As many of you know, 2018 marks Action on Poverty’s 50th Anniversary. To celebrate this achievement, we held a special event at Hicksons Lawyers in Barangaroo on Thursday 22 March. Joined by 130 guests, we reflected on our achievements so far and the challenges ahead, while enjoying wine, canapés and spectacular views of Sydney Harbour.

It’s incredible to look back and see how Action on Poverty has changed. For the first 20 years, we relied entirely on volunteers and focused on aid work in the South Pacific. We opened a Hanoi office in 1995 and were the first Australian aid agency to be recognised by the Vietnamese Government. Today, we work across Africa, Asia and the Pacific, with projects ranging from health to education, food security to governance.

But one thing hasn’t changed since the very first days of Action on Poverty – our mission.

We have always focused on empowering communities to find their own ways out of poverty. We have always invested in people who have their own vision for change. And we have always believed that a more just and equal world is possible by working together.

Thank you to everyone who joined us for our 50th Anniversary, and for those who have walked beside us on our 50-year journey.

Christine Pollard
CEO Action on Poverty

Find out more about our history: actiononpoverty.org/celebrating-50
US AND THEM: WORKING TOGETHER FOR CLEAN WATER

Them, 31, lives in Krapeu Pir commune in Veal Veng, Cambodia, with his wife, Hem, and his three daughters, aged 8, 6 and 2. In Veal Veng, climate change is creating erratic weather patterns, making it difficult for farmers like Them to earn a stable income.

Last year, drought created a life-threatening situation in Them’s commune. They had no water point and all the other local sources of drinking water dried up. Some people in the commune were spending hours every day fetching water, which meant they had very little time to earn money.

Them couldn’t afford to spend time away from work. He was forced to purchase water from expensive water trucks. Every few days, Them spent $3 on water for his family’s drinking and washing needs. This was about $40 a month – a sizeable portion of their income.

Due to the high cost of water, his daughters weren’t able to wash themselves properly. They were often ill and Them could barely cover the medical bills.

Together with the Cambodian Organization for Children and Development (COCD), we installed three new wells in Veal Veng to combat drought. These wells are now used by 321 villagers, including 81 children. Local villagers, including Them, contributed money to buy building materials, and have now formed water point committees to maintain the wells and educate their communities about hygiene.

This is much safer for Them’s young daughters. With a clean source of water, they are less likely to contract diarrheal diseases – one of the leading causes of death among children in Cambodia. Girls in Cambodia are also at particular risk of encountering violence as they fetch water – something Them no longer has to worry about.

With COCD, we also built a toilet at the local primary school in Krapeu Pir. Previously, students were forced to walk all the way home to use the toilet. Teachers now report lower rates of absenteeism, and greater focus from students in the classroom.

As this project continues, we will continue to monitor water quality at the wells and support the water point committees. We will also continue to work with farmers to ensure their water needs are met, especially during the dry season.
Escape the tourist traps on this trek with a difference. Walk through fertile valleys, bamboo forests and rice terraces. Stay with locals in traditional stilt houses, where you can sample their traditional cuisine and culture. And best of all – see our projects in action, including homestays and schools.

Register your interest now for our six-day trek through Da Bac at actiononpoverty.org/trek

“Trekking has been fun and the people we stay with have made us feel so welcome. It has been a very enjoyable experience so I can only recommend it to other travellers.” – Celia Coote
FLOOD RELIEF FOR STUDENTS IN HOA BINH

In October 2017, deadly floods swept through Hoa Binh in Vietnam, killing more than 50 people, washing away homes and destroying livelihoods.

In Dong Ruong commune, two primary schools were damaged, and another has still not reopened. Students were forced to take a long journey across the river to attend classes in a neighbouring village, where there were terrible boarding facilities.

Thanks to you, we raised $1,410 to buy comfortable bunk beds and much-needed homewares. Students now have a safe, secure place to stay, and can focus on their studies.

"With the aid package delivered, parents can relax more while their kids are studying far away from home," said Mr Vang, the school principal.

Many families are still struggling to recover from the devastating floods. Visit actiononpoverty.org/donate to give a gift that truly matters today.

Francisco, a 50-year-old father from Liabote, is a man of many talents. He received a scholarship to study teaching in Portugal, before moving back to Timor in 2007 to educate other teachers in Dili.

After his father passed away, Francisco moved back home to his ancestral village in Liabote to look after his family. When a broken irrigation canal threatened the village’s wellbeing, Francisco leapt at the chance to learn how to repair water systems.

Over 40% of people in Timor Leste live in poverty. Lack of access to clean water and nutritious food sources are a huge threat to vulnerable communities. Children are at particular risk of malnutrition and water-borne illnesses.

As a father of eight, Francisco was eager to improve his family’s health and income. In training sessions with our local partner, Timor Aid, he learned how to repair the village irrigation systems. But he didn’t stop there. He also learned new farming skills, such as how to select seeds for wet and dry seasons, how to make fertiliser, and how to build chicken pens.

Combined with training in budgeting and market analysis, Francisco has been able to feed his family and earn a good income selling his produce at local markets. He has also generously provided his own land to local farmers’ groups for their fish ponds.

"I learned many new good things about fish farming, growing vegetables, and agricultural farming through this project," said Francisco. "At the same time, I improved the quality of life for my family."

FRANCISCO’S STORY: LEARNING TO FEED HIS FAMILY

A girl makes her bed before afternoon classes.

Francisco grows peanuts in his vegetable garden.

A girl makes her bed before afternoon classes.

Students wash the kitchenware after lunchtime.
Vulnerable women who have survived unimaginable abuse in Cambodia can now learn to read and write, thanks to your gifts to our Christmas Appeal in December 2017.

With your help, we raised over $5,000 to build a literacy room at Srey Sanctuary in Siem Reap – a safe haven for survivors of domestic abuse, sex trafficking and rape.

Rotha, 37, was forced to flee to Srey Sanctuary with her three children after her abusive husband beat her and burned down the house. At the shelter, Rotha has been attending counselling sessions and cooking classes, and dreams of opening her own shop one day.

Because of you, this dream is now a real possibility. With literacy skills, Rotha will be much more likely to succeed in business, and to escape the cycle of abuse and poverty.

Srey Sanctuary is remarkable because it offers much more than a place to stay. Staff are committed to advocating for women, prosecuting abusers and educating communities. This means just 2% of women have to return for further assistance.

Read Rotha's full story at actiononpoverty.org/rotha.

We are thrilled to announce that our Hanoi office has been honoured by The Viet Nam Union of Friendship Organizations (VUFO) for its contribution to the sustainable development of Viet Nam from 2013 to 2017.

This is the second time our Hanoi office has been recognised by VUFO. In 2010, we were among the organisations of honour at a ceremony celebrating the contribution of international NGOs in the country.

In Vietnam, our work focuses on maximising the impact of livelihood, climate change, health, and governance projects. From 1989, savings groups, community-based tourism, fish rearing and many other models have helped vulnerable communities improve their livelihoods.

Find out more about other life-changing projects in Vietnam at actiononpoverty.org/afap-vietnam.
We're working with the Face to Face project in Malawi to offer permaculture training for people who need help feeding their family, regardless of gender, status or ability.

With the support of The Charitable Foundation, we have helped families in Phalombe establish over 2,000 gardens! These gardens are known as 'victory gardens' because they are capable of growing lots of different vegetables and legumes throughout the year, as opposed to 'kitchen gardens', which only produce one or two vegetables.

Oscar had such success with his victory garden that he became a trainer himself, and has now helped 115 households establish 77 new gardens. Families can now grow their own nutritious foods and are able to pay for other basic needs, such as school fees for their children, by selling surplus vegetables for extra income.

Order your 2018/19 Entertainment Book to enjoy hundreds of dining, entertainment and travel offers around Australia while supporting our work.

Purchase your membership today to receive $20,000 in valuable offers from participating businesses. For every Entertainment Book purchased, we'll receive $14 to support our work empowering poor and vulnerable communities to break the poverty cycle.

$14 can pay for health checks for 15 children in Cambodia, or buy seeds for communities in the Pacific grappling with climate change.

Your 2018/19 Entertainment Book is packed with hundreds of 50% off and 2-for-1 discounts. Purchase your Entertainment Book for a hard copy with tear-out coupons, or try the Entertainment Digital Membership, which downloads straight to your smartphone and allows you to find nearby discounts and track your savings.

Purchase online at actiononpoverty.org/entertainment.

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