

ISIS reinvigorates Bermuda connection

By Rebecca Zuill



A child in Uganda who has benefitted from the work of The ISIS Foundation

moved to Parliament Street.

The ISIS Foundation, the charitable organisation which saw its beginnings in Bermuda, is distinguished by an unusual and much-praised model — it is supported by the proceeds of its founders' corporate advisory and consulting firm ISIS (Asia Pacific) Pty Limited (ISIS AP).

Today, the ISIS Foundation is a global charitable foundation based in Australia, and primarily works with communities and children in remote areas of Nepal and Uganda to improve their lives through health, education and other development projects.

According to their website, businesswomen Audette Exel and Sharon Beesley, along with a small group of friends and supporters established The ISIS Foundation (Bermuda) in 1998. Initially located on East Broadway, the Bermuda offices of ISIS have now

A press release stated: “The ISIS Foundation Bermuda has recently established its new office on Parliament Street. ISIS Fund Services have generously provided pro-bono office space and resources to the 15-year-old Bermuda registered charity.”

The ISIS Foundation has nine ISIS offices in five countries, including two at 11,000 feet in the high Himalayas and one deep in the heart of rural Uganda.

A press release stated: “The Bermuda office has been established to renew a deeper engagement with the local Bermuda community.” It is being managed by development manager Pamela Barit Nolan, the former executive director of The Centre on Philanthropy. She said: “I am pleased to be a part of The ISIS Foundation family. Over the last several weeks I have started connecting with the many people in Bermuda that have supported ISIS

over the last 15 years. I am also reaching out to new partner organisations and individuals that are interested in the work of The ISIS Foundation.”

Founder Ms Exel stated: “We are continually inspired by the kindness and compassion of our supporters who have looked beyond themselves to see the needs of others around the world. “Bermuda has long been a part of the work of ISIS Foundation as many Bermudians and residents have supported projects, helped build schools and sponsored children, and for that we are immensely grateful.”

The ISIS website states: “Bermuda remains an important partner for The ISIS Foundation, and without its many committed resident supporters, would not be where it is today. “ Also according to its website, The ISIS Group is an Australian corporate advisory business, ISIS Asia Pacific, and an international development organisation, The ISIS Foundation. The objective of the business is to fund the core support costs of the foundation, and apart from their charitable work, the also: “ ... aim to change the way people think about the role of business, and the power of business/non-profit partnerships.”

In Nepal, ISIS works in the remote district of Humla, as well as supporting local NGOs in Kathmandu, according to their press release. They have expanded their assistance to the Humli community in improving, repairing, installing or constructing basic community infrastructure. They also implement and improve alternative technologies such as smokeless stoves, clean drinking water systems, pit latrines, greenhouses, solar lights, micro-hydro and solar driers.

“In a country where close to 2,000 children die each year from diarrhoea caused by unsafe water and poor sanitation, the introduction of drinking water systems and pit latrines have had an immense positive impact in health outcomes in these communities,” ISIS stated. “In Uganda, The ISIS Foundation has partnered with Kiwoko Hospital in the Nakaseke district of Uganda for the past 15 years with the goal of improving health outcomes for a catchment area of 500,0000 people. The district has poor healthcare facilities, malnutrition and a lack of basic health awareness which has led to a high infant mortality rate. In 2012 a whopping 6,500 children received immunisations through the ISIS-supported community based healthcare programme.

“Safe motherhood clinics have become the cornerstone of the programme providing immunisations to children, antenatal education, postnatal care, follow-up for women recently discharged from the hospital and referrals for at-risk women.”

Ms Exel said: “ISIS still has big dreams and exciting new plans.” The organisation intends to enlarge its established research team, and begin a new project called ‘knowledge sharing’.” Ms Nolan said: “If we achieve the goals which ISIS has set, tens of thousands more people will benefit as ISIS builds a training and knowledge-sharing pillar to its work to support others who are interested in doing similar work.”

In order to sustain its work, ISIS needs to raise a minimum of \$3 million year. “This goal can be achieved with the help of existing and new Bermuda-based supporters,” she said. “The ISIS Foundation has survived and thrived the last 15 years because of the astonishing kindness, generosity, love, passion and compassion of all their wonderful supporters in their different forms, from around the world.”

Useful website: www.isisgroup.org