

A lesson in how to fight poverty

THE TIMES
Sternberg
Active Life Award

Education is the only way to end poverty in the developing world, according to this year's winner of *The Times/Sternberg Active Life award* (Rosemary Bennett writes).

Sylvia Holder, 74, has transformed schooling in an Indian fishing village since retiring as a PR executive.

What began as a plan to refurbish the dilapidated primary school in Kovalam in Tamil Nadu has grown to the point that a 200-pupil high school is opening there.

Ms Holder, above, received her award, which celebrates achievements in later life, at Il Downing



Street yesterday. She has already spent the £5,000 prize on a classroom in the school.

The venture dates back decades to when Ms Holder met Venkat, a boy from the village, on the beach while on a work assignment.

She gave him £10 to cover his school fees, which eventually led to him going to university.

He was killed in a road accident aged 27 and the Venkat Memorial Trust was named in his honour.

"Filling the begging bowl is not a long-term solution," she said. "Education means good jobs, good jobs mean money and money means an end to an improvised living." Register, page 53