

Action Aid Australia Ltd

www.actionaidaustralia.org.au

In memory of Mr. Roger Griffiths

We extend our sincere condolences to Jane and Sarah, their families, other family members and friends on the passing of Roger.

Roger was an Honorary Director and member of Action Aid Australia from 2002 until his passing. Roger was also a good friend. In 2003 Roger travelled to India with Lyn for five weeks, which gave him a good understanding of the operations at SEDS (Social Education and Development Society) operated by Rajen and Manil Joshua.

Two years later he returned to India with Jennie and Andrew. Ian and Lyn were also there. During that visit we looked at the current project work of Watershed Management and visited schools and villages where the many sponsored children live. We attended a number of Rotary meetings as well and met old friends, and made new friends.

Earlier this year, Roger took Suresh on a drive in one of his beautiful old cars, along the coast for a sightseeing day. Suresh, an Indian friend was in Australia to attend a District Conference in Frankston. Roger had met Suresh when visiting India.

Roger, his late wife Helen, daughter Jane and mother in law Marion have all sponsored children through SEDS for some years now. Their support has meant so much to the young people who have all grown, with some now doing skills training and others remaining at school.

Roger, in his own way understood the needs of others, not only in India but also in his local community of Frankston where he worked through Rotary, and through other local community groups. Ian and I had a connection through Rotary with Roger, and it was because of that introduction, that he became an Honorary Director of Action Aid Australia.

Roger organised one of our fund raising nights where the two person play "Love Letters" was performed. The house in Fitzroy was well suited to this play. Forty people had dinner and a show, and were well pleased with the evening. Last year he arranged, with a friend for a small busload of people to attend our Annual World Food Day Dinner in Bayles.

The family requested information and envelopes be available for people who may wish to make a donation to Action Aid Australia, in memory of Roger.

We thank the people who have forwarded donations in Roger's memory. The Board of Directors have agreed to use the money towards a project in India through SEDS, and this will be worked on over the coming months. *By Lyn Pickering*

India Project Update

SEDS considers exciting new biogas project

Social Education and Development Society (SEDS) is currently looking to establish a Biogas Project, which aims to replace Non-Renewable Biomass with biogas for cooking and hot water heating through the setting up of 5000 biogas plants (digesters) in single households. Hopefully this project will be eligible for the United Nations Clean Development Mechanism program, which allows Emission Reduction Projects in developing countries to count towards the emission reduction targets of industrialised countries set by the Kyoto Protocol. Essentially, emission reduction projects earn certified emission reduction (CER) credits, each equivalent to one tonne of CO₂ which be traded and sold to industrialised countries.

There are numerous social, environmental, economic and technological benefits from this project, including the minimisation of health hazards associated with unmanaged waste in back yards and village streets, the reduction of environmental pollution through improved waste management system and reduction of greenhouse gas emissions and financial and societal gains from the use of renewable cooking fuel instead of fossil fuels and higher education and possible employability of locals in the area of biogas management. Furthermore, the project will provide technical training for at least 50 locals through masonry apprenticeship training.

In order to be eligible for the project the households must aid in the construction of the biogas unit, agree to maintain and operate the unit for 3-7 years and agree to stop burning non-renewable firewood and kerosene to meet cooking energy requirements. In order to run the biogas unit the household must own at least one cow/buffalo and be prepared to collect the required amount of substrate to feed the biogas digester on a daily basis.

The project will be financed by the forward sale of the certified emission reductions (CER's) generated in the first seven year crediting period to a carbon investor, following the certification of the project by the UN. A price of 12 Euros per CER will be sufficient to cover the costs of building all of the units and ensuring a maintenance team is in operation to ensure all remain fully operational. After fulfilling the initial seven year crediting period 80% of all future CER revenues will be paid to the each of the women running the biogas unit. The remaining 20% will be set aside in a long term fixed deposit account and be used to pay the salaries of the SEDS maintenance staff, to cover all costs of repair and to provide grants to end users facing a shortage of substrate. This could happen due to loss or death of cattle, temporary shortage of fodder faced by a particular family, etc. At the end of the project's lifetime any funds remaining in the account will be distributed to the end users accordingly.

Emission Reduction Projects must meet the requirements and certification of the United Nations and Certified Emission Reduction credits are issued by the United Nations. So far, there are 1143 registered Emission Reduction Projects, with 65% of these projects in the Asia Pacific region. Of the total registered projects, 55% are in the energy industry (renewable and non-renewable sectors), followed by waste handling and disposal at 20%. In total this has amounted to 180 million CER credits being issued, with another 190 million requested.

SEDS tank de-silting program provides employment for the local people

During the severe drought of 2004, the Indian Government decreed that no machinery was to be used to carry out tank de-silting work being supported by AAA and other NGO's. The struggle for survival was particularly difficult that year for many families in this area of rural India.

At one of the small targeted villages for tank de-silting work, we came across a man in a wheelchair recording the loads of top soil which had been excavated by hand, placed on the ox cart and taken to the local farmer's lands. His hand push wheelchair had three threadbare bike tyres and a piece of old timber for a seat. He was however very cheerful, sitting out in the hot sun recording each load of soil. This was money he could earn to help support his family. As we were leaving, Rajen spoke with the man and then asked the local Field Coordinator from SEDS to supply new tyres for the wheelchair, to make his life a little more comfortable. Just one of the small caring extras that come from a project of supplying good clean water.

The day starts about 6 AM for many of the workers due to the heat and for many it is a nine hour day, breaking only to have a small meal or some water. By mid afternoon it was time for some workers to take their animals to a nearby water source for a well deserved drink, bath and then home to be fed. An area for de-silting is chosen and then pegged out using white powder. Machinery could do this work in a few days, but using manual labour took many weeks, gave needy day workers money to feed their families and was a winning situation for all.

The down side of this was that the tanks could not be dug to the normal two metre depth and therefore did not have the same capacity to provide water long term. Some of the tanks de-silted by hand that year, have since been tidied up by machinery. The way the tank de-silting is carried out and the way each of the local village communities view their involvement in the process is always fascinating. Some communities remain very cohesive, while others can be divided in their opinion on where and how the excavation is to take place.

As a result of the continued work of Rajen and his teams in the villages, the majority of the communities have come to the realisation that if they cooperate with each other and agree to the not onerous conditions placed upon them by SEDS that their village and all of their people will benefit in significant ways. *By Lyn Pickering*



All Bengal Women's Union (ABWU) is making music!

A big thank you to all our donors who have responded to our request for funds for repair of drains and kitchen repairs/renovation. We have been able to send fundin g for both of these and ABWU are very grateful, particularly as there has been a lot of rain and malaria this year. Project money (Tailoring, Machine Knitting and Weaving) has also been sent and, thanks to several other generous donations, we have been able to contribute funds to the orphans trip and medical expenses. Many of the girls have no family to go to for holiday times and therefore stay at the Home. Over some years we have raised funds to assist with giving these girls the opportunity to get out of Kolkata for a few days and get away from the noise and pollution of this very busy city. These holidays usually take place in Scout or Guide camps.

We also now have several donors contributing towards cost of Remedial Tutoring for some of the senior girls to assist with their education. Last, but not least, Kolkata has experienced many blackouts over recent months and have been without power sometimes for 24 hours. This has been causing many problems at ABWU and we have paid for two Battery Packs to use in these emergency situations.

ABWU celebrated Founder's Day on 29th August and this event is always a highlight for the girls. They have been busy practicing their dance routines and the Band has also been preparing their items. Mrs Romola Sinah was the Founder of ABWU and 29th August was her birthday. Each year her son provides a "Feast" for everyone at the Home followed by Prize Distribution and then the dancing and singing. A very exciting day!!!

Everyone loves a success story and ABWU have their v ery own!

Mita Das, a blind girl who was abandoned at birth and has been with ABWU since she was 5 years old, and sponsored since she was 7. She is now 18 years old and has just completed and passed her Higher School Certificate. She has also sat and passed with flying colours both oral and theory Entrance Exams to a Fine Arts University in Kolkata where she has already commenced her 3 years Tertiary Course in Vocal Music. The ladies at the home tell us that Vocal Music is the hardest to get into so Mita has done so very very well and is now also travelling on her own to and from University....no mean feat even for a sighted person! We are all so happy for her and feel very proud. On completion of her studies she will be qualified to teach singing and music. She has a very good voice and can play several instruments.

ABWU band has only recently been set up and is going ahead in leaps and bounds. One of the senior girls made all their uniforms so they look quite professional. Just another example of the forward thinking that goes on there all the time. *By Joy Handley*

Bangladesh Project Update

TTIS sewing training helps group members to open their own tailor shop

Technical Training and Information Support Project (T TIS) is running in nine different districts in Bangladesh. We provide sewing training, with many of our group members and trainees then able to sew their own dress and some trainees opening their own tailor shop. We also offer embroidery training for symbiosis group members and community people in the districts of Gazipur, Mymensingh and Jamalpur.

Beauty parlor training in one of the most important training programs we offer. The Beautician profession is in high demand in our community because not many people are involved in this profession and peoples desire to receive beautification treatments is increasing. Our project has two beauty parlors in Gazipur and Mymensingh districts. Six girls have already received beauty parlor training from our project. Four of them are now working in different beauty

parlors. One trainee has opened her own beauty parlor at Rangpur district and another trainee who has worked at our Mymensingh parlor for six months is now even thinking of opening her own beauty parlor. This sort of technical training is really effective as it allows people to generate their own income.



TTIS sewing program participant

Symbiosis helps Ambia and her family open a small business

Before joining the Symbiosis program, Ambia Begum and her family were very poor and illiterate. She was unable to send her children to school, her husband was a landless farmer and often they were unable to provide food for their children. After being introduced to Symbiosis, she joined the Natun Jibon mohila shomity group and the savings group, contributing her savings of 5 TK (\$0.10 AUD). Through this program she has learnt about women's rights, dowry, polygamy, health care and child care. Now there are 24 members in the group and they have saved TK 24,600 total, with Ambia saving 1,070 TK which she has contributed to the group. After saving this money, Ambia decided to open a small business and she took a loan from the saving group of 5000 TK. With this money she and her husband started purchasing rice from the local market and then sold it to the wholesale market. Their business was successful and she has reimbursed the loan. Day by day her business increases and she has been able to purchase a cow with a calf. She is hoping after two years she will be able to sale this cow for a minimum of 25,000 TK.

Her family is very happy and having many more opportunities now . Her children go to school regularly, they use sanitary latrines and drink clean water. They have a garden in which they plant vegetables for themselves and are able to sell extra to the market.

Philippines Project Update

Healthy Village Project leaders come to Australia!

Action Aid Australia has recently had a very enjoyable visit from Valerie Pis -o and Rose Alunday, who are the primary implementers of the Sinangpad Healthy Village Project in Kalinga, Northern Philippines. The main purpose of the visit was for Val and Rose to meet members of the Action Aid Australia Board and to report on the progress of the project. However, they also took the opportunity to meet with a number of people in Melbourne who have worked in similar projects abroad, in order to enhance their already considerable capabilities and glean some new ideas for their work on the Sinangpad Project.

Val and Rose reported that there is now very active involvement in the Project by ten of the local Provincial and Municipal health staff whom the Project has trained to provide the initial

basic training in community health development and environmental sanitation which is carried out in each of the villages that choose to participate in the Sinangpad Healthy Village Project. Although not paid any supplement to their government salary for participating in the Project, these ten people are now extending their involvement beyond the initially intended role of trainer and assisting with helping communities diagnose their priority health-related sanitation problems and monitoring the progress in participating villages.

Implementation has commenced now in 32 villages which have expressed an interest in being part of the Project. It is anticipated that with funds currently available, it will be possible to work with a total of 45 of the 153 villages in Kalinga, enabling them to improve their health situation. Meanwhile, Rose being the Provincial Health Representative was asked to do a presentation on the Project approach to a Forum of Governors from the six Northern Philippines Provinces that to be held at the end of August. The Project is now seen in the Province of Kalinga as one of the local Projects adopting best practices. While in Melbourne, Val and Rose have been working on a Replication Manual which can be given to any Governor interested in replicating the approach in his/her province.

In addition to the ongoing work enabling communities to improve their health situation through improving the local environmental sanitation, work plans for the coming months include the training of local volunteers from the participating communities as 'village sanitary inspectors', and efforts to liaise with the Department of Education with a view to providing a package of participative games, stories and activities that can be used in the local schools to encourage the children to practice good hygiene and environmentally sound behaviour.

As a result of the discussions they had in Melbourne, Val and Rose have now also added two more project initiatives that they hope to implement in the near future. These are:

- (i) the training of teachers and rural health workers on how the sun can be used properly to disinfect water (the SODIS technique). This activity will focus on several communities who are now using contaminated water straight from the river for drinking, cooking and food preparation – often without any prior treatment of the water, and
- (ii) organizing a workshop in Kalinga for local health and agricultural workers, with some invited external experts on the most up-to-date research on feeding household pigs that are being kept in pens in poor rural communities. While spreading information on the effective management of pigs in pens is clearly not directly related to human health, such knowledge is critical for local people if efforts to encourage villagers to pen their pigs for reasons of human health are to be both successful and sustainable.



Village training session

Child Sponsorship at SEDS

Currently there are five children requiring sponsorship at SEDS.

G. Umadevi is eight years old who lives with her mother and grandfather following the accidental death of her father when she was very tiny. Her grandfather is unable to work due to the loss of his hand.

Abu Bakar Siddiq and Ummar Faruk are six year old twins who come from an underprivileged family who would like to give their sons a good education. The father works for SEDS as a tractor driver and his wife doesn't work, which does not provide enough income for school fees.

K Divya is 7 years old, lives with her parents and is the third girl in a family of four girls. She is in 3rd grade.

K. Aruna is 8 years old, lives with her parents and very sick younger brother. She is in Grade 4 at school

If you are interested in sponsoring these children please email Lyn at lipickering@bigpond.com



Abu Bakar Siddiq

Ummar Faruk

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

THURSDAY 16TH OCTOBER, 2007, 8pm

The meeting will be held in FITZROY this year to give some of our Melbourne City and Western suburbs people the opportunity to attend a meeting should they wish.

VENUE – Fitzroy – the office will advise details when booking in.

Please advise the office of your attendance for catering purposes.

Phone – 9704 6315 Email – lipickering@bigpond.com

Please come and join us at a World Food Day Event this November

BRIGHT LUNCHEON

This will again take place on **Monday 17 November** at RSL in Bright. Joy will again be running this and food donated by Patrizia Simone of the reknowned Simone's Restaurant in Bright. Patrizia has been doing this now for 8 years and we thank her for her wonderful contribution. Anyone who may be in Bright at that time can c ontact Joy 5755 2344 if wishing to attend. Cost is \$20 and tickets are limited and always sell out very quickly.

BAYLES DINNER

The food is all donated, the meat is home grown on the farm at Bayles, and all the food is home cooked!

Saturday November 8th, 2007

6.00pm for starters, Main meal to commence serving at 7.00pm

\$30.00 per person (tax deductible receipt issued)

745 Boundary Drain Road, Bayles

Menu: Finger Food Starters, Roast lamb, beef & pork, Baked potatoes, salads. Vegetarian options available. Variety of desserts Drinks: soft drinks provided, byo alcohol

RSVP: Friday October 31th, 2007

Office - 9704 6315 or lipickering@bigpond.com

(a map will be sent out to those interested in attending.)

And in other Action Aid News

Quick reminder: Membership was due on 1st July Action Aid Australia membership is \$25 per person, per year. Dues 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.

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!

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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 = \$120.00 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3 months = \$60.00 | <input type="checkbox"/> | 12 months = \$240.00 | <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