



Our new partner, JDN in Timor Leste, brings young women together for a workshop to talk about what action they can take to reduce sexual harassment.



# **indigo foundation strategy**

## **2023-2027**

## foreword

For over 20 years, indigo foundation has built and sustained respectful partnerships with grassroots organisations in some of the most marginalised communities in the world. We work from the premise that communities are in the best position to understand their needs, set priorities and lead the development process. We seek to understand and support their capacities and strengths. With flexible funding and a willingness to remain committed to partners for the longer term, our community partners achieve significant impacts – in education, health, economic security, empowerment of women and girls, community strengthening and changing the structures and systems that cause poverty and discrimination.

This strategy sets an ambitious agenda to expand and deepen the impact of our overseas partnerships while remaining a proudly nimble and creative organisation. It will guide the direction of our community development partnerships and inform the way we improve our support of community partners. The strategy recognises the importance of people – our volunteers and staff – to indigo's continuing success. And it sets the path for continuing to grow indigo's supporter base and raise our profile as a model for localised development practice in the sector.

indigo and our community partners have a lot to be proud of. This strategy starts with respect for the learnings and achievements of those who paved the way for what is possible now. And it expresses the optimism and excitement about the future felt by our communities in Australia and overseas.

## who we are

indigo foundation is a not-for-profit development organisation that supports community partnerships overseas. In Australia we are virtual and largely volunteer based. Our community partners may be established or fledgling local community-based organisations or a group of community leaders with a vision for a better future for their communities. We work with local people who have knowledge of our partner communities who provide a conduit for communication and support of partners.

## our development approach

Founded on a commitment to respectful partnerships and community-led development, our experience has shown that transformative change happens when communities are given the respect and support to generate and implement their own development solutions. We listen and facilitate, rather than direct or impose. We fund the communities' priorities, including core costs, and adjust our support in response to their changing needs and priorities.

Respectful development partnerships require a relationship of mutuality and trust. We bring to the relationship a diversity of resources, including experience, information, knowledge and flexible funding. In return we learn, improve our practice, and share with others the impact made possible when communities are ethically supported and their resourcefulness is unleashed.

the first thing we offer is **respect** 





## our guiding principles

We aim to create an organisational culture that is open, ethical, inclusive, accountable and ambitious. indigo foundation's guiding principles – there from its inception – are embedded in all that we do.

### —● *community ownership*

Transformational change is achieved by resourcing and empowering communities to lead and manage their own development.

### —● *sustainability*

Good investments in community development create changes that are socially, environmentally, culturally and economically sustainable and produce opportunities for future generations.

### —● *transparency*

Transparency in planning, decision-making and operations builds confidence and trust in relationships and facilitates participation and accountability in organisations and programs.

### —● *equity*

A commitment to equity means a strong focus on human dignity, social and economic justice, human rights, gender equity, inclusiveness and challenging embedded power relations.



## the outcomes we work for

Our success is measured by the progress community partners achieve in their contexts across three dimensions.

- Marginalised communities leading their own development with confidence and resilience
- Improvements in individual and community wellbeing reflecting each community's needs
- Broader societal and systems change to address structural inequalities and discrimination

Our success is also assessed through the quality of community partnerships and other relationships, the application of our guiding principles and the extent to which we are an ethical, sustainable, accountable and reputable organisation.

We recognise strong development outcomes are underpinned by principles in international frameworks for human rights and international development, including those that relate to education, health, children, refugees, and gender justice.



Students and families gather in Ghazni Province in Afghanistan to mark the opening of a new school

# future directions and priorities

## our strategic goals

1. Expand the scope and impact of our development partnerships.
2. Strengthen support of community partners and continue to improve our partnership approach and development practice.
3. Further develop indigo foundation as a sustainable, influential, and effective development organisation.

## priority action and commitments

### GOAL ONE

Expand the scope and impact of our development partnerships.

#### ACTION COMMITMENTS

- Support our community partners to sustain their impact, scale up to meet community needs and priorities and build their capacities, including accessing funding from other sources.
- Respond to new partnership opportunities where there is high community need, potential to build relationships locally and a fit with our strategic focus areas, guiding principles and approach.
- Stay open to partnerships with smaller, more nascent local groups where the goal is to explore innovation, build capacities and support catalytic community development.
- Retain a strong focus on women and girls and gender equity across all partnerships - both as development outcomes and for the multiplier effect women's leadership brings to community development.
- Build on indigo's long-standing experience with diaspora led partnerships through strengthening links and relationships with refugee diaspora communities in Australia and seeking new partnerships in this space.



## GOAL TWO

Strengthen support of community partners and continue to improve our partnership approach and development practice.

### ACTION COMMITMENTS

- Reassess and improve our program management model to ensure our level of support and processes fit the needs, scale, capacities and stage of relationship of community partners in different countries.
- Strengthen participatory monitoring and evaluation of our partnerships, with a focus on practical evaluation methodologies and better utilising the reported information and stories of change collected by our partners.
- Ensure volunteer Partnership Coordinators are well supported and have opportunities for peer learning, mentoring, and training relevant to their support of community partners.
- Improve the use of indigo's publications, media platforms, events and networks to share successes and learning from community partnerships.
- Strengthen the way we and our community partners listen and are accountable to communities as an important element of community ownership and engagement in the development process.
- Develop and implement a gender equity audit of all partnerships and use findings to inform program development and improve support of partners.
- Meet the requirements of the ACFID Code of Conduct and participate in ACFID communities of practice and networks to share our approaches and learn from other development organisations.



Ibu Sarlipa Adu tending to crops at the Oebela II women's cooperative garden on the outskirts of the small village of Oebela, Rote Island, Indonesia





Anna, Bridgette, Judy and Clara, members of Hako Women's Collective, Autonomous Region of Bougainville

## GOAL THREE

**Further develop indigo foundation as a sustainable, influential and effective development organisation.**

### ACTION COMMITMENTS

- Continue to build a committed, connected and active supporter base in Australia, strengthen donor relationships and further develop our approach to stewardship of major donors.
- Increase income through foundation and other institutional grants that build a more predictable income stream and grow our impact.
- Develop our staffing and volunteer model to ensure we have the appropriate structure, capabilities and people to meet our commitments as an organisation.
- Maintain high standards in recruitment, induction, support and development of staff and volunteers.
- Improve internal and external communication with attention to content, protocols and use of different platforms and communication channels.
- Develop relationships with relevant academic bodies and development sector experts to gain access to knowledge and skills.
- Ensure our policies are up to date and invest in upgrading our systems for data management and security, fundraising and communication.
- Continue to improve indigo's management and governance in keeping with indigo's principles and directions.

## strategic focus areas

In order to grow our impact and use our limited resources efficiently, indigo foundation will assess potential community partnerships and other commitments through the lens of three strategic focus areas, together with our guiding principles.

### *Empowering women and girls*

Entrenched inequality, and in particular discrimination against women and girls, is a driver of poverty. Programs that promote participation and leadership and improve safety and economic empowerment of women and girls have been shown to have a multiplier effect on change, as we have experienced with most of our community partners. We will make empowerment of girls and women is an explicit goal across all our programs and a key filter when considering new partnerships.

### *Working with diaspora and refugee communities*

indigo foundation is committed to justice and fair treatment for asylum seekers and refugees. indigo will engage and work with leaders of diaspora communities in supporting local communities in their country of origin. Where opportunities arise, we will consider overseas projects with Australian-based leaders from refugee communities. Partnering with diaspora groups allows us to build trust, access knowledge, manage risk and develop partnerships in highly marginalised communities that would otherwise not receive external assistance.

### *Enabling systemic change*

We will support communities and partner organisations that engage in activities that challenge the power structures and seek to change the systems that oppress them. This may translate to support for organisations whose core purpose is advocacy and to funding partner initiatives that challenge the status quo, build alliances for change and empower groups in the community to stand up for their rights.



Through a challenging two years of Covid-restrictions, Mahalir Sakthi and PEAB's tuition groups and dedicated tutors have filled an incredibly important gap - supporting students and their families to stay in learning across extended school closures.