

### WOMEN'S RIGHTS



On the occasion of the International Day to End Violence against Women, ActionAid organized the event **From silence to words – Voices of Women against Violence from Milan to Kabul**. The event opened with the witnesses of **Nasima Rahmani** (Women's Rights Coordinator for ActionAid Afghanistan) and of a representative of the Anti VAW Centre of one of the main hospitals of Milan, followed by a theatre play against violence on women. Being Afghanistan one of the few countries to raise the interest of institutions as well as of media and general public, Nasima's presence in Italy offered a unique occasion to start contacts with key institutional representatives and raise our profile on Women's Rights issues. During her stay several meetings were organised with officials from the Ministry of Equal Opportunities, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and from the Defense and Foreign Affairs Committees of the Parliament. Alongside these formal conversations, Nasima was invited to give a speech in the event organised by the leader of the opposition on VAW and was invited to the event organised by an MP from the political caucus in a Muslim cultural centre in Rome. Nasima also met Italian women's organisations and journalist in a public event organised by the International House of Women. All the initiatives got good media coverage and interest from institutions, while on the internal side we managed to work in an integrated way, thus meeting policy, campaigning, communications and fundraising needs. For further info, please contact Beatrice Costa, Policy Officer and Women's Rights Focal Point ([beatrice.costa@actionaid.org](mailto:beatrice.costa@actionaid.org)).



### AFGHANISTAN

From the 16th to the 26th of November, we also had the Director of ActionAid Afghanistan visiting Italy offices for an induction tour on the work of the Northern Affiliates. **GB Adhikari** not only had the chance to meet the staff but also to experience in first person our lobbying activities. In fact, just in those days the Low Chamber had discussed the re-funding of the Italian missions abroad, whose second expenditure item is the ISAF mission in Afghanistan. GB and Nasima together with our policy colleagues thus met a delegate from the Development Cooperation Division of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and representatives from the Foreign Affairs Commission of the High Chamber, presenting the their perspective on the conflict and on the initiatives that the Afghan civil society keeps carrying out, despite the dangerous situation. Regarding this, what was highlighted is the need to keep the military and the cooperation aspects separate, since the overlapping

between reconstruction initiatives led by the troops and development project led by NGOs is seriously exposing NGOs to attacks, being them perceived as an extension of the military presence in the country.

### INTERNAL GOVERNANCE

On the 22nd of November our Board met mainly to discuss our 2009 budget to be presented to the Italian General Assembly for approval. Our trustees also agreed to enlarge our membership to 5 new members: **Sylvie Coyaud, Marco Moro, Cinzia Scaffidi, Orietta Maria Varnelli** and **Patrizia Vianello**. With these new entries, our Assembly counts now 28 members. The following day a training was organised for all the new members in conjunction with the General Assembly of our Local Groups to give them and trustees the chance to informally interact with our staff and activists. The training sessions were structured to allow interaction and debate, with trustees presenting their experience in ActionAid and the vision of documentaries and videos made during the year, such as the one on the concept of accountability in our work, the one on cartoon making in China and the one shot during the ItaliaWave Love Festival supporting the HungerFREE campaign.

### LOCAL GROUPS' ASSEMBLY

The General Assembly of Local Groups opened its yearly meeting on the 22nd of November, with an introduction of the President – Matteo Passini – and of the Secretary General – Marco De Ponte – on the work done in 2008 and on our future challenges, focusing in particular on the new organisational model that Italy will adopt to increase integration and maximise our impact. The special guests of this year were Roshan Sherchan (AA Nepal Campaigning Coordinator) and two Nepali activists (Pawan and Bhagavati) with whom our activist remained in touch after the field visit of September. Nepal was in fact the key topic of the morning session with the activists presenting their mission and Pawan and Bhagavati giving their witness on their engagement with students, youth and children. In the afternoon the Groups shared the initiatives carried out in 2008, while in the evening activists, members and staff gathered for the presentation of the documentary we made in China on the occasion of the Olympics and of the video shot during the ItaliaWave Love Festival in July. The next day our new HungerFREE campaign framework built around the concept of "fame" (hunger) was presented, together with 2009 priorities and strategic plans. For further info please contact Paolo Chiovino, Activism and Campaign Officer ([paolo.chiovino@actionaid.org](mailto:paolo.chiovino@actionaid.org)).



### CSR

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs approved our information and sensitization project proposal “**Promoting the corporate social responsibility of Italian corporations in the global context**” with a 238K euro grant out of an overall budget of 342,5K. This one year project was presented by ActionAid in temporary association with UCODEP and Manitesse (two Italian NGOs) and the participation of the network Valore Sociale. The project is aimed at the development of an information campaign targeted corporations, general public and NGOs, through communication products (press advertisements, articles, radio programmes, newsletters and a thematic video), seminars, publication of case studies and of a handbook on social certification. For further info, please contact Patricia Bozzetti, Programmes & Reporting Officer ([patricia.bozzetti@actionaid.org](mailto:patricia.bozzetti@actionaid.org)).

### PARLIAMENT HEARING

On the 5<sup>th</sup> of November ActionAid was heard for the **Survey on the Outcomes of the FAO Summit** by the Italian Parliament. Some 40 MPs from the four Committees involved (that is, the Committees on Agriculture and Foreign Affairs both from the Low and High Chambers) attended the session. Our delegation stressed the issues related to the Partnership for Agriculture in sight of the next G8 and highlighted the need for more food aid and for a sustainable agricultural models. This hearing represented a quite significant lobby occasion that gave us the chance to show our expertise on food rights, being the only representatives of civil society invited. For further info please contact Livia Zoli, Partnership Unit ([livia.zoli@actionaid.org](mailto:livia.zoli@actionaid.org)).

### EMERGENCY RESPONSE

The idea of creating a fundraising and mobilization network around emergencies took several years to come to life, due to some quarrelling within the Italian NGO community. ActionAid had promoted it since 2002, but the foundation of **AGIRE** (the Italian Agency for Emergency Response) was achieved only in 2007. However, after talks and a meeting between the presidencies of AGIRE (*Marco De Ponte*) and of **Italia Aiuta**, the other big Italian NGO network raising funds for emergencies, an agreement was found for a sort of merger between the two. Both the General Assembly of AGIRE and that of Italia Aiuta agreed the creation of a single network under the name of AGIRE. In January an extraordinary Assembly of AGIRE will proceed with the statutory amendments necessary to include the six NGOs of Italia Aiuta in the network. This way AGIRE will benefit of the support of all the mobile companies operating in Italy and of the agreement signed with the main Italian newspaper and TV news re the promotion of SMS-donations. In the fragmented Italian context, this is a quite significant achievement, showing how fruitful the commitment to work with others and patiently walk the talk can be.

### Goodbye to...

**Paola Giuliani** – Head of Campaign and Activism  
**Giusy Delfino** – Admin Officer

### Welcome to...

**Paolo Izzo** – Office Management Assistant  
**Egizia Petroccione** – CINI spokesperson

### NEWS FROM ITALY

#### FUNDRAISING

The financial statements of the main Italian NGOs show a growing trend for the 2003-2007 period. Save the Children passed from 6 million € raised in 2004 to 17 millions in 2007. Emergency doubled its funds from 2006 to 2007, with more than 15 millions raised. MSF records a 9% growth in 2007 reaching almost 36 millions), while CESVI last year raised some 3 millions more than in 2006.

#### MOTHER-CHILD MORTALITY

Fondazione Pangea and Terres des Hommes launched 24hrs camp, a 24hrs event to create an online platform for information, sharing and debate around the issues related to mother-child mortality. The initiative aims at starting a web based solidarity project in collaboration with practitioners from different fields.

#### DONATIONS

According to a survey commissioned by the Italian Institute for Donation, 50% of the Italians has made at least one donation to a non profit organisation in the past five years, for an overall amount of 3.5 billion €, with private donations representing more than half the budget of our third sector (equal to 6.2 billions). 33% of them is a regular giver, supporting year after year the same organisation. However, with the economic crisis “micro donations” (less than 10 €) will grow in number and importance: 30% of the irregular givers in fact indicated the lack of money as the main reason for them to give up donations.

#### ITALIAN DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION

Despite the several protests of the Italian civil society for the cuts imposed by the 2009 financial bill, all the amendments to increase resources for development cooperation were rejected by the Low Chamber. This means that the Italian cooperation will reach its all-time low with the 0.09% ODA/GNP of funds available. This financial bill is in fact cutting the 56% of the 2008 budget