



newsletter

April 2012 – issue # 29

indigo foundation is an independent, volunteer run, Australian community development organisation.

We work with marginalised communities providing innovative assistance to improve health, education, and human rights.

What's in this newsletter?

- + News on our new partner, Mahalir Sakthi, a women's organisation undertaking incredible work in the slums of Madurai, India
- + Stories and reflections on our education project in Madhurantakam, India
- + Update on our project in Borjegai, Afghanistan, inspiring stories of Borjegai students and 'thoughts from Kabul'
- + Profiles of indigo foundation people - Semmalar Jebaraj and Lyndall Grose
- + A fresh look at Rote and the experience of working in Indonesia
- + Our think piece – 'Who will run the World Bank?'and more...!

India!

Path to a new partnership – introducing Mahalir Sakthi ['Women's Power']

Deborah Raphael – Management Committee

Identifying new partners is never easy. Each year indigo foundation receives many requests for support either through our website or through members and supporters. Our guiding principles of community ownership, sustainability, transparency and gender equity provide a useful, rigorous filter for the proposals and not many stand up well to such scrutiny. So when a proposal does meet the criteria there is cause for celebration.

The connection with Mahalir Sakthi happened in a more indirect way than usual. While in Chennai in late 2010 Libby House, our Development Coordinator, was told about the work of Mahalir Sakthi and given contact details. Email correspondence started between Libby and Gunaseeli one of the founders and in July 2011 Ian Seal, coordinator of our Uganda project visited Madurai and delivered a two day workshop on adolescent health. Following this, Gunaseeli and Libby worked on a proposal to indigo foundation for assistance which was supported by the Management Committee in November 2011. We had a new partner.

The commitment was small. We provided \$4,800 for one year to support tuition centres, a tailoring centre and a typing centre with the proviso that if all goes well, we would consider an extended relationship with increased

financial commitment. In March 2012 Libby and I visited Madurai and met the energetic and committed team at Mahalir Sakthi.

It was a short flight from Chennai to Madurai, a distance of about 500km but we stepped off the plane into considerably more heat than we had left. Madurai is the second largest city in Tamil Nadu. It is dominated by the extraordinary Meenakshi Temple and its surrounding colour, bustle and noise. Poverty is never far from the surface in a city with about two hundred slums where marginalised Dalit and Muslim communities live without adequate amenities in crowded housing ranging from the just tolerable to truly appalling. Mahalir Sakthi works in twelve of the poorest slums.



Deb with Rajni and Nafisah, executive members of Mahalir Sakthi and Semmalar (our Liaison Officer from Madhurantakam), her son Joe, and husband Jebah.

The vigour, dedication and warmth of all connected with Mahalir Sakthi was such that I have found it difficult to report objectively on our visit. I therefore thought it might help to apply the guiding principles filter to what we had seen. So here goes!

Community Ownership - the name Mahalir Sakthi ('Women's Power' in Tamil) reflects the founders' belief that education empowers and transforms women and children as the heart of families. Founded in 2005 by a small group of local men and women committed to social change it was registered as a Trust in 2007 to focus on health and education for women and children living in Madurai slums. The driving force behind its establishment are sisters Gunaseeli and Grace Ganthimathi, both long time activists on women's and children's rights. Gunaseeli and Grace were born and raised in one of the slums and their former family home is now the hub of Mahalir Sakthi activities. (Slum residents have the right to build houses on government land). It serves as an after school tuition centre, tailoring training centre and community meeting house. Whilst Gunaseeli has moved sideways to an advisory role, Grace continues to have a key function. She is a born nurturer, a nurse and a social worker and has worked on health and educational issues in the slum communities for many years. However Mahalir Sakthi is very much a team effort and has developed through a process of community organization, training and volunteer involvement. Many of the women have become involved through their children's participation or after attending women's meetings. The organisation has been very skilled in tapping into their strengths and interests and supporting their ideas for new initiatives.

Equity is based on the principle that people should have equal access to resources and opportunities and many sources, including us, argue that equity should be a central concern for development. There is a lot of evidence that indicates equity has positive effects on efficiency and economic growth, poverty reduction, social cohesion and voice. One of the key areas for promoting equity is targeted action for disadvantaged groups such as the slum dwellers in Madurai who are Dalits, Muslims and Tribals.

Malathir Sakthi promotes equity by providing services directed at slum women and children and helps protect them from falling below a minimum level of well being *and* embedding equity inspired principles and practices in its decision-making processes. Most importantly the communities are empowered through building confidence, awareness and skills. Adolescent boys and girls all spoke of the confidence they had acquired as a result of involvement in Malathir Sakthi's programs and it was certainly evident from the poised performances at a concert and in some individual interviews. Girls and women are more involved as participants and volunteers but it was clear that the focus of the programs was on education for all and that Malathir Sakthi is sensitive to needs of boys as well as the girls.

For example, a young man of eighteen who had dropped out of Year 10 because of a violent alcoholic father had returned home to look after his sick mother and was now an organiser of the adolescent meetings. He was keen to involve more teenage boys and hoped that a tuition centre for dropouts like himself will be started soon. His friend who is now enrolled in a Bachelor of Computer Science is a first generation learner whose father committed suicide seven years previously and whose mother is a sweeper. He is a keen traditional dancer and supports the work of Malathir Sakthi as much as he can, taking on a range of volunteer roles.

Many of the slum dwellers have moved from surrounding villages as a result of eviction, displacement, discrimination or lack of employment opportunities. Limited (if any) education, poor health services, economic deprivation and, for the Dalit communities, the stigma of 'untouchability' have escalated the socio-economic and political problems of these disadvantaged groups. Women and children are the worst affected. The slums lack proper ventilation, sanitation and drainage systems, street lighting or drinking-water pumps. Slum dwellers are susceptible to HIV-AIDs and diseases like 'chicken gunya' (developing joint pains with fever), malaria, flu, diarrhoea and other seasonal diseases. Poverty and malnutrition compound their problems. Malathir Sakthi has been proactive in advocating for the communities on a range of legal rights in relation to education, housing, employment and entitlement to a range of government schemes. Ill treatment of women working as domestic servants is rife and Malathir Sakthi's field workers have encouraged community women to organise around implementation of a minimum wage.

For children, the cramped conditions in slum housing, the lack of adequate electric lighting and an environment destabilised by poverty and attendant problems such as alcoholism creates an unsuitable atmosphere for home study. This compounds their already vulnerable position in public schools, where slum dwellers may be subjected to discrimination, violence and missed opportunities due to social stigma. Many are first generation learners.

The tuition centres help to concentrate their studies and decrease the rate of drop out from schools. The adolescent program helps them understand the numerous concerns and needs of young people. One young woman aged eighteen explained that she had developed an interest in child rights and had recently represented Malathir Sakthi at a local non-government forum.

Promoting equity is not easy but the benefits are clear. In writing this short article I became aware that there is a need for us at indigo foundation to better articulate the concept of equity ourselves to enable a broader and deeper engagement with the way our partners are promoting equity.

Transparency is about how an organisation grows trust that is rewarded by loyalty. It is about creation of an open

culture within the organisation which enables many voices to be heard and listened to at all levels. As a small volunteer organisation Malathir Sakthi is similar to indigo foundation in several respects. It has no office and runs a number of programs on a modest budget mainly funded by private donors. It has a simple management structure with strong and active community representation. It engages with the community across a range of issues growing organically as former students become organisers and mothers become tutors. A number of tutors enthusiastically run tuition centres in their own homes crowding twenty or thirty children into tiny poorly lit spaces. There is a strong sense of common enterprise and commitment to the 'noble cause'.

Financial systems are simple at this stage of development but well recorded and documented.

Sustainability is clearly of paramount importance to Malathir Sakthi and all connected with it. Empowerment through education is at the core of everything it does. As in the education project we support in Madurantakam the tuition centres are set up to improve the secondary school retention rate and encourage higher education by motivating children and families and providing a safe study environment. Selection criteria to attend the centres is based on need but no child is turned away in these marginalised communities. The Tailoring Centre has been remarkably successful providing more than two hundred young women with income generating skills and assisting them into employment in garment factories or as pieceworkers at home. The Typing Centre aspires to provide keyboard skills but it would take a determined young person to build those skills on the manual typewriters circa 1955.

The long term impact of camps and lectures is not always apparent from a written proposal but becomes so during the course of a visit and meeting with students and tutors. It is obvious that the summer camp and health lectures complement and reinforce the more formal tutoring activities. The two day non-residential summer camp is the highlight of the year for many of the kids with opportunities to participate in a cultural program and explore creative pursuits. Enthusiastic young musicians, dancers and actors performed for parents and tutors during our visit. Talks on health, hygiene and self respect help young women living in crowded housing with poor sanitation deal with some of the difficult aspects of adolescence which in turn can impinge on their motivation to continue education. One thirteen year old girl told us her first summer camp was life changing.

One aspect of Malathir Sakthi which was particularly relevant to sustainability was its commitment to networking with other local non government organisations and private and government service providers. Several management members are involved with other non government organisations. Family Planning India and health providers contribute expertise to medical

camps and Grace is district convenor of a federation of non government organisations which work amongst children.

Libby and I are grateful to the energetic and committed team at Malathir Sakthi for their warm welcome and generosity of spirit during our visit.

Partner: Malathir Sakthi
indigo foundation Project Coordinator: Naaman Kranz and Caitlin Winter
MC Representative: Deborah Raphael

A Visit to Madurantakam

Tamil Nadu

Libby House – Development Coordinator

I undertook the monitoring and evaluation trip to the indigo foundation project in Madurantakam, Tamil Nadu with Management Committee Representative Deborah Raphael in March this year. We signed our first Memorandum of Understanding with the Pravaham Trust for the Program for Education and Awareness Building (PEAB) Madurantakam in 2006, and this trip was the first visit after a new Commitment Agreement was signed last year.

The Madurantakam project addresses critical issues for Dalit communities. It aims to enhance learning opportunities for Dalit and other marginalised communities in Madurantakam. Under India's social and religious systems Dalits are considered unclean and have been maintained outside the caste system as 'untouchables'.

The project's first objective was to provide coaching centres for Dalit children in Year 10 and a Student Guidance Program for Year 11 and 12 students. The program as a whole offers training in life skills and career options, aiming to improve the student's chances of completing school successfully and accessing higher education in Tamil Nadu's highly competitive education system. Without coaching it is extremely hard for children to achieve the required grades in Year 10 and 12 exams, and poor families borrow money to pay for their children's coaching.

A second element of the project is the Village Education Centre (VEC) program. The VECs provide a relatively uninterrupted and well supervised space for children up to Year 9 for evening study and learning. Based in the community, often in the open air, these centres are also a mechanism for demystifying the education system and informing first generation learners and their families about the advantages of education.

There are currently seven VECs in villages around Madurantakam, and given the physical environment in which they operate – children sitting on the ground (albeit now on plastic tarps) and with frequent power outages, it is a great credit to the community and the tutors that they have approximately 40 children attend

each VEC nightly. All tutors except one have completed university. During the wet season three villages operating VECs under the program are cut off from formal schooling by the rising river and the VECs are the sole providers of schooling during this time.

The VECs have considerable community support, and part of our work at the project was to evaluate the progress of the VECs under a new initiative from indigo foundation supported by funding from the Rotary Club of Ryde. The initiative has provided each VEC with a bicycle for the tutor, a mat for the children to sit on, a chair for each tutor and non-mains powered lighting for the evening classes; stationary supplies are also guaranteed.

The impact of specifically directed funding for the VECs was remarkable – morale was high, students were equipped with exercise books and there was a sense of evening classes being held rather than the unresourced ‘after school care’ structure observed last year. Tutors have developed their own individual communication networks between school teachers and parents – some formal, others needs based, but all tutors reported positive feedback from their communities.



Libby discussing current achievements and future plans...

Periyangar VEC tutor, Madhan Raj told us that when there was a death in one family, the children from that family defied convention and attended VEC class; others reported donations from the community and teachers making a point of congratulating VECs on the improvement of their students. Madhan Raj has taken the initiative of using his VEC to provide basic preventative health education for the children and employs drama to address community issues. This is a hugely popular development, and the VEC now runs in two sessions, has grown to the stage of needing two tutors and possibly need to divide into two VECs.

After indigo foundation’s Liaison Officer Semmalar Jeberaj visit to our new project in Madurai, and to the Dalit advocacy organisation Social Action Society for Youth, plans are afoot to expand health education, health screening and other non-curricular activities for children and adults to all the VEC’s. These plans were

strongly supported in community consultations we held with tutors and local residents.

VEC’s this year have an added importance to the community. The Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu has changed the school curriculum from activities based learning to a more formal structure making the support and tuition provided by the program even more essential for the Dalit and other marginalised community members.

With the recruitment of VEC Co-ordinator Muthukumar,



Deb and Muthukumar at a community consultation, Tamil Nadu.

Project Leader Mr Cheziyan has been free to focus on running the Year 10 Coaching Centres. Due to his ill health the planned expansion to a second centre was set back and the location was taken over by another organisation. However, Mr Cheziyan has found a new site for the second Centre, and it will open in August

this year. The original Centre is running evening classes in English, Maths and Tamil and on Sundays tutors from the VECs attend English coaching classes. Despite the ill health of Mr Cheziyan not one day of tuition has been cancelled at the Centre this year; of 50 students who started in this 4th year of operation, 15 dropped out prior to exams and 95% of all remaining students passed their exams, with Y. Vanmathi achieving the top mark for Madurantakam students - 87.8%.

A Felicitation ceremony and prize giving was held during our visit and Deborah and I were made very welcome. We met with students, including Vanmathi, and their families. The effort made by the students and the sacrifices of their families to support them to higher education clearly inspired respect and affection in the younger children and the broader community.

Providing guidance and support to Madurantakam students into tertiary education is a long term project. It has always been the objective of the program, however the constraints are many and involve teenagers putting themselves into difficult and foreign environments where they will be judged socially and academically.

Last year, the Student Guidance Initiative supported three students into tertiary education. It has involved a heavy workload for the project and the students are very aware they are role models for their communities.

During our visit Deborah and I recognised that the support we are providing is meeting an important community need. It also became clear that not only the Dalit and marginalised community but the project leaders themselves are in need of governance strengthening in order that their new non government organisation, SIRPEE can finalise its registration. SIRPEE will become our new partner for the PEAB when the Pravaham Trust will withdraw in 2014, as agreed in the Commitment Agreement.

The work being done in Madurantakam has made considerable headway since my 2010 visit with Project Co-ordinators Nic and Cameron Moore, despite some unavoidable delays due to occasional communication problems. I look forward to the project going from strength to strength over the next two years especially as the work of the VEC's expands and the original project area of life skills and subject coaching for Years 10 and 12 develop.



VEC tutors and VEC Co-ordinator Muthukumar, with Deb and Libby and new bikes, bought with our assistance.

Challenges for First Generation Students

Deborah Raphael – Management Committee

On a balmy evening in Karunguzhi a small rural town two hours' drive south of Chennai Libby and I attended a Felicitation Ceremony. The ceremony honoured the academic achievements of the participants in the 2010-11 Year 10 Coaching Centre which is supported by the PEAB project. In the presence of enthusiastic and proud families and community members each awardee came to the dais to be garlanded and receive a large English dictionary. Then two young men and a young woman came in turn to the microphone. Each spoke strongly and confidently and the audience listened. Devan, Manikandan and Thenmozhi had been participants in the first year of the Year 10 Coaching Centre and having moved on successfully through Years 11 and 12 to tertiary studies. They showed to their families, community and tutors that they were exemplary role models for younger siblings and students.

It was too late in the evening after the ceremony to talk to them so we arranged to meet up in Chennai. They had come home to Karunguzhi for the ceremony and would be back in the college hostel the next day. Devan's younger sister aged about 12 hung off his arm adoringly. She is a VEC student and hopes to follow her brother to university.



Devan, Manikandan and Thenmozhi

We met at Ema's Emu restaurant in Tambaram close to the Madras Christian College (MCC) where Devan and Manikandan are enrolled. (We had already met with a 4th student Nandhini at her mother's teashop in Karunguzhi.) Emu restaurants have proliferated in Chennai in last couple of years so it was a new experience for the students as well as Libby and myself.

Devan has just turned 18 and is enrolled in a 3 year BSc (Chemistry) at MCC which is a liberal arts and sciences college affiliated with the University of Madras. His friend Manikandan is enrolled in a B.Sc. (Statistics) at the same college. Like many young men of their age they are enjoying living away from home for the first time but the challenges they both face in finishing the degree are considerable. Thenmozhi is studying medical laboratory technology at The Sankara Netheaya Academy and working part time at a hospital. She is more anxious than the young men about the course upon which she has embarked but is determined to keep going.

Talking to them, Libby and I tried to understand how they had made it this far notwithstanding the almost overwhelming hurdles in their paths. I suspect they do not really understand themselves. Nonetheless they have resisted the lure of a pay packet as an unskilled worker which has drawn former classmates to work for big companies such as Nokia (which send agents into the villages around Chennai to sign up workers). As Devan said: 'Having a job and money is fun but once Semmalar (indigo foundation's in-country representative for this project) took me to the college to see the campus and get an application form I was encouraged by the sight of the college and the thought of how exciting it might be.'

All the students were encouraged by their parents in their studies even though they were unable to provide

help financially and academically. Several parents had completed year 10 but most are uneducated working as unskilled labourers or house servants. The Year 10 coaching centre had provided a helpful study environment and intensive tutoring in key subjects but until recently PEAB had been unable to provide specific help for able year 11 and 12 students.

However under the 2011 Commitment Agreement establishment of a student resource and guidance centre for Year 11 and 12 students was identified as a project priority. This is slowly taking shape but in a different way to originally envisaged. As Semmalar Jebaraj and her husband Jabaraj have mentored students informally nudging them towards tertiary education their experience shows that personal attention is a key factor in retaining first generation students in education. Devan's visit to the college campus was a turning point for him as was offer of financial support for tuition and hostel fees. Thenmozhi has been supported through early anxieties about leaving home.

Nandhini is the only one of the four to decide to study closer to home and to her widowed mother and is undertaking a degree in English literature at Vidyasgar Arts and Science School. As her mother has a tea shop she is able to support her daughter financially at the local college albeit with some difficulty.

The challenges for these students are enormous.

The first is the financial strain for the student and family in undertaking higher education. There are tuition fees, hostel fees and other expenses which most of us would not anticipate. Recurring monetary concerns and family issues intrude on students' ability to focus on studies. A suitcase. A fan for the room. College clothes. Transportation back home to visit family. Books. Semmalar Jebaraj has personally fundraised to support tuition (AUD320 per annum) and hostel fees for Devan, Manikandan and Thenmozhi for their first year but is somewhat concerned about the ongoing commitment to get them to graduation. One hope is the recent announcement by the Tamil Nadu government that a longstanding promise to waive tuition fees may actually take place and will be widely applied.

The next challenge is English proficiency. Rural high school students are taught in Tamil. University courses are taught in English. This means students from the PEAB project struggle once they are at university and are drawn to science and maths regardless of their real interests. Spare time is taken up by English classes.

Family responsibilities impinge strongly on the decision to continue studies. Poor health of family members and financial insecurity take their toll. Devan told me he almost gave up in Year 12 because of constant concern about his father's health and job security as a labourer in a rice mill. His father refused to have tests for chest

pains because of fear of losing his job carrying 100kg bags of rice. At the same time these students feel a growing strain between themselves and their families who do not share their exposure to new concepts, new resources and new value systems.

However in spite of these circumstances the students have a commitment to giving back to their communities and sensitivity to what their communities need. They are appreciative of the support through the PEAB project and are keen to encourage younger students to follow their path to tertiary studies.

indigo foundation people - Semmalar Jebaraj



Semmalar 'Sem' has been our in-country representative on the PEAB Project since late 2010. She visits the project quarterly from her home in Chennai and regularly communicates with the in-country team to ensure the project is operating in accordance with the

Commitment Agreement. She is particularly involved in mentoring the senior high school students towards higher education and is thrilled to have guided four from the first batch of the project's year 10 coaching program into tertiary studies. She and her husband and friends are also funding tuition and hostel fees for three of the students now studying in Chennai.

Sem is a passionate and articulate advocate for the rights of Dalit and Tribal people in India. As an educated Dalit woman she believes strongly in the importance of improved access to education, particularly for rural students as well as building community awareness of the value of investing in higher education.

Sem's human rights career started in the human rights monitoring unit at People's Watch in Madurai where for the first time she was exposed to the realities of atrocities against Dalits. Later at another human rights organization Social Awareness and Socialization of Youth (SASY) she observed first hand the discrimination and humiliation Dalits and Tribals experienced in the delivery of relief and rehabilitation programs in the aftermath of the 2004 tsunami. She moved to Delhi briefly to work with the National Campaign for Dalit Human Rights on a national consultation on Dalit economic rights.

Back in Chennai, married to Jeba and mother of three year old Joe, Sem is currently a PhD scholar at the Indian Institute of Technology Madras researching higher education access for Dalit students in Tamil Nadu. She has a Bachelor of Commerce and a Masters of Social Work from Madras Christian College one of Asia's oldest colleges. Sem emphasises the importance of her strong Christian beliefs which have fuelled her passion for Dalit liberation and human rights.

Semmalar is an inspiring colleague and we look forward to continue our work with her on the PEAB project as well as exploring links with indigo foundation's new partner Mahathir Sakthi, in Madurai.

Partner: Pravaham Trust
Liaison Officer: Semmalar Jebaraj
indigo foundation Project Coordinator: Nicole and Cameron Moore
MC Representative: Deborah Raphael

My Trip to Kabul - 2011-2012

Ali Reza Yunespoor – Project Advisor



During my trip to Kabul over January, I managed to meet with Mr Anwar Haidari, the Financial Trustee and key in-country volunteer for our Borjegai project. I also met with his team, the Principal of Borjegai High School, key members of the Koshkak High School

Shura (Council) and the representatives of Jirghai area.

They all expressed their deepest appreciation to indigo foundation and Rotary Club of Ryde (RCR). They mentioned that the support and assistance of indigo foundation and RCR have changed significantly the social and cultural landscapes of Borjegai. Specifically, they named the changes in the level of education from almost no student in school in 2003 to a level that most of the school-aged children are currently enrolled in schools. They highlighted proudly that more than 200 of Borjegai students are studying at various universities; and that those who have finished their studies are working in either government or non-government organisations. The community representatives had a positive perception of these changes and re-emphasised that the school project acts as a catalyst for social cooperation and community harmony.

Mr Anwar and his team reaffirmed their commitment to work with the Borjegai community and the indigo foundation, RCR and other potential partners. They are highly respected in the community and receive an enormous amount of support from the Borjegai people. In their last visit to Koshkak High School, the school Shura presented them with a prestigious gift representing the community's support. Mr Anwar told me that 'things have changed a lot in Borjegai in the past few years and people feel proud of seeing their youth attending universities'. In fact, the positive outcome I saw amongst members of Borjegai community who were in Kabul is the high respect they pay for their educated members. They feel and believe that the future of their community and, in fact their country, lies in the hands of their educated youth.



Children in Koshkak High School, using the new furniture bought jointly the community, indigo foundation and Rotary Club of Ryde.

The Koshkak High School Shura and the Principal of Borjegai High School came to our place and stayed there for a night with my family. The Shura sent their special thank to all indigo foundation and RCR members and said their school is equipped extremely well and was ranked first in a survey conducted by the Nawur District in 2011. Due to the improvements in the physical infrastructure of the school, the education level improved significantly to a point that it is now placed equal to the Borjegai High School and the other leading high schools in the district. They also said that the community has requested from the Shura to hire more female teachers in school. In that regard, the school Shura is working actively to hire more female teachers in the new Afghan Year (after March) which is highly promising. I reassured them about our principle of Gender Equity and told them that we and our partners are highly committed to girls' education and equal opportunity for men and women.

I managed to see privately some of the Borjegai university students. They are highly hopeful that their education will provide them with great opportunities in the future. One of the areas that they expressed concern is entering the workforce, which they said is discriminatory and is a place where bribes play a major role. Despite the overall lack of jobs in Kabul and the lack of just work environments, they reported that more than ten of the Borjegai university graduates found jobs with the Afghan National Army; some work as advisors with the Member of Parliament; five graduates returned to Borjegai and work as teachers and there are others who work as teachers in other districts of Ghazni Province. Hearing about these students and the high hope amongst the current university students made me realise the positive contribution we are making from here to the life of a community in a remote corner of this world.

I also met three Borjegai students who sat this year in the university entrance exam. They expressed their satisfaction with the exam and told me that their school Principals also came with them to Ghazni City where the exam is held in order to help them with finding accommodation. They found the exam an easy paper and seem hopeful to start their higher education in less than three months.

Currently, they are studying in private English language and computer classes [each class is one hour per day]. One of them said to me that 'my family survives very hardly in the village. My older brother works in Iran to support us financially. But, they are committed to my education because they feel proud amongst the community when I attend university and learn English fluently'. These students work so hard to fulfill the expectation of their family and their community and to achieve their best in their personal life.

Urgent needs in Borjegai

While there are major achievements that we can all be proud of, there are always areas that we can do better and help further the Borjegai community. The following were emphasised by the representative of the Borjegai community as important priorities for the people of Borjegai during my various talks with them.

1. The representatives of the Borjegai area asked me for an urgent assistance for the building of Salman-e Fars School. According to their assessment and advice, the school needs nine rooms, a water well and six toilets. They re-stated the contribution they will make towards this building. In particular, they will help to identify the required land and will provide the labour and required tools. As per our previous work in the area, the salaries of professional builders are also beyond the capacity of the local people. After the completion of the school building, school furniture is also mentioned in our meeting as a priority for this school.
2. The completion and furniture of three semi-constructed school buildings. The Koshkak High School Shura passed to me a verbal message from the Shuras of Sayyed Jamaluddin High School, Ali Ibn-e Abi Talib and Abuzar Ghaffari High School. These Shuras requested assistance for a number of classrooms, completion of school roofs, doors and windows. In addition, they also asked for assistance for school furniture. However, they told me that all three Shuras announced and re-stated their full commitment to provide the required labour and the tools when the work began.
3. The principal of Main Borjegai School, Mr Fahimi, came from Borjegai to visit me in Kabul and asked assistance for the maintenance of school building and school furniture. He also highlighted the positive impacts of our works in the Borjegai area including improvement in the physical infrastructure as well as the social harmony which is growing every day around educational, social and cultural programs amongst the people of Borjegai.
4. The Koshkak High School library works as a central library for all Borjegai community. According to Koshkak High School Shura, the students and parents have warmly welcomed the establishment of this

library and, through this library, are in more direct contact with the school and the school staff. Seeing the benefit of this library for the local people, the Shura has managed to collect books through community donation and also bought a small number of books from Kabul. However, they said the library needs more books to encourage further the culture of 'book reading' and to strengthen further the quality of education in Borjegai.



The new Library at Koshak High School.

Jirghai Area

I felt extremely proud when I heard that the representatives of Jirghai area came to visit myself and Mr Anwar. They heard of my trip from Mr Anwar and made the hard trip from their respective villages to Kabul. In my meeting with the Jirghai people, they told me that they are aware of the contribution that indigo foundation and its partners made in Borjegai in the past few years. They also said that, through traveling to and from Borjegai on many occasions, they have seen the positive changes in Borjegai which came as a result of investment in their schools and education system. Specially, they stated that Borjegai is a much smaller area than Jirghai with a much lower population. However, Borjegai has more university students than Jirghai in Kabul as well as country wide.

They also pointed out that there are currently sixteen schools in the Jirghai area including three high schools. In total, they have 6000-7000 students including a high percentage of girls in primary and secondary levels. Approximately, half of the teachers are provided locally and the other half are hired from other Ghazni districts with the assistance of the Afghan Ministry of Education. Like Borjegai before 2004, most of the Jirghai schools are currently held under the tents and there are a small number of schools which have buildings with not even one with more than six rooms.

From the talk with Jirghai representatives, I learnt that there is a high need in the Jirghai area and the people of Jirghai are extremely hungry for education. They are also highly committed to provide the best possible education for their children. Their representatives told me that each

family does everything in their power to send at least one, if not more, of their children to school. Based on these needs, they asked collectively for assistance for their schools. The requested assistance is for the construction of school buildings, school furniture and potential assistance for teachers' salaries. They are aware of the capacity of indigo foundation and its partners and said that they are happy to work with us for a long period of time. Like the people of Borjegai, they prefer a long term over a short term engagement because they believe that a long term engagement has been effective in the Borjegai area and that most of the one-off development projects have failed substantially in Ghazni Province since 2001.

A Word of Thanks

The Borjegai people sent their message of gratitude to all of you and wished for a day to see you in their village. Let's hope for that day and remain proud of our work in Borjegai. I also would like to thank personally all indigo foundation and RCR members and volunteers.

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Inspiring stories from Borjegai students

Karim's Story.....

My name is Karim. I was born in Borjegai in 1992. I have two older brothers and a younger sister. I finished Year 12 in Koshkak High School in 2010 and currently study Engineering in Kabul University.

My birthplace, Koshkak, is a poor village. My family, like many others, survives on subsistence farming and the work of my eldest brother in Iran. However, they are committed to my education and my sister's education who has completed Year 7 last year.

Compared to our older brothers, my sister and I are much luckier because we have found the chance to attend school. But, our schooling took place either in the local mosque or under the tents until the indigo foundation and Rotary Club of Ryde helped our village and provided funding for building of Koshkak High School in 2010. I did not have a very long time to study in the new school building, but my sister is thrilled with the new school building and the school furniture. Sometimes, I tell her that I am so jealous that you are attending the rest of your school years in this amazing new building!

Since starting my Engineering Degree, I have managed to go back to the village on different occasions. In particular, some of my village friends and I went back to see our families last year and ended up being there during the Afghan New Year ceremony. It took place in the school building for the first time and the entire village was so happy. My friends and I, like other university students, received an enormous level of respect from the village and were presented as role models to the current school students. In the ceremony, I felt so proud and my family was so thrilled with the experience.

I am hoping to finish my Engineering Degree in 2014 and work as an engineer in the future.

Mansor's Story.....

I am Mansor from the Borjegai village. I finished my school in the Borjegai High School in 2006 and enrolled in the University of Kabul at the beginning of 2007. I have completed a degree in Law in 2010.

I enjoyed most of my school years. In particular, I learnt so much from three of our qualified teachers who were hired by the village with the assistance of the indigo foundation. Those teachers made all the difference to our education and helped my friends and myself to get very high university entrance marks.

When I finished my university degree, I found a job with the Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development (MRRD) in which I worked on the National Solidarity Program (NSP). As part of this program I travelled extensively to Borjegia, Jirghai, Khawat, Qeyagh and other parts of Ghazni Province. Last year, the MRRD provided a small amount of funding for new roads in Borjegai. The people worked in harmony and now the village roads are in much better condition that people can travel by car between some of the sub-villages. I felt so much pride in providing advice to the MRRD and helping with the implementation of road projects in Borjegai.

(translated by Ali)

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The Borjegai Schools what next in 2012?

The achievements of this project over the past nine years are significant.

Apart from the provision of school buildings, textbooks, stationery and funds to support the retention of qualified teachers, one of the most noteworthy outcomes is the collaboration and cohesion of the communities and their commitment to the education of their children. Building local capacity is a critical key in development - this community has demonstrated just how much is possible with some outside assistance.

One school remains to be constructed in Borjegai, Salman-e Fars School, and then nearly all the communities will have access to buildings which can operate in all weathers. Tents simply aren't enough when winter temperatures are below -10 degrees Celsius! With the support of Rotary and indigo foundation building of Salman-e Fars School will begin shortly. Three other schools remain without roofs, but plans are already drawn up for their completion - we and other donors are working on fundraising plans to assist with these.

Negotiations with committed donors are progressing well. indigo foundation has been approached by neighbouring districts to assist with similar projects in those districts.

This is a direct result of these neighbouring districts seeing just how much the provision of education has benefited Borjagai and its communities. We are hopeful that this too will be possible and are closely watching how local and state governance is developing in the run up to international security withdrawal.

Partner:	Borjagai School
Australian partner:	Rotary Club Ryde
Project Advisors:	Salman Jan and Ali Reza Yunespoor
indigo foundation Project Coordinator:	Cynthia Grant
MC Representative:	Alice Cameron

A visit to Nemberala, Indonesia

Natalie Roberts

As the sun rises, I look across the road. A young family takes turns to pull up water from the well. Their arms pull strategically, swinging left and right. It's Tuesday, which means everyone is out and about heading to the market. Adda, the woman who lives next door, offers to take me and we scoot off on her motorbike. I notice everyone returning with 10kg sacks of rice balancing on their bikes.

By 10am, the kindergarten children come flooding down the street, laughing and singing. Kevin, a three year old who lives in the main house, runs out to join with the others as they arrive home from school. Mr Thomas sits next to me, a man in his seventies, sharing stories of days gone by. A woman carries baskets over her shoulders, full of local produce from the farms. Not long after a man passes selling fish.

Thud, the sound of coconuts dropping is a common occurrence. Walking toward the beach, the dogs, pigs and goats stare intriguingly at me as I pass them. I only know a few words in Bahasa, but I manage to speak with a weaver who takes me to her house and shows me her cloths. I end the day fishing with the local women – I've realised I have a quite an eye for spotting the schools of small fish which pass through the seaweed harvests. The women are impressed with my help and are quick to scoop them up in the nets.

I'm in Nembreala, on the island of Rote, Indonesia. My interest in sustainability and permaculture lead me to indigo foundation in November 2011, when I contacted Sally Stevenson to advise her of my plans to travel through south-east Asia. I traded emails with Libby House over a couple of months, and in late February we finally met in Bali.

The trip from Bali to Kupang then by ferry to Rote was an experience in itself. Arriving at Rote, a man from Nembreala finds me amongst the crowd and escorts me to his *bemo*. We drive for over an hour, on gutted roads, passing school children and farmers, and then arrive at Pak Thomas's homestay.



Natalie and M'bak Fina, whose is from N'dao but living in Nemberala, wrapped in traditional Rotinese hand-woven cloth

The first night I meet with Pak Onee and Pak Nico from the Leu Lemba Education and Community Development Organisation. Despite the language barrier, we are able to talk with each other and arrange to go out and visit the neighbouring communities.

Over the next couple of days we travel out to the kindergartens and farms, talking with teachers, playing with children, meeting the farmers and observing the land. The farmers at Bo'a, Oenale and M'bore are predominantly growing rice, sweet potatoes and shallots. From what I understand, the land goes through extreme changes throughout the year, with heavy rain in the wet season bringing wetlands with lush grass, giving way to little rain later in the year, with a dry and dusty earth revealed.

Powering around the coastal road on motorbikes, I experience the special opportunity to see the workings of these communities and sit with the people who run the farms. The warmth I received from these families was immense and maybe even more as I am introduced as 'friend of Libby', to which everyone's response is 'me also friend of Libby for a long time!'. The relationship between indigo foundation and the communities here is alive and strong.

The kindergartens open up their classrooms for me, and I can see the impact that indigo foundation's work has had on the development of their education program. The classrooms are filled with eager children and teachers, and the walls are lined with trophies and awards that show off their academic achievements.

My last few days are bittersweet, as my time in Nembreala draws to an end. But as I say goodbye to my new-friends, I can't be too sad. I know I'm leaving with a better understanding of their lives, their relationship with nature and their inspiring community, and can't help but feel I'll be back here sooner rather than later. As I ride the bemo out to the ferry and wave goodbye, my mind is already filled with ideas on how my skills can support the work of the Nembreala community, and the hope that I can return to make a difference.

An Indonesian experience....

James MacDiarmid – Project Officer

Last year I was privileged to have been given the opportunity to present a project I had been working on as part of the Asia-Pacific Child Friendly Cities network on the beautiful Indonesian island of Java. Child Friendly Cities is an initiative that aims to guide cities and other systems in accordance with the resolution passed during the second UN Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat 2), in particular, the rights of a child. Since first being launched in 1996 there has been huge interest in its outcomes and the effects on communities and children alike. From Sudan to Brazil, India to New Zealand, Child Friendly Cities has become a global movement with CFC municipalities flourishing.

As I arrived along with Dr. Karen Malone, director of Asia-Pacific CFC's, within a couple of minutes we were greeted by a small congregation of highly excitable children and two, soon to be discovered, incredibly dedicated women. The air was humid and the atmosphere bustling with business and organised chaos. Thankfully we were exposed to this atypical Indonesian way of life through the comfort of a cool air-conditioned car, with the best guides in the world telling us every little bit of information that at times appeared speculative. Can never disagree with children! Upon arriving to our destination soon after we were quickly invited to be shown around certain local areas that had been specifically established for the benefit and well-being of young, orphaned, street children. Of course we accepted.

SOS Children's Villages was first founded in 1949 by an Austrian, Hermann Gemeiner, with the first official facility established in 1955, Innsbruck. Mr. Gemeiner believed that in order for children to maximise their full potential it is imperative that they have supportive and protective environments in which to move freely, interact and explore. Such environments like this we were off to explore at first light the following day.



The day began with an instant episode of ferocious sweating followed by a quick re-evaluation of 'appropriate' attire, though before we had time to reconsider we were quickly being whisked away to visit our first site. All these sites we were told are known as PlaySpaces and designed

for the local children to come play, learn and be in a safe and comfortable environment.

It was the simplicity of the concept that made it so incredible and the way it was run and by whom. Each PlaySpace is cared for by volunteers and often volunteers who had once themselves been children who attended on a regular basis. It is worth noting that these volunteers were in fact still children, most being under the age of 18.

Each PlaySpace is also situated amongst the concrete jungles of a highly dense impoverished urban environment and as a foreigner appeared to be like trying to find a needle amongst hay. Once you manage to reach one of these 'havens' straight away you notice the presence of bright colours and a warming aura. Each space is simple yet effective in its purpose and this became apparent when noticing that one space was no more than a pergola which resided above residential housing. Every place, irrespective of location always had play equipment, educational apparatus and dedicated staff.



Learning and development is not always fixed to this traditional idea of prescribed learning through structured regime and

discipline. In fact often learning best takes place under situations where the learner has to physically engage and react upon spontaneous encounters. Interaction is pivotal to the learner and often we neglect to encourage this and allow explorative behaviour.

The notion of integrated learning and exploration has most certainly been adopted by the angels of these PlaySpaces and from what myself and Dr Karen Malone could see, the children were highly engaged and enjoyed the process of learning in a safe and consistently accessible environment.

We often become overwhelmed with the how and procedural application of making a difference but as these children and children all over the world continue to be given every opportunity to exercise their rights through ventures such as this and all the work that indigo foundation and other NGO's continue to do this notion will always be abated. My time in Indonesia and the opportunity of being able to see these PlaySpaces was an extremely rewarding experience and certainly further inspired me to continue exploring new ventures that will benefit children all over the world.

Solomon Islands – update!

Lucinda Wilson – Management Committee

It is almost 12 months since I visited the spectacular Weathercoast of Guadalcanal in the Solomon Islands and lots has happened in that time. The reason for my visit of course, was to see the project we support, the youth training centre called Turusuala. After that monitoring and evaluation trip, indigo foundation and Turusuala signed their third three year commitment agreement. The Liaison Officer, Doni Keli who had been involved in the project since it was established almost a decade ago, became the Project Coordinator.

In the last twelve months we are delighted to report that Turusuala now formally owns the land on which the training centre operates. It was a lengthy, and relatively expensive, process to acquire formal ownership, but the security this outcome offers the centre is vital for long term planning and sustainability. More materials were purchased for the centre, particularly for the class attended exclusively by women, called the Life Skills course. Unfortunately the Life Skills teacher, the very devoted and hard working Mary Theresa, was not accepted into the teacher training college in Honiara. This is very disappointing and we hope to find alternate training for her.

This year nineteen new students enrolled in the two year residential program which is very good news, especially as four of them are female (representing over 20% of the student intake). We continue to aim for an equal gender balance at Turusuala and will continue initiatives to achieve this.

The indigo foundation and Turusuala are organising a trip for a small group of indigo foundation supporters to visit Turusuala, and see other parts of the Solomon Islands too. The trip will involve spending time in Turusuala and in the surrounding villages of the Weathercoast. If you would like to come or would like more information please email lucinda.wilson@indigofoundation.org.

Partnerships that continue, and grow!

We are thrilled that our three key partners in Australia are continuing their support in 2012.



Firstly, our long-term and highly-valued partner, the **Rotary Club of Ryde**, has continued its very strong support of ongoing work in Borjagai.

Over the next two years this will see another new school built at Salman-e-Fars, with the resulting educational opportunities for hundreds of boys and girls.

Our thanks go particularly to President Ken Allen, incoming President Burkhart Foertsch, and President

Nominee for 2013-2014 Adrian Hallett, for their support and leadership.

Additionally, the Rotary Club of North Sydney has recently donated very generously to support the indigo foundation/Rotary effort in Borjagai. Thanks to President Ross Waugh, and also incoming President Russell Grove and Treasurer Ian Mackenzie for their keen interest and support.

Several other Rotary Clubs have expressed their interest in the "Afghanistan schools project", particularly following the outstanding presentation by Ali Yunsepour at the recent District Conference in Wollongong.

Secondly, our thanks to the **University of Wollongong Library**, which has chosen us, for the second year in a row, as their 'charity of choice'. All of the Library's fund-raising efforts throughout 2012 will go directly to indigo foundation projects. Thanks so much to Margie Jantti and her team!



Sally Stevenson accepting the generous cheque for just over \$1,800 from Margi Jantti, Head Librarian, from the Library's 2011 fundraising efforts.



And thirdly, **Big Fat Smile** (formerly Illawarra Children's Services, a community-owned and not-for-profit organisation) has generously donated another \$10,000 towards our Rote early childhood support project. Big Fat Smile Board member Jenny Hopkins successfully travelled to Rote in March and April to provide technical support. We look forward to an ongoing and valuable partnership. Thanks to Jenny Dixon, President of Big Fat Smile, Jenny Hopkins, the Board, and CEO Bill Feld for their support.

marketing & fundraising

Successful events and future plans!

Community and fundraising events are critical in helping 'spread the word' about our work as well raising the necessary funds to support communities around the world. Our supporters continue to do a great job.

- : On Sunday 22nd April **Sue Everard** and the **Rosanna Support Group** held a market stall at Latrobe University and recreated their wonderful success of the last two years. All funds will go to the Uganda Project.

Upcoming events include:

- : We are absolutely delighted that on 3rd May **Allens Arthur Robinson** are hosting an evening to showcase

and raise funds for our projects supporting the Women's Education Centre in Kabul. Allens is an international law firm with offices throughout Australia and Asia.

- : **Canberra fundraising dinner** - following the fabulous success of last year's dinner we now invite you to another fun filled evening to support the education of young women in Afghanistan.

Join us on 12 May at the National Press Club for another great evening with Virginia Haussegger (ABC news reader in the ACT) returning as MC.

The auction prizes this year are wonderful and unique and include bottles of wine signed by **Julia Gillard and Penny Wong!**

Go to our website for the invitation and RSVP details.

- : **Annual Dinner** - this year's annual dinner is shaping up to be another fantastic evening. Returning to the NSW State Library in Sydney on the **13th October**, there will be music, humour, and our excellent (short and exciting!) auction. More details and invitation coming soon to our website.
- : We are been chosen by **Reasonable Cause**, a legal education organisation - as their charity of choice next year. They hope to raise almost \$20,000 for us!

Thirsty??

We have teamed up again with Prospect Wines to conduct a **wine fundraiser**. We have selected a range of great value for money wines which have our own label.

Every dozen bottles of wine sold will contribute significant funds towards our projects.

We encourage you to personally support this wine fundraiser, and also to take orders from your family and friends, and pass this message on to other potential supporters.

Placing an online order is very simple: just click go to <http://www.prospectwines.com.au/?k1G1L&pV2&vsZ> and follow the website instructions.

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indigo foundation think piece

Wanted – one new World Bank President

Susan Engel – Management Committee

What has been unofficial public knowledge for well over a month now finally become public with the announcement that current World Bank President, Robert Zoellick, will not seek a further term when his contract runs out on the 30th of June this year. Well before the announcement,

speculation was running thick and fast regarding a likely successor. However, the more fundamental questions is whether - this time - the selection process will be open and merit-based.

As I outlined in a contribution to The Conversation last year on the International Monetary Fund (IMF) leadership debate, control of the so-called Bretton Woods twins, the IMF and the World Bank, has been governed by a gentleman's agreement between the US and Europe. This agreement, the product of Cold War politics, sees the US select the head of the World Bank and the Europeans (normally the French) select the head of the IMF.

By 2008/9, both of the Bretton Woods twins had committed to an "open, merit-based and transparent" selection process for their chiefs. This was followed up with a similar commitment from the G20 in June 2010. But this did not stop the appointment of the then French Finance Minister, Christine Lagarde, to the top job of the IMF in mid-2011 with little ado. In December, a UN General Assembly resolution followed, calling for more general reform in the governance of the Bretton Woods twins, to increase representation of developing countries as well as merit-based selection of the heads. The changes in representation that have occurred over the past decade have mostly benefitted larger emerging economies like China, South Korea, Mexico and Israel while representation of smaller countries, heavily dependent on World Bank loans, remains poor.

This takes us to the heart of the problem – the dominance by the US and other Western countries deriving in part from the undemocratic governance system. The system gives each country votes proportional to the shares they have in the organisation and the shares relate to the size of each country's economy. So the US has 15.75 per cent of votes in the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development arm of the World Bank, followed by Japan with 9.44 per cent of votes. Whereas developing countries that are the World Bank's only borrowers and the source of its profits and pay its operating costs including the President's salary, are significantly underrepresented in the governance of the institution. The 47 sub-Saharan nations combined have just 5.77 per cent of the votes on the Bank's Board.

It is now the middle of February, and a new President would ideally start in June to enable a transition period. An open process would see a 'position vacant' ad to appear by the end of the month. If time is allocated for submitting applications, the selection process, a period of notice for the successful candidate to their current position and a transition period, it is fairly clear that this cannot be done by the end of June. In other words, there is unlikely to be a fully open and transparent process, yet again. This was confirmed in an email by US Treasury Secretary, Timothy F. Geithner, just four hours after Zoellick's announcement, which stated that: "In the coming weeks we plan to put forward a candidate with the experience and requisite qualities to take this institution forward."

Candidates for the Job

According to an earlier Bloomberg report, the US Treasury undersecretary for international affairs, Lael Brainard, has been compiling a list of potential candidates for weeks now with the frontrunners no less than Lawrence Summers and Hilary Clinton.

Summers has worked at the World Bank and was Bill Clinton's Treasury Secretary and the President of Harvard. Yet he would be a controversial choice. In 1991, when he was Chief Economist and Vice-President for Development at the World Bank a controversial memo he wrote on pollution and developing countries was leaked. The memo asked: "[j]ust between you and me, shouldn't the World Bank be encouraging more migration of the dirty industries to the LDCs [less developed countries]?" Summers logic was that lost earnings from "morbidity and mortality" are less in developing countries; the air quality in LDCs is "underpolluted"; and those with most money are more choosy about their air quality and can afford to be so.

Despite being nominally a Democrat, Summers clearly has held very neoclassical and rigid views on economics. He supported financial deregulation during the Clinton era, including of over-the-counter derivatives and his overall track-record with regards to the US economy is not well-regarded. Nevertheless, he has the support of top Obama Administration officials including Treasury Secretary Timothy Geithner.

Hilary Clinton is, of course, the current Secretary of State in the Obama Administration. She doesn't have any particular expertise in banking though as Secretary of State she does oversee USAID and has taken an interest in the area. She is rumoured to be the current runner-up in the contest, though is still campaigning. An interesting question is whether Clinton wants to contest the 2016 US Presidential Elections, meaning she would only have three years in the job before having to step down.

If you'd like to keep up with the latest information on the World Bank presidency race, you can check out World Bank President.

Significance?

World Bank lending has jumped dramatically during the current Global Financial Crisis and given the poor forecasts for global economic growth this year, the demand for its resources is likely to continue. Yet there is a tricky balance here as the Bank loans money, which in turn increases debt. After the last big increase in Bank lending under President McNamara, repayments to the Bretton Woods twins, and the Bank in particular, became one of the biggest burdens on highly indebted poor countries. While quite a few developing countries are seen as low risk borrowers at the moment, this can change rapidly, especially given the volatile global situation. The World Bank plays an important role in many of the poorest and most vulnerable countries and its record has not been outstanding. Reform of the institution itself to date has been modest and, at times, tokenistic. An open,

transparent selection process for the next Bank President could, arguably, set the tone for more substantive change.

The Australian government does support merit-based selection but will they pursue this reform in the face of US opposition? A call by the Australian Government for the initiation of a merit-based selection process would be an important way to maintain pressure for reform of the Bretton Woods institutions

Update - Latest news on the Process and Candidates

The deadline for nominations for World Bank President is March 23rd. If there are more than three nominations (which is unlikely) the World Bank Executive Directors will keep the list of nominations in confidence until they agree a shortlist of three. The final three candidates will then be interviewed behind closed doors. Most likely, the United States' choice will be approved.

Jeffrey Sachs public nomination has added a new dynamic to the selection process. This is the first time someone has campaigned for the post by trying to get support from developing countries and the general public. Ex-pat Australian, James Wolfensohn, did campaign for the job (the first time unsuccessfully) but using political channels.

As Sachs' own bio states he 'is a world-renowned professor of economics, leader in sustainable development, senior UN advisor, bestselling author, and syndicated columnist.' He is also Director of The Earth Institute at Columbia University. What the bio does not state is that Sachs was previously one of the best known proponents of rapid 'structural adjustment' for transition countries. Between 1985 and 1993, he served as an economic advisor, first in Latin America and then in the former Soviet bloc prescribing 'shock therapy' for all. The impact of the resultant program of rapid deregulation, liberalisation and privatisation was controversial at best. Indeed, there is quite strong evidence that shock therapy was a significant factor in the economic decline and unemployment that subsequently characterised these countries. In the Russian case, the rapid privatisation of state assets resulted in the rise of corrupt and powerful oligarchs. But sometime in the 1990s he underwent a conversion and became a supporter of poverty reduction and aid.

Sachs' candidacy has been supported by a number of members of the US Congress and by a range of countries including: Kenya, Haiti, Namibia and East Timor. The Obama Administration, however, has kept mum on their thoughts about Sachs.

There have been some hints that the Obama Administration will nominate a woman to help shore up women's votes in the election later this year. However, the mostly commonly mentioned names for the US nomination are Larry Summers and now Timothy Geithner, US Treasury Secretary and a rival of Summers.

The blog site World Bank President ran a poll on who the next President should be. The winner was Sri Mulyani Indrawati, an Indonesian economist, former finance minister and one of the current Managing

Directors of the World Bank Group. She is generally highly respected and has also had some support from Australian commentators but it remains unclear as to whether she will receive a formal nomination from a World Bank Governor.

You might also be interested to know that the Australian Governor to the World Bank is selected and briefed by the Department of Treasury. This is likely to reduce the chance that the Australian Government will support a candidate with a development focus. I see that the World Bank is primarily a development institution and, as such, our Governor to it should be selected and briefed by an agency focused on combating poverty. In the Australian case this means the Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID) through the Department of Foreign Affairs not the Treasury. This is now the practice in a number of countries including the UK (where responsibility lies with the Department for International Development) and Germany (the Bundesministerium für wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit und Entwicklung).

Susan is currently a Visiting Fellow in the Southeast Asian Studies program, University of Freiburg, Germany and a Lecturer in the School of History and Politics at the University of Wollongong. She is author of 'The World Bank and the Post-Washington Consensus in Indonesia and Vietnam: Inheritance of Loss' (Routledge, 2010).

Australia Leadership Awards – 2012

Congratulations go to.....

.....our Chair, Sally Stevenson for winning a 2012 Australian Leadership Award from the ADC Forum, for her indigo foundation work. To win, Sally had to outline her vision for Australia - and she did it based on our four guiding principles.

Vision for Australia

Recently I was asked to speak at a workshop on the latest 'hot' topics in community development for the non-government organisation I established, indigo foundation. I decided that the hottest topic for me was in fact something almost radically conservative: the idea of 'old principles'. That is, in the rush of the world today, communities are best served not necessarily by being given the latest information or piece of technology or even money but rather, by our ability to make change *together* through a set of basic, strong and proven development principles.

The principles that indigo foundation uses to underpin its highly successful community development approach are community ownership, sustainability, transparency and equity. Applying these principles to our partners and ourselves allows us to have a meaningful framework around which we can communicate and negotiate. It avoids a managerial or technocratic approach to development by giving us flexible boundaries that allow for innovation, different processes and timelines, diversity in identity – and ultimately empowerment.

These principles are drawn from an international consensus reflected in documents such as the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (1948), the *Declaration of Alma-Ata* (1978) and the *World Declaration on Education for All* (1990). These are not new documents, but they are agreements defined by experiences over time and across cultures. The fundamental values that inform them remain as legitimate and powerful as when they were first drafted. They are agreements that articulate, demand and support the most fundamental of human aspirations: the right to a dignified, healthy and respectful life.

Central to the implementation of these principles are people and, importantly, their relationships based on mutuality and reciprocity. This is what indigo foundation focuses on, and what allows the tensions, complexities and ambiguities of the development process to be managed. Focusing on relationships and the intangible but deeply human qualities of trust, respect, grace, commitment and integrity has enabled marginalised communities to act and deliver results far beyond what was initially thought possible.

Principles such as respect, equity, ownership are, however, easy rhetorical words, because they are apparently simple to both understand and implement. This simplicity is deceptive; they are complex, frustrating and at times difficult to manifest in a meaningful and concrete way. Yet, when they are applied properly, and with care, change does occur and the momentum it can create opens up so many wonderful possibilities and opportunities.

When these principles are applied to leadership, political debate, policy development and program implementation the positive outcomes can be manifold. *If* these principles were applied to sensitive yet critically defining issues around our national identity such as refugee policy, climate change and Aboriginal health, Australia would not look back.

I believe the Australian community is characterised by the energy of promise – and it is this energy that informs my vision for our country. In order to harness this potential, this optimistic dynamic, we as individuals, as a community and as a nation, need to embrace a principle-based approach to our governance, our social, cultural and economic growth, and our contributions to the world. My vision is for an Australia whose leaders lead *and are seen to be leading* according to a set of principles. In doing so, they will encourage - indeed inspire - us to do the same, to shift the way we look at the world so we interpret information and act upon it in a principled way, no matter the difficulty or the discomfort.

My vision for Australia is that we are seen and known by our principles and as a result we, all of us, are able to live in and contribute to a world that is respectful, fulfilling, sustainable and above all, equitable.

ADC is an Australian, non-political, not-for-profit leadership organisation which brings together leaders from business, government, the public sector, academia and the broader community to improve their understanding of key issues affecting Australia.. <http://adcforum.org/>

General Manager's Comments

Rob Mitchell



In the last few months we've had a heavy focus on ensuring that we have in place all of the organisational arrangements which are necessary to make indigo foundation a QUALITY organisation.

Our stated strategic intent is:

Guided always by equity, transparency, sustainability and community ownership, and through carefully managed growth, indigo foundation will be widely recognised and supported by the Australian community as:

- *a benchmark, independent volunteer-based NGO*
- *achieving the development of small, poor and marginalised communities worldwide,*
- *through genuine and respectful community partnerships.*

We strive to be a 'benchmark' so that our supporters, and potential supporters, can have confidence that the energy and funds which they invest in our efforts will be effectively and efficiently utilised.

The quality documentation which underpins our ability to deliver successful outcomes to communities is available to our team via a suite of computer applications, accessible by them wherever they have internet access. **Our thanks go to Alice and David Cameron for the hard work necessary to establish our 'indigo central' system.**

indigo foundation is, in the jargon, a 'virtual' organisation. To a very large extent we exist because of the power of modern communications and information technology.

An important result is that we will become increasingly well known worldwide via increasing volumes of internet traffic bearing our name.

The more our team and our supporters use their indigo foundation email facility, 'like' us on Facebook, mention us on LinkedIn, and post messages and links about us on any of the social media, the higher will be our profile, and the stronger will be our ability to attract support to take on the challenges we've become so good at tackling.

SO: DO IT – PLEASE!

Stay in touch, Rob

our people

Lyndall Grose – *Financial Administrator*



Hi All. I've been Financial Administrator for indigo foundation since February 2010. My background is in Hospitality Management and Small Business. After years of managing restaurants, in 2005 I decided I needed to reclaim my weekends and evenings and began my

own business as a bookkeeper. Since then I have taken on the responsibility of a diverse range of business' bookkeeping duties.

I first became aware of indigo foundation through an old colleague and friend Lucinda Wilson (a current Management Committee member). At Lucinda's urging I applied for the vacant and new position of Financial Administrator.

At the time of joining the indigo foundation team, I had just moved from the beaches of Coogee to the very beautiful, but small town of Bright. Bright is in the picturesque Ovens Valley at the bottom of Mount Hotham and Mount Buffalo in North East Victoria. After living here for just over two years, I'm very happy to call it home and hopefully one of these winter seasons I'll give skiing a go!

Management Committee update

Sally Stevenson – *Chairperson*

Over the last few months we have had a wonderful influx of new people into indigo foundation and I would like to extend a very warm welcome to:

Ralph Rawlinson, who joined our Management Committee in February. Ralph has an extensive background in education and development in Australia and overseas, including policy, governance, employment/ deployment, and project-related work for AusAID, World Bank, ADB and various Governments. He was also, amongst many other things, Planning Vice-Chancellor, Chifley University (now Western Sydney) Foundation Chairman, Education Commission of New South Wales, Australia and Chief Executive Officer. We are lucky to have him!

Dr Husna Razee, who joins us as Research Coordinator. Husna is currently a public health Lecturer at the University of NSW. Previous to this she was Dean, Faculty of Health Sciences, Maldives College of Higher Education, Maldives and for six years the Director General, Institute of Health Sciences, Maldives. As Director and head of public health programs for the Maldives, Husna managed and coordinated national programs related to safe motherhood, family planning, nutrition, communicable disease control, immunization, and HIV/AIDS prevention. More good fortune for us! The position of Research Coordinator will provide us with a vital connection between theory and practice, something we have wanted to work on for many years.

Naaman Kranz and Caitlin Winter our joint Project Coordinators for the new project in India. Naaman has a Bachelor of International Studies and Law, has completed a Human Rights internship in India and currently works in the Department of Immigration and Citizenship. Caitlin is a youth support worker with qualifications in primary teaching, sociology and drama. They make a great team for our wonderful new education and human rights project.

James MacDiarmid, Project officer in the Borjagai team. This is by far our biggest project, by any measure, and

James' academic qualifications and special interests will be particularly helpful as we take on even greater challenges in Afghanistan.

Isabelle Raphael, who has joined us as website coordinator. Isabelle is a New York based photo editor, has an honours degree in Digital Media and will provide critical support to us on our website ensuring it is up-to-date, viewer-friendly and visually enticing!

And last, but not least **Kevin Barry** has joined us as an intern from the University of Wollongong. He is currently studying for a Masters of International Studies and will be

assisting Husna, as well as researching opportunities for grant funding for our projects.

Welcome!

As we head towards June, with inspiring trips to India and Indonesia already taken place and two new exciting and very worthwhile projects beginning, I encourage you to continue your support for our work.

As always, we can't do without it, and very much appreciate it when we get it.

Many thanks.



Children at one of the Village Education Centres we support in Madurantakam Tamil Nadu, India

End of FINANCIAL YEAR is coming!

We'd appreciate your support!

Donations to indigo foundation are tax-deductible.

Pls to www.indigofoundation.org homepage and click on the bright red 'donate now' icon. This will transfer you to ourcommunity.com.au. This is a secure site, supported by Westpac, for not-for-profit donations. Receipts will be issued at the end of the month.

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