

**WPF ANNUAL REPORT  
AVAILABLE ON REQUEST**

*Alert: The human population has quadrupled in the last 100 years.*



*Alert: 86% of the world's projected population growth will be in the poorer countries.*

"As smaller families become the norm, a larger share of observed fertility differences between rich and poor results from differences in access and use of contraception. The rich in poor countries have both higher demand and greater ability to satisfy it. The poor desire larger families, in part because of residual cultural norms and in part because their circumstances have changed less. They do not get the signals about the changes in mortality levels and the returns on investments in education available."

*Percentage of women aged 15 to 49 years using modern contraceptives:*

Timor Leste	9 %
PNG	20 %
Lao PDR	29 %
Vietnam	60 %

*from UNFPA State of the World Population 2008*

**News from the Australian Reproductive Health Alliance**

ARHA has received funding from UNFPA for a project entitled *Building Parliamentary Groups on Population and Development in partnership with national parliamentarians and sectoral leaders*. The project will take place in Papua New Guinea and Timor-Leste. The key objective is to assist parliamentarians and stakeholders to establish Parliamentary Groups on sexual and reproductive health and population and development in their respective countries.

The Hon. Kevin Rudd MP, Prime Minister  
Dear Prime Minister,

There are wonderful parallels between the initial moves of the Rudd Government and the Obama Government to redress grievous delays in human rights issues, sending clear signals of enlightened government.

Now President Obama has removed the negative and counterproductive "Gag" legislation which prohibited reproductive health funds for measures such as contraception to be transmitted to any organisation which also had anything to do with abortion. World-wide, women's access to reproductive health was greatly reduced as a result of former President Bush's move. Many in the poorest nations of the world will benefit from President Obama's reversal of legislation which was punitive to the poor and driven by sectoral interests. He has said "While this is a sensitive and often divisive issue, no matter what our views, we are united in our determination to prevent unintended pregnancies, reduce the need for abortion, and support women and families in the choices they make. To accomplish these goals, we must work to find common ground to expand access to affordable contraception, accurate health information and preventative services" [The Australian, from the Wall Street Journal].

President Obama's courageous move, given the way some sectoral interests target politicians with abuse to affect their stance, follows on the successful conscience vote in Australia on permission for entry of RU486. Conscience in public opinion has been in favour of the change.

We wrote to you in September urging the removal of the Guideline which prohibits funding for family planning to an NGO which has other programs related to abortion. AusAID has every right and duty to choose the design of programs it funds, but the requirement that it deny funding for contraception because of possible proximity to abortion has increased human suffering and deaths.

We ask you, and Minister for Foreign Affairs, the Hon. Stephen Smith, to remove the Guideline so that funding may flow, for contraception to meet demand. In a world where abortion is the result of inadequate access to contraception, removal of the Guideline will obviate many deaths. In a world where population growth places an increasing burden on a warming, shrinking planet, this is essential.

We look to you to lead in enlightened action.

**Call for a Candidate** -- Awards are presented each year by the National Council of Women. Find for WPF's nomination, a young woman wanting to study for a career in reproductive health in overseas aid/development. Find a course in a university which provides further learning in the area of contraception. Shouldn't this be possible? Please alert Alice Oppen.

## Fundraising Plans

Accomplished **Manuela Darling-Gannser** will give a Cooking Demonstration Luncheon on March 26th for a small group. Appreciate cooking as alchemy and hospitality, with Swiss/Italian inspiration. \$45 for food and beverage, plus \$50 suggested fundraising donation. Ring Sue Wilson, 9130 6907. Manuela's next book will be launched in September.

Engaging **Susannah Fullerton** will speak on Samuel Pepys and his Diary at Morning Tea at The Women's Club in mid June. Discover Restoration London and the man behind the greatest diary ever written. \$45. Ring Alice Oppen, 9817-5175. Susannah's latest book is to be launched this year.

An **Art Viewing** and a **Lunch Talk** on overseas projects are being considered for winter, and a **Major Fundraising Event** for spring.

## Fundraising Results

The Annual Cocktail Party and Auction raised \$10,000, plus \$3,000 in donations -- thanks to the beautiful harbourside home courtesy of the Espies, and Bold Food, Ellis Lamont's music, the mc & auctioneer duo, donated auction items and generous bidders.

Along with income from the Trust Fund, this is being donated to Marie Stopes International Australia's Access program, for outreach teams taking contraceptive methods to remote areas in PNG.

In 2007/08 donations to the Trust Fund totalled \$115,000; investment income and interest totalled \$20,816. \$30,000 was donated for overseas projects. While the economic downturn will make building the Fund a challenge, the world's need for family planning is increasing. WPF can make a most fundamental incremental improvement.

Women's Plans Foundation, ABN 64-823-197-874, 3 Madeline St. Hunter's Hill, NSW 2110 (02) 9817-5175, [oppenama@bigpond.com](mailto:oppenama@bigpond.com), [www.womensplans.org](http://www.womensplans.org)

Trustees: Carolyn Blanden, Elizabeth Lloyd, Alice Oppen, Helen Sheffer, Stefania Siedlecky AM.

Fundraising Committee: Miranda Baker, Linda Cameron, Jenny Hall, Marjorie James OAM, Alice Oppen, Trish Procter, Helen Sheffer, Sue Wilson.

## RESEARCHERS' INSIGHTS

Wednesday September 24<sup>th</sup> 2008 was the second "World Contraception Day". It was also the date of WPF's Researchers' Insights meeting. The coincidence was appropriate as the evening offered a truly global perspective on contraception. The evening was hosted by Zeny Edwards at the National Trust Centre on Observatory Hill. With delicious canapés during technical hitches we settled down to listen to two eminent speakers on women's health.

Dr Edith Weisberg, the research director at FPNSW, spoke about challenges of research into providing effective safe and accessible contraception. Even with all the options available at present, vital research continues to make choices safer and easier for women worldwide. We learned about new formulations of hormonal and non hormonal contraception and research in to new delivery methods such as the vaginal ring, the patch and even a contraceptive spray.

Anna Whelan, Associate Professor of Public Health at the University of New South Wales spoke to us about the SPRINT Initiative (Sexual and Reproductive Health in Crisis and post Crisis situations). This is a response to the fact that in times of upheaval and unrest, many women lose access to family planning services, antenatal care and pediatric care facilities, exposing them to unwanted pregnancies in perilous conditions, Sexually Transmissible Infections, and birth complications including maternal and infant death. Adolescents and youth become increasingly vulnerable to such risks. SPRINT trains emergency teams to respond to sexual and reproductive health needs systematically in crisis and post-crisis situations in the East, Southeast Asia and the Pacific Region.

Question time after these two eloquent speakers was lively and there was energetic and informed debate from the audience. The evening presented an insight into the very different but real challenges facing both healthcare providers and women in all over the world. It was a rewarding and inspiring evening. Women's Plans Foundation would like to thank Zeny Edwards for the generous offer of the Observatory Hill Centre and both Associate Professor Anna Whelan and Dr Edith Weisberg for their insights.

Dr. Ellie Freedman

*This year Megan Cornelius and Evan Oppen retired as Trustees. We thank them, founding Trustees, for their contribution in many ways and wish them well in their new endeavours.*

*We welcome Helen Sheffer as Trustee and Ernst & Young's Siobhan Sellick and John Mamo, kindly providing pro bono accounting services.*

**Booking & Donation form** (post to WPF, 3 Madeline St., Hunter's Hill, NSW 2110) tel. (02)9817-5175, [oppenama@bigpond.com](mailto:oppenama@bigpond.com)

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