



indigofoundation

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Spotlight on Thailand, East Timor, project updates, newsletter survey results, 'think piece', a special lift out Afghanistan report and more...

Spotlight on Baan Ayui Hostel

Chiang Rai, Northern Thailand

In this edition of our newsletter, we introduce our most recent partner - The Ayui Foundation, based in North Thailand. The Foundation, through the Baan Ayui Hostel, provides young, disadvantaged Akha hilltribe people with quality education thereby enhancing opportunities to improve their lives and livelihoods. The article is by:

Julianne Cowley - Project Manager, Thailand

I am very happy to introduce a new partnership for the Indigo Foundation with a small not-for-profit organisation in Thailand - The Ayui Foundation. The Foundation focuses on three main areas of disadvantage among Akha hilltribe people: access to education; lack of citizenship; and familial social problems.

The Ayui Foundation, established in 2007 in Chiang Rai Northern Thailand, is a non-profit, non-denominational organisation working with Akha hilltribe teenagers. The Foundation is very small and was set up by Sumalee Milne, a Thai-Australian woman - and graduate of the Australian National University's Faculty of Asian Studies - who has been living and working with hilltribe people in Chiang Rai for the last decade.



Graduates with Sumalee

The Foundation opened a hostel for young people called 'Baan Ayui'. Ayui is the Akha word for 'older sister' and the hostel's name means 'our older sister's house'. The Baan Ayui hostel provides a safe home, love and access to education so that up to fifteen young people have a chance to change their lives long-term. The young residents can stay at the Hostel for as long as they continue with formal education (and abide by hostel rules). They are supported to achieve the highest level of education that they aspire to. The Hostel's Board accepts the children on a case-by-case and needs basis. Such acceptance is influenced by many factors, for example, the number of vacancies, gender balance and whether they have siblings or wider family members at the Hostel.

The Akha People of Northern Thailand

The Akha people are semi-nomadic South East Asian hilltribe people originating from Mongolia up to 1,500 years ago. Today, Akha people live mostly in China (Yunnan Province), Burma, Laos and North Thailand. Their overall population is around 450,000 with an estimated 60,000 living in Thailand.

Many of the Akha people who live in Thailand have fled civil unrest and persecution in Burma only to find that they are not welcome in Thailand. They are not able to practice their self-sufficient and traditional agricultural methods of 'slash and burn' to cultivate rice. The land where the Akha people have settled is perceived as more valuable for deforestation to satisfy international demand, rather than for cultivation purposes to support Akha survival. The restrictions on land use have greatly impacted their traditional way of life and village economy. In addition, the poverty and discrimination facing the Akha people of Northern Thailand have resulted in loss of culture and identity. In this setting, young people are particularly vulnerable to ongoing poverty and disadvantage.

The Akha people face many challenges, and the young people living at Baan Ayui are no exception. They must work to overcome a history of illiteracy, poverty and a lack of opportunities.

Citizenship

The basic human right to citizenship is denied for many Akha people living in Northern Thailand due to unofficial government obstruction and discrimination. Even though Akha people moved to the mountains of Thailand some 200 years ago, citizenship is not automatically granted for Akha people born in Thailand today. The lack of citizenship means that some of the most basic aspects of living are out of reach. Some examples are: the ability to open a bank account, obtain a drivers license, or travel between provinces. Recently, one of teenagers staying at the hostel was refused the opportunity to borrow books from the local library because she lacked the appropriate papers.

However there are more serious and far reaching impacts of 'belonging to no nation'. These include land ownership; access to legitimate work; legal protection and human rights violations.

Gaining citizenship is an alien concept for many Akha people as applying for the documentation is a bureaucratic process. Forms must be completed in Thai (not the Akha language) and although the process is officially free of charge, it is usually expensive with hidden costs and bribes. Even if the application process is followed exactly as prescribed, citizenship can still be denied, or revoked after it is granted. The Ayui Foundation supports young people in navigating these processes legally and raises awareness of citizenship issues more broadly.

Social ills

Aside for citizenship issues, there are other long-term social problems that face Akha communities and impact on opportunities available to young people. With a history of opium farming, there is a legacy of drug use and trafficking, HIV/AIDS, child prostitution, child trafficking and abuse. While many hilltribe people have moved into farming other crops, there is still a stigma attached to the Akha people. Additionally many young people with limited education are lured into drug trafficking or the sex industry with false promises of other employment - a lack of rights make hill tribe young people easy to exploit. The Ayui Foundation directly addresses these issues with the children providing education on HIV/AIDs, drugs etc.

Education

Of all the hilltribe groups in Northern Thailand, the Akha people are least educated and most at risk from the poverty cycle. According to a 1998 study, the literacy rate in their first language (Akha) is between 1% to 5% and the literacy rate in a second language (Thai) is between 1% to 50%. It is the young people who are increasingly becoming proficient in Thai language, yet losing their own native language which is categorised as a Tibeto-Burman language and very distinct from Thai. Whilst the increasing rates of Thai as a second language provides pathways for young Akha people, the current approach is widening the gap between their own culture and identity as it excludes education in Akha, their first language.

Sending children to school, sometimes located in another village, is financially difficult for many families. It can mean a family loses the child's income from working in the fields; or the child is no longer able to mind siblings, allowing parents to continue to work. This is one of the reasons why education is at the heart of The Ayui Foundation's mission – with an understanding that education can be the key to breaking entrenched generational poverty. With the support of The Ayui Foundation the young people at the hostel have all their educational and living costs covered. They have access to tutoring, mentoring and support to assisting them to grow into strong and proud people. Every opportunity is taken to introduce the children to positive role models to combat the negative assumptions and stereotypes they have been exposed to.

Local parent-teacher meetings were held recently and these revealed how well the hostel's children were doing at school. Additionally, the House Mother passed all her exams – The Ayui Foundation is supporting her to complete her schooling as well which is an important example for the children (and supports the Foundation's core belief that education can break the cycle of poverty)



Akha young people from Baan Ayui Hostel ready for school

Parental visits

Many of the children come from farming families where their parent's income is simply too low to be able to support their children. In these instances we offer an 'open door policy' to parents so that they are able to visit their children to ensure they are still part of their lives and can support and be involved in our organisation. This open-door policy is not available to all parents however, as some have addiction problems or are abusive to their children, which makes their visits unsafe. In such cases, parental visits occur off-site. Some parents are deceased, in gaol, have moved away from their children or struggle with other issues such as violence and abuse. The Hostel provides support and access to counselling to help our young people understand these issues.



Baan Ayui House

Cultural pride

Cultural pride is important to The Ayui Foundation and its staff works to provide a situation where heritage is celebrated, not ignored. The hostel is run on a daily basis by an Akha house mother and is situated near the Akha Association. These community links enable the young people to continue to participate in traditional Akha ceremonies throughout the year. The children attend a local hill tribe school and on Friday's wear traditional dress.

Discussion groups

Each week Sumalee Milne meets with the children hosting discussion groups. The focus is always different but the main aim is to build self-esteem while exploring issues like gender roles, decision making, bullying and other teenage concerns. Important topics are openly discuss with the older kids ensuring they are aware and educated about HIV/AIDS, the sex industry, people and drug trafficking.

Indigo Foundation partnership

The Ayui Foundation does not receive any government support or ongoing grants. Its work is supported through private donations, particularly those who are able to visit

Chiang Rai. Volunteers who come and work with the kids turn into their biggest ambassadors telling everyone about Baan Ayui. The Board seeks advice and direction from a number of prominent Akha people.

Ayui Foundation's partnership with Indigo Foundation, signed in October 2008, provides a number of new opportunities for this small Thai organisation. In the first instance the Foundation can use the funding as a core-contribution towards running costs. It will assist covering basic costs such as the house-mother's wages and house rent.

Secondly, the partnership offers the Foundation a chance to learn from Indigo Foundation's experience as another relatively small not-for-profit organisation. The Ayui Foundation hopes to work with IF to review basic policies and put in place strategic planning, contingency and risk management procedures, future directions, and operating budgets.

Lastly, the partnership also provides an opportunity for The Ayui Foundation to strengthen links with Australia. A number of private donations have already been received from Australia and the Foundation has made links to several primary schools in Canberra that they hope to develop.

While only a small grass-roots organisation, The Ayui Foundation is uniquely placed to make a positive impact working with the Akha community in Chiang Rai. We encourage supporters or volunteers to visit the hostel if able, meet its young people and be inspired by their energy for life and spirit

IF Project Manager:	Julianne Cowley
Country Liaison Officer:	Sumalee Milne
MC Representative:	Caitlin Marshall

Afghanistan – a story of hope in Borjegai

Last June, Indigo Foundation's Project Advisor for Afghanistan, Salman Jan, visited Borjegai School which is located in Nawor District, central Afghanistan.

Salman has written a powerful and insightful account of his trip, a summary of which has been inserted into this newsletter. Please be sure to read footnote 4.

Salman identified a number of benefits that stem from the construction and continuing presence of Borjegai School. These include:

- Enhanced educational opportunities for 3,800 children, 40% of whom are girls;

- Enhanced quality of teaching because IF's core funding provides salaries for professional teachers and the related Teachers' Training Program;
- A significant increase in the overall achievement level of the School, so much so that it is now viewed as a 'select school' which families aspire to send their children;
- Remarkable student achievements in the national university entry examinations. In the 2007-08 national examination, 19 of the 20 students attending the entry exams managed to get into universities, and in a Provincial Survey, the School had become first in the entire Ghazni Province.
- In a village where not even a single girl/woman had ever been able to read and write, now almost all girls under 18 years of age are literate; the girls attend classes at all levels from grade 1 to grade 12; the girls have gained paid employment by teaching in village schools; and, against all the odds, at least 7 girls are studying in university in Kabul.
- The villagers have successfully lobbied the Provincial government and gained their approval for the granting of funds to construct a Medical facility.

We are proud of the achievements made in Borjagai, and thankful to Salman and Mr Haidary, the financial trustee based in Kabul. It is their commitment and that of the community's that has made this project so remarkable.

Salman's report highlights the necessity of not only evaluating monetary impacts of development programs, but also the inspirational and motivational values that usher in positive social change. For example, one of our Guiding Principles - Community Ownership – upon which continued IF funding depends, has ensured Borjagai's inclusion of all stakeholders in decision-making and development activities.

Despite the remarkable achievements that have occurred over the past 5 years, the challenges and practical needs are great. Corruption, nepotism, tribalism, violence, drug trafficking, insurgencies, to name a few, are rife throughout Afghanistan and this has its impact on Borjagai Village. There are still more than 1000 children in Borjagai who are being educated in makeshift tents. The tough environmental realities of the region keep Borjagai locked in isolation and economic hardship. Health issues are a major concern for the villagers. Salman's report makes it very clear that Borjagai villagers need the continued relationship and support of IF to help them on their path to self-determined progress.

The trip to Borjagai was an extremely dangerous one for Salman and those who accompanied him on his journey. Salman writes: 'Throughout my journey, two main sources of insecurity were of particular concern. The first security concern was the increased Taliban insurgency... The Taliban were carrying roadside bombings, suicide missions, random shootouts and hit and run operations

almost on daily basis. The second source of insecurity was a full-fledged military incursion by Kuchis (nomads belonging to Pashtuns, the largest ethnic group in the country and to which the Taliban belongs) on parts of Hazarajat in Wardak and Ghazni Provinces'.

Upon his return, Salman wrote a 'world class' report about his trip to Borjagai. It is truly a most interesting and enlightening report. Enclosed is a short summary of Salman's 20 page report but we cannot recommend highly enough that you read the report in its entirety. We guarantee you will be hard pressed to put it down. Please contact us indigofoundation@bigpond.com for a copy.

You will note that one of Salman's recommendations was to provide support to Borjagai students studying at tertiary level. Indigo Foundation agreed to do this in November is currently negotiating a Commitment Agreement with the Students Association to support them with approximately \$3,000 per year.

Combating Tobacco Use

A public health program in East Timor

Tobacco is one of the biggest causes of preventable illness and death worldwide. According to the World Health Organisation, in the early 1990s, between 70 and 75% of the world's 1.1 billion smokers lived in developing countries. This percentage is likely to be larger today. In Timor Leste, smoking creates a huge burden for the country's fledgling health system, with smoking rates amongst men estimated at around 80%. Exposure to first and second-hand tobacco smoke also impacts the health of women and children and creates an additional financial burden for families living in one of the world's poorest nations.

Indigo Foundation is funding a two year health promotion project focusing on tobacco control, in partnership with Caritas Dili, in Timor Leste. Tobacco control constitutes an opportunity to make significant gains in health promotion with relatively small investment through increasing public awareness, creating tobacco control legislation, training health professionals, supporting the creation of smoke-free areas (such as schools and hospitals) and working with the Ministry of Education to include tobacco related education in the syllabus.

Rowena Ivers, our Project Advisor, funded by a Royal Australian College of Physicians travel grant visited Dili last year to meet with our partners (Caritas Dili, the Ministry of Health and the World Health Organisation)

and discuss options for tobacco control in East Timor and assist in planning. Indigo Foundation provides funding for a Tobacco Control Officer - Atanasio de Jesus - including salary and expenses who is located within the Caritas health program. As one of the focuses of the Caritas program is tuberculosis, this proximity allows good collaboration on lung disease issues, strong program synergies, and importantly managerial and peer support for Atanasio.

The priorities for the project are:

- Launching a smoke-free policy in health facilities around the country;
- Development of a training kit about tobacco, suitable for both existing volunteers who work with Caritas in tuberculosis education and for other health professionals, and
- Working with the Ministry of Health and the World Health Organisation to begin working on national tobacco legislation

In early August, Indigo Foundation sponsored a visit by Atanasio to Sydney for two weeks in early August. He attended a postgraduate course on tobacco, run by Professor Simon Chapman, at the University of Sydney. Atanasio and Rowena then met with agencies involved in tobacco control, including Action on Smoking and Health (Australia's primary national advocacy agency for tobacco control), Quitline (where he met with Tracey Greenberg, a leading tobacco educator) and attended a Smokecheck workshop. They also visited Caritas Australia and, along with former Indigo Foundation member Trina Supit, attended a seminar given by The East Timorese Health Minister, Dr Nelson Martins. Rachel Reilly (East Timor Project Manager) flew from Melbourne to spend time with Atanasio and they were able to refine plans for the course of the project (with a little time squeezed in showing him around Sydney!).

Work has begun on the development of a tobacco training kit, regional workshops are planned, and lectures in tobacco control will be delivered by Atanasio to public health students at the university. We continue to provide guidance and specialist tobacco advice and resources, including a laptop computer for the delivery of regional and university training. With this helpful new teaching tool, Atanasio has since been conducting training in Dili, using resources provided by Rowena. However, his ability to train further afield is being stymied because of transport constraints, especially in outlying rural areas

Discussions with Caritas Dili have indicated that the budget agreed to in 2007 is not sufficient to fund

planned activities and have proposed a revised budget which also includes funds for a motor bike for Atanasio to travel to the districts. The original budget only covered petrol. The fall in the Australian – US dollar exchange rate has also meant that the funds Caritas were to receive in the most recent tranche were less than the original budget provided (the East Timorese currency is currently the US dollar). Indigo Foundation has agreed to make up the short-fall.

Future activities

The Oceania Tobacco Conference takes place in Darwin in September 2009, and Indigo Foundation is seeking funding or sponsorship for Anastasio to attend. We trust he can present, or co-present with Rowena or Rachel on Indigo Foundation and Caritas achievements to date.

IF Project Manager:	Rachel Reilly
IF Project Advisor:	Rowena Ivers
Project Worker:	Atanasio de Jesus
MC Representative:	Sally Stevenson

A Health Festival in Delha!

Rote, Indonesia

Ian Seal - Project Advisor, Indonesia

Libby House (Project Manager) and Ian Seal visited our Rote project in July/August last year. Ian undertook health education workshops in schools and churches and has written an engaging and inspiring analysis of what was achieved within the community during this trip. Below is an extract from his report.

In July and August of 2008 I spent five weeks in Delha, Rote, Indonesia, as well as time in Kupang, Timor and on Savu, as a volunteer for the partnership between the Lua Lemba Education and Community Development Foundation ("Lua Lemba") and the Indigo Foundation. This was the second of three visits as part of the Rote Health Project and followed the four weeks I spent there in 2007.

The objectives of this visit included:

- Support a group of students to develop peer-based health education programs;
- Progress partnership and participation options with Yayasan Tanpa Batas on Rote;
- Work with community leaders, schools and Tanpa Batas on a community health promotion event;
- Design sustainable public health campaigns with community leaders; and
- Work with teachers on design and content of comprehensive health curriculum.

Yayasan Tanpa Batas (YTB), based in Kupang in West Timor, works on HIV/AIDS prevention, treatment and support for the general population and for at-risk groups. While poorly resourced, they do excellent work, part of which involves the provision of support to a number of HIV positive people from Rote (who must travel to Kupang to receive that support). In 2007 I visited YTB with a view to the possibility of the organisation coming to Rote concurrently with my next visit there. This could lead to their participation in prevention-focused workshops with me or separately, assistance with the event idea or other broader reproductive health promotion, and they could promote their own clinical and support services, potentially even providing a mobile testing service. Building links between a local (i.e. Kupang) non-government organisation and the Delha community was seen as providing significant opportunities for sustainable service delivery in HIV prevention, treatment and support.

Between the 2007 meeting and this second visit to Rote, I maintained communication with YTB regarding the possibility of collaborative work. While in Kupang at the beginning of this trip Libby House and I followed up the 2007 meeting with further face-to-face discussions and negotiated the assistance of YTB in this year's activities.

Three staff from YTB subsequently joined us. They took the major role in the initial peer-education training program, and participated in the Delha Health Festival. A number of positive benefits flowed from this collaboration.

- i. Relationship building between Lua Lemba and YTB*
Lua Lemba now has a direct relationship with a comprehensive HIV/AIDS organisation in its own region. Whilst there are still challenges to consider in relation to local service delivery (testing, counseling and treatment, access to condoms), Lua Lemba is now in a much stronger position to determine how these might be addressed.
- ii. Local context & understanding for the community*
YTB are able to provide HIV/AIDS education and support that is appropriate to the cultural context. YTB were able to be much more explicit in their discussions and depictions of sexual activity than we had been in 2007, and while this may be partly *because* we did the work in 2007 of talking to the community about what was appropriate, it is also due to their status as 'locals' and their understanding of the cultural context. They are also able to provide local examples to illustrate issues that arise during
- iii. Capacity building for YTB & us*

Through the process of collaboration in delivering the peer-education program, YTB were able to share strategies, resources, and ideas with Lea Trafford and myself, who are sexual health educators in Australia. In this way, we all gained new ideas for the work. As well as this, YTB have been assisted to extend their geographic reach, to access new networks and to promote their relationships with IF and Lua Lemba in seeking further funding to do their work.

Supporting students to develop peer-based health education programs

As a recommendation from my 2007 visit, in 2008 we developed a peer education program based in Delha's three secondary schools. Literature internationally recognises the strengths and benefits of peer education in health promotion, particularly for issues such as sexual health and drug use.

We asked the larger of the two senior secondary schools (SMA) to identify 3 female and 3 male first-year students, and the junior secondary school (SMP) to identify 3 female and 3 male final-year students, to work with us. They attended the Lua Lemba office for three days (along with a teacher from SMA) and worked with YTB staff on activity-based curriculum focused on HIV/AIDS and the broader context of puberty, reproduction and sexual relationships. Lea, Libby and I played support roles to this. At the end of the three days the 12 students were 'introduced' as peer-educators to their community at the Delha Festival, and one spoke briefly about what they had learned.

The following week I worked separately with the 6 students from SMA then the 6 from SMP to help them shape what they had learned in to a workshop to deliver to their peers, and to develop the resources they needed in order to facilitate the workshops effectively. Subsequently, the SMA students ran a 2-hour workshop for students at SMK (assisted by Libby and I), and the SMP students ran two 1-hour workshops with other SMP students (again with our assistance). The students also identified informal ways in which they could continue to promote sexual health messages to their peers.

After the SMK workshop, the SMA students worked with a smaller group of SMK students to enable them to do similar work. We also asked the SMA Principal's permission for the SMA students to run workshops back in their own school after our departure. We identified a teacher at each school who could support the students to continue their work after our departure.

In pre and post-testing, and in the subsequent workshops they delivered, the 12 students showed that their understanding of HIV/AIDS and its context had improved dramatically, as had their confidence in talking with their peers about such issues. With support from their schools and further work in 2009 it is hoped that peer education can be a sustainable and capacity-building approach to education around HIV/AIDS and other health concerns.

The Delha Health Festival

In discussion with Lua Lemba in 2007, a decision was taken that the next Indigo Foundation Reproductive Health Program in Delha could include a concert or some other type of broad community awareness program. The aims were to introduce ourselves and YTB to the broader community (and promote YTB's services) to increase the community's understanding of the work we were doing in the schools, to promote health as a broad concept with which everyone could engage, and to highlight young people's participation in health promotion and their community. In the first few weeks of the 2008 visit, the Delha Health Festival grew from these ideas.

A small sub-committee of Lua Lemba was established to oversee the technical aspects of the Festival, which included such detail as costume hire, sound and lighting systems and paying for the electricity to be 'pumped up' for the night. Each school was asked to consider a song, dance or play for the evening, and students were invited to submit a poster with a health-related theme for a competition. Lea, Katherine and I worked across four schools to assist with their practice, suggest ideas and provide resources for their various activities. This included body image-focused art work at SMP that developed in to life size puppets that performed at the Festival. Village leaders and the police were informed by word-of-mouth and letter, and we requested that the road through the village square be closed off during the period of the Festival.

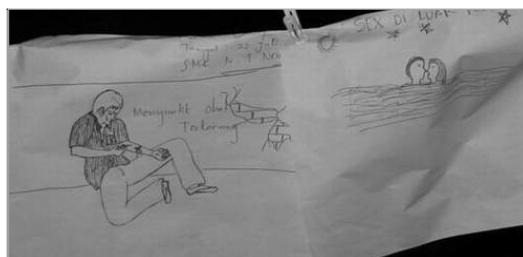
The idea for the Festival generated great excitement, and without the interest and support of the community it would not have been the success that it was. A number of people from Lua Lemba and from the schools gave considerable time to making it happen. Several hundred people attended, and events ran for four and a half hours. We began with a volleyball match between the two senior schools, while a slide show depicting students of the various schools preparing, learning about HIV/AIDS in peer education workshops, and participating in their community, played as a backdrop against the wall of the church. Young people played traditional music and

danced. The village leader from Nemberala judged the poster competition and awarded prizes. The 'official opening' included speeches by the Chair of Lua Lemba, Libby and I. After that, each school did a series of music and dance performances, interspersed with introductions to YTB and the peer-educators, an HIV/AIDS quiz, and a puppet story-telling session about various public health issues in the local community.



Entertainers at Celebrating Healthy Living Festival

Feedback from the Festival was extremely positive, and the events clearly assisted the broader community to understand our role and work with their children and young people. There is considerable interest in a bigger, better Delha Health Festival next year. Undertaking this would enable us to develop a number of more sophisticated public health messages for the community, and to work towards sustainability of the Festival itself.



Posters in the competition

Sustainable public health campaigns

Lua Lemba takes an active interest in the health of their community. In 2007 I had discussions with Lua Lemba regarding a number of public health issues, particularly focusing on children and young people. This led to the recommendations to undertake the peer education training, to build the relationship with YTB and to develop the Health Festival. A number of members of Lua Lemba were directly involved in each of these activities. While a specific focus on reproductive health was primary

in each of these, it was contextualised within broader 'good health' messages.

We also talked last year about particular concerns, such as road safety, personal safety with strangers and other concerns arising primarily from the growing number of tourists visiting Nemberala and its surrounds, as well as about pollution to the water source from shampoos and soaps. These issues were acknowledged through the puppet show at the Festival, and were discussed with staff in each of the secondary schools. At SMK, which has curriculum focused on working in the tourism industry, there is interest in developing explicit curriculum about these issues.

The capacity of Lua Lemba to develop and deliver public health campaigns is limited by its lack of resources, and this is being addressed in a number of ways through their partnership with Indigo Foundation. By working together on activities such as the Festival and continuing to talk about health issues and concerns, it is hoped that we are helping to build some of the infrastructure for further public health campaigns.

A comprehensive health curriculum

Both staff and students positively recalled last year's work in the three secondary schools - workshops focused on sexual and reproductive health - and it was clear that there was generally greater comfort with talking about sexual activity and sexually transmissible infections, including HIV/AIDS. This gave us the opportunity to engage with staff on the issue of broader health curriculum. We ran workshops for staff in each of the three secondary schools, and had less formal discussions with teachers in the primary school. The workshops focused on models for understanding health, including perceptions of health in Delha. As a group, we identified health issues of concern to young people in Delha, and what was currently being done to address them. We also explored what were thought to be some of the difficulties of educating for health.

Preparation for the Festival gave us the opportunity to discuss how health curriculum might articulate across schools from primary to senior secondary, but this is made difficult by Indonesian mandatory curriculum which is content-based and inflexible. Given this it seemed that modelling and supporting teacher engagement in health promotion activity was more suitable than developing particular units of health curriculum. Each school felt that they could involve themselves in special 'health days' but not change the existing curriculum. We thus endeavored to include teachers actively in student preparation for the

Festival, and in the peer education programs. Some staff were very enthusiastic about this, others were less so.

On the goodwill engendered through this year's activities there is considerable scope to expand on this issue next year, and to develop in each school a 'health day' or something similar. While research would tell us that this is less effective than comprehensive health curriculum spread across the year, it may serve as a springboard to more ambitious work in the schools at another time. We also have the opportunity to work with SMK on their particular issue of addressing tourism-related concerns through curriculum.

The teachers in Delha also found this a very useful activity as it gave their students real and practical use of spoken English. There was interest from two of the schools in developing a relationship with schools in Australia, and I hope to facilitate this before my next visit to Rote.

Lua Lemba are interested in extending their work to the Oenale district of Rote, and I was fortunate in having the opportunity to visit there this year. In comparison with Delha, Oenale struggles with significant poverty and malnutrition, and appears to have much less community infrastructure. Including Oenale schools and community in the work of the Health Project will need to take this in to account.

Similarly there is interest in extending the project to Savu, an island considerably more isolated than Rote and struggling with drought and other concerns. I visited Savu this year and worked in two schools there, running workshops for students in which they identified key health concerns for their community, and including them in the movie making activities. School staff were extremely supportive of my presence there, and a number spent time with me afterwards and expressed real interest in partnership in the future.

Conclusion and recommendations

Evaluation of sexual health education in Australia and around the world shows that the most effective forms of sexual health education are those that are contextualised within broader understandings of health and human biology, take into account the developmental stage of the participants, are non-judgmental, provide accurate and detailed information, provide opportunities for participants to practice relevant skills and create a safe, affirming environment for participants to ask questions. In the second year of this work in Delha, I believe we have been able to move significantly closer to this model.

The success of the peer education programs and the Health Festival were highlights, both of which offer

opportunity for further work next year. They are also 'exportable' to the Oenale and Savu communities, along with the other activities we undertook in Delha.

A challenge for next year is to embed the work we have been doing in the 'core business' of the schools. Supporting teaching staff and working with each school to develop school-based health days that articulate in to the Health Festival may be the most effective way to do this.

A number of the activities this year encouraged youth participation and control. Strengthening this aspect of the work in 2009 will assist in sustainability and improving the health of those young people involved. It also assists the development of future community leaders.

As in 2007, I was made very welcome and had many wonderful experiences on Rote in 2008. I wish to thank Libby House and Lea Trafford in particular, as well as Katherine, Immi, Lua Lemba, the staff of YTB, Arnol Paut, Jeans Gigy, all those who helped to make the Festival come together and the Tamelan family. A special thanks to the donor whose support made the trip and all the activities possible.

Indigo Foundation Project Highlights....

India

IF's community partner, Pravaham Trust, recently released its annual report indicating that elements of the program for Education and Awareness Building, located in Tamil Nadu, are going well. Community requested math and science coaching is in full operation and a community-based Project Committee has been established with the aim to help ensure project activities reflect community needs and aspirations.

A key outcome from the past year has been the growing interest in the program's work as a result of advocacy with other organisations and political leaders by the project team and Annie Namala (Indigo Foundation's Liaison Officer). Four of the Village Education Centres are now housed in local schools, whereas previously most had no shelter at all.

Pravaham Trust visited the project twice last year and so did Annie. Indigo Foundation Project Manager, Pat Duggan, will also be visiting this month. This will be a monitoring visit and Pat will particularly be looking at other potential resources in India to better support the project. We look forward to including Pat's report in the next newsletter.

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Congo

Last year, Indigo Foundation, through our partner Bonobo Conservation Initiative (BCI), contributed approximately \$25,000 towards the purchase and distribution of long lasting insecticide treated nets (ITNs) anti-malarial medication, basic curative medicines and material and the salaries of four local Congolese nurses who provided education on malaria prevention is provided by in parallel with net distribution.

Project coordinator, Bienvenu Mupenda, collected data on the incidence of malaria from 6 clinics which demonstrated a reduction in malaria cases since the project began. The positive results of this project led to local community from the United States supporting the position of a Doctor for the Kokolopori. With Dr Saidi's appointment, and his background in public health, hospital administration and surgery, the health clinic in Kokolopori will now be incorporated into the Congolese national health care system – a significant development towards sustainability of local health services. Consequently, the clinic will take part in immunisation programs as well as public health programs aimed at tuberculosis and leprosy. This is an important achievement as the sustainability of our work on this project is dependent on Kokolopori receiving ongoing support from government.

On a sad note, two key supporters of the Kokolopori Health Project, Veronique Lokasola and Antoine, passed away.

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Solomon Islands

This past year has seen the Turusuala Community-based Training Centre still actively engaged with the surrounding community. Community outreach projects have included: construction of two semi-permanent buildings, seats for the Avu-Avu Catholic Church and desks for Avu-Avu Primary School. Importantly, the community has begun to trust and value the services of the centre and has agreed to provide a nominal payment for these projects, which previously have been provided free of charge. Such community support will help contribute to the ongoing financial viability of the centre.

2008 was also designated a planning year and four priority areas were identified following Indigo Foundation's visit to the project: teacher quality; graduate transition to village; income generation; and the centre's facilities. Jerry, Doni Keli (Liaison Officer) and Helen Lucy (IF Project Manager) have been working on strategies to address these issues and some early initiatives are already up and running.

Uganda

Ian Seal is currently in Uganda this summer to evaluate the establishment of a new project that supports orphaned young people living with HIV/AIDs. The main aim of the project would be to improve psychosocial outcomes and reduce risk factors for poor health in orphans by strengthening and supporting the capacity of families and communities to protect and care for their children. We wish Ian a safe and productive trip and look forward to hearing all about it.

Indigo Foundation People

A Personal Profile of Julianne Cowley, Project Manager,
Thailand



I am excited to join IF as the project manager for the new partnership with The Ayui Foundation.

I grew up in Canberra and studied Communications, Teaching, and have completed a Masters in Business Administration. I have always had a passion for education and after classroom teaching, was able to work in Indigenous Education. It was one of those jobs where you're lucky enough to receive just as much from the position as you contribute to it. I was privileged to travel and work with a number of Aboriginal communities and be able to listen to people share their stories and experiences. My husband Anthony now works in Indigenous Education, and together we have a passion for native Australian foods and the idea that food can be an avenue for contributing to reconciliation, cultural understanding, and the environment (let alone the fantastic flavours and culinary potential).

I volunteered at Lifeline Canberra for seven years (as telephone counsellor, consultant, and Board Member), and have more recently spent the last five years working with CanTeen, an organisation that supports young people living with cancer. In different ways both of these organisations have taught me a lot about the resilience of people in difficult situations.

In 2006-07 my partner and I spent a year in Chiang Rai teaching and volunteering and, near the end of our stay we supported an ex-Canberran to establish The Ayui Foundation. In our first few years of establishing the hostel we found it difficult to obtain funding because most grants were only available to organisations that have been operating for more than two years.

One of the reasons we were originally attracted to Northern Thailand was the traditional community living

where food is central to family and the village. Everyone stops for meal-times - food is talked about, thought about and cared about. We had a few occasions when we were able to travel to remote hilltribe villages and again experienced a sharing of food and culture – the people we met were incredibly generous.

When I returned to Canberra I started working at AusAID where I was introduced to the Indigo Foundation – which the Ayui Foundation was looking to for help with networking experience, advice and financial support. I look forward to my new role at the Indigo Foundation, and continuing to support the fantastic work that is being done in Chiang Rai with a group of really wonderful and inspiring people.

FUNd raisers

Community fundraisers are the heart and soul of supporter involvement in spreading the word about Indigo Foundation whilst raising funds which enable us to continue to support communities around the world.

Once again, we have some great fundraising stories to share and we thank everyone who helped organise or attended!

Congo Kids Carnival & Congo Choir - A group of home-schooled children in Sydney raised over \$1000 at a Kids Carnival and a Choir performance. A big thank you to Susan Bowman for organising these and to the parents and children who participated!

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An **Afghanistan afternoon tea in Adelaide** organised by Sarah Kelly raised \$750 when Salman Jan (Indigo Foundation Project Advisor) discussed his recent visit to Borjagai in Afghanistan as part of a monitoring and evaluation trip.

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A **Congo Live Music night** was held where the Elastic Mindbladders performed a gig to raise money for the Congo Project. This fundraiser was the brainchild of Shauna Howe assisted by Susan Bowman, who have been instrumental over the last 12 months in raising money to buy insecticide treated nets for the Congo project. The event was held at a bowling club and over 100 people attended (including many kids). The lead players in the Elastic Mindbladders (being the husbands of Shauna and Susan) were very big in Annandale in the 1980s. A great time was had by all and through auctions, T-shirts and entry prizes, over \$4000 was raised.

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Rotary support for potential Uganda project – Indigo Foundation's 2007 Praxis Award recipient and Rote Project Advisor, Ian Seal, met with the Rotary Club at Eltham, Melbourne to discuss his idea for investigating a new project in Uganda that would support HIV/AIDs orphans. The Rotary Club kindly contributed over \$4,000 towards Ian's first trip.

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Clothes Swap - Once again Theresa Huxtable blazes the community fundraising trail with friends Sue Kemp (Newcastle) and Maura Cato organising a clothes swap where over \$2000 was raised. To quote Sue: "It was a great day and went too quickly but it surpassed all my expectations!" Theresa writes: Once again I would encourage anyone to organise one of these. It is easy to do and so much fun! It's a social activity, it's a good community activity, it provides an opportunity to rid oneself of all that stuff that just hangs in one's wardrobe and of course there is the added advantage of swapping clothes rather than purchasing which ultimately demands more energy. Lastly there is another charity that will benefit from leftover clothes that do not get swapped.

If you would like to host your own Fashion Swap to help raise funds for Indigo Foundation projects, don't hesitate to contact Theresa through indigo.foundation@bigpond.com

If you have any fundraising ideas, we are more than happy to arrange for a speaker to come along and talk first hand about our work. We can also provide materials and a banner. Please contact with Kieran to discuss: 0418 420122 or Kieran.longridge@gmail.com

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Individual donations - Since the last newsletter, we have received over 50 donations from individuals and families. The donations vary between \$50 and \$15,000 as well as new and increased monthly donations. Every one of your donations is truly appreciated! Whilst we cannot list every donation in this newsletter (and some donors prefer to be anonymous), we would like to particularly thank Michael Joseph for his ongoing and generous support for the Congo project.

Donations to Indigo Foundation are tax-deductible.

Supporter Survey Results!

As many of you know, we conducted our first online supporter survey last year to learn more about who our supporters are and what it is that you would like to see more or less of, in terms of our communication. Highlights of the survey were published in our Annual Report 2007-2009 (contact us for a copy). One positive find is that 's supporter base covers a wide spectrum of age groups and is relatively balanced in terms of gender representation. For our newsletter readers, below is a brief overview of the responses relating to the newsletter.

Newsletter topics that survey participants would like to see more of:

- Project updates: 43.3%
- Personal accounts from projects: 60%
- Information about countries we work in (culture, politics, etc): 46.7%
- Profiles of people involved (local & international): 43.3%
- Think pieces about aid and development: 50%
- Photos: 30%

Newsletter length:

- Too long: 28.6%
- Too short: 0
- About right: 68.6%

Newsletter readers tend to:

- Read the newsletter in its entirety: 54.3%
- Scan for interesting articles: 25.7%
- Read only those articles you have particular interest or involvement in: 17.1%

Options for receiving the newsletter:

- Online only: 45.7%
- Mail only 31.4%
- Online and mail 22.9%

Our sincere thanks to everyone who participated in the supporter survey! We assure you that we have listened to your thoughts and ideas and are currently working on making improvements, based on your feedback.

The Global Financial Crisis & Developing Countries

Susan Engel – Management Committee

We are, it seems, in the midst of a global financial crisis sparked by the Sub-Prime Mortgage Crisis in the US, but with deeper roots. The crisis is only really starting to impact in Australia. However, in other Western countries, the impact has been felt for a number of months with

company failures and increased job losses. Given the vast sums involved (US \$62 trillion in Credit Default Swaps alone) and the level of global integration, it has been a little surprising how long it took for the crisis to impact upon the 'real' economy. But impact it has. The prospects for 2009 are not entirely rosy.

Although the crisis is fundamentally a product of deregulated Western financial systems, its impacts are global. Indeed, the poor in developing countries are very likely to suffer disproportionately from the global downturn as they have no savings or social welfare systems to fall back on. This bursting of the financial bubble comes on top of burst bubbles in food and commodity prices over the past 18 months, which has also hit the poor hard. Early in the crisis there was some surprising resilience in the developing world. A number of sub-Saharan African countries kept a solid growth path through 2008 and we've seen quite divergent outcomes in East Asia – China. Subsequently they expected to maintain economic growth at nine to ten per cent in 2008 but the forecasts for 2009 are lower. It may be that the relationship between growth in the developed world and outcomes in the developing world is no longer as direct as it once was. In the 1980s and 1990s, every one per cent drop in world GDP would produce 0.5 per cent drop in African GDP, but between 2000 and 2007, the correlation decline was only 0.2 (te Velde, 2008: 1). Some of the early optimism regarding prospects for the developing world has dried up. Declining demand is flowing along the trade path which is already having an impact on developing countries, particularly those that have followed the (IMF and World Bank promoted) model of export-oriented development. The possibility of financial contagion into developing country markets has been realised in places such as Eastern Europe, Brazil and India. We are already seeing declines in financial flows to developing countries due to multiple factors:

- Remittances from foreign workers are falling;
- FDI and equity investments to developing countries are declining;
- Withdrawal of finance from several developing economies has produced falling exchange rates, making it harder for countries to service their overseas debt;
- Commercial lending is likely to decline too, as banks and other investment agencies are now extremely cautious in new lending operations. Although global interest rates are falling, banks are likely to demand

higher premiums from high risk borrowers, which basically includes everyone in a developing country;

- It is possible that aid flows to developing countries will fall as Western countries are under pressure from their electorates to focus on domestic issues.

As a result of these various factors, Robert Zoellick - current president of the World Bank - has said that as many as 30 countries could suffer from balance of payment problems. Countries that already have balance of payment problems, such as South Africa, are particularly at risk.

Nevertheless, the impacts on developing countries will vary, influenced by things like their current economic situation, exposure to world markets, reliance on specific sources of income and government capacity to respond. Countries with existing high levels of government debt – such as India - will be constrained in their policy responses to the crisis. The health of each country's banking systems and their integration into the international system will also be influential. Interestingly it's been claimed that Africa, with its older-style banking system, which was for many years criticized as a hindrance to development, is now seen as being better able to weather the finance storm precisely because of its lack of integration and exposure to world credit losses. But as global demand contracts, those African countries that have benefited from the commodities boom will suffer.

There is a complex picture unfolding in Asia. On the one hand, many Asian countries are highly cashed up. This is because after the Asian Financial Crisis of 1997/8, most governments decided that rather than fall into IMF tutelage again, they would build up their cash reserves; they now have around \$4 trillion in reserves (Feroz, 13/10/08). On the other hand, these investments are fairly exposed to the US market and, equally perilous, Asia's export-oriented markets are contracting. The growth forecast for the Asian region as a whole has been reduced by 1-2 percentage points (te Velde, 2008).

One of the big issues is the resilience (or not) of China; an issue for not only the Asian region but the global economy as a whole. China's economy held up fairly well in 2008 but the growth forecasts for 2009 are being revised downwards again – now in the 7.5-8.5 per cent range, which is quite a decline compared to the 11.9 per cent growth rate in 2008. China is very reliant on export growth and if that fails, one of their few recourses will be to expand domestic consumption. China's gross domestic savings reached an extraordinary 50.6 per cent of GDP in

2006 and only 38 per cent of China's total GDP derives from domestic consumption. This is one-third less than India and a very small amount overall (Wherfritz, 13/10/08). What this means is that boosting domestic consumption is not something that can be done overnight in China. It will be a medium-term and painful process of 'structural adjustment', presumably involving many job losses and changes.

So, even as we think of tightening our own belts a little, it is not the time to forget the poor and dispossessed across the globe for whom tightening the belt can involve fundamental choices about consumption of food, health care and education.

Interested in Volunteering?

Our volunteer network is instrumental in ensuring that we continue to deliver quality community development projects and operate as a professional organisation. Volunteer roles are varied and can be tailored to suit your interests and availability. We are currently looking for:

- An Accountant to audit our 2007-2008 financial records
- Community fundraising opportunities
- Someone to update our website content

Some recent examples of volunteer contributions include:

- Various community fundraising events
- Upgraded supporter database
- Re-design of Indigo Foundation letterhead

We would love to hear from you about ways you may like to be further involved in our work as a volunteer. Please contact kieran.longridge@gmail.com to discuss!

Management Committee Update

Welcome to 2009, we hope it is treating you well so far! This year, like many others, is looking to be a full and exciting one for Indigo Foundation.

Let me first start by thanking Jenny Noble and Zoe Mander Jones for the excellent job done over the last year as co-chairs. 2008 proved full of challenges and new experiences for Indigo Foundation, and we have come through as a more mature and diverse organisation, which can only serve us well in the future. With sadness too, we say goodbye to Zoe who is stepping down from the Management Committee, coinciding with the impending arrival of her second child! Zoe was a founding member of the Committee and through her drive, commitment and extensive and varied contribution has helped to make

Indigo Foundation what it is today. Just one example – it was Zoe's strong position that we support refugees in Australia during the Tampa crisis. This passionate and principled stand led us not only to an extremely worthwhile and productive relationship with the Hazara community in Sydney (where we supported English lessons and community development services to newly arrived refugees on Temporary Protection Visas), but also to our education project Borjegai – an extraordinary example of what can be achieved through trusting relationships and good community development practices. We wish Zoe all the very best in the future and insist that she stays in contact with us!

At the same time, we gladly welcome three new arrivals on the Committee: Alice Martin, Kate Weir and Mary Mertin-Ryan. Mary has extensive experience in the community and government sectors, particularly in areas related to social justice issues affecting women and their families. She is currently the Executive Officer of a community based organisation which provides direct services to socially disadvantaged people through emergency relief, family and child support and life skills programs. As a qualified Company Director, Mary brings strong governance and board knowledge and experience. Based in Wollongong and raising four children, Alice comes to Indigo with a strong background in financial management and accounting education spanning over two decades. Alice will be working on financial related matters. Kate is experienced in management and organisational skills and has a long standing commitment to social justice volunteering and fundraising. Kate will be responsible for Marketing and Fundraising within Indigo Foundation.

We are all excited about working with Alice, Mary and Kate in the years ahead.

Meanwhile our Project Managers remain busy: Ian Seal is currently in Uganda, Pat Duggan has just returned from India, Helen Lucy completed a trip to the Weathercoast in the Solomon Islands and Libby House and Ian return to Indonesia in the coming months. It's all happening!

As always, we look forward to reporting on our activities over the year. If you have any questions, comments or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact us: we are always happy to talk! Sally Stevenson – Chairperson

pass it along!

Once you have read the newsletter, why not pass it along to someone who you believe would be interested in supporting the work of Indigo Foundation?

Indigo Foundation proudly supports the Syrian 'Colours of the Sun' Exhibition!

The 'Colours of the Sun' is an exhibition of embroidered panels from the Jabal Al Hoss cooperative, a women's organisation in Syria, showing at 'the Q' exhibition space, Queanbeyan Performing Arts Centre from 26 January to 7th February 2009.

IF supporters are warmly invited to come along to the opening event on Saturday 31st January from 1-3pm. It will be a lot of fun! Food will be provided by the Syrian Ambassador. There will be a fashion parade of embroidered designs from the ANAT workshop (Damascus). There will be a great mixture of traditional Syrian music and Arab pop! Pat Duggan will be giving a short talk about Indigo Foundation's work and the potential for extending our support to the Jabal Al Hoss project.

Lisa Addison has organised this exhibition for 'fun' and to assist the women of the Jabal Al Hoss cooperative. Lisa met the women while in Syria doing archaeological conservation at the nearby Jabal Khalid excavation. The artists from the cooperative produce the colourful embroidered works seen in the poster below. While some of the works are 'naive' in style, others are very abstract, and others have 'painterly' qualities; all them convey the colour, warmth and quirkiness of the Syrian culture and people.

Lisa was studying cultural heritage development at the time she first met the women from ANAT and the Jabal Al Hoss cooperative, and was keen to promote their work – not only are the embroidered works beautiful, bright and optimistic - it's a great example of 'cultural heritage development' in action: harnessing cultural heritage to keep it alive, evolving, incorporating new influences while alleviating poverty. The artists gain an independent income which improves self esteem and status for these women in their community and improve lives. All profits go to the women's cooperative to invest in small scale community development projects.



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