

UK DIRECTOR

Senior Management changes

There have been significant changes in the senior management team in the last few months with the arrival of David Woodbine as interim Finance Director and Belinda Calaguas taking over as the Policy and Campaign Director. The effect of these changes means that the UK SMT has a completely new make up, compared to the original team that led the establishment of ActionAid UK at the beginning of 2004. Apart from myself the longest standing member of the SMT has only been with ActionAid for 18 months. Such changes bring some challenges but also many opportunities with new ideas, fresh energy and different ways of moving forward or tackling problems. The next few months will be critical to ensure that the new SMT is effectively formed and can provide appropriate and clear leadership both in the UK and in developing our evolving relationship with ActionAid International.

International update

Ramesh Singh's recent update to the International Board is included in these papers. Additional points of interest are:

- Four organisations are currently in pre-association status with AAI – NiZA, Austcare, Peoples Solidaire, MS and it is expected that some of them will move towards Association before the end of this year.
- A draft environmental management policy has been approved to help AAI address its impact on the environment, and especially carbon dioxide emissions created by its own internal activities.
- A framework has been approved to enable effective and speedy decision-making when emergencies strike in countries where AAI is not already operational.
- Proposals for more transparent and clearer guidelines for resource allocation in countries and fundraising investment are being developed.
- International Directors have agreed to give greater priority to discussing child sponsorship, especially when setting up new country programmes. It is recognised that not sufficient attention has been paid to child sponsorship in recent years by IDs and this has led to difficulties, especially where new CPs have been established.
- Following Koy Thomson's resignation an internal review of the Knowledge Initiative, and how to take it forward to the next stage, is being carried out.

International relationships

Ramesh Singh paid an 'official' visit to the UK in May. Ramesh often 'passes through' the UK office and meets staff, but the idea for this visit was for more focussed time with us and a greater opportunity for engagement with UK staff. We were able to have a workshop to look at the draft 'International – National handbook' with all UK senior and middle managers plus an all staff briefing that you will have seen reported in SLACK. The importance of better and more predictable planning process was a key need that arose out of the national- international workshop.

In addition there were a number of meetings with different departments and UK Trustees, which gave an opportunity for more in-depth discussion and engagement. The visit was received very positively and it was a healthy opportunity to engage and understand the thinking behind decisions as well as renew the vision for the future. It was a reminder that we should not to take for granted the relationship between AAI and AAUK but to continue to build understanding, especially as new staff join the organisation.

The importance of this work has been underlined in recent months where there has been significant levels of tension between ActionAid UK and International concerning such issues

as the Single International Campaign (HungerFree), media and policy issues related to G8, ongoing confusion between international and UK media departments operating out of London and a lack of clarity, and to some extent competition, between the differing roles of the UK and international websites. We have tried to tackle these issues both individually and within the context of discussions around national – international working. For HungerFree it has been agreed that ActionAid UK will help to develop the policy underpinning the campaign, a review of G8 is being carried out and Ramesh and I are discussing proposals to clarify the role of media staff based in London.

DFID

The last few months have seen a number of meetings between myself and DFID officials at different levels – the Permanent Secretary, the Director General for Policy and International, the Head of Civil Society Unit and the senior Gender Advisor. Some of these meetings were for specific policy and lobbying purposes but they were also to build our understanding and attention in DFID's eyes ahead of the renewal of our PPA early next year. One issue that emerged clearly from the meetings was that in future we (i.e. the NGOs not just ActionAid) will be expected to greatly improve our accountability to DFID on the PPA money. This will mean improved reporting and 'more figures' to report against. One worrying observation is that DFID are also clearly looking for improved credit and profile for the funds they provide. Following the UK Trustees discussion, we raised our concerns about the amount of money they are able to spend on administration and the cuts that are taking place in this. Officials said they are making zero progress in their arguments being heard and would welcome increased pressure once new Ministers were appointed. However they have to prepare for the worst case scenarios since the Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR) won't now be completed until later in the year and they are under pressure to demonstrate increased efficiency.

Other news

BOAG Directors met with Gordon Brown, prior to him becoming Prime Minister. He challenged us to recreate Make Poverty History in some way so as to continue to pressure the Government on international aid and development issues.

Daniel and Netsanet remain in prison in Ethiopia but they are shortly due to begin the defence of their case. I remain closely involved and act as a mentor to Retta Menberu, the Country Director.

I spent 2 days away with the senior management team of the International Emergencies and Conflict Team to look at roles and responsibilities.

Key meetings over the last few months: Mr Jan Knutsson, Director-General of the Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Mr Staffan Carlsson, Swedish Ambassador to the UK; Kofi Annan, former UN Secretary General; Mrs Sadako Ogata, President, Japanese International Cooperation Agency; Gordon Brown, then Chancellor of the Exchequer; Hilary Benn and Gareth Thomas, DFID Ministers; Suma Chakrabarti, Mark Lowcock and DFID Director General team; Darren Welch, Head of Civil Society, DFID; Gerard Howe, Senior Gender Adviser DFID; Alan Bookbinder, Sainsbury Family Trusts; John Maver, Trustee, Austcare.

COMMUNICATIONS

Departmental structure and direction

There has been significant progress with recruitment in this quarter, although it has proved a real challenge to find communications professionals of the right calibre for the salary and conditions we are currently able to offer.

Mel Herdon will be joining us as our new Head of Multimedia Production, a key post created during the restructure. She heads Amnesty's new media operation and also comes with good experience in design and print, photography and video. She will start in September. The Public Relations Manager has also been appointed, as has the Video Producer and the Senior Media Officer (Broadcast), known as the roving reporter. This means that for the first time ActionAid has expertise to call on in these fields. The Fundraising and Youth Media Officer, Schools Manager and Festivals assistant are also in place, and Sue now has an interim PA, much to everyone's relief.

Outstanding is the E-comms and Website Manager post, which has not yet been re-advertised due to further changes to that job resulting from a new investment by fundraising in e-comms posts to attract supporters. Agreement on structure has now been reached and we are taking it forward. The Design and Print Manager post has proved difficult to fill but we are searching via a variety of means whilst using freelancers.

When the Multimedia Production team (MP) is up to capacity and the head in place, the team will formulate new guidelines for commissioning teams before creating a series of strategies in 08.

The comms department is currently working on various strategies and guidelines to create clear direction and protocols around our work. The celebrity strategy has been consulted upon and now comes before the board for sign-off. The media team has produced a nations and regions plan for increasing our reach, and has begun to establish clear case study/images guidelines to protect those with whom we work. The first stage of the youth strategy review is complete; this included two market research workshops and the results will inform the consultation with internal stakeholders. The comms team strategy has been timetabled for the last quarter to gain input from the new head of MP.

Brand development/core messaging (see separate paper)

This project is half way through; the current thinking arising from the collaboration between the agency and the SMT forms the basis of a work in progress paper for the board and a workshop on 13th July.

Supporting AAI

Sue and the interim head of Multimedia Production/Picture Desk Editor, Laurence Watts, attended the international comms team meeting in Rome at which the Single International Campaign (SIC) was discussed. The Picture Researcher contributed to the Asia skillshare where the online picture library was introduced to comms officers.

The comms department had a very useful first meeting with Ramesh on his UK visit at which we shared our work, explained our working practices and debated our relationship with AAI. We are hoping this will inform further discussions which will in turn provide clarity about roles and responsibilities and help further improve relations. There are three different ways in which UK comms teams formally interact with AAI: through the education team's work with the international theme and the Global Campaign for Education; the formalisation of the joint international/UK picture desk, and the media team working with AAI comms at moments such as the G8. These work to varying degrees of success and we are gathering and sharing learnings to take forward.

MP is working with AAI to ensure brand guidelines are met in the many international documents produced in the UK, on international photo exhibitions and on materials for our presence at the German G8. The picture desk has processed 173 requests from AA, up 50% from last quarter. The UK led media work on a European coalition policy report, and piloted a media advocacy debrief which seeks to analyse the effectiveness of media work in support of policy objectives.

The education team has successfully devoted much effort to the GCE JOIN-UP campaign, the latest development of Send My Friend to School. Actions have been taken by UK schools throughout the year and in over 100 countries around a Global Week of Action in April. AA is the lead agency in many of those countries. So far 79 articles have been logged with 24 AA mentions; our media partners the Education Guardian and First News carried 20 of them.

New media

In line with team strategy the use of e-comms is becoming central to how the department operates. We are embracing new tools and techniques, including: use of the social network platform My ActionAid; our campaigning space the Loyalty Zone; a presence for Common Cause on the web; publishing documents solely as PDFs and training in new digital software and e-comms best practice.

So far My ActionAid has raised £50,000 in sponsorship and got 18/20 in a charity website review. The statistics for www.actionaid.org.uk for this period are: Avg. 897 Unique visitor sessions per day – down 5% on the last report, Avg. 3693 page views per day – down 9% on last report. We are investigating but experience shows this is due to less project activity compared to the last quarter (eg Women's Rights work).

Significantly MySpace UK has agreed to promote the youth work in various ways, including pushing Bollocks to Poverty on Tour at Reading Festival on its homepage, which receives 11.5million hits a day. ActionAid Space also has a presence on FaceBook. Our strategy is now to measure success by the number of BTP events rather than website visitors, as creative campaigning happens at the events and much of our traffic is being hosted by social network sites. www.sendmyfriend.org, edited by AA, has had 50,000 unique users since its January launch and we conservatively estimate 60,000 schoolchildren sent paper chains to Angela Merkel.

We are also investigating exciting new projects including one which brings together charitable giving, social networking and popular voting techniques.

Media advocacy and campaigning

The main push was G8. We supported the rest of the AA team and generated a tremendous 63 pieces of UK cover for AA policy messages including 9 national papers, an interview on Newsnight and the Today Programme. We even prompted a question in the House of Commons. The G8 assessment will examine how we can further improve planning and joint working.

The supermarkets campaign, our contribution to the SIC, kicked off the latest action by bringing South African fruit picker Gertruida Baartman back to the Tesco AGM with our colleagues on Women on Farms to confront the chairman about continuing terrible conditions on farms and his broken promise concerning her welfare. (She was sacked then reinstated and claims to have been intimidated.) This gave rise to two large pieces in the Guardian, two in the Independent and one significant comment piece in the Independent on Sunday – all of which are considered by the Trade and Corporates team to be most helpful to the campaign.

We worked with P&C to write a spoof handover memo from Tony Blair to Gordon Brown which was well received and should help position AA as an agency with intelligence, creativity and a lightness of touch, which in turn should be reflected in the brand work. It was

a pleasing example of how the teams are working more closely together at all levels and how we are able to produce work ourselves rather than always use agencies.

Fundraising/PR

The schools and media teams and Comic Relief sent actress Dani Harmer (TV character Tracy Beaker) to Ghana for the UK arm of GCE. It was highly successful with targeted coverage on BBC children programmes and in targeted print.

For the first time we are working on campaigning projects with local fundraising groups; the first is a template letter on Africa and PR work around the supermarkets' Who Pays loyalty card launch in the regions. We will continue to challenge ourselves to increase our regional cover. The PR section of media is also working with P&C to arrange immersion training in Rwanda for members of the shadow cabinet.

Other Schools and Youth projects

ActionAid is now present at four summer music festivals (two new additions) and is taking the first action for the new international youth network. The team has attempted to meet the needs both of the international network and the UK campaign by creating a joint action with a global and UK ask.

We also took a climate change theme to Glastonbury for the first time – rather aptly building a Bangladeshi house on a raised platform which proved popular with rain-sodden festival-goers. This was accompanied by a hand-painted information wall with stories of disaster risk reduction from the school project. We also tested ideas for “Kids in Action on Climate Change” – see www.actionaid.org.uk/schools for more information - and even managed to promote BTP on Tour with a chai and chill area.

Looking forward

Projects for the second half of the year will include developing the various functions of the new Multimedia Production team, especially e-comms; undertaking a video needs assessment and starting work on a generic film to be repurposed for various needs; taking the SIC forward through our supermarkets campaign; supporting HungerFREE directly through helping lead the youth network ; promoting child sponsorship and ActionAid's policy work using the 35th anniversary as an internal hook; undertaking the team comms strategy and finishing the core messaging project

FUNDRAISING

Below are my latest top three lasting impressions after six months with ActionAid as interim Director of Fundraising:

- **Child Sponsorship is the centre of all fundraising.** I have attended running events where the runners are child sponsors and met major donors who originally supported ActionAid through child sponsorship. Increasing child sponsors will benefit all other areas.
- **Keeping existing donors is now a priority.** The Next step is now ActionAid UK's biggest source of income. This highlights the increased emphasis the fundraising programme needs to have on keeping existing donors who have supported us for sometime.
- **Setting inspiring goals.** From a fundraising perspective the planning and budgeting process feels cramped and has an emphasis on asking fundraising 'how much can you raise?' and less of a response to 'how much does the organisation need?' This doesn't push the fundraising teams to set aspiring (and inspiring) goals.

Income received and raised looking good

Income 'received' up to the end of May is on target and slightly up on this time last year (please see financial commentary). Although some areas such as income from foundations look as if they are behind target this does not reflect income 'raised', which also includes money that has been committed but not received. For example, we are only £4,900 short of achieving the foundations target for the year, and 77% of the years target income from company partnerships has already been raised.

Development of Performance Indicators

Each team is developing performance indicators to help see how each area of fundraising is progressing on a week by week basis, flag up any shortfalls in advance so we can react accordingly, and have advanced knowledge of our financial performance that team leaders can comment on at anytime. Example indicators are participants taking part in events, retention of existing supporters, and money raised (not just received) by major donors.

Changes in Team Leaders

There have been a number of changes amongst the fundraising team leaders: The Head of Individual Giving, Imelda McGuigan, left at the start of June for a summer break; Lisa Sutton replaced Stuart Linnett as Head of Foundations in May; Tamar Gosh has been upgraded to Head of Company Partnerships; the interim Head of Major Donors, Sharon Jackson has just left for WaterAid and Karen Aycinena will be acting up before Zoe Macalpine returns in September. Despite the changes there is positive attitude amongst staff within the fundraising department to improve our performance.

Participative Planning Process

Every fundraising team (Individual Marketing, Events, Major Donors, Foundations, and Company Partnerships) has held a planning away day off site. All the team leaders came together for a day to develop our fundraising vision and again for a further two days with key staff in Chard to share the strategies and outline plans for next year and beyond. My main concern is the time for thinking about different planning scenarios feels very short.

Building Team and Department Relations

We are introducing some ideas to help build team spirit and ways of working together across teams and departments. These range from celebrations of fundraising achievements, a regular all fundraising staff briefing to share what teams are doing, and a proposed seminar series with Policy & Campaigns to improve the understanding within both departments of each other. These are small additions but they seem to be making a very useful and positive impact.

Giving to campaigning success

Fundraising campaigns targeting individuals are going well including 'upgrade' campaigns, to those who had previously stopped their regular gift for the first time, and 'uplift' campaigns, asking supporters to increase their existing financial commitment. Of particular note is a test campaign to 2,500 campaigners and 3,500 child sponsors asking them to give £1 a week to fund our campaigning work. We have had an excellent response.

Mapping out 'The Donor Journey'

Staff from several teams have been analysing and tracking all contact with thirteen donors (each representing a different type of supporter) over a two year period (emails, phone calls, mailings) in order to review the relevance of the communications from ActionAid UK. This ongoing exercise will help determine the best 'journey' we wish to take supporters on.

Events

There have been a series of events in the last month: the Ambassador briefing on Emergencies and Conflict with 26 supporters; the Adam Cole Foundation Ball, raised over £50k towards six Reflect Centres in Cambodia; and The Pledge dinner with Emma Thompson at the beginning of July focusing on a small group of prospects and donors.

Likely BBC Coverage

Vicky's water project is gaining momentum (see last update for background). It is likely that the BBC will be travelling to Ethiopia with Adam and Chris Chataway along with Vicky's family in September to film the water programme and use this footage during coverage of the Great North Run (which is the one the ways individuals are raising money in her memory).

Challenge Event resurgence

There is renewed interest in overseas challenges and all seven planned challenge events will be taking place this year (last year one challenge event was cancelled).

Another 4 million grant?

ActionAid is the only applicant to be short listed to the 2nd stage of a Big Lottery Fund strategic grant for £4 million supporting Violence Against Girls in schools in Kenya, Mozambique and Ghana. ActionAid has also received another grants from Comic Relief, £652,000 for supporting women living with HIV/AIDS in Kenya, and from the Big Lottery Fund, £481,059 for Reintegration and Resettlement of Women in post-conflict Liberia.

Cadbury dialogue

Following a joint panel debate with Cadbury, ActionAid has been invited to discuss a potential partnership with them worth £5 million. Although Cadbury do not currently pass the corporate screening they are interested in engaging with ActionAid so they can adapt their practices and possibly support ActionAid in the future.

New Media use

Just under a third of all new child sponsorship links are coming in via the website and average regular donations are £11 a month (this is high compared with other methods). The new fundraising community website **myactionaid.org** has over 120 active fundraisers. Improvements are being made to its speed and usability and we have resolved a payment glitch leading to donations going to a test account. This emphasises the need for dedicated resources in this area to avoid these problems in the future.

Extraordinary gifts

Following her visit to ActionAid's work in Brazil, donor Kathy Whittleton pledged £120,000 over the next three years. Kathy said she is now giving 50% of annual income to ActionAid! Tony and Michelle Hillary have just returned from India and have pledged to give £100,000 towards ActionAid's emergency and conflict work.

POLICY AND CAMPAIGNS

Two new staff started this quarter. The new Director started in her post in June and a new department administrator started at the end of May.

We had a constructive meeting with the international policy theme heads who met in London in June. We agreed on the need for all AA to arrive at joint analyses of the core issues within our 6 themes; agreement on our alternative policy proposals; and how we work to achieve the changes we want. AAI will start work on two issues: development finance and growth. P&C will contribute to these processes.

We also met with the International Campaign coordinator. We agreed to draft the briefing paper that will serve as the overall policy anchor and platform for the HungerFREE campaign and to assist in developing the campaign plan and strategy for 2008 and 2009. We still need to resolve branding and other issues as we link some of UK campaigning to HungerFREE.

To mark AA's 35th anniversary, our contribution will consist of an interactive forum event on the development challenges of the next 5-10 years, and the requirements of campaigning in this future environment.

Policy Coordination

The G8 continued to dominate this quarter. In May, we produced a media-report on behalf of AA International, *Merkel's Moment*, setting down the challenges to the G8 in regard to HIV-AIDS funding; violence against women; delivery of aid commitments; further debt cancellation; corporate accountability and assistance to poor countries with climate change adaptation. Unfortunately, there was poor press pick up, due to the timing of its release. On the other hand, there was good press coverage of ActionAid spokespersons and positions throughout the G8 summit. The success comes despite difficulties encountered with the functioning of the cross-ActionAid G8 team. On this, we await a process for evaluation and lesson-learning.

We used the Blair-Brown transition and the appointment of the new Sec of State for International Development to highlight our key advocacy agenda – via a media advert and letters sent to Brown, Alexander and Harman. The new Prime Minister is reported to be keen for more UK campaigning on development in 2008. Needless to say, we will seek an early bilateral meeting with the new SoS.

Our women's rights policy officers, together with AAUK CEO, held a useful meeting in June, with the Sr Gender adviser at DFID to explore how we can contribute to efforts towards implementation of DFID's Gender Equality Action Plan. DFID staff lauded ActionAid's consistent and energetic advocacy on women's rights, compared with other agencies. We will work to make women's rights and gender equality a defining priority for Douglas Alexander and accepted as an indicator of his achievement in office.

We will also input into the new HIV-AIDS strategy currently being developed in DFID, to ensure that there is recognition of the feminisation of the pandemic and that violence against women is addressed as a cause and consequence of the spread of HIV.

Campaigns Coordination

The Target Poverty May mail out received the highest response rate we've had to any campaigning action to date – initial analysis suggests 21% or some 7,000 postcards were sent by our supporters to Tony Blair ahead of his final G8 summit. This is an excellent response rate for the sector. The bold style of the communication - combined with the accessible nature of the demands, target and hook - appears to have been very effective in grabbing the attention of our supporters.

Level 2 campaign actions have also continued to achieve good response rates, with more than 500 letters downloaded to send to Tony Blair, reinforcing the message of the May postcard action, following the more than 700 letters downloaded in April to send to the Competition Commission as part of the launch of the Who Pays campaign - reported as 'a flood' by Commission officials.

However, we still have to unblock some cross-departmental 'barriers' that slow down implementation of our pyramid campaign strategy. So we continue to work with the Fundraising teams to understand ways of working and differences in planning horizons; to seek consensus on the tone and style of our campaigns materials and actions; and to unravel some of the knotty issues around the supporter/campaigner database. We will also work with the Individuals Marketing team to undertake a detailed market research on the Target Poverty supporter base. This will provide quantitative and qualitative information on who exactly our campaign supporters are, whether there are significant variations between Levels 1 and 2, and between those who donate alongside their campaigning, and those who don't.

Lastly, we intend to use the 35th anniversary forum event to launch our 'Level 3' campaigner recruitment. This will involve identifying a small core of committed campaigners with whom we can develop a very tailored and individual relationship to drive forward our campaigning.

Economic & Social Development Team

On HIV and AIDS

Since September, the HIV Team has been campaigning for a funding plan to achieve the target of HIV Treatment for all by 2010. While the G8 did not meet these demands at the Heilegendam summit, we have had a number of small successes, including wide media coverage of our concerns over HIV funding during and after the summit.

Since the Youth Team launched 'On Record', parliamentary support for our campaign has grown substantially. DFID and the Treasury received over 400 letters from MPs calling for a funding plan for the 2010 Treatment Target. DFID's AIDS Team worked closely with ActionAid on a proposal to ensure full funding of all existing national AIDS plans in the run up to the G8. The drafting of DFID's new HIV and AIDS Strategy presents the next opportunity for this agenda to be secured, as does the next Global Fund Replenishment Round, when we will call for the UK to pay at least its fair share.

Over the coming months, we will scope options for a new campaign to launch in 2008, and initiate new research highlighting how the violation of their rights leaves many women unable to access effective HIV prevention, treatment and care. Across AAI, World AIDS Day activities in December will focus on the issues this research will raise.

On aid and accountability

Working with a pan-European coalition of NGOs, in May we launched the second 'Aid Watch' report highlighting the failure of European governments to meet their collective aid targets for 2006 without artificially inflating their aid figures. The report received widespread media coverage across the continent and very positive feedback from the coalitions involved.

We have prepared for AAI, a policy briefing paper for the Accra High Level Panel on Aid Effectiveness to be held next year. In the paper, we are proposing a 10-point action plan to turn the Accra meeting into a dialogue that will produce real results for Africans on the ground. We are currently developing detailed plans for the Accra forum, including influencing other NGOs to promote key issues of aid quality and accountability, and helping to support country-programme-led aid monitoring.

We continue to lobby DFID on reforming their Technical Assistance (TA), including through influencing the up-coming TA review and writing a '5 Point Plan of Action' on TA.

Trade and Corporates

We successfully launched the Supermarkets Campaign in April, through our media launch of the report *Who Pays?*. The report received extensive press coverage, including in the Guardian, Independent, Mirror and Metro, and was picked up by Sky news, Radio 5 and local and specialist radio stations. This was followed by the launch of the Loyalty Card and website action on May 19th. We worked with the Community Fundraising team to organise actions with ActionAid local groups in Leeds, Shrewsbury and Swansea. The events were also attended by local MPs and Welsh assembly members. The card allows us to build up a large number of people calling for regulation of supermarkets, to communicate with supporters via the website and to be the basis of a hand-in action in the future.

In June, we held a forum, chaired by Heather Stewart of The Observer, on how to get changes in supermarket behaviour. It was attended by the head of the Competition Commission inquiry, our target for this stage of the campaign, representatives from most of the major supermarkets, DFID, the DTI, academics and other NGOs working on supermarket issues. The aim of the event was to explain our position in detail to this informed and influential audience, and to show them that our proposal is a workable solution to the problem we all agree exists. In this, it succeeded very well, and in addition useful contacts were made.

We have been asked to lead AAI's engagement with John Ruggie's UN inquiry into Business and Human Rights. This work is being developed now with interested country programmes.

Work on the WTO is stalling because the Doha Round process is paralysed. In June we did a survey of developing country negotiators in Geneva, and found that nearly three-quarters of them felt that the current deal on offer failed to live up to the development promises of the original Doha mandate. The survey received coverage in newspapers including the Guardian, Independent and Washington Post.

On EPAs we worked with other NGOs to co-produce a report on the conduct of the European Commission during the negotiations. Lobby work with MPs on this issue will commence as the deals get closer to ratification. We are also contributing to NGO efforts to produce a 'toolkit' for NGOs and negotiators as new trade negotiations are launched between the EU and various developing countries, including India.

ORGANISATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

Environment Policy

ActionAid UK now has its own Environmental Policy which has been widely consulted upon and was the subject of a staff briefing in early June. The policy outlines ActionAid UK's overarching objectives to reduce and minimize our environmental and social footprint and gives 5 core principles to guide this work. They are: to reduce our level of consumption of energy and materials; where this is not practicable, to reuse, repair and recycle, in that order; to only purchase products that meet strict environmental and social criteria; to use the most 'sustainable' form of transport (however, where air flights are necessary, carbon emissions will be offset) and to purchase the most 'sustainable' form of energy.

We have introduced a number of "quick wins" one of which is invoking the power management settings in all desktop computers as follows:-

- after 10 minutes of idle time the computer monitor will go off
- after 30 minutes of idle time the computer hard disks will go off
- after 1hr of idle time the computer will go into Standby mode

Next steps over the coming months include developing detailed strategies for implementing these objectives and setting targets in order to be able to measure the impact of these initiatives and report on progress. We will also be drafting an ethical procurement policy to compliment and work alongside the environmental policy.

Diversity and Inclusion

The Diversity and Inclusion Steering Group has now been set up to develop and agree a focused and structured plan for implementing our longer term diversity and inclusion goals and to set priority areas for the next twelve months.

The Steering Committee are about to commission an audit which will include a) reviewing all our policies, procedures, processes and working practices to establish ActionAid UK's current position with regard to compliance and best practice and, b) analysing our workforce profile and benchmarking against other comparable organisations and the general population of London/ UK.

The results of the audit will lead to further policy review and development and the setting of targets and strategies for improving the diversity our workforce composition over the next five years and beyond.

Human Rights Based Approach and Women's Rights

As a result of the focus groups held in March, we have drafted a proposal for a learning programme for ActionAid UK staff in conjunction with the Director, Knowledge Initiative and the Policy and Campaigns Director. This will be taken back for consultation to staff before being implemented.

Competency Framework and Review of Grading and Salary Systems

Terms of Reference have been drawn up and a tendering process initiated to select a consultant to work with us on developing a competency framework for ActionAid UK and on reviewing our grading and salary system in line with the new competency framework. It is anticipated that this project will be completed by the end of 2007.

Premises Review

GK Partners have been appointed to support the start of the premises review project as a result of tender process with four prospective consultants. Both AAUK and AAI UK-based staff have completed a questionnaire and invited to attend a workshop to give their views. Over 60% completed the questionnaire and 70 staff attended one of the workshops. A report

will follow shortly making clear recommendations with a view to SMT making a decision about whether we should consider moving or remaining at Hamlyn House by the end of July.

Cascading ALPS

We have continued with the embedding ALPS to strengthen our accountability. In May, we ran training sessions for all staff over two days and a total of 27 staff attended the training (last year our training programme focused on managers).

We decided to develop and run the training sessions in-house as oppose to having consultants in as we did last year. The training was developed and facilitated by Silva Ferretti, Europe IASL Coordinator and Abigail Taylor, Head of IASL, UK. The design of the workshop was modelled to respond to the following questions: *“Why does ALPS matter to you, in your everyday practice? And how can you personally commit to ensure that ALPS is fully realised?”* taking onboard learning drawn from last year’s training sessions. The training was well received and we had very good feedback. Here are some of the highlights from the feedback/evaluation from staff:

At the same time ALPS continues to challenge us. The interaction with staff confirmed that awareness of ALPS, and empowerment towards using it at the fullest are not yet realised, so there is still a lot of work to be done. We believe that these workshops will be a first important step, helping to catalyse energies and commitment towards a meaningful, truly participatory and connected realisation of ALPS.

Shared Learning strategy development: we are starting work to take this project forward with staff focus groups scheduled from 22nd to 27th June. We are working with Samantha Hargreaves, our International Coordinator for Shared Learning who will be here to work with us to run the focus groups. The focus groups are an important way to get buy-in from staff. The sessions have been designed so that the outputs of the discussions will form the basis of our strategy/approach to Shared Learning in the UK.

Infobase

There have been two brainstorming meetings, one in Archway and one in Chard to identify the ways in which this crucial fundraising tool can be enhanced and developed to offer a better solution for all users, including colleagues working in policy and campaigns. We are in the process of establishing a working group to scope the project and develop a project plan. Mike Niemis has undertaken some e-training to learn how to produce web-forms to provide a similar interface to that used in Raisers’ Edge. After the very real disaster that struck the Chard office and led to considerable downtime for Infobase we made a claim for the loss we accrued and this claim has now been settled in our favour. The money we have received will be spent on improving the way in which the system is protected from adverse weather and power surges. We are looking at bringing in a specialist consultant to advise on what is necessary to prevent this problem re-occurring.

Business Continuity Project

The final element has now been completed. The integrated IPVPN link between Archway, Chard and the Tier 1 data centre at Savvis (Docklands) is now live. The blade hardware that was purchased for this project will be installed at Savvis by specialist removers over the weekend of the 7th – 8th July 2007. OE will be hosting a staff briefing on this crucial advance on the 18th September 2007.

New Media

IS is working with Fundraising and Communications to develop the roles of the new media team, which are seen as crucial in developing new ways of generating donor income and campaigners for Actionaid.

Contribution to ActionAid International and the European Region

ActionAid Ireland: We have been working alongside the Chief Executive of ActionAid Ireland since early January on a full organisational review. This is resulting in several posts being made redundant and the creation of a new structure and new posts which will better reflect the skills needed to deliver against their new strategy.

ActionAid Greece: We have been providing support to the ActionAid Greece Board on the recruitment of a new Director. This support has included developing and administering occupational/ psychometric testing of candidates and actively participating in the selection process itself.

International Fundraising: We have been working with the International Fundraising Director and the International Human Resources Manager to implement the recommendations of the review of this international function. This has resulted in changes to several existing posts in the UK and the creation and recruitment to several new posts based within and outside the UK.

Africa IT Conference: Mark and Susan both attended the Africa IT conference in Nairobi last week and found it to be incredibly useful. Elizabeth received a vote of thanks from the delegates for all her hard work in managing IT procurement, domain names and software licenses as well as resolving issues the needs of our international colleagues.

Looking ahead

Staff conference: the 2007 staff conference has been scheduled to take place in November with a focus on our 35th anniversary and the launch of our new brand.

Global Monitoring Framework (GMF): as part of strengthening M&E in the UK, we are planning to work with teams on the GMF to create an understanding and provide support in developing tools for the various teams in adapting and implementing the GMF. Silva Ferretti and Abigail Taylor will be working together with teams in the near future. This will help us to measure the impact of our work with a strong analysis on people power and change and therefore helping us to have much stronger analysis of the impact of our work in the near future – with powerful stories of change.

Telephony: A paper on internet telephony and proposed a way forward for Actonaid UK has been drafted. This will provide additional functionality and applications, including voice and video calling, which are not currently provided by the Siemens telephone system. Key staff attended a demonstration of the Mitel telephone system at their London HQ to see what the system was capable of and how it could be used within Actionaid. The Kenya Regional Office is about to commit to the same Mitel system that is used within the Johannesburg office and will be compatible with the Mitel gateways already deployed in London and Chard.

Director of Finance

1. 2006 Trustees' Report & Accounts

The Trustees' Report & Accounts are in the process of being finalised and a draft of the report is enclosed.

Preparation of the accounts has taken much longer than anticipated this year, mostly due to a lack of resource in ActionAid International resulting in a greater than anticipated level of work being conducted by the ActionAid UK finance team. Changes in the consolidation process and some new technical scenarios have also contributed to the challenge.

Trustees are asked to approve the 2006 Trustees' Report & Accounts.

2. Summary Information Return

The Summary Information return is enclosed.

Trustees are asked to approve the 2006 SIR.

3. Management Accounts - Quarter 1 2007

Due to the timing of the July Board meeting it will not be possible to provide the quarter 2 management accounts. Quarter 1 management accounts have been attached with commentary and graphs.

Trustees are asked to note the March management accounts.

4. May 'Flash' Report

A 'flash' report for May has been enclosed as a supplement to the quarter 1 management accounts,

The flash report is intended to bridge the gap between formal quarterly reporting and will be used on occasions such as this meeting, as well as providing a more regular financial overview to SMT. Although this information is produced and reviewed at the team level this is the first time we have produced such an overview report and as such it is a 'work in progress'. Any feedback would be welcome.

Please note that the flash report currently focuses solely around income and expenditure rather than reserves.

5. ActionAid International Annual Report

The ActionAid International 2006 Annual Report and Accounts and an accompanying finance presentation are enclosed for the consideration of the Trustees.

There will be the opportunity for discussion, however as there will be no ActionAid International representative at the meeting, Trustees are kindly requested to submit questions to Rachel Leonard before the meeting.

6. Finance Department Update

a) ActionAid UK - Internal Audit Report (Feb 07)

As reported to the Finance and Audit Committee there still remains a considerable amount of work to be done to address the recommendations in the agreed timescale. Most recommendations are around financial and operating policies and procedures e.g. procurement, reporting, asset management. A key deliverable is a financial policies and procedures manual work on which has yet to start but is scheduled to commence in July.

b) VAT Claim

As reported in previous updates we have been pursuing a claim through Saffery Champness for VAT on fundraising costs deemed to be partially recoverable after the Children's Society VAT Tribunal case. This claim has now been settled with the total recovery of VAT and interest at £340k (£300k after fees).

Saffery believe that there is potential for a further recovery of about £100k in relation to the input VAT suffered on general overheads from 2003 to 2006 – but this can only be substantiated after further work. This claim is likely to be made within the next quarter depending upon the level and availability of information to support such a claim.

c) Internal Audit – Brazil

Rudi Lewin participated in the Internal Audit of Brazil in late March.

d) International Finance Team Meeting

The International Finance teams meeting took place in May and considered reporting and planning issues as well as an update on the reserve de-restriction process.

As part of the wider International team meeting, the UK also attended a meeting of Affiliate Heads of Finance. This resulted in progress developing ties with Affiliate finance teams and improving monthly reporting processes with AAI.

e) Team Changes

Rudi Lewin left for a year's sabbatical at the start of June to be replaced by David Woodbine for this period.

Amos Makuvis started as accounts assistant in the middle of June and Yijide Adebisi joined the team on a three month temporary engagement at the end of June, replacing Roseana Crawford as Finance Manager (Operations).

7. Looking ahead

During the next three months finance will be involved in:

- Production of quarter 2 management Accounts
- 2008 – 2010 Planning
- Development of the Financial Policies and Procedures Manual

6. Other

a) Company Secretary

The Board are asked to approve the appointment of David Woodbine as the Company Secretary for the period during which Rudi Lewin is absent.

b) Additional Grant to ActionAid International

At 31 December 2006 the unrestricted reserves of ActionAid UK stood at £5,052k (including £40k fixed assets). The reserves policy is for affiliates to hold 3 months of planned unrestricted expenditure for the coming year. With such expenditure budgeted at £14,860k this would suggest that reserves at the start of the year should in fact be £3.715k with an unrestricted reserve surplus of £1,297k.

The Board are asked to approve an additional payment of £1,297k to ActionAid International in 2007.