

## ISIS LIMITED

### Audette Exel & Sharon Beesley

Audette Exel and Sharon Beesley, otherwise known as Bees, remain something of an enigma to Bermuda society.

In 1997 they established ISIS Limited, a corporate finance and consultancy business whose mandate was not to increase their own net worth but to raise funds for The ISIS Foundation. What began then as a concept today affords children in developing countries a better life.

The unique partnership of business and charity came about by chance. Exel is Australian and Beesley British. The pair met more than 20 years ago while working in the Hong Kong offices of the English law firm Linklaters.

"In 1990 we escaped the world of corporate law in Hong Kong and the UK," Exel said. "We set off on a two-year cycling trip through Europe, Eastern Europe and Israel. On the way, we volunteered at a Romanian orphanage for seriously disabled children. That experience showed us that not only could we do something for kids in need, but that we should do something.

"Years later, ISIS Limited and The ISIS Foundation were born, and they were started with the first business plan drafts done from Bees' kitchen table in Bermuda."

The pair drew on their respective strengths to make the idea work.

"We have differing but complementary skills," explained Exel. "I have been described as an optimist where Sharon is considered more of a realist. In very general terms, I consider the big picture while Sharon more is detailed orientated.

"However, given the challenges of ISIS in lifting both a business and a charity off the ground from a zero base, it has been our strong friendship and shared goals that have enabled us to weather some very tough times. This is not to say that we have always agreed on how to achieve the goals, but by constantly communicating we have managed to rise above some very low points.

"This partnership coupled with the amazing efforts of the ISIS team is the engine that now which enables the ISIS vision to grow."

ISIS Limited operates as a Bermuda-based corporate finance and consultancy business.

"Audette and I are structured finance law-

yers by background and the business mix of ISIS reflects that specialty," Beesley said. "In addition to its Bermuda-based clients, ISIS acts on behalf of a number of leading Australian institutions and families, and thus has developed a specialty in cross-border transactions between those markets. In particular, ISIS has been heavily involved with bringing to Bermuda very large Australian-managed infrastructure and private equity funds business, which has led to the engagement of many of the different service providers in Bermuda.

"We are amazed and intensely proud that the business started eight years ago to fund the ISIS Foundation is now a thriving corporate finance and consulting business that has provided over US\$1.5 million in support to

the foundation to date."

The company's success has enabled The Isis Foundation substantial growth.

"Since our beginning in 1997, the team at ISIS Limited and The ISIS Foundation has grown to include many wonderful staff worldwide, with Bermuda as our base, Beesley said. "We now have nine substantive development projects in operation in Nepal and Uganda, a thriving head office at our Crow Lane Bakery premises in Bermuda, registration of the ISIS Foundation in the UK and Nepal and the ability to obtain tax deductibility in the USA.

"Hopefully we will have our Sydney branch office opened by the end of the year, and the foundation registered within the next year in Australia."



Sharon Beesley and Audette Exel