a little sad because OSG was such a large part of my life in 2010. It has been full of ups and downs but more importantly, was a great experience for me that has provided invaluable lessons for my future.



Reflections from the program

Farida Nurlanova and Zara Gough (Year 11)



What course did you take?

Farida: I took the Genetics Fall course.

Zara: Genetics

What did the course require you to do?

Farida: The course required us to learn a unit of new material relating to different areas of genetics each week, and then we were required to submit assignments which demonstrated our knowledge of the unit.

Zara: Each week the work involved completing a vocab list where we had to write definitions and examples for new words used in the unit. There was also a weekly assignment of study questions, which were mostly problem solving questions that were relevant to the unit's work. Each week there was a discussion topic, to which we had to post a response. At the end of each unit, there was a short test, as well as longer exams from time to time and occasional group projects.

How many hours each week did you spend on the course?

Farida: I spent about 10 hours a week doing this course.

How many weeks were involved in the course?

Zara: The course ran for about 12 weeks.

What forms did the communication take?

Zara: There were many forms of communication. The Online School website had a messaging tool for communication, which was helpful, and we were also able to talk to our teacher and other students through Skype. There were also discussion boards (similar to a blog) which allowed us to speak to others.

Was there any sharing of work with other students or the facilitator?

Zara: Yes, a lot of our work was done collaboratively or published on the class site for other students to see. Some examples of this was an assignment where we had to create a video to teach the rest of the class, and our final assignment where we picked a topic and created a website for it which was then published to the rest of the class and we all had to comment.

How enjoyable was the learning?

Farida: I really enjoyed gaining a greater knowledge of genetics throughout the course; however, this was at times affected by the huge amounts of work set every week and the fast pace at which we were supposed to complete tasks. At times, I felt learning in the course was very rushed.

Zara: I found the learning really enjoyable. It was a different style of learning to have a class fully online but I really enjoyed the experience.

What needed to be improved or would have made it better for you?

Farida: I think that time constraints was the main issue I had with the course. I found most of the work quite intellectually taxing and as there was usually a lot of it every week, I often didn't have time to complete the work or fully understand the concepts that were taught. Extending the time frame of the course could make it easier to spread out the distribution of work and students could benefit from more time to learn the material and do the work.

What was the best part of the course?

Farida: The best part of the course for me was the global communication it provided with other students and the instructor of the course. I enjoyed engaging in the frequent discussions which occurred as well as the collaboration of work and ideas. This was really a strong factor in sustaining my interest in the course.

Our students were sponsored by the Alliance of Girls' Schools Australasia as part of a pilot research project.

Student Leadership Conference 2011

In January this year, the annual Student Leadership Conference was held for the first time in a university college – Dunmore Lang College at Macquarie University, Sydney. Another first was the collaboration with a young and dynamic leadership team – Rising Generations – and they didn't disappoint. In 2012, the Student Leadership Conference will move, together with Rising Generations, to the Women's College at the University of Sydney. Below is a summary from one of the Rising Generations team, Bek Donders.

'We can make an impact one person at a time. You can never learn too much. Women can do anything and everything!' – Sharnie Kunde, Ipswich Girls' Grammar School

What an inspiring way to kick-start the new year!

Rising Generations was the proud host of the 2011 Alliance of Girls' Schools Student Leadership Conference (SLC) held from 19 - 23 January, at Dunmore Lange College, Macquarie University, Sydney.

SLC brought together 142 enthusiastic school leaders from across Australia, from Singapore, New Zealand and the United States for a five day interactive leadership program, covering the themes of service, passion, vision, values and resilience.

The girls were divided into small groups, representing different animal tribes, to take part in various team and relationship building activities.

A highlight of the conference was a spin-off of The Amazing Race challenge, which saw the tribes head to either Manly Beach or the city to complete an array of point-scoring activities, culminating at the steps of the Sydney Opera House.

Creative juices flowed during a modification of Donald Trump's Apprentice Challenge. Tribes were put under-the-pump to produce a new iPhone application designed to benefit young people (12-18 year olds) and present it to a panel of industry experts in marketing and communications. In this challenge the students recognised the value of working together as a team, the importance of delegation and trust and using the strengths of their teammates. The teams learnt to research, develop prototypes and pitch their ideas, in much the same way the girls will operate in their leadership teams within a school context.

Students also took the opportunity to put servant leadership into action at a local aged care facility. Much to the delight of the residents, girls with musical talent performed concerts, and spent quality time listening to their stories.

'It was a real privilege for the team at Rising Generations to host SLC. The calibre of the girls made the experience incredibly valuable for all who attended,' said Rising Generations CEO, Bec Heinrich.

'We can't wait to witness the impact of their leadership in their schools and local community in 2011 and no doubt in the decades to come.'

Key note speakers at SLC included Bec Heinrich, Olympic gold medalist, Kerri Pottharst, motivational speaker and voice of Blinky Bill, Robyn Moore, Channel 10 journalist, Natasha Exelby, Caltex General Manager, Helen Conway and Telstra Young Business Woman of the Year, Andrea Culligan-Dring.

The girls had a thoroughly enjoyable time growing their confidence to be highly effective leaders for 2011, and making life-long friendships.



International Women's Day

International Women's Day was again a focus for reflection on the status of women in our communities and in society, and we re-print a message for our patron-in-chief on the occasion of the 100th anniversary of the first IWD.

Guest SPEaker, Deborah Jefferson, spoke to girls from Victorian member schools and her speech is also reproduced here.

Ms Andrea Coote MP, Mrs Catherine Misson, Principal of Melbourne Girls Grammar, Principals, staff and girls. It is a great honour and privilege to be invited to speak to you today and to celebrate International Women's Day.

International Women's Day has been observed since the early 1900's.

In December 1977 The General Assembly of the United Nations adopted a resolution proclaiming a day for Women's Rights and International Peace. This important day is now observed on 8 March. Unfortunately it is rare for the world in history and to this present day to be at peace.

As a barrister and as a woman I am always conscious of the personification of our legal justice system being a woman. Outside the County Court of Victoria in William Street, the imposing sculpture "Lady of Justice" by William Eicholtz reminds us of the importance of justice.

The sculpture is a version of the image of the Goddess of Justice holding set scales in her left hand, a sword, symbolizing the power of Reason and Justice, in her right hand and wearing a blindfold. The blindfold represents objectivity. It should be noted she is NOT blind.

The statue of 'Lady Justice' atop the Old Bailey courthouse in London stands without a blindfold. The courthouse brochures explain that Lady Justice was originally not blindfolded because her 'maiden form' is supposed to guarantee her impartiality.

Women today have an opportunity to balance the scales and make decisions that influence International social justice more than ever before. Women today are not blind to the social injustices in world communities. Women play an ever-increasing role in promoting awareness of breaches of international social justice.

I was fortunate to spend my entire school life at Melbourne Girls Grammar. My school years allowed me to learn and mature in an environment that was protected and encouraging. The teachers instilled in us the importance of respecting humanity.

It is these values that attracted me to Australian Red Cross and my current career path. The principles of Red Cross include humanity - 'to protect life and health and to ensure respect for the human being' - and impartiality which includes making no discrimination as to nationality, race, religious beliefs, class or political opinion.

I attended my first meeting with the Australian Red Cross in 1979. A committee was formed to raise funds for the work of Red Cross. Through volunteer fundraising over the last 30 years the pathway of my life changed

in a way I never would have expected.

I was in awe of some of the women who attended my first meeting. Miss Maureen White had served as a Red Cross nurse in World War II and continued the work of Red Cross as a volunteer for most of her life.

By chance in 1998 I attended an information day at Red Cross on International Humanitarian Law. International Humanitarian Law is the law of armed conflict and was formulated to govern the conduct of warfare and alleviate suffering as much as possible. Even wars have limits.

IHL stands alongside refugee law and human rights law.

The International Committee of Red Cross (ICRC) is perhaps less well known as being the "guardian" of International Humanitarian Law. The rules of International Humanitarian Law are contained in the four Geneva Conventions of 1949 and two Additional Protocols of 1977. They are legally binding on all countries that have agreed to adhere to them.

My grandfather, Roland Wilson who was a Red Cross worker was captured by the Japanese after the fall of Singapore. He like thousands of other soldiers and humanitarian workers faced starvation and torture as a prisoner of war. He died soon after his return to Australia after his release.

At the IHL information day I learnt that Japan was not a signatory to the Geneva Conventions, which requires member countries to respect the human rights of prisoners.

I became an Australian Red Cross volunteer IHL speaker disseminating IHL and increasing the awareness of the Geneva Conventions to the community. Greater knowledge among the public and the defence forces of the role of the Geneva Conventions puts pressure on

Governments around the world to respect and comply with these rules.

To quote Daniel Masse, ICRC dissemination delegate in Bosnia – Herzegovina in December 1992:

'If, after months of discussion and great effort, I am able to change the attitude or behaviour of just one combatant, I consider my work successful because maybe two, perhaps three, or even five innocent people will have been spared.'

Unfortunately we live in a world with constant armed conflicts. The Geneva Conventions are extremely relevant in the past, present and future. As the mother of three sons and two grandsons I am passionate that governments uphold them.

In May 1999 as chairman of a fundraising committee 'The Overseas Support Group' I organised a fundraising lunch at the Park Hyatt to launch a Red Cross program called 'The Next Step'. This program raised funds for victims of landmines in Cambodia. Red Cross organized for Man Sokheurm, a 17 year old landmine victim to travel to Australia to attend the lunch by Sir Ninian Stephens.

I spent a week with Sokheurm attending schools and informing students of IHL and the tragedies if governments do not abide by the Geneva Conventions and use weapons that maim and kill innocent children and civilians indiscriminately.

"Women today play an ever-increasing role in promoting awareness of breaches of international social justice."

Continued overleaf...

International Women's Day (continued)

Today I am still a member of the 'Overseas Support Group'. We raise and send money for overseas projects recommended by Red Cross delegates.

Projects include building bridges in areas that are flood prone in China to allow children to cross the bridge and attend school during the wet season and supporting hygiene promotion and installing clean water sanitation systems in Northern Vietnam.

My involvement as an IHL speaker made me appreciate how little I knew about the legal system and fostered a desire to increase my knowledge of the law. I applied and was accepted for a Graduate Diploma in International Law at the University of Melbourne with the support of a mentor, Professor Tim McCormack and my work with Red Cross as a volunteer in IHL.

Having completed Year 12 at Melbourne Girls Grammar some 20 years earlier and deciding not to go to university I was terrified driving to my first lecture at University. Listening to the car radio I heard 'Judge Judy' was making an appearance at Southland Shopping centre to launch a book – I nearly took the option to skip the lecture and go and buy her book instead!

After making the choice to attend university at postgraduate level I vividly remember the introduction of the 20 students in a small room under the bell tower at the University of Melbourne. Each person around the table stated their expertise in the field of International Criminal Law.

Students included the head lawyer of the New Zealand Army and a surgeon who had flown in from London and was in charge of setting up the hospitals in the middle of war zones around the world for the ICRC. I felt extremely insignificant as a desperate housewife from North Balwyn.

On track at 48 years of age to start a postgraduate law degree there was still a steep hill to climb. The university recommended I attend a class in the law library on legal research. I sat in the old law library in a cold sweat. I did not know how to turn a computer on let alone navigate through the resource sites of international law. I was the last to leave the library that day as I prayed for a power failure to avoid having to ask someone how to turn the computer off!

After completing the Graduate Diploma I realised I needed further education to be taken seriously and fulfil my ambitions. I was accepted to Monash University as a fulltime undergraduate law student.

I was fortunate to spend time as a student working at the Springvale Monash Legal service. Working at the legal service gave me an insight into the many vulnerable people who had fled worn torn countries and found themselves in trouble in Australia. I completed my law degree at Monash University while running a house with three sons at home. After the 4 years I decided I had finished studying.

A celebratory drink with Professor Tim McCormack and Major Michael Mori, the US Marine Corps, defence lawyer for David Hicks who was detained in Guantanamo Bay, influenced my decision to complete my Masters in International Law.

I believed that further education would enhance my prospects of ultimately

working at the International Criminal Court in The Hague. I was again fortunate and appreciated the chance to study further.

Determination and hard work proved to me that anything is possible if you are passionate about making a difference.

While completing my Masters in International and Public Law I was instinctively drawn to war crimes committed against woman and children. Women are often the forgotten victims of war and the most vulnerable.

During times of armed conflict crimes against women includes rape, forced prostitution, sexual slavery and indecent assault. (Protection under Geneva Convention IV article 27 para 2). Over the centuries rape has been used as an instrument of ethnic cleansing intending to humiliate and degrade women.

In war continuous rape of one ethnic group by another ethnic group can result in forced pregnancy and can destroy or partially destroy the group. Sexual assault can also destroy the social structure of a particular group where the women become unmarried, divorced or abandoned by their own people because of rape.

Sexual violence jurisprudence now confirms that a single instance of sexual violence with a nexus to armed conflict warrants prosecution, as a war crime and sexual violence may be committed with genocidal intent and as part of the process of genocidal destruction.

I started my working career with a criminal law firm as a way to assist some of the disadvantaged in Australian society.

It was fortuitous my first trial as an instructing lawyer was for a young Sudanese boy who had escaped from war torn Sudan and the atrocities of war. He had witnessed at 4 years of age his grandfather having his throat cut by the militia. His father today shows the scars of being tortured and his legs burnt.

My client and his family had only been in Australia 3 weeks when an 'Aussie kid' offered him ice – the rest was history after taking the ice, which can make you sexually active, prompting him to rape several women.

My heart sank when just prior to entering the Supreme Court for the trial I received a phone call from a midwife at the Box Hill hospital informing me my client's mother had gone into labour with her fifth child and she was distressed at not being at Court to support her son. After fleeing the war her family was being torn apart.

Three years later I was in the supermarket at Kew at 5pm when I received a phone call from the same young Sudanese boy in Barwon prison. He was extremely distressed and asked for my help. The Department of Human Service had taken away his three younger brothers and sister.

I was unable to help until Court sat again on the following Tuesday as it was a long weekend. I appeared pro bono on his behalf at Court and explained my client was in prison and that I knew the family professionally for a considerable time.

At the end of a long day of submissions from several barristers Her Honour asked my opinion to assist her in her decision about whether the family should be reunited. As I sat at the bar table I knew she respected my

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Her Excellency Ms Quentin Bryce AC
Governor-General of the Commonwealth of Australia

8 March 2011

**Message from your Patron
Her Excellency Ms Quentin Bryce, AC
Governor-General of the Commonwealth of Australia**

My warmest greetings to you on the occasion of the 100th anniversary of International Women's Day.

This special milestone provides an opportunity for us to reflect on what we have achieved and the challenges still ahead, as we strive for gender equality.

Together, let us celebrate Australia's pioneering rural women; our professional trailblazers; our leading researchers; our sportswomen and our girls.

This is our day. We must honour those bravehearts who broke down barriers for us; share experiences, stories, warmth, humour, and encourage our young women to seize the future.

I offer my friendship and best wishes to you in your pursuit to enhance the lives of women, their futures and their potential.

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opinion as a woman, mother and barrister. The weight of my opinion was far greater coming from me as educated barrister than a woman. I was grateful for the opportunity to help the family.

I will never forget minutes after walking out of court seeing these young Sudanese children running into their parents' arms in tears of joy after being separated for the weekend.

I admire these families and in particular the women who have faced so many social injustices in their life to have the strength to continually fight against all odds so their children can have the benefits of a country such as Australia.

In 2008 I signed the Bar Role and am currently practicing as a Barrister primarily in crime. Out of a total of 1,805 Victorian Practising Counsel only 426 are woman. The Bar is traditionally a male dominated profession. In Court my opponents are predominately male.

There is however one advantage in Chambers there is never a queue for the female toilets!

I represent clients in the Magistrate Court throughout the State of Victoria. The men and woman I represent in court every day have often endured abuse in their lives. Some have come from worn torn countries and others physically and sexually abused in their homes here in Australia.

One young distressed woman who I met in the cells of the court prior to making an application for bail had the benefit of an education at a girl's school and a degree from university. Unfortunately after a family breakdown she chose to use drugs and ended up as a prostitute on the streets in St Kilda.

This demonstrates that although you may be given all the benefits of an education you still have to make choices as to which way to utilise them.

Each day that I go to work I am aware of an obligation to use my education to the best of my ability and assist vulnerable people in our society. It is often stressful knowing the outcome from court will mean the freedom or deprivation of my client's liberty.

Every girl here today has had the opportunity of an education at a wonderful school. As you know we are privileged in this country to have an education that many girls in other countries will never have. Your options are boundless and you have the choice to use those options for yourself and humanity.

You are the leaders of tomorrow and have the empowerment of an education. It is never to late to take different pathways in life.

Perhaps you will be in positions that require you to make choices as a leader that involves armed conflict or in assisting and protecting women in the international community. Like the 'Lady of Justice' you will have the opportunities to balance the scales. My best wishes to you all for the future.

Call for Nominations Alliance of Girls' Schools Australasia Liaison Persons

Each Alliance member school is invited to designate a liaison person whose role is:

- to be on the email list for Alliance newsletters and information and disseminate this appropriately
- to handle the dissemination of the twice-yearly magazines – to staff and members of the school community
- to report on and champion the Alliance at staff meetings
- to suggest projects or topics for research related to girls' education
- to update school information (eg change of Principal) on the Alliance web site

Some activities that the liaison person may initiate:

- create a noticeboard for flyers and information about the Alliance
- organise students and staff to attend Alliance functions and conferences
- manage the purchase and distribution of Why a Girls' School brochures
- participate in conferences and seminars
- regularly access the Alliance web site and check updates of research articles, passing on articles to relevant staff
- note the entries for Women of Achievement and First Women on the web site and suggest equivalent role models from their own school to be added to the web site

NOMINATION FORM FOR LIAISON PERSON

Name:

School Position:

Email address:

School Name:

Email form (or send email with details) to jbutler@agsa.org.au.