



# L.I.B. Newsletter



## Letter from the Board



### GREETINGS FROM THE BOARD!

It is with great excitement that we introduce our first newsletter and take this opportunity to share with you our story, vision and achievements thus far.

Your interest in our organization is our motivation and inspiration. We hope that those who align themselves with L.I.B., by donating time, money or by simply supporting our vision and believing in our goals will regard their relationship with LIB as an experience that fosters compassion, social awareness, and a sense of proactive engagement.

L.I.B. was born out of a vision and passion to reach out to the impoverished villages of the world and improve the living conditions of the disadvantaged. While on a trip to Vietnam, Heather Hild, president and founder of L.I.B, discovered within herself an imploding sense of social responsibility that would act as a catalyst to fuel the creation of L.I.B.. Heather realized that globally, we are all connected and small actions here in Canada could very well have a great impact on the health and wellbeing of those who suffer in developing countries.

There are two areas of focus within L.I.B. that are interdependent on one another; fair trade and community development. L.I.B. is working to create an opportunity for many artisans in developing countries to access the global market. We will purchase goods from these artisans and sell them here in Canada with the intention of creating a fair and dependable income for the artisans while gaining a small profit to help sustain L.I.B. and our community development programs. Through our community development programs we hope to improve upon conditions within chosen international villages and cities that at present impede upon their citizens' quality of life. These conditions include shelter, education, sanitation, economical sustainability, healthcare, and social issues such as women's rights and child protection.

Ultimately L.I.B. is driven to improve the circumstances that further the impoverished state of many developing countries. However, it is imperative to our organization that we provide aid in a respectful and sustainable manner. L.I.B. is sensitive to each community's unique culture; its strengths, resources and its issues. L.I.B. will collaborate with the locals as well as local aid groups to ensure that our programs meet the needs of the people and are respectful to the character of each community. Our programs will do more than simply offer aid; they will create opportunities and systems that guide families out of poverty and allow them to sustain themselves and their families through their own efforts. Critical to this approach is the ability to empower people facing poverty and give them strength, vision, inspiration and self-respect.

The next chapter of our story is being written. We have developed and secured a few fair trade partnerships in Vietnam and India and hope to have products available for sale this summer. As well, we are excited to announce our first community development project - strengthening and supporting the development of education in slum areas of India!

The continual development of L.I.B. has been a long journey thus far. Our accomplishments to date are due to the incredible perseverance, hard work and dedication of the Board of Directors: *Brenda Marion, Gayle Schindler, Heather Hild, Michelle Perrow and Sameera Mehra*. We value the diversity and individuality that each board member brings to the group and believe that the wide range of views are beneficial to making positive strategic decisions for the organization. Each has his or her own set of strengths and has contributed to L.I.B. at a number of levels.

*Let it be known that L.I.B. International exists to proactively eridicate the extreme cycle of global poverty through environmental and sustainable community development, fair trade and human empowerment practices.*

*Written By: Gayle Schindler*



## PRIMARY EDUCATION IN INDIA

In December 2009, L.I.B. embarked upon a journey to India and made great strides for our first community development initiative. A number of city centers and communities were visited, building relationships and connections with local non-government organizations (NGOs) whose vision and philosophy align with L.I.B.'s. Through our meetings with the NGO's and community residents, we found that a common element contributing to poverty in India is the absence of quality primary education that is accessible and beneficial to poor children living in slum areas.

India is a beautiful country boasting an abundance of culture. Economically, India has taken great strides and is finding its place among the developed world. Its emerging economy has allowed India to invest billions of dollars into infrastructure and prepare for its role as host to the 2010 Commonwealth Games. Furthermore, a series of high caliber colleges and universities have been established, successfully yielding world class professionals. The Indian government has made primary education a major focus during the past decade. Great accomplishments have been made, including the establishment of an agenda aiming to abolish child labour and ensure that all children six to fourteen are enrolled in government funded primary schools. However, these efforts are facing a dismal and discouraging evaluation and more must be done before an Indian child's right to universal education can be fully realized.

The disparity between the classes in India is blatant and enormous. Many, if not all, slum area residents live below the poverty level and face numerous obstacles in providing their families with basic necessities. As a result, many children are forced to enter the work force before a chance is given to attend primary school since the minimum enrollment age is six. Once a child becomes of age to go to school, parents often view this opportunity as irrelevant or unnecessary. This belief applies most often to girls who are expected to help their mothers, marry young and start families. Parents also view, sometimes accurately, that the education in slum areas is of low quality and ultimately a waste of time. Unfortunately children of these parents are seen as being more productive labourers than students. Many

children who do find their way into the education system show poor attendance and eventually drop out before their eighth term, departing with few skills and little motivation to better themselves and their economic positions.

There are many factors that contribute to the dismal state of primary education in the slum areas. Teachers are often under staffed, under trained and have inadequate resources. Corporal punishment is the norm and children are taught with a heavy hand. There is little or no room for these children to engage with their studies and enjoy learning. Sanitary conditions are awful as toilets are very rarely available to the students and there is little or no access to fresh drinking water. Food is scarce and if a midday meal is offered it is usually of very low nutritional value and sometimes can even be spoiled due to poor storage and preparation.

Since the need to improve upon the primary education system in India is obvious and pressing, L.I.B has committed to do its part and collaborate with partnering aid groups in India to help make a difference. Currently there are many NGOs working hard to make education more accessible to all slum children by aiding in the development of more high quality schools. Buildings are secured and these organizations aim to train only qualified and motivated teachers while offering the students an improved curriculum that teaches basic skills while allowing the space and time to play and become self-secure and motivated little people. Sanitary conditions are also a priority and nutrition is seen as the foundation to successful learning. Parents are seen as a vital resource, and their participation in the student's learning is paramount. As parents become more involved in their child's learning they realize the benefits of education and support their child to a level in which he or she becomes a skilled, motivated and responsible participant in society. It is through our relationships in India that L.I.B. hopes to contribute to the development of humanity. We hope to improve conditions that are affecting primary education in the slum areas and help to eliminate the limitations that make it hard for these people to meet their basic needs.

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*Written By: Gayle Schindler*



## WHAT IS FAIR TRADE?

Fair trade is a growing movement that is expanding its support to a variety of industries throughout the world. Although there is no clear definition of the term it represents the trend that trade should have a conscience. Producers throughout the world should be free from exploitation and valued for the products and services that they provide to the global community. On their website [www.wfto.com](http://www.wfto.com) the World Fair Trade Organization (WFTO), a global regulatory body, defines fair trade by the following ten standards:

1. Creating Opportunities for Economically Disadvantaged Producers
2. Transparency and Accountability
3. Trading Practices
4. Payment of a Fair Price
5. Child Labour and Forced Labour
6. Non Discrimination, Gender Equity and Freedom of Association
7. Working Conditions
8. Capacity Building
9. Promotion of Fair Trade
10. Environment

## L.I.B. INTERNATIONAL IN FAIR TRADE

L.I.B. is currently connecting with artisans in countries such as Vietnam, Jordan and India and proposing a business relationship that will provide a global market for their products. A fair price is offered to these artisans for their products based on the above standards. L.I.B. intends on supporting these artisans from a business development perspective and giving them tools to increase the efficiency and productivity of their business, without compromising their autonomy, dignity or values.

L.I.B. hopes to increase the quality of life for many artisans who, without a dependable income, would not be able to satisfy the needs of their families. Ideally the effect of the fair trade initiative would not only benefit the individual artisans, but would also benefit their families and help break the cycle of poverty occurring in their communities.

L.I.B., as a non-government organization, will also benefit from the sales of the fair trade products in the sense that a small profit will be made. However, the profit made from the sale of these goods will be

reinvested into L.I.B. to supplement operating costs and further allow for the maintenance of a true non-profit organization. Because our operating costs will be fulfilled through our fair trade initiative, L.I.B. will be able to apply all donations directly to program development, without requiring any percentage for administration costs.

## OUR FAIR TRADE PRODUCTS

We are pleased to announce our first fair trade partnership with an organization in Vietnam. Pictured below are the elaborate embroidered wall hangings that have been created by teachers and students at a school for auditory handicapped children.



The school opened in 1994 and presently has 110 deaf children and 140 handicapped (7 of which are defined as orphans whose families have no means to financially support their children). The school offers standard Vietnamese curriculum for primary education, vocational training for teens such as, embroidery training for girls and small engine repair for boys. The result of this partnership will contribute to the continued development of the school.



Written By: Matt Osborne & Heather Hild

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## Bulletin Board

### FUND-RAISERS

#### Toy Library

The formal program name is Khel Kehl Mein and is a simple concept - Education through toys! The Wockhardt Foundation in Mumbai India started a Toy Library in the Geeta Nagar (Colaba) in collaboration with their local Rotary Club. They started out with two rented rooms with two teachers and would run the programs for four hours a day (two in the morning and two in the afternoon) on weekends. Due to the size of classroom and the amount of children in the community they would have to split the children into groups of 25-30 and they would come in shifts. The combination of toys, puzzles and books enhance the child's language and numerical skills.

A number of family members from the slums volunteer the time and resources that they have to continue the success of the programs. This could be from young mothers reading a book to a group of children, to a computer teacher spending time orientating children with the systems, to locals donating gently used items to the centers - leaving the children inspired and motivated to achieve more.

L.I.B. International in partnership with the Wockhardt Foundation will be collecting and shipping items to be used in existing and new Toy Libraries. If you have books, dvds, puzzles, toys, teddy bears that you no longer use in your family unit and would like to donate them to be used by children in a far worse situation than us. Our first donation will be sent on May 31, 2010, please contact Heather Hild at (403) 880-3754 if you would like to donate.

### RANDOM THOUGHTS

The name L.I.B. was inspired by the song we all know and love 'Let it Be'.

Essentially 'it' is interchangeable to activate and drive the mission of the society and what we are trying to accomplish within specific agendas.

Ultimately we need to unite and combat global poverty and LET IT BE; let independence be, let change be, let peace be.

### THOUGHTS TO PONDER

What would your utopia look like?  
How would you conquer world peace?

### ANNOUNCEMENTS

- L.I.B. International would like to THANK everyone who made the Peace, Love, Understanding & Music event come to life. It was with the help of a youthful, driven and dedicated committee that made everything a success. *The committee included: Christie Gullekson Debra Woods, Gayle Schindler, James Early, Janna Gullekson, Sameera Mehra, and Stacy King.* This event would also not have been possible without the musical entertainment of the Ruben Kincaids.
- L.I.B. has joined the social networking scene now you can follow us on our website ([www.libinternational.com](http://www.libinternational.com)), Facebook and Twitter
- For your continued reading pleasure of our trip to India please visit our trip blog: <http://india2009lib.blogspot.com/>

### VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

- Board of Directors: L.I.B. values a diverse board of directors; we appreciate and value the unique skill set individuals bring to a group. We are looking for determined, passionate and motivated people who are interested in the growth and development of a grass-roots foundation and shaping the direction it provides aid internationally while making an impact on the development of humanity
- Grant Writer: Every non-profit organization experiences the difficulty in rising money and therefore the needs for grants are essential. We are looking for someone with an understanding of how grant applications work.

### QUESTIONS/SUGGESTIONS?

As we are a community based and driven organization and believe that more voices are better than one, please contact us with your suggestions OR questions:

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