



# ACTION ON POVERTY NOW

## October 2016

Ms Le makes a living farming nang

### FINANCE GIVES FARMERS NEW OPPORTUNITIES

Ms Nguyen Thi Le comes from Soc Trang province – one of the poorest in Vietnam’s Mekong Delta. Like most of her neighbours, Ms Le has always farmed rice but her yield was so low that she and her family could barely cover food and school expenses. With salt water seeping inland and damaging her crops, Ms Le was forced to consider pulling her children out of school as she couldn’t afford their tuition.

Like so many others, all Ms Le needed was access to capital. Through our microfinancing scheme, Ms Le borrowed AUD\$400 and learned how to start a small business. Ms Le began planting *nang*, a grass-like, aquatic plant that is a popular vegetable in the Mekong Delta, and selling it to local traders.

During harvest, Ms Le and her husband rise at 1am to collect the young shoots, trim them and pack them in 100kg

bundles for the traders to collect at 4am. Despite the hard work, Ms Le smiles and jokes about her accomplishments and looks towards the future.



*Nang is a delicious vegetable*

“Growing *nang* is hard work,” said Ms Le, “even harder than growing rice. But thanks to the loan, we can afford school fees and buy new shoes for the kids. For the first time we’re not living day to day and we are able to cover our monthly loan repayments. Next year, I’ll be applying for an even larger loan.”

### OUR NEW NAME: ACTION ON POVERTY



*Action on Poverty staff*

In case you haven’t noticed already, we’ve got a brand new name: Action on Poverty (AOP).

Our old name – the Australian Foundation for the Peoples of Asia and the Pacific (AFAP) – was too long, confusing and forgettable, and neglected all the amazing work we do with our partners in Africa.

Our new name is much simpler, explains our mission and doesn’t limit us to the regions in which we currently work.

Although we’ve got a new name, our mission remains the same: helping people lift themselves out of poverty. Since 1968, we’ve been working with local partners – first in the South Pacific and now in 22 countries in Africa and Asia too – to help poor and vulnerable communities make positive changes in food security, health care and more.

As we continue to expand our work, your support is more important than ever. Thank you for helping us tackle inequality – it makes a world of difference!

You can now visit us at [actiononpoverty.org](http://actiononpoverty.org)

### SHOP FOR A GOOD CAUSE AT FOLO



Do you shop online? Download Folo now and a percentage of what you spend shopping online will go towards a charity of your choice – us, of course!

Go to the Folo website to sign up and, after entering your details, select Action on Poverty from the list of charities in the drop down menu. When you search the Internet, the Folo bar shows you who Folo partners with and how much they’ll donate if you make a purchase. Folo retailers include some of your favourite brands, such as The Iconic, Microsoft, Expedia, Priceline and Dan Murphy’s.

For more information visit [fole.world](http://fole.world)



## YOUR GIFTS HELP THOUSANDS IN MALAWI

Thanks to you, 1,500 people in the remote Thyolo district in Malawi have improved their food security and income.

Using \$20,000 that our incredible Action on Poverty supporters donated, we worked with our partner, Concern Universal, to improve the livelihoods of Malawian families through livestock pass-on schemes and village savings and loans (VSL) programs.

Your gifts paid to procure and distribute livestock for families to use for food and trade. You also helped train 25 people in livestock management as para-vets, and another 40 people, including traditional leaders, in VSL programs to help their communities access essential financial services so they can save money, improve their houses and invest in business.

Unfortunately, Malawi is the poorest country in the world, with 74 per cent of the population living below the poverty line, and 40 per cent living in severe poverty.

Your generous gifts have helped thousands of the most vulnerable Malawians like Chifundo and John to improve their income and set aside money, food and other assets for the future.



*People receiving vouchers to buy livestock*

### Chifundo's story

Chifundo, who was born with a disability that means he can't walk or work in the garden, had always struggled to help his family make an income.

Through our small livestock pass-on scheme, he received crops such as sweet potato, peas, cassava and maize to plant, and was also given a voucher to buy a goat.

Chifundo sold his first goat in 2014 to buy food, clothes and bedding. Recently, he sold another two to other families in his community to help share the benefits of the scheme. He now has

eight goats and makes a living selling them, which has allowed him to pay back the scheme and gain independence.

"We used to eat once a day, but now we eat at least twice a day," said Chifundo. "I am now able to support our family, headed by my grandmother, who, in addition to me, takes care of three orphans.

"Previously, I was the one who needed all the support. Now I can make decisions at home as I have assets. I am now an important member in the family and society."

In future, Chifundo wants to train to become a tailor so he can make jerseys for school children and adults to generate more daily income.



*Para-vet training*



*Community members with their new livestock*

### John's story

John started a VSL group in 2010 when he learned about the success of a similar group in the nearby village of Dzimbiri. John learned quickly – he started out with shares of AUD\$28, which soon grew to AUD\$74, and, with some of this money, he moulded bricks to build a house for himself and his wife.

Two years later, John's village head nominated John as a VSL facilitator to help other groups establish their own schemes. Meanwhile, with the ongoing income from his initial \$28 investment, John installed solar power at his house and bought a television. His latest dividend from the group was \$220.

John also grows crops in his village's irrigation scheme, which gives him extra money to invest back in his savings group. He now operates a grocery store and was recently elected Vice Chairperson of his VSL network.

"This will go a long way in helping me to reach out to as many groups as possible," said John of his new position. "Since I have received full training in VSL, I have seen myself growing. To me, VSL has helped with my personal development."



Healthy mothers and babies who have benefited from the maternal waiting home

## TEACHING MEN ABOUT WOMEN'S HEALTH IN ZIMBABWE

Maternal waiting homes in the Mutoko district of Zimbabwe have helped hundreds of women give birth safely. But in addition to offering free medical support, the homes also play a key role in educating men about the risks women face when giving birth at home.

Aweza is 34 and has four children. The first three were delivered at home, but her youngest son, Tendai, was delivered at Kawere Clinic. Aweza helped build the clinic in 2012 and was very discouraged that her husband did not want her to give birth there when she fell pregnant soon afterward.

"I encouraged him to participate in men's dialogue sessions. He learned that trained personnel monitor pregnant women and detect any complications early enough to be treated. He changed his mind," said Aweza.

"The Kawere home provided me with a private and relaxed environment where I delivered comfortably although I had a breach delivery. Tendai was delivered with the legs first. It would have been a disaster had I delivered at home where there are no trained medical personnel. Delivering at home has so many disadvantages, such as no time to rest, unhygienic conditions during birth and no trained nurses.

"I am now practising exclusive breastfeeding and giving my children nutritious meals. I am very grateful for the project because it opened many minds, including my husband's."

Nurses at the clinics encourage men to visit the homes with their wives. After touring the facilities and speaking with staff, men return to their communities and often encourage others to use the homes.

For more information on maternal waiting homes, visit [actiononpoverty.org/mwh](http://actiononpoverty.org/mwh)



Aweza with Tendai

## From the bedside

"After we opened a maternal waiting home in 2013, home deliveries reduced drastically. We have six to 10 deliveries a month at the clinic. All primary care nurses are trained in basic obstetric care over six months and a registered general nurse who is also a midwife is posted here to help run the home." *Nyasha, nursing officer at Kopondoro*

"The maternal waiting home is especially useful here in Kopondoro because the population catchment stretches to the mountain areas where the transport network is not good. Women from the mountains can come here at 36 weeks to wait for their delivery date without fear of emergency." *Tanaka, nursing officer at Kopondoro*

"Most of the women in the rural areas survive on less than \$1 a day and make a living farming. This year we experienced El Nino-induced drought so we are trying to source funds to introduce a feeding scheme for pregnant mothers. If we can provide food, this will be a further incentive to attract more mothers." *Faith, nursing officer at Makosa*



## SAYA RAISES OVER \$2,000 FOR KIDS IN VIETNAM

Eight-year-old Saya and her grandmother, Dianne, teamed up to raise \$2,070 to bring clean water to a school in Pu-Nhi, Vietnam.

Dianne is a long-time Action on Poverty supporter whose passion for helping disadvantaged people has taken her to Vietnam and Zambia, where she has helped install wells, build a bakery and provide medical supplies.

“My grandma inspired me to help others who don’t have enough water to drink or food to eat,” said Saya. “The children at the school in Vietnam have to drink from dirty streams and have no shoes, even in winter.”

This dynamic duo exceeded their target of \$2,000 within mere weeks. They money they raised will go towards a water tank and filtration system, as well as winter clothes, boots and scarves, to help over 90 children at the remote preschool and kindergarten.

“My grandma has seen how she can change people’s lives and I wanted to start helping people just like she does,” said Saya. “She taught me that everyone deserves to live with dignity.”

### Got a fundraising idea?

If you’d like to follow in Saya’s footsteps, contact us to find out more or download our Fundraising Guidelines at [actiononpoverty.org/fundraiseforum](http://actiononpoverty.org/fundraiseforum) for our A-Z guide to fundraising ideas.

Fundraising isn’t all about bake sales and raffles. Flash mobs, scavenger hunts, paintball competitions, recipe swaps, dancing classes – there are so many ways to bring your passion for change into your community. By mobilising your friends, family and neighbours, you can help connect disadvantaged people with life-changing opportunities.



Saya and her grandma



Children from Pu-Nhi school saying thank you to Saya and her grandma

## TAKE A TRIP LIKE NO OTHER THROUGH VIETNAM

Explore the stunning landscape and culture of northern Vietnam on a trek through Da Bac province from 2 – 6 December.

This trip is part of our Community-Based Tourism (CBT) program, offering a socially and environmentally responsible tourist experience. CBT gives ethnic minorities in the rural Hoa Binh province the chance to develop sustainable and equitable livelihoods, while also preserving the area’s natural and cultural integrity – building a bridge for the world to Vietnam’s hidden beauty.

Book now to trek scenic routes through pristine forest, kayak and raft on stunning lakes, stay in traditional stilt houses, and sample the traditional cuisine and culture of the Muong people.



Be entertained by traditional Vietnamese dances

See traditional life on the trek



### Bookings

Price: \$800 per person includes airport transfers, two nights’ accommodation in Hanoi (the night before and after the trek), four nights’ accommodation in homestays, meals, and trekking guides and porters.

Contact: 02 9906 3792 or [info@actiononpoverty.org](mailto:info@actiononpoverty.org)

More info: [actiononpoverty.org/trekvietnam](http://actiononpoverty.org/trekvietnam)