

### **IF & Borjegai School – Building the relationship**

*Sally Stevenson - Management Committee Representative,  
Afghanistan.*

This month, Borjegai School in Central Afghanistan will begin its 2005 year, having been closed for the six months over winter due to deep snows and freezing weather. The community School, which includes a high school, two middle schools and six primary schools, starts with a commitment from IF to provide support for the next three years. We are excited to be continuing the relationship begun with Borjegai School in 2003, when our funds were used to purchase 5,900 textbooks, and consolidated with a visit by Salman Jan last year. Formalised through our Commitment Agreement, we will provide financial assistance of up to \$5,000 a year, as well as technical assistance to build the capacity of the school to administer and provide education. In addition, we are also offering assistance in establishing links with the broader international community. This could involve introducing the School to other organisations able to provide health services, drinking water and agricultural expertise.

Borjegai is a Hazara village located in Nawor province, near the city of Ghazni. The village is made up of a series of 'sub-villages' that are spaced apart on the mountainous terrain of the region. The village is poor, has very limited access to resources and no current international support. Borjegai School was established at the initiative, and with the financial support of the community. It was then registered with the Central Government.

In line with IF's funding principle, our financial support is considered 'core funding'. This means IF funds can be used according to the School's priorities and as determined and agreed by the community. We do not dictate what the money can be used for, instead the only 'strings' attached are that it is used within the framework of our *Guiding Principles* – sustainability, community ownership, transparency and equity, in line with the School's stated priorities, and reporting requirements as set out in the Commitment Agreement are adhered to. As such, this first

year of IF money will be used to a) engage qualified teachers who will be able to teach both students and other teachers (as teacher capacity is low) and b) buy educational materials for the school students such as schoolbooks.

Another priority of the school is to build a girls high school so that adolescent girls who are not able to attend a co-educational school, due to cultural or other circumstances, can continue to be educated. As part of our non-financial assistance to Borjegai, IF made a commitment to identify an organisation or individual that can provide funds to help build and operate such a school.

Following Salman's visit to Borjegai, we are confident of the community's commitment to the School, and excited by the considered discussions about IF's *Guiding Principles* that took place. Signing the Commitment Agreement symbolises for us the development and strengthening of our relationship with Borjegai. It also reflects the dedicated work of Salman Jan and Sarah Kelly – ongoing communication with the community is time consuming and difficult because of limited infrastructure. Negotiating Commitment Agreements and ensuring genuine understanding of IF's *Guiding Principles* can also be challenging. Salman and Sarah work at this with infectious enthusiasm and heartfelt commitment. Please contact us if you would like further information about the project, or would like to see a copy of the Agreement.



*Borjegai school children, with one of the schools – a UNICEF tent - in background.*

### **Transparency – how we transfer funds to a remote village in Afghanistan**

Once both the English and Dari copies of the Commitment Agreement have been signed, IF transfers the funds to a private Afghan money transfer agency, based in Sydney. As limited banking facilities exist only in key cities, and none operate in places such as Borjegai, systems such as this have been established throughout the world for Afghan expatriates to send money back to their families and their villages. We used the same arrangement for our transfer in November 2003, and the standard commission was waived because the funds were for charitable purposes. Initially, the funds will be sent to a third party financial trustee, **as proposed by the school** to ensure consistency with our *Guiding Principle* of **transparency**. IF and representatives from the three tribes in the village agreed that Mr Mohammad Anwar Haidary will be the trustee. He will receive and disburse the funds provided by IF, and report directly to us. For funds to be disbursed, a request outlining the proposed use of funds must come from the School Principal and be signed by one representative of each tribe. If the request is in accordance with the Commitment Agreement and the *Guiding Principles*, the Trustee will transfer the funds to the School, or purchase goods on behalf of the School. The School as part of its reporting requirements will also provide a financial statement to IF detailing the date funds were received, the use of funds, any problems encountered and receipts will also be attached. The Trustee also signs this report.

**Update!** As expected, Hamid Karzai was elected President of Afghanistan on 9 October 2004. However, Parliamentary elections due to be held in January 2005 have been postponed until at least September, this year, due to security concerns.

### **A new Girls School in Afghanistan!**

*Sally Stevenson - Management Committee Representative, Afghanistan.*



*Girls at Borjegai school*

As noted in the previous article, as part of our commitment to Borjegai we undertook to find a supporter for a new Girls School. We are thrilled to report that with the extremely generous financial assistance of a key IF supporter, the girls of Borjegai will now have their own school.

### **Why a Girls School?**

For the first time in history, Borjegai Leaders recently decided it was important to educate girls. This is an enormous and exciting step forward. As such, girls are welcome at all levels within the established Borjegai School, which we are supporting. However many villagers still believe that girls, when they reach adolescence, should not associate with boys and therefore refuse to let their girls attend the coeducational high school. Village Leaders and School Teachers believe the most appropriate solution to the exclusion of some girls at adolescence to education is to build a Girls High School. Indigo Foundation fully supports this approach. Importantly, discussions with the village indicate that amongst returning refugees from Iran there are three qualified female teachers who are keen to work at the School.

### **Community Ownership**

The community is determined to make the Girls School a reality. As such, from the beginning of our discussions with them they committed both financial and in-kind support for the building and operating costs.

The overall cost of building the Girls School is approximately AUD\$46,000. The community will provide \$29,500 of this by donating the land and raising funds to pay for the tradesmen and tools necessary to build the School. Local businessmen have agreed to pay for 70% of cash costs. This left approximately \$16,500 to be raised, which is the amount IF is providing. These funds will cover concrete, wood, plaster, doors, windows and other building materials needed for the new building. In terms of operating costs, staff will cost around AUD\$14,600 per year and materials and administration will come to \$1,500. Of this, \$12,600 is expected to come from the Afghan Government (65%) and the community (35%), leaving \$3,500 to be raised externally.

### **Accessibility**

The Girls High School is intended to be located on land about a half to one kilometre outside one of the sub-villages of Borjegai. This site is accessible to people from all three local tribes. While the total population of the village is about 36,000, about half of that population is within reasonable

walking distance (being about an hour and a half's walk) from the proposed site. It is estimated that most of the girls who are attending the current school (about 1,500, being 40% of the current 3,900 students) would be within walking distance of the high school – and so - when they become adolescents, will be able to access the Girls High School if they choose (and are permitted by their families to do so).

The road network in Borjegai is of poor quality. To get to the School, the girls will walk on local mountain paths which are kept clear by regular use and rock clearing. The girls will walk in groups. All the girls in one sub-village, say ten of them, will gather together in the morning (as they do now) and walk together to the high school. This is a sociable and friendly event.

The Girls High School will also be an important centre for activity and celebration (as is the main school). Important days in the Afghan calendar such as New Year and Independence Day are celebrated in the local school buildings. This involves the best students from each class writing essays in advance, and then giving speeches on the day to the parents and other community members that attend (and are very welcome). There are groups of students who recite poems and traditional lyrics and songs. Last year, women and girls were included in these gatherings at the existing School and it is expected they will continue to be involved through the Girls High School – maybe even more so.

We are in the process of finalising a separate Commitment Agreement for this project. Providing the Hazara girls of Borjegai with expanded and, until recently, difficult to imagine opportunities for education is something, I believe, all IF's supporters can be proud of. As a village representative put it, a girls school will 'give the village girls the opportunity to fulfill their dreams'.

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### **Centro Feto Enclave Oecussi – an update**

*Jennifer Spence - Project Manager, East Timor*

In our last newsletter we informed you that allegations had been made of possible theft and/or misuse of funds in our partner organisation Centro Feto. Financial support to Centro Feto was suspended in October pending findings of a local Audit Committee established at the request of the President of Centro Feto. Unfortunately, despite a series of requests from Indigo Foundation, the Audit Committee is yet to present its findings to us. Whilst we will continue to seek information as to the outcome of the audit, the lack of information flow is not at all encouraging. The IF

Management Committee will discuss this issue at its next meeting in May and will make a final decision about our partnership arrangements with Centro Feto.

IF is committed to working with vulnerable women in East Timor. In the event the decision is made to end our relationship with Centro Feto we are starting to explore other possibilities for supporting women's NGOs in East Timor. We will also write to IF supporters who requested their funds be used specifically in East Timor (with the understanding we were supporting Centro Feto) to outline options for their donations.

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### **Stopping Tuberculosis & Reducing Stress in Rote, Indonesia**

*Rotrease Regan-Yates*

*Rotrease is a nurse, & public health student at the University of California. The community of Dehla requested that Rotrease present workshops on tuberculosis (TB) and the link between women's stress and mental health. Her visit to Rote in December / January was facilitated by IF.*

About one year ago, I was looking for an internship to fulfill the field experience requirement for my Masters degree in Public Health. I was very interested in working in Indonesia and during my search I came across the contact information for Sally Stevenson and Indigo Foundation. Sally was very friendly and very helpful. She informed me of the possibility of working in Dehla, Rote. The idea sounded fabulous, however due to the need to fulfill particular requirements during the internship period, I was not able to conduct the internship in Rote. Nonetheless, after writing to Sally about the community and Lua Lemba Education and Community Development Foundation, I was interested in working with the community in Dehla at another time.

The time came during my winter break. Although the holiday season found the community busy, they invited me to conduct sessions on tuberculosis prevention and stress reduction. I was greeted at the airport by Nonya Theresia Tamelan, IF's Liaison Officer in Kupang. Theresia was instrumental in orienting me to the island and the community. In addition, she was also instrumental in helping me with Bahasa Indonesia. In Nemberala, Pak Thomas and Pak Pendeta (Lua Lemba's Head and Secretary respectively) were very welcoming and planned the tuberculosis and stress reduction activities. Village and religious leaders, health workers, nurses, and teachers were to attend the workshops.

The residents of Dehla face many struggles. Each morning, families head to the ocean in search of *rumput laut*

(seaweed). This seaweed provides the means of financial support for the members of the community. Sometimes the obligations to family, job, church and community, can be overwhelming. The community members wanted to learn about stress reduction techniques. As a group we discussed reasons why we experience stress and we participated in stress reduction exercises; exercises such as simple breathing exercises, simple stretches and guided imagery. Although stress is a part of life, and in fact, can lead to positive changes, there is a need to manage stress in order to keep our bodies healthy as well as to continue to work and live as a community.



*Children from the community*

The tuberculosis workshop addressed issues concerning how TB is transmitted, the effect it has on the body, and how it can be treated. *[A standard curative course of antibiotics for TB requires daily medication for six months.]* As the community members in attendance were already well informed, this was an interactive discussion, more than a lecture. I was able to understand how the management of those who need TB treatment worked in this particular community. One of the main issues that came to be considered important was the fact that anyone who needs TB treatment or monitoring, needs to go to the World Vision Office, which is located about 30 kilometers away. This poses a great barrier for individuals. Because of the distance, persons who should go might choose not to because of the financial burden of the transportation costs. In addition, the individual in need of care feels conflicted because the time spent on the road and in town, is time taken away from their family duties. The individual may decide not to make the journey. This is especially true if he or she does not "feel" sick, which can happen after about one month of treatment, when symptoms start to subside. Ibu Theresia Aleksia, one of the health workers from Nemberala clearly articulated the difficulty - adherence to the medical regimen is a problem due to the distance between the village members who need care and the organisation that provides the service.

The community members present brainstormed ideas to help increase adherence to prescribed TB therapies and monitoring. The members came to agree that if it were possible for all of the neighbouring villages to make a list of the persons in need of follow up, everyone could go together on the same day. In addition, it was felt that a transportation program could be started, that would pay for the cost of the journey to the World Vision Office: if all of those who need to go to the World Vision Office go together, the costs would be less than if everyone went separately. It was felt that this would be acceptable to the community and would also provide TB patients with a form of social support. It was further suggested that funds already provided to Lua Lemba Foundation from Indigo Foundation, might be used for this purpose. There was overwhelming support for this proposal. Pak Pendeta, would like to see the new transportation program implemented in March 2005 after meeting with staff of Indigo Foundation, who planned to travel there in February.

Working with the community representatives of Dehla and Lua Lemba was an amazing experience for me. I am thankful to the citizens of Dehla for allowing me to have this learning opportunity. I especially thank Sally Stevenson, Theresia Tamelan, Pak Thomas and Pak Pendeta. I look forward to another opportunity to work with the community again, and improving my skills in working with such communities.

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### **Indonesia Update – Rote & the tsunami**

*Sally Stevenson, Management Committee Representative,  
Indonesia.*

In February both Alberto Vela del Aguila and I were planning on traveling to Rote. Alberto was to begin the water project with M'bore village, as described in the December newsletter and I was going to undertake a monitoring and evaluation, and planning visit. Unfortunately, Alberto was unable to travel at the last moment due to a serious illness in his family. He will now travel there in July / August.

I was also unable to travel. As a member of the United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination (UNDAC) team, an emergency response tool for natural disasters, I was deployed to assist with the UN tsunami effort in Indonesia. I spent three weeks in Indonesia, split between Jakarta and Banda Aceh, providing logistic, administrative and information management assistance. Pat Duggan, also on IF's Management Committee and an UNDAC member was deployed at the same time. Based in Jakarta, Pat was responsible for establishing regular reporting systems for the UN Office for Coordinating Humanitarian Affairs as well as

'kick starting' the development of a UN humanitarian plan for the transition from relief and emergency assistance to recovery and reconstruction.

Libby House, IF's new Project Manger for Indonesia (see Management Committee update) will be traveling to Rote this month.

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### Postcards from the Edge

*One of a series of articles by Leanne Black, IF Development Award recipient.*

Have you ever thought you've reached your limit, when something else comes along that threatens to tip you over the edge? My time on Atauro Island (East Timor) conducting fieldwork for my research was one of those times. Although Atauro Island is a 'tropical paradise' in many ways, I faced personal challenges that caused me to ask myself, not a few times, 'What am I doing here?' Mice infested sleeping quarters can be tolerated, but when one has a phobia of mice, one does not 'rest in peace'. Hiking is a wonderful experience, but when everywhere you go is either straight up or strait down in tropical heat, the challenges to your body are considerable. To visit the toilet in a local village isn't too bad, but when you see two planks of wood precariously balanced over a lively pig pen, you are faced with a serious decision.

So here we were, hiking to a village on the other side of the island - a breathtaking journey in more ways than one - when we arrived at the edge of a cliff. I looked around to see where the path led, and was mortified to find it went in only one direction; straight down. I froze as my panoramic view of the bay was replaced with a vision of me plastered on the rocks below. Reasons for not continuing the journey filled my mind like, 'I can't jeopardize my safety'; 'Not visiting one village isn't going to affect my research too much'; and, as the panic mounted, 'Who cares about this stupid research anyway!' As I was contemplating whether to go over the edge (possibly in more ways than one), a line from the comedic movie 'What about Bob?' came to mind: "Baby steps. All you need to take is one baby step at a time". 'Okay Leanne', I said to myself; 'Baby steps. Don't think about the whole descent. Don't envisage a fall. Don't think about what else you might encounter on your journey. Don't think about *anything* other than where you will place your first step and then the next step after that, and before you know it you will have made it over the edge in tact'.

My challenges in East Timor were petty compared to the daily challenges facing millions of people around the world, but they were challenges nonetheless. In my research, I

have come to believe that "capacity" is the *overall ability* of living systems to respond to their environment through a process of regeneration (self renewal). For humans, capacity is made up of three types of action: (1) technical action, which is oriented towards survival and work; (2) communicative action, which is oriented towards the negotiation of meaning and the coordination of behaviour; and (3) emancipatory action, which is oriented towards liberation from restrictions imposed by distorted communications, and oppressive relationships of power<sup>1</sup>. In the discourse on capacity building, emancipatory action (often referred to as empowerment) is perhaps the least understood form of human capacity. "Emancipation" is most often seen as freedom from oppressive or unequal social and political conditions. Capacity building usually aims to "empower" the victims of oppression and inequality by equipping them with knowledge and skills considered necessary for social and political mobilization<sup>2</sup>. As such, capacity building activities include advocacy training, civic education, participatory action, policy (re)formation, and public awareness campaigns such as gender and human rights.

Emancipatory action is what I have just described, but it is not just about liberation in the external world. Emancipation is also about freedom within. Emancipatory action involves overcoming fears, lack of confidence, and bad experiences, among other things; those restrictions on our thinking and behaviour that limit our overall capacity to respond to our environment and experience well-being. Identifying capacity strengths and weaknesses is an important part of many development interventions. But the focus is usually on technical and organisational capacities, whilst personal capacity issues are left out of the equation. And yet freedom within is what gives people the power and courage 'to effect change in the greater systems of which [they] are a part'<sup>3</sup>.

Emancipatory action involves re-minding ourselves about who we are: tapping into our strengths and dealing with our limitations, often caused by distorted communications and oppressive relationships that we have experienced in our lives. Capacity building that promotes emancipatory action needs to encourage critical reflection about such issues, as well as reflection on how our attitudes and actions can enhance or limit the capacity of others. The development of human capacity is not just an accumulation of skills and information but a process of becoming<sup>4</sup>, usually one step, one decision, at a time.

### Endnotes

1. Although the terms *instrumental action*, *communicative action*, and *emancipatory action* were coined by critical theorist, Jurgen

Habermas, my understanding of these terms differs to some degree from Habermas.

2. Efforts to strengthen individual and collective capacity to affect social change vary considerably, depending on how change is believed to come about, for example through collaborative or adversarial action.
3. CDRC. 'Emergence from the inside out'. Community Development Resource Association's Annual Report 2003/2004 in CDRC Nugget, February 2005.
4. Wenger (1998) *Communities of Practice: Learning, meaning, and identity*. Cambridge, UK, Cambridge University Press.

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## Capacity building & poverty reduction

### Want to find out more?

*Compiled by Leanne Black*

The challenge for the future is not an intellectual one. More research is always needed, but we already know the principles of project success: engage with local realities, take your time, experiment and learn, reduce vulnerability and risk, and always work on social and material development together. The real issue is why so many agencies cut corners on these principles, and the answer to that question lies in the ...the short-termism, control orientation and standardisation that have infected development work for a generation or more. In this world view, projects are a mechanism to deliver foreign aid, not short-term building blocks of long-term change.

**Edwards, Michael** (1999) *Future Positive: International Cooperation in the Twenty-first Century*, London: Earthscan, page 86.

If you would like to read more, below is a recommended reference list. We encourage you to dip into it from time to time!

#### Articles – available on the internet

- Various articles in 'Capacity.org', Issue 19, October 2003. <http://www.capacity.org>
- Goodhand, J. (2003) *Enduring Disorder and Persistent Poverty: A review of the linkages between war and chronic poverty*, World Development, Vol 31, No. 3, pp. 629-646, 2003 [www.elsevier.com/locate/worlddev](http://www.elsevier.com/locate/worlddev) (access via subscription /a secured university link)
- Josie, A. and Moore, M. (2000) *The Mobilizing Potential of Anti-poverty Programmes*, IDS Discussion Paper 374, February 2000 <http://www.ids.ac.uk/ids/bookshop/dp/dp374.pdf>
- Morgan, P. (2004). *What is Capacity? Going beyond conventional wisdom*. European Centre for Development Policy Management

- Øyen, E. (2002) *Poverty Production: A different approach to poverty understanding*, Comparative Research Programme on Poverty (CROP), 2002 [http://www.crop.org/publications/files/report/Poverty\\_production.pdf](http://www.crop.org/publications/files/report/Poverty_production.pdf)
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- Doward, A. a. Kydd, J. (2002). *Locked in & Locked Out: Smallholder Farmers & the New Economy in Low Income Countries*. Paper presented at the 13th International Farm Management Congress, Papendal, July 7 - July 12, 2002. [http://www.sarpn.org.za/wssd/agriculture/doward\\_kydd/Smallholder\\_Farmers.pdf](http://www.sarpn.org.za/wssd/agriculture/doward_kydd/Smallholder_Farmers.pdf)
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- Jerve, A. M. (2001). *Stimulating Poverty Reduction Policies: What Have We Learned? A discussion note*; Bergen, Norway, UNDP [http://www.undp.org/poverty/publications/docs/Poverty\\_Bergen%20Report.pdf](http://www.undp.org/poverty/publications/docs/Poverty_Bergen%20Report.pdf)

#### Books

- Eade, D. (1997). Capacity-Building: An Approach to People-Centred Development. UK: Oxford, Oxfam.
- Hulme, D. and M. Edwards, Eds. (1997). NGOs, States and donors: Too Close for Comfort? London, Macmillan Press Ltd.
- Kaplan, A. (1999). The Development of Capacity. Geneva, United Nations Non-Government Liaison Service (NGLS).
- Sen, A. (1999). Development As Freedom. Oxford, NY., Oxford University Press. **HIGHLY RECOMMENDED!**

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## CONFERENCE REPORT

*Katrina Gamble, Management Committee*

*Secondary Education in Africa Second Regional Conference*

*June 2004; Dakar Senegal*

As part of my day job I had been involved in the preparation and submission of a proposal for a Thematic Study entitled "Management, Governance and Accountability in junior and

senior secondary education in Sub Saharan Africa" being funded as part of the Secondary Education in Africa Project (SEIA). As we came very close to being contracted (pipped at the post by a more experienced American research organisation) the Kenyan Team Leader and I were invited by the World Bank to attend the SEIA second regional conference in Dakar, Senegal. SEIA, funded by the World Bank with support from Trust Funds sponsored by France, Ireland, the Netherlands and Norway, is an interesting initiative which is attempting to investigate key issues relating to the provision of secondary education to the youth of sub Saharan Africa.

At a time when the focus is on universal primary education (UPE) and Education For All (EFA) it is refreshing to see effort being made identifying some strategies to address the issue of "what next". EFA initiatives, as part of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) concentrate on providing a basic level of education to all – i.e. primary education. This, on face value has merit, however for governments it creates further dilemmas. With EFA there will, in theory, be an increased number of students completing Primary level education. The challenge facing governments is how do they deal with the increased number of graduates wanting and deserving access to secondary education – a system which in most countries within sub Saharan Africa is already unable to cope with the current numbers.

Access to secondary education in Sub Saharan Africa is extremely competitive and is entirely based on the results of a centrally administered examination which the students sit for at the end of their primary education. In the majority of cases this exam and the academic position that the candidate is given will decide whether or not a student will be eligible for secondary education and indeed which school they are able to attend (in many cases can be far from their family home). According to World Bank statistics less than one third of Sub Saharan youth attend secondary education with a far lower number actually completing their education and graduating. [Source – World Bank SEIA Website].

SEIA is an attempt to be proactive and to begin the arduous task of trying to address the issues facing secondary education in Sub Saharan Africa. At the conference 21 countries within the region sent a representative and the discussions and group sessions revolved around two key themes – Costs and Financial Sustainability; Quality and Relevance of what is taught and learned.

The conference identified the massive challenges that lie ahead for nations in the region as they proceed with the implementation of EFA. Whilst fiscally governments will be

concentrating in the short term on upgrading the provision of primary education it is inevitable that secondary education will need to have increasing importance on the political agenda.

Lets hope that these words will somehow become a reality for the millions of children currently denied a secondary education – something which we in Australia take for granted.

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## **Management Committee Update**

*Sally Stevenson, Chairperson*

In March 2005 we held our bi-annual Strategic Planning day. The Management Committee and key volunteers looked at IF's achievements since we began, what makes us unique, and brainstormed the challenges ahead of us, including the size and nature of our support to partner communities. We all came away positive about IF's contribution to development and the way we operate as an organisation. Key components of the strategic plan will be outlined in the June edition of this newsletter, once confirmed in our next Management Committee meeting on 8 May. The day was made productive and efficient by the skilled facilitation of Lyn Stephens from RPR Consulting, who very generously gave her time to the preparation and execution of the meeting. RPR Consulting works with organisations and government agencies on, amongst other things, organisational development and governance, community capacity building, and facilitation and negotiation.

The planning day was well timed, given a number of changes occurring within IF over the next few months. I have accepted a position with Medecins sans Frontiers (MSF) to be Head of Mission for South Sudan. I will be based in Nairobi starting mid May and will be away for a year. Susan Engel, currently IF Secretary, will take over as Chair, and Sarah Kelly, currently IF Project Manager, Afghanistan will also become IF Coordinator. I am thrilled both Susan and Sarah have decided to fill these positions - I am confident they will lead and manage IF extremely well.

Whilst I will remain on the Management Committee as representative for Indonesia, I will no longer be the Project Manager for Rote. In my place we have been lucky enough to recruit Libby House. Libby has a long-standing relationship with the communities in Rote, having visited there many times. On my trip to Rote in 2002, she, Pak Anis and I co-facilitated a workshop with our partner, Lua Lemba on proposal writing. Libby's passion for Rote, her insights into the community (and development more generally) make

her perfect for the position! She will be traveling to Rote to work with Lua Lemba on 17 April.

I am also extremely happy to welcome to the IF volunteer ranks, Kate Spencer who has gallantly offered to be our fundraising focal point. Naturally, we jumped at the suggestion! Kate has a background in visual arts and fundraising for community organisations. Her enthusiasm for IF over the past year has been very encouraging.

I would like to thank Sarah Thomson who is currently auditing IF's accounts, pro bono. Audited accounts are a pre-condition for gaining tax deductibility status, so we are on our way. Her support of IF is much appreciated.

Founding Management Committee member and Management Committee Representative for the Solomon Islands Zoë Mander – Jones is returning to Australia after three years in Vanuatu as AusAID's Development Counselor. We are very much looking forward to having her back at our meetings, complete with her principled and pragmatic ways.

Finally I would like to publicly thank the Management Committee, Project Managers and all our volunteers for making IF what it is today. Your commitment, intelligence, thoughtfulness and amazing generosity of time have created an organisation I am proud to be working for. I step down as Chair after five years and travel to Kenya leaving IF in excellent hands.



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