

David Bussau

David Bussau AM is a pioneer of microfinance, having founded Opportunity International Australia and co-founded the Opportunity International Network. He has been hailed for his innovative approach to solving world poverty by challenging the conventional wealth distribution model of development, addressing the root causes of poverty through responsible wealth creation.

A successful entrepreneur himself, David started life in an Anglican boys' home and launched his business career at the age of 15 with a rented hotdog stand. Twenty years later, and with numerous successful businesses to his credit, he "retired", having reached what he refers to as the "economics of enough".

In 1974, answering a call for help, David moved his family to Darwin and headed up a national movement to assist the victims of Cyclone Tracey. Soon after, he began aid work in Indonesia and eventually endowed a private foundation committed to responsible wealth creation and entrepreneurship, believing this is the best way to alleviate global poverty.

Challenging conventional thinking that poverty is inevitable and hopeless, David truly believes that there are many creative and talented poor people and all they need is an opportunity. Recognising that the key to building any small business is access to credit, Opportunity International has been active for over 35 years and Opportunity International Australia currently serves over 1.3 million clients and is focused on three main countries: Indonesia; India and the Philippines.

According to the World Bank, by tackling the causes of poverty at the grass roots, microfinance has proven to be one of the most effective and sustainable ways to solve poverty.

Now retired from Opportunity International, David continues his work by providing consultancy services to governments, multinationals and other organisations. He also retains an honorary position on the Opportunity International Australia Board of Directors.

David has been recognised for the amazing work he has done in the international development sector: chosen by The Bulletin magazine "as one of Australia's 10 most creative minds"; awarded the Order of Australia for services to international development; named the Ernst & Young Entrepreneur of the Year 2003 and most recently awarded Senior Australian of the Year 2008.