The following communities have participated in

BIG ONES LITTLE ONES® exhibitions

Work from their artists will be showcased in

BIG ONES LITTLE ONES®

Thoughts – Feelings – Imagination

at

The University of Western Sydney, 2011

For information about the BIG ONES LITTLE ONES® visual art and literacy project, contact:
Trish Amichi
Gallery Amichi
0411 888 501 or gallery@amichi.com.au
AUSTRALIA
NEW SOUTH WALES
ALEXANDRIA PARK COMMUNITY SCHOOL
With its local community focus, Alexandria Park Community School provides a dynamic and creative multi-campus school for children from Kindergarten right through to Year 12. The Junior Campus houses two learning centres, a Kindergarten to Year 4 Unit and a Year 5 to Year 8 Middle School Unit. Early learning programs, including strong literacy and numeracy programs ensure a sound start to all children’s education in the K-4 Unit, while the Year 5-8 Middle focuses on a successful transition between Primary and Secondary school in an environment that provides students with both strong support and meaningful academic challenges. Students in Years 9 -12 study within a wide subject choice including traineeships, industry related training and other programs.
Alexandria Park Community School provides:
- Programs in art, music, drama and dance
- Partnerships and links with local community groups including UTS
- Sport related training and employment opportunities
- Strong co-curricular program including choirs, band, drama, dance and journalism
- Excellent language programs including Italian, Vietnamese, Indonesian, Mandarin and Wiradjuri
Alexandria Park Community School allows students access to a broad range of high quality educational opportunities and gives them a strong community support base. It is therefore not surprising to hear that the students of Alexandria Park Community School "do well and achieve great results".

BELLBROOK PUBLIC SCHOOL is a rural school 52km west of Kempsey, located on the mid-north coast of NSW. It is a small K-6 school for 36 students, with 40% of students being of Aboriginal descent. Due to the school’s isolation, we have been included in the Country Area Program (CAP) for many years. The program is designed to provide students and teachers from isolated communities with access to high quality professional learning opportunities targeting quality teaching and learning, the effective use of technology in the classroom and the quality improvement cycle.
‘Our school is also a part of the Priority Schools Funding Program (PSFP). This program provides staff, students and parents with funding to develop literacy, numeracy skills and parent-community partnerships. The school is acknowledged as a leader in the district in quality teaching and learning and has developed strong networks with other local schools to provide teachers with the opportunity to engage in professional sharing and discussion with their peers. Cultural understanding and tolerance are qualities typical within our school, as we run many programs to develop and share Aboriginal culture in our school. Notable amongst these is our Aboriginal program’.

BOGGABILLA CENTRAL SCHOOL is part of the Euraba Education Centre in the township of Boggabilla. It is situated on the Queensland - New South Wales border. Boggabilla is a village of approximately 750 people on the banks of the Macintyre River. The school currently has an enrolment of 210 talented students. Being a Central School, we cater for students from Pre-
school to Year 12. Our school services both the Boggabilla and Toomelah communities.

**LA PEROUSE PUBLIC SCHOOL** provides a safe, warm and supportive learning environment for all students. A significant percentage of our student population (75%) is from an Aboriginal background. The school has a proud history of providing quality education, which promotes Aboriginal cultural programs for students. Strong partnerships with the community have been further expanded through the Schools in Partnership initiative and the Priority Schools Program. Students are given opportunities to develop their gifts and talents in academic, cultural and sporting domains and their leadership potential. Learning is enriched through the inclusion of Aboriginal programs, which promote self-esteem and pride in Australia’s Indigenous heritage.

Creative and Visual Arts is an important component of the curriculum. The students participate in a range of activities, including Aboriginal and contemporary dance, drama and visual arts accessing a wide range of technologies. These activities enrich the children’s written work as they create stories, plays and legends to accompany and inspire their creative efforts. La Perouse public School has participated each year in the Big Ones Little Ones Art Exhibition and has benefited from the opportunity to produce work with a real audience and purpose in mind.

**MINIMBAH PRIMARY SCHOOL** is a small Independent school that services a disadvantaged Indigenous community in East Armidale, next to the Narwan mission. The school is relatively new (10 years old) and is an extension to the Minimbah Preschool, which was setup by the Save the Children Fund in the Narwan Aboriginal Mission here in East Armidale. Since its opening, Minimbah Primary School has achieved success in many different ways. The ethos of Minimbah Primary School is to equip every Aboriginal child with the skills to participate effectively and integrate successfully in mainstream life. Minimbah School treats every student as an individual. An holistic view is taken in the context of education, with physical and spiritual wellbeing given the necessary support. We believe that if one’s physical and social health are both well, then all else will follow. At Minimbah, students are provided with at setting that is user-friendly to Indigenous communities. We proudly boast an Indigenous Principal, Mrs. Dianne Roberts, OAM, a visionary in Indigenous education and a proud Dhungutti woman. The Primary School also has two fully qualified female Indigenous teachers. The majority of the staff of 30 also identify as Indigenous and this is seen as a very important aspect of the school. Families, including students are reassured and feel a sense of ownership of the school when family members are employed at all levels within the school. Minimbah Primary School is special, as we engage closely and personally with out students and their families to achieve the positive outcomes we all desire. Minimbah Primary School is unique and has been described as “a school that every Indigenous community should have”.

**ST. LUCY’S SCHOOL, WAHROONGA** was established by the Dominican Sisters in 1938 as a school for the blind. There are seven classes on site at Wahroonga, plus two satellite classes, one at Narrabeen and one at Narraweeena. Additional input is provided for the children through specialist
consultants and teachers including speech therapists, occupational therapists and music, dance and physical education teachers. Today, St Lucy's is a school for all special needs, maintaining expertise in education of the vision impaired whilst providing an outreach service to children in the mainstream. “St Lucy’s is a school for young children with wonderful gifts and major disabilities. There are many medical labels attaché to their disabilities but no label to describe their spirit, their capacity for delight, their quirky observations, and their love for the people and things of their world”. Jo Karaolis, Principal, St Lucy’s.

TOOMELAH PUBLIC SCHOOL is a small school with approximately 56 students from K-6. The school has a 100% Aboriginal population. It is located on the border of NSW & QLD. The community is 130km from Moree. Toomelah School strives to build literacy & numeracy skills in all students. The school is proud of its Aboriginal heritage & continues to excel in dance. We have participated in the Croc. Eisteddfod for many years in Moree. There are many talented students in the school, particularly in the Arts.

NORTHERN TERRITORY
IRRKERLANTYE LEARNING CENTRE, ALICE SPRINGS
The Irrkerlantye Learning Centre - ILC - is a unique intergenerational learning centre for Arrernte families; a joint initiative by a number of organisations including Ngkarte Mikwekenhe, Tangentyere Council and the NT Education Department. The ILC was set up in 1996 to provide an educational alternative for Aboriginal students considered to be at risk from high levels of substance abuse, violence, involvement with the juvenile justice system and dysfunctional and anti-social behaviours. The ILC offers programs that involve family members of all ages, studying and working together on community-based projects. This emphasis on family participation means that younger children attend the crèche, school age children attend class and adults participate in the arts centre (Irrkerlantye Arts). There is strong interaction between the groups and children are welcome in the arts centre where their cultural heritage is often taught during painting sessions. Arrernte family members believe that the ILC, which provides total family participation, makes people strong by keeping their Arrernte culture and identity strong.

PAPUNYA SCHOOL is located 240km west northwest of Alice Springs. Although there is a regular airmail service, the roads are often corrugated and thus access can be difficult on occasions. Papunya School hopes to provide a range of appropriate educational experiences for students in a wholly Indigenous community school in a remote Western Desert community. It is classified by the Northern Territory Department of Education as ‘a remote Aboriginal community school’.

QUEENSLAND
CHERBOURG STATE SCHOOL is located within southeast Queensland and situated on the Barambah Creek. Cherbourg has a population of around 2000. It is within the Wakka Wakka tribal boundaries near the border of Gubbi Gubbi
In the late 1980’s, Cherbourg developed from being a welfare institution to a community with self-determination and self-management as its mail goals. There are a number of community-based organizations that are operated and controlled by community people. The Cherbourg State School stands proudly at the centre of the community and its activities. The School has 250 students, ranging from Kindy to Grade 7. In 2003, the ‘Strong and Smart’ sculpture was created. It is a work that incorporated a self-portrait of every child at the Cherbourg School. It was a painted 3-dimensional rendering of the School's mottos: **Strong + Smart**. This work was exhibited at the Old Government House at Gardens’ Point during September of 2003 and was then taken back to Cherbourg, where it was raised on top of 5-meter poles at the entrance to the School grounds. It visually reminds each child who enters the grounds of what they need to be. It also acts a beacon to the township. Every year since then our students have worked with visiting artists from Ratatat in Ballarat to experiment with a range of other art styles and processes. This great partnership culminated in 2006 with Cherbourg students being ‘artists in residence’ at Artplay- a children’s art space in Melbourne. They taught screen-printing to visiting Melbourne children.

Our continued participation in BIG ONES LITTLE ONES is evidence that the remarkable Cherbourg State School aims to be **Strong, Smart and Creative**.

**MORNINGTON ISLAND STATE SCHOOL** (Prep to Year 10) is located at Gununa on Mornington Island, a large island in the southern half of Queensland’s Gulf of Carpentaria. There are approximately 240 students at the school, out of a population of around 1200. Dance and painting are at the centre of stories and culture from Mornington Island. There has been a recent resurgence of painting based on the traditional skin designs used by the Mornington Island dancers who are renowned worldwide. All students from Prep to Year 10 participate in art lessons at school. The school is the centre for learning, incorporating programs that recognise Standard Australian English as a second language and with a culturally inclusive curriculum. We believe that building a connection between school and community is critical for the positive future of young people on Mornington Island. Our school vision is “Thaldi Bana Merri” (Come and Learn) Courage, Choice, Challenge and is based on turtle imagery.

**OUR LADY OF THE SACRED HEART SCHOOL, THURSDAY ISLAND**

The first Catholic School on Thursday Island was built in about 1900, on the present site of the Sacred Heart Mission Hall. The French order - Missionaries of the Sacred Heart - had established the mission in 1884. A few years later, the Missionaries were joined by the Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, then a little later still by the first Australian Daughter of the Order.

- **1887** - The Sisters started teaching on the veranda of the Convent. They also ran an orphanage, which closed in 1942 due to the War, then reopened briefly in 1948
- **1961** - The orphanage on Thursday Island was converted to a school, and a second campus was established on Hammond Island
- **1968** - The Order of the Sisters of Mercy took over administration of the School
- 1973 - The new school was built around the old orphanage, which is now used as a library
- 1987 - The Sisters of Mercy left and the School is now one of the 25 in the Cairns Catholic Diocese systemic school system

O.L.S.H has continued to maintain two campuses - one on Thursday Island and one on Hammond Island. The current enrolment is 88 students. The majority of the students speak Torres Strait Creole as their first language, with an eastern or western dialect as their second language. O.L.S.H is the most northern school in Australia.

**ST. MICHAEL'S PRIMARY SCHOOL, PALM ISLAND**

St Michael's School was established at the Casement in 1938 where two nuns taught 60 children. In 1969 the casement site was needed to accommodate an airstrip and the school (5 classrooms) was relocated to where it now stands, on the Banfield Highway in the foothills of Mt Bentley. In 1972, additional classrooms were added to cater for the needs of 150 students and 1986 saw the first qualified Aboriginal teachers, Mrs Irene Mc Bride and Mrs Carol Fisher joining the staff. In 1991 plans evolved to address some of the issues arising out of the Black Deaths in Custody situation. To the forefront of this vision was the importance of Education and in particular, Pre-school Education.

The original school building was demolished in 1998 and a new one erected, including 4 classrooms above a storeroom and a much needed covered area. The creek was made safe during this time and a new administration building was erected, together with brick classrooms and an amenities block. The tuckshop was totally renovated and a new toilet block built, with a carport added to house the Toyota carrier purchased in 1999. The opening and blessing of the renewed St Michael's was in October 1999.

**ST. PAUL’S STATE SCHOOL** is on Moa Island in the Torres Strait. About halfway between the tip of Queensland and Papua New Guinea, Moa is the second largest island in the Torres Strait. St. Paul's is relatively a new community of 250 people, having been settled about 100 years ago by a group of Torres Strait Islanders from different islands, as well as by people from the South Sea Islands.

St Paul’s Community now has about 300 residents; 60 of these are students at St Paul’s State School. The school is located right on the beach, where the students are often found playing football. They also love to go fishing or squidding on the reef, which is directly off the shore. The students’ artwork is heavily influenced by their surrounding environment. They also take great inspiration from aspects of their traditional lifestyle, which has been passed down from local elders.

**NORTHERN TERRITORY**

**IRRKERLANTYE LEARNING CENTRE, ALICE SPRINGS**

The Irrkerlantye Learning Centre - ILC - is a unique intergenerational learning centre for Arrernte families; a joint initiative by a number of organisations including Ngkarte Mikwekenhe, Tangentyere Council and the NT Education Department. The ILC was set up in 1996 to provide an educational alternative
for Aboriginal students considered to be at risk from high levels of substance abuse, violence, involvement with the juvenile justice system and dysfunctional and anti-social behaviours. The ILC offers programs that involve family members of all ages, studying and working together on community-based projects. This emphasis on family participation means that younger children attend the creche, school age children attend class and adults participate in the arts centre (Irkerlantye Arts). There is strong interaction between the groups and children are welcome in the arts centre where their cultural heritage is often taught during painting sessions. Arrernte family members believe that the ILC, which provides total family participation, makes people strong by keeping their Arrernte culture and identity strong.

**PAPUNYA SCHOOL** is located 240km west northwest of Alice Springs. Although there is a regular airmail service, the roads are often corrugated and thus access can be difficult on occasions. Papunya School hopes to provide a range of appropriate educational experiences for students in a wholly Indigenous community school in a remote Western Desert community. It is classified by the Northern Territory Department of Education as ‘a remote Aboriginal community school’.

**SOUTH AUSTRALIA**

**MIMILI ANANGU SCHOOL** is part of the Mimili Anangu Community in the far north of South Australia, about 100km south of the Northern Territory border. From 1948 until the early 80’s, it was a cattle station called Everard Park. Since the 80’s, it has been an Anangu community of about 250 people. "We have a store, a clinic, a community office, a church, art centre, youth centre, a school, swimming pool, football oval, TAFE buildings and a bush tucker garden. Mimili is in the desert but it looks beautiful, being completely surrounded with red rocky hills that look a bit like little Ayers rocks."

**WESTERN AUSTRALIA**

**KARALUNDI ABORIGINAL EDUCATION CENTRE:** Ever since its inception in 1954, Karalundi Aboriginal Education Centre has developed and bloomed in almost every sphere a school should encompass. Today, it primarily caters to the needs of young indigenous boys and girls from immensely distant communities and remote areas of Western Australia. The students who attend this 100% residential institution hail from Hall’s Creek and Fitzroy Crossing to Meekatharra and Wiluna. Karalundi offers academic education to children from the Kindergarten to Year 10. It lays special emphasis on Moral Values and aims to inculcate in each student its rich Christian ethos of love, forgiveness and unconditional acceptance. Besides school uniform, it provides the boys and girls three meals a day (with snacks in-between), air-conditioned classrooms and dormitories, all, at NO COST to the students. The school proudly boasts a 25-meter swimming pool, a full sized Footy Field, a huge recreational shed and a well-equipped Music Room, where all the children are encouraged and talents enhanced. Its vast farm provides opportunity for the students to learn and experience the basics of agriculture, horsemanship and sheep rearing. The children also have the facility of
relaxing on the weekends driving go-carts and riding pushbikes. Karalundi’s vision is to EDUCATE its people for work today, EQUIP them with skills for tomorrow, and INSPIRE a hope for Eternity.

PURNULULU INDEPENDENT COMMUNITY SCHOOL is a small community school located in the Kimberley, Western Australia. There are no shops in the community and we are a two and a half hour drive from Kununurra, the main town in the centre of the Kimberley. The community itself, Frog Hollow, is an Indigenous one, numbering about sixty people and the school is situated just across the creek from the community. The community’s land includes the Purnululu National Park, which is most famous for the ‘Bungle Bungles’. The community is a two-hour drive from the National Park, and a yearly camp is very much anticipated every year, where the whole community heads out to the Bungles for a fantastic week of fishing and swimming and relaxing amongst the most beautiful landscape. Recently (2006) the school has seen some dramatic changes with, for the first time, having full power and not having to depend on solar. There is still no air conditioning in the main classroom building, so over the wet season, it can get extremely hot in the classroom and we usually finish school before the big heat of the afternoon. We are fortunate that we have a creek running by the community and you will usually find all of the students down there swimming after school to cool down.

Being an independent school, the community is in charge of the school and very much takes an interest in the running of the school and they help on a daily basis with the running of the school. There are around 30 students that come to school ranging from 2 years old up to 13 years of age. Students are given breakfast every morning at school, and members of the community come over to the school kitchen and prepare a hot lunch for the student’s everyday. We have two members of the community who also come over, prepare, and teach the lower primary classes of the school. There is a principal and two other teachers, who take the two upper classes and who also live in the community. We are very privileged to be invited to live in the community and made welcome to share in lifestyle and learn more about culture.

SPECIAL GUEST ARTIST

DION BEASLEY
Dion Beasley was born in Alice Springs on 7 July 1991. He lived with his parents and extended family members at Canteen Creek and Appurrurulam (communities in the Barkly Region) for the first eleven years of his life. When Dion was a baby, he contracted meningitis, which is believed to have caused his deafness.

In 2002, Dion came to live in the township of Tennant Creek with his Aunty and extended family. He attended the Tennant Creek Primary School and engaged in a modified curriculum. Dion had a passion for drawing, choosing lead pencil and paper. Dion was fascinated with the dogs around him and as he drew his surroundings, his drawings of dogs became a feature of his work. His great aptitude for drawing also initiated a form of communication with others. Previously he had
extremely limited communication. This talent for drawing a great array of fascinating and fun dogs led into producing the images on T-shirts, shoulder bags and cards. A trust fund has been established now, where royalties from his work can be secured for his future needs.

Dion, now 15, is presently attending the Tennant Creek High School, where he particularly enjoys participating in cooking lessons and the practical art activities. He swims daily in the town swimming pool and enjoys the freedom of movement the water allows. This is great as Dion also suffers from Muscular Dystrophy. Dion has a wonderful sense of humour, which shines through in all his art. His fascination about learning about the world keeps his mind active and alert. Dion has been living with his Grandfather and family for the past 12 months. Dion has a special bond and affection for his Grandad and is happy and secure in his company.

Dion’s drawings for the BIG ONES LITTLE ONES® TOGETHER in SHARJAH, UAE exhibition portray many different animals. Donkeys down at Canteen Creek – a community south of Tennant Creek – shows the donkeys that come into the community at night (looking for water). Dozens of dogs spend the night barking and chasing the donkeys. Needless to say, these nights are very noisy! Cows crossing the Road is the subject of many conversations – “Get off the road!” – as the cars and trucks are approaching. Of course, it is usually dogs in Tennant Creek, but Dion is often imaging giraffes, elephants, tigers etc also crossing the road. The African animals, drawn in From the Lion King I-III, are inspired by The Lion King. Dion saw the show in Melbourne two years ago and has watched the video countless time since. From the Lion King I shows Simba and Nala walking down to the elephant graveyard, Zazu flying and the three hyenas waiting.

OVERSEAS SCHOOLS/COMMUNITIES

AFGHANISTAN

PANSHIR VALLEY GIRLS’ SCHOOL is located in Abdara village, which lies in a small valley among the dry jagged peaks typical of the Panshir Valley area, north of Kabul, in the mountains of the Hindu Kush range. The region is isolated and has few schools or medical facilities. This is the very first girls’ school to operate in this remote area. Currently there are 180 girls studying at the school, built by Mahboba’s Promise* - which also provides teachers, stationery and uniforms for the students. This school, along with its companion boys’ school, has made a huge difference to the education of young people in the valley. The girls are keen students and enjoying the advantages of literacy. Many have hopes of going to university and entering a profession. Recently a new assembly hall has been added to the school and gradually improvements are being made to the grounds. A medical centre, funded by Mahboba’s Promise, is attached to the school.

The future of Afghanistan must include a strong role for educated women. The present literacy rate for women is just 14%.

*Mahboba Rawi founded Mahboba’s Promise in 1998 in response to the suffering, poverty and tragedy experienced by the people of Afghanistan for nearly three decades. Mahboba’s Promise has NGO (Non-Government Organisation) status in Kabul and has been recognised by other NGOs as a
highly effective organisation operating in and around Kabul. The Abdara Girls Primary School was the first girls’ school to operate in the Panshir Valley and is sanctioned by the Afghani Government.

EAST TIMOR/TIMOR LESTE
ESCOLA PRIMARIA CATOLICA, BESILAU - AILEU
Besilau is a small country settlement about one and a quarter hours drive south of Dili. The school was actually destroyed in 1999, but was then rebuilt by the teachers, who cemented the lower part of the wall and used woven bamboo to construct the upper section of the building. Together with the students, the teachers initially also made desks and benches from bamboo. There are 223 children currently attending the primary school. Jacinto Borges is the Director and he and the teachers are enthusiastic in trying to provide education for the children. The families continue to struggle as the rains have not been good this year again.

At the end of 2006 (Christmas Eve), the rebuilding of one school block was completed. It consists of three classrooms and a teachers’ staff-room. The teachers, children and families are extremely happy and very proud. They prepared a wonderful celebration for the blessing and official opening of the new school block in January. Children danced, teachers and parents prepared food and an area for the celebration, as well as preparing three beautiful tais to present. All building work was done by Timorese, with funds donated by Australian people through Mary MacKillop East Timor. It is hoped that in the not too distant future the remaining three classrooms, library and toilets will be able to be rebuilt.

S.LUIS GONZAGA SCHOOL, BALIDE - EAST TIMOR
459 children attend this school, which is also in Dili. This school also has very little, but there are enough desks and chairs for the students. The three students representing this school in the exhibition are a brother and sister and their nephew.

For most of the students from Dili, these works are actually their first pieces of art. Because of this, the children are very excited that their drawings have been included in an exhibition in Australia.

S. TERESINHA SCHOOL, BEDOIS: 271 children attend this school, which is in a very impoverished area on the outskirts of Dili. This is little clean water available and what there is has to be carried from quite a distance. All the children work after school to help their families live. Every day the children carry water, collect wood for cooking, sell vegetables, pound grain (such as rice or corn) and work in the family garden or a combination of several of these jobs.

Whilst many schools in Dili now have school uniforms and the children wear shoes, at this school these are not the requirements as the families are too poor to provide them and it would hinder many of the children from attending. Many of the children have no shoes but a number of them have thongs.

The school consists of just 2 rooms. Classes are run in shifts, from 7.30 am till 5.30pm. There are insufficient desks and chairs, so some of the children sit on the floor. There are no such things as cleaners, so the children sweep the rooms and the school yard. Until a few months ago there was no toilet. The
INDIA

C.B.M SAKUNTHALA VIDYALAYA ELEMENTARY SCHOOL is located in Kovaipudur, Coimbatore, in Tamilnadu State. On 16th June 1976, C.B.M. Nursery school was founded by Dharmapravarthana C.B. Muthusamy Chettiar in memory of his beloved wife, Tmt. Sakunthala. At the time, it was situated in a rented house. Later, it was upgraded to an Elementary School, with a new building constructed for this purpose. Next, came the promotion to a Middle School and on 29th March 1986, this Middle School was upgraded again to become the C.B.M. Sakunthala Vidyalaya High School. It is to be noted that within a short period this school has experienced tremendous growth. Thiru. C.B. Muthusamy Chettiar helped the people of Kovaipudur to get a proper and good education by starting this school. After his death, his son, Thiru. C.M. Ramraj showed keen interest in developing this educational institution. In 1995, Mrs. Shashikala Ramraj became the Secretary of our Institution, working to achieve further improvements. Currently, C.B.M Sakunthala Vidyalaya Elementary School has 200 students and runs from grade I-V. The High School has Grades VI-X. The Chairman of our school is Thiru. C.M. Ramraj; the Headmistress is Thirumathi. P. Anusuya and the Secretary is Thirumathi. Sashikala Ramraj.

IRAQ

HIBATO ALLA CENTRE, BAGHDAD

“I am Mrs. Sahira Abdul Latif Mustafa. Born in Iraq in 1948. Graduated from University of Basrha, having B.Sc. In 1983 I gave birth to my fourth child, called Hiba…meaning in Arabic ‘a gift from God’ …I don’t know that she will be a real gift; I did not know that she is different from my other children, as she is DOWN SYNDROME. In 1984, my husband get his grant to get his Ph.D. in Engineering from London for nearly five years. We all go with him. Because I know English, I found it very easy to mix and be a member in the Down syndrome Assoc. in London. In late 1989, we get home back to Iraq. I decide first to transfer my work to the Ministry of Labour, who is responsible for handicapped school in Iraq. But after one year, I ask for Retirement. I sit at home because my aim in teaching those kind children is different from the one that is in the centers there. In 1992…we buy one big house…opening a center for DS, according to my own aims…here I’m in HIBATO ALLA CENTER in 1993, which we call after HIBA...(and in 1993) I get only four children and one teacher. In 2002, I put a new plan to my 150 children with thirty teachers. All my family also work with me. Now because of the bad war, the children are affected as some of them could not come to the center because of the bad security. I hope every thing will be okay to go back to the normal life and activity.”

Sahira Abdul Latif Mustafa, Head Teacher - Hibato Alla Center; President - Iraqi Down’s Syndrome Assoc; National Representative of Iraq (Mena region)
ISRAEL

HAND IN HAND CENTER, WADI ARA: Following extreme tensions in the country in October 2000, a small group Arabs and Jews from the central area of Israel began meeting together to explore solutions to the political difficulties that divide the two people. The group quickly grew to 200 and as concerned citizens joined together, searching for a way to live in peace, equality and mutual respect. In their exploration, they dedicated themselves to building a bridge between the Jewish and Arab communities. They decided that they would do this with their most precious asset, their children and began planning a school that would provide a place for all children in the region. The parents reconfirmed their commitment and agreed that the new school would not only bring the Jewish and Arab community together but for the first time in Israel’s history would bring Jewish children to study on a daily basis to the heart of an Arab town. Thus began the Hand in Hand Centre at Wadi Ara, approximately 35 km south of Haifa.

The school is bilingual. The children are taught to speak, read, and write in both Hebrew and Arabic. The classes are mixed, half and half, with Jewish and Arab children. There is one Jewish and one Arab teacher in each class, each speaking in their own language. Language is an important element of the Hand in Hand community, creating a community based on equality and respect, and teaching understanding and appreciation of each other’s culture, which is at the core of the Hand in Hand philosophy. Today there are three integrated schools run by Hand in Hand - with over 750 students and still growing. Each year, the parents, teachers, educators, and government officials learn more about living together, learning together, and being together as equals, developing a new partnership and broadening community involvement - bridging the distance between the Jewish and Arab communities. Hand in Hand’s schools have brought huge steps forward in re-defining Arab-Jewish relations in Israel.

MONGOLIA

HOVD AIMAG BULGAN SOUM SCHOOL NO 2 in Bulgan Soum (town) is located in the far south of Hovd Aimag (state) of western Mongolia. It has 1500 students. Bulgan is the largest rural area in Mongolia and is the home to both the Torgood people and Kazak. The land is extreme in every way, with temperatures reaching the 50’s n the summer and below 40 in winter. In Bulgan, living takes time and this must be allowed for, even as changes take place to meet with the modern world. Bulgan is very isolated, even within the boundaries of its nation, by the great Altai Mountain range. The advantage of this is that Bulgan people, the Torgood, hold many keys to Mongolia’s traditional culture and life, which is now lost in the cities and larger towns. No 2 school promotes many activities involving traditional dance and song. A disadvantage is that many times this isolated region is forgotten by all. It has no electricity, no running water and no infrastructure. This means the children are already behind when they enter university, because they have not had computers or access to books or other resources that give them knowledge of the outside world. The school has a dormitory for herds’ family children. It was built 25 years ago to house 90 children, but these days more than 130 squeeze into its rooms. Every year the children and staff kill and prepare 45
goats for winter meat for the dormitory. They also have to participate in gathering gobi wood for the school heating system and many other daily tasks of school life. Despite many hardships of life, Bulgan children do well and many go on to university and then take important roles in Mongolian society. The children must be very practical by nature of life but many of the children are also very intelligent. They certainly all know how to sing, dance and ride a horse.

NEW ZEALAND
TE KURA KAUPAPA MAORI O PUKE MIRO. This relatively new school opened in 2003. It is situated on the outer edge of the township of Kaitaia at the top of the North Island of New Zealand. We are a small school of 50 children with 4 teaching staff and the Principal. The curriculum is taught in the Maori language throughout the whole school. This year we have been learning more about our school environment and our coastline. We have studied pingao plant, which grows on our beaches in the far North. Our students have chosen different parts of our school surroundings that they would like to improve on and make our school look more beautiful. This included planning for things like special seating, play areas, a playground and a basketball court. We are also learning about the History of our ancestors, our people and our land. From this, our children learn how to respect and care for all living things as well as themselves.

NGA KORERO WHAKATAKI
Tena koutou i runga i nga ahuatanga o te wa. Ratou kua mene atu ki te po moe mai koutou i runga i te rangimarie, tatou te hunga ora tena koutou tena koutou tena koutou tena koutou katoa

- Our mountain is Taumatamahoe
- Our village is Pukemiro
- Our river is Kaitaia
- Our ancestral canoe is Tinana
- And our tribes are Te Rarawa, Muriwhenua

PAPUA NEW GUINEA
WARDSTRIP DEMONSTRATION PRIMARY SCHOOL, BOROKO. This School was opened in 1970 with single classes for Prep-Grade 6. It was originally a 'level 5' school with 500-600 students. Wardstrip is located at Boroko - Port Moresby. It is situated near the Papua New Guinea Education Institute (Pre-Inservice College), which is used a lot by the teacher trainee students for teaching lesson observations and for research.

Today, Wardstrip is a 'Level 8" school, with an enrolment of 1730 students. It has 38 teachers and a support staff of 7. The land on which the school was built is a World War II airstrip, with Wards catering for the injured allied soldiers. This is how the name WARD-STRIP came into being - it was a place that once served the injured allied soldiers. Our School logo signifies the memories of WWII. The School motto is Keep Learning Alive.
**SHARJAH, United Arab Emirates**

**EMIRATES VERY SPECIAL ARTS, SHARJAH**, was established in 1995 with the support of His Highness, Sheikh Sultan Bin Mohammed Al Qasimi, Member of the Supreme Council, Ruler of Sharjah. Since October 2000, Emirates VSA has been affiliated with the founding organization in Washington D.C., which has more than one hundred affiliates worldwide, including in Australia.

Emirates VSA comes under the umbrella of Sharjah City for Humanitarian Services, headed by Sheikha Jameela Bint Mohammed Al Qasimi.

There are currently 40 students enrolled at VSA, Sharjah. 20 have special needs. Our objective is to link these special needs students with the wider community. By working together as a team, we achieve this through the art classes and by holding local, and international, exhibitions. “We are all very happy to have our students participate once again in the BIG ONES LITTLE ONES exhibition in Sydney. We see this as realization of full co-operation and ongoing partnership between Gallery Amichi and VSA, Emirates”.

**SOLOMON ISLANDS**

**ST. MARY’S TANAGAI COMMUNITY HIGH SCHOOL** is located at the western outskirts of Honiara and was established in the 1960s. The school was established and administered by the Roman Catholic Church Education Authority with supervision from the ‘Marist Brothers Society’ from Australia. The school was established purposely to cater for the increasing primary needs of the residents in and around the Kakabona area, right down to Visale, a few kilometres further west. In 1984, the school was transferred from the Catholic Education Authority to the Guadalcanal Province Education Authority, which continued to administer the running of the school until today. The school was later extended to accommodate students at the secondary level. On 16th January 2003, under the name St. Mary Tanagai Community High School, or Marara Community High School as is sometimes called, the school enrolled its first new intake of secondary school students within the area.

**SOUTH AFRICA**

**KOPANANG - SITHAND’IZINGANE COMMUNITY.** Kopanang is a Sotho word, meaning gathering together. While gathering together, the women of Kopanang feel that their work is about relationships. It is about wonder, creativity and the resilience of the human spirit in the face of grinding poverty, the impact of HIV/AIDS, and the remaining legacy of apartheid.

Sithand’izingane provides an orphan after school program for 55 children and 35 small children during the day. The centre provides good nutrition, vitamin supplements, and stimulating educational activities for the women and children.

Besides the drop-in centre, it also provides the following services –

- Basic sewing skills for our mothers and grannies
- Literacy classes
- A feeding plan for 375 orphans, delivered to five sites in the two townships five times a week
- Orphan after school care programme and holiday programme
- A bi-weekly therapy programme for children of child-headed households.

Volunteer field workers provide emergency food package distribution to over 150 families in crisis each month. They in turn collect paper, plastic and tin waste as their contribution for “payment” or choose to work in the organic food garden training program. Sithand’izingane also runs the Food Garden project.

**TRINIDAD**

**ST. MONICA’S HOLY FAITH PREPARATORY SCHOOL** is governed by a Board of Directors of the Holy Faith Congregation, Ireland. Today, however, we can boast of our very own local Board – Srs. Marie Young (Trinidadian), Juliet Rajah (Trinidadian) and Columba Byrne (Irish). To date we have a school population of 394 students ranging from the age of 5+ to 12yrs. There is the total of 25 teachers and we’re proud to say that of our staff team, there is an Art teacher present. Fondly called S.M.P., this 48yr. old establishment can boast of many accomplishments. The most recent acknowledgement was being awarded with a plaque for outstanding achievement in the 11+ Exam – the Secondary Entrance Assessment (S.E.A). This award was given to us by the Ministry of Education of Trinidad and Tobago. We have also been able to distinguish ourselves in the field of Art Competitions; young Jake Salloum only last July won in his particular category in Colgate’s Happy Smiles and who can forget Master Alejandro Davila, who won the title for one of the most creative entries in the S.W.M.C.O.L.’s Defending the Environment Competition - November 2005. We can also boast of our past pupil Ayodhya Ouditt, who possessed tremendous drawing skills as a student and who continued to excellence at the Secondary and Advanced Levels. Our School Song carries a line, “We’re happy each day in our school”. I would like to say that our children at SMP find a safe, happy, well-motivated, well-rounded environment!

**TURKEY**

**TED ISTANBUL KOLEJI.** From kindergarten through primary and secondary education, our aim is to promote students’ awareness of their social and national responsibility for upholding a democratic, secular republic - to empower their learning by encouraging intellectual exploration in the light of their uncovered individual interests and abilities. Always our aim is to be in touch with current thinking and latest educational development. Students will, therefore, acquire at least one foreign language and gain respect for the environment and awareness of the importance of their physical well being. They will recognize the value of sports, music, and fine arts; have an international and intercultural perception of life; adopt universal values as they develop their qualifications academically for success in higher education and further.

TED Istanbul College is built on the hills of Beykoz on the way to Polonezköy. Education in TED Istanbul College takes place in 78 classrooms. 20 of these are in the Kindergarten, 43 in the Elementary School and 15 in the High School. Two floors in the elementary school building have been allocated for the ACS (Art, Culture and Sports) Activities of the Elementary and High School students. In the same building, there are 3 laboratories for computer
assisted learning, 2 computer laboratories, a chemistry laboratory, a science laboratory, and a multi-purpose hall. There is also an amphitheatre, and an area for applied agriculture on the campus. In the High School building there is a physics laboratory, a chemistry laboratory, a biology laboratory, a music room and an art room. In the Kindergarten section there is a mini gymnasium. The dormitory located on the campus is capable of providing board for 30 girls and 60 boys to make a total of 90 students. At TED Istanbul Koleji Foundation Elementary School, the day begins at 8:30 am and, concludes at 3:45 p.m., covering a forty-hour week. The school has adopted a student-centered educational model. In addition to the curriculum set by the Ministry of National Education, English is taught between ten and twelve hours per week by both Turkish and native English speakers. Commencing in the fifth grade for four hours a week are elective French and German courses.

WESTERN SAHARA

ELLAL ANDALLA SCHOOL. This school is located in the 27TH OF FEBRUARY SAHARAWI REFUGEE CAMP. It was founded in 1980 and now has 18 classrooms, 23 teachers and around 500 students. The school is one of many schools situated in the Saharawi refugee camps in Southwest of Algeria - which are inhabited by 165,000 Saharawi refugees. The refugees fled Morocco’s invasion of their homeland, Western Sahara, in 1975, following Spain’s withdrawal from its former colony. The camps are not like the refugee camps of popular imagination, on the brink of despair and disease. Saharawis’ achievements in health and education are remarkable given the hostile environment of the desert. The camps have been considered by NGOs and the UNHCR as example of high organisation and tremendous efforts towards self-sufficiency. The camps are entirely managed by Saharawis. In the Saharawi refugee camps education has been a priority. The literacy rate is around 90 per cent and the proportion of people in higher education verges on Western levels. At the time the Spanish colonists left 32 years ago, the Saharawis were among Africa’s least-educated people. *Ellal Andalla, the name of the School, is the name of a Saharawi martyr who died in the liberation war.