

Action Aid Australia Ltd

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Philippines Project Update

Cecily Neil

The Healthy Village Project

The goal of the Healthy Village project is to help rural communities in Kalinga (Northern Philippines) diagnose for themselves the environmental sanitation problems in their village that are affecting their health, and enable them to take steps to change behaviour through both promotion of healthy behaviour and removal of physical barriers to change where this can be done in a low-cost but effective manner. The Project is being carried out in close association with staff of Provincial Health Office and the Department of Agriculture, all of whom are providing input on a voluntary basis.

An underlying principle of the Project is that all activities should be low-cost as well as effective, thereby allowing other areas with very limited financial resources to replicate the results. Accordingly, once a community has undertaken a diagnosis of the key environmental sanitation problems in their area the assistance provided is limited to technical advice and sufficient funding to cover the costs of materials required for constructing infrastructure to help overcome the priority problems. For example, money may be provided for concrete for pans and sanitary latrine or for materials for pig pens.

Participation of communities is entirely voluntary, and some initial resistance to participation of local communities was experienced when it was realised that only small amounts of money would be released to participating communities: projects in the Philippines tend to be associated in local people's minds with large amounts of money being provided for expensive infrastructure. However, the Project has now been well publicised by both radio and through meetings organised by the municipal health staff, and a significant number of villages are now partners in the Project.

There are a number of steps involved in establishing and building on the relationship between the community and the Project which involve community leaders, family representatives, children and the entire community. These steps include;

1. Conduct of 1-2 day training within the community on community health development, with a particular emphasis on environmental sanitation. This training is carried out in a village on the understanding that every family will send at least one member. The training includes instruction on how cheap but effective solutions to barriers to change can be overcome. So far, this training has been carried out in 21 communities.
2. Work with community leaders (with subsequent feedback to the community) to diagnose the community's environmental sanitation problems. A diagnostic tool has been developed to help with this process. This has been completed in 9 of the above communities. (It has also been carried out in an additional 9 communities who have experienced community health training in a different context.)
3. Preparation of a health plan by the community and submission of a proposal for funding for materials required for small-scale infrastructure construction within the community. This proposal is reviewed by the Provincial Health Office, and funding supplied if

appropriate. So far 9 proposals have been submitted, and are in various stages of review and release of funds.

In addition to these steps outlined above, an illustrated leaflets have been prepared (in conjunction with the Provincial Rural Sanitary Inspector) with simple instructions on the construction of a sanitary latrine using local materials, as well as fun, participative children's material designed to encourage good environmental behaviour. Meetings with the Dept of Education to discuss possible adaptation of these materials for use within schools in the Project area and further leaflets are planned in the near future.



Pigs in a newly constructed pig pen to improve hygiene



Community members at a participatory project meeting

The Jamuna River Sandbar Peoples Development Project

Rong Chahara is a group member of a savings group in the Sandbar project of Symbiosis. She was always looking for a means to provide money for her family, as she has three children and her husband was unable to provide for them because it is difficult to get regular employment as a labourer. After a visit from a Symbiosis staff member, who listened to her talk of the problems she was facing, Symbiosis recommended she join a new eight month functional education course. By the end of the eight months, she could read, write and do simple arithmetic. Following the course she joined a savings group, contributing a deposit of five taka (4 cents) per week with other group members and taking on the role of cashier of the group. She took a three thousand taka (\$50) loan from this savings group one year ago and started a small shop near her house. She sells her goods from her shop and her husband also helps her. From the profits of the shop she has been able to send her children to school regularly, install a sanitary latrine and have drink safe water, contributing greatly to better health and happiness for her family.



Rong Chahara at her Grocery Store

The Technical Training and Information Support (TTIS) Project

The TTIS project empowers women through training in areas including sewing and embroidery and micro credit programs which provide them with small loans to start their own business and become self sufficient. One such woman is Shahinur, a housewife with a husband, son and daughter living in a community with low literacy and poor living standards. Shahinur joined the TTIS trust and savings group and took part in TTIS sewing training, before being a loan of 20,000 taka (\$300) to buy a sewing machine and cloth to start her own tailoring business. Her business was so successful that she was able to support her family as her husband did not have regular work, repay her loan and take a further loan to expand her business. Today she is self sufficient and now has the means to send her children to school.



Shahinur at her successful tailoring business

Employee Donation Schemes/Workplace Giving

Many companies support their staff in Employee Donation 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 work has a similar scheme then consider adding Action Aid Australia to their list of charities, making your donation even more effective!

Board Member Profiles

We have had an exciting last year at Action Aid, with a number of new board members. Check out the profiles of two of the recent joiners, Graham Moore and Kristin Burdett below.

Kristin Burnett

I am 35 and have a BA (anthropology major), and a Grad. Cert. in Development Studies. I am currently undertaking a Grad. Cert. in Sustainability (part-time) whilst on a LOA from a Masters in Development Studies (can't quite work out a thesis topic... Argh...). Main interests lie in sustainable agriculture and farming as a way of promoting happy and healthy communities who also have a future. I currently work in Melbourne as an IT business analyst, but spent most of my twenties living overseas, mainly in the UK, Canada, Israel and Greece. I'm planning an extended trip to India towards the end of next year, which will be the first time I've made it back since spending 6 wonderful months there in 1998 -9.

Dr. Graham Moore

Dr Graham Moore was coopted to the Board of Action Aid Australia at its February meeting. Graham teaches environmental engineering at the University of Melbourne, a role he has held

for 22 years. Close associations with the International Development Technologies Centre has resulted in him supervising research of scores of students involved in various studies related to development and environmental issues from across the developing world. As a result of one of these projects Graham has recently spent 1 month in Papua New Guinea working with a remote village assessing options for water supply and sanitation improvements as well as advising on a range of other engineering related issues from road drainage to sewing machine repair. A proposal for aid funding from the European Union is now in preparation.

Graham brings to the Board other experience from community -based organizations. He has previously held roles as School Council treasurer, childcare centre secretary and sporting club registrar. Graham grew up on a farm in Western Australia and now lives with his wife and adult children in inner suburban Melbourne. Travel to many developing countries will also inform his deliberations on the Board.



India Project Update

All Bengal Womens Union (ABWU)

Anne-Marie Maltby

Recently, we have been in discussion with ABWU about future projects that extend beyond the current vocational training projects, as some donors have shown interest in further sponsoring such projects. As Paul Knowd's article in the September's newsletter showed, there is much that can be done at ABWU to improve living and health conditions – on his visit there he put legs on 200 beds and worked on improving the drainage in the Children's home.

ABWU priorities are putting in a vitally needed drainage system in the area for the older girls, as the standing water during the monsoon aggravates the mosquito situation and the resultant malaria problem. There is also the need for kitchen repairs and renovation as the current kitchen is extremely dilapidated and very basic, making it extremely difficult to make food for all of the girls. It is estimated that such repairs would cost \$2000 dollars. Also, ABWU welcomes support for their ongoing requirement for additional therapies, such as dance therapy for the most abused girls, which is particularly aimed at those who are unable to talk about their experiences in counselling. If you would like to sponsor one of these projects, please make a note of that on the donation form at the back of the newsletter when donating.



Cooking facilities. There is a single, cold water tap for cooking and cleaning

The currently supported projects are going well. Currently there are 25 girls in the Tailoring and Cutting project, in which they learn to make clothing. This project helps in ensuring that the girls are self-sufficient when they leave the home and when they leave, they are given a sewing machine so that they can continue with this work, earn a livelihood and be less prone to exploitation. In the Weaving project, the girls who joined the project earlier have now crossed the primary stage of weaving training and are weaving tablemats, napkins, designed bed-covers, designed scarves, etc. With our support, the home has procured a Jacquard Machine for weaving fine articles and fine design and special training for this is being provided by an outside agency. ABWU are satisfied with the progress of the girls and feel that the girls will be able to earn enough to become self-sufficient which is vital for preparing the girls as they prepare to leave the home.



The 'dining table'

Cooking facilities at the older girls home

India Social Education and Development Society (SEDS)

Science Equipment for Schools – in recognition of Dr. Brian Ryan

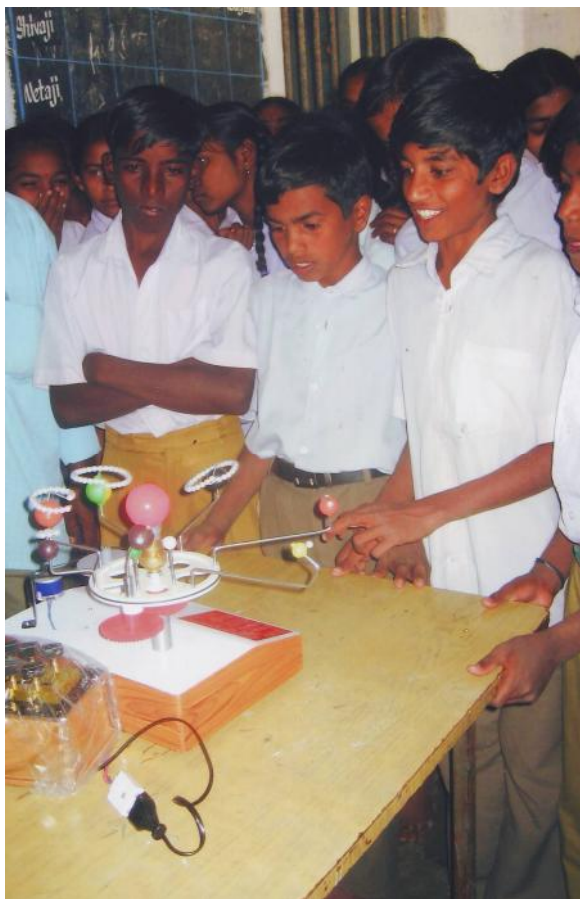
The first part of this report is by Lyn Pickering, followed by Maithe's observation of the visit to two of the three schools selected to receive equipment.

The Board of Action Aid Australia approved funds of \$1,500 earlier this year to supply basic science equipment to three secondary schools in the SEDS area of developmental work, in memory of our former Hon. Chairman, Dr. Brian Ryan, a Senior Research Scientist with the CSIRO.

The three selected schools have very good community involvement in the Watershed Management program and through women's self help groups in those Village organisations.

Educational supplies are not readily available in many schools. The equipment has been very favourably received by local Principals and teachers. Whilst the equipment is very basic compared with Australian schools, it is a step forward for the children in their rural secondary schools.

During Amanda's recent visit to SEDS she took part in a Science Forum for local Secondary schools and was able to see first hand some of the excellent work teachers do with students, with so few resources.



Students using the new science equipment

Following are excerpts from a letter from Maithe at SEDS

With the Sankranti (Pongal) holidays coming to an end, the co -ordinators decided that the first day of school would be ideal to distribute the science material to two of the selected schools.

The Science equipment was purchased in Hyderabad by Prasad, because charts had to be printed in Telugu. Health Care Nurse/Area Co -ordinator Mani, Field Worker Leader Venkatesh, Lin, a volunteer from Belgium and me, Maithe, loaded up the jeep with all the new equipment for the visit.

When we entered the gate of the first school we immediately noticed the nice relaxed atmosphere. Some classes were being given outside, children sitting in the shade doing their school work and studying for their final or public exams. Of course our arrival caused quite a stir, curious looks, heads turning, concentration gone, books being put aside ...The headmaster and science teachers gave us a warm welcome and after a short introduction and look around the school grounds (two rooftops of classes collapsed due to heavy rains earlier this year), we started our program. First the board was hung outside for photos before being placed inside the science classroom. The boxes containing microscopes and charts and science materials were unpacked outside amongst much excitement.

After all the materials were distributed, inspected, tried out etc.... we were invited for a cup of tea in the teachers' room. We signed the guest book and then left for our next stop.

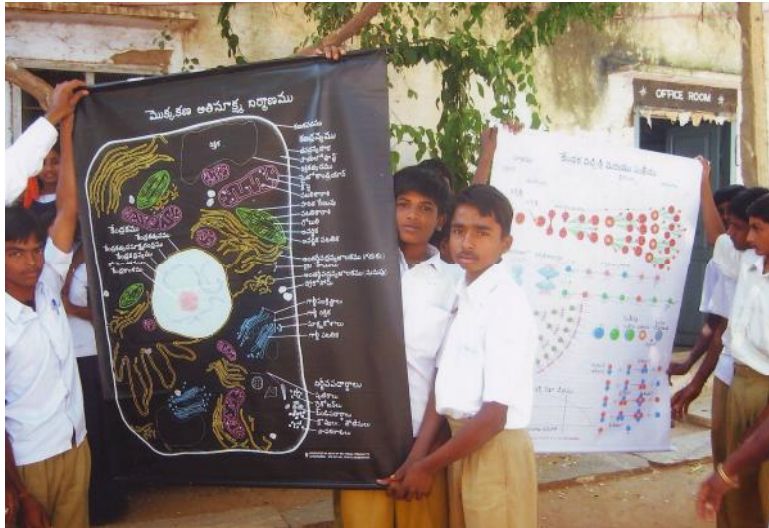
I loved the second school immediately, there were trees, it looked green, some nice cycles parked against the wall, it was relatively quiet, and all the standards had their own classrooms.

After a short chat with the headmaster and the sarpanch (village head), and vice -sarpanch, who had come especially for the occasion, we proceeded with the program. The board with the recognition for Brian was shown first, and then the distribution of the materials began.

When everything was finished and of course after another cup of tea and some biscuits, we all headed home. We felt really tired, but also very satisfied knowing that now the students and the teachers would have some quality materials at their disposal. The joy on the student's faces when they opened the boxes, saw the charts and materials were worth a million dollars. All the students, teachers and people here at SEDS really want to thank you for being so generous. The opportunities and chances this creates for a more interactive way of studying and teaching, (something rural Indian Government schools badly needs) are big. This will be a day remembered by all for a long time.



The plaque erected at the secondary school in honour of Brian Ryan



Students with science posters

Latest Update from SEDS

The summer this year at SEDS has been extremely hot with temperatures up to 48 degrees celcius on many days. The school children are on summer holidays and return to school in mid June. School reports are released from many of the schools when the children return for the new school year.

Work at the SEDS office has slowed as computers and people struggle. Air conditioning is available only at the office, but with power available only for a few hours a day, life is made difficult. The noisy Generator operates when necessary.

Tank desilting which is normally carried out from 1st February was delayed due to unseasonably good rain, but it is now very dry again and they await the monsoon rains. SEDS are not in the direct path of the monsoons, more on the peripheral edge. There is always great excitement when the rains finally come, some years this may happen only on a small number of days. The area is said to have a rainfall of ten inches however for many years it has been less. Occasionally six inches has fallen on one day.

Rise in sponsorship payments at SEDS and ABWU

We regret that we will have to raise sponsorship from \$220 to \$240 per annum, to become effective as of June 2008. AAA sponsorship cost has not changed in over ten years, and with rising administration costs an increase has become inevitable. There are no other changes to sponsorship arrangements.

Many of our supporters are aware that there are a number of child sponsorship programs who advertise in the media which have sponsorship costs of \$40 to \$50 per month (around \$500 per annum) - more than double that requested by AAA.

Together with our donors, we will continue to sponsor needy children and we thank you for your support. If you have any concerns or questions, please ring Lyn at the Office on 9704 6315

And in other Action Aid News

Membership is due Action Aid Australia membership is \$25 per person, per year. Dues are payable by the **1st July, 2008** and cover the period 1st July, 2008 to 30th June, 2009. Money from membership dues goes towards our Administration costs for Action Aid Australia. As an organisation we have been able to maintain our administration costs around the 10% figure, which puts us in the top 5% of NGO's in Australia .

Best wishes to Honorary Director Roger Griffiths who just underwent a stay in hospital. Roger has suffered from Parkinsons for some years, and late last year was also diagnosed with Liver cancer. Recently he was hospitalised and tests revealed that the Parkinsons was causing many of his ongoing problems. A change to his medication has given Roger some relief and he is now home from hospital and we wish him all the best.

Congratulations to Treasurer, Andrea Pickering and Geoff on the very early, but safe arrival of their first baby, Lachlan Ian on the 12th April. Weighing in at 6 lbs 3 ozs (for those of us who relate to that), he was almost five weeks early. The family are all well, albeit tired, and Lachlan is thriving. The modern family - both parents sitting in the double hospital bed over ten days with their laptops, and with Geoff's IT support to set up cables so that he could do some work. All this, and in between caring for their precious little boy.

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

COMPUTER INITIATIVES

Tim Moore
03 9707 4850
Berwick

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
 - Womens’ Self Help Groups
 - School Development
 - Medical Fund for sponsored children
 - **India (ABWU)**
 - Special projects (kitchen renovation etc..)
 - Medical Fund for sponsored children
 - **Philippines Healthy Village Project**
 - **\$25.00 Membership – 01/07/07 to 30/06/08**
 - **Information re Bequest (Tick the box)**
 - **Begin a Child Sponsorship in :**
 - **India (ABWU) - All Bengal Womens’ Union in Calcutta)**
 - **India (S.E.D.S.) in Central Southern India**

The cost to sponsor a child for :

- | | | | |
|--------------------|--------------------------|----------------------|--------------------------|
| 1 month = \$20.00 | <input type="checkbox"/> | 6 months = \$110.00 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3 months = \$55.00 | <input type="checkbox"/> | 12 months = \$220.00 | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Name : _____ Title : _____

Address: _____

_____ Postcode _____

Email _____

Note: email addresses will not be given to a third party and only used for occasional relevant updates. 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