

Action Aid Australia Ltd

Action Aid Australia Name Change

As reported in the last newsletter, we have been negotiating with Austcare and ActionAid International (AAI) regarding the name Action Aid Australia.

Many of you will know that we have used the name Action Aid Australia since the early 1980s when we entered into a partnership with ActionAid UK. Although the partnership has long finished, we have retained the use of the name since that time.

More recently, ActionAid UK formed partnerships in several other countries and eventually several amalgamated to become AAI. Several years ago we were approached by AAI to join the global network. This would have required us to become a larger, more bureaucratic organization with many paid staff and the board took the view that this was not the direction in which we wanted to go, nor the type of organisation that would suit our supporters.

As a result of our decision, AAI has approached other Australian NGOs to join them, and Austcare has agreed to an affiliation. For this purpose they wish to use the name ActionAid Australia.

As we have been established in Australia under our name for more than twenty years, we were initially extremely reluctant to relinquish the name, but recognise that this would stand in the way of AAI achieving a truly global presence. AAI and ourselves share the same aim – eradicating poverty and improving the lives of others but we work only at the grassroots level with local communities. AAI place more emphasis on influencing governments and international institutions, which we are clearly not in a position to do in any formal way.

After lengthy and complex negotiations, we have reached an amicable in-principle agreement with AAI whereby we give up the rights to the name based on the ‘greater good’, rather than our personal attachment to the name, and where they have agreed to provide financial assistance for us to ‘rebrand’ and some additional assistance with projects. We are presently working through the legal technicalities to finalise this agreement.

In practical terms, this means we need to find and implement a new name for our organization, which encompasses our values and goals. The upside to this whole process is that we are now in a position to take on a name that is a true reflection of who we are and what we do. It will also remove us from the regular confusion where people associate us with the Action Aid international network, and therefore expect us to be a different type of organisation.

As a starting point, we have recently held several discussion groups with supporters who were randomly selected to take part, the aim being to understand supporter perceptions and identify related words and names.

In general terms, we found that what appeals to our supporters is that we are small and personal, focused on direct and tangible results and work effectively with our partners at the grassroots in their local communities. Supporters also like the fact that donations go directly to people in need rather than being used in Australia for unnecessary overheads.

To give you an idea of the feedback, supporters particularly liked names that included the words 'action/active', 'aid', 'community' and 'partners'. Less popular names included the words 'allies/allied' (military connotations), 'development' (big and bureaucratic), 'international' (really only couple of countries), and anything that made us sound large and cumbersome.

We have utilised the feedback to develop a shortlist which reflects the general feelings from these groups.

Aid Partners
Partners in Aid
Village Neighbours
Community Aid

We'd like to know what you think and would appreciate your input. So that we can keep to the timescale, if you want to tell us what you think, we need to hear from you by April 5th, 2009. You can email us on admin@actionaidaustralia.org.au or phone Anne-Marie on 03 94298598 (not the office number).

We are anticipating that the changeover of name will occur on July 1st this year. The final choice of name will be announced on our website and further updates mailed out as soon as possible.

ENTERTAINMENT BOOKS – AVAILABLE IN MOST STATES

The books will again be available towards the end of MAY. The books are a guide to the best restaurants, hotel accommodation, attractions, sports and leisure activities – all with 25% to 50% off or two-for-one offers. Great value.

Cost - \$65 each – Melbourne, Sydney, Sydney North, Adelaide, Perth.

Cost - \$60 each – Brisbane Cost - \$50 – Geelong, Tasmania, Canberra, Gold Coast,
Cheques to be made out to Action Aid Australia. We receive a percentage of each book sold as a donation.

HAPPENINGS AT ALL BENGAL WOMEN'S UNION, KOLKATA JOY HANDLEY

Both Homes continue to run smoothly and girls in Children's Welfare Home have been on some exciting outings from Nov08 to Jan09 which included the Nicco Amusement Park, and Rotary's Annual Treat. Also, in order to celebrate Children's Day, all members and staff,



including counsellors performed a play followed by special lunch. Some children received their Bronze medals in the Duke of Edinburgh Scheme including Moumita Chowdhuri. 24 took part in an inter-school talent camp at Don Bosco School. On arrival the next day they found an array of cups laid out which had all been won by them! This was a very proud moment for all as they competed against privileged children from so-called 'elite' schools. ABWU took 1st place in Senior Group Dance, Junior Group Dance, Group Singing, and Solo Singing. They also took 3rd Place in Drawing competition. 100 girls took part in candle-lit procession to show solidarity for the victims of Mumbai blasts. Mid-January all resident girls and staff went on a picnic while some others went on a camp and later in the month 50 went to Eden Gardens to take part in a story telling and drawing competitions. They sure are kept busy!!

Projects funded by Action Aid Australia continue to be very successful in giving these young women skilled training to help them be self-sufficient when they leave. After training and rehabilitation in Tailoring they are given a sewing machine so that they can make a living using their skills. The Machine Knitting continues to be very popular and their product is much in demand in the cooler months. The Weaving Project has been greatly revitalised due to our financial support and the standard of production has greatly improved.

SPONSORS NEEDED FOR 4 GIRLS AT CHILDREN'S WELFARE HOME

Currently we have 4 girls waiting on sponsorship:

Jaya Goswami is 15 years old; her father was a painter but due to ill health was unable to work regularly. He was tortured by his brother and other family members and eventually took his life in 2006. Jaya is an intelligent girl and needs sponsorship to complete her education.

Sariswati Haldar is 8 years old and is the sister of Lakshmi (see below) and her needs are very similar; she is also in the Bridging Class at ABWU and needs sponsorship until she completes Middle School.

Megha Das is 6 years old and her parents both tested HIV positive at the time of her little brothers birth and are unable now to look after the children neither of whom is affected by HIV. She is quiet and adjusting to her new surroundings with help from Dance Therapy and counselling sessions. She is also in the Bridging Class and needs sponsorship to complete her schooling in a safe and healthy environment.

Lakshmi Haldar



Name: Lakshmi Haldar
Date of birth: 20.1.1999
Date of Admission: 3.11.2008
Father's Name: Mangal Haldar
Mother's Name: Gouribala Haldar
Sister's Name: Saraswati Haldar

Lakshmi's father Mangal Haldar is a casual labourer working with a contractor constructing pandals on irregular and her mother works as domestic help earning Rs. 1000/- per month.

The family lives in a rented room for which they pay Rs 600/- per month. The room has cemented floor, bamboo wall with asbestos roof. Electricity and water from corporation are available. Five families use one proper toilet and bathroom.

Lakshmi is the first generation learner and when admitted to ABWU, she joined Bridging class. She is keen to learn. She is attending Dance Therapy class to try and address her psychological issues. She enjoys all the activities held at the Home. She prefers sour and spicy foods as opposed to her sister who likes sweet food.

Lakshmi needs support till she completes middle school

If you would like more information about this valuable program to rescue girls from dismal situations, please return the form on the last page to the office (P.O. Box 42, Narre Warren LPO, 3805) or email us on admin@actionaidaustralia.org.au (please put abwu sponsorship in the subject line).

SPONSORED CHILDREN through SEDS in Central Southern India – Lyn Pickering.

The program continues to grow due to the generosity of our donors. There are currently five children to be formally placed on the program. I have recently received photos of 185 children on our program, receiving their new clothes, a Christmas present from their sponsors. These photos will be sent out in the coming weeks.

Ian and I have started our plans to visit SEDS in September or October, and we are looking forward to seeing everyone, and especially the young people who have grown so much. This has been our longest time away from India since we began our travels to SEDS, back in 1992 and 1994 respectively.

The photos all show beautiful young children who enjoy being on the program. Their stories are always heart wrenching. Since 1995 when this program commenced, Ian and I have watched young people join our sponsorship program, and observed the changes to the lives of the majority of these young people. None of these young people will become rocket scientists, but many of them do have goals, which may allow them to make more informed choices about their futures. During this past year a number of these long time students have gone to College (Year 11 and 12), and even on to University. This is a very long way from the young people who are featured with this article, and who are just beginning on a road to a better education.

Suneela Bai is 6 years old and lives with her mother. They were abandoned by her father, and her mother struggles to keep them in food.

M Harish babu looks a little surprised in his photo, and was probably in awe of all he was seeing at his first or second visit to the SEDS Campus. Harish is 6 years old and lives with his aging grandmother after the death of his parents.

B. Nandini is 6 years old, lives with her mother, grandmother and older sister. Her father deserted the family when she was a baby. Her mother carried out daily labouring in the agricultural fields.

Lakshminarayamma looks very sad in the photo. She lives with her mother after they were abandoned by her father. Her mother struggles to earn enough to keep them both, and relies on day labour when available.

K. Roja is a beautiful young lady who is 11 years old and lives with her Aunt and Uncle after the loss of her parents. Her younger sister is living with her grandparents. The Aunt requires assistance to send Roja to school.

The local VO's (Village Organisation) have all recommended that these families be assisted where possible so that the children may attend school.

If you have not sponsored a child before, please consider doing so, and put a smile on the faces of these beautiful young people.

Sponsorship:

If you would like more information about this valuable program to educate children, please return the form on the last page to the office (P.O. Box 42, Narre Warren LPO, 3805) or email us on admin@actionaidaustralia.org.au (please put seds sponsorship in the subject line).

Employee Donation Schemes/Workplace or Matched Giving

Schemes (also called Workplace Giving). These schemes match employee donations, making them doubly effective.

Currently we are registered on the BHP Employee Donation Scheme. If your workplace has such a scheme, then consider adding Action Aid Australia to their list of charities, making your donation even more effective!

Other companies with Matched Giving programmes include Investec, Macquarie Bank, Ernst & Young and Westpac

You can ask your employer if they have this programme in place. It's a great idea.

M & K PRINTING

For all of your printing requirements, talk to KEN
at M & K Printing, Vesper Drive Narre Warren.
Telephone – 9704 8500

ACTION AID AUSTRALIA – REMITTANCE ADVICE

I would like to help Action Aid’s work in the following way:

- **Make a general donation : \$_____**

- **Support Village Communities in project activities**

Bangladesh (Symbiosis) Vocational Training for Women TTIS

India (SEDS) – Watershed Management Project

India (SEDS) - Women’s Self Help Groups

India (SEDS) – School Development

India (SEDS) – Medical Fund for sponsored children

India (ABWU) – Special projects

India (ABWU) – Medical Fund for sponsored children

- **\$25.00 Membership – 01/07/08 to 30/06/09**

- **Information re Bequest (Tick the box)**

- **Begin / Continue a Child Sponsorship in :**

India (ABWU) - All Bengal Women’s Union in Calcutta)

India (S.E.D.S.) in Central Southern India

The cost to sponsor a child for:

1 month = \$20.00

6 months = \$120.00

3 months = \$60.00

12 months = \$240.00

Name: _____ Title: _____

Address: _____

_____ Postcode _____

Please advise if receipt to be in a different name to the sender.
All gifts of \$2.00 and over are tax deductible (receipt issued)
P.O. Box 42, Narre Warren LPO, 3805