

## Highsnlows

[www.highsnlows.com.au](http://www.highsnlows.com.au)

This is an initiative of the Australian Drug Foundation, ORYGEN Youth Health, and the Victorian Department of Human Services. The campaign will roll out over the next five months and will feature a series of animated short films following four young people's experiences with cannabis. These films encourage the audience to think about how their mental health and wellbeing may be affected by cannabis use.

The first of the films can be found on the highsnlows website along with other

information for young people about how cannabis use can affect their mental health and where they can find help.

The website includes:

- an anonymous and professional question and answer service that provides clear, unbiased, non-judgmental answers to any questions about cannabis and mental health (the answers are provided by a panel of health professionals);
- a safe space for visitors to share their stories and

experiences;

- information about cannabis and mental health; and
- a searchable database of Australian youth-friendly health services and organisations.

In addition, parents and professionals can find cannabis and mental health information on the DrugInfo website at [www.druginfo.adf.org.au](http://www.druginfo.adf.org.au)

(Thank you to Anne Hugo, Youth Field Xpress. Source: DrugInfo Clearinghouse)



## Wallwisher

<http://wallwisher.com/>

This is an 'online notice board maker' that's fun and could be very handy for particular purposes!

Easy to use, it's just like having a corkboard on your wall, except it's electronic and on your computer screen. Click, write a note then post it. Simply drag and drop to rearrange your notes ...

To see how it works, visit the website. To learn a little more, read the FAQ page at

<http://wallwisher.com/faqs>

For those who like to use the computer instead of scraps of paper for their notes and reminders, it could be a useful tool. For this purpose, you'd probably want to create a 'private wall'.

However you can also use it publicly as a collaborative notice board, sharing it with others who don't happen to be in the same room. ☺

For example, if you are working with a team to plan and brainstorm an activity, or if you'd like to invite others to comment or post feedback on a particular topic.

Check it out – and have fun!  
☺

*There is no magic funding fairy! ...On the other hand, many nonprofits are sitting on a gold mine without realizing it. They need to dig out their hidden assets and match them to proven fundraising strategies.*  
(Society for Nonprofit Organizations)

## Society for Nonprofit Organizations: Fundraising Guide

[www.snpo.org/funding/index.php](http://www.snpo.org/funding/index.php)

This guide has some useful ideas, tips and tricks for effective fundraising.

*"No matter how worthy your cause, you won't automatically attract funds. Successful fundraising demands a broad view, an understanding of why people give and what you can offer in return for their support."*

The site recommends taking just an hour a day to work through the sections of the guide.

There are ten sections::

1. Introduction - Are You Sitting On A Gold Mine?
2. Are You Ready For Fundraising?
3. Eight Steps To Effective Fundraising
4. Pros & Cons of Fundraising Methods
5. Tips and Tricks
6. Available Grants
7. Essential Reading
8. Related Articles
9. Related Links
10. 12 Things To Do Next Monday



# From Strength to Strength in Chitwan



After the 2009 World Appreciative Inquiry Conference in Kathmandu, Nepal, Chris and I spent a wonderful three days in Chitwan in southern Nepal.

We travelled there with several others to visit some of the villages where Pact, its NGO partner ECTA, The Asia Foundation, and a network of local NGOs at the district level had implemented the Women's Empowerment Program (WEP) between 1999 and 2001. Two of our group, Marcia and Mac Odell had been major drivers of and key folk involved in WEP.

The WEP program, now known as WORTH, covered literacy, numeracy and support for establishing village banks – a “savings-led micro-finance” venture. To work with the village women, Mac and Marcia developed a *short, streamlined and action-oriented* adaptation of Appreciative Inquiry, which they called *Appreciative Planning and Action (APA)*.

(For more information about APA see Mac's website at <http://macodell.com> )

During the three years of the program, 1,500 village banks were established. By 2001, when program funding ended, amazing results had been achieved, including *more than doubling the women's savings from USD 720,000 to USD 1,800,000, tripling the number of women who can read and write and quadrupling the number of women in business from 19,000 to 86,000.*



Yes, that's right. Almost 2 million American dollars had been saved by some of the poorest people in the world!

When Pact's formal support ended, WORTH groups and these village banks were left entirely to their own devices. Shortly after that, the Maoist unrest in Nepal plunged the country into civil war.

So when researchers returned to Nepal in 2007 to evaluate the impact of the program, it was with some trepidation. What would they find? Would any of those 1,500 village banks have survived? What impact, if any, would they find WEP had had in the longer term?

Imagine their amazement and joy to find that not only had 64% of the original village banks survived ... even thrived ... in the intervening years, but 25% of those groups had helped to start another 425 new groups – new village banks – involving 11,000 women.

Other equally significant outcomes were found in terms of broader impacts on families and communities – for example 43% of women reported that their degree of freedom from domestic violence has changed because of their membership in a WORTH group.

For more detailed information about this program and its outcomes, see

[http://www.pactworld.org/cs/worth/where\\_we\\_work\\_nepal](http://www.pactworld.org/cs/worth/where_we_work_nepal) where you can also download the full evaluation report, written in 2007.

It was in the light of this background, that our party of 15 or so folk travelled the 5.5 hours in a small bus from Kathmandu to Chitwan.

We had the honour and privilege to be the first ‘foreigners’ to visit these villages and spend time with these amazing women – the village bankers – who had achieved so much for themselves, their families and their communities.

It was a profound experience for all of us. Both deeply moving, and life-changing. Whether in smaller or larger ways, our lives will not be the same because of this visit.

Friends and colleagues can all attest to the fact that I am almost never ‘lost for words’. :) But I have yet to find the right words to capture what is in my head and

heart as a result of this trip. So many reflections, thoughts and feelings are still swirling around for me, that I've not yet manage to pin them down and articulate them properly. I hope to do so eventually ... but in the meantime, I'll point Starlink readers to the reflections of two others who travelled with me.



One piece you'll find on the last page of this issue of Starlink, where Chris has included his own reflection about our arrival in the first village we visited.

The other piece is a wonderful journal essay, written by Jen Hetzel Silbert, entitled *Strong Women: Finding WORTH in Nepal*. You can download it at

[http://bjseminars.com/docs/Strong\\_Women\\_JHSilbert\\_Dec09.pdf](http://bjseminars.com/docs/Strong_Women_JHSilbert_Dec09.pdf)



Thank you to Jen (pictured above) for permission to share this piece with our Starlink readers.

Finally, if you'd like to see more images of Chitwan and the villages, we have a slideshow of photographs Chris took during the trip. You can find that at

[http://bjseminars.com.au/2009\\_world\\_ai\\_conference/](http://bjseminars.com.au/2009_world_ai_conference/)

Scroll down to “A Chitwan Adventure” for a link to the show.

Cheers  
Sue

## Teaching Expertise

[www.teachingexpertise.com](http://www.teachingexpertise.com)

A UK-based website, Teaching Expertise is Optimus Education's *information and learning website for teachers and other educational professionals.*

*"We have a huge searchable library of free **education articles**, practical management and teaching **resources**, and **blogs** written by school professionals. You can also sign up to our free **email bulletins** to receive guidance, updates and fresh ideas."*



This site is a great resource for classroom teachers and school leaders! Although written for a UK audience, much of the material is highly practical for an Australian context as well.

*It is the supreme art of the teacher to awaken joy in creative expression and knowledge.*

*(Albert Einstein)*



## ICT Teaching and Learning

<http://sharpjacqui.blogspot.com>

This is an inspirational blog, written by Jaqui Sharp, an educational consultant (based in Auckland, New Zealand) who has worked in the field of computers in education since 1987. She is a trained teacher with 26 years experience teaching children and 11 years working with teachers.

*What is available on this blog is happening right now in schools that I work in. These are examples of the questions teachers are asking and the activities that are working in their classrooms. Some are isolated activities, some are integrated but it showcases teachers having a go!*

## Cutting Edge Law

[www.cuttingedgelaw.com](http://www.cuttingedgelaw.com)

The mission of Cutting Edge Law is to *"shift the consciousness of what it means to be a lawyer, to have the legal profession recognized as an agent of transformation with lawyers as peacemakers, problem-solvers and healers of conflicts"*.

This website has a wealth of information! Articles, news, blogs, podcasts and forums all deal with the transformation of

legal practice into a more humanistic, healing form. Meet a number of lawyers who are working as agents of social change to make a real and positive difference in the world.

With thanks to:  
J. Kim Wright, J.D.  
Publisher & CCBW



## Social Traders

[www.socialtraders.com.au](http://www.socialtraders.com.au)

This website contains a wide range of articles and resources for anyone interested in the field of social enterprise. Social Traders is an independent company established to facilitate, support and advocate for the development of social enterprise in Australia.

*We work collaboratively to:*

- *raise the profile and highlight the benefits of social enterprise*
- *influence government policy*
- *generate investment and market opportunities*
- *build skills and knowledge*
- *encourage a coordinated approach to social enterprise development in Australia, and*
- *increase trading capability.*

*Co-operative production carried on by people whose hearts are in the cause - ought to be able to hold its ground against private establishments.*

*(John Stuart Mill, 1859)*

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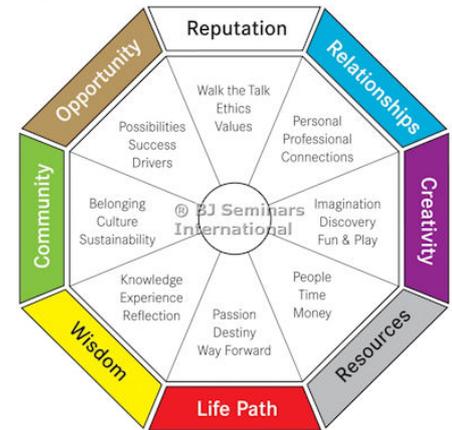
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*<http://bjseminars.com.au/our-approach/aq-kq/> or call us on (03) 9758 2528*



## Namaste



Reflections  
CHRIS BENNETT

It was a moment I was not prepared for.

A moment that had a profound effect on me during our visit of a village in Chitwan, Nepal.

It was my turn to walk between the two rows of smiling, clapping, village

women – elegantly dressed in their aqua, red and purple sarongs – greeting us westerners with ‘Namaste’.

I lowered my weighty 50d Canon camera, removed my Aussie bush hat and bent forward as one of the women placed a chain of yellow flowers around my neck and another anointed me with a red mark on my forehead.

I walked along the path and acknowledged both lines of women with a smile, a nod and ‘Namaste’.

When I reached the end of the line there were emotions stirring inside me, which at that time I could not identify.

Rather than deal with those emotions there and then, I distracted myself by quickly raising my camera and looking for possible photo opportunities.

“Four weeks later, that experience, which lasted only a few seconds, still resonates with me.”



As I had done many times in the previous eight days we were in Kathmandu for the World Appreciative Inquiry conference.

Four weeks later, that experience, which lasted only a few seconds, still resonates with me.

It was an experience that left me with feelings of humility, respect and admiration for the village women who had started a successful village bank many years ago with the help of Americans Mac and Marsha Odell.

A once poor village that was now a prosperous village thanks to the determination of these women.

And the experience has also left me with a strong desire to go back.

Perhaps as a volunteer to help out where needed.



**Note: “Namaste (pronounced Nah-mah-stay) literally means “I bow to you” from the Sanskrit namas (to bow) and te (to you). The word and its accompanying gesture are a deep sign of respect, honouring the spirit that resides in the other person as well as in oneself.**