



indigofoundation

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Update from the Management Committee

We are very happy to welcome back as an IF volunteer Margaret Easterbrook. Margaret managed IF's accounts for our first three years and then took 'maternity leave' in March last year to have her baby, Michael. She is returning to manage not only our accounts but also our finance administration. We are of course overjoyed. We would also like to extend a warm welcome to Leigh White who as our Marketing and Fundraising Advisor is a much needed addition to our team. Leigh's enthusiasm and optimism about increasing IF's profile have energized us all and the results of this are attached to this newsletter!

We are also happy to report that Katrina Gamble has joined the Management Committee and will be responsible for volunteer coordination. Katrina has been working in the development industry for over 5 years and is currently managing the consulting arm of a private company, SWIC, jointly owned by the University of Western Sydney and ACL.

Lua Lemba and IF continue partnership!

Sally Blake reports.....

We are happy to announce that the second stage of our support to the communities of Rote, Indonesia is up and running. This new phase reflects our commitment to developing long-term and meaningful relationships with the communities we work in.

Last year we received three proposals from **Lua Lemba Education and Development Foundation** (our local partners). They were for general operational support, water management and English teaching. In response to these proposals, in February IF and Lua Lemba signed a three-year Commitment Agreement. This Agreement covers both financial and technical assistance.

Operational Support

In line with our development strategy to assist small local non-government organisations we will be providing core funding of \$5,000 a year for three years to Lua Lemba. The first year's support was transferred this month. Lua Lemba will be using these funds to:

- Employ **permanent staff**. Amongst other things, staff will manage the micro-credit scheme established during the first stage of IF support and work to generate funds for further community development activities.
- Build an office and supply and maintain office equipment
- Provide an **education fund** to 40 school students
- Facilitate and fund marriage certificates and weddings for 30 couples. Many women and children suffer economic disadvantage due to a lack of legal marital status. By facilitating marriages, Lua Lemba is assisting marginalized women gain access to a variety of government services.
- Provide funds to train two people in computing

The Commitment Agreement also commits us to establishing the following links:

English Teacher: Recruiting a volunteer English Teacher for Nemberala School. In addition, we are working with Lua Lemba and an Australian school to establish links between the two - beginning with children exchanging letters. We will bring you more on this in the next newsletter.

Water Management: Linking Lua Lemba to an organisation that can provide assistance with water management, so some of the smaller Delha villages can develop irrigation systems.

Working to set up such links is an important component of IF's work. We believe that helping local organizations access international agencies that can provide specialised forms of support is a vital element of technical assistance.

We will be visiting Rote later this year to continue building the relationship, undertake joint monitoring and evaluation activities, and provide organizational technical assistance. Following our terrific partnership with Lua Lemba during 2001-2003 and taking into account the high credibility and confidence Lua Lemba enjoys from the local population we are confident that this second phase will be as successful as the first.

World Social Forum and International Health Forum – Mumbai, January 2004

Patricia Morton reports...

In the Muslim quarter of Central Bombay, India, international health activists gathered together for the International Health Forum 2004, a satellite conference of the World Social Forum. The International Health Forum was organised by organised by the People's Health Movement. Amongst calls to prayer from nearby mosques, activists from India, the Philippines, Nicaragua, Brazil, Egypt, Tanzania, Palestine, Iraq, Australia and many other countries sang the People's Health Movement campaign song – Give Health a Chance - to open the conference.

The World Social Forum is part of the growing international movement that is questioning the neo-liberal economic policies being pursued in many countries. These policies are often interpreted as tools of imperialist globalization. In 2001, 2002 and 2003 the World Social Forum, held in Porto Alegre, Brazil, explored and proposed alternatives to the rules of governance and investment being set by the World Economic Forum. The people's argument is that 'Another World Is Possible'. The International Health Forum planned to look at these issues from a health perspective.

Keynote presentations were made by leading globalisation activist, Walden Bello, Executive Director of Focus on the Global South and Professor of Sociology and Public Administration at the University of the Philippines and well-respected health activist and academic, and David Legge, Associate Professor at the School of Public Health at La Trobe University, Melbourne, Australia. Walden Bello talked about a macro perspective of globalisation today. he said the idea that the free market leads to growth *which in turn leads to peace* has been shown not to work. On the contrary, freeing the market has led to increased poverty and inequality. David Legge highlighted the importance of the discipline of political economy in making sense of the economic and political determinants of health in the current climate of globalisation.

After keynote sessions, People's Health Movement representatives from around the globe made presentations on the impact of globalisation and neoliberalism on the health of people in their regions and countries. They noted the impact has been: poorer health and poorer access to health care and essential medicines; greater poverty; increased inequalities; environmental destruction which has led to loss of livelihoods; marginalisation; and displacement. Sessions covered various topics including: privatisation and commercialisation of healthcare services; health under war, occupation

and militarization; access to essential medicines; HIV/AIDS; women and population policies; health care and the marginalised; environmental justice and people's health; and the social determinants of mental health.

The conference closed with a session looking at reviving the spirit of the **Declaration of Alma Ata** and the challenges in achieving this. The Declaration of Alma Ata was drafted at the 1978 International Conference on Primary Health Care, attended by health representatives from developing countries. It supports a primary health care approach, which takes into account underlying economic, socio-cultural and political determinants of health such as poverty, conflict, food security, water and sanitation, immunisation). The two key challenges to implementing such a Primary Health Care approach were noted as war and globalisation. As a result **The Mumbai Declaration** was drafted calling civil society to action (see box). The Declaration focuses on the key challenges that the people of the world face today in achieving health. It analyses the causes that prevent the international community fulfilling the promise of "Health For ALL".

The Conference was inspiring. Although many of the sessions highlighted the plight of poor people around the world - HIV, war, the privatisation of health and water, and policies of the World Bank, World Trade Organisation and the International Monetary Fund, there was a lot of enthusiasm to work together as civil society organisations to counter these issues.

The World Social Forum itself was similarly stimulating and colourful. One hundred thousand people from many countries, disciplines and interests attended the forum. There were also many local Indians from grassroots organisations representing dalits, sex workers, indigenous peoples, disabled peoples, and agricultural workers. Mumbai Resistance, who claimed the forum was the 'Trojan Horse of Imperialism' called people to join the armed revolutionary movement from their conference just across the road.

What can activists do?

Join the People's Health Movement (www.phmovement.org) and implement the actions of the The Mumbai Declaration, which include:

- **Strengthen** the international anti-war movement;
- **Pressure** the World Bank and IMF to acknowledge their culpability in the current health care crisis;
- **Pressure** governments to resist privatising health and public utilities;
- **Pressure** governments to resist the efforts of the WTO and transnational corporations to patent, own and trade in intellectual property rights

The People's Health Movement will be holding a seminar Building a Global health Community at the University of NSW on Tuesday May 4. If you would like more details please email indigo.foundation@bigpond.com and we will forward you the information.

The Declaration of Alma Ata

The Declaration stresses:

- a focus on health as a fundamental human right
- a recognition of people's right to participate in the planning and implementation of their health care
- a need to address the inequalities in the health status of people particularly between developed and developing countries
- promotion of a primary health care approach as the key to attaining health for all.

IF has an integrated approach to community development that focuses upon improving the health, environment, education and supporting the human rights, of marginalised communities both within Australia and developing countries. IF's approach for each area is drawn from internationally agreed charters including the *Declaration of Alma Ata* (health), *Agenda 21* (environment) and the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*.

IF Function in Mosman a Great Success

Sally Stevenson reports...

In February, Sheilagh Kelly generously hosted an IF information & fundraising event for our Afghanistan project at her home in Mosman. Sarah Kelly (IF Afghanistan Project Manager) and Sally Stevenson set the scene by providing some background on IF ('who we are' and 'what we do'), and describing the political and humanitarian situation in Afghanistan. IF member Salman Jan, a Hazara refugee and now Australia citizen then talked about his experience returning to Afghanistan last year after 7 years, and the importance of our support for the village schools in Brorjegy.

We are extremely pleased to report the event was a wonderful success – on a number of fronts! During both the question and answer session that followed the formal part of our presentation and the discussions over coffee we received a lot of enthusiast encouragement and some great ideas about how to continue raising the profile of this project. We raised over \$2,000 (including the total of monthly contributions for one year). And, finally – we had our first press coverage, with the Mosman Daily reporting the event. We have attached a copy of the article and photos to this newsletter. The Mosman Daily prints 36,308 copies of their free publication, and that is accepted as their 'circulation' figure. Their

readership is estimated to be 108,924 people, so we got the IF name out into a broad audience.

Our heartfelt thanks to Sheilagh Kelly and Fred Stevens for holding the event, to Sarah Kelly and Salman Jan for their time and commitment to our project, and to everyone who came, listened and provided financial and moral support to our work.

Salman will be travelling to Brorjegy in May. We look forward to reporting on his visit and how IF will continue to provide support for this school. If you would like any further information on our support to Afghanistan, please email Sarah Kelly or Sally Stevenson at indigofoundation@bigpond.com.

Upcoming events!

We will be holding another IF function in Wollongong between 5-7pm on Saturday 1st May. This time we will be introducing IF more generally, and showcasing two communities where we provide support – East Timor and Afghanistan. Founding members, Kate and David Atkinson will be hosting the event – a wine and cheese evening. We encourage all Illawarra members to come and hear what we are doing and to meet and chat with 5 of our Management Committee members.

We will be sending out invitations during the first week of April – but we are not exclusive!

Please feel free to bring any friends or colleagues who might be interested in supporting. We look forward to seeing you there!

Book Review

Mike Davis, *Late Victorian Holocausts: El Niño Famines and the Making of the Third World*
(London, Verso, 2001)

By Susan Engel

Mike Davis's book explains the deaths of somewhere between 30 and 60 million people in the Third World from extensive droughts, famines and epidemics during the late Victorian era. As scientists are now able to convincingly demonstrate, the droughts were the consequences of a series of three major El Niño events in 1876-79, 1889-91 and 1896-1902. However, Davis makes a convincing case that to understand the massive mortality in the Third World during the late Victorian era requires more than the new knowledge about climatic events, it requires an understanding of the theory and practice of late Victorian markets and governments.

Prior to the 1876-78 drought, most scientists had not realised it was possible to have large-scale drought in so many countries simultaneously. In 1876-78 there was drought, famine and high mortality in parts of

China, India, Egypt, Java, the Philippines, New Caledonia, Korea, Brazil, southern Africa, and the Mahgreb. The 1889-91 drought affected parts of India, Brazil, Korea, Russia, Ethiopia and the Sudan and the 1896-1902 drought affected northern China, India and Brazil. Parts of Australia too were drought-stricken during all these events.

This improved understanding of climatic events has provided new insights into many human disasters. In the late Victorian case, there was a succession of three 'strong' (large) El Niño events, which largely explains the extent and scale of drought. However, as Davis points out, this alone does not explain the massive mortality they caused. Why is it, for example, that a series of equally serious droughts and floods in China between 1720 and 1785 did not produce anywhere near the levels of mortality of the 1876-1902 events? (287)

In seeking an explanation, Davis turns to the "force-march" of the Third World into the late Victorian world market. He identifies three key relations with world socio-economic structures were key to peasant subsistence: "First, the forcible incorporation of smallholder production into commodity and financial circuits controlled from overseas tended to undermine traditional food security", via, for example, the privatisation of village commons and communal grain stores, increasing reliance on wage labour for survival and pushing smallholders to produce monoculture cash crops (289). Second, this integration "into the world market... was accompanied by a dramatic deterioration in their terms of trade." Apart from sugar, the terms of trade of tropical produce deteriorated significantly from 1873 to 1897; the terms of trade of temperate produce did not. Third, given formal and informal Victorian imperialism there was little or no investment in social capital that "might have reduced vulnerability to climate shocks" (290).

The British have made much of their capital investment in the colonies, in particular railways. In India the thousands of miles of railway track were not used to transport grain from surplus to deficit areas during the drought, but to more than quadruple grain exports *from* India to the UK from 1875 to 1878 (27)! Further, the British Viceroy of the time, Lord Lytton, influenced by the laissez faire theories of Adam Smith and the population theories of Thomas Malthus, was averse to even minimalist relief to the starving masses. Responding to the reports from the church and media, some relief was provided but its form meant that it ultimately contributed to mortality. Work camps were established outside the peasants' localities, they had to walk to get to them and many died on the way, their bodies littering the roadsides and providing nourishment for starving animals.

In return for a minimalist caloric intake (less than the ration in the Buchenwald concentration camp), men, women and children were required to undertake heavy labour (38-9). Combined with mostly non-existent sanitation, the work camps became "extermination camps" (40). Here, Davis powerfully demonstrates the influence of the theory and practice of governments on mortality. Many in Britain realised that the carnage fundamentally "annulled the apologies of empire" (8).

There are so many dimensions to Davis's book; it is impossible to do it justice in a brief book review. It is a tremendously rewarding read if you can stomach the myriad tales of ghastly suffering and the staggering inhumanity. The only negative comment I have is actually the result of my inadequate geographical knowledge —the book describes the impacts of the droughts and imperialism in detail in part of India, Brazil and China in particular, and I found the maps in the book weren't enough to fill my knowledge gap.

Footnotes are available on request

Food for Thought!

- A fundamental human freedom is the freedom from want. Poverty is a human rights violation, and freedom from poverty is an integral and inalienable human right.
- Sustainable human development seeks to expand choices for all people—women, men and children, current and future generations—while protecting the natural systems on which all life depends. Moving away from a narrow, economy-centred approach to development, sustainable human development places people at the core, and views humans as both a means and an end of development.
- Human rights and sustainable community development are interdependent and mutually reinforcing.

Can you help?

At IF we are always looking for innovative suggestions and recommendations of ways in which we can increase public awareness of our work and in turn increase our membership and income.

This is extremely important function of IF as we would like to maintain and expand our involvement with communities not as advantaged as our own.

We recognize that had it not been for the support of our wonderful members we could not have achieved as much as we have. We therefore extend our thanks.

If you would like to contribute further to IF's work, offer suggestions or seek further information please contact us.
