



news letter

March 2011 – issue # 25

Indonesia, Uganda, Haiti, governance review, think-piece, and more...

indigo foundation is an independent, volunteer run, Australian community development organisation. We work with marginalised communities around the world providing innovative assistance to improve health, education, and human rights.

indigo foundation seeks to empower local communities to access resources and have control over the decisions that determine their basic needs and human rights. We do this by providing financial and technical support to local 'not for profit' and community-based organisations, with a particular focus on capacity building.

We currently support community development projects in eight countries: Indonesia, Afghanistan, Solomon Islands, Congo, Uganda, Palestine, India & Australia.

The Rote Festival: celebration, cultural rejuvenation, health

Libby House - Project Manager

Factors which make for health are concerned with a sense of personal and social identity, human worth, communication, participation in the making of political decisions, celebration and responsibility. The language of science alone is insufficient to describe health; the languages of story, myth and poetry also disclose its truth.

Michael Wilson, Health Is For People (1975)¹

In July last year, Lua Lemba Education and Community Development Foundation and indigo foundation held a public event to commemorate ten years of collaboration. Stories were told that celebrated the partnership's many achievements – the community food gardens, a Senior High School for the district, a kindergarten, a community pharmacy, health education programs and income generation projects. And, to maintain the importance of a dynamic community development program, students wrote, produced and performed theatre pieces exploring issues of gender equity and health.

The planning of these worthwhile and happy events gave rise to a remarkable turn in the festival program. In response to expressions of regret that traditional cultural markers had been lost from Delha, a troop of 27 horsemen from a remote village gathered together to perform harvest ritual displays on the day. This display, the *limbe*, had not been performed in Nemberala for over 37 years.

At the same time, a children's dance troupe formed at the Bo'a village school and old groups which had not performed for many years and which had fallen out of practice, appeared asking to be included in the Festival. Traditional textiles and hats were borrowed from whoever would loan them. Many people practiced for hours at night after long days of manual work.

Rote is a remote island with remote communities and for many days, as news of the event spread, new performers sent messages of support, offering to travel to Nemberala to perform. We were unable to take advantage of these offers largely due their timing but also due to lack of funding. Despite the lack of funds however, the program took on a life of its own very quickly. It was all those of us involved could do, to ride the tail of the beast!



The Bo'a young dance troupe

While the initial character of the Festival was to be celebratory and educative, it grew to incorporate a sense of regeneration and cultural strengthening through the enthusiasm, processes, performances and the

¹ As acknowledged by Mike White Arts Development in Community Health (2009)

consequent renewal of old networks and support systems. From something that was initially planned as low key and school based, the Festival evolved into an event with over 150 participants from six villages and which attracted over 700 local guests and dignitaries, including the local Member of Parliament, the Chief of Police and the Deputy Mayor. People even came from Kupang to attend.

The impact of the Festival on the community was palpable. There was a sense of enormous pride when the



value of the dances and music was recognised, and when people reflected on the improved opportunities generated over past ten years, whilst at the same time having their hard work and achievements publicly recognised. There is also excitement about what opportunities lay ahead.

The Delta and Oenale communities want this event to become an

annual festival and exercise in cultural strengthening. It provides a venue for people young and old to find strength and pride in their unique origins, ancestral stories, handicrafts and traditions in art and music and it's a dynamic vehicle for strengthening identity through celebrating culture.

There is potential for the event to develop into a drawcard for domestic and international tourists who are coming to Rote in increasing numbers. By extension, there is also a strong possibility for it to become a significant income generating activity for the community.

There is another significant benefit. Producing the Festival created a spirit of high energy: there was lots of laughter, some disagreement, and a strong sense of purpose. This atmosphere increased the confidence and the credibility of marginalised people (especially the artists) whose skills and self worth had been undervalued. There was a real sense of trust and well-being as these members of the community worked with Lua Lemba and indigo foundation representatives on their own terms. The process itself brought about a change in participants sense of self and an awareness of privileged space developed where action and capacity for change was not only possible but enabled.

Links between culture, identity and well-being have been well documented in an increasing body of research over the past twenty years. There is now growing evidence that the use of inclusive, participatory arts based activities in health programs can have a transforming effect on many people's lives.

The 2010 Festival production was able to create an environment where the community narrative was of an inventive, talented and recognised group as opposed to a group whose traditions were irrelevant and poverty and hard work their primary reality.

Capacity building was a planned outcome of the Festival but we did not foresee a direct health outcome. We (Lua Lemba and indigo foundation) initially saw the inclusion of the *limbe*, music and dancing as having an educative and entertainment role, however it may be that the benefits of the event may include social outcomes that indirectly impact on health.

It remains to be seen how we can evaluate the longer term effect of the Nemberala Festival on individuals and the community in terms of capacity building, improved health and well-being. At the time there was little time for appraisal and reflection or quantifying what was a personal journey for many participants.



A *limbe* horseman, Gai Anderson and Libby House

Preparations are underway for the 2011 Festival. The provisional theme is 'Go Green!'. The area was affected by the West Atlas oil spill in late 2009, heightening awareness of the frailty of fishing and seaweed farming activities and the importance of caring for the environment. Dancing, music and horsemanship will again be an important part of the festival. A lantern parade with images drawn from local ecology is planned. This year Gai Anderson who, through indigo foundation, assisted the production of the Festival last year has been awarded a prestigious *Asialink* grant to return to Rote to mentor the local sub-committee producing 'Go Green!'

It promises to be an exciting time, I can't wait to be there, and look forward to reporting on it soon!

+ + +

If you are interested in the links between Rote, local community development and refugees coming to Australia, we refer you to an article in the new *Inside Indonesia* magazine.

Of fishers and men: Indonesians held in detention in Australia for people smuggling are there because of poverty

<http://www.insideindonesia.org/stories/of-fishers-and-men-20031408>

Food for thought!

Illawarra Children's Services partners with indigo foundation and Lua Lemba in Rote

Liz Depers - Illawarra Children's Services

Illawarra Children's Services believes that children should have access to quality childcare and education and that education in the early years is critical in shaping a child's future. That's why when indigo foundation approached us about providing technical assistance for one of its international projects we were happy to provide it.



Illawarra Children's Services is a not-for profit organisation that began in 1981. Celebrating our 30th birthday later this year, we are an organisation dedicated to providing quality child care. We do this by working within our values of imagination, courage, honesty, integrity, respect, and diversity. Known for our industry leading practice, particularly in the design of natural outdoor playscapes and in implementing the National Early Years Learning Framework, Illawarra Children's Services was well placed to provide the technical assistance Rote was requesting.

Jenny Hopkins, Secretary of the Illawarra Children's Services Board will represent us in Rote. She has a long career in Early Childhood, particularly working with disadvantaged communities. As Head Teacher of Early Childhood Studies at TAFE, Jenny has dedicated many years teaching others the importance of education in the early years and how to do it. Her career has taken her to all sorts of childhood centres and areas, from rich schools where money was no object to the very poorest of schools where resources were nonexistent.

Jenny goes to Rote with the purpose of Illawarra Children's Services underlining her work: empowering children, families and communities to reach their potential through high quality child care and education. She will do what she loves best with children - reading, singing and playing games. In fact, anything to do with self esteem, attachment behaviours and encouraging a sense of community within the kindergarten.

Jenny will be working with the Rotinese kindergarten teachers to develop a three year program to introduce 'best' practice ideas in areas such as creative arts, health and nutrition, music, games, stories and English. She will also meet with local government representatives to discuss the potential for the program to engage kindergarten teachers from other districts of Rote.

Our partnership with Lua Lemba and indigo foundation is full of potential and we look forward to our first venture together!

Partner: Lua Lemba Community and Education Foundation
indigo foundation Project Manager: Libby House
MC Representative: Sally Stevenson



Uganda - pictures of Joy (Katooko)!

In March we transferred \$1,200 to each of the four community based organisations (CBOs) we support in Budaka, Uganda. In partnership with these organisations we are working to build community capacity to support and nurture orphans and other children made vulnerable by HIV and AIDS. Activities include the provision of scholastic materials to these children; training for CBOs to work with and support vulnerable children; pilot program work with orphans and other vulnerable children; organisational capacity building and support for the CBOs (e.g. program planning, funding submissions and report writing); and training for teachers and program development in schools.

Below are photos of the meeting where Joy Katooko, our Liaison Officer and the District Governor Sam Mulomi, our initial contact in Budaka, distributed the funds. During this meeting the Kakule AIDS and Grieved Families Association, the Galimagi Orphanage Group Against HIV/AIDS and Iki Iki AIDS Community Initiative agreed that one week later Joy and Sam would be invited to witness the subsequent distribution of material purchased with the money.



Joy Katooko, our Liaison Officer with Dr Christine, District Director Medical Services.



Handing over funds to Galimagi Orphanage Group Against HIV/AIDS



Members of the community at Iki Iki AIDS Community Initiative office grounds during the handover of funds

In May, Ian Seal our Uganda Project Manager and Libby House, Development Coordinator will be travelling to Uganda on a capacity building and monitoring and evaluation visit.

Partner: Four community based organisations, Budaka local government
Indigo Foundation Project Manager: Ian Seal
MC Representative: Sally Stevenson

A story from Afghanistan

Salman Jan – Project Advisor

When I was in Borjegai, I found the story of the man in the photo most striking. His name is Nowroz and people called him Nowroz Mama, (Mama, meaning maternal uncle). He was born with a mental disability.



He is married and has three children between the ages of 9 and 16. Nowroz and his wife managed to send their three boys to indigo foundation supported school. His boys have completed year 10, year 6 and year 3 of their schooling respectively.

My team and I spend a night in one of the sub-villages of the neighbouring Jirghai Village and there we met Nowruz Mama.

As you can see in his photo, he was working as a shepherd. His entire annual salary was about 120 Ser wheat (Ser is a measurement used in Afghanistan and one Sir is about 7 kilograms). Thus the entire family salary was less than AU\$ 400 dollars a year and with that they had managed to send off all their three kids to school.

He was talking a lot of nonsense at night but he was very clear about his boys schooling. He said he is doing the job for his children to go to school. He was very content about his life and said he has a very happy life.

We arranged for one day off for him from his village employers to take him to his home. Throughout the night before we were to leave he didn't sleep a blink to be sure we didn't run away in the morning. We all slept in one room and with every little move he was on his toes in order to make sure that we would really take him home. In the morning, we took him to his home for one day and there we met his wife. We found out that the entire family was managed by his wife. An extremely poor but very clever and shy woman. She even didn't tell us her name. Women are not known by their names in rural Afghanistan. They are the daughter, wife and/or mother of this and that. On the way we bought Nowruz Mama a lot of stuff including dry fruits, washing powder, chocolates and sweets.

At night when we were talking to his employers, the Financial Trustee joked with the villagers and said that a person like Nowroz from Borjegai is better than the Maliks, Khans and tribal heads of Jirghai because his children are more educated than theirs.

The villagers admitted with examples that Nowroz Mama's children really had higher levels of education than the children of the tribal head in that Jirghai sub-village. Nawruz Mama and his wife promised us that they will do everything to keep their boys in school and we left their house with no doubt that soon the three boys will graduate from their secondary schools.

Later on we found out that the entire village had their eyes on Nawruz Mama's children and it had become a matter for the village to really keep the boys in school as the best examples of the Village's commitment to education.

I found his story inspiring.

Some fleeting impressions from Port au Prince, Haiti

Stefan Knollmayer – Management Committee

Stefan works in CARE Australia's humanitarian and emergency unit and was in Haiti on a monitoring visit as part of CARE's Haiti earthquake response Advisory Committee.

As you fly over Port au Prince, the capital of Haiti, a veritable urban sprawl spreads out beneath you. Amongst the 2.1 million living in a variety of permanent and temporary accommodation, you can still see the damaged houses, uncleared rubble, and tents from spontaneous settlements that have sprung up on any patches of available ground (hill sides, public parks, farming land). Often every second or third house stands (or rather lies) with the upper floor still intact but lying like a pile of crumpled papers on top of each other, clearly illustrating the force of the January 2010 earthquake (and the poor building codes that permitted simple concrete

constructions that turned into death traps for their inhabitants).

A fleeting glance at Port-au-Prince, and anyone would be forgiven for thinking that the earthquake occurred yesterday – but scratch under the surface and delve into the moving bustle of the streets and there is a palpable dynamism, with a street economy that is booming again and offering real hope for survivors. Traffic is hectic, roads are congested (and rush hour means sitting in a car to get to work for hours!), street vendors are active selling their wares, and technicoloured buses are crammed with people travelling around the urban sprawl to work and for business.

After all, this is a country of a truly resilient people, who fought off slavery and survived civil wars, countless massacres and oppressive leadership, lived through a massive earthquake killing 300,000 people (injuring a further 300,000 and rendering over 1 million people homeless – essentially the same magnitude as the 2004 Boxing Day Tsunami but concentrated in one city!) and now face a cholera outbreak that has claimed the lives of over 3,000 people and made a further 170,000 ill.

The vast majority of Haiti's people lived in desperate poverty and insecurity before the earthquake – and do so today. Even before the January 2010, less than 50% of the Haitian population had proper access to water and sanitation. The situation is still the same outside the spontaneous settlements. While a significant number of families have left the internally displaced camps for better accommodation, the most vulnerable families, with no other alternative, are still living in camps. There is a real fear, as the earthquake media attention decreases one year on, that funding opportunities will dry up leading to more vulnerability to those yet to find permanent accommodation solutions and faced with a continued lack of basic services.

While it may seem that little has changed since January 2010, a continuing concerted humanitarian response is widespread, sustained and reaching hundreds of thousands with the basics of clean water, sanitation, shelter, medical support, training and education. Transitional Shelter programs to try and get people out of the spontaneous tent suburbs have picked up momentum, although still a fraction of what might be needed to dent the problem. The challenge is to see these shelter initiatives, for example, as the start of potential solutions – that can be added to and improved over time by the families who benefit from the programs.

Ironically too, the Cholera outbreak has shown the humanitarian response of both the government and its partners at its best. The response scale, connectedness and collaboration between agencies has been positive, but the crisis has underlined how under developed Haiti is in terms of clean water, sanitation and how steep a hill there is to climb to offer improved and sustained solutions. The fear amongst all in Haiti, is that Cholera will come back with a vengeance during next year's rainy season.

There are no easy answers to many of Haiti's intractable problems – it will take time, and a concerted effort to start to address some of the underlying causes to Haiti's social exclusion - poor governance, lack of access to education and insufficient opportunities for sustainable livelihoods. Humanitarian and development organisations operational in Haiti are stressing the need for patience and a realistic understanding of what is possible in the Haitian context – recovery from such a devastating earthquake and the necessary social change and reform to make a lasting difference takes time. This requires patience on all sides and it is vital that organisations and individuals stay engaged with Haiti as it continues its painful journey of national reconstruction.

Solomon Islands Update

Lucinda Wilson – Management Committee Representative

The project we support in the Solomon Islands is Turusuala, a training centre for the youth of the Weathercoast.

In mid April, I am heading there to undertake a monitoring and evaluation trip with a view to negotiating a third Commitment Agreement with Turusuala, again for three years.

The Weathercoast is possibly the most remote part of the Solomon Islands and the trip there will be interesting to say the least! The new project manager, Doni Kelly, who has been the liaison officer for the project for some time and who is the indigo foundation's first local project manager, will guide me to the training centre. He tells me 'we cannot depend much on private boat operators because they do not have very reliable schedules. Regular boat will be a fortnight and they sometimes do not go as far as Turusuala.' His other suggestions are 'that we travel by plane (Solomon Airlines) to Marau which is about 70 Kilometres from Turusuala... We can hire Outboard Motor Canoe from Marau to Turusuala. It will take us 3 hours on the OBM/canoe. The sea is not always friendly so we also have to consider the weather while at Marau which is the border of Weathercoast. Return trip will be by OBM from Turusuala or we can walk back to Marau (it is one day) if you like. Estimated walking time is 14 hours with 4 rivers to cross on the way. Maybe we can arrange to stay at Tavanipupu Resort or find shelter with locals.'

As I get very seasick I have told him I prefer the overland route! However as Doni has just recovered from two weeks in hospital with malaria, I am also weary of suggesting two 14 hour hikes!

I look forward to telling you all about what happens in the next newsletter.



Tramping across New Zealand for the Solomon Islands

Shalane Hopkins from Canada and Alexandra Ward from the UK had been tent neighbours at a campsite at

Broome, Australia, for just four days when they decided they wanted to spend the next seven months together, tramping the length of New Zealand.

The women are now firm friends but admit they have had their moments and have learned a lot about relationships during their journey from Cape Reinga to Bluff. They are now at Lake Hawea and have about 500km to walk before reaching Bluff by the end of April.

During their long, off-road walk they have raised more than \$2,500 for our Solomon Islands project. They also spent ten days working as volunteers for the Christchurch earthquake relief effort.

'We were in Greymouth when February 22 happened. We were just sitting there watching it on TV. There's something about sitting there, glued to TV feeling helpless. So we put our trek on hold and went there to help.'

'We were with the Student Army and it was fabulous to be able to do your bit,' said Shalane, a support worker from Calgary, said. 'I don't think we could be so close to Christchurch and not help,' said Alex, a human resources executive from Kent.

They valued being able to meet New Zealanders and experience the country pulling together, which was something tourists did not often get, they said.

The Te Araroa Trail had been the biggest tramping challenge of their lives and beat travelling on a tour bus, they said. The women's progress can be followed on their websites www.missionlivelife.com and www.onelifeadventures.com.



Shalane (left) and Alexandra rest at Lake Hawea as they near the end of their 3000km fundraising trek along the Te Araroa Trail.

Photo by Marjorie Cook

We thank Shalane and Alex for their wonderful effort on our behalf.

indigo foundation Governance Review

After ten years of operation, significant growth over the last two years, and a healthy turnover of volunteers the Management Committee though it prudent to undertake a governance review. Deb Michael, the principal partner of RPR Consulting very generously offered to do the review pro bono. RPR Consulting has expertise in organisational, program and policy development; facilitation and community consultation; good governance and organisational change; and good practice and quality improvement.

Below are excerpts from the review, including some examples of the positive findings and some of our challenges.

The Review was conducted in the second half of January 2011. It has involved:

- A review of relevant documentation provided by indigo foundation, including: Rules of Association; policy and procedure manual; examples of agendas, briefing papers and minutes of management committee meetings; financial statements and finance reports; annual report 2009-2010
- telephone interviews with all but one current Management Committee member and other key stakeholders including: current staff, a selection of Project Managers, funding partners, and other volunteers.

These interviews followed a semi-structured format, seeking experiences and views about indigo foundation's governance understandings, structures and processes. A framework for reviewing the governance of not-for profit community organisations in Australia, developed by RPR Consulting, was used to guide the review. This framework has as its starting point the work of John Carver's Policy Governance model, which has been widely embraced by larger organisations in the not-for profit sector, in Australia and overseas.

General health of indigo foundation's governance

indigo foundation is a very highly regarded organisation. All stakeholders were proud to be associated with the organisation. Founders and Management Committee members are generally seen to be people of very high integrity who have devoted a great deal of passion, energy and commitment to the work of the organisation. Some typical comments made to the reviewer included:

- *It's the most professional organisation I've ever been involved with*
- *They are highly critical and self-reflective- it's crucial to their success*
- *It's an awesome organisation*
- *The networks indigo foundation has are phenomenal*
- *A terrific organisation – people with great hearts – doing amazing things.*

At the same time.....stakeholders identified a number of challenges the organisation is now facing due to its stage of development. There was strong recognition that as indigo foundation grows, in line with recent and future plans, this will necessitate some tweaking of old approaches, as well as development of some new structures and systems.

The four key areas of consideration

1. Leadership and direction setting

This area of responsibility relates to the critical role a governing body must play in setting the overall, big-picture directions for the organisation. The governing

body defines why the organisation, exists, how it will conduct its business, and what it hopes to achieve.

- ✓ Since its inception, indigo foundation has been a strongly values and mission driven organisation. It was established by a core group of people who felt passionate about adopting and supporting a local community driven approach to international aid and development. This background was understood and highly valued by all stakeholders engaged in this review. It was cited as one of indigo foundation's greatest strengths.
- X The values and vision that have been the driving strength of Indigo was also cited by some stakeholders as a potential weakness. By many admissions, indigo foundation has long been a network of quite like-minded friends and associates. As the organisation grows and the networks become more stretched, it will be critical to ensure that newcomers – be they staff, Management Committee, volunteers, or partners – continue to gain a good understanding of, and commitment to, the values and intended directions of indigo foundation.

2. Stewardship

The stewardship role of the Management Committee relates to putting the policies, structures and personnel in place to effectively manage the organisation. Normally the governing body would set the broad principles and parameters for how the organisation will be run rather than the operational detail, which is delegated to the General Manager to work out.

- ✓ The Management Committee has long recognised the managerial load which has been carried by the Chair, and in light of the decision to pursue growth, a General Manager position has been created. This was viewed by stakeholders as an important step towards ensuring the long-term sustainability of the organisation.
- ↑ Better use of the website by all stakeholders is also needed. All policies, procedures, templates, minutes, and other key documents should be accessible online, to cut down on some of the administrative load on all positions – paid and unpaid.
- X Currently Project Managers are expected to raise funds for their projects. This adds a substantial work load, as well a whole new layer of complexity in relation to the skills required for the position. This structure also reinforces the focus of fundraising as project-based rather than supporting the work of indigo foundation.

3. Meeting legal and fiduciary requirements

Governing bodies must be aware of and clearly understand their legal responsibilities within the organisation. This includes systematic monitoring and review of any matters likely to expose the organisation to legal risk. One particular area of risk relates to the organisation's financial health, both short and long-term. Governing bodies need to undertake long-term financial planning to identify future sources of revenue and resources; assess budgets prepared by management to ensure resources are allocated to the outcomes and

priorities determined in planning; and monitor expenditure to ensure money is being used well. Legally, individual members of the Management Committee of an incorporated association have very little personal responsibility for legal or financial problems, unlike Directors of a Company or a Cooperative. However, this does not negate their moral responsibilities to show "due diligence" in their role – which they owe their staff, volunteers, project partners and communities they serve.

- ✓ The issue of biggest concern in relation to legal responsibilities has been the safety and security of people engaged (paid or unpaid) by indigo foundation to undertake in-country visits to projects. Projects are often based in poor and unstable regions (such as Afghanistan, Palestine, Congo) so duty of care is a major issue. Responding to this duty has been discussed at length by the Management Committee, and pro-bono legal advice has been received. A Safety and Security Policy has been developed and implemented, which involves ongoing risk assessments pre and during trips and explicit steps to be taken to maximise safety.
- ✓ A Marketing and Fundraising Sub-committee has been established and is developing a more strategic and branded approach to income generation. This includes a focus on indigo foundation as an organisation, rather than relying solely on project linked fundraising. This is a significant shift to support the growth of indigo foundation's capacity overall.

4. Accountability to owners and those the organisation serves?

The starting point for accountability is knowing who 'owns' the organisation. It is a useful question for governing bodies to ask themselves – is it the management committee, the members, the funders/donors, and/or the communities the organisation serves? Governing bodies need to have policies about what its 'owners' can expect from the organisation and strategies in place for how they will communicate and account to them. Processes should go beyond merely producing an annual report and inviting people to an AGM, and include seeking feedback as input to planning and evaluation processes.

- ✓ indigo foundation appears to take its accountability responsibilities seriously at all levels. It values its volunteers, donors, and partners and actively encourages them to engage with the organisation's work. Communication strategies include the website, newsletters, annual report, annual dinner, fundraising events, and the annual workshop day which feeds into the strategic planning process. The Monitoring and Evaluation Framework for projects explicitly states that participation must be as broadly based as possible and include the perspectives of the full range of people. It should also involve collaborative processes to set goals and measure progress in reaching them.

- ↑ While the Monitoring and Evaluation Framework ensures that feedback is sought from communities served by projects, a few stakeholders commented that gaining honest feedback can be hampered by the inherent power imbalance of indigo foundation providing funding to those communities. This unintentional barrier can probably only be best overcome over time as relationships become stronger and greater trust develops. Nonetheless, it is worthwhile considering new, and perhaps more culturally appropriate, methods for gaining feedback.
- ? A few instances were also cited where indigo foundation policy had clashed with local decision-making about how a project is run, highlighting the fine balancing act that is involved in this work when community wishes conflict with indigo foundation research and knowledge on effective practice. Careful and respectful communication and management in resolving these types of differences can mitigate against damaging valued partnerships.

Conclusion

Overall the governance of indigo foundation is in good shape. There is a strongly committed and hard-working group of people on the Management Committee with a good range of appropriate skills. The organisation has been established with a clear vision, and a strong values base, which is understood and endorsed by all involved. There are a range of methods in which indigo foundation communicates with its members, partners, and the communities it serves. Accountability is taken very seriously. There is a good policy framework in place, which is continuously refined, but would probably benefit from a more systematic approach to review.

The Management Committee meets regularly, has productive meetings in which members are engaged in meaningful discussions which result in decisions when required. This includes monitoring reports on each funded project. There is a regular strategic planning cycle that is structured to gain the input of other indigo foundation volunteers and supporters by linking it to the annual workshop. Legal and financial issues are taken seriously; appropriate systems have been set up and advice is readily available when needed.

To date the organisation has largely been structured to be governed and managed by volunteers. It has been quite successful, despite the considerable load many people take on. Discussions have lead to a decision to grow the organisation. Along with this has come the recognition, that the expectations on volunteers cannot be pushed much further, and to be sustainable in the longer term, additional paid staff have been created indigo foundation is therefore in a transition phase – this presents a number of challenges.

None of these are likely to be insurmountable to indigo foundation. Continuing to work together the way they do – in the Management Committee, with volunteers,

and partners and communities, indigo foundation is well placed to succeed.



Note: In February we established the Development Sub Committee

The sub committee is made up of indigo foundation Chair, a permanent Management Committee member, and a rotating Advisory Committee member. Other Management Committee members can attend if they wish, so as not to lose a connection with the projects. The General Manager and Development Coordinator attend meetings. The subcommittee reports to, and can refer any major issues that arise either in terms of the program or policy to the broader Management Committee. The committee meets quarterly to:

- a. Undertake annual reviews of projects
- b. Receive project updates and provide comments/decisions/guidance as requested.
- c. Recommend ongoing support for projects to the Management Committee
- d. Recommend new projects to the Management Committee
- e. Award the Development Praxis prize
- f. Receive and comment on the Development Coordinator's report.

Our Operational Principles

indigo foundation projects are chosen, monitored and evaluated against a set of *Guiding Principles* (community ownership, sustainability, transparency and equity). Applying these concepts 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.

In order to facilitate the implementation of principles, the type of operational support we provide our partners is critical. This can either enable or undermine efforts to maintain or achieve the Guiding Principles. Therefore, we have a set of operational principles by which we work and which in many ways are the practical manifestation of our Guiding Principles.

Wherever possible and appropriate the following key operational principles should be applied to projects:

1. **Core funding:** Funding should not be tied to specific projects or activities, but rather provided for the general use of the organisation. Funds can be used for ongoing costs (such as salaries or recurrent administration expenses) or specific program or activities. However, we need to be assured the budget of the organisation aligns to and reflects a robust strategic planning process (including appropriate identification of community needs) and the

reporting of funds received and expended is transparent to the community.

The establishment phase of the project may require some conditionality on use of funds as the relationship (and trust) is established.

: *Relevant guiding principles*: sustainability, community ownership & transparency

2. **Commitment to relationships:** we believe that robust relationships based on equality are at the core of successful community development. Strong relationships provide a foundation for honest and meaningful exchanges, and for when circumstances become difficult. Our commitment to relationships is formally expressed through our Commitment Agreements which should aim to be for three years. A persisting relationship is a key criteria for supporting an organisation, and should be maintained and supported through both formal channels (such as liaison officers, reporting requirements) and informal means (emails and telephone conversations).

: *Relevant guiding principles*: sustainability & transparency

3. **Partnerships:** Most marginalised communities we support do not have access to national or international assistance: they do not have adequate access to telecommunications and/or are not large enough to be noticed (or considered administratively efficient). Strengthening and broadening links to the greater development community (and those who can provide better technical or financial assistance than Indigo) should be a key component of project management support.

: *Relevant guiding principles*: sustainability & equity

4. **Risk taking:** empowerment and change do not happen without taking some risks. Indigo supports calculated risk taking (mitigated by a thorough risk analysis which includes risk management options) where it has a strong chance supporting a community's development priorities. Such risk taking may include supporting new or fledgling organisations (noting that small community based organisations in marginalised communities are inherently risky because of limited capacity and usually a strong reliance on individuals) or providing catalytic funding to test or demonstrate the validity of development idea.

: *Relevant guiding principles*: transparency & equity

5. **Reflection:** quality monitoring and evaluation of support is crucial to ongoing development success. We believe that at the core of effective monitoring and evaluation is an ability to critically self analyse – and an open and ‘safe’ environment of discussions about mistakes and lessons learned should be facilitated. Partners should be strongly encouraged to not only reflect on their own progress but on the support that Indigo has provided.

: *Relevant guiding principles*: transparency & sustainability

Marketing & fundraising

Successful events and future plans!

Lucinda Wilson - Marketing & fundraising, Management Committee

Community events and fundraisers ‘spread the word’ about us and raise the necessary funds to support communities around the world. Our supporters continue to do a great job – please take the time to read about their successes below.

: **Ian Seal** organised ‘Hope Never Runs Dry - a fundraiser for the Uganda project’. On Friday 25th March at *Swipers Gully* vineyard, just outside Melbourne played host to almost 50 people, to raise money for our project in Budaka. Those who attended enjoyed a 3 course meal, musical entertainment, and viewed a photo exhibition focused mostly on Uganda but also including photographs from our Rote project, and other projects Ian is involved in around the world. The photographs were on sale, along with a range of Ugandan handicrafts, and a silent auction was held with a range of donated goods and services. Ian gave a short presentation about the Budaka project.

The event was an incredible success raising almost \$8,000, as well as pledges of further support. Thanks goes to the group of hardworking and enthusiastic volunteers that made the event happen, and the several people who were very generous with donations.



The exhibition of photographs will continue to hang in the Swipers Gully vineyard in Kangaroo Ground until Sunday 10th April. If you're interested in viewing them, call Swipers Gully (Eltham College) on 03 9437 2222 to check when they are open.

- : **Pat Duggan** hosted a lovely, intimate drinks evening in Canberra which not only mixed long term supporters with new friends, it gave us the opportunity to talk about our project in Afghanistan and it raised almost \$500.
- : **Clare Matthews and Sally Stevenson** held a thoroughly enjoyable clothing swap in late March which raised over \$600 and introduced a group of new people to the work Indigo Foundation does.

- On Sunday 3rd April **Sue Everard** and the **Rosanna Support Group** held a market stall at Latrobe University and recreated their wonderful success of last year, raising over \$800 from the sale of household goods and books, and a few donations. All funds will go to the Uganda Project.

Maintaining the fundraising momentum we have developed is a priority, and will always be a key concern of ours. If you are able to join us at any of the following, please do!

Upcoming events include:

- An afternoon tea in **Canberra** on the 16th April will cater to around 30-40 people who will be first time supporters of our work. Attendees will hear about the positive experiences of India project managers Nicole and Cameron Moore while being treated to the fine catering skills of the two amazing women organising the event. Organisers **Karen Baumgart** and **Sarah Watson** are experienced home caterers with a number of successful events under their collective sleeves. We are exceptionally fortunate to have them on board and ready to promote our work.
- The University of Wollongong Library** has chosen us as their charity of choice for 2011, a decision we are, naturally, thrilled about.

On the 19th and 20th April, the **Library** will be hosting a 'mega book and DVD swap' in the Library's Panizzi room to raise funds for our projects. Not just a fundraising event, this will be wonderful opportunity for us to showcase our work to the staff, students and the broader University community.

It costs \$5 to participate and you can swap the same number of items as you take in.

Entry also gets you a ticket in raffle for Apple **ipad** – and additional tickets for the raffle are also on sale.

The swap is open to the community

Come and join in the fun!!

- Libby Lloyd** is organising a dinner in Canberra in June which will highlight the success of our Afghan project, with Virginia Haussegger (ABC news reader in the ACT) as MC, a great auction, great food and indigo foundation wine!

Watch our website and facebook for details!

+++ Wine sales: +++

With our own label, we have a great range of value for money wines from Prospect Wines. **Starting at \$10 a bottle**, we encourage you to support this fundraiser - for every bottle of wine we receive \$4.

Simply go **on-line system** for ordering. Click on the link to go directly to our fundraiser page on the Prospect Wines web site: <http://www.prospectwines.com.au/?k1I11&R7G&v1n>

If you want to order wine but don't like to purchase via the internet, there is a downloadable order form on the website. You can print the order form, and send it direct to Prospect Wines. This order form is also great if you want to take orders from your friends, work mates or neighbours.

For every dozen wines – we make \$48!!



indigo foundation think piece

Foreign workers, local NGOs and local Christian Churches NGO support networks for Vietnamese guest workers in Malaysia

Dr Vicki Crinis - Research Fellow, Faculty of Arts, University of Wollongong.

Dr Crinis' research focuses on globalisation mobility and development: labour migration, regulation and work; and bordered exclusions.

Malaysia has a workforce of over 11 million of which approximately 3 million are guest workers on short-term contracts employed in the unskilled sectors of the economy. The underrepresentation of migrant interests over the years in both a national, regional and international context, in unions and formal organisations, have left vulnerable transnational guest workers in very unfriendly environments. In response NGOs offer guest workers a safety net that unions and formal institutions have not been able to offer to date. These support groups can be explained in the context of social networks which include international civil society movements, local NGOs, church outreaches, and workers who support workers on the ground. There is however limits of transnational advocacy groups organising guest workers since the Malaysian government also plays a role in mediating between local and transnational groups. In the case of Malaysia however, non Malay church institutions are perceived as non-intrusive and as a result are allowed to operate free services for non Malay citizens and non-citizens.

This piece highlights the importance of NGOs to the lives of migrant workers. In 2009 I was conducting research in Malaysia and in the first week newspaper reports highlighted how an Indonesian domestic maid

was beaten and burned and another committed suicide. These are not isolated incidents.

Foreign workers, local NGOs and local Christian Churches

NGOs such as *Tenaganita* have played an important role in migrant labour issues. Although they cannot effectively perform the functions of trade unions, they have provided Vietnamese workers with an alternative source of information. These organisations have two main roles: firstly they help workers who need help to deal with the police, the immigration department and the embassies and refer labour problems to the local trade union; secondly they work with the local church communities of Malaysia to provide outreach services for the workers. Labour NGOs are almost totally funded by international agencies and donations.

In the last ten years *Tenaganita* branches have been established in different states in Malaysia. As part of this research an NGO team was interviewed in Penang. When asked how they help Vietnamese foreign workers one asserted that;

As one of us is a native Vietnamese and the other is a Malaysian lawyer trained in industrial law (and we both are fluent in Vietnamese, English and Bahasa Malaysia), we believe we have the necessary skills to help them. We work closely with other local non-government organisations to identify those who need our assistance. We help arbitrate between the workers and their employers, we help argue their cases in court, and we counsel those who are in need of advice. In the future we have plans to invite experts and guest speakers to impart to them useful skills such as financial management skills because most of them are still poor when their work contract expires.

Knowing the depth of isolation that foreigners experience in the host country these activists have banded together in the hope that they may improve workers lives and generate worker's awareness of economic issues.

Since Vietnamese outmigration to Malaysia commenced *Tenaganita* has received support from international civil society movements such as the Vietnamese American boatpeople. In response to the inhumane treatment and actions against Vietnamese refugees, Boat People SOS (BPSOS) was founded in the US in 1980 with the mission to rescue boat people at sea (Boat People SOS 2009). These activists are now well organised in defending the rights of Vietnamese workers abroad. The BPSOS outreach is through many venues; Catholic churches, Protestant churches, civic associations, labour unions and word of mouth among the workers themselves.

On the local scene, the Human Resource Development run by the Malaysian Catholic Church in Penang and Kuala Lumpur commenced help lines for Filipino

domestic workers in the 1990s and in recent times has established a Migrants and Refugees Ministry. These earlier experiences enabled the Ministry to learn from practise and to extend services to different ethnic groups in Malaysia. Although the early networks started with Filipino domestic workers at present these networks extend to Vietnamese, Myanmarese, Nepalese and Indian workers in Kuala Lumpur and Penang and to organisations outside Malaysia in the countries of origin. The church plans to extend assistance and pre-departure guidance to foreign workers before leaving the sending country.

In addition many religious communities under the umbrella of their outreach services encourage self help among ethnic groups and accept volunteer workers. Young workers who speak the language and understand the needs of the workers act as mediators. One worker interviewed was a Vietnamese volunteer interpreter who assisted the Outreach by translating for Vietnamese workers who needed help with language interpretations. When asked what dreams he has, he said that "*right now I just want to help Vietnamese workers deal with working in Malaysia*".

Protestant Churches also play vital roles in providing social networks to Vietnamese workers in places such as Batu Pahat, Kuala Lumpur and Penang. According to the Vietnamese American Pastor;

The Malaysian Government allowed Vietnamese to work in factories about 6 years ago. About 100,000 came in the first year. We had about 6000 Vietnamese working here in Batu Pahat. The church started reaching out to meet their needs about 4 to 5 years ago as the church is located very near to the industrial estate in Batu Pahat. We teach the workers English and Mandarin because they need language skill to communicate with the management and also other workers. We also provide for those who are sick and those in financial difficulty.

The harsh realities of 'contract' work in Malaysia mean that some workers leave their employers join up with street gangs and steal to survive. The outreach organisations are well aware of these problems and are not afraid to reach out to workers in need. They assist the workers with everything from court hearings to illness, accidents and criminal charges. This is exemplified by a NGO in Penang funded by the Protestant Church;

The Vietnamese here are also besieged by social problems such as, unwanted pregnancies, sexually transmitted diseases, alcoholism, in-fighting, robbery and gambling. Many do not know whom to turn to for help due to the language barrier (many are not fluent in the local language or English). Our ministry works closely with them, offering them legal support, teaching them about the dangers of

HIV/AIDS and starting them on English language classes.

According to one worker reflecting his feelings for the church community, “*church people treat us well. They love us like family member. If not, nobody care about us*”. In many interviews the workers described feelings of comfort knowing they had access to outreach networks. Most complimented church groups for making their stay in Malaysia more bearable and, in many cases, enjoyable. In contrast other guest workers complained about the harsh working conditions, feelings of fatigue and loneliness in Malaysia. Despite different religious denominations outreaches assist all Vietnamese workers in need of help. While many workers are not interested in religious institutions and do not participate or attend religious fellowships they nevertheless are aware of the help and free services these organisation offer ‘troubled’ workers.

indigo foundation People



Jenny Dixon – General Manager

I became aware of indigo foundation when I saw Sally Stevenson’s photo in the University of Wollongong Alumni newsletter,

receiving the Chancellors Award for Community Service. Our children attended the same primary school and I recognised her as one of the other ‘waiting’ parents. As curiosity would dictate I read through the indigo foundation webpage and was amazed not only by the organisation, but also the secrets a playground can hold.

My first real conversation with Sally was at Green Bean, a play café for children, a place of repose for mothers. indigo foundation was talked about and so was Illawarra Children’s Services (ICS), of which I am President of the Board. The project in Rote, Indonesia was looking for some technical training for their kindergarten teachers, who had heard of ‘world’s best practice’ and wanted to improve the quality of their teaching. That cemented my involvement in indigo foundation, as we worked towards ICS providing some funding and the expertise needed by Rote.

I have been on ICS board for the past seven years (five as President). ICS is a not-for-profit childcare organisation that provides quality childcare and is a market leader in outdoor environments and values creativity as fundamental in learning. I became involved with them when my oldest child was at one of their childcare centres and I had strong opinions about some of the decisions being made there – the policies have since changed!

Not only had ICS been lucky enough to become involved with indigo foundation, so have I.

For several years I was a stay at home mother, and then started teaching adult women to sew. While I loved playing with the colour and textiles, and for some women it was about the mechanics of sewing, for many of the women and for me, the sewing was just the mechanism on which to build relationships and a safe place of friendship and support.

Once my older two children had gone to school, and the youngest one had started pre-school I increased my time in the workforce. I work for The Housing Trust, a Community Housing Provider. The position seems to have morphed into a project management role of sorts, assisting the Executive Officer with the surprising and ever changing range of things that fly past.

One of the things that came up in my interview for the General Manager position was that I was extremely curious to know, what the volunteers clearly already know. What is it that keeps indigo foundation volunteers so dedicated? As I am starting to get to know everybody and as I talk to people about indigo foundation it would appear the answer is different for everybody. What is consistent however is the integrity and respect that is shared.

I am so proud to have been invited to be part of indigo foundation and I sincerely cannot wait to see where the next year will take us. Thank you for all the support that has been offered. I look forward to knowing you all much better.

Management Committee update

Sally Stevenson – Chairperson

I hope you enjoyed our first newsletter of 2011. We had a relatively quiet start to this year in terms of project activities – after an extremely busy end of year in 2010.

However! The next three months will see Lucinda Wilson head off to the Solomon Islands to work with Doni Kelli on our support to Turusuala training centre. Her departure will be closely followed by Libby House and Ian Seal travelling to Budaka in Uganda. Whilst in Kampala Libby and Ian will be staying with Veronique de Clerk, our representative who travelled to Congo last year, who is currently working for Medecins san Frontiers in Uganda. Since visiting Kokolopori Vero has spent more time in the Congo and will be continuing to advise us on how to manage the health project we support though Vie Sauvage. Libby will then be traveling (at her own expense) to Ethiopia for discussions about a potential project there.

I would like to warmly welcome Deborah Raphael to our Management Committee. Deborah is based in Sydney and brings to indigo foundation enormous and valued experience and skills in international development.

A lawyer by training, Deborah also has a Masters of International Social Development. Her work experience includes time as Manager for International Health Development at the Public Health and Community Medicine, UNSW as well as Programs Coordinator for the Diplomacy Training Program, Faculty of Law, UNSW and a Research and Development Associate at the UNSW Centre for Refugee Research. You can see why we are thrilled to have Deborah as part of the Management Committee! Deborah will be Management Committee Representative for our India project.

In February at our annual project manager workshop, we developed our strategic plan for the next five year. It was an enthusiastic and thoughtful process and we all feel optimistic about the next five years. Our June newsletter will include a summary of the plan, which will be focusing on strengthening our programs, structures and systems.

Finally, our warmest congratulations to Phil Strickland and Kate Weir on their recent wedding – wonderful news and we wish you all the happiness and prosperity in the world!

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Our annual dinner

This year's annual dinner in Sydney is being held at the State Library, a stunning location. This year the price includes wine and soft drinks so is a bargain.



The Indigo foundation invites you to share in a fun filled night of food, wine and celebration!

The evening begins with music, wine and canapés then progresses to the divine dining room of the State Library to hear about Indigo foundation's great work and be entertained by a very special guest

the first thing we offer is respect

When: Saturday 15 October 2011
6pm start

Where: Venue is the State Library of NSW:
Entrance via the Mitchell wing entrance
on Shakespeare place (facing the Cahill expressway)

Cost: Cost is \$100 per person for three courses and unlimited wine and soft drinks

RSVP: Lucinda.Wilson@blackstone.com.au
with payment. Please pay by direct deposit to the Indigo foundation
BSB: 032036 acc: 226470

Each year has been great but we are hoping this will be the best. Not only is it a fundraiser but the perfect chance to get together with all the Indigo foundation crew and celebrate the work we do.

Hope you can make it! Pass on the invite!!

Come to the University of Wollongong Library's '**MEGA book and DVD swap**', win an ipad and support our projects!

♦ ♦ ♦ details inside ♦ ♦ ♦

the first thing we offer is **respect**

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