

the first thing we offer is respect



iNK

indigo news & knowledge



MAY 2018

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COVER IMAGE: STUDENTS IN THEIR NEW SCHOOL BUILDING AT SHEBAR HIGH SCHOOL IN JIRGHAI, AFGHANISTAN

from us to you

To open this edition of indigo iNK, we have some exciting news to share with you. Our schools program in Borjagai and Jirghai has been chosen for an award from the Afghan Ministry of Education.

To mark Afghan New Year, Afghan President Ashraf Ghani asked education authorities to find and acknowledge successful education programs. Our long-standing partnership in Borjagai and Jirghai was one of only two programs acknowledged by the Provincial Head of Education in Ghazni. We want to congratulate the entire Borjagai and Jirghai team – from our successive Partnership Advisors Salman Jan and Ali Reza Yunespour, to the Financial Trustees and the team in Afghanistan and to the teachers, families and community leaders who have put so much into making the program a success.

So it is timely that in this edition we look to our programs in Afghanistan – Ali Reza writes about the Jirghai partnership (including news that the program has expanded into a new province) and Partnership Coordinator Deborah Raphael looks back on our partnership in Kabul with the Women’s Empowerment Centre, including some incredible snapshots of the women who have received scholarships and completed their university degrees.

Our Partnership Coordinators David and Mandy When reflect on our partnership with Club Rafiki in Rwanda, shining a light not just on the outcomes of specific programs but also the growing strength of Club Rafiki’s governance, influence and networks. These elements are at the core of building strong and resilient local organisations – and in turn sustainable programs.

Finally, our think piece is on climate change and the Sustainable Development Goals. Across our programs, we are seeing the impacts of extreme and unpredictable weather. In Indonesia, the women-run gardening cooperatives that we work with are reporting that wet seasons are late and inconsistent leading to crop failure and low yields. Similar stories are coming from our partners in Uganda and 2017 saw severe water shortages in Tamil Nadu, India, where two of our community partners are based.

We hope you enjoy the read!

jirghai: growing our partnership, school by school

afghanistan



STUDENTS TRY OUT THEIR NEW DESKS AND CHAIRS AT SHUTURMURDA SCHOOL

Ali Reza Yunespour, Partnership Coordinator

This year marks 15 years since we first partnered with the Borjegai community to improve education outcomes in local schools and five years since we extended the program to Jirghai. Despite ongoing conflict and the fragile social and political context in Afghanistan, our partnership has remained strong and continues to scale up.

In the past 12 months, we have partnered with the Jirghai community to provide furniture for four schools, purchased and delivered over 3,000 books to five schools and built a new building for Qaraqul High School – our first time partnering with a school outside of Ghazni province. These programs have benefitted around 1800 primary and secondary students – a third of whom are girls – who enrolled in these schools last year.

And in exciting news, our education programs in Borjegai and Jirghai were acknowledged last month with an award by the Provincial Head of Education Mr Muheb Ansar. As always, these milestones are made possible because of the ongoing support of our committed volunteers,

generous donors including the Planet Wheeler Foundation, and of course the sacrifice, leadership and financial commitment of our partner communities.

Reflecting on the past year – students, principals, teachers

It has been an incredibly busy 12 months for our partnership with the Jirghai community.

At Shebar High School in Jirghai, the student cohort of 350 students enjoyed their first full academic year in their new school building, built with indigo foundation support in 2016. In August 2017, we worked with Jirghai schools to build a library and purchase 350 books, as well new desks and chairs so students no longer have to sit on the floor.

Masuma, a grade 10 student at Shebar High School, says: “I used to attend my classes under the old tents and empty shops for the past eight years. I am so happy since we have moved to the new building ... My family have seen our classes in the new school building and have allowed me to continue my education until grade 12.”

Similarly, students of the Fatimeya School did not have any furniture or access to a library since it was established in 2003. Last year, the community worked with indigo foundation to provide tables and chairs for around 250 students, and to cement the floors of eight-classrooms as well as the school corridor. These were significant achievements for Sar-e Garmab village, one of the most remote and isolated villages in Jirghai community.

The school's principal Juma Khan Alizada shares: "Until this year, our students used to sit on the floor, mostly on old plastic mats. However, we became aware of indigo foundation's work in Borjegai and Jirghai, and approached Ali Reza Yunespour for assistance for our furniture around two years ago. We are proud of our partnership with indigo foundation and the difference that it has made to our school and the education of our students."

In addition to students, local teachers have also reported benefits from our partnership with the Jirghai community. Access to resources like exercise books and teaching materials have been especially useful for some teachers, graduates from Borjegai and Jirghai schools, who for social and economic reasons could not attend higher education and teacher training institutions.

Kamali, a teacher of Dari and Pashto language in Jirghai's Shebar High School, graduated from a public teacher training institution in Kabul and has been teaching at Shebar High School for four years.

"We all work double shifts and it is very difficult for us to go to our homes every day and return back to work the next morning," she shares. "We used to cook and sleep in an old shop, which was also used as school storage, and sometime classroom, until indigo foundation provided the new school building for Shebar High School in 2016."

"Since then, we have been teaching our students in the new building. The indigo foundation-funded building, furniture and books have made things much easier for us," adds Kamali. Teachers have also renovated the shop—now no longer needed for storage—and have a proper place to sleep and cook.

Moving beyond Jirghai: Qaraqul High School building

Last year, for the first time in 15-years, our partnership moved beyond communities in Borjegai and Jirghai to the neighbouring Maidan Wardak province.

We partnered with the local community to construct a six-classroom building and a corridor for Qaraqul High School. It was completed in October 2017, and about 300 students – including 120 girls – have been using this building since the start of the new Afghan academic year in late March.

The Qaraqul High School project was a joint initiative that involved indigo foundation, our Kabul-based financial trustee and his team, the Jirghai school shura (Council), and the Qaraqul High School community elders and principal. In these isolated communities in rural Afghanistan, the construction of a new school building acted as a catalyst to bring these different parties together to share resources, knowledge, expertise and a commitment to education and community-led development.

The political and security context

Our partnerships in Borjegai, Jirghai and neighbouring provinces operate in a fragile social and political context – one that we work with our Afghan-based team to continually monitor and assess.

While the Afghan National Unity Government controls most of the district centres across Afghanistan, the Taliban, Islamic State and other insurgent groups put enormous political pressure on the government and are a real threat to innocent civilians.

Last year was one of the deadliest years since the fall of the Taliban regime in 2001, with 10,000 civilian deaths. The country-wide insecurity and partial withdrawal of international troops have exacerbated unemployment, poverty, and economic challenges – this in turn has hampered community development.

While the Afghan government expects 9 million students to be enrolled in primary and secondary schools this year, the reality on the ground is bleak: half of all primary and secondary



A CEREMONY TO CELEBRATE NEW DESKS AND TEXT BOOKS AT SHUTURMURDA HIGH SCHOOL

schools are without buildings, 3.5 million children (mostly girls) are out of school because of insecurity, cultural norms and a lack of education infrastructure; and between 600 and 1,000 schools have been closed due to the ongoing conflict.

In the face of these national statistics, our long-term partnership with the Borjegai has supported the local community to strengthen nine schools, ensuring they have basic infrastructure, including sound buildings, toilets, furniture and books. In turn, we have seen a growing number of girls enrolled in schools, a growing number of female teachers and much improved graduation rates. More importantly, at a time that the Afghan government lacks resources and capacity to provide equitable education and community services, our partner schools and communities are leading the way to educate their children and to fight poverty and insurgency.

Since 2003, indigo foundation has cherished the resolve and commitment of our partner communities. We will continue to support them in their desire to provide quality education and to achieve social and gender equity in their respective schools and communities.

women's empowerment centre: from strength to strength afghanistan



SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS FROM THE WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT CENTRE

Deborah Raphael, Partnership Coordinator

Seven years after giving seed-funding to the Women's Empowerment Centre in Kabul, we reflect on achievements and celebrate its young women graduates.

In 2011 Nasima Rahmani, a law lecturer at the Gawharshad Institute of Higher Education (Gawharshad Institute) in Kabul, approached close friends of indigo foundation Libby Lloyd (our Patron) and Ros Strong to marshal funding and support to establish a Women's Empowerment Centre (WEC) at the Gawharshad Institute. Libby and Ros were both former presidents of UNIFEM Australia (now UN Women) and knew Nasima from her time as a UNIFEM Australia Peace Scholar.

Nasima's vision for the WEC was for an organisation that would expand opportunities for young women in Afghanistan to access higher education through scholarships and other support. In particular, it would target young women who had graduated from high school but were blocked from going to university due to a lack of finances and family support.

This vision was perfectly matched to that of the Gawharshad Institute, a not-for-profit university established in 2010 by Dr Sima Samar, Chair of the Afghan Independent Human Rights

Commission. The Gawharshad Institute had already received some funding to cover the tuition fees of young women from international donors, but the support was ad-hoc and not coordinated. The role of the WEC would be to consolidate and grow this support.

By 2011, we at indigo foundation already had a strong commitment to improving education opportunities for girls in Afghanistan through the Borjegai schools program in Ghazni province. And we were keen to partner with Nasima and the WEC, as the organisation aligned with our guiding principles of community ownership, equity, transparency and sustainability.

We were particularly excited about the opportunity to play a catalytic role in getting a new women's organisation off the ground in Kabul. Rather than supporting only individual scholarships for Afghan women, we wanted to partner with the WEC as a whole – to build their capacity as a new organisation, to fund scholarships and other support, and to support WEC to build an academic and public dialogue about women and peace.

With confidence high at indigo foundation about the prospect of funding for the project, the partnership with WEC was launched in 2011.

Seven years later, under the leadership of Nasima Rahmani, WEC has become an integral part of the Gawharshad Institute, which now has



SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS FROM THE WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT CENTRE IN KABUL

about 2800 students of which 37% are female. Students come from most of the 34 provinces across Afghanistan and are a mix of religions and ethnicities.

To date, WEC has funded the tuition fees of more than 290 female students from financially and educationally disadvantaged backgrounds. It has supported those girls with an active program of English and computer studies and provided pastoral care. It has set up the first gender studies program in Afghanistan, a model for other universities in Afghanistan, and now offers gender studies as a diploma course. Funding has also supported the introduction of a Peace Studies Centre at the Gawharshad institute.

The WEC is also playing a growing role in public debate. Last year, WEC and the Peace Studies Centre held a National Dialogue on women's participation in the peace process with about 200 participants from diverse backgrounds, including civil society, youth, media, academia, women's rights activists, mullahs and parliamentarians. The WEC also facilitated a 'rising' at the Gawharshad Institute, bring together 150 students, civil society activists and academic staff to discuss the status of women in Afghanistan and the needs and demands of women workers.

And in a sign of the growing strength of the WEC, its programs are no longer dependent on indigo foundation support and now attracts funding from both local and international donors.

The WEC has thrived despite the insecurity that continues to be part of daily life in Kabul, and the political struggle to improve the rights of women and girls, a dire issue in Afghanistan.

We are grateful to the many donors who have supported this project, as the young women at the Gawharshad Institute have worked towards their dream of a higher education over the last seven years. Although there is the ongoing need to build capacity to help the women transition from their degree to employment, many are already soaring. There have been many success stories over the years, Anosha, Zahra and Hamida are three from the first cohort of scholarship holders.

SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS – STORIES OF COURAGE AND PERSEVERANCE

> Anosha comes from a family of seven in Ghazni province where her mother was the main breadwinner. With the support of the Women's Empowerment Centre, she completed her law studies and is now the gender program manager for UN-Habitat in Kabul.

> Zahra comes from the remote Bamyan province and overcame huge obstacles to graduate from university. She is now a journalist, and spoke recently in Nepal at a feminist workshop. Her moving story about how she dressed for six years as a boy during the Taliban period so she could stay in school was published in Huffington Post.

> Hamida comes from Badakhshan province and watched her mother struggle to support three children when her father took a second wife. Hamida was determined to get an education but the financial challenges were immense until she received a scholarship from the Women's Empowerment Centre. She is now a database manager in a government ministry.

club rafiki: dance, empowerment, partnership

rwanda



PRESIDENT KAGAME OPENING THE CLUB'S RENOVATED BASKETBALL COURTS

David and Mandy Wheen, Partnership Coordinator

indigo foundation has partnered with local grassroots organisation Club Rafiki since 2012 in the impoverished district of Nyamirambo in Rwanda's capital, Kigali. This support has enabled Club Rafiki to offer a range of programs to improve the health and wellbeing of local young people including a hip-hop dance school, a sexual and reproductive health clinic and English language workshops.

However, the impact of our support has gone well beyond the direct outcomes of these programs. As an organisation, we believe in the importance of building strong, resilient and

sustainable local organisations – not just funding specific programs. We have worked with Club Rafiki over the past five years to help build their capacity in governance and reporting and it has been exciting to see their growing networks and recognition in Rwanda.

During our 2017 visit to Club Rafiki, the Club's President told us that its relationship with indigo foundation is a "special partnership" and one which has enabled the Club to enhance its visibility in the community and establish its own partnerships with local NGOs and government authorities.

Since its inception in 1975, Club Rafiki has established a reputation as a well-run creative grassroots organisation that is deeply rooted in

its local community and capable of producing impressive outcomes.

Three new partnerships exemplify the recognition the Club has gained and the connections it has been able to make.

First is a collaboration with Giants of Africa, an NGO supported by the American NBA basketball team, the Toronto Raptors. Giants of Africa sees basketball as a vehicle to educate and enrich the lives of young people. It looked to Rwanda to run an outreach program and it wanted a reliable partner which would provide basketball facilities.

Club Rafiki had always provided basketball as an activity for the community but its two courts were badly run down. The Giants offered to fund a major renovation of the courts.

In August 2017 the President of Rwanda, Paul Kagame, came to the Club to open the new courts – there could be no greater recognition for the organisation than a visit from the President. In his remarks President Kagame said: *“This facility, humble as it is, lights the spark of opportunity for many young Rwandans.”*

Providing that spark of opportunity is something we are proud to be a part of with Club Rafiki.

In its second noteworthy partnership, Club Rafiki teamed up with the Digital Opportunity Trust (DOT) Rwanda, which provides opportunities for young people to develop digital literacy, entrepreneurship and business training. The two organisations work together and offer entrepreneurship and computer literacy courses at Club Rafiki. DOT has provided computers to the Club and maintains its IT network which is heavily used by the local community for fun, as well as for study and research.

The third partnership is with Grace Rwanda/Ineza Foundation, which arose out of Club Rafiki’s weekly English language workshops piloted in 2017. Club Rafiki had struggled to find story and reading books in English and Kinyarwanda suitable for the students. Books are not items found in most Rwandan homes and the Club library contains largely old books in French. The Grace Rwanda/Ineza Foundation has a goal of promoting a reading culture. It learnt of what

Club Rafiki was offering and gifted a thousand story books in English and Kinyarwanda for use in the library and in English workshops.

In addition to these new partnerships, Club Rafiki has had a strong focus on strengthening its internal governance and outreach networks. Some notable achievements include:

- The Dominican Fathers, the founders of Club Rafiki in 1975, recognised the revitalisation of the Club and offered funding assistance to develop financial management policies and processes.
- The Club often receives requests from local and national authorities to participate in developing national youth policies and programs.
- The Club has established links with schools to provide sexual health education programs.
- The Club has drafted and agreed a Code of Conduct for staff and participants.
- The Club has developed planning skills and now has its own strategic plan.
- It works to develop and grow the professional skills of its staff, and even sent the head dance teacher on a study tour in Uganda.
- The Club has sourced funding to improve its facilities, including paving much of the area around Club buildings which was a bog in the wet seasons, building a storage facility, and removing asbestos from some buildings.

focus on girls and young women

Club Rafiki continues to be ambitious in seeking new ways of meeting the needs of its community. It has a priority to empower women and girls – and we are excited to partner with Club Rafiki on this. In March we launched a crowd funding appeal to raise \$8,000 for a range of activities targeting girls and young women. Thanks to many generous donors, we are hopeful we’ll reach the target which means that programs like the following will get off the ground:



CLUB RAFIKI DANCERS AT OPENING OF A MATERNAL AND CHILD CENTRE

- *Girls Space* – A weekly time for girls focusing on sexual health and discussing gender issues
- *You are Able* - A mentoring program which links girls with successful Rwandan women to expand their horizons in education, work and life.
- *Girls First* – A new program to build IT and social media skills.

It is a privilege to partner with Club Rafiki and play a catalytic role as the Club continues to strengthen and take on new opportunities. And it is fuel for our approach at Indigo Foundation that trusting local communities and organisations to lead and implement their own development and works – it improves lives and builds strong and resilient local organisations.

what do we do in rwanda?

Our partnership with Club Rafiki in Rwanda includes the following programs:

hip hop dance school: In 2012, we provided support to start Club Rafiki's hip hop dance school, the first hip hop dance school in Kigali. The school provides 10 hours of classes per week across three locations – in Kigali and two outlying villages. It trains young people not only in dance but also aims to build their life skills, confidence and self-esteem. Some dancers have been trained to be advocates and peer-to-peer educators in sexual and reproductive health, raising awareness about how to prevent HIV, sexually transmitted diseases and unwanted teen pregnancies.

sexual and reproductive health clinic: In 2016 the *Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria* reduced its support for sexual and reproductive health education and testing across Rwanda. These cuts had a large impact on Club Rafiki and in the past 12 months we have partnered with the Club to support the 'Family Friendly Centre' – a sexual and reproductive health clinic - a vital service providing which provides free and confidential information, counselling and testing for girls and young women.

english language workshops: In 2017, we partnered with Club Rafiki to launch a pilot program of English language workshops to help young people develop their English language skills. These workshops provide four hours per week of lessons and focus on developing speaking and writing skills for 60 young people. A great many more would like to attend.

our annual gathering

In February, indigo foundation board, staff and volunteers came together in Canberra for our annual weekend gathering. As a virtual organisation, this is the one time a year when we all get together face to face. Not surprisingly, it was a packed agenda!

We had workshops exploring how we apply a 'gender lens' across our programs and operations, what it means to provide core funding to community partners and discussions to strengthen how we measure and assess impact. We also looked internally at how to build our sustainability as an organisation,

asking what draws people to indigo foundation and how to safeguard our much-valued base of volunteers and supporters.

And to top off the weekend, we had Semmalar and Jebaraj join us via skype from Tamil Nadu in India to shine a light on our partnership with local grassroots organisation, the Program for Education and Awareness Building. All in all, it was a great weekend – with generative and respectful discussion, enormous good will and fantastic momentum for the coming year.

a spotlight on cash transfers

At our annual gathering we were lucky to welcome Joanna Pickles from the Development Policy and Education Branch, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) to brief us about the latest research and developments in 'cash transfers'.

Cash transfers are really just what the name says - direct transfers of money to eligible individuals or households designed to help raise and even out the incomes of people who are living in poverty. They can be provided by NGOs or most commonly by local governments often with some support from donor organisations. They are either unconditional or conditional on things like vaccinations and school and health-clinic attendance.

Their positive impacts have now been demonstrated convincingly through extensive research, including randomised controlled trials. They have been shown to reduce monetary poverty, increase school attendance, improve dietary diversity and reduce child labour. Their impacts do vary from location to location, reflecting things like the quality of education and health care in a region.

Of course, implementing any policy requires a myriad of choices and difficulties and doing so in developing countries generally adds to the challenges. Developing countries have limited budgets so deciding who should get cash transfers is a major challenge. Transfers were originally targeted at poor women with school-age children, however, there is strong evidence

that children's outcomes are highly dependent on pre-natal and early nutrition. Thus, in some countries, the focus is now on targeting pregnant women or women with pre-school aged children. Other countries are focusing cash transfers to people with disabilities or to the elderly.

Once countries have decided on their target groups they have to find the intended beneficiaries. That might be done by geographical or demographic targeting. The size of transfers, their duration and timing all impact their effectiveness too.

Conditionality of transfers seems like a good idea at first glance – of course children should be going to schools and getting their vaccinations. Yet in some areas, the quality of education and teacher attendance is so poor that attending school might not have great benefits for children. Another study found women have to be seen to be queueing at local health centres even when they are not open in order to retain their benefits. So conditionality may not be such a great idea, recipients needs to be treated with dignity and respect!

indigo foundation has long worked with communities using their own small-scale variations of cash transfers, for example with education bursaries in Rote, Indonesia. We have long held that social support needs to be part of the mix of support for development (just as it was and is for our own families in Australia).

Susan Engel, Board Member

our people

First, a big congratulations to our Uganda-based Liaison Officer Joy Katooko, who has had a beautiful baby boy called Genesis. Congratulations Joy from all of us at indigo foundation!

We are excited to welcome two new board members, Leigh Cupitt and Robin Brown. Leigh has more than 30 years experience working in Aboriginal health and more recently has focused her work in PNG and the Solomons. She brings a deep commitment to grassroots community-led development. She has led high-impact initiatives in Aboriginal Health, including developing the first *Joint Area Health Service – Aboriginal Medical Service Plan* in NSW and as a Director in the Federal Office for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health. We are excited about the contribution Leigh will make on the Board.

Robin Brown is an expert in the field of consumer rights and competition policy and advocacy. He founded the Foundation for Effective Markets and Governance and has advised government, business and civil society organisations in Australia and in the region on consumer policy and government accountability. Robin headed the Consumers' Federation of Australia and has served as President of the ACT Council of Social Service and on numerous boards, including Choice and the ACF. You can get to know Robin better in his profile!

With comings there are also goings and it is with many thanks that we bid farewell to Partnership Coordinators Caitlin Winter and Jean-Louise Olivier. Caitlin stepped into the Rote Partnership Coordinator role in 2016, building strong relationships and offering her patience and guidance to our partners at Lua Lemba. Thank you Caitlin for your persistence, your calmness under pressure and the many hours you have given.

Jean-Louise is leaving the Partnership Coordinator role – and also Australia – to relocate

back to South Africa and take up a role with a local NGO. Jean-Louise worked as a close support to Santino Yuot on our Wedweil education program. She supported Santino in signing our first three year commitment agreement with the Wedweil Community Development Fund – an exciting development for the program. Jean-Louise, thank you for your hard work and best of luck for your next stage in South Africa. We will be recruiting for a new Partnership Coordinator to work with Santino so please keep your eyes on our website and social media.



introducing robin brown - indigo foundation board member

In November, indigo foundation welcomed long-time supporter Robin Brown as its newest board member.

A staunch advocate of consumer rights in Australia and the developing world, Robin is a long-time supporter of indigo foundation. In the past five years, he has organised several charity bike rides, raising more than thirty thousand dollars for the foundation.

We are very excited to welcome Robin to the indigo foundation's board. He brings more than a decade of experience in consumer protection, policy advocacy, and social service to our organisation.

Here's a little bit about Robin, in his own words.

1. How did you first get involved with indigo foundation?

For much of my career I've been involved in trying to advance the interests of people as consumers of goods and services, mostly in Australia but also in the developing world. I've been lucky enough to have had the opportunity to help limit the damage done by industries such as tobacco, junk food and financial services. I've been fortunate to have been involved with the development of the United Nations Guidelines for Consumer Protection and their implementation in a number of developing countries.

I also worked at AusAID and served on the Code Committee of the Australian Council for International Development. Though I have worked across a broad range of public sector roles, I really see myself more as a civil society activist.

When I was doing a project review as a consultant for AusAID in Solomon Islands in 2009, I learnt that for a few years previously there had been programs of civic education aimed at empowering Solomon Islanders to make their government work better for them, but that funding for these had been discontinued.

One effective program was run by the Girl Guides and I was particularly interested in this as it also promoted women's empowerment. Back in Australia, I tried to get various NGOs to assist in getting this program going again. A number were interested, but it was indigo foundation that agreed to explore the idea. I arranged for some funding from another organisation and indigo foundation sent a team to Solomon Islands. They came back with a very positive report, but unfortunately circumstances changed with the Girl Guides in Solomon Islands and it wasn't possible to proceed.

In spite of this disappointment I got hooked on indigo foundation! I learnt a lot about indigo foundation's modus operandi and principles and its emphasis on empowerment of women and girls, which I already knew was the effective way to assist communities. The fact that indigo foundation isn't a large organisation was a key attraction, because it created several exciting opportunities for me to get involved.

2. What has your journey with indigo foundation been like since that initial project?

During the past five years I have got groups of friends to bicycle from Canberra to Melbourne and twice from Sydney to Kosciuszko (about 700 kilometres and a total vertical more than Mt Everest) to raise funds for indigo foundation programs. On the rides Kosciuszko we focussed on Mahalir Sakthi and Club Rafiki.

When a vacancy arose on the board last year, I put my hand up and was delighted to be appointed.

3. What are you looking forward to as a board member of indigo foundation?

I'd like to serve on the board long enough to learn enough to make a useful contribution, but not past my best before date! I'm interested in indigo foundation sharing the "secrets of its successes" with the development community generally and in collaborating and learning from other development organisations.

I'm also interested in what we can do to assist collaboration between communities we work with within and between countries when this is appropriate. For instance, it would have a significant impact if Club Rafiki's success was replicated in other parts of Rwanda or other African countries. And in India, I'm sure many other communities would greatly benefit from Mahalir Sakthi (Women Power) groups. In UN circles this is called "south-south" development cooperation and "triangular" when assisted by a "northern" or developed country organisation.

I also remain interested in our small Pacific neighbours and especially possibilities for contributing to women's empowerment.

think piece: climate change and development



WOMEN TENDING TO COOPERATIVE GARDENS IN ROTE, INDONESIA, ARE CONTENDING WITH INCONSISTENT WET SEASONS AND REDUCED YIELDS

Vaidehi Shah

By 2030, hunger and poverty will be eliminated; inequality between the rich and poor, as well as between men and women, will be history; the world's oceans and forests will be healthy and thriving; and everyone will have access to affordable energy and decent work. These are just a few of the ambitious targets agreed by the global community when it adopted the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in September 2015.

The 17 goals and 169 sub-targets have galvanised the development community, private sector, and governments behind a common effort. Almost three years on from the adoption of the goals, various segments of society have made vocal and public commitments to the SDGs. Countries across the world have committed to voluntary national reviews of

their progress towards the goals, companies have made explicit connections between their corporate responsibility achievements and the goals they advance, and civil society organisations have aligned their advocacy agenda to the SDGs.

But even as each of these groups identifies the goals most relevant to their work and focuses on making progress in specific areas, there is one goal that cuts across the remit of virtually every government agency, company, and non-profit: climate action.

While no single SDG is more or less important than the other, climate action is arguably the thread that connects the various goals in two ways. First, failure to achieve deep emissions cuts and to halt – or reverse – global warming will undermine progress on many of the other SDGs. Second, time and resources invested into successful climate action will unlock significantly

greater opportunities to achieve the other SDGs.

In the development sector, for instance, much of the work that focuses on hunger, poverty, gender equality, and good health is increasingly going to be shaped by climate change. In many parts of the world for example, erratic weather patterns such as prolonged droughts and warm conditions are already causing crop failures, and in the process exacerbating extreme poverty and food security. In many situations, this results in adverse outcomes for the health and well-being of communities.

In communities where women are tasked with fetching drinking water for their families from communal taps, having to travel longer and further to access clean water leaves women with a greater workload and less time to complete it. Further, in times of scarcity, women are often the first to be denied adequate food, water, and access to education.

Sadly, studies have also shown that during natural disasters – such as hurricanes, which are growing more intense due to climate change – men are more likely to perpetrate violence against women.

For many of the SDGs, it is possible to demonstrate how worsening climate change will undermine progress against individual goals.

But at the same time, strong climate action in the form of strong government policy on emissions reductions and renewable energy adoption can unlock benefits and opportunities that accelerate progress on various SDGs.

For instance, renewable energy such as wind and solar power has been widely hailed as the solution to the 'energy trilemma' faced by many developing countries, that is they must juggle making sure energy is accessible and affordable for all, without increasing greenhouse gas emissions. With falling prices and increasingly short payback periods, renewables have proven to be a cost-effective, safe, and healthy solution to energy poverty in many countries. And, if countries such as Australia and China are anything to go by, the jobs boom that renewable energy uptake creates will help countries make significant strides towards goal 8, decent work and economic growth for all.

Strong climate action that is backed by good policy implementation can advance goal 14, Life Below Water by slowing down ocean acidification – the increase in ocean acidity caused by high levels of atmospheric carbon dioxide dissolving in water – and the repeated bleaching of precious coral reef ecosystems. And happily, this can have the knock-on benefits of promoting healthy fisheries, and food security and livelihoods for coastal communities.

These are just a few examples of the potential of climate action to solve big SDG-related challenges and unlock new opportunities. An analysis of an organisation's value chain, no matter where it starts, will almost inevitably lead to an examination of climate change in one way or another.

So how can organisations that are not already doing so deepen engagement on climate change? There are many ways, ranging from simple energy efficiency audits and retrofits across their operations and switching to renewable energy if possible, to stronger measures such as offsetting the carbon footprint of any personal and professional travel, and publicly affirming support for strong climate policy at a national level.

In the non-profit sector, more explicit steps can include setting goals around climate action when planning projects – these can include ideas to facilitate a community's transition to lower-emission energy and transport systems, or steps to improve community resilience to climate change with disaster preparedness training, sustainable agriculture, and alternative livelihoods.

Ultimately, each organisation will choose its own way of engaging with climate change. But while specific challenges and solutions may vary, the universal truth remains that climate action is integral to all development work, and has the potential to make or break the global development agenda.

Vaidehi is a Media Advisor at the Climate Media Centre in Australia. For over a decade, Vaidehi has worked in the environmental sector in the Asia Pacific through award-winning journalism, policy research, project management, and media relations.

indigo foundation in the community



PAT, CHRISIE, MILLIE AND CHRIS AT THE COLE CLASSIC IN MANLY, FEBRUARY 2018

swimming for change

A team of dedicated swimmers took to the ocean at Sydney's northern beaches to raise funds for indigo foundation in early February. Taking to the water from Shelley Beach, they swam across to Manly Beach and back again, as part of the annual Cole Class swim

Our thanks to Pat Duggan, Chrissie Eves, Millie Shilland and Chris Smith who made a splash and raised \$1,725 for indigo.

posties with a difference

A huge shout out to Louise Coutts from IAG for organising a group of big-hearted employees in the company's George Street offices to provide much-needed hands-on-deck for our appeals and newsletter mailings. IAG employees come together to print, fold and stuff our newsletters and appeals into envelopes so that we could get our mail out to our supporters.

The IAG 'postie team' completed this task for indigo foundation twice last year and have agreed to continue supporting us in this way into the future.



BOARD MEMBER SUSAN ENGEL SPEAKING AT A UNIVERSITY OF WOLLONGONG CARES EVENT

caring through the workplace

indigo foundation is fortunate to be a part of the University of Wollongong Cares' staff giving program.

In April, the team at University of Wollongong Cares (UoW Cares) hosted a lunchtime event with the organisations they support. Our Board Member Susan Engel, addressed staff at the event, sharing updates from our community partnerships and thanking those who choose to make a regular donation to indigo foundation



THE TEAM AT IAG HELPING TO FOLD AND STUFF ENVELOPES FOR OUR HUMAN RIGHTS DAY APPEAL

through their wages.

The commitment of Sarah Lisle and the team at UoW Cares, as well as the ongoing generosity of the staff, is much appreciated.

If your workplace has a payroll giving program and you'd like to discuss how indigo foundation may benefit from it, please contact our General Manager Jemma Bailey on jemma.bailey@indigofoundation.org



DRAWING THE 2017 TRAVEL RAFFLE WITH SARAH LISLE AND MELISSA THOMPSON FROM UNIVERSITY OF WOLLONGONG CARES AND SUSAN ENGEL

friends of indigo foundation

Our 'friends of indigo foundation' initiative was launched with Board, staff and key volunteers at our Canberra planning weekend in February and discussions with many ideas and approaches took place. The idea behind this programme is to host regular meet-ups of indigo foundation supporters in Canberra, Sydney, Wollongong and Melbourne so that they can come together, become more involved with our community partnerships and our team in Australia, and raise awareness about our work.

Since then, Robin Brown and Alice Roughley have hosted the first 'friends' gathering in Canberra, with seven supporters at University House.

If you have an interest in being part of a 'friends of indigo foundation' group, please email our Board Member Bianca Crocker at bianca.crocker@indigofoundation.org

and coming up ...

We'd love to see you (and your friends!) at these events. Visit our website for information and tickets.

The Annual Sydney Dinner will be held on Saturday 2 June at the heritage-listed Moore Park Golf House. This year we are very lucky to have two special guests from India, renowned human rights activists Annie Namala and Paul Divakar, sharing firsthand stories about the struggle for Dalit rights in India and reflecting on our community partnerships in Tamil Nadu. Back by popular demand, we will also have the wonderful Verity Firth to MC.

Our Melbourne Banquet will be held at the beautiful Abbotsford Convent on Friday 15 June. Join us as we celebrate our long-standing education program in Afghanistan. Our Partnership Coordinator Ali Reza Yunespour will share insights and stories about our program and the connection between education and peace-building in his home province in Afghanistan. With former ABC journalist and Asia-Pacific expert Helen Brown as MC, it is bound to be a wonderful night.

Don't miss out on our live music trivia night in Wollongong on Friday 31 August. Featuring the return of the Water Runners to get you up and dancing. The 2016 trivia night was a blast so gather your friends and don't miss this one.

Join us for a night of comedy at the Randwick Club on Saturday 15 September. We are teaming up with Comedy for a Cause to offer a night of stand-up comedy and fun. Doors open 7pm for 8pm show. \$35 adults and \$20 students.

Save the date for our annual Canberra dinner on Saturday 6 October. A guaranteed night of fine food and fine wine, fun and laughter to be held for the second year running at the National Arboretum. More information to follow soon.

support our work

We only exist as a result of the generosity of a huge range of supporters.

Whether it is by making a small donation every month, volunteering your time or expertise, or by helping us raise funds and awareness about our projects, it is all critical to our objective of improving the lives of those in marginalised communities and building the power of small grassroots organisations.

No matter how big or small your contribution might be, every little bit counts.

On behalf of everyone we work with, thank you for your ongoing support.



DONATE ONLINE

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www.indigofoundation.org



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