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Community

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BELMONT

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Volunteer Miss Poppy, TCF WA manager Carol Hanlon and Jan Teasdale, from Janome in Balcatta. Picture: Justin Benson-Cooper www.communitypix.com.au d310625

Stitch in time helps Philippines women

SOMETIMES even the most basic items can transform a community, as in the case of the Textile, Clothing and Footwear (TCF) project, which aims to provide sewing equipment to people in the Philippines wanting to start their own small businesses.

TCFWA volunteer manager Carol Hanlon works from the Belmont Enterprise Centre, and is seeking donated sewing machines and parts to send to Ormoc in the Philippines.

"A friend asked me to visit his village in Ormoc in January, 2007, where I met with a number of organisations to discuss the major

concerns and needs of the communities," Ms Hanlon said. "Their main concern was that there was little way of women in regional remote villages to earn any income at all for themselves or their families.

"I discovered that although the Filipino government was funding 100 women a year to learn how to sew, there were no sewing machines available in the region for them to utilise the skills they were taught."

The TCF projects now cover various regions, including Bali, Sri Lanka and Afghanistan, and Ms Hanlon says the communities are feeling the wider benefits.

"It is now recognised by AusAid and United Nations that by assisting women in third world countries to earn income, the benefits flow to improvement of health and education of children," she said.

"Women, men and the wider communities benefit by self-esteem and empowerment to be self-sufficient, to use their talents and skills to be role models to others and provide income and economic benefit to their family and community."