



Karthik Navayan <tonavayan@gmail.com>

PRACTICES OF CASTE DISCRIMINATION IN ACTION AID

Eugene Culas <vodi@vodintl.org.uk>
To: Karthik Navayan <tonavayan@gmail.com>

26 September 2014 20:30

From: Dipali Sharma
Sent: Friday, September 26, 2014 10:13 AM
To: Judith Davey ; Eugene Culas
Cc: Jayanta Bora ; Sandeep Chachra
Subject: RE: PRACTICES OF CASTE DISCRIMINATION IN ACTION AID

Dear Mr. Eugene,

Thank you for your email which has been shared with us by our colleague Judith in AAUK.

As requested by you, we are happy to provide more information and clarify the issues raised. Please find below relevant information in this regard.

1. Mr Karthik Navayan had applied for a short term (6 months) contractual position for Program Officer but the selection panel did not find him suitable for the Programme Officer position. Within the provisions of ActionAid India HR norms, since there was a possibility of taking him as a Field Officer, he was offered the position of Field Officer which he duly accepted. A duly signed copy of this acceptance is available with the organisation. Kathik had the right to reject the offer. It is to be noted that the position of Programme Officer was not downgraded as is being alleged by Karthik, but a separate vacancy announcement for Program Officer was released to fill that position.
2. A detailed enquiry was held to look into the allegations by Mr Navayan including the ones pertaining to caste discrimination. The inquiry was led by Mr. Martin Macwan, a leading national level Dalits rights activist who neither was nor currently is a partner of ActionAid India. He or his organisation has no financial relationship with ActionAid. The allegations levelled by Mr. Navayan were established as unfounded.
3. ActionAid India's Governing Board, which consists of eminent national personalities including some leading dalit movement leaders in India was well informed of the case and the process undertaken by the organisation including investigation into Mr Navayan's allegations. After reviewing the details of the inquiry and having satisfied themselves with the process, ActionAid India Board had shared its conclusions with AA International Board and international management.
4. AA is a socially diverse organisation and the same is true for our governing body as well. We also have a diversity based affirmative action policy and we consciously encourage people from diverse

backgrounds to apply and bring them on board in the organisation in various capacities. Presently 43% of our staff come from socially excluded and marginalised community – dalits, tribals, other backward communities, disabled people, religious minorities, people living with HIV and AIDS etc.

Hope the above information helps.

Best Regards,

Dipali

Dipali Sharma / Director – Organisational Effectiveness / ActionAid Association

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The logo for ActionAid, featuring the word "actionaid" in a bold, red, sans-serif font. The letter "i" in "action" is stylized with a white dot.

ActionAid is a global movement of people working together to further human rights for all and defeat poverty

From: Sandeep Chachra
Sent: 24 September 2014 14:58
To: Judith Davey; Eugene Culas
Cc: Jayanta Bora; Dipali Sharma
Subject: Re: PRACTICES OF CASTE DISCRIMINATION IN ACTION AID

Dear Mr Eugene Culas

Greetings

As noted by my colleague Judith, I am requesting our OE Director to respond to concerns raised in your mail, the details of which have already been shared with Mr Navayan, earlier.

Regards

Sandeep Chachra

From: Judith Davey <Judith.Davey@actionaid.org>

Date: Tue, 23 Sep 2014 14:02:44 +0530

To: Eugene Culas <vodi@vodintl.org.uk>

Cc: Karthik Navayan <tonavayan@gmail.com>, Sandeep Chachra <Sandeep.Chachra@actionaid.org>, Jayanta Bora <Jayanta.Bora@actionaid.org>

Subject: RE: PRACTICES OF CASTE DISCRIMINATION IN ACTION AID

Dear Eugene

Thank you for your note. As you'll be aware, ActionAid India is an independent member of the ActionAid Federation. I have therefore copied Sandeep Chachra, as the Country Director as he is best placed to respond to you.

Best Regards

Judith Davey

Director of People, Performance and Accountability
ActionAid UK

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End poverty. Together.



From: Eugene Culas [<mailto:vodi@vodintl.org.uk>]

Sent: 23 September 2014 01:12

To: Judith Davey

Cc: Karthik Navayan

Subject: Re: PRACTICES OF CASTE DISCRIMINATION IN ACTION AID

Dear Judith,

Thank you for your email. Through this I am responding to one part of your email. I will respond to the other part separately.

After speaking again to Mr Karthik Navayan, we are still concerned about his issue. He says that his case is about downgrading a Programme Officer position for which he was interviewed, to Field Officer, for which he was appointed, without following any prescribed norms within ActionAid's HR policy.

Mr Karthik says that the leading Dalits rights activist who you refer to was Mr Martin Macwan, who is a partner of Action Aid and as such would not be able to give an independent perspective.

In January 2014 Mr. Karthik also approached ActionAid International, who assured him that they will conduct an investigation and inform him of their findings and suggestions. Now, even after 8 months, they have not completed their investigation and provided him with some credible answers that he is looking for.

Mr Karthik believes that the Indian caste perpetrating office representatives of ActionAid India and in its international office in Johannesburg, S. Africa are influencing the delay in the investigation of his case.

We request you to intervene within your capacity, to further an immediate completion of the proposed enquiry of ActionAid International.

I am also copying this to Mr. Karthik.

With Thanks and looking forward to hearing from you.

Eugene Culas

From: Judith Davey

Sent: Friday, September 19, 2014 5:24 PM

To: vodi@vodintl.org.uk

Subject: FW: PRACTICES OF CASTE DISCRIMINATION IN ACTION AID

Dear Eugene

It was good to meet you again at the Bond meeting earlier this week.. I am now in a position to respond to your question on the specific case that you mentioned regarding Mr Karthik Navayan. I will respond separately with the information you requested on caste composition of ActionAid India once my colleagues have forwarded me this information.

Mr Karthik Navayan was employed on a one year local contract by ActionAid in India that ended in October 2013. When Mr Navayan raised concerns about his employment an inquiry was held led by a leading Dalits rights activist to offer an independent perspective in addition to ActionAid staff. The inquiry found that Mr Navayan's allegations of discrimination were groundless.

As an organisation dedicated to upholding people's rights, ActionAid India makes every effort to create a work environment free from caste-based prejudice and is dedicated to eradicating such discrimination wherever and whenever it occurs.

As I say, I'll be in touch when I have the other information that you have requested. I know that I gave you my business card and my contact details are also in my email signature below. Should you have any other questions in the future, it's probably best to raise them with me (or my colleagues) directly rather than raising them in an unrelated meeting.

Best regards

Judith Davey

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From: Eugene Culas [<mailto:vodi@vodintl.org.uk>]

Sent: 18 September 2014 00:27

To: Judith Davey

Subject: PRACTICES OF CASTE DISCRIMINATION IN ACTION AID

Dear Judith Davey

Greetings from Voice of Dalit International (VODI). Nice to have met you today. I am happy that you are aware of the practices of Caste discrimination within Action Aid. In the recent case it is against its own employee - unfair dismissal of its own employee based on caste discrimination. I am attaching some information on it.

Our request is to withdraw all charges against him and reinstate.

Meanwhile please let me know the caste composition of Action Aid India and its Indian Partners.

Today I have handed over to you a booklet "Dalits and International Development Aid", which categorically proves that over 1/3rd of the global poor living in caste affected countries are poor due to caste and discrimination based on work and descent. With such a big number in poverty due to caste discrimination, I am sure Action Aid must be having an expert in your office. Kindly let us know his/ her contact details so that I could interact with that person on caste issue and particularly on the unfair dismissal issue.

I would like to also seek a clarification from Action Aid, when 90% of the poor in India are Dalits, is it not only appropriate to appoint a Dalit as the Country Co-ordinator of Action Aid India?

Looking forward to hearing from you,

Eugene Culas

Voice of Dalit International (VODI)

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