

***Hi I'm Matt. It's so good to meet you.***

*The following will tell you a little bit about who I am and what I'm passionate about so that you can decide whether I am the right speaker for your event.*



## **A bit about me...**

My deepest belief is that we are all made for a purpose.

**I'm passionate about helping people find exactly what it is that they can contribute to the fight against poverty around the world.**

I have worked as an aid and development worker and communicator for the past 8 years visiting more than 30 countries.



For the past two years my family and I have **lived in Nepal** working for local and international humanitarian agencies. Our passion is seeing communities and youth empowered to free themselves from poverty and we have worked in remote communities across the country to achieve this.

At the time of the **2015 Nepal Earthquake**, we were living in close proximity to the epicentre. After experiencing first hand the fear and anxiety of being caught in a natural disaster, we went to work assisting in the aid and relief effort. In the 5 days that followed the earthquake, I was deployed to the epicentre of Gorkha for World Vision International, where I reported on events across the world's media, with agencies including - **CNN, The BBC, The Guardian** and **ABC**.

It was both **a devastating and yet powerful experience** to be caught in the middle of so much despair, whilst having the opportunity and responsibility to share the stories of affected individuals and communities to ensure the world responded in time and with the right aid.

I am also a **freelance writer** and regularly contribute stories for organisations and publications including; *World Vision International*, *Red Letter Christians*, *The Bible Society*, *Micah Challenge*, *Baptist World Aid* and *Compassion*.

I run a **blog** read by over 5000 visitors each month focusing on issues of justice, faith, relationships and family.

And I enjoy **helping organisations and campaigns to 'find their voice'** and tell their most compelling story.

Before moving to Nepal, I worked for **Compassion Australia** as the Child Advocate Network Coordinator. It was my role to mobilise and engage a nationwide movement of volunteers through running various campaigns, training events, conferences and speaking tours. In my role with Compassion I visited projects in Rwanda, Kenya, Uganda, Bolivia and the Philippines.

Prior to that I worked at **Micah Challenge Australia** as the Political Engagement Intern. I helped to oversee our annual campaigning event, which saw us train over 300 advocates to meet with over 100 federal politicians in our nation's Parliament House for the increase of foreign aid.

I have a unique understanding of **development issues in Asia** having studied International Relations at Sydney University. I majored in Political Economy and Human Geography, which I earned through visiting and researching community development in the Greater Mekong Area. I have travelled, worked or studied in Cambodia, Thailand, Vietnam, India, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Laos, China, Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia and the Philippines.

I am heavily invested in the task of '**peacemaking**', a passion I received after seeing the effects of violence and conflict firsthand whilst visiting Israel, Palestine, Turkey and Egypt in 2013.

I know how to **inspire and motivate young people** because I began as a passionate youth volunteer myself, campaigning for World Vision Australia's youth movement, **Vision Generation**. I was a State Director when our youth movement began the campaign for chocolate companies to go Fairtrade in Australia, which led to Cadbury Australia announcing its decision to use Fairtrade cocoa in Australia's top selling chocolate bar.

I am a **committed Christian**, although I respect and love to connect with people from all faiths and backgrounds. I was the **Missions and Justice Pastor at the Grainery Christian Church** in Newcastle Australia, where I oversaw a missions program with partners in Malawi, Papua New Guinea, India and Mexico. I was responsible for teaching and preaching on missions and justice within our Church and more broadly.

In my **free time** I love to go surfing, read, and hang out with the kids in our local neighbourhood, where we draw with chalk and they show me how to catch chickens! And whenever I visit a new city, my goal is always to find the best local barber for an authentic razor shave!



## **My Speaking topics**

I prefer to ***tailor*** my messages and presentations to accommodate your group's specific needs and goals.

That said, the following are some **examples** of talks I have been asked to give before:

- ***“Making Poverty Personal”***

I take my first-hand experiences from travelling as a humanitarian and communicator to over 30 countries, and share with you the *‘stories behind the statistics’* so that we can all realise our responsibility to ‘make poverty personal’.



- ***“Finding your unique voice in the fight against poverty”***

Think you have to be a Doctor, Teacher or Aid Worker to make a difference for the poor? You're wrong! This fight needs everyone to use what it is they've already been given - their skills, passions and gifts. I'll help you to discover your role in the fight against poverty.

- ***“Speaking up for the poor will break your heart...”***

I've seen and experienced things I wish I never had to as a result of dedicating my life to fighting poverty. Instead of choosing to be overwhelmed, I choose to only fight harder because I know the poor don't have a choice. I'll help prepare you for the battle, so that you'll not only last the distance but enjoy the journey by discovering how to see hope amidst the darkness.

- ***“Campaigning for Change 101”***

See an issue you know needs changing? I'll teach you how to create campaigns that win from my experience working on campaigns from ethical consumerism and child labour to sex trafficking and refugee issues. I'll give you the proven strategies, case studies and practical hands-on training.



## **Getting In Touch**

You can reach me at the following places. I'd love to connect!

**Twitter:** @mdarvas

**Blog:** [www.mattdarvas.com](http://www.mattdarvas.com)

**LinkedIn:** <http://np.linkedin.com/in/mattdarvas>

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