

Guest Speaker Profiles 2013

Ms Melissa Petros



Ms Melissa Petros has dedicated her career to public service in international development over the past ten years, including more than six years in Southeast Asia. Her work experience combines knowledge of human trafficking and child protection issues, program management, training, and communications with business development and advocacy experience in 12 industry sectors. Melissa is currently the Executive Director of Hagar International (Hong Kong), an international NGO that protects, empowers, and helps survivors of extreme human rights abuses in Cambodia, Vietnam, and Afghanistan to recover. Previously, she was the Industry and Corporate Relations Manager for the American Chamber of Commerce in Singapore, and prior to that she worked in Bangkok at the United Nations Inter-Agency Project on Human Trafficking in the Greater Mekong Sub-region. Her experience also includes consultancies with other international NGOs such as World Vision International. Through her former roles, Melissa has worked with government, UN, NGO, and corporate stakeholders in Southeast Asia on addressing human trafficking, corporate social responsibility, and business-related issues. She holds a Master of Public Administration degree in Public and Nonprofit Management and Policy from New York University, and a Bachelor of Science degree in Foreign Service from Georgetown University.

Mr Andrew Parkinson



Andrew Parkinson is a Coach, Counselor, and Therapist. He is the College-Wide Counselor and Well-Being Team leader at Renaissance College in Hong Kong, and also has a private counseling practice. For the past 20 years, Mr Parkinson has pursued his passion for assisting people to develop themselves, and their lives, in directions that are personally meaningful and rewarding. In order to better serve and support people in their self-directed transformations, he has studied psychology, counseling, coaching and various approaches to therapy. Mr. Parkinson works with a diverse range of people; including students from year 1 to year 13, families, executives, leaders, refugees and migrant workers. He derives great satisfaction and pleasure from working with people in pursuit of their wellbeing.

Ms Nicole Wong



Nicole Wong joined WWF in 1999 as Education Officer at Mai Po Marshes and Wildlife Education Centre to lead the development of school wetland education programmes. She was in charge of a number of resource materials produced by WWF that were widely used by schools and education institutes in Hong Kong and South China. Her proudest work in education includes developing the multiplier training programme for local and East Asia educators and nature reserve staff, helping to set up the Wetland Link International, Asia to link up all wetland centres in the Asia region, assisting in the establishment of Hoi Ha Marine Life Centre and the development of innovative marine education programmes. After nearly eight years working in the

field to implement the Learning in the environment programme, Nicole took the role of Assistant Director, Education in 2008 to lead the development of the education programme for both local and Asia Pacific regions. Her past experience includes working on education publications and youth development programmes. Nicole has a BA (Hons) in Geography from the Hong Kong Baptist University.

Mr James Smith



James Smith is Vice Principal at King George V School, Hong Kong. A graduate and former choral scholar of St John's College, Oxford, James has lived in Hong Kong for six years and been a teacher for eight. Following his time at Oxford (where he graduated with a first-class degree in English Literature) he qualified as a teacher and worked in a comprehensive school in the UK before moving to Hong Kong. A passionate advocate of the role of technologies in learning, James works with teachers from his school, Hong Kong and around the world to make learning more effective and engaging for students.

When not working, James loves spending time with his family. He has a nine-month old daughter who keeps him and his wife very busy, but he also occasionally finds time to sing and play musical instruments.

Ms Vandana Gupta



Vandana Gupta trained as an Architect in New Delhi, India where she completed a master in Landscape Architecture at the School of Planning and Architecture. She practiced for 6 years in Delhi where she did a variety of projects of national and international significance and then spent the next six years in Hong Kong. Much of that time was spent working for a large International architectural firm, Aedas Limited. During this period, she worked on the largest integrated resort development in the world, The Venetian, Macau in the capacity of a team leader. She left the firm in 2008 as a Senior Associate with a number of significant projects under her belt. She was also involved considerably in business development for the firm in India and the Middle East. She considers design skill as her forte. In 2009 she moved to Muscat, Oman where she worked as a visiting professor at a German University of Technology and taught Landscape Architecture. Since returning to Hong Kong in 2011, she has worked as a freelance consultant on a number of projects including the Light Rail System project in Macau.

Mr Joel Nainie



Joel Nainie trained as an English Literature Teacher in Melbourne, Australia where he completed a masters in Asian Studies at Monash University. He taught in Australia and Brunei and then spent a decade in Hong Kong teaching at King George V School, much of that time as the Gifted and Talented Co-ordinator. He completed the Train the Trainer Program in Gifted Education, Government of South Australia, December 2007 and subsequently established Gifted Leadership Services Limited, a private company with an office in Hong Kong, the business of which is delivering Leadership conferences to gifted secondary students from around the world. He has delivered several academic papers on his leadership model at various gifted conferences around the world and regularly runs training programs for staff, particularly on teaching strategy for the gifted. In 2009, he moved to Muscat, Oman where he accepted a post as Head of Year 12 and a Teacher of English and Theory of Knowledge at The Sultan's School. He subsequently returned to Hong Kong where he is now working for The Independent Schools Foundation Academy as the Assistant Director, K_12 Gifted and Talented, as well as the Grade Level Leader 9 and 10.