



indigofoundation

Issue 19
May 2008

Spotlight on Solomon Islands, visit to India, personal profiles,
workshop update, fundraisers, and more...

SPOTLIGHT ON SOLOMON ISLANDS

In this edition of IF's newsletter, we place the spotlight on the isolated Weathercoast region of the Solomon Islands and the IF-supported Turusuala Community based Training Centre that is located there. The Weathercoast is situated on the southern side of the island of Guadalcanal, the largest island in the Solomons (home to the capital – Honiara). Helen Lucy Moss, IF's new Project Manager for the Solomons, writes the following:

The Weathercoast and Turusuala Community-based Training Centre *Helen Lucy Moss*

Weathercoast socio-economic situation: While there is a general lack of socio-economic data on the Solomon Islands, we have drawn information from recent reports by AusAID and local NGOs, Kastom Gaden Association and Solomon Islands Development Trust, together with IF's experience in the area, to develop the following snapshot:

The Weathercoast is one of the least developed areas of the Solomon Islands. The lack of local markets and transport infrastructure to send goods to external markets are major constraints to the income generating capacity of the community. The area's food security is hindered by excessive rainfall (5-8 metres per year), pests and diseases, and poor soil quality. There is no electricity in the villages and poor communications. This lack of basic infrastructure significantly restricts the development assistance that the Weathercoast receives. For example, Helen Lucy was told by a major international NGO that, while they would like to work on the Weathercoast, they could achieve much more with the same funding in other parts of the country and are yet to find a way around this issue.

AusAID also recently reported that of the 20,000 people on the Weathercoast, 65% are not in paid employment and live in a largely cashless agricultural subsistence economy. The *2006 Solomon Islands Smallholder Agricultural Study* reported that where agricultural cash sales are made in AvuAvu (where Turusuala is located), the average taking is between SBD \$1 (AUD \$0.14) to SBD \$2 (AUD \$0.29) per market day. In the very limited

number of stores, prices are as much as 50% more than in Honiara. The country's minimum hourly wage had not been reviewed since 1969. However, the Solomon Islands' Government has just announced that, effective May 1st, the minimum wage will go up to SBD\$4 (AUD\$0.57) per hour for all sectors except agriculture and fisheries, which will become SBD\$3.20 (AUD\$0.46) an hour.

The income disparity and lack of local employment opportunities draw school leavers away from the Weathercoast. As a result the villages mainly consist of older people and those of school age.

Recent political situation: Economic and social recovery from the ethnic tensions which gripped the Solomon Islands between 1998 and 2003, has been hampered by a series of devastating events such as: the 2006 Honiara riots which destroyed large sections of Chinatown; the April 2007 tsunami in which 52 people died; and difficulties between the Solomon Islands Government (SIG) and the Regional Assistance Mission to the Solomon Islands (RAMSI), in particular the relationship between SIG and the Australian Government. The appointment of Dr Derek Sikua as former Prime Minister's Sogavare's replacement and a recent visit by Australia's new Prime Minister Kevin Rudd has seen a renewed enthusiasm in the bilateral relationship and SIG's support for RAMSI.

In January this year, the Weathercoast area held a large scale reconciliation ceremony in Peochapuri village, which was attended by the Deputy Prime Minister, Hon. Fred Fono. Local people identified a lack of social services such as health, education, communication and transportation as impediments to development. The government acknowledged that since the tensions began in 1998, areas of the Weathercoast have seen little, if any, development. A situational analysis of youth and mental health released in March 2008 by the Solomon Islands Development Trust warned that the trauma created by ethnic tensions could not be underestimated and that it continues to live on for many young people. This could not be more so than on the Weathercoast, which was the stronghold for the militia leader Harold Keke.

Turusuala Community-based Training Centre, located on the Weathercoast, is a community initiative which was established in 2003. IF began supporting Turusuala in 2004. The Centre is the only one of its kind in the area, providing vocational education for local youth, most of whom have only finished primary school. There are currently nine staff members who are instructors and mentors in the courses that are run at the Centre. The staff are largely ex-students from Rural Training Centers in other parts of the country.



Turusuala Community-based Training Centre

A visit to Turusuala

Sue Cunningham undertook her last trip as Project Manager to the Solomon Islands in December 2007. She visited Turusuala, surrounding villages to see the work the students had done within the community, and attended the graduation ceremony for Turusuala students. Sue was accompanied by Helen Lucy (who currently lives in Honiara).

IF's Liaison Officer, Doni Keli, arranged the four day monitoring and evaluation visit with transport assistance from AusAID's Community Sector Program and Vatu Rural Training Centre. Sue, Helen Lucy and Doni were greatly impressed with the enthusiasm and ideas that were coming out of the centre. Despite previous visits to the Solomon Islands, it was Sue's first opportunity to visit Turusuala and it was fantastic for her to finally see the project she has championed for the past three years.

2007 was a difficult year for Turusuala with a heavy rainy season and the departure of Principal Celestine Aloatu. Despite this, the centre made good progress in a number of areas and they are proud of what they achieved. Nine teachers ran a variety of vocational courses, including agriculture, life skills and literacy for the centre's 31 residential students. Turusuala added a third residential year for students and continued to conduct some short agricultural courses for locals.



Joinery class session: Year 1 students during a practical lesson on how to mark and cut chair legs

Gender balance continues to be an issue at Turusuala, reflecting the gender imbalance in education at all levels across the country. The teaching staff and local management committee are focused on ways to improve this and new Principal, Jerry Anderson, has invited the Solomon Islands National Council of Women to send a gender officer to the AvuAvu area to discuss gender issues with Turusuala and the local community.

Another critical issue for Turusuala is the quality of teaching. While the teachers are working very hard in what is essentially a volunteer position, during 2007 the centre only had one qualified teacher and she chose not to return in 2008. There is a lack of training opportunities on the Weathercoast so Jerry has arranged for one staff member to undertake a two year teacher training course at Vanga Teachers College and has sent two more teachers to another rural training centre for a year long attachment program. This has led to a high turnover in staff from last year. IF and Turusuala are exploring options for localised training solutions.



From left to right: Grayham Tahu (APHEDA Coordinator), Jerry Anderson (Turusuala Principal), Doni Keli (IF Liaison Officer) and Helen Lucy Moss (IF Project Manager).

New Commitment Agreement

Given the findings of this monitoring and evaluation visit, and the steady progress the Centre has made over the years with limited resources, IF and Turusuala have entered a new commitment agreement for 2008-2010. The agreement includes a boost in annual funding from AUD \$3,000 to \$4,000 and Helen Lucy's involvement as 'in-country' project manager. This is the first time IF will have a PM in-country and we think this will be a great opportunity for us to engage with the Avu Avu

community. Sue, who has championed IF's support in the Solomons from its inception, has taken up a position on the IF Management Committee (MC) and will continue working on the Turusuala project as MC Representative.

IF's contribution to the Centre, both financially and in terms of organisational capacity building, is a small contribution to a community that is marginalized, even within the Islands. We hope to continue providing assistance to this unique project over the coming years.

Project Manager: Helen Lucy Moss
Liaison Officer: Doni Keli
Consultant: Chris Chevalier
MC Representative: Sue Cunningham

Turusuala graduate profile: Corinne Olibola



My name is Corinne Olibola. I come from one of the communities near AvuAvu Provincial Secondary School on the Weathercoast of Guadalcanal. I have a family of eight; four boys and four girls. In the year 2000, my younger brother died from fever during the ethnic tension.

I started my primary education at AvuAvu Primary School from 1990 – 1998. I passed my examination for form one at AvuAvu Secondary School in 1999. Because of the ethnic tension, which happened between Malaita and Guadalcanal, I did not manage to continue my education.

During the ethnic tension I lived with my family in the bush for two years because of the militants who built their camp at the riverbank. They moved around in the villages in the area asking for money and pigs from people who were not following orders. And that really made us not free to move around in the communities, so we stayed in the bush until the national election in 2001. When RAMSI arrived, we decided to go back home again.

In 2003 Turusuala Community Based Training Centre started. Then in 2004 I decided to attend Turusuala. I was there for two years before I did my practical (studies) at home in 2006. During my practical, I set up my piggery project with local materials to build housing and a fence. I was given some local breed piglets by my mother. By seeing the increase of my piggery it really encourages me to continue with it. My father has a very positive heart towards my piggery project. He helped me

build the fence and even gives me some advice on how to manage it.

In December 2007 I graduated from the centre. Turusuala is really a model to me. It helps bring back the skills I missed during the conflict and encourages me towards my future projects.

Corinne is now working toward establishing a second project in her village drying fruits and making chips. She is currently visiting Honiara to learn these skills from Jennifer Keli, a former Weathercoast local and the wife of IF's Liaison Officer, Doni Keli. Corinne hopes to pass on these new skills to other local women when she returns to the area later in the year.

A great visit to a great project in Tamil Nadu, India Libby Lloyd

Editorial Note: Many of you will be aware that IF has funded the Program for Education and Awareness Building, in Madhurantakam, Tamil Nadu, India since late 2006. In recognition of its important work to improve the school retention rates of Dalit children (considered 'untouchables') and to promote their confidence and awareness of post-school opportunities in their senior school years, In December 2007, IF decided to provide an additional \$20,000 over three years to help build the momentum established by the Pravaham Trust in its first year.

Libby Lloyd, IF's recently appointed Patron, took the opportunity of her recent holiday in India in January of this year to visit the project. Here is her report.

At the end of one month travelling in southern India, the cream on the cake for me was to be the guest of IF's Tamil Nadu project and spend several days in the company of three men intimately engaged with the IF project: Mr Dayalan, the project manager (a Dalit who has crusaded for education in villages around his home for more than 20 years), Pastor Davadoss from the Pravaham Foundation and Mr Chezhan, a retired secondary school headmaster from Madhurantakam, the main town near the project.

By 25 January when my daughter (who accompanied me on part of the trip) returned to Australia, I was beginning to get the hang of India but was still fumbling my way! India is such a big and complex country in every way! On 26 January I was to be picked up in Chennai at 10.00am by Mr Dayalan and Pastor Davadoss. Trying to cram as much into my first ever visit to India, I accepted an invitation from an auto rickshaw driver, Purush (who was later to become a friend) to see the "never to be missed" India Republic Day parade in Chennai. It seemed too good an opportunity to miss, so I agreed to be picked up at 6.am – definitely to be back by 9am in time to be collected by Mr Dayalan and Pastor Davadoss! This was a wonderful start to the day but it turned out that I was not just seeing the parade; I was *in it* – on the Tamil Nadu Tourist Commission float! I discovered I was THE tourist on the float! Great start to India/Australia Day. The parade went on and on and on. The whole city was

in grid-lock because of it so I wasn't the only one who was late for the rendezvous at the hotel.

Two hours south-west of Chennai, on the highway to Villupuram, we made a road stop motel our base for visiting the homework centres. Unfortunately my timing meant that we visited the centres on a Saturday – not really a homework day.

One of the highlights of my trip was a visit to the nearby villages to meet the children attending the centres, along with their families and their tutors. Travelling in a 4WD, we were able to navigate the narrow, frequently unmade roads as we wound our way through to the Dalit villages. Thatched roofs and mud floors – a measure of poverty in any village in India - were everywhere. I saw a pump in the middle of the village and sometimes a stagnant pond on the outskirts, girls and women carrying water on their heads, magnificent coloured saris, little children wearing just a T-shirt top playing with others, water buffalo and rice paddies.



Families in Tamil Nadu

Along the way, we stopped at a major junior secondary high school which had 350 registered students with 4 teachers – though I was frequently told that teachers don't turn up for work. This stop highlighted widespread and pressing needs in the public education system which has become the preserve of poorer children whose parents cannot afford to give them private education.

We then travelled from village to village and met the students at eight homework centres. They all turned out in their best gear even though it was well into Saturday afternoon. The students sat cross-legged awaiting our visit in the space they use to study – on the roadway, in a church, or under a thatched roof by the side of the road. They took turns to read aloud or explain various aspects of their schooling. Most of the kids are first in their family to access educational opportunities. They are from families where their parents can neither read nor write and where the average daily income from rural work is 15-20 rupees - well under \$A1 - a day.

The final visit of the day was to a darkened village at 8.30pm. The children sat cross-legged on the earth while their classmates put on a concert and cultural event with some very energetic dancing, singing, and recitation. This display was held with amazingly enterprising techniques of lighting and generation of power for there was no electricity in the village.

I was asked to speak at each centre. I tried varying my talks about IF and its work, about Australia, life in Australia and how it might differ from their lives. I was constantly asked about my own family and Australia. The kangaroo remains the most reliable base point of knowledge. I frequently felt many light years away from my own reality and I tried to hop inside their skins to imagine how they would interpret such a visit; I still wonder now. Many dozens of handshakes and autographs later, we headed back late at night to our base along the highway to Villupuram.

The tutors I met all showed great commitment and interest in their work and in their students, but it was clear the challenges are significant. The original intent of the project was also discussed – that of providing career counselling and mentoring for Dalit senior school students. This component will get under way later this year.

Other issues were raised with me as we left Mr Dayalan and Mr Chezian behind, for example, how can they find a way to upgrade the junior secondary high school; the need for supplementary nutrition at the homework classes; ways they can facilitate the building of a space for community use, especially for the homework centres; ways they can fund and support scholarships for the most able students; how could they access assistance from expatriate teachers, particularly in math and English, even occasional teachers. All of these issues will be considered by the project manager and during IF's next visit to the project.

On the last day, we left our now familiar base on the highway and drove to Venkatapuram, near Vellore, to meet the Board of the Pravaham Trust (IF's partner organisation for this project). No one had warned me about how beautiful a location and environment this was. I was thrilled to be hosted most generously by Lucy Shyamsundar as a guest of the Trust for a night and to see the Trust's work. The Trust trains 25 young women annually who are from the poorest families and have dropped out of school. Over ten months they train to become nursing assistants and conclude their training with two months of work placement in Bangalore. Besides gaining much sought-after vocational skills, the girls actually run the Centre under the guidance of their tutors. They cook (superb meals from a truly simple kitchen), clean and keep the centre in order.



Pravaham's kitchen – catering for 30+ people



Libby presenting prizes at Pravaham

The day I visited was 'open day' with local village children invited to the centre for a day of fun – running races and drawing competitions, a mid-day feast and several of the resident students gave talks on hygiene and nutrition. At the mid-morning break, the kids had rare access to playground equipment and used it with such joy. I wished Australian children could witness this!



Playground at Pravaham

The hospitality and fun and the opportunity to spend time with Pravaham was a great bonus at the end of an inspirational visit to this off-the-beaten track in Tamil Nadu.



Village school children visiting Pravaham

My first visit to an IF project was really rewarding. The chance to meet directly with such stimulating and dedicated individuals, as well as beginning to understand

such a thought-provoking project, is something to be treasured. Thank you IF and thank you Pravaham.

IF Project Manager: Pat Duggan
 Pravaham Trust Project Manager: Mr Dayalan
 Country Liaison Officer: Annie Namala
 MC Representative: Zoe Mander-Jones

Personal Profiles

Organizations are, first and foremost, centers of human relatedness. Relationships come alive where there is an appreciative eye, when people see the best in one another and the whole, when they share their dreams and ultimate concerns in affirming ways, and when they are connected in full voice to create not just new worlds, but a better world.

The new Revised Appreciative Organization

The newsletter's relatively new section on personal profiles introduces Libby Lloyd (IF's new Patron), Helen Lucy Moss (Project Manager for Solomon Islands) and Bienvenue Mupenda (Congo, In-Country Project Manager); just three of the people whose involvement in IF is greatly appreciated.

Helen Lucy Moss

Solomon Islands in-country Project Manager

I first heard of IF when I was working with Jenny Noble on foreign and trade policy at the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet. I had joined the department as a graduate working on preparations for Australia's hosting of APEC. My educational background includes a Bachelor of Commerce and a Masters in International Relations, during which I was fortunate enough to be granted an internship with the Centre for Refugee Research at UNSW. Before working for the government I spent several years as a freelancer in the film industry.

While originally from Adelaide, and more recently based in Canberra, in September last year I moved to Honiara to accompany my fiancé on his two year AusAID posting. Honiara is an interesting town to live in and the Solomon Islands people are extremely friendly. It's also been a great opportunity for me as I wish to further a career in development.

Working on the Turusuala project has certainly been the highlight of living here so far (even if Sue Cunningham and I had to cross a lake with more than 2000 crocodiles in just a dugout canoe!) Doni Keli (IF's Liaison Officer) is a pleasure to work with and the enthusiasm of the staff and students is fantastic! It is great to work on a project that is widely recognised by international donors, the Solomon Islands Government and other NGOs as important to local development.

While the paperwork is yet to be finalised, in July I will start working as a Youth Development Officer at the Ministry of Women, Youth and Children Affairs under the

Australian Youth Ambassador for Development program. My role will include assisting the Youth Division to review the national youth policy and setting up the first National Youth Parliament. I have already begun volunteering at the Ministry and I think my recent work on the Turusuala project has provided me with an excellent foundation for what will be a really interesting experience.

Libby Lloyd
IF Patron



I have known about IF for quite a long time and now I am thrilled to become an active participant in such an interesting organisation with such potential.

Since I left the formal workforce several years ago I have become increasingly interested in finding ways to engage with people in other parts of the world who have never had the same opportunities as most of us in Australia. My work with refugees over many years has always reinforced for me the good fortune of those who can grow up and live in stable communities with great opportunities offered – we do not experience the same ‘no other choice’ decisions of so many others in the world. How fortunate we are to have an organisation such as IF to help bridge gaps between very different societies.

I grew up in Perth and graduated from Melbourne as an occupational therapist (OT). I was always interested in the psychiatric side of OT, working with people with various forms of mental illness – with methods designed to return them to the community and to become independent and resilient.

After marrying, my husband joined Australian Foreign Affairs and OT practice became impossible for me as we were never posted to an English speaking country. Our postings took us to London (very briefly), Cairo, Vienna, East Berlin, Warsaw, Jakarta and Baghdad. During these years we had three children - who are now dispersed across the globe. Our eldest child, our daughter, teaches sociology at Macquarie University in Sydney. Our elder son teaches and researches in astronomy at Cornell University in the US and our younger son is an international lawyer with Vodafone in the UK. To keep up with our children, and grandchildren in particular, means regular journeys around the globe.

Over the years I became increasingly interested in refugee and international development issues. I started working for the United Nations High Commissioner for

Refugees (UNHCR) in Jakarta in 1979 and throughout South East Asia during the crisis outflows of Indo-Chinese boat people. I subsequently joined the Dept of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs in Canberra, and then later worked again with UNHCR in Iraq, just after the end of the Iran-Iraq war and in the lead up to the Gulf war in 1991. This time I worked mainly with Iranian refugees given asylum in Iraq as well as with people from the Horn of Africa and others.

In between these highlights, I worked professionally in the area of refugees as well as in the area of cross-cultural communication. I maintain a strong interest in several organisations that will link well with IF – UNIFEM Australia (the UN Development Fund for Women) and the White Ribbon Foundation (supporting a campaign to eliminate violence against women).

Now, with a close involvement with IF, I look forward to helping raise awareness about its programs, in linking requests for project support to IF as well as raising funds to support IF’s projects. I look forward to engaging with IF’s members over the next little while and working together with you to build IF in as many ways as we can.

Bienvenu Mupenda
Congo in-country Project Manager



My name is MBMB, born in Kinshasa 18 Oct 68 in a polygamist family. I am the 5th child out of 13 (4 sons and 9 daughters). My father was in the military during (President) Mobutu and died in June 1995 due to poisoning. While he was alive he made sure that all his children received an education despite the low allowances from Mobutu. We were often on the move due to our father's career regardless of the school calendar. Sometimes we spent one school year in 2 different provinces. With God's help, I managed to obtain my Bachelor of Education in 1990 at the SAIO General Education Institute in Kisangani and my Graduate Diploma in Nursing at the Institute of Medical Technology in Kisangani in 1994 (Oriental Province).

After obtaining my Nursing degree, I worked for 6 months at BUTA General Hospital. Next I went to ABA (North East near Sudan border) where I worked as Director of Nursing, in charge of the Infirmary for 2 years. I was forced to resign due to threats initiated by older and less educated colleagues who refused to be directed by someone younger.

In 1997, following Laurent Desire Kabila's rule, I went to Bunia (Ituri District) and taught at the Adventist Medical Centre and at the same time worked as a nurse. After 6 months I became the Centre Manager. Unfortunately, in July 1998 the event of the 2nd War forced my flight to Kinshasa to avoid the consequences inflicted to Ituri inhabitants.

In 2001, I met Sally Coxe who was on her way to Wamba. She talked to me about the Bonobo Conservation Initiative (BCI), their activities, the inhabitants of Kokolopori in particular (and Djolu in general) - victims of the war between the Kabila government, MLC and RCD. The area was deprived of basic needs so Sally suggested that I work for BCI and prepare a project to open Bonobo Clinique in Kokolopori. In 2002, I started work officially as an assistant to Jean Marie Benishay (ex BCI/DRC coordinator). We had several tasks. One was to obtain the necessary documents to work legally in Congo. In 2003, I was in charge of BCI finances and logistics and I still am.

In 2006, I learned that the Bonobo Project received financial sponsorship from an Australian organization. The money was not enough, but enough to see the program start. In December 2006 I met Philip Strickland for the 1st time. He was with Dr. Luke Bennet and Angus Gemmell on their way to Kokolopori. The delegation brought medical kits to assist the population during their brief stay. That trip was extraordinary for it allowed me to meet Philip Strickland, the official representative of Indigo Foundation and head of Clinic project. I was assigned the coordination of the project. I was strongly committed to its success.

In May 08, signed the contract with Indigo Foundation to work as its coordinator. Together with Albert Lotana Lokasala and the medical team members, we are trying to solve the public health issues in Kokolopori with the help of Indigo Foundation and Mr Strickland who continuously looks for means to finance the Bonobo Clinic.

I serve as a bridge between Indigo Foundation and the Clinic. The financing of the project goes through Indigo Foundation, the planning of its activities is shared between Bienvenu, Albert Lokasala (from Vie Sauvage) and the medical team members based in Kokolopori.

Indigo Foundation's efforts were noticed, for after a few months after the start of Bonobo Clinic, an American organization (City of Fall Church) accepted to come to the aid of the Kokolopori population and contributed financially and materially to various sectors including Bonobo Clinic. At the beginning of this year, Falls Church financed the appointment of a doctor in Kokolopori for a year. He has performed 12 surgical operations so far.

In the capacity of coordinator, I note that the project is going very well thanks to Indigo and Falls Church. I am convinced that the issues of Public health will be overcome.

IF Workshop Weekend

Jenny Noble

On 23-24 February, IF Management Committee members, Project Managers and other key IF supporters came together in Canberra for the 2008 Strategic Planning workshop. The aim of the workshop was to develop strategies to grow our organisation over the next five years. Enthusiasm from IF supporters to expand our activities has always been strong; however we are also committed to maintaining the core characteristics and guiding principles of IF which make us different to other organisations and, we believe, make a real difference to the communities with whom we work. With this in mind, the workshop provided an important opportunity for people to share their views about what works and what doesn't work for IF, and what might be a manageable and realistic way to approach our envisaged growth.

What will IF look like in 2012?

Following are some of the key features we would like to develop in the organisation over the next five years:

- A professional and well regarded not-for-profit organisation which is a delight to be involved in.
- Support for more high quality projects in a way that is consistent with IF's mission statement.
- A strong and inspired volunteer-based organisation with some core staff positions.
- Income increased to at least \$250 000 per year.
- Where appropriate, a consolidated country focus with established in-country specialists.
- Good public and industry profile with IF being broadly recognised as an organisation engaged in best practice community development approaches.
- A Management Committee set up as an advisory/strategic board.
- An effective 'virtual' organisation with integrated communications.

How will we get there?

In order to make progress towards the above, we realise we need to carefully plan and undertake a range of parallel and integrated steps. This will take time and a lot of energy; so to ensure the workload and changes required are manageable for our volunteers, it was decided that we should develop a more detailed plan for 2008-09 and revisit our growth strategy on a regular basis. Rather than commit to specific fundraising targets and numbers of projects for 2012, it was agreed that we should focus on what is possible for the first year of growth and then build on these achievements. It will also allow us to maintain the flexibility we require to operate an effective, volunteer-based organisation with a dynamic and responsive approach to development.

Key growth priorities for 2008-09 are to:

- Approve at least two new international projects and one project to work with Indigenous Australians;
- Aim to raise \$150,000 to fund this expansion;
- Work to understand our supporters better and develop a more dynamic relationship with our support base. A first step to this will be a supporter survey. We will also aim to 'activate' a percentage of our membership base – this means we would hope to encourage more members to become volunteers and/or vocal IF supporters.

IF's new Coordinator, Kieran Longridge, will be responsible for ensuring systems and structures are in place to support the growth of IF. Kieran's work plan will include developing a new website, establishing online credit card facilities, upgrading the database for IF members/supporters and establishing a central online repository for key documents to improve information sharing. IF's policies and procedures manual will also be reviewed to ensure all our processes and procedures remain appropriate and are clearly documented and understood.

New positions

In seeking to ensure that we consistently apply best practice development approaches, we will be looking to fill several new positions on the team. This includes 2-3 project manager mentors/advisers to whom Project Managers can go for advice on international development issues. We are also looking for one extra person to join the Management Committee and additional Project Managers for new projects as they arise. Following the appointment of a paid Coordinator, we will review IF staffing/volunteer requirements in six months time.

A 'relational' organisation

Finally, one of the most important parts of IF's growth strategy is to continue to ensure that IF remains a delight to be involved in. Therefore, it is important that we maintain close and fulfilling relations among the IF membership – after all, this is one of the things that make IF a very special organisation.

Promising progress... It is just two months since the IF workshop was held and I am pleased to report that we are already making progress towards our 2008-09 goals. The upcoming May Management Committee meeting is expected to consider a range of concepts for new projects and the fundraising strategy committee is busy developing a plan to help us meet our \$150,000 target for this year. We are all excited about this new phase for our organisation and look forward to updating you on our progress.

A commitment to transparency, self-reflection, sharing ideas and learning new approaches has always been key to the way IF works and again the Strategic Planning workshop provided an opportunity to learn and share with others from outside of IF. Sincere thanks to Andrew Rowell (CARE Australia) and Belinda Patten (freelance photographer) for coming along to share their knowledge and expertise – Andrew on his experiences in

international development and Belinda on her knowledge of 'branding' and publicizing not-for-profit organisations. The contributions from both Andrew and Belinda were extremely valuable and much appreciated.

Editors note: A big thankyou to Jenny who hosted the event and thanks to everyone that was able to attend. Next year we hope to introduce technology that will make it possible for people to attend remotely.

Fund raisers

Comedy Night Rachel Reilly (East Timor Project Manager) organised a fantastic comedy night fundraiser at St Kilda, Melbourne on April 2nd. Comedians included Dave Jory, Nick Sun, Danny McGinlay and Duff. Approximately 100 committed folk braved some of Melbourne's worst weather to see the line up of comedians. \$1200 was raised and Rachel talked to many people about the work of IF. All money raised will go toward the IF East Timor project. Thanks Rachel for organising this great event. Congratulations also to



Rachel on the safe arrival of her baby son, Eliot.

Pymble Ladies College - This year the senior students at PLC selected Indigo Foundation as their charity to donate \$812.20 which they had raised. We would like to extend a huge thank you to the students and their teacher for this generous contribution to our ongoing work.

Rotary Club of Kew on Yarra has generously donated \$1000 to IF which will go toward the M'bore Water Project in Rote, Indonesia.

UPCOMING – Wollongong Fundraiser

Theresa Huxtable and her friends are - once again - putting on an event to raise funds for IF. This will be a **talk and slide show** by friends who recently returned from an intrepid adventure to K2 in Pakistan.

The fundraiser is at **Smith's Hill High School, Friday 9th May at 6.30pm**. For more details, look for 'Events' on the IF website at www.indigofoundation.org Alternatively, contact Theresa at huxtable@uow.edu.au or phone her on: 4226 7051 or 0421 655 149 or just come along. Thanks Theresa for your enthusiasm and dedication.



Hiking to K2 – Pakistan

Another BIG thankyou!

We would like to extend our sincere appreciation to **Mr Donald W de Boer of dbc associates** in Sydney for providing pro-bono accountancy services to the Indigo Foundation. We are grateful to dbc associates for stepping in to assist IF when we found ourselves with a gap in our volunteer base and we very much appreciate the expertise and professional support from **Deborah** Ianchello, also from dbc as she works with our Coordinator Kieran and Treasurer Trina on the financial side of IF's operations.

**Donations to the Indigo Foundation
are tax-deductible.**

Interested in Volunteering?

The volunteer network of IF is instrumental in ensuring that we continue to deliver quality community development projects and operate as a professional organisation. Volunteer roles are varied and can be tailored to suit your interests and availability. Some recent examples of volunteer contributions include:

- pro-bono accounting
- design of IF logos
- community fundraising events
- coordination of this newsletter

We are interested in hearing from you about ways you may like to be further involved in our work as a volunteer. Please get in contact with the IF Coordinator: Kieran.Longridge@gmail.com to discuss further.

Pass it along - Once you have read this; think about passing it on to a friend or family member who you think may be interested. **The newsletter is also available online** at www.indigofoundation.org

if

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