

# Virtual Link

## MILESTONE 4: Italy and the fight against poverty

The fourth edition of our report was launched in Rome on the 26th of May. **Italy and the fight against poverty** assesses



progress, missed opportunities, areas of excellence and challenges of the Italian cooperation, in the year of the G8 presidency. The former legislation gave a positive drive to the fight against poverty, also in financial terms, with significant advancements for our cooperation system. With the new one, areas of improvement are still visible.: aid to partner countries was disbursed on time, a stronger attention to less developed countries was given and the effectiveness criteria adopted improved. Moreover, bilateral aid to basic services doubled, loan concessionality grew while volatility decreased. However, there's still a lot to be done to align with European and G8 commitments: with a 56% governmental cut in the resources available for international cooperation, for the first time the MoFA will count on less funds than those raised by Italian NGOs on their own. What is needed is thus a re-alignment plan stating trend levels for ODA/GNP, but also detailed forms of coverage and dedicated income for cooperation to development. In order to have a broad evaluation of the Italian cooperation, this edition of the report was enriched by interviews to several politicians both from majority and opposition. They all recognize the potential cooperation has in ensuring an abiding recovery from the financial crisis and in reshaping a new international balance. At the same time, they all agree on the need

to relaunch and update the debate on cooperation issues, restore funds and review the current legislation. Among the speakers attending the launch event: **Cyril Mueller** (European representative of the World Bank), **Stefano Manservigi** (Director of European Cooperation) and the deputies and senators figuring in ActionAid top 40 politicians engaged on development aid. For further info please contact Iacopo Viciani, Policy and Lobby ([iacopo.viciani@actonaid.org](mailto:iacopo.viciani@actonaid.org)).

## MILESTONE 5: European Elections

ActionAid Italy joined the mobilization initiative launched by the Europe Region on the occasion of the elections of the 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> June: the Italian version of the six point **manifesto** of ActionAid was sent to our 155 candidates and published on Facebook, where a cause was launched to subscribe it. To highlight the role European Union can play in the fight against poverty – being the major official donor for development – a **video** collecting interviews to European citizens between 18 and 40 was realized by the European offices and published on YouTube. On the same occasion, CINI, the Italian NGO Association, the Italian Committee for Food Sovereignty and the Forum of the Third Sector organised a seminar in Rome to present the **CONCORD manifesto** for the EU elections and the 2009 edition of the **Aid Watch Report** to MPs and Italian candidates. Three the main goals to pursue by the EU, as highlighted in the CONCORD Manifesto: sustainable development and policy consistence; more and better aid; democratic accountability. ActionAid, who wrote the Italian chapter of the Aid Watch report, took part in the event presenting its main findings. For further info, please contact Luca De Fraia, Deputy Secretary General [luca.defraia@actonaid.org](mailto:luca.defraia@actonaid.org).



## TERRA FUTURA: good practices for a sustainable future



ActionAid participated to the fourth edition of **Terra Futura**, the international exhibition/seminar event on sustainable practices in governance, trade and daily life held in Florence from the 29<sup>th</sup> to the 31<sup>st</sup> of May. ActionAid was there with a stand where our local groups of activists promoted Fame on Tour. The initiative is aimed at mobilizing people across Italy to join the HungerFREE campaign and get governments to stop producing hunger. On the occasion ActionAid organized a seminar on the coffee market where the report **Caffè Amaro** (*bitter coffee*) was launched. The report is based on the findings of a field research carried out among coffee plantations workers in Guatemala and highlights the effects of the big retail practices on their life conditions. The seminar aimed at stirring debate on a market on which 125 million people depend, focusing on

human rights and corporate social responsibility. For further info please contact Nina Belluomo, Head of Campaign and Activism Unit ([nina.belluomo@actonaid.org](mailto:nina.belluomo@actonaid.org)). ActionAid also participated in another seminar, organized in network with other Italian NGOs under the MoFA funded project **Un'impresa per i diritti: valore per tutti** (*Corporations for rights: value for all*), to discuss the role that socially responsible corporations can play in a this period of major of crisis where "new poverties" are rising. For further info please contact Christian Quintili, project coordinator ([c.quintili@valoresociale.it](mailto:c.quintili@valoresociale.it)):



### Training to Local Groups of activists

A training weekend was organized for our Local Groups of activists in Milan on the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> of May. The training was structured with **working groups** on how to improve networking at local level and increase our activist base and **thematic sessions** focused on how to promote HungerFREE in the year of the Italian G8. For further info, please contact Chiara Sempio, Activism and Campaigns ([chiara.sempio@actionaid.org](mailto:chiara.sempio@actionaid.org)).



### Donami

Cemit Interactive media, an Italian leader agency in relational marketing, launched [www.donami.org](http://www.donami.org), a website to support six NGOs and their causes through a **six month funding initiative**. People are invited to register on the website and to choose the cause they want Cemit to support and Cemit will donate 1 euro to that NGO for each registration. ActionAid joined the initiative with the HungerFREE campaign. For further info, please contact Alessandra Neri, Web and Interactive Media ([alessandra.neri@actionaid.org](mailto:alessandra.neri@actionaid.org)).

### OCSE/DAC peer review

The Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the OECD conducts reviews of the development co-operation efforts of each Committee member every 4-5 years. From the 11<sup>th</sup> to the 15<sup>th</sup> of May, the DAC peer review team was in Rome for a **fact finding mission** to gather firsthand information on the Italian development cooperation. The previous review took place in 2004 and already recognized that the 2000 recommendations were still to be implemented: almost ten years after they're still valid since no protracted effort was registered in this direction. In Rome, the delegation met many stakeholders, including MPs and NGOs. We therefore had the chance to provide the peer review team with our positions both through CINI (Italian Coordination of International Networks) and AGIRE (Italian Agency for Emergency Response). For further info, please contact Egizia Petroccione, CINI coordinator ([egizia.petroccione@actionaid.org](mailto:egizia.petroccione@actionaid.org)).

### Report on Global Rights

Like in the past two years, ActionAid contributed to the seventh edition of the 2009 Report on Global Rights, this year with thematic sections on G8, food, women's rights and aid. The report was launched in Rome on the 29<sup>th</sup> of May and analyses threats and opportunities of the globalization processes, in light of the effects of the financial crisis. For further info, please contact Alice Grecchi, Media and Publications

## NEWS FROM ITALY

### REPORT ON GLOBAL RIGHTS

The panel intervening in the press conference for the launch of the report unanimously highlighted the worsening of the living conditions of the Italian population, the increasing violations of the migrants' rights, the rising indifference towards environmental issues and the worrying attacks to democracy taking place in our country. The major crisis – highlights the report – for our country is that of supportive values.

### IMMIGRATION

The 2009 Amnesty Report denounces the Italian immigration policy as an expression of human rights contempt. Asylum seekers are de facto detained without any legal basis or judicial control. Amnesty also denounces the policy of "rejection" of migrants, the racial aggressions against Roma people as well as the clearing out of settlements. Amnesty also denounces that torture doesn't appear as an offence in the Italian penal code, so that for example abuses by civil servants are prosecuted as ordinary offences. Some days earlier we expressed our concerns in a press release, highlighting how the recently approved bill on security gives causes to doubt about human rights respect and is not a structural response to the causes of illegal immigration, that is extreme poverty.

### GELDOF ON ITALIAN AID

On the 28<sup>th</sup> of May Bob Geldof (with the ONE campaign) met Gianni Letta, the Undersecretary of the Presidency of the Council of Ministers, to discuss the Italian ODA commitments, the leadership role that our country can play on the food issue in sight of the G8 final summit (as it did in 2001 on AIDS leading to the GFATM creation) and the impact of the financial crisis. Letta reaffirmed the Italian commitments, highlighting that delays are due to the current economic conjunction. He also referred to a possible "recovery plan" accompanied by an enforcement making ODA contributions binding, to be announced at the final summary.

### NEXT MILESTONES

- **24<sup>th</sup>-28<sup>th</sup> June:** first International General Assembly and new International Board meetings in Rome + event celebrating ActionAid Italy 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary
- **8<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup> July:** G8 Final Summit in L'Aquila

