

# Mapping UNSW Impact Global Development

<b>Primary SDG</b>	<b>10: REDUCED INEQUALITIES</b>
<b>Broad theme</b>	Disaster and health policy
<b>Research</b>	Investigating and facilitating ways to improve disaster responses and health care in post disaster areas
<b>Impact region</b>	Nepal, Philippines, Bangladesh, Timor-Leste
<b>Faculty</b>	Arts and Social Sciences
<b>School/Institute</b>	Social Sciences
<b>Academic</b>	Professor Anthony Zwi
<b>Project partners</b>	Nepal: CARE Nepal - \$210,000 in seed funding for two years until end of 2019
	Disabled children: Save the Children (ER unit), Research to Action (Philippines), UNICEF
	Timor-Leste: Ministry of Health, local contacts and organisations
<b>Related SDGs</b>	2: Good Health and Wellbeing
	1: No Poverty

## Elevator pitch

Anthony is helping to make disaster responses by government and NGO's more equitable for the poor and disabled. He is also interested in documenting the evolution of Timor-Leste's health sector since independence and the ways it can be more responsive to community concerns and less donor dependent.

## The Challenge: Disaster responses treat the disabled poorly; can Timor-Leste's health system survive?

Disasters are occurring with increasingly regularity due to climate change and a warming planet. Yet disasters have a different impact on members of the community who have varied capacities to respond. Those with money and power often receive favourable treatment and can more easily bear sudden and extreme losses. The poor and marginalised often miss out on vital resources and the chance to rebuild. Disabled children, for example, are not explicitly accounted for in disaster responses, placing the burden of their safety on more able bodied citizens.

Timor-Leste emerged from struggles for independence from Portugal in 1975 and Indonesia in 1999, before experiencing further internal conflict and displacement in 2005/6. Despite these crises it has managed to build a health system, thanks to long term engagement with external funding suppliers in the form of the UN and the Australian Government. How did this health service grow given the lack of resources and trained people? And is it sustainable without donor support?

## **UNSW's solution: Facilitate better disaster responses, document health sector's rise and condition**

Together with Krishna Shrestha, Hemant Ojha and Eileen Baldry, Anthony is undertaking research and analysing policy concerning disaster responses in Nepal, India and the Himalayas. The aim is to provide local communities and governments with better disaster plans that treat the most vulnerable fairly and equitably. Anthony is heading up the investigation of responses by humanitarian institutions, like CARE Nepal. Does CARE Nepal's work improve community resilience to future natural disasters? The project sees Anthony meeting with local government and community members to gauge views and perspectives on disaster prevention and response.

Anthony is planning a project with colleagues to investigate the support disabled children receive during a crisis, like in the Philippines (2012-13 typhoon), Bangladesh (Rohingya refugees) and Jordan (Syrian refugees). NGOs are pushing the envelope when it comes to disaster responses, particularly for disabled children. Anthony and his team will seek to document their work and policies, and learn about the barriers to care and how systems can be better prepared for these children (e.g. wheelchair access, exit pathways, designated assistants, plans for mobility). In partnership with UNSW's Computer Science, they would then like to transform their findings into virtual world training, initially with an emphasis on disabled children. They are soon to apply for ARC Linkage funding for a three year term.

Leveraging his network in Timor-Leste, Anthony is seeking to document how the health sector began and has evolved, how much trust has been built in the system, and what role Australia, the UN and other development partners have played. Can it survive without outside support? How can it improve its effectiveness and its ability to respond equitably? This is a one to two-year project. Anthony will call on his network in and outside of Timor-Leste of NGOs, politicians, researchers and bureaucrats working in the health sector.

### **The Impact: Make disaster responses more equitable, help health sector survive**

In Nepal, Anthony's work will help communities be more resilient to natural disasters, reducing the risk of loss of life, damage to infrastructure and the breakdown of social relationships. The findings will stimulate debate around policy change, encouraging local disaster organisations and government to focus on more efficient and equitable responses, including for disabled children. National disaster plans, NGO policy and disabled peoples' organisations will all benefit from Anthony's research insights, and ultimately, more disabled children's lives will be saved.

In Timor-Leste, Anthony's work will promote discussion around the merits of the health service and Australian and UN involvement, and what can be done to make the service more sustainable. This could result in changes in policies by government and NGOs, as well as changes in law. The work will also serve as an in-depth case study for other countries looking to build a health system in the face of severe political disruption and disasters.

### **Researcher**

Anthony Zwi is Professor of Global Health and Development at UNSW. He seeks to build partnerships between Australia, the Asia-Pacific, and Africa to promote capabilities in global health, development policy, and disaster planning, management and response. He has worked extensively in Timor-Leste, and has been involved with research and education activities in Sri Lanka, the Solomon Islands, Vietnam, Cambodia and Africa. Anthony believes all people deserve the right to live their lives safely, securely and with government support.

Ben Falkenmire 24.04.18