

TOP10

PHILANTHROPIC ORGANISATIONS AND INDIVIDUALS IN ASIA

writer **Frances Frangenheim**

Philanthropy is defined in a practical sense as the act of private giving for public good, but perhaps its etymological meaning best describes its powerful outcomes. Coined in Ancient Greece, the word philanthropy combines two words: *philos* meaning loving, and *anthropos* meaning humankind. Philanthropy is therefore defined as ‘the love of humanity.’ Here we chart some of Asia’s most passionate individuals and organisations working to improve the lives of needy people through a myriad of philanthropic projects. Every philanthropic effort, great and small, is to be applauded because it sends a loud message to the world that those less fortunate do matter. If a community is defined by the way it cares for its most disadvantaged, then these projects are an inspiring reminder that there is great potential for us all to help make the world a better place.

Himalayan Healers, Nepal

FOUNDER ROB BUCKLEY

Seven years ago, American massage therapist Rob Buckley dreamed up a business with social responsibility at its core. He recalls, "While training at Ojai School of Massage, the idea to start Himalayan Healers literally moved through me, gave me goosebumps, and gripped me." Rob's pearl of an idea was to build a healing arts school and a series of spa boutiques to train and employ young Nepalese people in the arts of Ayurvedic, Tibetan and Indigenous Nepali massage techniques. The particularly powerful part was that the school and boutique day spas would support students and staff from the "untouchables" caste in Nepal and others in profound need, such as victims of trafficking and domestic violence, and war widows. Through massage, the victims could learn to heal themselves while also building a career in healing others.

Rob's award-winning Himalayan Healers School is proving effective because it is recognised by the international massage therapy industry body and also provides graduates with certification in America, opening doors to working in resorts, day spas and health centres across the world. Rob explains, "Our students receive in-house, interest free, micro-credit loans, and guaranteed employment at Himalayan Healers. They earn an average of 10 to 20 times the national average every month working for us, and are able to repay their student loans within one to two months of work. It's a way in which everybody wins, together." In 2011, Himalayan Healers is also inviting adventurous souls on spa, trek and massage retreats where they can learn Indigenous massage techniques, enjoy the pristine lakeside at the base of the Annapurna Mountain Range, trek with locals to 12,000 feet elevation, meet and train with Himalayan Healers' students and staff, and receive world-class massage treatments along the way.

www.himalayanhealers.org



Desa Seni, Canggu, Bali

FOUNDERS TOM TALUCCI AND HOWARD KLEIN

At first glance, Desa Seni Village Resort appears to be a traditional Balinese village rather than a modern eco-resort, but that's the point. Founders Tom Talucci (a chef and restaurateur) and Howard Klein (a marketing and business guru) shared a dream to build an environmentally sustainable resort that embraced and celebrated Bali's art, architecture and lifestyle. The idea was to invite guests to be part of something authentic and connect with the local community, while enjoying all the comforts of a modern resort. After travelling the world and living in Indonesia for 10 years the pair realised their vision in 2006 with Desa Seni. The resort is a short stroll to the beach and offers everything from luxury accommodation to yoga retreats, meditation courses, spa therapies, art and cooking classes and delicious meals with organic produce plucked from the resort farm.

A warm community spirit keeps the place buzzing and guests are able to give back while getting to know locals through programmes such as Desa Seni's 'Keep Bali Clean,' designed to educate about recycling and the problems of garbage. Tom and Howard also run the 'Making Dreams Come True' programme to raise funds for orphaned children. Kadek Arisanti is a passionate member of the Desa Seni team and explains that there is much to celebrate in 2011. "Our apprentice programme for orphans will also grow tremendously in 2011. We work with Jodie O'Shea Orphanage in training and placing graduates in the resort in the departments they have interests in. They receive wages and start to understand what it is like to be in the work force. It's a great programme for teaching skills and helping them get out into the work force," says Kadek. The 'Panca May Yoga' programme offers yoga to the local community and a new partnership with the Coral Goddess research project in Bali's Pemuteran Bay is helping restore coral reefs.

www.desaseni.com



Shinta Mani, Cambodia

FOUNDER KHUN SOKOUN CHANPREDA
GENERAL MANAGER CHITRA VINCENT

In 2003, entrepreneur Khun Sokoun Chanpreda decided to play a practical and positive role in fighting the growing problem of youth poverty. With previous experience in high-end jewellery and property development, including the famous Bed Supperclubs in Paris and Bangkok, Mr. Sokoun opened Shinta Mani as a boutique luxury hotel in Siem Reap, just outside the heritage-listed town of Angkor in one of Cambodia's poorest provinces. Shinta Mani's mission was to service hip and well-heeled guests while using hotel profits to fund vocational training for disadvantaged young people in the area. Mr. Sokoun, with the assistance of tourism industry veteran Chitra Vincent (now General Manager), established the hotel's Institute of Hospitality to provide formal 10-month courses to needy young people in all aspects of hospitality training, including culinary arts, hotel

maintenance, management and spa therapies. The students then put their training into practice at Shinta Mani. The training and work experience is vital for preparing them for work in skilled jobs that earn good wages.

Shinta Mani's achievements are remarkable. Since the Institute of Hospitality opened its doors in 2003, 185 students have graduated and the Institute has grown increasingly financially sustainable. This is good news because where the hotel could afford to train only 16 students in the first year that number has grown to 40 students in 2011. Shinta Mani's community based programmes have also grown in leaps and bounds. In the early days, the hotel started working with 50 local families in areas of need, such as supplying clean drinking water, health and education, and that commitment has now grown to 1000 families.

Mr. Sokoun's model has proved an effective and visionary one: to pair a for-profit venture with a non-profit programme to achieve community development. Mr. Sokoun was educated and raised in Bangkok with roots in Cambodia and received his BA at Boston University. His current focus is to expand the Shinta Mani brand, with a new hotel recently opening in Luang Prabang and an ambitious renovation to the Siem Reap resort due for completion by July 2011. After all, Shinta Mani is not a charity – the more it profits, the more money and training is directed to the community, and the greater chance Cambodia's young people have of lifting themselves out of poverty. www.shintamani.com

4 Nihiwatu Resort and the Sumba Foundation, Sumba, Indonesia

FOUNDERS CLAUDE AND PETRA GRAVE

Nihiwatu Resort is a luxury boutique eco-resort perched remotely on one of Indonesia's legendary surf breaks. It is remarkable because it pairs vacationing and volunteering, giving guests simple yet life-changing opportunities to help improve the lives of local villagers and the environment. When founders Claude and Petra Grave stumbled across Nihiwatu Beach in 1998 they knew it was the place to build their venture that would strive to give more than it takes. Their goal was "to develop an environmentally and socially friendly business that would help conserve bio-diversity and culture in a responsible and sustainable manner." Building began in 1991 with the paid help of local villagers – many who had become friends – and Nihiwatu Resort evolved to become everything Claude and Petra had dreamed of and more. It is a constant award winner, scooping major industry gongs in responsible tourism and luxury spa categories.

More importantly, Nihiwatu Resort is giving back to the community in meaningful ways through the Sumba Foundation (www.sumbafoundation.org), launched in 2000 to formalise Nihiwatu Resort's fundraising efforts. Claude, Petra and Sean Downs (one of Nihiwatu's surfing guests) co-founded the Foundation to raise funds and implement community development projects to benefit the local Sumbanese community. The Foundation has achieved great things, such as building and staffing five health clinics, installing 40 water wells and 94 water stations, building eight primary schools, helping to reduce malaria infection rates by 85 percent, and administering life changing surgery to nearly 200 patients. Meanwhile, the resort's volunteer programme invites guests on fun, simple projects like visiting schools to paint murals or play soccer with the children. Guests who are professionals, such as dentists and paediatricians, can also contribute their skills at the Sumba Foundation health clinics. Children are welcome to visit Nihiwatu Resort and no doubt are some of the most excited and energetic volunteers. www.nihiwatu.com





Asian Philanthropy Forum CHIEF PHILANTHROPY CURATOR DIEN S. YUEN

The Asian Philanthropy Forum may exist in cyberspace but its actions and achievements impact positively on people in Asia in a very real way. The forum is a global online community that links donors, philanthropy advisors, non-profit professionals, and other social sector investors. It can be described in many ways – a think tank, a social networking community, a talk fest, a well of inspiration – but its mission for Asia is very clear: “to unite, act, share best practices, and leverage philanthropic capital and knowledge to advance human justice and security, improve quality of life, and to protect the environment.”

The Forum’s team of philanthropy curators is led by Chief Philanthropy Curator Ms. Dien S. Yuen who works for Give2Asia (www.give2asia.org), an American non-profit organisation providing philanthropic advisory services to individuals, families, foundations and corporations that want to help make long-lasting, positive social change in Asia. Many of the Give2Asia members, like Ms. Yuen herself, are successful immigrant entrepreneurs living in America who want to give back to their country of origin. Dien works across many other philanthropy focused boards and programmes, and is an advisor of OneVietnam Network (<http://onevietnam.org>), an online platform that connects people and groups to philanthropic opportunities in Vietnam. Her online blog at Asian Philanthropy Forum spreads the good word about giving. www.asianphilanthropyforum.org

Art2Healing Project, Asia FOUNDER LYDIA TAN

Australian arts therapist and yoga teacher Lydia Tan knows all too well the power of art, song, dance and movement to heal. Over the years and in countries across the world, Lydia has formed gentle friendships with countless women and children, listening to their traumatic stories of human trafficking and sexual exploitation, domestic abuse and self-loathing. It was while working on a volunteer project in Cambodia in 2005 that Lydia noticed survivors responding positively to art, music, dance, yoga, meditation and ritual as a form of non-threatening counselling and therapy. It was then she decided to launch her Art2Healing Project as a non-profit creative arts therapy organisation, which works predominantly with survivors of sex trafficking and slavery.

Five years on, Lydia and her team continue to work passionately alongside anti-trafficking non-government organisations with a focus in Asia, helping train caretakers and social workers in art therapy and yoga programmes. Lydia explains, “The yoga and meditation programme that we have set up focuses on healing trauma through yoga with women who have suffered from sexual abuse and trauma. Women who have been through severe sexual trauma, like the trafficked women we work with, dissociate from their body as a protective mechanism. Through yoga and meditation we find they learn to connect back to the body in a safe and nurturing way, and learn how to release stress and tension in their lives.” Among scores of other projects, Lydia’s team is also supporting Shakti Samuha (www.shaktisamuha.org.np), a non-government organisation run by Nepali women who are survivors of trafficking and prostitution. The women help other returning trafficking survivors by providing shelter, prevention campaigns, education, counselling, legal aid and art therapy. www.theart2healingproject.org



The LIN Center for Community Development, Vietnam

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR NGO QUYNH NHU
PHILANTHROPY ADVISOR DANA DOAN

The LIN Centre for Community Development is a relatively new organisation flying the flag for philanthropy and social responsibility in Vietnam. It launched in August 2009 with a mission to make it easier for philanthropists to share wealth and knowledge with not-for-profit organisations in and around Ho Chi Minh City. The Centre provides grant makers with research, consulting and information-sharing programmes to link with non-profits. Expert legal, management and financial advice is offered pro bono by a board of professionals led by Executive Director Ms. Ngo Quynh Nhu who has worked for some of Asia's leading legal firms. The Centre also funds non-profit organisations directly and helps organise volunteers to work on a growing database of community projects such as women's shelters, orphanages, schools, libraries and centres for the blind.

The LIN Centre's philanthropy advisor Dana Doan says 2011 is set to bring new philanthropic services as well as new grants and support for community development programmes. "In 2011, the LIN Centre is planning to roll-out customised services for philanthropists that want to improve the quality of life and support disadvantaged groups in and around Ho Chi Minh City," Ms. Doan says. "We believe donors appreciate and benefit from services such as timely research, due diligence and advice such as the importance of donor-grantee agreements and the monitoring and evaluation of a contribution. Meanwhile, we are pleased to be able to introduce new programmes that will highlight and promote best practices among our not-for-profit partner organisations, particularly in the areas of financial management, networking and grant management." The Centre has just released their 2010 annual report online, detailing their successes in 2010 and plans for 2011. Check it out at www.LINvn.org.



Ruth Mantle

INTERNATIONAL FUNDRAISING AND PHILANTHROPY CONSULTANT

Ruth Mantle is carving an exciting career niche for herself as an international fundraising and philanthropy consultant. Based in Europe, Ruth has spent the past 18 months launching and developing her company – Mantle Associates – to work directly with charities, foundations, social businesses and donors to help increase the flow of donations and nurture a spirit of giving to needy people. Her blog (ruthlouismantle.wordpress.com) provides an interesting insight into her work, where there is never a dull day. Ruth visits celebrity fundraisers and gets involved in the London Twestival (yes, that's a festival run on Twitter), as well as visiting Thailand to support her favourite project in Asia, the Father Ray Foundation (www.fr-ray.org), which cares for orphaned and disadvantaged children who may be blind, disabled, abused or sick. She also lends her skills to non-profit organisations in Asia, helping to test direct mail campaigns and other modern fundraising techniques, such as using social media like Facebook to reach new audiences.

Ruth's major focus is training and coaching non-profit staff and social entrepreneurs, and in 2011 her dream is to coach non-profit staff across Europe, Asia and South America to raise money effectively from individuals for their causes. Other projects Ruth supports include ActionAid www.actionaid.org.uk, ChristianAid www.christianaid.org.uk, CAFOD www.cafod.org.uk, and SolarAid www.solar-aid.org.uk.



Wild Earth Journeys

FOUNDERS CARROLL DUNHAM AND THOMAS L. KELLY

Americans Thomas L. Kelly and Carroll Dunham are never short of adventures. Based in Kathmandu with their two young sons, the energetic couple is committed to sharing the beauty and mystique of Nepal's culture in sustainable ways. Thomas is a renowned photographer and social activist, and also works as a documentary filmmaker, travel guide and all round explorer. Carroll is an anthropologist, herbalist, writer, filmmaker, yoga instructor and founder of Wild Earth Nepal, a cooperative that produces luxury Himalayan herbal products such as soaps, massage oils, body scrubs and essential oils. Carroll sustainably sources product ingredients from herbal farmers, often women, in remote, poor communities of Nepal, giving harvesters maximum income for their raw materials.

Thomas and Carroll have also founded Wild Earth Journeys, an adventure travel company that guides small groups of travellers on unique cross-cultural trips and volunteer efforts across South Asia and Mongolia. Thomas says 2011 is gearing up to be another exciting year. A new alliance with National Geographic Expeditions (www.nationalgeographicexpeditions.com) enables Wild Earth Journeys to offer two 14-day treks and horse rides through Mongolia in July. "And we'll be continuing our long-term relationship with Acupuncturists Without Borders (www.acuwithoutborders.org) and running community outreach clinics in Western Nepal, Surkhet with victims recovering from the post conflict in Nepal," Thomas says. Calling all adventurers! www.wildearthjourneys.com



Roadmonkey

FOUNDER PAUL VON ZIELBAUER

Paul von Zielbauer is a journalist by trade and an adventurer at heart. As founder of Roadmonkey, a philanthropic adventure company, Paul is melding his love for cycling and travel with his desire to make a difference to people in need. After an exciting 11-year stint as a journalist for the New York Times, Paul launched Roadmonkey in 2008. It is a simple yet effective concept: Paul brings together four or more people with a passion for cycling and travel. They raise funds through their personal networks and then partner with non-profit organisations to help volunteer their time, skills and muscle to build much-needed infrastructure in disadvantaged communities around the world. Paul is excited to share details of a recent trip to Vietnam. "We returned from our third Vietnam expedition, having cycled 220 miles of the central highlands before building a playground for ethnic Khmer students at a school in the Mekong Delta. Our non-profit partner there was the stellar Catalyst Foundation (www.catalystfoundation.org), which we will work with at least once if not twice in 2011."

In 2010, among other trips, Paul led expeditions to Nicaragua to learn to surf and build a playground for school children; to Peru to raft the Apurimac River rapids and build dye houses from traditional adobe bricks for Quechua women weavers; and to Tanzania to summit Kilimanjaro and build a revenue-generating fish pond and a library for a school. Paul is excited to announce that custom-designed expeditions are on the cards for 2011, including to Patagonia, Vietnam, Albania, Peru, Kilimanjaro and Cuba. If you have an idea for a worthy expedition, Paul's your man. www.roadmonkey.net