



## indigo foundation

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### **IF Strategic Alliance With Union Aid Abroad – APHEDA (and tax deductibility status!)**

Sally Stevenson reports...

In June, Indigo Foundation and Union Aid Abroad-APHEDA (the humanitarian aid agency of the ACTU) entered into a formal alliance that offers IF tremendous support. APHEDA is an experienced and highly regarded development organisation, and the alliance will boost IF's work in a number of areas – not least of which the use of APHEDA's tax deductibility status (any donation to IF over \$2 is now tax deductible). APHEDA has introduced us to important development networks, and we are now working with them to develop a collaborative approach to our projects in the Solomon Islands. Early this month, we submitted a joint bid to AusAID for short-term consultancy work.

**Indigo Foundation would like to express its strong appreciation and deep felt thanks to Union Aid Abroad – APHEDA for its generous support.**

#### ***The IF-APHEDA tax deductibility arrangement – how it works***

To gain tax deductibility status (DGR) under Australian Government regulations, an international development organisation must be 'approved' by the Minister for Foreign Affairs and the Treasurer. The organisation must demonstrate that it is a 'voluntary, non profit community based organisation' with 'activities focused on development' and that it has a 'record of providing aid in a professional manner'. Not surprisingly, the approval process takes time. Whilst an application is being developed, the organisation may affiliate with another NGO that already has DGR status, so supporters can receive a tax deduction for donations.

Under the arrangement we have with APHEDA, any donations to IF (memberships are not tax deductible) will be lodged with APHEDA, and paid back to us for project activities. A tax-deductible receipt will be issued from APHEDA. IF will pay APHEDA a small administrative fee. The arrangement with APHEDA also means donations to IF can be made by credit card (Please see the enclosed form).

**IF will be applying for DGR status later this year. To be successful we must have 100 members. We currently have 67. Please encourage your friends to become IF members!**

#### **Union Aid Abroad-APHEDA**

Union Aid Abroad-APHEDA was established in 1984 by the ACTU in recognition of the union movement's responsibility to contribute directly to countries and regions of the world where men and women workers are disadvantaged through poverty, a lack of workplace /human rights and civil conflict. A commitment to justice and human rights is the cornerstone of the work of Union Aid Abroad-APHEDA.

Union Aid Abroad-APHEDA's international program has developed from a rights based approach. Its work aims to build self-reliance through support to educational and training projects for workers and their organisations. APHEDA has over 50 training projects, working through 40 separate project partners in 15 countries in Southeast Asia, the Pacific, the Middle East, Southern Africa and the Caribbean.

For more information on Union Aid Abroad-APHEDA contact details are: Telephone: 61 (02) 9264 9343, Fax: 61 (02) 9261 1118 and email: [apheda@labor.net.au](mailto:apheda@labor.net.au).

#### **IF's Development Assistance Strategy**

From the IF Management Committee...

*IF provides financial, management and technical support to local NGOs for community development activities.*

In May, IF celebrated its second birthday! In the past twelve months we have focused on consolidating our project experience, building alliances and developing IF's management systems. We are now well-positioned for a year of planned growth. To facilitate and maximise the effectiveness of this growth, we looked at options for strengthening and clarifying our strategic focus. We reviewed: the nature of our current projects; needs and gaps in international community development; best practice development; strengths and capacity of our Management Committee; IF's financial and human resources; and the initial motivation for establishing IF.

The result is a development strategy aimed at supporting community-based and managed non-government groups and organisations (NGOs) to undertake quality development work in their own communities.

A key focus of IF's approach is to assist the establishment and/or sustainable development of new and existing NGOs. IF's assistance will generally take the form of catalytic establishment and administrative funding, ongoing support for capacity building and organisational strengthening and support during periods of critical growth or change. In most instances, IF will provide core funding to NGOs and, if required, make a commitment to continue funding for up to three years. This means:

- Funds are used according to the community's development priorities;
- Critical administrative costs (such as salaries) can be met on an ongoing basis, and medium term planning can be undertaken with a degree of confidence;
- An NGO is given sufficient support and time to establish itself and implement and evaluate activities;
- An NGO has access to support during times of change or growth enabling ongoing sustainability.

By providing a reliable source of funds, and management assistance during the establishment phase, IF's approach means local NGOs are supported during one of their most vulnerable periods – a time which is also full of potential. It results in increased organisational confidence and capacity and can improve continuity of activities, which leads to a greater likelihood of robust and effective results. Positive results will leverage increased support from the community and other funding bodies, improving the chances of long-term sustainability.

*In short, IF will give new NGOs, which are established with great optimism and initiative, a fighting chance to help their own communities.*

Equally, existing NGOs sometimes face periods of uncertainty, change and growth. Small NGOs are not always equipped to deal with these periods effectively and may require resources or other support to take the next step forward. From time to time, IF may also support NGOs with specific projects that fit with IF's mission and, in particular, to our commitment to community empowerment and human rights.

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#### **IF's Management Committee**

Sally Stevenson	Chairperson
Susan Engel	Secretary
Sally Blake	Treasurer
Jenny Spence	
Zoe Mander-Jones	

Management Committee Meetings are held every 2 months. The AGM will be held in December - all members are welcome.

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## **Community Development Partnerships**

### **ROTE, INDONESIA**

Sally Blake reports...

It is now 14 months since Tom Van Seville first undertook a trip to Rote. Much has happened since then. The development committee that the community established have now become an NGO ( Lua Lemba Education and Community Development Foundation). This NGO and the community have worked hard to undertake infrastructure projects with money allocated from IF's Australian partner Family Planning Australia (FPA). IF's Guiding Principles (sustainability, gender equity, transparency and community ownership) for project management appear to have been embraced by the community and they have undertaken some wonderful projects.

In mid June we received comprehensive and inspiring financial and activity reports from the community. The projects that have been completed range from building public toilets, making a volley ball court, establishing a revolving pig fund (a family is given a baby pig, and when it breeds the piglets will be given to another family etc), mending of wells and churches. Lua Lemba also used some infrastructure funds to make trips to complete administration requirements to establish a private NGO run senior high school. There are 55 students in the first intake who previously had no access to senior high school.

#### **Future Plans**

Tom will be heading back to Rote in July for three weeks. He will continue to do agricultural training as well as record some of the unique and inspiring agricultural practises used in Rote. Tom will also work with Lua Lemba to plan budgets and activities for the next tranche of infrastructure money.

Sally Stevenson will also return to Rote primarily to discuss and plan with Lua Lemba IF's future relationship with the communities of Dehla. Whilst FPA will cease its involvement in this project as of 30 June 2002 IF wishes to maintain its links with the communities.

### **CENTRO FETO OECUSSI ENCLAVE, EAST TIMOR**

Jenny Spence reports...

In March this year, IF signed a Commitment Agreement with Centro Feto Oecussi<sup>1</sup> Enclave (CFEO). Through this Agreement IF has undertaken to provide funding of A\$15,000 over three years to support the operating costs of CFEO. In addition, and where appropriate, IF will also provide organisational development support for CFEO.

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<sup>1</sup> Oecussi is one of the 13 districts of East Timor. It has a population of 50,000 and is surrounded by the Indonesian province of West Timor.

CFEO is an independent women's organisation accredited with the East Timor NGO Forum. The organisation was established early in 2001 in response to the community's growing recognition of, and concern for, the prevalence of violence against women in Oecussi. Through a series of meetings and planning sessions the community identified the need for a women's advisory and victim support centre. These sessions also highlighted the need for more education, skills development and training for the communities of Oecussi, as well as basic awareness raising of the role of women in the community.

CFEO is headed by a Management Committee and employs a Coordinator and an Administrative Assistant to help with the running of the Centre. As well as providing a small refuge and counselling service for women and children suffering from domestic violence, CFEO works with the community and other NGOs to develop strategies to overcome domestic violence and promote gender advocacy. Recognising the need to ensure that its operations are sustainable over the long-term, representatives from CFEO have attended training sessions run by UNTAET and other donors to improve, for example, their office skills and proposal writing. On return to CFEO these representatives have run courses to pass on their training to other members of CFEO thus further strengthening the skills and knowledge of the organisation.

We are very excited about this new partnership with CFEO and I am looking forward to visiting Oecussi in August/September for two weeks. This trip will be important to help cement our relationship with the women of CFEO and to develop our understanding of the longer-term aims and needs of the organisation. I will also be looking to identify areas where our two organisations can share and learn from each other. Visit the IF website for a full report on my trip to Oecussi – and please direct any enquiries on this project to myself or Sally Stevenson.

### **SHERRIN COMMUNITY ORGANISATION, AUSTRALIA**

Susan Engel reports...

In response to the appalling treatment of asylum seekers by the Howard Government, IF decided that – as Australians – we were duty-bound to offer assistance to this new and marginalised community of people in Australia. In line with IF's assistance strategy, we wanted to support refugees through a community development process. This meant working with refugees once they were out of the detention centres and part of the Australian community.

We were extremely fortunate to meet (through IF member Cecily Michaels) Salman Jan and Kawa Moballigh, members of the Hazara community in Sydney. The Hazara are an ethnic minority from Afghanistan who

have suffered social, racial and religious persecution from ruling Afghan Governments over the past 100 years. During the very brutal war with the Taliban, hundreds of thousands of Hazara have been killed and thousands of Hazara families have fled Afghanistan. The Hazara community in Sydney is made up of between 2000-2500 people, most of whom are immediate war victims. 70% are on temporary protection visas (TPVs). TPV holders are able to stay in Australia for 3 years, at which time their status will be reviewed (and they may be sent home). They are not allowed to leave the country, or bring their families to Australia during this time. Most TPV holders have not had contact with their families (wives and children) since they left Afghanistan. Most arrive in Australia having endured enormous suffering and stress, but nonetheless eager to make a life here. Community Migrant Resource Centres funded by the Commonwealth Government are not allowed to offer TPV holders assistance.

Salman and Kawa requested assistance to establish Sherrin Community Organisation (SCO), which would provide community development services to new Hazara migrants. Many Hazara do not speak or read English, and a large number do not have much (if any) formal education. This makes it very difficult for them to access government services (such as health, education and housing). It also restricts employment opportunities and limits integration into the Australian community. To address these issues SCO's objectives are to:

- Establish a close relationship with the Hazara community in NSW and to cooperate with all other multicultural and community welfare organisations in order to create a strong and healthy society in Australia;
- Assist new arrivals to adjust to new ways of life; and
- Provide emotional assistance to the members of the community in emergency situations

More specifically, and following a community meeting to determine priorities, SCO is providing three main services. These are:

- English classes to Hazara on TPVs. These classes also include information sessions on Australian culture and law.
- Community liaison services, to facilitate access to mainstream services for non-English speaking Hazara, particularly women.
- Homework assistance classes to Hazara children.

With IF financial assistance and moral support, SCO incorporated in April. Over 50 students now attend free English classes run by SCO Hazara volunteers and this number continues to increase creating a demand for more classes. Up to 35 people per week (mainly women and the elderly) receive community liaison or translation/ interpretation services. Non Hazara Afghans

are also starting to access this service. Homework assistance classes for children will begin in July with two IF volunteers (Sarah Kelly and Alex Reilly). The achievements of SCO, in short, have been fantastic.

IF considers it a privilege to be working with such committed, resourceful and generous people. Good development is about building relationships and in June IF and SCO held an Australian-Hazara picnic in the Royal National Park – it was a wonderful day. We plan to have more of them, so if you would like to come to the next one, please drop us a line!

### **Fact Finding Mission to the OCCUPIED PALESTINIAN TERRITORIES**

**15 – 23 May 2002**

Cecily Michaels reports...

I was part of a Union Aid Abroad – APHEDA delegation, which undertook a fact-finding mission to the Occupied Palestinian Territories in May. During this tour we met with a wide range of people including representatives of churches, non-government development organisations, Israeli and Palestinian human rights groups, people's elected representatives, academics, village councils, union representatives and members of the general public, many of whom had lost family members as a result of the military occupation. With such a broad program of meetings and visiting areas such as Jenin, Nablus, Salfeet, Gaza, Ramallah, Jerusalem and Bethlehem, we were able to witness the horrific situation, which the Israeli army's occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip has created for the Palestinian people.

We met with Union Aid Abroad – APHEDA's partners, Ma'an Development Centre in West Bank and Gaza and Patient's Friends Society (PFS) in Jenin. All were affected in some way by the military occupation. MA'AN's Ramallah office, training facilities and permaculture site were totally destroyed, vandalised and equipment stolen, and in the case of PFS, a staff member was killed and 2 are still missing. These acts were not unique to Union Aid Abroad partners as we witnessed and saw photos of numerous examples of destruction carried out by the Israeli army of public institutions including other development organisations, human rights organisations, health organisations, Palestinian ministry offices, local government buildings. In Gaza we were denied access to the community development activities because of the closures imposed by the occupying army.

We were personally shocked by the extent of land confiscation and settlement building throughout the Palestinian Occupied Territories. The creation of a situation of apartheid, with razor and barbed wire fencing imprisoning whole Palestinian communities and cutting them off from other nearby Palestinian towns, cities or villages, is also making daily life intolerable for every Palestinian. Many Palestinians cannot reach their workplaces, cannot visit family members and most

importantly most cannot even access necessary medical care. This imprisonment is a form of collective punishment, which contravenes the Geneva Convention. The refusal to allow access to the injured by medical workers is a further contravention of the Geneva Convention.

In addition to many workers not being able to get to work, we heard and saw that around 60 factories or industrial workplaces in the West Bank and Gaza have been demolished and many Palestinian roads have been ripped up or blocked making transport extremely difficult and exporting produce through the checkpoints is now impossible. The World Bank estimates more than 50% of the Palestinian population now live below the poverty line.

In addition to these economic conditions are the well-documented beatings, shootings, killings, assassinations or arrests of Palestinians including children, of which we witnessed two incidents during our visit. Since September 2000, 280 children have been killed and over 7,000 injured. Prior to the recent invasions in March this year more than 700 children were arrested and subjected to maltreatment while imprisoned.

In spite of all the misery, humiliation and oppression experienced by the Palestinian people, we were extremely impressed by their courage, resilience and spirit. We were also extremely grateful for the hospitality we received from all Palestinians and were particularly grateful to a family in Aqraba who offered us their home for the night when we were stranded after being denied permission to pass through one of the many checkpoints. It is clear that the Israeli occupation will not break the indomitable Palestinian spirit and that independence will be gained for Palestinians one day.

The Indigo Foundation condemns all acts of violence against civilians and urges the Australian Government to support the United Nations calls for the immediate withdrawal of the Israeli occupying army from all Palestinian Territories in accordance with UN Resolutions 242, 338 and 1402, and the immediate deployment of an international force to protect the Palestinian people.

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### ***LOST YOUR NEWSLETTER? – FIND IT ON OUR WEB SITE!***

IF is currently in the process of developing its own website. The site will provide members, community partners, and those interested in providing funds or accessing funds, the opportunity to find out more about IF's projects, its guiding principles, and key directions. Members will be notified by email as soon as the site is up and running. Comments and suggestions on its format and content will be most welcome!

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