

THANK YOU !



Kia ora koutou, Welkam evriwan

2023 is already turning into another tumultuous year. In this newsletter we look back on our past year's work in Vanuatu, but at the same time are very conscious of the devastation caused by Cyclones Hale and Gabrielle, and other recent flooding events, in Aotearoa, not to mention other disasters, both natural and man-made, throughout the world. Vanuatu has also been hit by two cyclones in quick succession. Our aroha goes out to all who have been affected. In Aotearoa, this includes not only residents, but also the RSE workers from the Pacific Islands, including Vanuatu.

In Vanuatu, you will see that the Butterfly Trust has maintained its role of supporting local communities and government organisations, and their leaders, so that the strengthening of local systems of health and education can continue to grow from within. We take a holistic view to this work, believing that education, health and the environment are interconnected. We also believe that local Ni-Van know best what will work in their environment. In addition, we have continued to foster relationships with other NGOs, large and small, Ni-Van and international, in the belief that shared knowledge and resources lead to better outcomes.

Vanuatu is a small, island state, precariously located in one of the most disaster-prone areas on Earth. It battles with very low levels of education and health and is extremely grateful for the outside help it receives. Your contributions, from around the world, are invaluable, both practically and symbolically. Tankyu bigwan.

Finally, we would like to welcome Nick Morley and Vijay Satyanand, both long-time supporters of the Trust, as new trustees. Many thanks to you both for giving us your time and expertise.

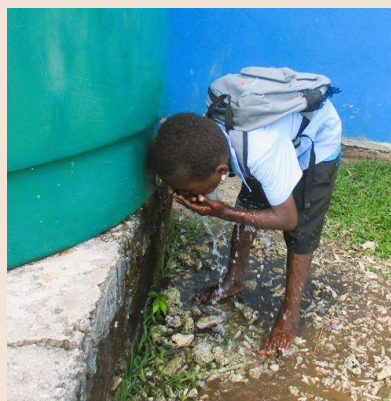
YOUR SUPPORT HAS HELPED

Oral Health services

Covid-19 assistance

School health projects

Sanitation projects



Covid-19 assistance in the capital and provinces



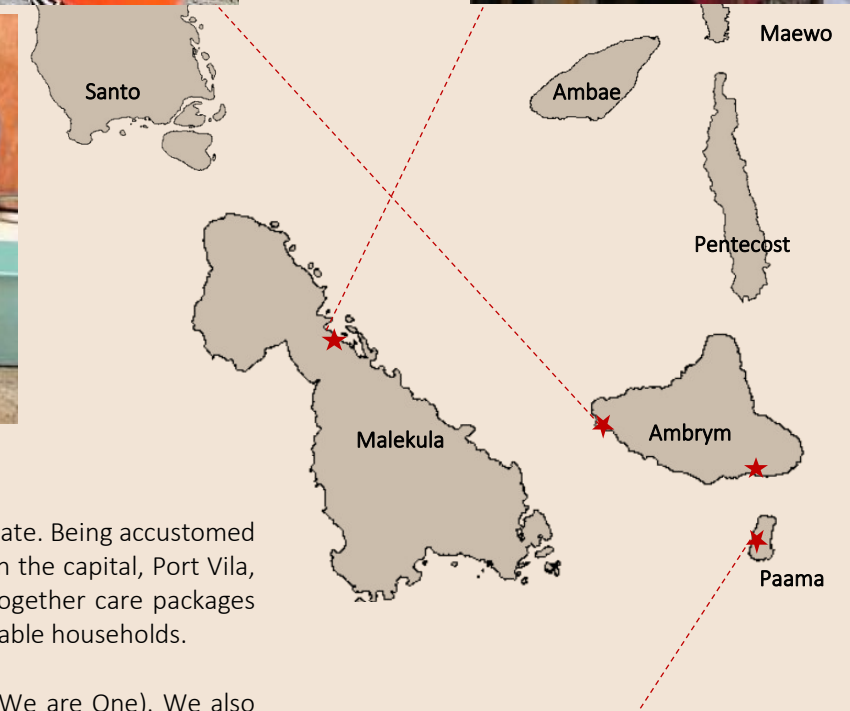
Port Vila



West Ambrym



Lakatoro, Malekula



Maewo

Ambae

Pentecost

Malekula

Ambrym

Paama

Paama



Paama

Solidarity amongst Port Vila locals in support of the most vulnerable when Covid struck in February 2022

Vanuatu successfully kept Covid at bay for almost two years, but it was inevitable that the virus would eventually infiltrate. Being accustomed to natural disasters, the locals stepped up to the challenge. Adhering to health protocols, the community networks in the capital, Port Vila, acted swiftly to assist disadvantaged groups. Volunteers and local businesses united to administer donations, put together care packages (which included dry goods, fresh produce, seeds, hygiene and PPE items) and organised distribution of these to vulnerable households.

BT assisted the collective Covid-19 response efforts of Mike Kaun and the group he founded, *Vanuatu Yumi Wan* (We are One). We also assisted *Friends Vanuatu* and the *Vanuatu Society for People with Disability* (VSPD). In less than a month, Vanuatu Yumi Wan and its partners reached over 2 500 vulnerable members of the community.

Elsewhere in the country, health and local council authorities urgently mobilised to ensure rural and remote communities were prepared and could respond to updated and accurate information. On request, BT provided financial assistance to enable provincial health teams, the police and Red Cross to jointly facilitate awareness about setting up community isolation centres on the islands of Malekula, Ambrym and Paama.

We also received requests to help with the operational costs of vaccinating people in hard-to-reach areas on the islands of Penama Province, and to provide hygiene supplies to isolation centres on Santo. Due to the rapidly evolving Covid-19 situation, funds we allocated for Covid-19 assistance on Penama and Sanma Provinces were not required. Those funds have since be redirected into BT's Sanitation Projects.

Photographs courtesy of Vanuatu Yumi Wan, Malampa Provincial Health and Malampa Red Cross. We acknowledge our friends and partners - Vanuatu Yumi Wan, Salome Kenneth (Malampa), Markson Tabi (Penama), Keith Gasi (Sanma), Julia Colvin of Friends Vanuatu, and Glen Craig of Pacific Advisory



BT's community *sanitation* project is a long-term initiative across various communities in the central islands of Malekula, Ambae and Santo. The project is aligned with the Health Promoting Schools Programme. Toilet designs are based on Ministry of Health guidelines using locally accessible, low-cost materials. The project is currently focused on areas where water is scarce.

Each community is encouraged to drive its own sanitation improvements, at its own pace, with the support of local health, water and sanitation officers. These officers provide technical assistance on hygiene and related health topics, as well as the practicalities of toilet construction. Local council administrators are also involved. They go out into the field and promote the project. They also provide storage points for building materials and encourage community involvement.

Donor funds are used to purchase construction materials, provide transport, run group workshops, provide allowances for training and supervision, and fund ongoing site visits to monitor progress. Communities and individuals are encouraged to contribute to the project and not to rely entirely on donor funding. This approach is encouraged by Vanuatu national and provincial health teams.

As well as financial assistance, BT plays a part in enabling the local systems and mechanisms of community development to adapt and thrive. We do this by listening to locals voice their challenges and frustrations, by assisting with problem-solving and by forging partnerships with like-minded organisations. This enables us to delve deeper into, and confront, wider community issues of poverty, inequity, environmental changes and the legacy of colonialism. For more detail about how BT works, you can refer to the diagram below or read [Empowering Communities](#).



Pictures from the project on Canal Fanafo in Luganville, Santo in 2022

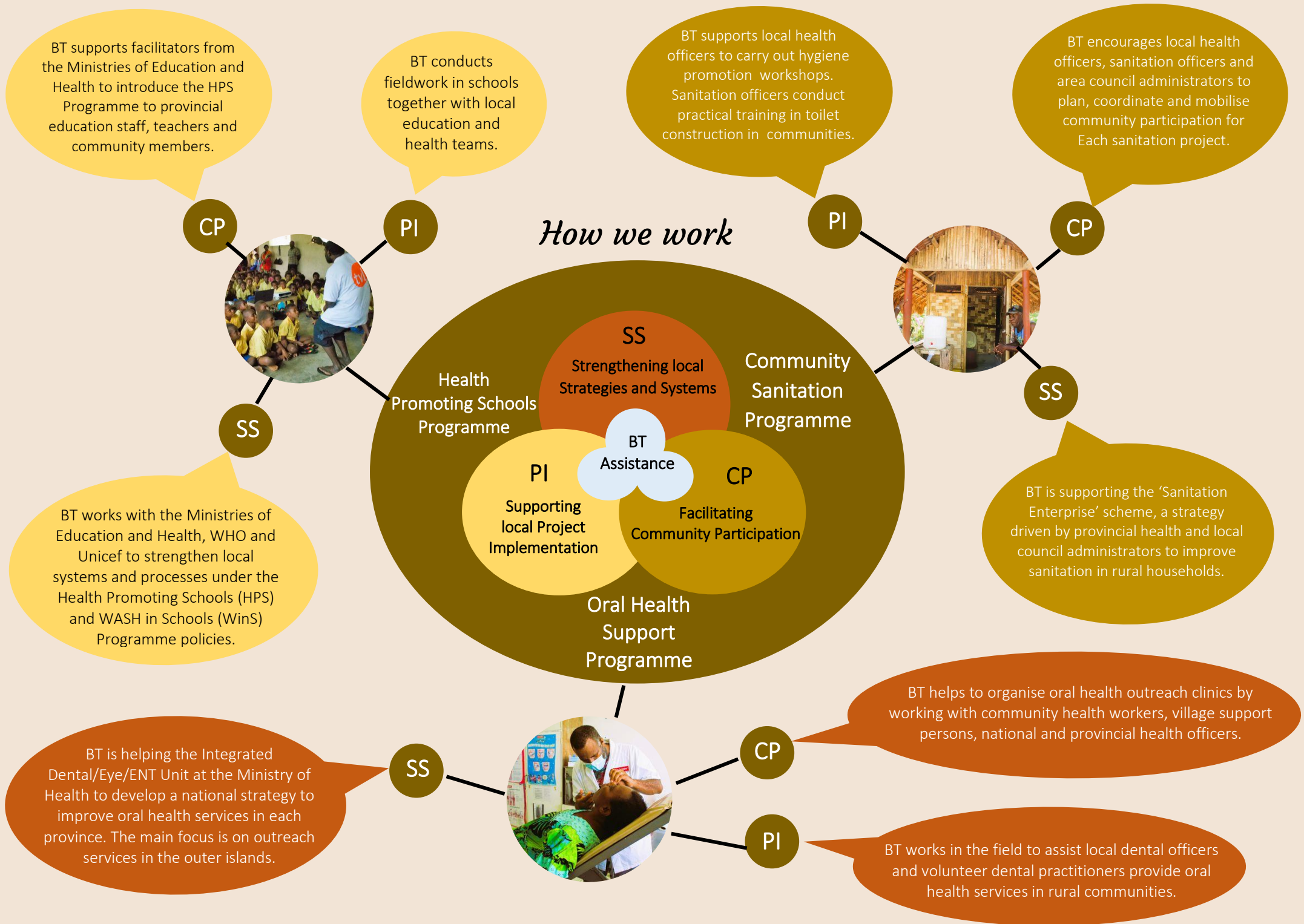
Sanitation officers Kalo, Zakias and Abel supervise construction of ventilated improved pit latrine toilets during community training



Projects in Santo target up to four main areas in the Fanafo catchment with an estimated population of over 9500 across 2000 households. There is also a separate project in South Santo



Thanks to Keith Gasi, Environmental Health Officer, Sanma Province and sanitation officers, Kalo Loli, Zakias Tabi and Abel Karai. We also acknowledge Kalfao Lum, Area Administrator for Canal Fanafo and Markson Tabi, Provincial Health Manager for leading the projects on Penama.



Health Promoting Schools Programme

The Health Promoting Schools (HPS) Programme continues to gain momentum. This is a result of increasing dialogue between BT and key decision-makers in the Ministries of Education and Health, the endorsement of the programme by both those Ministries, and the endorsement of WHO. Consequently, the programme is expanding amongst urban and rural schools in each province of Vanuatu.

Being a part of joint efforts to revitalise established (*cont. below*)



Dr Mackenzie Sitobata and dental assistant, Pascal Wilson at Lamap Health Centre, South Malekula in October 2022. BT helped to set up a permanent dental base at this health facility to improve access to basic dental care for people living in this catchment area. The journey has not been without its challenges. For example, the chronic shortage of dental practitioners to service the outer islands is a major hurdle.

BT's Oral Health Support

Services in rural and remote communities on South Malekula finally resumed in 2022 after a hiatus of almost three years. This hiatus was due to a temporary shift in priorities following the devastation wrought by Cyclone Harold in 2020 and by the intervention of Covid-19 prevention measures, including border restrictions. These two events meant that some government resources had to be reallocated, making it more difficult for local practitioners and visiting volunteers to conduct dental outreach clinics, especially to more remote locations.

During the hiatus, we were able to work with local dental officers and other Ministry of Health officials to identify and address some of the issues affecting the delivery of dental care, especially in the outer islands. This work included strengthening current school-based oral health preventative activities such as group toothbrushing, screening and early intervention and treatment.

Oral hygiene activities are included in the health policies of some Vanuatu schools, but many have yet to adopt the practice of regular group toothbrushing, or implement measures to minimise the overconsumption of unhealthy, ultra-processed food that promotes tooth decay and other health problems.



Students from Vovlei Primary School in a semi-rural area of Santo in September 2022. One of the goals of the Health Promoting Schools Programme is to encourage schools to implement and maintain group toothbrushing while learning how sugary foods and soft drinks can impact negatively on oral and general health.

During recent monitoring visits we took part in, schools have expressed a willingness to continue engaging with the parents of their pupils in a holistic, integrated way in order to increase understanding of health issues, strengthen dialogue between parents and schools, and improve school and community co-operation. As with the sanitation projects, this ground-level engagement with schools enables us to discuss wider issues such as literacy and education levels, cultural knowledge, poverty and inequity.

BT will continue to support local systems and mechanisms of community development, with a special focus on school-based oral health activities, alongside further oral health field work in 2023.

We gratefully acknowledge the contribution of all donors, volunteers, businesses, organisations and ni-Vanuatu partners in supporting, administering and actively participating in various facets of the Dental and Oral Health Support programme



Island Food Days and healthier options at Santo East School in Luganville. Ironically, the cost of local fresh produce is one barrier to full scale adoption of healthy, island kakai in schools



Most urban schools have limited space for vegetable gardens. Luganville Adventist in central Santo supplements the kitchen with fresh produce from its small plot



Nurses administered treatment for gastrointestinal worm infections, yaws and scabies at St Therese Primary School in Luganville in September 2022



Inspecting a handwashing station at Brenwei Primary on Malekula. Headmistress Madeline Bani (above right) practising the use of a Sawyer water filter, introduced during a visit to Bernier Bay Primary on Aore Island



(Cont.) frameworks and structures such as the HPS Programme, appeals to us as it enables previously neglected policies to bear fruit. With competing items on the agenda for most schools, and the perception that responsibility for health matters lies with health care workers alone, basic hygiene, nutrition and oral health activities are often overlooked, poorly implemented or insufficiently monitored. The persistence of public health advocates has nevertheless increased awareness in recent years, particularly in respect of non-communicable diseases. The Covid-19 pandemic certainly made its mark on attention to hygiene.

Nutrition and enabling healthy food choices, oral health focusing on toothbrushing, dental screenings and preventative treatments, deworming, personal hygiene, water and sanitation are the main areas currently being integrated under the HPS Programme.

BT's early oral health work with South Malekula schools gave us an insight into the underlying systems and processes designed to deliver oral healthcare to remote communities. It also helped us identify aspects that could be further strengthened. As a result, we saw the potential to advocate for a well-coordinated support system so that schools are better able to implement and sustain health activities. To help achieve this, we are currently engaging with both Ministries of Education and Health, WHO and a number of committed individuals and development partners in a collective effort.

In 2022, BT extended its HPS reach to include Sanma Province, working collaboratively with the Provincial Education Department, HPS programme facilitators, Ministry of Health and WHO. Our support for the programme on Malekula continues. This year, we plan to start off by assisting an integrated Oral Health/Eye/ENT health outreach to a handful of schools on the outskirts of Port Vila, followed by more support for the HPS programme on Santo and Malekula.

We look forward to further supporting the HPS Programme through our partnership with the Ministry of Education and Ministry of Health. Special acknowledgements to Marie Jonah and David Coulon (MOET), Jean-Jacques Rory and Dr Rhoda Bule (MOH), Mdm Myriam Abel, Dr Tsogy Bayandorj, Fasiah Taleo and Dr Evatt Ala (WHO), Brecht Mommen (Unicef) and Keren Simon.



Students from Dombulu Primary, Tutuba Island, manually refill the water container for handwashing by the school toilets. Lack of piped water distribution supply is common in many rural schools and communities throughout Vanuatu, an added challenge in terms of hygiene and sanitation



Mr Iven with Japanese JICA volunteer, Kumi Kobayashi, at Tautu Primary in 2019

Honouring the late Mr Iven Meltely: 24 May 1975 ~ 13 April 2022

It has been almost eleven months since our dear friend, colleague and supporter, Mr Iven, passed away from a tragic mishap in the early morning of 13 April 2022. He is greatly missed.

As head teacher of Akhamb Primary, then Tautu Primary on Malekula, Mr Iven was pivotal in establishing and sustaining health activities at both schools. Under his leadership, the HPS Policy at Tautu School was the first to be developed. His influence endures. Teachers who have served under Mr Iven continue to apply the skills and ideas gained under his guidance and tutelage. The head teacher at Vinmavis Primary on North Malekuka, for instance, has successfully initiated various components of the HPS Programme. Mr Iven's spirit lives on.



Climate Justice Summit at Port Vila in June 2022

BT attended this event organised by Human Capacity Development International (HCDI) and the Vanuatu Climate Action Network (VCAN) for the purposes of networking and information sharing, strengthening collaborations across sectors and raising capacity in the field of climate change. A small-island developing state, Vanuatu is extremely vulnerable to the impact of climate change including rising sea-levels and increasingly powerful cyclones. Vanuatu is playing a key role in the request for an advisory opinion from the International Court of Justice (the ICJAO) on states' obligations to act on climate change under international law. It is also the first country to introduce the term 'Loss and Damage' at UN climate negotiations in 1991. We continue to adapt and integrate our work in health and education by advocating for a better understanding of the links between climate and environmental changes, and health.

We warmly acknowledge Astrid Kersten, Hashmat Sidky and Carren Bough from HCDI for their friendship and partnership.

ONCE AGAIN, THANK YOU

Your contribution matters

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