

if

indigo foundation

Issue 4
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IF Financial Strategy – Brainstorming Meeting

On the 28th August members of the IF Management Committee held a financial brainstorming meeting with a range of key business contacts from Sydney. The aim was to look at new ways for IF to raise money, in particular to develop a strategy for IF to approach business for donations. It was agreed that the most pragmatic approach was to use personal and professional contacts in business as a starting point.

From this meeting the attached one page outline on IF was developed as a way of explaining our goals, principles and the way we operate to potential supporters. We feel it is also a useful document for new and potential members so please point it out to your friends. The meeting also highlighted the need for IF to increase information flows to members. Quarterly newsletters will now be sent out – voila the October newsletter!

The Management Committee would be happy to discuss ideas for the finance strategy with interested members and welcomes any input on how IF can generate a sustainable and ethical income base for our programs. A follow-up finance meeting will be held on the 16th October.

DON'T FORGET!

**2002 Annual General Meeting
Saturday 12 October, 10.30am
5 Bates St Dickson, ACT
All members welcome**

**See page 5 for details of Management
Committee candidates**

The Infrastructure Fund - Rote



The new village health clinic in Oenguat



New village well in Oenguat



The new preschool with stage in the foreground

PROJECT UPDATES

ROTE, INDONESIA - Lua Lemba

An update from Sally Blake...

Sally Stevenson returned to Rote in August. Her primary goals were to work with Lua Lemba to monitor and evaluate activities and to discuss the future relationship between Lua Lemba and IF.

For monitoring and evaluation IF and Lua Lemba used three means to gather and verify information:

1. Reflection by key Lua Lemba and IF personnel on lessons learned to date (action-learning methodology).
2. In-depth interviews with key informants, including some of the same informants who assisted with the original needs assessment (interpretative evaluation).
3. Visual verification of, and discussion about, infrastructure fund activities, training results/outcomes, and finance documents.

Much has been achieved with the A\$25 000 (from FPA) that was allocated for the infrastructure fund, and there is a substantial increase in vegetable growing after Tom's training. There have also been organisational and management lessons learnt by Lua Lemba and IF through this project, the first for both organisations.

Lessons Learned by IF

Relationships: We are always learning how to create a fair and balanced relationship with our project partners. This trip reinforced IF's belief that community control underpins successful community development. The development of individual relationships between members of our organisations has also been very important in building trust and understanding.

Evaluation of projects: Sally recognised on this trip that not enough evaluation of IF was undertaken by Lua Lemba, and that perhaps IF drove the evaluation process too much. Further discussions are needed to establish whether this is Lua Lemba's preferred approach, and to see if a more balanced approach would be useful to them.

Volunteers: The IF component of this project has been undertaken entirely by volunteer staff. IF has had to develop procedures and policies to streamline logistical aspects of projects, provide pre-project training to volunteers and to ensure the safety and security of our staff when traveling. This work

has been important in informing our approach to other projects and has contributed to the development of a policy on volunteer management.

Lessons Learned by Lua Lemba

Sustainability (personnel): Like many NGOs, Lua Lemba is reliant upon a few key members for the bulk of its work. Lua Lemba has recognised the need to train and mentor new staff, and devolve a range of roles and responsibilities to ensure their long-term sustainability.

Management: Developing robust management strategies has been a key to the success of Lua Lemba. Where a difficult or sensitive issue has arisen, Lua Lemba has adjusted their approach to prevent it happening again. For example, after a small amount of funds were found to be misused in phase one, a system of rotating project coordinators was introduced, so that a person could only be a project coordinator once. This a) minimized risk b) distributed the workload c) spread opportunities for experience.

Agriculture and Infrastructure

Tom Van Sebille also visited Rote in August with the aim of providing a further round of agriculture training for the community. "There were about 20 participants from 4 villages. As part of the two-day seminar we set up a nursery in one village, made potting mix and did experiments in pot design. We did some work on seed saving and even made some solar teapots".

Tom was also there to meet with Lua Lemba to discuss their progress with the infrastructure fund and to assist them with the planning of further activities. "An amazing amount has been achieved by the community since I was last there... and the community still have a third of the infrastructure fund left to spend!"

One of the exciting elements of this trip for IF members is that Tom recorded the activities conducted by Lua Lemba and the community on film. I tried to capture a sense of the change underway in Dehla. The introduction of seaweed farming to the area about two years ago has increased the cash wealth of a lot of people there – reflected by a (noisy) increase in motorbike ownership. I was surprised too to find that since I was last there some of the villagers have even bought TVs. Generators run the TVs now, but there is some talk of the government supplying electricity (and water) in the near future. Rote has just gained

autonomy as an administrative region and Dehla is on the verge of having its own local government." IF's first foray into the world of cinema is now in post-production. Stay tuned for details of the Australian premiere!

Future relationship

The relationship between Lua Lemba and IF will continue (Family Planning Australia finished their component in June 2002). As per our strategic focus, IF can offer core funding to Lua Lemba for their running costs, as well as organisational support, training and assistance in establishing links with other organisations, particularly other NGOs with specialist skills in agriculture, water management and English teaching. Yme, a Norwegian water NGO has already agreed in principle to work with Lua Lemba. We expect to receive a written proposal from Lua Lemba in November.

EAST TIMOR – CENTRO FETO ENCLAVE OECUSSI

Jennifer Spence reports...

In August I travelled to Oecussi, East Timor for two weeks to visit our project partners, the women of Centro Feto Enclave Oecussi, and was astounded to see the progress they have made! IF had had little contact with Centro before the visit as mobile access has been unreliable and there has been no public access to the internet since the UN Transitional Administration in East Timor (UNTAET) withdrew earlier this year. After a nine hour ferry trip from Dili I was really excited to finally meet the four paid staff (we had thought there were only two) and various members of the voluntary Management Committee.

Centro Feto's aim is to provide support to women and children who are victims of domestic violence and to advocate for the empowerment of women in all four subdistricts in Oecussi. The objective of my trip was to cement the partnership between IF and Centro Feto in person; to gain a better understanding of the needs of the organization and the district; and to identify areas where IF might be able to provide technical assistance or establish linkages with other organizations to support the development of Centro Feto.

We have made a financial commitment to Centro Feto of \$5000 a year for three years. Centro Feto has chosen to use this money to fund the salaries of two women who form the training unit of Centro Feto. During my stay I attended four workshops conducted by the

training unit in the villages, between 30mins to two hours by four wheel drive from Oecussi town – the main village. Each of these workshops was attended by approximately 70 villagers, with roughly equal numbers of men and women. The workshops are conducted in cooperation with the East Timor Police Service, UN Human Rights, the International Rescue Committee (international NGO) and FFSO Men's Group Against Violence – a local NGO. They are designed to create greater understanding of the negative development impacts caused by gender-based violence. Each workshop begins with a session on gender, followed by discussions on domestic violence, sexual abuse and human rights. Each one I attended was well received by the villagers and led to a healthy debate on both the advantages and difficulties of overcoming domestic violence and empowering women in the community. It was obvious that the collaborative nature of the workshops with other organizations in the community is key to their success.

Before my visit we knew that Centro Feto had established an office space and resource centre, where women suffering from violence can come and receive support and counseling. We also knew that Centro Feto supported the running of the Safe House. In fact, two Safe Houses have been built which are located within the police compound. Nine women have sought support from Centro Feto and two women have made use of the Safe House. Admittedly this is not a lot, but Centro Feto understands that it will take time and understanding for women to feel confident about reporting gender-based violence. In this sense the workshops and other outreach activities play an important role in informing women of their rights and the services available to them.

During my stay the staff and Management Committee indicated that they needed some organisational support to help them plan for the future. Early thinking is to expand activities that focus on empowering women through education and income generation. They would also like to employ a local woman in each of the four sub-districts to ensure closer and more regular contact between local women and Centro Feto so as to better meet the needs of women in the subdistricts. Before embarking on this next level of activities it will be important for Centro Feto to consolidate the knowledge and contacts that it has built over the last year. Particularly so they can be assured of sourcing other larger donor

funding. Centro Feto and I agreed that they would develop an outline of their organisational development needs (budgeting, forward planning, activity design) and that IF and Centro Feto would then work together to plan a visit by an IF volunteer in March next year to help them facilitate some of this planning.

From my interaction with the villagers, the District Administrator and other local and international NGOs it was clear that Centro Feto is one of the most active local NGOs in Oecussi. This is a fantastic achievement but it appeared that it will also place expanding and competing community expectations on Centro Feto as they are seen increasingly as an NGO that can make things happen. Next year will be an interesting time for them as they plan the growth of the organization against this backdrop. It will be important for them to be very clear about what they want to achieve.

It's interesting to see this issue reflected in our own organization. In looking towards expansion we can see that IF needs to measure the constraints of working as a volunteer organization whilst also trying to sustain the momentum that has been building over the last two years. I think working with Centro Feto next year to help strengthen their systems and practices will provide us with a great opportunity to learn and think more about the expansion of our own organization.

The women of Centro Feto are proactive, enthusiastic and dedicated to promoting transparent and appropriate community development. I for one still have a lot to learn from them. Thanks to IF and Centro Feto I can see this is what good development is really about.

(Ed. An enormous thanks must go to Sally Blake for all her efforts in August in mobilizing not only Sally and Tom but Jenny also. IF simply couldn't have done without Sally's input.)

HAZARA COMMUNITY, SYDNEY SCO-IF PARTNERSHIP

A report from Sally Stevenson in consultation with Salman Jan...

In the last newsletter we informed you of our partnership with SCO Community Organisation, a small NGO set up in Sydney to assist members of the Hazara community, an ethnic minority group from Afghanistan. Some 70% of Hazaras are refugees, and are currently on Temporary Protection Visas (TPVs). TPV

holders are able to stay in Australia for 3 years, at which time their status is reviewed (and they may be sent home).

SCO currently provides three main services: English classes to Hazara on TPVs; community liaison services, to facilitate access to mainstream services for non-English speaking Hazara, particularly women; homework assistance classes to Hazara children. These services are provided to assist new arrivals from the Hazara community to adjust to new ways of life in Australia. SCO also works to form close relationships with other multicultural and welfare groups in the community with the aim of creating a strong and healthy society in Australia.

Deleted:

A large number of Hazara people on TPVs have now been in Australia for over 30 months. Recently they received letters from DIMIA (Department of Immigration and Indigenous Affairs) notifying them that their status will be reviewed in January, and they must justify any continuing claim for asylum. In response, SCO has attempted to find lawyers to represent TPV holders at their hearings. Sadly many of the lawyers they approached felt the prospects of the claims to be hopeless in the current political environment and declined their services on this basis. The Hazara community has been significantly demoralized by these events and the effect on SCO has been great. For example, no longer do people share the enthusiasm or drive to learn English as they see it as a waste of time if they are returned to Afghanistan, where it is unlikely that they will be employed on the basis of their English language capacity.

Afghanistan has just emerged from one of the bloodiest civil wars in its history. Prominent warlords who perpetuated ethnic persecution during this time now hold positions of power within the new government and continue to control large regions within Afghanistan. The UN has peace-keepers only in Kabul, and there has been a growing number of security incidents there over the last months. As a minority group that have been persecuted from ruling Afghan Governments over the past 100 years, the Hazara are understandably extremely worried about the security situation that will face them on their return.

At the same time, the Afghan government is faced with enormous resource constraints, and the provision of adequate food, shelter and health facilities for returning refugees is a huge concern. UNHCR has requested that no

refugees are returned until at least March next year - after the Afghan winter. "Though the Taliban regime is gone the puzzle of security and stability is still unsolved with the warlords abusing the power all around Afghanistan. These days DIMIA claims that Afghanistan is safe for the return of TPV holders but the reality is a big HOW?" questions Salman Jan, Chairperson of SCO.

IF and SCO are currently establishing links with other refugee activist groups with the aim of working together to raise public awareness of this issue, as well as to find good legal representation for TPV holders. We hope that in the next newsletter we will be able to report some happier news on this issue.

Election of Management Committee members at the AGM

In line with the decision taken at last year's AGM to stagger the election of members to the Management Committee, a decision taken to ensure IF maintains some institutional memory each year, three positions on the IF Management Committee are up for election this year. The following current office bearers will be standing for re-election. If elected they will hold the positions for a period of two years. Also, if passed, the proposed Special Resolution at this year's AGM will increase the number of Ordinary Members from two to up to six members. **Current members of IF who would like to contribute to the management of IF are encouraged to apply for election!** All positions are maintained on a voluntary basis.

Sally Stevenson (Chairperson)

IF has been able to achieve a number of its objectives this year and I have very much enjoyed being part of this. I would like the opportunity to continue to work for IF over the next two years. My background in commerce, community development and public health, as well as management experience, I believe, would serve me well in doing this. Therefore, I would like to be re-elected to the position of Chairperson this year.

Susan Engel (Secretary)

I was co-opted on to the Committee earlier this year after a casual vacancy arose! Since Zoe's move to Vanuatu I have also been filling the post of Secretary. I currently work for the Centre for Asia Pacific Social Transformation Studies at the University of Wollongong and am hoping to commence some further studies here next year. Prior to that, I worked for over

three years managing capacity building programs in East Timor and Mozambique. I have been involved in various community organisations for most of the last 15 years - prior to moving from Melbourne I was on the Board of Working Women's Health (a migrant women's health information organisation). I look forward to contributing some of my skills and experience to IF in the future.

Jennifer Spence (Ordinary Member)

This year has simply flown past! Over the past year I continued my role as IF Project Manager for Centro Feto, East Timor as well as contributing as an Ordinary Member of the IF Management Committee. There is still so much for us to do and I would love to be involved.

I currently enjoy working for AusAID in Canberra. I find the combination of working for a large donor and a small community development organisation to be quite fascinating and indeed complementary - a lot of what I have learnt this year from IF about community development has been very important in informing the way I consider development issues at AusAID. In this way I look forward to contributing and learning more from IF in the future as an Ordinary Member of the Management Committee.

Thinking about Christmas...

Last weekend Sally Blake and I attended an exhibition of East Timorese tais (weavings) in Canberra 'Weaving Women's Stories'. NGOs in Canberra with contacts with women's groups in East Timor were invited to come along and sell their wares. Centro Feto and UN Human Rights work with three widows groups from Maquelab, Oecussi who have formed tais-making cooperatives to generate income. Thanks to Carolyn Graydon from UNHCR I was promptly sent 18 tais to sell and am pleased to announce that I sold all of them making \$900 for the widows groups!

As a result of this success it has been suggested that IF organise a sale of weavings from Rote and Oecussi at the IF members' Christmas Party in late November/early December. What do you think? Please indicate your support for this idea early so that we can arrange for goods to be sent. (js_indigofoundation@hotmail.com)