

## **Academy of Root Development (Australia) Inc 2014-15 Annual Report**

Academy of Root Development (Australia) Incorporated has been established in Australia to source donations and on-going funding to support the social development of disadvantaged women and their families in India.

ARD(Australia)Inc has established an operational Centre in Guraru Block, Gaya District, Bihar under the name of WEIV (Women's Empowerment in Indian Villages) to implement a programme of Reproductive and Child Health Education and Awareness

### **IN INDIA:**

To enable our organisation to deliver appropriate and effective programmes, WEIV staff have conducted an extensive **Baseline Survey (BLS)** to identify the specific reproductive and child health needs of the target community.

Staff drew up maps of the area, held Focused Group Discussions to establish the basic health situation of the community and from this information compiled Village Registers of the target population. Staff then used digital tablets to fill out a questionnaire of 30% of each target group that had been surveyed, from which a representative sample could be produced using digital software to determine the specific needs of the population.

All staff learnt to operate the tablet, thereby further up-skilling themselves. They will continue to use the Village Registers to track an individual person and will use the tablets in future to report to Virinchi on the progress of the RCH programme.

There will be a review of the programme after one year and any mechanisms needed to strengthen the program will be implemented. Evidence-based tracking of progress will be used to ensure appropriate forward planning

### **IMPLEMENTATION OF REPRODUCTIVE and CHILD HEALTH PROGRAMME (RCH) Education:**

WEIV staff are working with women according to their age and stage of life, as follows:

**Adolescent Girls (9 – 19 years):** healthy menstrual practices, understanding the female anatomy, the right to say no, negative effects of child marriage – not marrying before 18 and preferably waiting until 21, Self Hygiene, Balanced Diet, Steps to Prevent Diarrhoea, Sanitation, Malaria Prevention and Cure, Vaccination.

On May 6th, WEIV staff commenced forming Adolescent Girls' Groups and to date have formed 30 groups. In each group of girls a co-ordinator is chosen, who has an attendance register and will be the contact person for WEIV staff. Groups will meet fortnightly. There are over 3000 girls going to these monthly groups and all 10 Panchayats (local government areas) in Guraru Block are being covered.

**Recently Married Couples:** Waiting until 21 to have their first baby and spacing them 3 years apart, awareness of the incidence of anaemia and what to do about it, contraception. As soon as a woman gets pregnant, WEIV staff will track them and encourage them to join the following group.

**Pregnant and Lactating Mothers:** Nutrition, safe delivery as a primary concern, breastfeeding, importance of colostrum for newborns, immunisation entitlements, Anaemia, Antenatal check-ups.

**Couples with One Child:** Child nutrition, immunisation entitlements, spacing of children, contraception.

**Couples with Two or More Children:** Child nutrition, immunisation entitlements, benefits of non scalpel vasectomies for men as opposed to tubal ligations for women and debunking myths surrounding vasectomies.

**Menopausal Women:** Awareness and understanding of the hormonal changes in their bodies and consequent impacts of this on their lives.

**Adolescent Boys:** We have organised meetings with Adolescent boys on the topics of Self Hygiene, Balanced Diet, proper time of marriage and what it means to be a father. Meetings were held in 7 villages and so far a total of 59 boys have participated.

This is just a beginning and we will continue to build numbers and cover more topics, as through working with the boys, the girls' lives will also improve.

#### **Refresher Training for Staff:**

In September, all staff participated in a 3-day Refresher Training on various aspects of Reproductive and Child Health (RCH) in order to be able to educate women about their bodies and to support them in adopting safe and healthy lifestyle practices. The training was delivered by professional organisation, Virinchi Development Services in Patna.

#### **ADVOCACY:**

This is a two way process wherein WEIV staff mobilise the community to access Government programmes and will be on the ground to ensure that Government delivers these programmes.

Staff will meet formally and informally with various Community Health workers: ANM's (Auxillary Nursing Midwives), ASHA's (Accredited Social Health Activist) and Anganwadi staff (preschool/baby health centre staff), as well as attend their meetings to advocate for the community. Staff will also advocate with Government health outreach services so that needed equipment should be available in community health centres.

Secondly, the Health Department makes an Annual Village Health Action Plan. ANM's (Auxillary Nursing Midwives) collate the plan in consultation with the community. WEIV staff will ensure that they are part of the consultation process and that the grassroots needs of the community are represented. Once the plan has been approved by the Government and adopted, WEIV staff will support the Government to carry out the Plan.

#### **Awareness and Empowerment**

Working through the above-mentioned Groups, WEIV staff will inform the women of their rights and encourage them to advocate for those rights. For example, haemoglobin, blood pressure and urine tests should be done on all pregnant women. Another example is that

the Government has a scheme to give iron and folic acid supplements to adolescent girls and pregnant and lactating mothers after first testing them for deficiencies.

WEIV staff will encourage linkages with other schemes/programmes including international and national NGO's and with the government-auspiced, Bihar Rural Livelihoods Mission.

## **LITERACY CENTRES**

When we discovered that we could no longer work with Microfinance and Self Help Groups, we asked the staff to ask the women they had been working with, which areas of Women's Empowerment they would like us to work in. Reproductive and Child Health, Vocational Training and Literacy Centres for young girls and women who had been forced to leave school at a young age because of poverty were the three areas suggested.

We are now working in the Reproductive and Child Health field. Implementation of Vocational training at this point has been postponed, as it is quite costly and there is the possibility of Government-run schemes coming to Guraru Block.

We asked WEIV staff to identify 10 villages, one village in each Panchayat. (Local Government District) in which there is a high preponderance of these young women. They have listed 10 villages all of which are Dalit (untouchable) villages, where Government schools are far away and where parents have not been placing a high value on education because of financial constraints.

We decided to start with one pilot Centre to see how this project fares.

When WEIV staff entered in Pathra village, they were told that there were no illiterate adolescents girls, but after surveying the village, it was found there were 19 Illiterate adolescents girl. The parents generally do not want to educate there daughter, as they are needed for domestic work such as cooking food, grazing etc.

WEIV staff called a group meeting with parents to encourage them to allow their daughters to attend, by helping them to understand the value of literacy education. Parents have consented to release their daughter from her tasks for 3 hours per day from 11am until 2 pm as that will allow time for morning and afternoon/evening tasks in the home to be completed.

There are no Government buildings available in this village where we can hold the classes. All villagers have small buildings made of soil with straw or tile roof. Our education centre was running in open space out side the home of the one of the villagers. With the commencement of the rainy season, the need arose for a roof for the centre. Two thousand Rupees were required for rmaterials, with labour to be contributed by the villagers. ARD Australia duly sent the money and the roof was built.

Teaching and Learning started in June this year. A total of 19 illiterate adolescent girls are enrolled and most are coming regularly. Study starts with Prayer to God. They have started learning the alphabet of Hindi and English, as well as basic numeracy. The woman teacher (Fulmanti Devi) and students are very happy about this centre. In July attendance dropped to around 50 percent due to the involvement of girls in rice farming work.

## **IN AUSTRALIA:**

Fund-raising is an intensive activity, requiring considerable input and our organisation is based on volunteers, which makes us vulnerable to personal commitment. Due to developments in the personal lives of a number of Volunteers, fund-raising activities have been limited in the 2014-15 period.

Fundraising initiatives through such activities as Transactional Giving (Buy1Give1) are therefore becoming a more important element in ARD(Australia)'s fundraising strategy.

Regular periodic financial donations continue to be the primary source of income. Fully Tax Deductible donations can be made by Direct Deposit into the ARD(Aust)Inc bank account with Summerland Credit Union BSB: 728 728, Account Number 22256190 or by secure on-line deposit by card via eGive from our website [www.ard-india.org](http://www.ard-india.org)

The second-hand goods stall at Lismore Carboot Market continues to provide a regular contribution to ARD(Australia) funds and donations of clean women's clothing, books, CD's, jewellery and bric-a-brac are always welcome.

We appreciate the help of all of the volunteers, including Wendy, Graeme, Naomi, Jozie, Nicky, Bruce, Linda, Patrick and James, who have all put in much effort supporting the stall. The monthly donation of organic free-range eggs by Simon Cripps-Clark of Organigrow has been an invaluable contribution to the success of our market stall.

We have commenced selling donated goods via the internet, so would appreciate any support that people can give in this field.

ARD(Australia)Inc currently has 68 active members, which includes 46 regular donors.

## **2014-15 FINANCIAL STATEMENT:**

The ARD(Aust)Inc 2014-15 Financial Statements, as attached, were prepared by Irvin and Company, Accountants, Lismore NSW.

In total, AU\$ 30,110 has been sent to India as our investment in the social development of disadvantaged women and their families in the project area of Bihar, India. The operating loss of AU\$4463 has primarily come from training and establishment costs associated with the implementation of the new Reproductive and Child Health Programme.

**ACADEMY OF ROOT DEVELOPMENT (AUSTRALIA) INCORPORATED**  
**Profit and Loss Statement**  
**For the Year ended 30 June 2015**

	2015	2014
	\$	\$
<b>Income</b>		
Donations & Fundraising	22,627	22,236
Ipex	3,352	3,221
Membership Fees	30	30
Interest Received	569	620
	26,578	26,107
<b>Expenditure</b>		
Accountancy Fees	132	132
Administration Costs	37	195
Advertising/Postage/Stationery	173	105
Bank Charges	374	418
Overseas Projects	30,110	28,643
Registration /Licences	215	96
	31,041	29,589
<b>Loss before Income Tax</b>	<b>(4,463)</b>	<b>(3,482)</b>

**ACADEMY OF ROOT DEVELOPMENT (AUSTRALIA) INCORPORATED**  
**Balance Sheet**  
**As at 30 June 2015**

	2015	2014
	\$	\$
<b>Equity</b>		
Retained Profits	23,828	28,291
<b>Total Equity</b>	<u>23,828</u>	<u>28,291</u>
 Represented by:		
<b>Current Assets</b>		
Petty Cash Imprest	19	1,201
Cash at Bank - SCU Gift Account	1,905	1,792
Cash at Bank - SCU Access Plus Account	21,824	25,185
Cash at Bank - Redi Access	<u>80</u>	<u>113</u>
	23,828	28,291
<b>Total Assets</b>	<u>23,828</u>	<u>28,291</u>
<b>Net Assets</b>	<u>23,828</u>	<u>28,291</u>