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People's Action In Practice

ActionAid's Human Rights Based Approach **2.0**

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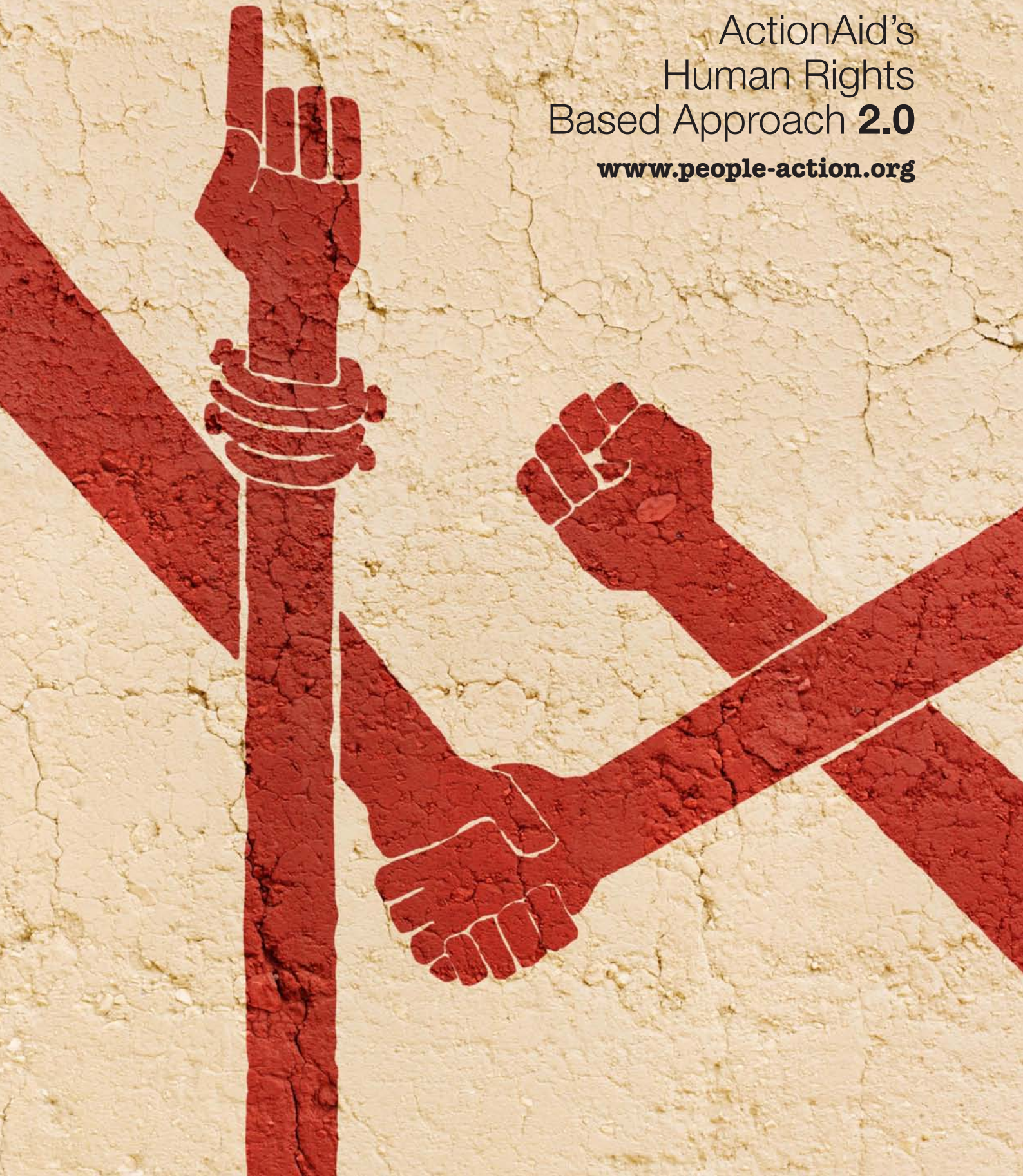

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If you are having problems accessing ActionAid's internal materials, please contact people-action@actionaid.org

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Contents

Contents List of boxes

Acronyms

ALPS – Accountability Learning and Planning System

CBI – capacity-building initiative

CBO – community-based organisation

CCA – climate change adaptation

CEDAW – Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women

CRSA – climate resilient sustainable agriculture

CRC – Convention on the Rights of the Child

CS – child sponsorship

CSE – comprehensive sex education

CSP – country strategy paper

DRR – disaster risk reduction

EFAST – emergency fast action team

ELBAG – economic literacy and budget accountability for governance

ESC rights – economic, social and cultural rights

EU – European Union

FAO – Food and Agriculture Organization

FGM – female genital mutilation

GBV – gender-based violence

GCE – Global Campaign for Education

HIV – human immunodeficiency virus

HRBA – human rights based approach

HTP – harmful traditional practice

ICESCR – International Covenant on Economic Social and Cultural Rights

ILO – International Labour Organization

IMF – International Monetary Fund

IS – international secretariat (of ActionAid)

INGO – international non-governmental organisation

KCP – key change promise

LGBT – lesbian gay bisexual and transgender

M&E – monitoring and evaluation

MDG – Millennium Development Goal

MoU – memorandum of understanding

NDS – national development strategy

NGO – non-governmental organisation

OE – organisational effectiveness

PAMF – People's Action Monitoring Framework

PRA – participatory rural appraisal

PRRP – participatory review and reflection process

PRS – Promoting rights in schools

PTA – parent teacher association

PVA – *Participatory vulnerability analysis*

RTI – right to information

SLT – senior leadership team

SMC – school management committee

SME – small and medium enterprises

SMT – senior management team

STAR – *Societies tackling AIDS through rights*

TNC – transnational corporations

TDI – territorial development initiative

ToT – training of trainers

Glossary

Every organisation uses or understands certain words, terminologies and concepts in different ways. Below is an introduction to some of the key words and concepts used in this resource book, with simple, top-line definitions and explanations, and (in some places) links to more elaborate definitions elsewhere in the book.

Active agency = we believe in supporting people living in poverty to play the central role in bringing an end to poverty; their empowerment, action and organisation is fundamental.

Activista = ActionAid's network of youth activists around the world.

Advocacy = the deliberate process of influencing policy-makers.

Alternatives = ideas which stretch the scope of our existing interventions or frameworks – promising something different for the future, something positive, something that changes systems.

Appraisal = an exercise undertaken to explore and understand the context, feasibility and value of a new long-term partnership or programme based on financial, technical and political factors.

Baselines = the starting point against which we can measure change in people's lives. We collect baseline data and information about indicators we want to monitor over time.

Campaigning = harnessing people's power through organisation, mobilisation and communication around a simple and powerful demand, to achieve a measurable political or social change.

Capacity development = an ongoing process where people and organisations improve their ability to achieve strategic change in a sustainable way.

Change promises = the 10 specific commitments ActionAid is working towards over the next five years, published in our *People's Action Strategy 2012-2017*.

Climate change adaptation = adjustments in ecological, social or economic systems/processes/practices in response to climate change.

Climate resilient sustainable agriculture = strategies aimed at making smallholder farmers less vulnerable and more resilient to future climate shocks.

Collectives = community groups or people's organisations that have come together to share knowledge and lobby decision-makers on a particular issue. In collectives, nothing is bought, sold or owned. Every member has equal decision-making power, and everything they do is the "collective" output of their members.

Communities of practice = networks within ActionAid that link people working on the same change promise/issue at local, national and international level.

Community-based protection = all activities aimed at making people fully respect individuals' rights, in accordance with the letter and spirit of relevant bodies of law (ie human rights law, humanitarian law and refugee law).

Comprehensive sexuality education = education that offers age-appropriate, medically accurate information about contraception, relationships, gender, sexuality and decision-making; the opposite of abstinence-only education.

Conscientisation = a process of reflection and action, where people look at the social, political and economic contradictions in their lives and take action against them.

Control over bodies = Empowering women to claim their rights to a violence free life, safe and wanted sex and informed decision-making about reproductive choices.

Cooperatives = groups of people that merge into one larger organisation to increase their income and improve their livelihoods in different sectors, including agriculture. Cooperatives have different legal structures in different countries.

Critical pathway = a visual representation of how we believe we will achieve impact, linking actions at different levels to outcomes and impact. A tool to help us design strong HRBA programmes.

Direct impact = change in people's lives that results very clearly and directly from our work.

Disaster risk reduction = techniques, tools, policies, strategies and practices that help communities avoid and/or limit the effects of disasters.

Duty bearers = individuals and institutions with the obligation to respect, protect and fulfil rights. The state and its various organs, such as parliaments, local authorities and the justice system are usually the primary, or ultimate, duty bearers.

Economic literacy and budget analysis = a set of approaches that deepen people's capacity to monitor and take action on public budgets/finances.

Empowerment = the process through which we enable people living in poverty to become rights activists. We do this by making them more aware and more critical of power relations and by strengthening their own power.

Feminist economic alternatives = innovative solutions that seek to address the gender biases in the present economic system (at both micro and macro levels) and that recognise the significance of unpaid care work.

Gender-based violence = any act that results in, or is likely to result in, women's physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering. It includes threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of freedom, in both public and private life.

Harmful traditional practices = practices and other factors that inhibit women's ability to control their bodies, including female genital mutilation, early/child marriage, unplanned pregnancies, sex-selective abortion, honour killings, widowhood practices and dowry systems.

Heteronormativity = practices and institutions that legitimise and privilege heterosexuality and heterosexual relationships as fundamental and "natural" within society and that promote stereotypes around men and women's roles and occupations.

The Hive = ActionAid's intranet system.

Human rights based approach = our human rights based approach centres on supporting people living in poverty to become conscious of their rights, to organise themselves to claim their rights, and to hold duty bearers to account. We build on international human rights law, but go beyond a legal or technical approach, supporting people to analyse and confront power imbalances and taking sides with people living in poverty.

Indicators = the things we choose to track to find out whether we are making a difference. We look at indicators (the impact we make), outcome indicators (the outcome of our work) and meta indicators (the outcomes we achieve at different points in a project).

Indirect impact = where we bring change to people's lives but cannot show a direct link to our work. For example, where we help change a policy or law, or help shift attitudes and behaviour.

Intermediate outcomes = the stepping stones we need to go through to achieve an overarching outcome.

International rights programmes = multi-country programmes or campaigns, linked to achieving a key change promise or an element of a promise.

Lobbying = direct attempts to influence policy-makers, public officials or other decision-makers, including, for example, face-to-face meetings or letters.

Local rights programmes = our long-term programmes in particular communities.

Meta indicators = the very broad indicators that we set for tracking achievement of our 10 change promises at the global level (see page 110, part three).

Metric = a system or standard of measurement.

National rights programmes = our programmes involving national partners/sustained engagement on an issue. They may involve multiple local programmes and national work.

Objectives = realistic steps towards a bigger vision of change. All our objectives must be specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time-bound.

Outcomes = the specific changes in people's lives we work towards in a programme, project or campaign. We believe achieving outcomes will help us achieve an overall impact.

Outcome indicators = the indicators we select to track our progress towards and achievement of an outcome.

Participation = the active involvement of people in a process. Participation can range from tokenistic to full. We always work towards the latter.

Participatory vulnerability analysis = the process of engaging communities and other stakeholders in identifying, understanding and analysing threats, hazards and vulnerabilities; one key element of a comprehensive *Reflect!on-Act!on* process.

People's Action Monitoring Framework = the four interconnected elements (our theory of change, our impact, the people we work with and our organisational priorities) that we monitor at all levels, through all programmes, to know if we are on track to deliver our strategy.

People's Action strategy = *People's Action to End Poverty: ActionAid's Strategy 2012-2017*

People living in poverty = we avoid talking about "poor people" which has an element of condescension. "People living in poverty" emphasises common humanity and poverty being a state that people are living in, which we are trying to end.

Process indicators = the indicators we use to monitor our progress towards and achievement of stepping stones (the intermediate steps towards an overarching outcome).

Promoting rights in schools = ActionAid's framework that every school should promote, based on 10 core rights. Our framework is empowering, involving children, parents and teachers in tracking progress on education rights and producing citizen reports.

Reflect = an approach to adult learning and social change inspired by Paulo Freire and developed by ActionAid – now the backbone of our *Reflect!on-Act!on* process.

Reflect!on-Act!on = a new approach to change that integrates *Reflect*, PVA, STAR, ELBAG and other participatory methods into a single coherent rights-based process for conscientisation and empowerment.

Resilient community = a community with the capacity to absorb stress or destructive forces through resistance or adaptation. A resilient community can manage or maintain certain basic functions and structures during hazardous events and recover after an event.

Social audit = a tool to understand, measure, verify, report on and improve an organisation's programmes, finances and performance – often used to track a government's performance in implementing its policies and programmes.

Social movements = the act of standing side by side with people suffering from rights violations – supporting them by giving money, time or skills to help them with their struggles.

Societies tackling AIDS through rights **(STAR)** = an approach to help mobilise and empower communities to respond to the challenges of HIV and AIDS. A key part of the the *Reflect!on-Act!on* process.

Solidarity = the process of uniting allies in a politically supportive relationship that may cross geographies or "areas" of struggle to support and strengthen a movement for change.

Strategic oversight teams = teams within ActionAid that help to design and oversee strategic programmes of work to deliver on our key change promises. Teams include a balanced representation of countries and international secretariat staff.

Theory of change = how we believe change will happen: the underpinning belief and logic of how our actions will lead to the change we want to see (see page 9).

Unpaid care work = work principally done by women, which is not paid, provides services that nurture other people and is costly in terms of time and energy.

Our **VISION** is:

"A world without poverty and injustice in which every person enjoys their right to a life of dignity."

Our **MISSION** is:

"To work with poor and excluded people to eradicate poverty and injustice."

Our **THEORY OF CHANGE** is:

"We believe that an end to poverty and injustice can be achieved through purposeful individual and collective action, led by the active agency of people living in poverty and supported by solidarity, credible rights-based alternatives and campaigns that address the structural causes and consequences of poverty."

Our **VALUES** are:

- **MUTUAL RESPECT,** requiring us to recognise the innate worth of all people and the value of diversity.
- **EQUITY AND JUSTICE,** requiring us to work to ensure equal opportunity to everyone, irrespective of race, age, gender, sexual orientation, HIV status, colour, class, ethnicity, disability, location and religion.
- **HONESTY AND TRANSPARENCY,** being accountable at all levels for the effectiveness of our actions and open in our judgements and communications with others.
- **SOLIDARITY WITH THE POOR,** powerless and excluded will be the only bias in our commitment to the fight against poverty.
- **COURAGE OF CONVICTION,** requiring us to be creative and radical, bold and innovative – without fear of failure – in pursuit of making the greatest possible impact on the causes of poverty.
- **INDEPENDENCE** from any religious or party-political affiliation.
- **HUMILITY** in our presentation and behaviour, recognising that we are part of a wider alliance against poverty.

Preface

Introduction and use of this resource book

ActionAid is a global federation working to end poverty and injustice with thousands of communities and millions of people across the planet. We are committed to using a human rights based approach (HRBA) to development, transforming power relations in every community and country where we work. Our distinctive approach prioritises the active agency of people living in poverty, supporting them to become conscious of, organise and claim their rights, holding the powerful to account. And we aim to set an example ourselves by transforming our own practice of power, creating a democratic federation that truly models the change we seek.

ActionAid adopted a HRBA to our work in 1998. In 2010, we systematised our rich experiences of working with a HRBA in a variety of contexts, producing the first version of this resource book. We held a series of capacity-building workshops to introduce staff to this first draft in each region during 2011. In July 2011, ActionAid's assembly approved *People's Action to End Poverty*, a new international strategy for 2012 to 2017. In light of this new strategy and accumulated learning, we have revised this resource book.

While we believe that there is no one-size-fits-all recipe for a HRBA, we have developed this resource book as an agreed HRBA programme framework to provide unity across our federation. By facilitating greater links across countries and building coherence we can maximise the impact and reach of our work. This resource book further elaborates on the theory of change that is outlined in our People's Action strategy, providing a practical guide on how to put this into action.

Part one outlines **key concepts**, providing some history, describing our theory of change, the principles that guide our HRBA work, our areas of programming (empowerment, campaigning and solidarity) and the minimum standards that we should apply in every context. This section offers a broad framework based on our experiences, and a guide for how we should be using HRBA at local, national and international levels.

Part two provides **specific resources around the five strategic objectives and 10 key change promises** in our People's Action strategy. It includes critical pathways for how we will achieve our promises and how we will track our progress against them, as well as some background rationale and key definitions, case studies and practical tools to help you think through adapting each area of work to your context.

Part three addresses in-depth the People's Action Monitoring Framework we will use to monitor our progress towards our People's Action strategy goals. It also outlines the core **cycle** each of our programmes should follow, including:

- appraisal
- strategy development
- implementation
- evaluation.

This cycle and supporting systems are relevant at different levels (local, national and international) and over different timeframes (short, medium and long term).

This resource book includes:

- Links to supplementary materials on www.people-action.org. These are specially designed materials for the resource book. They include short case studies to give more detail, training materials to help you run workshops, checklists/guidelines and relevant policy documents.
- References to internal and external publications. If you have any problems accessing internal material, email people-action@actionaid.org

There will be a dedicated website for our People's Action strategy and HRBA. This will have an online forum where practitioners and trainers can communicate, learn, develop and share practical resources.

Who is this resource book written for?

Strong HRBA programmes, supported by our skilled, passionate and politically-committed staff, are fundamental to our efforts to build a world that is just and free of poverty.

This resource book is designed to be relevant for **all** ActionAid staff and partners. **It aims to help staff and partners design and implement local, national and international rights programmes that are aligned with our collectively agreed strategy.** It aims to be relevant to programme specialists and policy analysts, to campaigners and communications staff, to managers and trustees, to frontline workers and fundraisers, to administrators and activists. It cannot exhaustively refer to all possible contexts where we are working and so will need creative adaptation and interpretation by you, informed by your context.

For ActionAid's HRBA to be effective you need to regard this resource book as part of a dialogue, interacting with your experience and your ongoing practice. It should feed into your own process of reflection and action – your own process of transformation.

You may use this resource book to:

- help you develop a new country strategy paper or design a local rights programme aligned to our People's Action international strategy
- feed into a local rights or country programme review process
- inform your work in a pre-appraisal or appraisal of a new local, national or international programme
- design capacity development workshops for staff or partners
- develop your own capacity/understanding
- inform your annual planning process to ensure programmes are working with a HRBA
- contribute to a participatory review of and reflection on a programme
- evaluate a local, national or international programme against our agreed HRBA
- help you develop a sound funding planning approach in-country, helping you link programme and sponsorship work
- assist in producing well designed fundraising proposals around one or more of our 10 key change promises
- help you deepen connections between your work and work in other countries
- make your work more coherent on different issues
- become familiar with the wider world of ActionAid as part of your induction process
- prepare presentations about ActionAid's work – helping to share our work with others and put your own work in a wider context.

You may find it useful to read the book as a whole and then return to sections of it as a reference point at different times. We urge you to connect up to the website www.people-action.org to share your experiences of this resource book and to communicate with colleagues around the world about how we can most effectively use a HRBA in different contexts.

We hope that this resource book will also be a useful reference point for people in other organisations who might find inspiration and practical guidance in ActionAid's HRBA. While it talks very concretely about the specific change promises in ActionAid's People's Action strategy, we value ongoing dialogue with other organisations and individuals who share our principles and values.

Part one: Concepts

Chapter 1

A short history: Why we work for human rights

1. A note on approaches to development

Different approaches to development have evolved among development agencies over the past decades. Popular approaches since the 1970s have included the welfare/charity, anti-poverty, basic-needs and empowerment approaches. HRBA approaches have gained popularity since the 1990s. Each approach has its own underlying understanding of development, poverty, inequality, social change needed, how change should happen and who should drive change.

These approaches represent different ways of thinking about development that translate into different ways of designing, planning and implementing development programmes and projects. Recognising that earlier approaches were not bringing about desired changes led many development agencies, including ActionAid, to make a gradual shift to a HRBA.

Underlying understandings of the welfare and basic-needs approaches were that people living in poverty would be passive beneficiaries of the trickle down of benefits from gross domestic product (GDP) growth and from infrastructure projects such as dams and bridges. In contrast, pure empowerment approaches stressed the direct participation of people living in poverty and placed human development at the core of their concerns.

ActionAid's HRBA builds on this idea that human development is the central concern. It takes the lead from Nobel Prize-winning economist Amartya Sen, who defines development as a process of expanding people's freedoms. According to Sen:

"These freedoms are both the primary ends and the principle means of development. They include freedom to participate in the economy, which implies access to credit, among other facilities; freedom of political expression and participation; social opportunities, including entitlement to education and health services; transparency guarantees, involving freedom to deal with others openly; and protective security guaranteed by social safety nets, such as unemployment insurance or famine relief."

Over time, ActionAid has moved from a charity orientation to a HRBA approach to development. While many other development organisations have changed their approaches, our HRBA approach evolved earlier than most, and has deepened over time. This evolution, which has not been a "clean" movement from one approach to the next, but rather a gradual transition, is explored in the sections that follow.

2. A short history of ActionAid's approach to development

"History, despite its wrenching pain, cannot be unlived; however if faced with courage, need not be lived again." Maya Angelou

The 1970s: Charity and welfare

The 1970s were mainly a time of charity and welfare, where we did not challenge the overarching system of injustice and inequality. We provided school uniforms and equipment to sponsored children and direct assistance to their families. But we became increasingly aware that our focus on individual children was random and unjust. We helped children lucky enough to be sponsored. Those who were not, despite their greater need in some cases, received no support. The sponsored children were going to school but receiving little education. Little was really changing in the lives of the children we worked with.

The 1980s: Basic-needs/service-driven approach

Learning from our work in the 1970s, we moved beyond individual children and schools as the main focus of our work. We included the families and communities that children are part of. We focused mainly on meeting the basic needs of communities – supplying physical essentials such as seeds, farming equipment, construction materials, pumps, wells and taps for drinking water. For 15 years we built good quality schools, often using locally-sourced materials, and ensuring people from the local community took part in construction. We also provided money, raw materials and training so people could set themselves up to make money in areas such as tailoring, weaving and beekeeping.

While this improved the "quality" of life of those we reached to some extent, our efforts were a drop in the ocean. Many of our initiatives were unsustainable. This approach did not tackle the unequal power that results in unequal distribution of resources in the first place. While we met women's specific needs for water, education for their children and to make an income, we failed to challenge the gender-specific roles women were confined to, with their work undervalued and underpaid.

The 1990s: Supporting the empowerment of communities

Our focus during the 1990s was sustainability and empowerment. Our thinking was that since the state could not meet the needs of people, we would support communities to help themselves. We helped set up local farmers' cooperatives, community schools and non-formal education centres. We also continued to give people the resources they needed to make a living.

We strengthened our capacity for participatory analysis, and inspired by Brazilian educator Paulo Freire, we developed the "*Reflect*" approach to adult learning and social change. Indeed, we saw a flowering of participatory methodologies, with increased use of participatory rural appraisal, participatory learning and action and specific methods such as *Stepping stones* for addressing gender and HIV. We helped people living in poverty make their voices heard through advocacy work. We researched and developed alternative policies, and lobbied local and national governments. We had some success and the resulting changes government officials implemented benefited others beyond the communities we worked in – expanding the impact of our work.

We realised that helping communities run their own services is not a sustainable long-term solution to poverty and injustice. We also realised that without strong grassroots organisations and movements putting pressure on the state, we could not achieve and sustain the systems changes we wanted – such as strong education systems and health services for all. Finally, we learned that we were inadvertently trapping women in marginalised positions when we organised them to address the needs of others – their husbands, children, the disabled, the sick and even "the community". Women are oppressed and we must work with women directly to identify and overcome the root causes of their oppression, namely patriarchy.

During this period, we consciously shifted towards addressing the causes of poverty, setting up ActionAid policy units in a number of countries. For example, we started to work on trade justice and food rights globally, realising that all our community development efforts, and even national level advocacy, would be undermined if we did not also work to change the rules of the World Trade Organization.

From the late 1990s: Working for human rights

Fighting Poverty Together, our strategy launched in 1998, committed ActionAid to a HRBA to eradicating poverty. Our 2005 strategy, *Rights to End Poverty*, reinforced this.

These strategies committed us to focus on protecting and fulfilling the human rights of people living in poverty as the best way to eradicate poverty and injustice. By building local organisations of "rights holders", and linking these organisations into networks, platforms, alliances and movements at national and international levels, we help build a broad and powerful movement for change.

In some places we still run programmes directly, and we do address basic needs. But the major difference is that we work in partnership with local people as rights activists, and allow them to shape our priorities, strategy, plans and budgets. Our basic needs delivery work, such as building schools and providing water pumps directly, brings real improvements to people's lives. However, done within a rights-based approach it delivers much more, becoming a vehicle for organising people, building their analysis and piloting alternatives.

The primary impetus for changing our approach was recognising that poverty is a violation of human rights. Poverty arises principally because human rights have been denied. If we want to end poverty it is necessary to protect, promote and fulfil the human rights of people living in poverty. We see people living in poverty as the leading agents in their development process and in challenging unequal power and injustice.

Our main strategies are to empower people to become rights activists, able to claim their rights and to hold the people and institutions (duty bearers) meant to deliver on these rights accountable. We help people find real and sustainable solutions to their immediate problems. Alongside people living in poverty, we also campaign for structural change, working to mobilise others in civil society, including sponsors and supporters, to act in solidarity and align to the rights struggles of people living in poverty.

We explicitly focus on women's rights. We understand that the structure of society marginalises women so they have unequal power. We must work with women and girls to build their power so they can achieve their rights. We mainstream women's rights work in everything we do and also make it a stand-alone priority.

From 2012 to 2017: *People's Action to End Poverty*

Our strategy *People's Action to End Poverty: 2012-2017* seeks to strengthen our HRBA, clarifying our theory of change and focusing our attention on 10 key promises:

1. securing women's land rights
2. promoting sustainable agriculture
3. holding governments to account on public services
4. achieving redistributive resourcing of development
5. transforming education for girls and boys
6. harnessing youth leadership to end poverty and injustice
7. building people's resilience to conflict and disaster
8. responding to disasters through rights
9. increasing women's and girls' control over their bodies
10. generating women-centred economic alternatives.

This new strategy commits us to:

- moving on from just fighting **against** poverty to working **for** long-lasting solutions to poverty, advancing alternatives together with our partners and allies
- building **deeper connections:** linking people and movements across the planet and across issues; connecting our work locally, nationally and globally; and linking our programme, policy, campaigning, communications and fundraising work
- recognising that changing policies is often not enough – unless we are also changing **attitudes and behaviours** – and that harnessing mass communications and campaigning are essential to achieve this
- emphasising our own accountability: making sure we can more explicitly **show the impact** of our work on the lives of women, men, youth and children living in poverty.

A shift in how we talk: people living in poverty

In our new strategy we avoid talking about "poor people" and generally avoid the term "rights holder" (which was becoming routine). "Poor people" has an element of condescension, so we prefer to use "people living in poverty", which emphasises their common humanity and poverty being a state they are living in, which we are seeking to end. In the past we used the term "rights holder" loosely – as if only those people living in poverty were rights holders, when in fact everyone is equally a rights holder. We now talk about how we can support people living in poverty (and citizens acting in solidarity with them) to become rights activists.

In conclusion, it is important to note that while our approach to development has changed over time, we have drawn upon elements of prior approaches in each "new era". For example, empowerment of people living in poverty is still a central feature of our HRBA. But now it is part of a larger agenda of enabling people to be human rights activists, demanding accountability from powerful actors and holding the state accountable for meeting the basic needs of citizens. Under a HRBA, we continue to provide some support for service delivery (the major focus of our work in the early years), but now we do this in strategic ways that reinforce rights and help secure sustainable change.

Today we are committed to building the capacities and capabilities of people to take innovative, rights-based action. This work is grounded as much as ever in local rights work, but builds connections to national and international work and proposes credible alternatives that can transform the lives of people living in poverty on a significant scale. We fully expect our approach to continue to evolve, recognising that in a changing world we will always need to change. That is why we commit now to exploring alternatives and continually testing our theory of change.

Examples of needs-based and rights-based work in education

Amount available	Needs-based approach: How we would have spent the money	HRBA: How we spend the money now
£20	Buying just part of a school uniform to allow one child to go to school in Kenya	Paying the travel costs of two children to go to speak to the national parliament in Kenya, as part of Global Action Week. This led to the education minister writing to 17,800 primary schools saying lack of uniform should not prevent access.
£200	Buying some textbooks and teaching materials for one school in northern Nigeria	Documenting the positive impact of community school management committees on school performance in 40 schools in northern Nigeria – leading to the government mandating formation of committees in all Nigerian schools.
£2,000	Building an extra classroom in Tanzania benefiting about 100 children	Supporting Tanzanian NGO Maarifa to do research on why children were unable to go to school. It showed that user fees were the problem. A campaign to abolish user fees led to an extra one million children enrolling.
£20,000	Opening a non-formal education centre for two years in Bangladesh, reaching 100 children	Training community audit groups in dozens of districts across Bangladesh to monitor whether the education budget arrives in practice at school level and is used appropriately. This has improved the performance of government schools, helping millions of children.

Visit http://act.ai/MnfmYR **for an article about the evolution of ActionAid's education work.**

3. Key features of three approaches to development

The table below summarises the key features of three of the main approaches to development. You can find a detailed case study about these three approaches (from Kenya) in the online resource.

	Features of needs-based/charitable or welfare approach	Features of a participatory-empowerment approach	Features of ActionAid's HRBA
Role of the individual	DOMINANT	STRONG	STRONG (has inalienable rights – but weak on their own)
Role of the community	STRONG	DOMINANT	BASE FOR EMPOWERING AND ORGANISING
Role of civil society	BYPASSED	BYPASSED (except as implementing partners)	DOMINANT (key to a movement for change)
Role of the state	BYPASSED	WEAK/NEGATIVE (often seen as a block)	STRONG (as duty bearer)
Role of corporates	UNCLEAR	BYPASSED	MODEST (corporates may be allies or may be blocks – they need to be held accountable for their impact through government regulation or their own self-interested actions)
Intervention focus	Meeting basic needs of people living in poverty without making links with broader processes	Empowering the community to provide and manage public services at the local level, often in partnership with us	Protecting and fulfilling the human rights of people living in poverty
ActionAid's role	Direct implementation of basic services	Working in partnership with the community and in some cases with government to meet the basic needs of people living in poverty	Working with people living in poverty to empower them and their organisations, build solidarity and campaign to hold the state and corporations accountable
Who drives change?	Development organisations such as ActionAid	Empowered, skilled communities/community groups	Women and men living in poverty are key agents of change. All citizens have a role, acting in solidarity
Who ActionAid works with	A localised geographical community	Groups of people in poverty living at village level	Communities, organisations and movements of people living in poverty, supporters who are ready to act in solidarity and other actors that are committed to change
How we see the people we work with	Passive beneficiaries	Capable of providing and managing a basic standard of service at the local level	Capable, autonomous and able agents of change
How we understand poverty	Lack of ability to meet basic needs	Lack of ability to meet material needs, and lack of information, knowledge and power	Structural causes lead to social exclusion along lines of sex, race, class, caste etc
Relationship to government	ActionAid takes on the role of government	Communities take on the role of government locally with support from ActionAid	Government is to be held accountable by its citizens while being strategically supported
Addressing gender inequality and women's rights	Ensure needs of both men and women are met, without necessarily challenging unequal power relations between them	Empower women to participate in the development process and address unjust gender relations locally	Women are recognised as being among the most systematically excluded groups, so women's rights are integral to our understanding of poverty. Addressing power imbalances between women and men is both mainstreamed in all our work and a stand-alone focus
Working beyond the local	Not linked to the national or the international	Not linked to the national or the international	Think and act globally and locally; constraints to change lie beyond the local in a complex, inter-connected global system

Chapter 2

Defining ActionAid's HRBA

"ActionAid has really pioneered the way on rights-based working in terms of larger INGOs."
Dr John Gaventa, Coady Institute, formerly a professor at the Institute of Development Studies at the University of Sussex and chair of Oxfam GB

1. A summary of our human rights based approach

Poverty is a violation of human rights and a terrible injustice. Poverty arises because of the marginalisation and discrimination associated with human rights violations. ActionAid has a distinctive human rights based approach[1] to development that centres on active agency: supporting people living in poverty to become conscious of their rights, organise and claim their rights and hold duty bearers to account. **Our HRBA flows from our values and our strategy, builds on international human rights law, but goes beyond a legal or technical approach to rights.** We support people to analyse and confront power imbalances and we take sides with people living in poverty. This sets our HRBA apart from the approach many other agencies take, using rights-based language but failing to challenge abuses of power at local, national or international level.

At all levels of society, the rich and powerful often deny the rights of excluded groups and individuals to keep control over productive resources and build individual wealth. It is often in the interests of the rich and powerful to dominate institutions, including state structures, and to use them for their economic, social or political gain. The ongoing struggle for recognition of human rights has been a key counter-balance to this, opening doors for more fundamental social, economic and political change.

By using a HRBA, we support people living in poverty to understand that many of their **most fundamental needs are actually enshrined in specific human rights frameworks**. Indeed, the deprivation of needs often arises from the denial or violation of specific rights. The state normally has the ultimate responsibility to respect, protect and fulfil these rights. We should help people identify and target the specific duty bearer, or bearers, accountable for ensuring rights are realised. Some rights are subject to "progressive realisation", where civil society actors have an important role in ensuring that states are indeed progressing in the right direction, dedicating increasing budgets to delivering on rights.

We place **people living in poverty at the centre** of our HRBA. We believe that women, men, youth and children living in poverty can only claim and protect their rights when they organise themselves and mobilise as a constituency, aware of their rights, and conscious of why their rights are being violated. They need the tools, knowledge and capacities to advance their case. But raising awareness and mobilisation are not enough on their own. We need a wider movement to challenge the structural causes of poverty – and this creates a vital role for supporters and solidarity action between citizens at all levels.

Women's rights are central to our HRBA. The eradication of poverty and injustice will simply not be possible without securing equality and rights for women. We understand that women living in poverty face double oppression because of their poverty and their gender. Causes of female poverty can be different to causes of poverty in general. For example, men may have property rights where women have none. As such, approaches to tackling poverty need to be gender specific. We believe that gender discrimination, which is all-pervasive, must be removed before we can achieve rights and end poverty.

1. It is important to note that there is no single HRBA. Different development organisations have drawn on rights in their programme work in different ways. In this resource book we focus on a HRBA as understood by ActionAid.

If we fail to specifically address women's human rights, our efforts to eradicate poverty for women, but also for men and the wider community, will be ineffective, at best – and harmful, at worst. Through our work we aim to confront the violation of women's rights and the inequality between men and women in access to services, resources and power.

In most cases, **we need to change practices and not just policies**. Securing rights on paper will never be enough – we also need to change the attitudes and behaviours of people that perpetuate rights violations. Anti-domestic violence laws, for example, exist around the world. But until women and men, girls and boys change their attitudes and behaviours to no longer tolerate or perpetuate violence, a life free of violence will not be possible.

In our HRBA, **we think and act globally and locally**. The roots of a human rights violation at the local level may lie elsewhere in a complicated and inter-connected global system. For example, people living in poverty in Kenya might be thrown off their land to make way for a biofuels crop grown by a European company as part of their efforts to promote a green economy. In building our programmes and campaigns we need to be aware of how the local links with the national and global. And we need to reform institutions at every level, working collectively as a federation.

2. A checklist of minimum standards for HRBA programmes

Eight principles underlie our HRBA, and we have established minimum standards for their achievement. The checklist below will help you "assess" if a programme (whether local, national or international) is consistent with ActionAid's HRBA. While you may not meet all these standards at the start of a programme, it is non-negotiable that you must be able to show in your plans that **you are working towards these in a credible way** – and that your programme design is addressing these.

Principles	Minimum standards
1 Putting the active agency of people living in poverty first – and building their awareness of rights	• People living in poverty and their organisations have been actively involved in the drawing up of all our local rights programmes. Our national and international programmes are based on analysis and learning done with people living in poverty. • Programme activities or strategies exist that enable people living in poverty to analyse and reflect on the conditions and causes of poverty and inequality, linking this with rights and the violation of rights. • We have supported the active, free and meaningful participation of people living in poverty so they are aware of their human rights and of key duty bearers and are able to hold them accountable. • We have addressed and understood vulnerabilities, strengthened people's resilience and helped respond to basic needs in ways that are sustainable, strengthen rights and generate alternatives. • People living in poverty have organised themselves and mobilised as rights activists. We have supported them to build their skills and leadership to articulate their agenda, and to take actions to claim and enjoy their rights. • Our fundraising and communications work represents people living in poverty as active agents, not victims. • In our campaigning and fundraising work, we are actively engaging people living in poverty, respecting them as rights holders and giving them a voice.
2 Analysing and confronting unequal and unjust power	• We have analysed and understood the impact of unequal power relations within groups of people living in poverty and between them and other actors/duty bearers. • We have challenged all forms of discrimination and prioritise working with those who are most excluded. • We have specifically analysed and understood power relations between women and men and worked on strategies to address them. • We have analysed the impact of our own power in partnerships and alliances. • We have a clear critical pathway, laying out how change will happen, based on a thorough analysis of power and rights. • Comprehensive power analysis informs our campaigns, which seek to shift power. • Our fundraising narrative recognises the role of unequal power relations in causing poverty and the importance of addressing this.

3 Advancing women's rights	• We have ensured that women have the confidence to identify and challenge different forms of subordination and exploitation – whether sexual, cultural, political or economic. • We have supported the capacity development of women living in poverty and their organisations. • We have confronted unequal power relations between men and women, including within our own organisation. • We have done gender analysis and gender budget analysis to concretise this commitment. • We have connected women living in poverty and their organisations with others to build solidarity and strengthen the movement for change. • Our fundraising and communications work is gender-aware and challenges stereotypes.
4 Building partnerships	• We have identified strategic partners who can help us achieve our goals. • We are prioritising partnerships with organisations that are constituted by, genuinely represent or strongly connect with people living in poverty. • We have built credible partnerships based on our principles, building trust and mutual understanding and developing clear agreements. • We have identified partners with the capacity or the potential to implement high quality and high impact programmes. • We have supported our partners' organisational and institutional capacity development. • We are linking our partners (local-local and local-national, national-local, national-international etc), especially facilitating connections with social movements and engagement in international advocacy and campaigns.
5 Being accountable and transparent	• We can show evidence of our primary accountability being to people living in poverty. • We are satisfying all relevant secondary accountabilities (as listed on page 40, chapter 2). • We can show the impact of all our work on children. • We have fulfilled the requirements of our open information policy, by making information about our programmes and budgets available to all stakeholders in accessible formats. • We are using our own accountability as a foundation for strengthening people's ability to hold their governments to account on their rights obligations.
6 Monitoring, evaluating and evidencing our impact, and promoting learning	• We are tracking relevant indicators and have credible baseline data so we can measure change, showing the outcomes and impact of our work – whether we are working in a local rights programme, in a multi-country campaign or in fundraising. • We are cost- and carbon-conscious in all our work, being careful how we use both ActionAid's resources and natural resources. • We are monitoring and reflecting on change processes in a participatory way on an ongoing basis. • Our future plans are informed by what we are learning and by evidence of what is effective.
7 Linking work across levels to ensure we address structural change	• We are working towards lasting gains at the local level and beyond by tackling structural causes of poverty and rights violations (for example, changes in law, policy, procedure or budget allocation in favour of people living in poverty). • We are connecting local rights violations to national and international factors and to recognised human rights legal frameworks. • We are connecting local struggles with national and international movements, and connecting local issues to national civil society change processes. • We are connecting work on different objectives/key change promises and connecting grassroots programme, campaigning and fundraising work. • We are facilitating communication and information flows between local, national and international levels.
8 Being solutions-oriented and promoting credible and sustainable alternatives	• We are putting forward credible alternatives to challenge dominant models and paradigms that undermine people's rights. • The alternatives we propose and support are sustainable, being cost- and carbon-conscious. • We have developed these alternatives with people living in poverty, our partners and allies. • We encourage innovation and experimentation and are not afraid of failure – but are quick to learn. • We are connecting our work on alternatives in different areas. • We have created some space for dreaming and visioning the future.

These principles are consistent with those in the latest version of Accountability Learning and Planning System (ALPS). We have many practical resources available to help you apply them in practice (to see notes to accompany ALPS, visit http://act.ai/KiozxK). Each of these principles is also elaborated in more detail in on page 30, chapter 2.

3. Our understanding of poverty and exclusion

ActionAid has a very particular **understanding of poverty** and its relationship to human rights. This understanding shapes our responses to poverty. The UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights provided a useful definition of poverty in 2001:

"*In the recent past, poverty was often defined as insufficient income to buy a minimum basket of goods and services. Today, the term is usually understood more broadly as the lack of basic capabilities to live in dignity. This definition recognises poverty's broader features, such as hunger, poor education, discrimination, vulnerability and social exclusion. In the light of the International Bill of Rights,* ***poverty may be defined as a human condition characterised by sustained or chronic deprivation of the resources, capabilities, choices, security and power necessary for the enjoyment of an adequate standard of living and other civil, cultural, economic, political and social rights***."

Building on this, ActionAid believes that the indignity of poverty is a violation of human rights, arising from unequal and unjust power relations from the household to the global level. Institutions such as international financial bodies, the state, the market, the local community and the family often perpetuate inequality and injustice – through exclusion, authoritarianism, exploitation, racism, patriarchy and other forms of discrimination.

Institution	Conventional ideal	What sometimes lies behind the conventional ideal
International financial institutions	Maintain global economic stability and promote development	The wealthiest nations control decision-making at the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank, often promoting policies that entrench inequalities and undermine people's rights.
State	Concerned with national interest and national welfare; protects and promotes the human rights, dignity and well-being of all citizens equally	State laws and policies can be geared to the interests of the powerful, discriminate against women, and produce and reproduce social exclusion. Progressive constitutions can disguise regressive practices.
Market	Concerned with bringing about prosperity: the invisible hand of the market maximises the greatest good for the greatest number of people	The market is rarely truly fair; it privileges those with existing resources – and powerful business interests often perpetuate exclusion as profits alone drive them. Indeed, people living in poverty are often made invisible by the market.
Community	Caring for and servicing all its members	In most communities a small, usually male, elite has access to and control over resources, power and authority.
Family	Members cooperate, provide mutual support, and care for the welfare of all members	Unequal relations mean that women and girls may get less food, have less access to information, less control over resources, and exercise less authority to influence family decisions. Many women and children experience violence in the family.

The causes of poverty are thus structural. Poverty is not just a lack of income or a lack of material resources. It is a lack of power to access, acquire, use or control the resources, skills and knowledge that people need to live a life of dignity.

Effective action to address poverty should not just address the obvious symptoms – it must also address these fundamental causes.

People living in poverty are denied almost all of their human rights – including rights to basic needs such as food, education, housing and health care. They often do not enjoy the normal benefits of citizenship such as legal justice, participation in decision-making and access to information. These human rights violations compound one another, driving people further and further into poverty and marginalisation. Children being brought up in poverty have little prospect of escaping the cycle so poverty is also perpetuated across generations.

People living in poverty are often treated as less than human. Day to day, from the cradle to the grave, they are cheated, exploited and denied what they need to flourish as human beings. More powerful family members, neighbours, employers, traders, the state and powerful global actors all carry out this injustice. When people are treated as less than human, they often internalise that treatment, and can feel deeply ashamed, inferior, unworthy and powerless. They can feel undeserving of the freedoms, privileges and benefits other human beings enjoy. Oppression can rob people of the ability to dream and imagine a different life for themselves, and to stand up for themselves. To address this, our HRBA challenges people's internalised oppression through consciousness-raising and through changing attitudes and behaviours towards people living in poverty.

Social exclusion is the outcome of the multiple human rights violations a social group experiences. Exclusion takes place on the basis of gender, race, class, caste, ethnicity, age, religion and sexual orientation, as well as due to many other factors. Exclusion is often most acute when people suffer multiple layers of discrimination. People with disabilities face some of the most systematic exclusion in almost every society. In all excluded social groups (people living in poverty, lower castes, people with disabilities or people of alternative sexual orientations) women and girls are generally further marginalised because of gender power relations which privilege men and subordinate women.

Excluded groups are denied their human rights not because someone forgot or did not make enough effort. They are denied their rights because of their place within a system of unequal social relations of power, which enables the more powerful to deny the human rights of the less powerful. Sometimes this is a result of conscious action by the powerful (such as when a rich person seizes control of vital natural resources) but sometimes it is less conscious (such as when a privileged person is brought up to believe that inequality is a natural or necessary part of the economic order and acts accordingly). Either way, the impact is that members of excluded social groups cannot participate fully in the economic, social and political life of the communities and societies where they live.

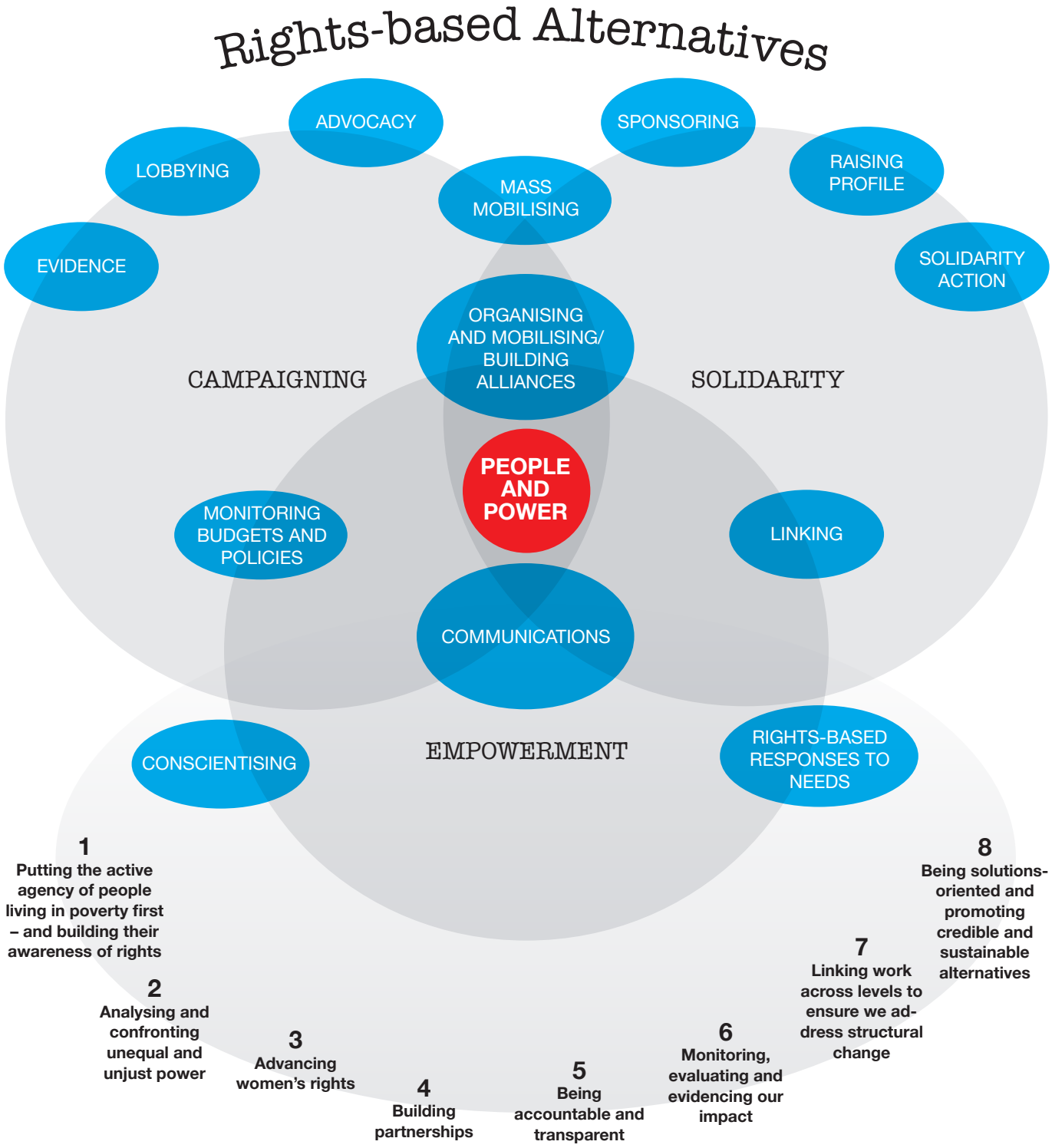
But the cycle of social exclusion can change, in particular when excluded groups organise and act to change the situation. The transformation of attitudes in many parts of the world over the past century – towards race, class, gender and imperialism, for example – shows how quickly social movements can make change happen. Human agency – the power of human beings to change things – is the most potent force for change.

4. Our theory of change

Our analysis of poverty and exclusion drives our theory of change, which is, succinctly:

"We believe that an end to poverty and injustice can be achieved through purposeful individual and collective action, led by the active agency of people living in poverty and supported by solidarity, credible rights-based alternatives and campaigns that address the structural causes and consequences of poverty."

The diagram below shows our theory of change simply:



People living in poverty – and their relationships to power – are at the centre of our concern. For our theory of change to work, we need to be rooted in our principles and values and we need to be inspired and supported by credible rights-based alternatives. Only by working on empowerment, campaigning and solidarity together will we secure change.

This resource book is effectively an elaboration of our theory of change, translating the theory into a practical resource.

Empowerment is at the heart of our approach to change. In ActionAid's thinking, human rights can only be realised if people living in poverty have active agency. Empowerment includes giving people living in poverty the power to:

- build critical awareness of their situation (conscientisation)
- organise and mobilise for individual and collective action, with us supporting and strengthening organisations and movements
- monitor public policies and budgets
- develop communication skills and platforms
- respond to vulnerability and needs through rights-based approaches to service delivery.

Read more about empowerment in chapter three

Campaigning creates and harnesses people's power around a simple and powerful demand, to achieve a measurable political or social change to the structural causes of poverty. It has many elements including:

- building a research/evidence base
- advocacy
- lobbying
- mass mobilisation
- mass communications to engage key people and motivate others to act.

Read more about campaigning in chapter three

Solidarity involves people and organisations sympathetic to the struggles of people living in poverty supporting and sustaining a movement for change, with people living in poverty taking the lead. Solidarity takes several forms for ActionAid:

- sponsoring children and donating money
- linking different struggles
- taking action through demonstrations or letter writing
- using communications to raise the visibility of an issue
- building broader alliances.

Read more about solidarity in chapter three

Alternatives play a crucial role for us. They add vision and a sense of optimism and direction to our work. Rather than only fighting against poverty we work towards lasting solutions – exploring, documenting, sharing and activating alternatives. We work with people living in poverty and our partners and allies, finding and popularising new ways of doing things, challenging dominant paradigms, promoting innovation, piloting, innovating and being solutions-oriented. Even more than that, our commitment to work on alternatives is also a commitment to find the space to dream, to build visions of another world, to escape from present boxes and labels, to think laterally and to imagine a different future which can inspire action today.

Ending poverty and injustice is a complex process. Sometimes change takes decades – as the movements to end apartheid, advance gender equality, stop wars and demand accountable leaders show. At other times change can seem to happen overnight. Change does not follow a straight path. It is, however, happening every day because of the passion, vision and commitment of people working together in solidarity across borders, social groups and experiences. **People make change happen!**

Monitoring and testing our theory of change

In our People's Action strategy we commit to elaborating and testing our theory of change. Through our People's Action Monitoring Framework (PAMF) we monitor our theory of change, including the progress we are making in our three programme areas (empowerment, solidarity and campaigning) and towards our eight HRBA principles. This is the first core element of the PAMF. The second core element is monitoring impact through the critical pathways – which represent our theory of change – and associated indicators for each key change promise (see part two of this resource). This monitoring will help us learn more about our theory of change and how change happens.

Our monitoring and evaluation system will let us analyse whether our theory of change is leading us towards the desired impact. Its insights, coupled with our culture of being self-critical, will help to ensure that we are continually testing and evolving our theory of change.

See part three for more on the PAMF and our theory of change.

5. Understanding human rights

"A right delayed is a right denied." Martin Luther King

Over the past 65 years state parties (or national governments) at the United Nations have progressively agreed a broad set of human rights and freedoms that give equality to all human beings. Human rights belong to a person by virtue of being born. They are independent of a person's sex, religion, disability, ethnicity, race, sexual orientation, where they live or any other status. They cannot be given or taken away. All human beings are equally entitled to rights, without discrimination. International human rights law is our fundamental foundation in pursuing a HRBA. However it is important to recognise that understanding of human rights has developed over time, through the struggle of people, and continues to expand through struggle. We are exploring new frontiers – for example around earth rights and the rights of future generations.

Human rights can be classified into three categories:

- **Civil and political rights** ensure that all citizens can participate in the civil and political life of the state without discrimination or repression. They focus on what the state should not do to interfere with people's freedoms, such as freedom of speech, association and belief. They are, in effect, "keep out" notices to the state saying that these freedoms must not be limited in any way.
- **Economic, social and cultural rights** focus on what the state should do to promote people's rights. They are concerned with equality of condition and treatment, for example, that the state should offer good education for all or that it should guarantee the right to food. There are also "negative" rights here: the right to be free from forced displacement or free from coercive sterilisation.
- **Collective rights** or "solidarity rights" focus on the rights of groups of people rather than on individual rights. These are still contested in many cases. They include minority rights, the right to development, environmental rights and the rights to sovereignty and self-determination. The right to development includes the concept that states can make human rights claims against other states or the international community, including the right to pursue a national development policy, or the right to an international environment conducive to development. It may also imply the duty of powerful or responsible states to provide international development assistance.

Human rights have three key principles:

- Human rights are **universal**. That is, they apply to all human beings. Any discrimination between individuals in respect of their rights is unacceptable.
- Human rights are **indivisible**. A human being can only be treated with justice, equality and dignity if all his or her civil, political, social, economic and cultural rights are respected, protected and fulfilled. There is also an **inter-dependence** in rights: for example, a woman may be free to vote and to be elected as a political candidate, but if she is denied the right to education and is illiterate, she may not be able to take up these other rights. In this sense, all rights are inter-related and there is inter-dependency between them.
- Human rights are **inalienable**. They cannot be taken away and people cannot be forced to give them up.

Because ActionAid is a defender and advocate of human rights, we must uphold these principles to the highest standards and commitment, both within and outside the organisation. We acknowledge that we cannot work actively on all rights at the same time. But we cannot decide to defend only the rights we agree with, while rejecting others because they challenge our beliefs. People might be morally offended by sexual minorities, but any discrimination against people on the basis of their sexual orientation and gender identity is a violation of their basic rights. Working in a HRBA requires us to look closely at our beliefs and prejudices, and how these lead to the denial of basic rights and social exclusion. When we are acting as ActionAid we must always defend people's rights – even when in some (hopefully rare) cases we may hold different private beliefs.

The international understanding of human rights has evolved over many years, with new conventions and covenants developing. Some of the **key international reference points and landmarks** in the evolution of social and economic human rights are:

- Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948)
- International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (1965)
- International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1966)
- Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (1979)
- Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989)
- International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families (1990)
- Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006)

There are also important **regional treaties:**

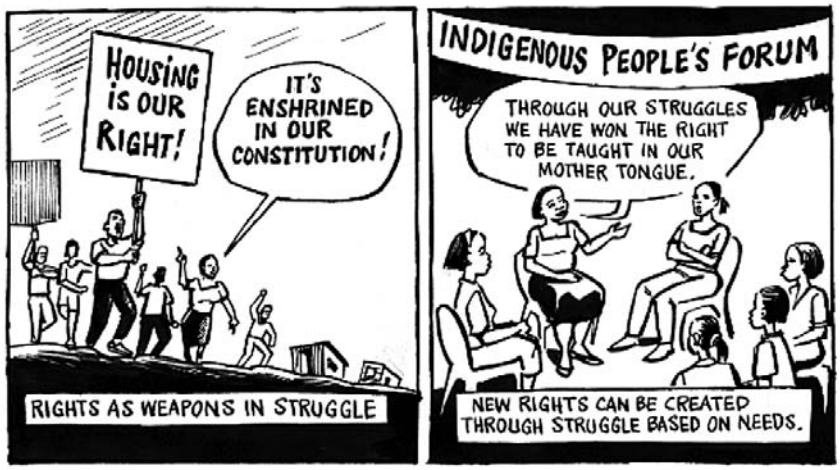
- European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (1950), its First Protocol (1952), European Social Charter (1961) and Revised European Social Charter (1996)
- American Convention on Human Rights (1969), and Additional Protocol to the American Convention on Human Rights in the Area of Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (Protocol of San Salvador) (1988)
- African Charter on Human and People's Rights (1981), African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (1990), and Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People's Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (2003)

For a full list of the core international human rights instruments and their monitoring bodies, visit http://act.ai/MKJUjO**. For human rights treaties and other instruments, visit** http://act.ai/KxDOaR**. For a list of the nine core international treaties and their monitoring mechanisms visit** http://act.ai/Mt58SQ

These international and regional agreements, together with national constitutions, are important reference points on human rights. They are often more robust than the particular legal rights in a country because the country's legal structures are not neutral (the courts and the state institutions, like commissions, government departments and parliaments that draft and pass laws). **We work with people to fight for and defend human rights – not just those rights enshrined in a particular nation's law. International human rights law applies universally to all people.**

International human rights frameworks and national laws are the outcome of negotiations that reflect the balance of forces at a particular point in time, and have not always taken into account the rights of all human beings.

For example, the original formulation of the Universal Declaration said nothing specifically about women's rights or the rights of sexual minorities – even though they were implicitly covered by the universality of all the rights. **New rights continue to be recognised and defended by movements and constituencies of excluded people**, including sexual minorities, people with disabilities and indigenous peoples. In this sense, rights can be seen as arenas of struggle to be constantly extended and defended. Bolivia recently enshrined earth rights in its constitution, and adopted an alternative model, called "buen vivir", to achieving rights. This is now being widely advocated and may further shift international human rights understanding.



In our People's Action strategy, we prioritise work on particular rights by outlining five strategic objectives and 10 key change promises – as elaborated in part two of this resource. While we focus our own efforts on advancing these, we need to ensure that we respect all rights in the process.

Our focus means that, for example, we will not be prioritising coordinated action, linking local, national and international efforts, on the right to health. But this does not mean that we consider the right to health inherently less important or would ever do anything that undermines the right to health. It is simply a matter of recognising that as a relatively small organisation (in global terms) we need to focus our energies and harmonise our efforts to maximise our impact.

6. Holding duty bearers to account

The focus of ActionAid's HRBA is to support the protection and fulfilment of the human rights of people living in poverty – as the best way to eradicate poverty and injustice. Our main strategy is to empower people living in poverty (who are rights holders just as much as any people) to claim their rights and to hold the institutions (duty bearers) meant to uphold these rights accountable.

Fulfilling human rights is based on a good relationship between the rights holders and the duty bearers. Everyone is a rights holder as human rights are universal. A duty bearer is an individual or institution with the obligation to respect, protect and fulfil a right. **The state and its various organs, such as parliaments, local authorities and the justice system are usually the primary, or ultimate, duty bearers.**

Where governments have sub-contracted provision of essential services to private corporations or NGOs, both the government and the corporation or NGO may be seen as duty bearers. However, the state is usually still the primary duty bearer.

To defend human rights, ActionAid might work to ensure that a government properly regulates and supervises private contractors. In contracting out service provision or implementing public-private partnerships, the state is not absolving itself of its ultimate responsibility as a duty bearer. It has the power to enforce minimum standards on the private sector.

In the context of a weak or failed state, multilateral agencies such as the UN, humanitarian agencies like the Red Cross, or INGOs/NGOs like ActionAid, may become "proxy" (replacement) primary duty bearers. However, this should be for a temporary period and every effort should be made to rebuild the capacity of the state.

Secondary duty bearers are non-state actors who also have power and duties in relation to rights – for example, traditional and religious authorities, corporations and employers, and even individuals.

A core principle of ActionAid's HRBA is the **accountability of duty bearers** for their obligation to respect, protect and fulfil rights. In the past, development was seen as an act of charity, a "gift" of states to their citizens. In a HRBA, development is recognised as an obligation and a duty. And duty bearers can therefore be held accountable for their actions and for their inaction to advance human rights.

The emphasis on accountability is one of the most powerful features of a HRBA. Accountability requires that the government, as the legal and principle duty bearer:

- accepts responsibility for the impact it has on people's lives
- cooperates by providing information, undertaking transparent processes and hearing people's views
- responds adequately to those views.

7. HRBA is political

"A man who stands for nothing, will fall for anything." Malcolm X

ActionAid's HRBA is political. It is political with a small "p", not party-political. Driven by our values and our mission, we go to the heart of complex political issues to do with the exercise of power. In this, we are not a neutral actor. We take sides with people living in poverty. We work to advance their power through consciousness-raising, organisation and capacity development. We mobilise more power on the side of people living in poverty by building solidarity with friendly movements, organisations and supporters at all levels of society. We work with social movements. We work to hold duty bearers to account and we advocate and campaign with others to change laws, policies, programmes and practices of duty bearers. Although we are clearly not neutral, we are impartial, particularly in the context of our humanitarian work and in responding to conflicts.

It is important to acknowledge that ActionAid has a distinctive way of seeing and a clear set of beliefs about how change happens. We do not start with a blank slate. Rather we have a set of priorities we are passionate about, as articulated in our People's Action strategy. We do not seek to dictate or impose these on others. But we do need to be transparent in sharing them in a dialogue with people. For example, we are deeply critical of the dominant global economic framework, which favours a minimal role for the state, cuts back public spending and supports continued distortions of the market in favour of richer countries and powerful corporations. We have seen how a fundamentalist implementation of this framework contributes to the violation of rights – making it one of the main structural reasons for the perpetuation of poverty, inequality and social exclusion. Equally, we challenge cultural and religious fundamentalism, where rigid adherence to a doctrine encroaches on diversity, equality, autonomy and freedom of expression, contributing to the violation of rights.

As we work for change we also need to consider ways of dealing with and mediating conflict. Conflict is inherent in the social change process. We cannot avoid it if we want to challenge power. Indeed, it is often a positive force for change. However, it can worry ActionAid staff and partners, especially in countries that have recently emerged from civil war or where there is limited democratic space.

One of our roles is to support rights activists and their allies, including ourselves, to analyse the balance of power around any particular rights struggle, figure out where powerful groups sit, which institutions align with and against them, and what the likely consequences may be of different non-violent strategies and actions. It is important to be prepared so that we can support and defend our staff and partners on the frontline – who may face a backlash. Good power mapping and analysis is essential in any change process. Equally important though is clarity about and consistency with our values. It is important to stress that violence always violates someone's civil and political rights and should always be avoided (as all rights violations should be avoided).

8. HRBA requires coherence

A HRBA should frame all our work, whether we are engaging at a local, sub-national, national, regional or international level and whether we are directly working with people living in poverty or raising funds to support this work. In low- and middle income countries, we usually undertake our rights programmes in partnership with local or national organisations that share our commitment to working with people living in poverty and with their communities, organisations and movements.

Action is needed at all levels to address the structural causes of poverty. As such, in designing a rights programme, one of our key concerns is to ensure **coherence** between our work at local, district, national and even international levels. We seek to make the most of the connections between levels because we cannot secure sustainable change to people's rights through isolated interventions. This means we should conceive rights programmes in an integrated way and we should:

- **Connect local work:** We should design and develop all local rights programmes with clear links to district and national level work, for example by bringing the voices of people living in poverty into national spaces; strengthening organisations and movements of people living in poverty; generating evidence from local engagement to inform wider change processes; and ensuring national perspectives inform local analysis of poverty and rights, exploring structural causes. Avoid isolated local work!
- **Connect national work:** Our national campaigning and policy work should maximise connections with local rights programmes (based on a two-way relationship) and seek to make international connections. Bring local partners together to inform your national analysis and draw on other members and the international secretariat to bring in new perspectives and harmonise efforts. Avoid isolated national work!
- **Connect international work:** Our local and national experiences should inform and connect with our international engagements, harnessing and elevating the voices of those living in poverty. Our People's Action strategy commits us to 10 key change promises that provide a powerful uniting framework for coordinated action. Avoid isolated international work!

Our People's Action strategy provides an overall framework for coherent programme design, with its five strategic objectives and 10 key change promises. Some countries with smaller programmes may be prioritising just one or two of these objectives and may seek to focus their rights programmes around these. Other countries may be taking on more or even all of the strategic objectives, although particular local rights programmes may still be focused on one or two of them. Where you are working on a number of different key change promises it is important to look at the connections between them and to ensure that you design a coherent overall programme. In the past, our work on different themes was sometimes too segregated, leading to "silos". The emphasis in the People's Action strategy is to work holistically, to avoid fragmentation and internal competition between work on different objectives or issues.

Each country strategy paper, reviewed to align with the international strategy, will identify the key contextual issues that lead to prioritisation of certain objectives and certain issues. This will inform the balance of rights programmes that it makes sense to prioritise. Rather than opening ever more local rights programmes in different parts of a country, leading to a proliferation of similar initiatives, it is important to select local rights programmes which can truly and distinctively add value to a coherent national programme of work in pursuit of clear rights-based objectives. Likewise, it is important to be conscious of how each partner or coalition weaves together into a coherent overall rights programme, so that the whole programme is more than the sum of its parts.

Video resources on HRBA

- **Selay in the UK** (ID 105450) – how our experience and partners in country programmes can work internationally, using the solidarity within our federation to influence at a global level
- **The accused: the alleged witches of Ghana** (ID 89438) – about our partners working in "witches camps" to provide sanctuary but then challenging rights violations to work towards reintegration
- **Dignity: the Garima campaign** (ID 70144) – empowerment through Dalit rights
- **The Honourable Jeelah** (ID 94807) – how our participatory approach has empowered women to become representatives of their communities
- **Canh's story** (ID 105810) – how men's as well as women's groups are addressing violence against women
- **Leya and Esther** (ID 100351) – how our participatory methodology leads to empowerment
- **Disappearing daughters** (ID 104976) – how ActionAid has engaged with a massive social injustice, going beyond policies to change attitudes and behaviours
- **Under the rain shadow** (ID 97222) – working with communities to realise alternatives which reduce vulnerability to climate change
- **Neela's story** (ID 96486) – tackling a difficult social injustice (acid attacks) which other organisations have ignored
- **One cow** (ID 87777) – how support for a progressive government policy is helping Rwanda towards our *HungerFREE* campaign objectives
- **Change-maker: a video from Myanmar** (ID 109973) - how young people create change in Myanmar
- **People's journey for change** – how ActionAid Bangladesh brought about changes in government policies. Go to http://act.ai/N5gE7X

You can watch all these ActionAid videos about HRBA online. Visit http://act.ai/MbrrSj

9. Eight principles that guide all our HRBA work

Eight core HRBA principles are the foundation of our practice. They guide **how** we plan and implement interventions and distinguish the ActionAid HRBA approach.

The eight principles at a glance

1. We put people living in poverty first and enable their active **agency** as rights activists.
2. We analyse and confront unequal **power**.
3. We advance **women's rights**.
4. We work in **partnership**.
5. We are **accountable and transparent**.
6. We rigorously monitor and evaluate to **evidence our impact** and we critically reflect and **learn to improve** our work.
7. We ensure **links** across levels – local, national, regional and international – to ensure we are addressing structural causes of poverty.
8. We are innovative, solutions-oriented and promote credible **alternatives**.

Principle 1: We put people living in poverty first and enable their agency as rights activists

"The most potent weapon in the hands of the oppressor is the mind of the oppressed." Stephen Biko

Why?

We believe that the analysis and views of people living in poverty and their meaningful agency in taking action on rights is essential to changing unequal and unjust power. Together with excluded groups, we analyse and strategise about how their rights can be addressed, and we work to build their power as rights activists. While we may support people to develop "tactical" alliances with more privileged groups to achieve a specific change, for example working with middle class women to campaign for a law preventing violence against women, we should do this in ways that put the interests of the women living in poverty first. Putting people's agency first does not mean that ActionAid puts aside other parts of its mission and values. We are committed to building an honest, open relationship with people living in poverty, based on dialogue and mutual challenge.

How?

By identifying those living in poverty. ActionAid prioritises long-term engagement with people living in poverty and the most excluded groups, and the organisations that represent them, in rural and urban areas. In different locations this may involve working with indigenous peoples, people living with HIV and AIDS, landless people, marginal and smallholder farmers, informal workers, people with disabilities, dalits, sexual minorities, migrants, pastoralists, fisherfolk, displaced people, slum dwellers and other groups suffering from social discrimination and poverty. Within these groups, we specifically engage with women, youth and children. In every programme we need to be clear about which groups of people we are working with, mapping them, building long-term relationships with them and working with them to increase their awareness and their organisations to advance their rights. We can measure our overall achievements best by looking at the changes these people are able to make in their lives with our support and solidarity.

By supporting rights awareness and conscientisation. Over the years, we have developed a range of participatory approaches that we use to support rights awareness and power analysis. Examples include the *Reflect* approach, *Societies tackling AIDS through rights* (STAR), *Participatory vulnerability analysis* (PVA), *Economic literacy and budget analysis* (ELBAG) and more recently the *Territorial development initiative* (TDI). All these methods use the same basic basket of tools and all have their strengths for addressing different issues. However, there is a real danger of fragmenting people's analysis – having multiple groups in any one community using different methodologies but actually pursuing similar ends. We now need to harmonise these participatory processes into a single coherent, integrated process that draws on the strengths of each. This resource book is a foundation for doing this.

By supporting organisation and mobilisation. We place particular emphasis on supporting people to organise as rights activists, linking organisations across communities, localities and continents, and building and strengthening people's organisations and social movements. We can strengthen the capacity of organisations for focused action by helping with the monitoring and tracking of government policies and budgets. This is an integral part of our empowerment process that is centred on building the active agency of people living in poverty.

By sensitising duty bearers about rights. This includes key people in local, district and national governments, so they understand their responsibilities and are more likely to be responsive to demands. Facilitating the active agency of people living in poverty without also raising the wider awareness and capacity of duty bearers can lead to unnecessary confrontation. How we work with governments will vary according to the national context. But in all contexts we are likely to be working to promote or strengthen their responsibility for rights.

By grounding our national and international campaigning in the lives of real people. Sometimes our campaigning for structural change involves influencing policies or institutions in rich countries, far away from the people living in poverty who we work with. Wherever possible, we seek to root these campaigns in the voices and actions of people living in poverty – and we track the long-term impact of our campaigns on these people. Many of our campaigns involve encouraging solidarity action from supporters all over the world. We need to invest in making this happen as it can accelerate change. But this should not distract us from the primary focus of our work, which is seeking people's solidarity with the rights activism of people living in poverty.

By involving people living in poverty in our own processes of decision-making during appraisals, strategy development, annual planning, participatory reviews and evaluations. By engaging people in every stage of our processes we can shift norms and model different ways of working, building people's capacity to hold other agencies, especially governments, to account. In some parts of the federation, for example, in campaigns and communications work in high income countries, this may be more challenging (and may need to be done indirectly or through links with other members) but it is still necessary for building our legitimacy and distinctiveness.

Principle 2: We analyse and confront unequal and unjust power

"It is not power that corrupts but fear. Fear of losing power corrupts those who wield it and fear of the scourge of power corrupts those who are subject to it." Aung San Suu Kyi

Why?

We believe that ending poverty depends on changing unequal power relations at every level – from the household through to global institutions. Powerful elites make the decisions in most institutions from community institutions to state bodies, corporations to inter-governmental agencies. Elites sometimes wield power in visible ways (where decision-making processes are known and transparent, but elites still control them), sometimes in hidden ways (where elites set the agenda behind the scenes) and sometimes in invisible ways (where a dominant discourse or ideology that favours the elite determines the whole framing of an issue). We need to become aware and critical of all the ways power is wielded (including within families and communities) if we want to confront it effectively and secure change.

How?

Through empowerment work, we build the organisation and power of people living in poverty. Through solidarity work, we build alliances to strengthen their power. And through communications and campaigning, we work with allies to raise voices, engage people and apply pressure for changes in policy, practice and behaviour.

Through our programmes, we work with people to analyse and make the power relations that keep them in poverty visible. Then we work with them to figure out how to confront this power, working with allies. We recognise that we, as ActionAid and as individual staff, may have more power than the people we work with. This comes from the money we have, from our power to make and influence decisions, and from our skills. In our relationships with people and our partner organisations, we use our power positively by being transparent and accountable, promoting participation, working to support women's rights, and passing our skills on to others.

When you are promoting critical reflection on power and privilege, it is useful to consider the following key elements. They apply whether you are working at local level in a remote village or at national level in a coalition meeting.

We can analyse and confront unequal power using a reflection-action process by following these building blocks:

By recognising power analysis is a political process. It is not a neutral approach that seeks to promote a neutral vision of "development". Rather it looks to help people assert their rights, challenge injustice and change their position in society. It is action-oriented, not passive or detached. It involves working "with" people rather than "for" them.

By creating and facilitating democratic spaces. We need to actively build democratic spaces to ensure people have an equal voice. In any group there will always be stratification, for example based on gender, class, race, caste, age, hierarchy, status, ability and confidence. You need to be aware of this and facilitate reflection on power within the group as part of the process. You need to be particularly alert to the participation of women. You may need to create separate spaces for them sometimes. Training facilitators to build trust, promote confidentiality where needed and manage conflict within a group is important.

By ensuring the process is intensive and extensive. A deep analysis of power will not emerge overnight, in a week or in very occasional meetings. There needs to be a regular and sustained space for people to engage fully, build trust and address sensitive issues.

By respecting people's existing experience/knowledge. If you come in with all the answers you can unintentionally disempower people. Instead, you should start with respect for people's existing knowledge and experience and give space for their own analysis. This does not mean accepting people's existing opinions or prejudices without challenge. Bring in additional information and analysis as and when it will advance or challenge (rather than supplant or completely undermine) people's own analysis.

By building a process of reflection-action-reflection. Endless theoretical analysis of power becomes disempowering. Build a cycle of reflection and then action. Then encourage reflection on that action, new analysis and new actions. This reflection-action process is key to a HRBA. Action isolated from reflection becomes pure activism that rapidly loses direction. Reflection alone can become indulgent and purposeless. Action to address unequal power may be in the public or private sphere, and it may be collective or individual. But it must be part of the process.

By using participatory tools to help people advance their analysis. Asking people directly about power is likely to lead to silence, fear or confusion. You need to be creative and use approaches that will stimulate them, give them critical distance and help them structure their discussion. There is a huge basket of tools available, including visualisation tools (maps, calendars, Chapati diagrams, matrices, trees, rivers and other graphic tools practitioners of Participatory Rural Appraisal/*Reflect* have developed), alongside role-play, songs, dance, participatory video and photography.

By asking good questions. No tool or method is a substitute for good questions, and you can undermine every tool with bad questions. Indeed, all participatory tools can be distorted, manipulated or used in exploit-ative ways if you use them without sensitivity to power relationships. Ask open-ended questions that stimulate critical thinking and dialogue. Dig deeper, beyond the obvious responses, asking why and why and why again to find the root causes of problems. Ask questions that may be uncomfortable, which explore power relations based on gender, class, caste, race, physical or intellectual ability, hierarchy, status, language or appearance. Good questions get under the surface and explore structural issues.

By enhancing people's capacity to communicate. Years of inequality, injustice and oppression can leave people profoundly disadvantaged, and unable to communicate well. They may be illiterate or unable to speak the dominant language. They may lack confidence to speak up in public spaces, lack information about how to reach their target audience or lack access to powerful media and communication platforms. You will not change power relations unless you also build people's capacity to communicate using whatever means are most relevant to their context.

By being coherent in how you train people on power analysis. If you want people to engage in deep power analysis then the training process for facilitators and for trainers themselves needs to respect all the elements outlined above. You cannot lecture people about how to do power analysis. They need to go through the process themselves if they are to facilitate it effectively with others.

By being aware of our own power in partnerships and coalitions. We need to have the confidence and capacity to understand and be able to talk about our own power as individuals and as an organisation.

For some practical resources on power analysis go to www.people-action.org

Principle 3: We advance women's rights

"Feminism is the radical notion that women are human beings." Cheris Kramarae

Why?

ActionAid makes women's rights a high priority because we believe that gender inequality is an injustice we must fight. Indeed, the underlying causes of poverty and injustice are gendered. ActionAid recognises that the majority of people living in poverty in the world are female. Because of their socially-ascribed roles, women living in poverty have less access to land, education, networks, technology, transport, cash, decision-making, safety and control over their bodies, all of which keeps them impoverished. Developing strategies to explicitly confront these causes of poverty and injustice are essential if we want to have real impact on the lives of women and their communities. We will not succeed in tackling poverty if we do not support women to fight for their rights.

ActionAid believes that we have a part to play in creating a more equal and just world. Our hope and aim is to witness women worldwide growing in confidence, skills and knowledge so they can decide their own destiny, live without fear of violence and participate effectively in the decisions that affect their lives and livelihoods at all levels (local, national and international).

How?

ActionAid's HRBA places women's rights at the centre of our work at all times. When we analyse a problem, we must ensure that we analyse how the problem affects women differently from men. When we develop solutions we must ask if they will expand or limit women's access to services, resources and power.

In our rights programmes, at times we work with women specifically as a group (for example, in a programme on ending violence against women). In all our programmes we make sure that we communicate and address women's concerns and interests because they are so often discriminated against in wider groups (for example, in HIV and AIDS programmes).

We work to organise women as a constituency; to build their awareness and consciousness of their specific oppressions as women; to put in place and support female leaders in communities and our partner organisations; and to increase women's access to and control over means of communication. We also make sure that our own organisation and our partners support women's rights. We have equal recruitment policies, and work to ensure that ActionAid and our partners' staff have the skills and political commitment to support women's rights. We also recognise that we need to work with boys and men (traditional and religious leaders, for example) to change entrenched views and advance women's rights.

The following are key building blocks for how we can advance women's rights in our work:

By recognising that achieving women's rights requires organisation and struggle. Initial conceptualisations of rights did not explicitly include women's rights or recognise women as a marginalised group. This was even the case in the UN Declaration of Human Rights, although all the rights enshrined in that document do of course apply to women as much as men. Only campaigns by organised groups of women saying "women's rights are human rights" made bodies such as the UN take notice of and address women's rights more directly.

Equally, initial rights struggles by independence movements in Africa, Asia and Latin America did not include women's rights within their agendas. It was only when women within these movements campaigned and

insisted that men take up women's rights that a shift began. Even today within development organisations, some people do not think that women's rights are an integral part of human rights. Maintaining and strengthening the local, national and international movements for women's rights is essential for achieving progress.

By thinking about power and rights in new ways, including women's rights. In all our power analysis, we need to systematically look at the inequalities between women and men as one of the most challenging dynamics of power and as a critical factor in all situations of poverty and injustice. We need to create space for women, men, girls and boys to analyse the gendered division of labour. Sometimes we need to create safe and separate spaces for women and girls, sometimes we need to include boys and men.

We need to analyse power relations between women and men within our own organisation and with our partners and allies. We cannot facilitate the transformation of others without transforming our own practices. We need to strive to "walk our talk" on women's rights by encouraging women to take on leadership roles within ActionAid and changing our organisational culture and practices to respect and protect women's rights.

By recognising the value of stand-alone and mainstreamed programmes on women's rights. We can promote and advance women's rights within all our programmes, whether we are working on sustainable livelihoods, access to land, democratic governance, education, mobilising youth, building resilience or responding to disasters. But there is also important work to be done specifically on women's control over their bodies and time, challenging violence and building women's economic alternatives. It is important for women and girls to have the space to define issues for themselves, as they will not raise some sensitive issues in front of men, for example related to maternal mortality, domestic violence or female circumcision. In our work with young people we should always ensure we are promoting the balanced involvement and leadership of young women. Of course, sometimes working with boys and men to change their attitudes and behaviours is part of the process. But ensuring girls and women have independent and safe spaces to build their analysis and leadership is our priority.

By being aware of the unintended effects of programmes on women. Many development interventions unintentionally increase women's subordination. For example, a livelihoods project set up with the idea of improving women's status by involving them in farming activities might unintentionally increase women's work burden and let men in the community off the hook from providing for their families. Too often programmes reinforce stereotypes about women's roles, rather than challenging gendered norms. It is important to be mindful of this risk and to ensure that at no stage do our programmes reinforce gender stereotypes and women's marginalisation and inequality.

By modelling women's power in our own organisation. We need to ensure strong women's leadership and provide a positive working environment for women.

Principle 4: We work in partnership

"Don't walk in front of me; I may not follow. Don't walk behind me; I may not lead. Just walk beside me and be my friend." Albert Camus

Why?

Structural change can only happen when people stand together. One of the ways we can stand together is by building partnerships with people's organisations and social movements, and non-governmental and community-based organisations supportive of their struggles. In some contexts we may even partner with progressive companies or state agencies. Partnerships with local organisations can strengthen and expand civil society and can help to root our work at the local level. Local organisations may know the context better, speak the language, and may build trust more easily with local people. Partnerships with social movements and people's organisations that organically represent their members can build greater legitimacy and pressure for change. Working in coalitions and alliances can mean actors are more effective in campaigning and mass mobilisation than they would be alone. And partnerships with academic and research institutions can help to improve our rigour and deepen the evidence base for our work.

Our HRBA means we are challenging entrenched power relations that one organisation's isolated actions will not overturn. With our limited resources we can have greater impact by working in partnerships, catalysing action, galvanising and mobilising others, building strong platforms and constituencies, and connecting our work locally, nationally and internationally. The nature of any partnership depends on the partnership objectives and the type of organisation we partner with, but our HRBA and partnership principles always guide our relationships.

How?

Partnership is a feature of ActionAid's HRBA. We only manage 25% of our local rights programmes across the world. Partners manage the remaining 75%. Sometimes we have to work directly because of political constraints and sometimes we choose to where we cannot find strong partners. As we establish national boards and assemblies in more countries and we become an embedded part of domestic civil society, the types of partnership we develop can change. But, no matter what, we seek to build all our partnerships on mutual respect, equal power, transparency and accountability.

Excerpt from ActionAid's partnership policy

- A partnership is a relationship of equality between partners based on mutual respect, complementarity and accountability where the shared values, purpose, goals and objectives are clear and which recognises autonomy of the partners.

Based on the above definition, we recognise:

- A partnership as both a dynamic process and a relationship, which may or may not involve the transfer of money.
- It is often longer-term (one year or more) allowing time to develop and deepen the relationship for shared goals, objectives, programmes and projects.
- It involves the transfer or exchange not just of funds but also of solidarity, staff, ideas, learning and extended relationships etc.
- A partnership is grounded in a documented agreement that spells out contractual obligations, irrespective of whether ActionAid provides funding or not.

Guiding partnership principles

- **Complementarity.** Partnerships must identify mutual benefits for the partner organisations and ActionAid. Mutual benefits should strengthen the impact of our work to eradicate poverty and injustice. Partnerships should be perceived as alliances for joint action towards a common goal – not only in relation to a specific project, but also at a more strategic level.
- **Adherence to principles of mutual respect, equity, justice and accountability.** All parties should recognise that a partnership between two organisations comes with its differences in resources, information and power. Holding on to the principles of mutual respect, equity, justice and accountability mitigates the misuse and abuse of power, which has the potential to derail the partnership.
- **Nurturing nascent organisations of rights holders.** Partnerships should aim to support them to develop into autonomous and sustainable organisations that have their own identity and are not replicas of ActionAid.
- **Fostering a HRBA.** ActionAid fosters a HRBA in its strategy to fight and end poverty and injustice. Ideally, ActionAid partners should share this approach, or at the very least, agree that programming activities undertaken within the partnership are clearly designed and implemented in accordance with the rights-based approach.
- **Promote independence.** While some partners will initially be heavily dependent on ActionAid (financially and technically), it is recommended that we develop partners' capacity and sustainability to reduce their dependency on ActionAid.

To see the full ActionAid partnership policy, visit http://act.ai/KpuEZh

Below are a few key learnings about how we build effective partnerships:

By selecting the right partners through a thorough mutual appraisal. Our partners need to be committed to working for the advancement of human rights. They need to have the necessary knowledge and capacity, and their systems and policies need to support HRBA programmes and fundraising work. We have to share values and principles and build trust. Local communities need to trust local partners, particularly the most excluded groups. We need to take time to get to know each other before we enter into a long-term partnership This is a two-way process of building mutual understanding in a clear and transparent way. It is better to start slowly, collaborating for a year or more on a specific initiative, before entering into a long-term partnership.

By developing clear partnership agreements, reflected in a memorandum of understanding (MoU), during the strategic planning process. Through the extended initial appraisal process a partner should be able to assess and understand ActionAid and its systems, and vice versa. This appraisal should inform the MoU developed during the strategy process, particularly with regard to any agreed capacity development (see below). For example, if the appraisal shows weakness on women's rights, financial management or accountability to people living in poverty, there should be a very clear plan, with agreed inputs, support and outcomes, to address these weakness. Likewise, if the partner's appraisal of ActionAid shows incompatibilities or potential problems in ways of working, these should be addressed.

By modelling and monitoring our values and principles in our relationship with partners. Throughout the partnership (at least once a year), you should monitor how well the MoU and partnership principles are being respected and how the partnership can be improved. We need to be aware of all the principles outlined here and we need to live up to our organisational values in our relationship with partners. This means being critically aware of our own power in the relationship – power derived from the size and reputation of our organisation and from the financial and human resources available to us.

By supporting the capacity development of our partners. In many cases we have long-term relationships with partners, and we need to ensure we are supporting their capacity development across the spectrum. We need to build their understanding of rights and their mission-related capacity, and we also need to support their organisational development. Over time, we want to make our partners stronger, more independent and

more sustainable, so they can add to the richness and diversity of national civil society. We will not work with all our partners forever. When our relationship ends our goal is to ensure they are able to stand without us. The parameters of capacity development should be agreed in the partnership agreement and regularly reviewed. There should be a clear baseline documented, and outcomes and indicators agreed, just as in other elements of our programming.

By linking our partners together. This helps address power imbalances. We have local partners in different geographical areas and national partners who are working on policy and campaign issues. We need to ensure we link them – that there are forums for them to come together and that we facilitate communication between them and with wider movements for change. There is a real value to linking partners across countries where they are working on similar issues or for similar groups of excluded people. Our capacity to make links between partners is one of the areas where we can add most value.

By regularly reviewing our partnerships. At least once a year, as part of the participatory review and reflection process, partners should give ActionAid feedback on its work and the relationship, and vice versa. To empower the partner, you could do this review in a meeting of multiple partners. Partners should also be made aware of and encouraged to use ActionAid's complaints policy, to raise issues to an impartial part of ActionAid. Sadly, partnerships at times break down before we have met our objectives. Leadership may change, an organisation may take a new direction, staff may leave or relations could break down between the partner and local people. The MoU/partnership agreement should spell out clear mechanisms for how to exit from a partnership.

Working with governments

We work in many diverse contexts, in strong and weak states, with progressive and regressive governments. We need to adapt how we work with governments accordingly. In some contexts, for example in China and Vietnam, we need to build a strategic partnership with government at local, district and even national level to be able to work effectively. In other contexts, for example Ethiopia, The Gambia or Cambodia, the government has imposed restrictions on the use of human rights language. We need to navigate carefully to work effectively. Often, we need to develop a positive strategic relationship with government to influence their thinking, promote innovation, get information, help the government strengthen its delivery capacity and enhance accountability systems. For example, we often support agricultural extension services or work to get farmer-to-farmer networks/exchanges recognised as part of the government framework. In this, and all contexts, we need to ensure that we do not "replace" government in delivering services.

Working with the private sector

A strategic relationship with companies can magnify our political voice, as long as we are very clear about the risks involved. For example, ActionAid UK has been campaigning for the UK government to establish a powerful "Supermarket Adjudicator". If implemented, the Adjudicator could prevent food retailers using unethical trading practices with farmers in developing countries, including delaying payments to producers, charging suppliers for losses caused by shoplifting, and dropping the agreed price after a shipment has been delivered.

To achieve this goal, ActionAid is part of a broad coalition, including organisations lobbying on behalf of multinational food companies. Some success came in May 2011, when Waitrose, a major UK supermarket, announced that it backed the Adjudicator. Waitrose's support is particularly significant, as it came despite strong opposition to the Adjudicator from other supermarkets and the main retail lobby group.

Capacity development in ActionAid

We prefer the term "capacity development" to "capacity-building", as "development" signals the existence of capacity that can be developed further, and that the individual or organisational "capacity owner" is at the helm while ActionAid supports and facilitates the process. Put simply, for ActionAid, capacity development is an ongoing process by which people and organisations enhance their abilities to achieve strategic change in a sustainable way. In our partnership policy we recognise that capacity development is part and parcel of any partnership. While some partners may initially be heavily dependent on ActionAid (financially or technically), we are committed to reducing that dependency. Capacity development is key to achieving this. We recognise that capacity development is always a two-way street – ActionAid is also developing its own capacity through the partnership process.

It is helpful to recognise that as well as looking at organisational capacity development (focused on the human resources and systems needed within an organisation to ensure effective results) we also need to look at wider capacity development in a sector or constituency. For example, we should look at how different actors are able to work together to influence changes in legislation, policies, norms, culture and beliefs and how they learn from these processes. There are different capacities needed to help organisations network, interact, advocate together, connect across levels and build effective alliances. Our concern for capacity development thus extends beyond the capacity of specific partners.

Principle 5: We are accountable and transparent

"It is not only what we do, but also what we do not do, for which we are accountable." Molière

Why?

As an NGO we are not elected and we do not have a mass membership or formal constituency that we represent. We therefore need to work to be accountable in all our relationships, as this is key to building our legitimacy. If we want governments and corporates to be accountable, we need to model being accountable ourselves in every way possible. Indeed, it is often necessary to show that we are accountable if we are to have a credible voice in our advocacy and campaigning work. Most importantly, we believe that being accountable will make us more effective. It enables us to get better feedback on what we are doing, to know what is working and what is not and to respond accordingly. We are also a signatory to the Accountability Charter (http://act.ai/Nfrdck), and other internationally recognised sets of standards such as SPHERE, which bring specific responsibilities. Being accountable is a value ActionAid puts into practice in all our relationships.

How?

By recognising that our primary accountability is to the women, men, youth and children living in poverty who we work with. By being accountable ourselves we can build trust, increase our legitimacy, raise awareness of rights and strengthen the capacity of people to hold their own government to account.

To be accountable to people living in poverty we must ensure that:

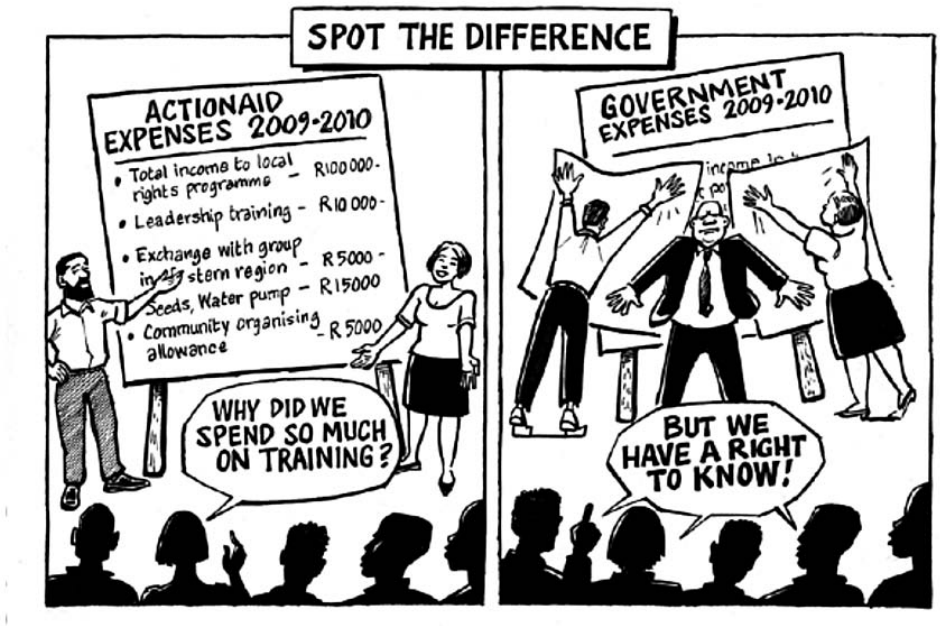
- They take part in local rights programme appraisal, analysis, planning, implementation, monitoring and review.
- We respect and critically engage with their analysis and perspectives; and their priorities and perspectives inform the decisions we and our partners make.
- They are engaged in the recruitment and appraisal of frontline programme staff.
- Women living in poverty are actively and equally involved in our processes.
- We listen to children, whose views are rarely sought and mostly ignored; and we measure the impact of our work on children living in poverty (as we often raise our money in their name). See box on page 41.
- We are transparent in our relationships, sharing information freely and proactively.

- We apply budget analysis and economic literacy tools to ourselves, including social audits and transparency boards. We should also show we are cost efficient and cost effective in our work, under an overall "umbrella" of demonstrating value for money in our programmes.
- We maintain an open information policy – and actively practice it.

By recognising that we also have other accountabilities:

- **To the state.** We must respect the constitution and laws of countries where we work, including legislation that regulates civil society organisations. We may disagree with and challenge policies that limit our capacity to work for change or which contribute to rights violations. But we need to do so within the law. We work in a huge variety of contexts, in strong and weak states, under progressive and reactionary governments. We adjust our strategies accordingly, remembering always that our primary accountability is to people living in poverty.
- **To donors who provide financial support for our work.** We need to ensure that we deliver on the contracts we sign with donors, taking this accountability seriously. We should enter into contracts fully aware of associated conditions, reporting and accounting requirements. We may seek to influence donor policies and procedures, including by involving them in our processes. But in the meantime our compliance is essential if we are to maintain our credibility and reputation.
- **To sponsors.** We raise over half our income from child sponsorship and other regular giving products. To ensure continued support, we need to be accountable to our sponsors. We need to ensure that our local rights programmes involve children (see box below) and have an impact on children's lives (a specific commitment in our new strategy). We should also ensure high standards in our communications with sponsors, so they can understand the change process. We need to connect our sponsorship and programme work more, ensuring that staff work closely together, that we develop plans in an integrated way, that we link systems and that our monitoring and communications work about programmes serves our accountability requirements to sponsors. If we communicate better and are more accountable to sponsors there is great potential to mobilise them in solidarity and campaigning actions that can help advance local struggles.
- **To our partners.** We need to be accountable to our partners and to our peers in community-based organisations, NGOs, social movements, coalitions, and to all those with whom we share common interests and agendas.
- **To each other.** We need to be internally accountable within ActionAid, mutually accountable for delivering on our work and upholding our values. We need to recognise the power we have and work to transform how we use it inside and outside the organisation.

By mapping out our accountabilities in country strategy papers, annual planning and participatory review and reflection processes. Developing an accountability strategy in each local rights programme is valuable, helping us to define who we are accountable to and for what – and also how we will be accountable (for example, through quality monitoring and evaluation, transparency boards or social audits.
See www.people-action.org



Child participation and our impact on children

We must make sure we help all children in our local rights programmes (whether sponsored or not). In the past we often claimed that children benefited from our work, but when asked to demonstrate this we had difficulties. We have addressed this "accountability gap" in our new strategy, which recognises that ActionAid has a special responsibility to work strategically with children. Our People's Action strategy specifically commits us to "track the changes that all our work on our mission-related objectives makes in children's lives".

Child sponsorship and other regular giving products linked to children provide almost half our income. Our strategy commits us to using child sponsorship-related activities in local communities in ways that "advance our rights-based approach and wherever possible link to our programmes in schools". Often our programme work concerning children will relate directly to education, ensuring that children have access to quality schools that respect their rights. This means that our primary point of engagement with children will normally be related to schools. This could include doing sponsorship activities in and around schools (in after-school clubs or lunchtime sessions) to build children's rights awareness, develop their confidence and skills, and facilitate their participation in our wider rights-based community development work.

Where direct work in schools is not possible we need to create other safe spaces for children's active participation. All our programme staff are encouraged to identify the ways in which different interventions might directly or indirectly (over the short or long term) impact on children, and we should seek children's own views on this (see the "impact on children" paragraphs under each promise in part two). Through their active participation in our local development processes children and young people can become catalysts for big social change. Meeting the above challenges is essential for us to deliver on our accountabilities to children, their parents and sponsors and for us to secure the long-term income we need to carry out our programme work.

Principle 6: We rigorously monitor and evaluate to generate evidence of our impact and we critically reflect and learn to improve our work

"He who learns, teaches." African proverb

Why?

To know if we are making a difference, we must show the impact of our work on people living in poverty. This requires us to monitor, evaluate and document our work rigorously, and to critically reflect on it so we can be more effective in the future. We need to constantly test our theory of change and determine whether our approaches are the most effective (including cost effective) and transformative ones available. By analysing and reflecting on an ongoing basis we can learn more about challenging power, and how change happens. This can lead to new insights and we can adapt our work to support new, stronger actions for change, as well as discontinuing work that has not been so effective.

Rigorous evaluation can also be important for deepening our accountability to donors (helping us to generate more resources in tough economic times), for testing innovations and for building the evidence base for alternatives.

Good monitoring and evaluation contributes to the process of reflection and learning and should inform our future actions, so we are following the same cycle of reflection-action-reflection that we promote in communities.

How?

Our ALPS system lays out in more detail all the ways in which we use appraisal, planning, monitoring, evaluation and reflection to deepen our accountability (the programme cycle in part two summarises this).

Here is a broad summary:

By conceiving monitoring and evaluation as an integral part of our HRBA (and not just as a technical exercise), including:

- Designing our programmes in a participatory way, involving people living in poverty and key target groups, from the point of appraisal through planning, monitoring, review and evaluation. These processes build analysis, create knowledge and deepen skills and are therefore an integral part of the empowerment process.
- Debating and setting indicators with people and partners, and then establishing a baseline together, against which we will collectively monitor progress.
- Monitoring our work with people and sharing the outcomes is part of fulfilling our accountabilities to people living in poverty.
- Critically examining the **evidence** of change helps us reflect on how change has happened (or what has blocked change), enabling us to build new knowledge and identify alternatives and new solutions to inform the next cycle of actions.
- Being careful not to **over-claim** credit where we work with partners or where other forces have contributed to change.
- Using impact from our work to engage with duty bearers.
- Identifying the outcomes and impact from our work to inspire supporters, enabling us to continue to finance such work.
- Analysing the value for money of a programme on an ongoing basis by examining the outcomes achieved and asking whether we could have achieved the same change in a different and more cost effective way. This requires us to rigorously document our analysis and the reasoning behind the choices we make when we design a programme for review and analysis during monitoring and at the point of programme evaluation.

By doing participatory appraisals. Before any work begins, all local rights programmes need to do a participatory appraisal, so we can build trust and understanding, know our starting point, can adjust our plans in light of local evidence and can credibly define the changes we aim to bring about over time. Appraisals should collect small amounts of highly relevant quantitative and qualitative information in a participatory way. They should capture information on the position and conditions of women and girls, especially those living in poverty, and present sex disaggregated information. They should use a lens of human rights, looking at which rights violations are most acute and focusing on the rights that relate to the strategic objectives the programme is seeking to address.

The appraisal may raise new, unexpected issues, leading to a rethink of the programme design. It will inform the indicators that the programme will use to review progress. The information collected during an appraisal can also help generate data for the baseline which programmes will develop as part of the strategic planning phase. The appraisal and baselines should be used as ongoing reference points in monitoring, reviews and evaluation. National programmes, new countries and international campaigns also need to do appraisals involving relevant constituencies and people, and should include mutual appraisals for partnerships as well.

By developing good strategies/strategic plans. A programme will develop a strategy in light of its appraisal to provide a focus for its work. The strategy will define clear outcomes and how we believe change will happen for people living in poverty (you could represent this in a simple critical pathway). Local strategies should tell us how the programme will contribute to the goals and objectives of the country strategy and international strategy. In turn, higher level strategies should outline their relationship to and support for local programmes.

All strategies/strategic plans should include a monitoring framework that identifies the changes to be monitored (outcomes), how we will know if progress is being made (indicators), a baseline so we know our starting point, and a monitoring plan, which sets out how the expected changes will be monitored. It is not helpful to generate long lists of indicators, nor is it helpful to stick to indicators that are not working. Discuss with people living in poverty what big changes they want, what the smaller changes might be along the way, what these changes will look like and who will be gathering the evidence. Strategies at all levels require the collection of relevant and appropriate baseline information on the identified indicators.

By tracking change and reflecting during implementation. Monitoring is the regular collection and analysis of information on progress, so we can assess change and the impact we are achieving on an ongoing basis. Some organisations monitor only whether they have done what they said they would. ActionAid monitors outcomes and impact on an ongoing basis, because we want to learn and adapt as we go along. Any monitoring questions or formats used should be simple and encourage analysis of change, not just the reporting of activities. Encourage the writing of critical stories of change to stimulate critical thinking about change, and to document experiences.

Participatory review and reflection is a key part of our participatory monitoring. It is an ongoing process in which we engage communities, partners and allies in discussions to reflect on progress, drawing on data gathered through other monitoring and deepening our analysis of what is working and what is not working, what we need to continue and what we need to change. Programmes should pull together the ongoing review and reflection process annually before annual planning to offer space for agreeing significant changes to future plans and budgets.

By taking evaluation seriously. Evaluation is of the utmost importance in everything from grassroots programmes to national and international campaigns and advocacy work. A strategy should be evaluated (whether at international, national or local level) in its last year. However, it is valuable to have a learning or formative review midway to ensure the work is on track to achieve the intended changes. Evaluation aims to help us understand what changes (positive and negative) the programme/strategy has brought. It is also an accountability mechanism, detailing what was achieved, what was not achieved, and why. Evaluations may include peer evaluators (from other programmes/countries) and external evaluators (who can offer a different perspective), but must always include local people and partners in a multi-disciplinary team. Any evaluation report should be written in simple, accessible language, and a summary (in local language(s), where appropriate) should be made available to all people and communities the programme is working with. The true test of whether an evaluation has been taken seriously is whether the insights and lessons gained inform our future work.

By recognising that monitoring and evaluation will require sustained investment in capacity development. There are capacity challenges across the federation, both in respect of our own staff and our partners. We need to acknowledge and address these.

Monitoring and evaluating the new global strategy:

Introducing our People's Action Monitoring Framework (PAMF)

In our new strategy we make a strong commitment to deepen and better evidence the impact of our work on the lives of people living in poverty, holding ourselves collectively accountable for delivering on our key change promises, and strengthening our monitoring and evaluation system. The new global strategy specifies four clear, inter-connected elements that we must monitor at all levels, through all programmes, and across all countries:

1. **Our HRBA/theory of change** (at the heart of the diagram). The loops depict empowerment, solidarity and campaigning, which show our theory of change when woven together and delivered in line with our programming principles.
2. **Our impact.** This is achieved through our five objectives (the five trees in the diagram), each with two change promises (depicted as fruit) and our work on alternatives (seeds for the future). Each change promise has an agreed meta indicator to allow us to collectively monitor progress (through aggregated data) towards it across the whole federation.
3. **The people living in poverty, supporters and allies we work with** (represented by the groups under the trees). We will monitor how many people (men, women, girls, boys and youth) have participated in efforts to achieve change and how many our work has impacted (building on element two).
4. **Our organisational priorities and values** (represented by the ground the people in the diagram stand on). What we need to change and deliver organisationally (increasing our supporter base, raising more money, strengthening members and building staff capacity and women's leadership, for example) to be able to deliver the promised change.

The PAMF does not insist on a host of standardised indicators across the organisation. The most that it requires is 10 global meta indicators (one for each change promise), which we will monitor together with our own appropriate indicators for our local programmes. We also have seven global indicators for assessing our organisational priorities.

You should integrate all four elements of the PAMF into your ongoing monitoring and evaluation of programmes, whether at local, national or international levels. But it should not replace your current monitoring and evaluation. The PAMF is simply a framework, a guide to help you assess your progress towards your strategy and programme objectives, and for us to see how we are progressing towards the realisation of our People's Action strategy.

For more details about ActionAid's programme cycle, from appraisal and strategic planning to implementation and evaluation, see part three of this resource book.

Principle 7: We ensure links across levels – local, national, regional and international – to address the structural causes of poverty

"Philanthropy is commendable, but it must not cause the philanthropist to overlook the circumstances of economic injustice which make philanthropy necessary." Martin Luther King

Why?

Poverty is caused at many different levels – the international and national as well as the local. If our work is going to bring about the change we seek, we need to take action at all these levels, and we need to link them. For example, our actions at international level must achieve impact (over time) on people living in poverty in the communities where we work. Similarly, a rights violation at local level may be rooted in a law or policy failure that we can only address through advocacy or campaigning at national or even international level. As an international agency, one of our added values is that we can link local people to movements, information and strategies for change on other levels.

How?

ActionAid is grounded in local work in thousands of communities. It is also grounded as a national organisation, with national boards and assemblies, in dozens of countries. And it is grounded internationally by working as a democratic federation. One of the greatest added values that ActionAid can bring is connecting work across these levels.

Working simultaneously at different levels – local, district, national, regional and international – enables us to bring about the changes we seek. Local work is fundamental as the experiences, analysis and perspectives of people living in poverty should shape our agenda for change. People's action locally can often secure significant changes (for example, securing government entitlements, challenging traditional institutions or changing social attitudes).

However, some change requires people's action at district or national level, holding governments or corporates to account, changing policies, practices, attitudes and behaviours that cause or maintain unequal power relations. Local organisations may need to link with wider movements, alliances, networks or campaigns to secure such change. And the roots of some problems lie in other countries or at the international level with the policies and practices of big corporations, other governments or institutions such as the European Union (EU), IMF or World Bank. So people's action is needed at all levels.

Our challenge is to maximise the added value we can bring by connecting work and by building bridges across these levels:

By producing simple programme summaries of every local, national and international rights programme. We have developed a simple format for summaries, (http://act.ai/MOE4xC) which we ask every programme to complete so that we have a comprehensive overview of every rights programme. This will enable people to make more connections across local rights programmes and between local, national and international programmes.

By linking ALPS processes at different levels. We need to ensure that national staff and partners are involved in developing local appraisals, strategies, reviews and evaluations; that local staff and partners are actively engaged in national processes; and that local and national staff and partners can input into international processes.

By focusing our work around the five objectives and 10 key change promises in our People's Action strategy. This will make sure our work in different local rights programmes can inform and influence work nationally and internationally. It will also help us work harmoniously, adding the maximum value to our work at each level and thus giving our unique global federation maximum impact. Part two of this resource book outlines ways we can work together around the five strategic objectives, offering practical resources to help us. A matrix on page 193, part two, tracks the connections between our work on different strategic objectives; links between these are as important as links between levels.

By linking local violations of rights to the recognised human rights legal frameworks and to national constitutions and laws. That way, people will be able to see that legal frameworks apply as much to their community and lives as to any others.

By sharing information and knowledge. We need a smooth flow of information and knowledge between local, national and international levels, travelling in both directions. People working at international and national levels can produce resources that help to deepen local analysis of people's rights. And local analysis from diverse contexts can enrich the understanding and effectiveness of people at national and international level. Good communications, policy and campaigning work requires evidence, and ActionAid is uniquely well placed to get it from local work across a country or around the world. Our engagement in national and international spaces helps us understand some of the structural causes of poverty which may not be obvious in all local areas, but if communicated clearly, can help local partners and communities take more strategic action.

By building and strengthening people's organisations. People living in poverty often feel isolated. And yet millions of others invariably share their experiences. This isolation can begin to change when people organise to take action locally. And when they link with wider organisations that represent their interests, their strength of numbers can bring about larger change.

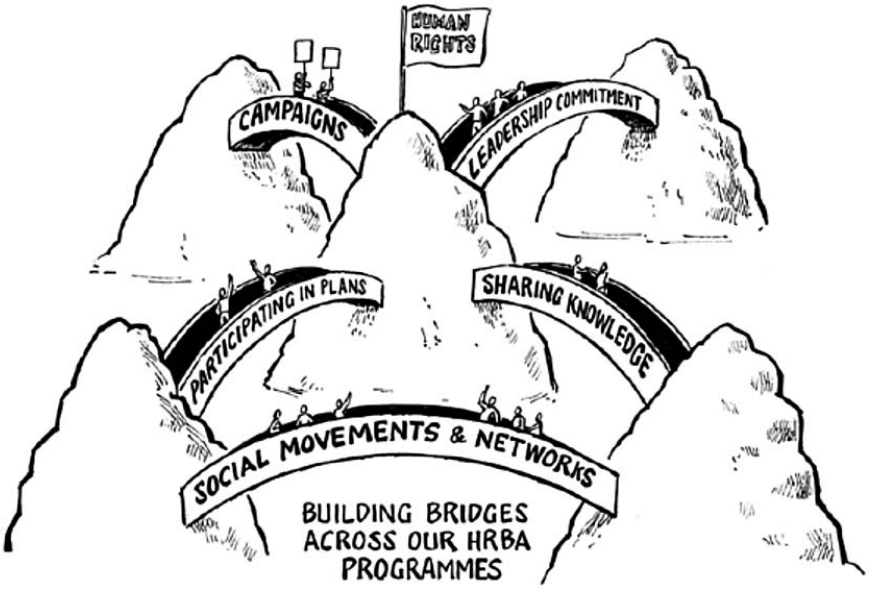
We work with a wide range of people's organisations and social movements (including land rights movements, women's organisations, dalit movements, peasant movements and bonded-labourer movements) as well as with alliances, campaigns and coalitions (such as on education and food rights). We should focus on ensuring that these organisations, movements and coalitions have a strong base – that they are rooted in the voices of people living in poverty, that they provide a democratic space and that our local engagement with people's action connects and provides a credible and powerful foundation for them. We can also play a valuable role in linking people's organisations and social movements across countries, helping them to bring their issues into key international forums. This can be a key area where we can add value through our capacity development work with partners.

By harnessing people's voices and opening up spaces. Testimonies of people living in poverty can be the most powerful way to shift the position of a politician, a policy-maker or a journalist. Too often, the same people (usually male, well educated, and middle class) occupy the spaces where decisions are taken at national and international level. Even where some of them may seek to speak on behalf of people living in poverty there is still a gulf in practice. Our long-term, local engagement means ActionAid is well placed to bring people living in poverty into these exclusive spaces – to use our (often privileged) access to open them up to people's organisations and social movements, bringing new voices and perspectives into debates.

By enhancing our communications capacity. Our strategy recognises that stronger external communications have a central role to play in helping us to achieve our change promises and organisational priorities. Strong communications can help us to expand our supporter and funding base, to achieve greater influence and to change attitudes and behaviours, as well as policies.

By campaigning together. ActionAid is working on three major, multi-country campaigns from 2012 to 2017. These will give us opportunities to work together in new ways that connect local, national and international work. There will doubtlessly be other campaigns where two or more countries work together, so that a campaign in one country is supported by solidarity action and campaigning in another (see, for example, a case study on page 89 about the Vedanta campaign, which linked local mobilisation against a mining company in India with mobilisation in the UK around shareholder meetings).

By building an internationalist perspective across all members. ActionAid is a global federation and every member of governance bodies, management and staff should feel a sense of dual identity: national and international. The more we are able to build this sense of identity, the more we will maximise the added value of being a democratic global federation.



Principle 8: We are innovative, solutions-oriented and promote credible, sustainable alternatives

"Daylight follows a dark night." Masai proverb

Why?

Our People's Action strategy commits us to moving on from just fighting against poverty to working for long-lasting solutions to poverty, advancing alternatives together with our partners and allies. Too often, struggles against poverty and injustice focus on challenging and confronting existing conditions without providing credible and sustainable solutions. We are seeking alternatives to the current system of economic and social relations, where institutions such as international financial bodies, the state and the family abuse power, violate rights and perpetuate inequality and injustice.

We are also responding to a changing world which creates new challenges (around sustainability of natural resources, for example) and new opportunities, including new technologies and ways to empower people, build solidarity and campaign. We commit ourselves to engage proactively with others to uncover, explore, document, share and activate alternatives, adding two key ingredients to change processes: a sense of optimism and a sense of direction.

Alternatives under each strategic objective

SO	Strategy commitment
1	Developing and testing economically and ecologically just alternatives to commercial over-exploitation of ecosystems and food production, including through agrarian reform, strengthening informal rural economies, agro-ecological farming, seed banks, cooperatives and community forestry.
2	Supporting and putting forward new models and processes of inclusive decision-making that allow women living in poverty and excluded groups to have greater political influence. Promoting advanced thinking and practice globally in accountable governance, social protection, taxation, the care economy, development finance and other redistributive measures for ending poverty and injustice.
3	Transforming education by developing alternative models of teacher training and practice, and curriculum development, so that education contributes to wider social, economic and ecological justice.
4	Promoting community-centric and rights-based humanitarian approaches, changing national and global policies and practices around risk reduction, disaster prevention, climate adaptation and coordinated emergency responses.
5	Supporting women and their organisations and movements to progress innovative thinking and research and to pilot and advocate for women-led alternatives related to feminist economics and ecological justice.

How?

By driving innovation and compiling lessons to influence alternative systems/paradigms. Our critique of the dominant economic model, of patriarchy and of political systems that deny people's social and economic rights, together with our commitment to work on alternatives, forces us to be ambitious. One way to explore what might make up an alternative is to test innovations in our programming. **An innovation** is a practice which, along with research and analysis, might help us to identify alternative systems and paradigms. An **alternative** is something which stretches the scope of our existing interventions or frameworks, promising something different for the future. It may not be immediately achievable, and we may not yet have sufficient experience or evidence to deliver it, but it is something positive, exciting and different that has huge potential which we want to explore, examine, build, experiment with, create space for, convene people around, document, support, popularise or champion.

By building a research dimension into our programming, so we can test innovation. We should spell out a hypothesis for how we believe change will happen in the design of our programmes. It is important to build research into programme design so we are collecting an evidence base to inform future programme design, shape policy or campaigning work and influence alternatives. For programmes that are truly focused on innovations that might generate alternatives, up to 20% of budgets might be used for this research and evidence-building work.

Of course, we need to be ready to accept and learn from our failures. Sometimes our hypotheses will be wrong. But that is the whole point of testing, and we can draw substantial learning from what does not work. Research might be around testing our ways of working, asking, for example, "will this new participatory approach achieve change?" or about content issues, for example, "does a social pension given to women impact on women's equality in the household?" The way we do research should always respect our values and our HRBA principles.

By being open to learning from others, documenting this learning and working in solidarity with others. Communities, young people, civil society, social movements, research institutes and activist academics may already be doing or have ideas about something that is highly innovative and, if introduced as a systems change, could be a powerful alternative to normal practice. We need to be open to drawing out learning from others, not feeling that we have to invent our own wheels all the time. We can help to champion or popularise existing innovations and share learning with others to build momentum for wider change.

By bringing our own ideas and niche to existing positive practice. While the ideas behind the innovations that we champion may not be new, ActionAid can bring in new elements which make ideas innovative. For example, cooperatives are not new, but our work with cooperatives is innovative as it integrates a women's rights and resilience perspective. Learning from this work, building on analysis and working with partners might help us to unpack and define an alternative system of agriculture that is economically and environmentally just.

By recognising a spectrum of possibilities. ActionAid's range of alternatives might go from "innovations" – things which are "easy wins"/"pilots" representing new ways of working (for example, exploring the option of food-based entitlement schemes) to completely different ways of thinking (for example, how to tackle hegemonic macro-economic policies). In many cases, we cannot yet say what alternatives we are focusing on and we may instead seek to create spaces and processes with people's organisations and social movements that will enable us to build alternatives collectively.

By building momentum behind and mainstreaming progressive ideas and practices. Even if they are not wholly new! We should not be constantly reinventing the wheel. Many progressive solutions already exist that advance the rights of people living in poverty and have the potential to operate on a much large scale. We can help to champion or popularise these. We can take something from one location in one country and share it in others, spreading horizontally. But we should aspire to achieve a real scale – not just to proliferate small projects that depend on our own resources.

By linking our innovations and alternatives work between local, national and international levels. As with all our programming work, our innovations and alternatives, whatever their starting point, must link with other levels for greatest impact. For example, learning around ActionAid Haiti's innovative work linking women and men affected by crisis to the humanitarian response programme may influence wider systems change, where all humanitarian responses are transparent, accountable and involve affected communities. Alternative systems are not always generated from local innovations. Macro alternatives may emerge from experience and analysis at national or international level. For example, an alternative to the aid paradigm is redistributive taxation. This emerging understanding needs to impact on communities, but the learning was generated through multi-country research and analysis.

By linking alternatives across different strategic objectives. ActionAid alone will not be able to come up with a comprehensive metaalternative. We will work with partners and allies to identify systems changes within our strategic objectives. We will then need to connect these changes to ensure there is coherence between them. We can share our learning with our coalitions and networks to ensure the debate feeds this into broader discussions around alternative development.

By ensuring that our alternatives contribute to sustainable development. Our solutions must promote a partnership between people and natural/environmental systems. We have exceeded planetary boundaries and we need to reduce natural resource consumption to maintain a safe and viable environment. To be credible, we need to premise any alternatives we propose on an understanding of their environmental impact, recognising our inter-dependency. There may be some trade-offs between social, economic and environmental impact in the short, medium and longer term. We need to make these explicit, bringing an awareness of ecosystems into our analysis.

By embracing failure and failing faster. We need to be self-critical, recognising where we have failed and being willing to share learning from our failures as well as from our successes. An open culture that acknowledges failure will help us take calculated risks with innovative work and fail faster, so we can move on.

By finding the time and space to dream. We need to take the time to imagine and build visions of a better world, which can inspire us and help shape action now.

When a pilot or innovation becomes an alternative

Alternatives may be generated/identified at local, national and international levels. Local innovations generate some alternatives, but not all local pilots or innovations will really help to build an alternative. An innovative practice or pilot can contribute towards an alternative:

- when it is genuinely innovative, breaking new ground and not just reinventing (or relocating) the wheel
- when there is a rigorous approach to monitoring and evaluation, with good baseline data taken at the start so we can really demonstrate change
- when the costs are closely and accurately tracked so that the spending per capita is something that others can credibly replicate/take to scale
- when we are not working alone (blowing our own trumpet), but engaging a wide range of actors who accompany us in the process of developing the alternative
- when we do not seek to create an oasis of excellence in one location, ignoring the links between what happens in one place and work at other levels, ie when we make relevant systemic connections
- when government or other agencies that we want to influence are involved from the start so they learn with us and take ownership
- when we are connecting grassroots practice and blue sky thinking by progressive thinkers/"organic intellectuals"
- when we are able to make new links across issues, for example bringing together priorities for women's rights and tax justice, and by making these links we forge new ground that single issue movements have not yet touched.

10. Identifying and managing risks

Our HRBA puts ActionAid, our partners, and especially frontline rights activists into potentially difficult relationships with duty bearers. The change we are working towards with people living in poverty and our allies will potentially shift power away from the powerful. Those who stand to lose will resist this change. This introduces tension and possibly even conflict, which may be an inevitable and necessary part of change.

In many environments, any form of organising, advocacy and challenge to duty bearers, and the state specifically, is risky and maybe dangerous. In some places it is life threatening. Moreover, external environments are constantly changing. Political crises and natural and human-made disasters can leave our staff and partners exposed to increased risks. Collective, gender-aware analysis, forecasting likely outcomes, and careful strategising to minimise risk is critical. Careful assessments of potential partners will help ensure that you do not open yourself to further risk.

We can broadly anticipate the following types of risks:

- political risks, which may include harassment and threat, arrest, legal charges (even for treason or sedition)
- social risk, particularly for individuals, which may include harassment, social exclusion/isolation, victimisation and separation from family
- economic/resource risks, for organisations and individuals, which may include threats of donor withdrawal, fraud or corruption, and risks of job loss
- reputational risks, especially in a borderless 24/7 media world
- other safety and security risks, which may include targeted or opportunistic crime and work-related injuries.

Our role is not to stop the tension and conflict, but to help rights activists and partners identify how duty bearers are likely to respond to different strategies, to figure out whether they are prepared to take these risks, and help them plan for and manage the potential risks.

ActionAid's global security policy and principles, as well as country/field level security plans and procedures, will help minimise security/safety risks to staff, partners and rights activists.

You will need to conduct a **gendered risk analysis** as part of your overall analysis. This will help you think through how you can minimise risks. The basic questions you need to ask are:

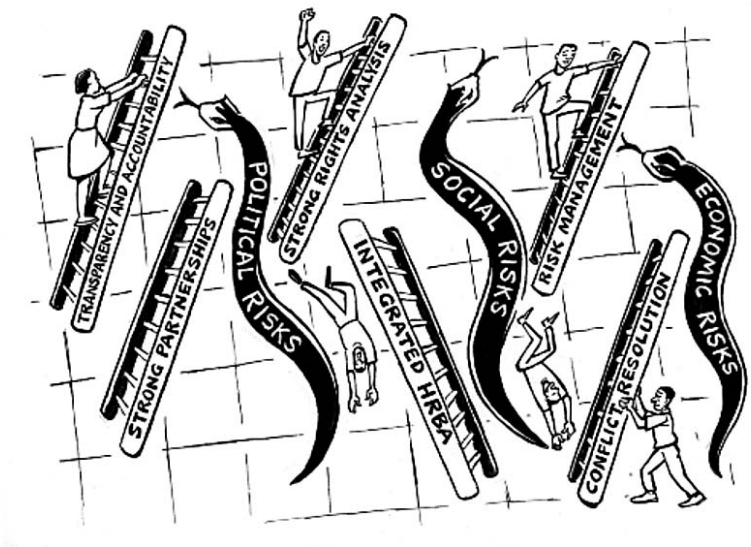
- What are the risks? What are the things that might go wrong with this strategy or action that could place people's lives and well-being, the programme, and/or the organisation in jeopardy?
- If we faced the risk, what would its impact be on the rights holders, on our organisation, on individual staff and on the programme? High, medium or low impact? What would be specific risks to women and men, to national and international staff and to others?
- How likely is it that this negative situation (risk) will arise?
- For risks that have high impact or high likelihood, ask: What can we do to reduce risk and protect rights holders, the organisation and the programme?

Impact	Likelihood
High – catastrophic, will threaten the future of the organisation or rights holder group(s), places people's lives at risk, could lead to a backlash and a reversal of our work **Medium** – damaging, has substantial impact, but does not threaten future **Low** – we will notice but it will have little effect on our programme	**High** – very likely to happen in x months/years or is already happening **Medium** – could happen in the next x months/years **Low** – unlikely to happen in the next x months/years

You can download ActionAid's security risk framework and global security policy here: http://act.ai/L1T4Yt

Here are some **basic suggestions** to help reduce risk:

- Build **strong, mutually accountable partnerships** with partners that are allies to rights holders, operate with the highest level of commitment and integrity, and work in accordance with the values and principles to which we subscribe.
- Undertake thorough **analysis** so you know your context and develop strong change **strategies** on an ongoing basis.
- Build **strong, trusting relationships** so people involved in struggles share information with us and build good links with people in power, for example in the government.
- Implement **strong, integrated HRBA programmes.**
- Ensure that we uphold the highest standards of **transparency and accountability.**
- Do thorough risk analysis and build **risk management plans** into our long-term rights programme strategy, strategic and annual plans.
- Implement other **organisational policies and systems** that can protect the organisation, such as internal audit processes and standards, adhere to publications and libel risk policy, and implement staff security policies and safety procedures.
- Finally, and very importantly, support rights holder organisations and movements, **deal with internal conflicts and power struggles,** and tackle **resistance to HRBA** inside ActionAid and partner organisations. A divided, weak organisation is more open to risk.



Risks are often routine

When asked to think about risks, people's first thought is of dramatic events, high profile disasters or political repression – earthquakes, military coups or killings of staff members. Of course, these can happen. But there are many other serious risks which are less high profile. These include risks related to the capacity of partners to undertake a piece of work; our mitigation plan in such cases needs to address capacity development. Another risk is losing track of sponsored children and the potential scandals associated with miscommunication around this. Staff turnover is often a significant risk within ActionAid and our partners, affecting the continuity of programmes. Road transport can be a risk. We have lost too many staff to accidents, and clear mitigation measures can be put in place to reduce such risks (driver training and compliance with regulations). We need to openly consider fraud in the workplace as it thrives on silence, based on people's trust of each other. We can easily put checks and balances in place to reduce risks here. Your risk matrix needs to consider everything from changing weather conditions to child abuse, from bribery to harassment.

Monitoring the environmental impact of our work

Our People's Action strategy commits us to become a greener organisation. It states, "Recognising the negative environmental impact associated with the conduct of our work we will promote a greener organisation by making informed choices where our work has an impact on the environment, setting targets to reduce our environmental impact and carbon footprint."

To do this, ActionAid has created a role specifically focused on organisational sustainability, cost and carbon within the Organisational Effectiveness Directorate of the secretariat. This will help us:

- Foster organisational innovation resulting in lower environmental impact and improved work systems. Using all available tools in a coordinated, cross-functional approach, we will ensure that we are integrating sustainability objectives into strategic decision-making along with cost and performance measures.
- Develop a federation planning process that results in setting reduction targets for resources and carbon emissions across member countries and the secretariat. Develop systems to collect environmental impact data which we will report to the INGO Accountability Charter and in annual reports. We will use this data to create local reduction plans that include targets.
- Build capacity internally to develop and implement reduction plans. Ensure that staff and volunteers are aware of the implications of day-to-day choices they make in the workplace on the environment and the lives of rights holders, so ActionAid becomes a model for our communities of a responsible and sustainable organisation. Establish and maintain a network of green champions across the federation. Develop a curriculum for green champions on environmental data collection, carbon accounting, emissions calculation, communication, mitigation planning and staff engagement.
- Develop a holistic view of the impact of our work. Specifically, where ActionAid promotes programme activity that has measurable impact (positive or negative) on the environment, we should understand these impacts along with the social and economic benefits of ActionAid programmes.
- Continue outreach and benchmarking of ActionAid's efforts against other INGOs.

Mainstreaming conflict sensitivity

Conflict sensitivity is the ability of an organisation to:

- understand the conflict and power dynamics in the context in which it operates
- understand the two-way interaction between its intervention and the context
- act upon this knowledge to minimise negative impacts and maximise positive impacts on conflict, within an organisation's priorities/objectives.

ActionAid works in around 24 conflict-affected/post-conflict countries, with the most vulnerable and marginalised people. Working to protect the rights of those living in poverty and exclusion often means challenging existing power dynamics to bring about social change. We recognise that pursuing our rights-based approach will inevitably impact on existing tensions, and create new ones. We are therefore committed to conflict sensitivity to ensure that we mitigate or prevent unintended negative impacts, and that communities are prepared and understand the implications of any projects or activities, so that our interventions do not lead to violent conflict.

The following are **core components of a conflict-sensitive approach:**

- **Conflict analysis.** A structured conflict analysis which is regularly updated throughout the project cycle should inform the way we design, implement, monitor and evaluate interventions. Conflict analysis takes a systematic approach to understanding the background and history of the conflict; identifying all the relevant groups involved; understanding the perspectives of these groups and how they relate to each other; and identifying the causes of conflict.
- **Programme cycle.** Conflict sensitivity should inform and be considered at all stages of the programming cycle, from assessment and design through to final evaluation. Key considerations include inclusion of a participatory conflict sensitivity analysis in appraisal processes and strategic planning; ensuring implementation is carried out in such a way that it does not unintentionally cause or exacerbate tensions, and makes the most of all opportunities to contribute to peace-building outcomes; reflection during project monitoring and evaluation examining the interaction between the intervention and the context; and transparent consultation about exit strategies.
- **Conflict-sensitive programming.** Key issues for conflict-sensitive programming include sensitive and transparent targeting (to make sure it does not exacerbate tensions); careful procurement (especially when transporting goods into areas with scarce resources); engaging communities in decision-making at all phases; maintaining strong feedback and accountability mechanisms; careful selection of partners; and sensitive relations with other key stakeholders (governments and donors, for example).
- **Conflict sensitivity in emergency response.** Applying conflict sensitivity to an emergency response can be particularly challenging because of the complex contexts in which emergencies often occur and the need for organisations to respond quickly. You should employ existing standards or norms, for example, the Humanitarian Accountability Partnership standards, as well as explicitly considering conflict sensitivity. The key component for ensuring conflict sensitivity in emergency response is a regularly updated conflict analysis, with a "good enough" conflict analysis included as part of the rapid assessment, which is deepened as the emergency intervention progresses.

Visit http://act.ai/LcSxJD **for more resources, including a guide to conflict sensitivity.**

Chapter 3

Empowerment

"The most common way people give up their power is by thinking they don't have any." Alice Walker

ActionAid's HRBA empowers people living in poverty to seek their rights and entitlements by:

- building awareness and critical consciousness, enabling people to become rights activists
- organising and mobilising
- monitoring public policy and budgets
- harnessing the power of communications
- responding to needs through rights-based approaches to service delivery.

Our empowerment approach places **people** and **power** at the centre of the struggle for rights, enabling people living in poverty to become rights activists. Empowerment should be part of every area of our work – in local rights programmes, with sponsors and supporters and in our campaigning. We should constantly be alert to the empowerment potential of our work. Appraisal of new programmes, strategy development, planning, monitoring and reviewing can all contribute to awareness and consciousness-raising. We can all play a role in helping people analyse their situation, become aware of unequal power relations and develop strategies to challenge power imbalances.

As our first principle highlights, ActionAid puts people living in poverty first. In any particular context we will **define this constituency more precisely**. It may involve indigenous peoples, people living with HIV and AIDS, landless people, marginal and smallholder farmers, informal workers or people with disabilities. We work with dalits, sexual minorities, migrants, pastoralists, fisherfolk, displaced people, slum dwellers or any other group suffering from social discrimination and poverty. Within these groups, we specifically prioritise engagement with women and youth (and where we raise funds through child sponsorship we also prioritise work with children). These are the people we are seeking to empower. And the first step is to build their awareness of rights and their critical consciousness.

Often people living in poverty are unaware that they have rights. Or they may lack the information, skills and knowledge to access them. Awareness-raising and information sharing processes can help in these situations. But often people also internalise their oppression, seeing their condition as natural and un-changeable. Consciousness-raising processes can shift people's fatalistic beliefs and help them begin to see themselves as agents capable of bringing about change.

Equally, people living in poverty are often poorly organised, fragmented from one another and with little space or time to mobilise together. Strengthening their capacity for collective action and helping them build democratic local organisations can be a major breakthrough, enabling them to connect with others in the same position.

Many governments have policies and programmes that are supposed to benefit people living in poverty. But these do not always arrive in practice. Enabling people to monitor public policies and especially to track budgets can be an effective means to extend their empowerment.

But this transformation is not easy with people living in acute poverty, who may lack even the most basic needs (such as water, food, education and shelter) needed to survive and live a life of dignity. We are very

clear that most basic needs are basic rights, and we focus on empowering people to secure these rights. But sometimes we need to provide an immediate response, directly helping people to address their basic needs to build trust and create the space for more strategic rights-based change. In such cases we deliver services in ways that will build resilience and help people become aware of their rights, analyse power and organise.

1. Conscientisation: the *Reflect!on-Act!on* process!

"What's needed now is greater clarity of politics and of purpose, and reflexivity and honesty with which to reclaim participation's radical promise." Andrea Cornwall

ActionAid has a long history of using different participatory methodologies for raising critical consciousness and analysing power, including *Reflect*, *Stepping stones*, STAR, *Participatory vulnerability analysis*, *Economic literacy* and *budget analysis*, and gender and rights analysis. While each method has its strengths, they draw on the same philosophies and tools.

By using separate names we have tended to fragment peoples' analysis, even to the extent of organising separate groups in a single community. **Over the next six years, in line with our People's Action strategy, we will use an integrated/harmonised approach** which draws the best from all of these. We urge practitioners and trainers previously linked to different approaches to work together under a unifying approach. This approach is deliberately branded to connect with ActionAid and to articulate the essential nature of the process. We call it ***Reflect!on-Act!on.***

Inside a *Reflect!on-Act!on* process, we will facilitate **comprehensive analysis by people living in poverty**, analysing their rights, power relations, women's rights in particular, vulnerabilities, different actors and institutions, their own communication skills and risks. The process always starts from people's analysis of their own context and builds in a cumulative way, looking at the connections between local, national and international levels. *Reflect!on-Act!on* becomes the bedrock for building people's agency, starting with their own conscientisation.

The term **conscientisation**, coined by Brazilian educator Paulo Freire, **is a process of enabling people to perceive the social, political and economic contradictions in their lives and to take action against them. It is a process involving reflection and action** that enables people to "perceive the reality of oppression, not as a closed world from which there is no exit, but as a limiting situation which they can transform" (Freire, 1972). The key is enabling people to delve into **why** they are in such a situation and also arrive at an understanding of **how** to change their situation. In this process, understanding and reflection are linked to action for social change. Conscientisation is not something that we teach or give, but it can be facilitated or obstructed.

Conscientisation requires careful work to first bring to the surface and then challenge deeply held prejudicial ideas related to power relations, for example around gender, race, class and sexual orientation. These ideas are generally not visible to the person, and prevent change. Examples include the idea that poverty is unchangeable, determined by divine law or caused by individual failure. Through conscientisation, we challenge the internalised oppression and lack of self-worth that most oppressed groups suffer. We also uncover the issues that go untouched because they are "personal" or "private", such as sex, or relations between a husband and wife in marriage. Through conscientisation we bring them out as political issues that have everything to do with power and require change.

Conscientisation is deeply tied to action. Because people living in poverty often have a low sense of self-worth and personal (or even collective) power, the experience of acting to change their situation gives them another experience of themselves – as agents capable of bringing about a change. This positive experience of a more powerful self and community gained through action is reinforcing and supports deeper struggles to bring about change. ActionAid and our partner organisations can play a key role in facilitating these continuous cycles of action and reflection (praxis).

Conscientisation will be particularly challenging in countries where states are repressive and space for civil society actions is constrained. However, in such cases, awareness combined with critical consciousness can empower people to initiate struggles within the parameters of what is possible in their context. For this reason, starting with people's own context is fundamental.

It is important to note that **in our own organisational processes we are fundamentally following the same reflection-action process.** Part three of this resource book outlines our programme cycle and shows how it follows the same basic process: from reflection (appraisal and strategic planning) to reflection (participatory reviews and evaluations). By recognising this we can deepen the coherence between our own internal organisational processes and the community-level change processes we are supporting.

Paulo Freire and ActionAid's methodologies

"Read the word, read the world." Paulo Freire

Paulo Freire is a key reference point for our conscientisation work. Paulo Freire was a Brazilian educator who developed a method of conscientisation linked to literacy through his work in Brazil's slums (see his book *Pedagogy of the oppressed*). His work inspired the *Reflect* approach ActionAid developed from 1993 (with Freire's advice until his death in 1997). His theoretical thinking underlies most of the other methodologies ActionAid uses. However, we have made important additions to Freire's work over many years, including from the feminist movement. We see consciousness-raising as an important tool to challenge patriarchy.

One challenge Freire saw was shifting people from a passive or fatalistic view of the world where, for example, they see government provision of basic services as a form of charity for which they should be thankful and where they do not believe change is possible. Moving towards a more active view of the world in which people see government services as basic rights is a fundamental step. But getting access to information is not always easy, especially in contexts where there is no guaranteed right to information, or where information is only available in dominant languages or written form. This is a major challenge because many people living in poverty lack basic literacy skills or do not speak the official language. ActionAid and its partners can play a key role, facilitating *Reflect!on-Act!on* processes and bringing in information in local languages on government entitlements, policies, acts and schemes.

The methodologies ActionAid has developed and used in recent years have all been connected to Freire's ideas. Robert Chambers' groundbreaking work on participatory methodologies and "putting the last first" has also inspired many of our methodologies. We will draw on many elements in promoting the *Reflect!on-Act!on* process including:

- **The *Reflect* approach.** ActionAid has been at the forefront of translating Freire's ideas into practice, with the development of the *Reflect* approach to adult literacy and social change in 1993. Both Freire and Chambers offered advice during the development of ActionAid's pilot Reflect programmes in Uganda, Bangladesh and El Salvador. *Reflect* has now spread across the world. Hundreds of other organisations in over 80 countries use it and it has won five UN prizes since 2003. ActionAid continues to be a key reference point for networking and strategic development of the approach, hosting the *Reflect* website (www.reflect-action.org) and Reflect Basecamp (an intranet for frontline Reflect practitioners).
- ***Societies tackling AIDS through rights.*** STAR is a participatory approach empowering and mobilising communities to respond to the challenges of HIV and AIDS. It is built on the *Reflect* approach and drew on insights from the *Stepping stones* methodology. It has generated some excellent insights on the importance of changing attitudes and behaviours.

- ***Participatory vulnerability analysis.*** Reflect practitioners working with ActionAid's human security team to support vulnerability analysis at local, district and national level developed PVA. It has given excellent insights on how vulnerability cuts across all our work and has shown effective ways of linking processes of conscientisation at different levels.
- ***Economic literacy and budget analysis.*** ELBAG uses participatory tools to enable people to track local and national budgets, engage in budget formulation processes, build their economic literacy and hold governments to account. It draws on social audit, report cards and a range of other methods. It has given some excellent insights on how to systematically monitor public policy and budgets as part of the conscientisation process. Visit www.elbag.org for more information.
- **Gender equality and rights-based approaches.** Our *Power, inclusion and rights-based approaches* resource kit has over 100 pages of practical tools on how to do feminist structural analysis, stakeholder analysis, mapping of rights contexts and priority group analysis, as well as theoretical explanations. It generates a deeper analysis of patriarchy and ensures that a women's rights dimension is integrated into all our analyses.

Visit http://act.ai/KRyYIz **to see Freire, P.** ***Pedagogy on the oppressed.*** **Continuum, New York, 1970.** http://act.ai/KRy0G6 **for more information about Robert Chambers' work.**

The Hive (http://act.ai/LcUNAz**) has details of various methodologies and useful resources.**

Key elements for the *Reflect!on-Act!on* process

Use the name *Reflect!on-Act!on* consistently and merge all other approaches into this. This means that we no longer use the term ELBAG, but we do continue to promote economic literacy and budget analysis under *Reflect!on-Act!on*. We no longer talk about PVA, but we of course make vulnerability analysis an integral part of what groups using *Reflect!on-Act!on* do. Equally, we address HIV where it is a key issue, but we no longer have a separately-branded process. We will ensure we systematically address gender analysis in all *Reflect!on-Act!on* processes. We will organise around *Reflect!on-Act!on* groups or circles, or use *Reflect!on-Act!on* approaches with existing groups to advance their analysis and action.

Ensure that all the *Reflect!on-Act!on* processes we support respect our eight HRBA principles. These are a powerful framework for guiding everything we do.

Draw on the full basket of participatory tools and methods. We have extensive experience of using participatory methods, particularly visualisation, which people can use to develop their own materials for critical analysis. Visualisations may include maps (that analyse anything from land use and land tenancy to government services and markets); calendars (analysing trends through a year, daily routine charts on gender roles or timelines mapping longer history); matrices (to analyse or rank crops or preferences, for example); problem ranking; Venn or Chapati diagrams (to analyse power relations); trees (to analyse cause and effect or income and expenditure, for example); rivers (to visualise life stories of individuals or institutions); and flow diagrams (to look at the inter-connections between issues).

But we can also bring in so many other approaches, from social audits to participatory video; photo-montage to puppet shows; transect walks to games; popular music to dancing; newspaper and radio critical analysis to citizen journalism; and street plays, role play and drama (from Boal to Brecht). We can use any form of creative expression. **We have many excellent resources to draw from that we have developed under *Reflect*, PVA, STAR and ELBAG. The challenge is to de-brand these and connect them into a common format so they form part of a single, coherent process.** There are thousands of other resources available and new participatory tools are constantly being developed which we can draw from (see, for example, www.planotes.org and www.iied.org).

Create a national and international community of practitioners and trainers. They should learn from each other, constantly develop their capacities and have an online forum where they can exchange materials and resources. This resource book acts as a foundation, but we need all the people working on different strategic objectives to work together to produce practical resources to supplement this core. All the people who previously worked on different branded methods need to connect together to develop resources for *Reflect!on-Act!on* processes.

Invest in community facilitators/cadres/fellows. No one is more important to the success of a Reflect!on-Act!on (or any conscientisation) process than the facilitator. We need to invest in the capacity development of grassroots cadres. These may be people from the same communities we are working in – ideally identified transparently by people living in poverty in these communities. Or they may be people from outside the area (such as the "fellows" used in Myanmar – see http://act.ai/LzKzXu for a case study) who are given intensive training and located with communities for a year or more to facilitate change processes. Either way, we need to value the training and development of these people, recognising the importance of their own empowerment in the process.

Form *Reflect!on-Act!on* circles (or locally-named groups) with the most excluded people or use the approach with existing groups. How you do this will depend on the size of the community and the nature of the different groups that are most excluded/living in greatest poverty. There may be more than one group, but where this is the case there should be an articulation between them. Linking groups/circles within and across communities, especially identity-based groups (farmers' organisations/women's groups, for example), will be important to build people's analysis and connect to people's organisations and social movements.

Support the strengthening of people's communication skills. Many people living in poverty have had their right to education violated and struggle with basic literacy or access to official languages. Sometimes there is a case for actively teaching basic skills as part of the process or of strengthening the practical use of these skills (there are useful *Reflect* resources for supporting this in a way that is integrated with the conscientisation process). There is invariably some dimension of the process which involves strengthening people's capacity to communicate, from accessing information in new ways, building confidence to

speak out in public spaces or understanding audiences they are trying to reach to accessing and using new media or strengthening people's use of official languages (the languages of power). This may mean helping people to become citizen journalists or bloggers, to learn new skills (like digital photography or participatory video) or to access new forms of communication (community radio, for example). A key part of any *Reflect!on-Act!on* process must be to help people find, use and strengthen their voice.

Produce simple new resources based on national and international policy reports or publications. Every time we advance our analysis on a particular issue and produce a new publication we should produce a one-page practical resource to inform and advance people's analysis in *Reflect!on-Act!on* processes at local and national level. This will ensure constant updating and refreshing of analysis and facilitate links between local, national and international work. All practical resources will be available online on the website www.people-action.org

Actively consider the case for women-only spaces and ensure gender analysis of power everywhere. Often women will need an independent space and we should ensure this option is always available. It may be particularly important at the start of the process, as women build their confidence. This does not mean permanent segregation, but separate space and time is often essential to build the confidence and capacity of the most oppressed groups. Of course, connections need to be maintained so that at critical moments the women can share their analysis and actions with wider groups. Moreover, gender analysis of power needs to be prioritised in all groups, not just those with women.

Create spaces for young people. Historically, ActionAid has done relatively little work with youth. However, the People's Action strategy emphasises that youth are a critical group whose rights are violated and who can be powerful drivers of change, making it important for us to work with them. We need to reach out to existing youth organisations or help create new spaces where we can support conscientisation processes with youth and enable them to address their own critical issues, as well as supporting them to engage in wider community and national development processes.

Create spaces for children. As Nelson Mandela observed, "There is no keener revelation of a society's soul than the way in which it treats its children." In most contexts (especially where child sponsorship is working), we will engage with children through schools. We need to invest in spaces that can help build children's awareness of rights. We may do this by working with teachers to reform or reinforce the curriculum, by bringing in new teaching methods or learning materials, or by supporting lunchtime or after-school clubs, particularly for girls. The charter of 10 core rights in schools (*Promoting rights in schools*) offers a framework for this.

In some cases we may work with children wholly outside the school environment – promoting children's rights awareness and analysis in safe spaces in the community. In all these cases, we are using fundamentally the same principles and methods and there should be a clear connection between the methodology and process with children and with the wider community. Reflection-action as a core cycle is as relevant for children as it is for anyone. We may also develop teaching-learning materials for use in schools or with children that draw on and help them analyse (from their own perspective) key local development issues. **All processes of child message collection are opportunities to advance rights awareness and empowerment processes.**

Promote comprehensive power and rights analysis. We have many tools to help you analyse power and rights. See the table on page 82, chapter 4 and www.people-action.org for a set of practical tools to ensure detailed power analysis.

Support more focused work on particular issues with particular groups. Different groups of people sometimes need different spaces to pursue their analysis and action, for example smallholder farmers, landless people, service user groups, community-based organisations focused on budget analysis or vulnerability, school management committees, youth organisations and children's clubs. The challenge is

to **support each of these groups using the same philosophy and the same *Reflect!on-Act!on* process and connecting them on an ongoing basis to the overall community process.** There may be tensions between them but these should be brought out and addressed in wider assemblies rather than buried or ignored. Each of these groups may link to different people's organisations or social movements, but within the community there needs to be connections so we do not end up with fragmented or divided processes.

Address the power of excluded groups within the community. Most communities have some form of assembly or decision-making body, which elite groups often dominate. We need to promote new norms where possible, creating space for the voices of excluded groups (and specifically women, youth and children within those groups) in the wider community processes, helping them get elected into new positions or changing the dynamic of decision-making processes so they are more inclusive. As much as possible, we should also promote the use of the HRBA principles and our *Reflect!on-Act!on* processes within these powerful spaces.

Connect community level processes of conscientisation with district, national and international level mobilisation. The next section talks about the role of organising and mobilising. The critical thing is to use the conscientisation process of *Reflect!on-Act!on* as a foundation. Isolated local actions will never resolve many issues, so connecting people to organisations and supporting their mobilisation is absolutely essential. We can often use *Reflect!on-Act!on* processes in our work with social movements and national partners, strengthening their analysis and process, democratising their practice and grounding them in the voices of people living in poverty.

Promote shared learning visits and accompaniment. There is a particular value to shared learning visits/peer exchanges, such as exchanges between women's groups, across communities or through farmer-to-farmer exchanges where people learn from peers who have overcome challenges. Having someone from a different yet similar context "accompany" your process of empowerment or organisation can bring in new perspectives, open doors, spread new practices and build solidarity.

Recognise that our own ALPS processes should be part of the conscientisation process. When we are doing appraisals, strategic planning, participatory reviews and evaluations we can be enriching and deepening the conscientisation process. The essence of ALPS is that it uses the same participatory principles and tools for our own organisational processes. Another dimension of this can come when we apply our economic literacy and budget analysis tools to our own budgets!

Integrated empowerment in Bihar, India

"Initially I faced many problems…through Reflect processes I have come to know of many things. Now I understand the reasons for the dominance of the patriarchal system. The Reflect circle has given us a platform to bring out our hidden potential. Women have learned to analyse social conditions, such as safe drinking water, electricity, schools and hospitals and reasons for lack of basic amenities. Through social mapping and Chapati diagrams, we are able to discuss and identify the responsible factors. Now we are making collective efforts and raising our voices to get our own rights from upper caste people and the government. We have already claimed our housing rights, drinking water, job cards for all and quality midday meals for our children. We can now read and write and do our own signatures. Our children, particularly girls, are regularly attending school."
Priyanka, *Reflect* participant, Phulwari Sharif block of Patna district, Bihar

Tips for how to make child sponsorship part of an empowerment process

ActionAid's commitment to internal accountability means we have to make the people we work with aware of how we raise funds for our work. In most cases, the bulk of our funding comes from child sponsorship. It is important that people living in poverty are aware of what this is and how it works. This awareness and understanding enables communities to make an informed decision about whether to take part in our scheme. Being fully transparent helps to build trust and reduces people's fear that we are diverting money elsewhere.

But it also sets an example. If we are transparent and accountable in how we raise and use resources, this builds people's confidence to demand transparency and hold others to account. A well managed, transparent sponsorship programme enhances the empowerment process, modelling our values and principles in practice.

Every child sponsorship activity is also an opportunity for empowering children. For example, we can:

- Organise specific activities for children to introduce them to child sponsorship during a community awareness-raising process, so they know what ActionAid does in the area, who the sponsors are and why they offer support.
- Ensure that children, parents and communities know what is expected of them during child sponsorship activities, and have a part in deciding how roles are allocated.
- Encourage children (especially older ones) to be involved in planning child sponsorship events, setting themes and defining suitable activities, helping them to develop their leadership and negotiation skills – and deepening their ownership of the process. Use the process to identify children who can be powerful spokespeople or ambassadors and who you might support to keep personal blogs, photos or videos.
- Ensure child message collection events are organised for all children (sponsored and non-sponsored), so they encourage unity and engage the whole community.
- Make sure that education is a key part of a message collection activity, whether your event is linked to school activities, done in after-school spaces or organised wholly out of school. The education dimension could be analysing local development issues supported by ActionAid and partners or understanding geography (where sponsors come from) and learning about other cultures (from messages from sponsors). There are also ways to use reading and writing of letters to develop (and even track) the literacy and communication skills of children.
- Make it fun! Children will want to continue participating in child sponsorship activities and act as ambassadors for our programme work if they enjoy it. Children have a right to play and having fun can be empowering! If we produce special resources for our sponsorship activities they should promote creative learning, involve games and introduce new methods.
- Share correspondence from supporters openly and discuss what it means for someone from far away to be interested in their life; what might be effective ways to make them understand more?
- Use sponsorship activities to engage staff, partner organisations and the wider community in setting indicators and checking progress against programme goals.
- Design sponsorship activities that will help us capture stories and photos to use for donor reporting and media work. As much as possible, stories should be told from the vantage point of local children and the children should narrate them directly to give them additional emotional power.

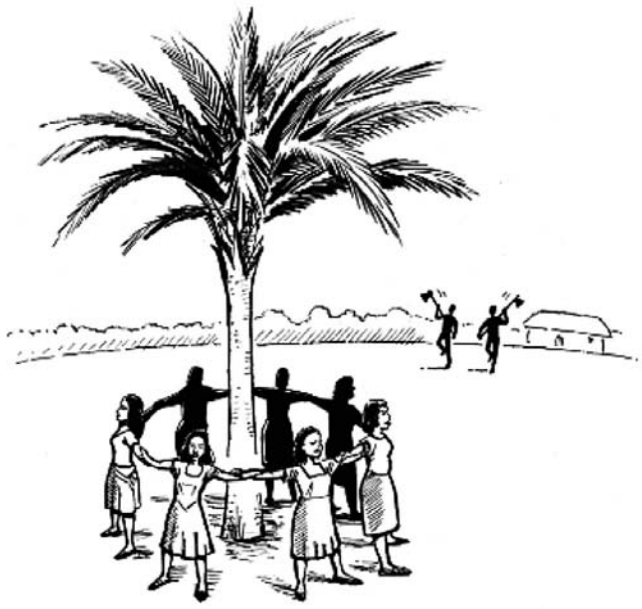
Children can become active agents in supporting local development

2. Supporting and strengthening organisations and movements

"In union there is strength". Aesop, Greece, 560BC

People living in poverty can take on and challenge more powerful interests that deny them their rights through organising, mobilising and building constituencies. Processes of awareness-raising and building critical consciousness are a foundation but are in themselves insufficient to guarantee structural change. We also need to support the self-organisation of people so they can lead their own struggles, as well as enable people to link with other organisations and movements that can advance their rights.

Organising is a process by which people come together to act in their shared interest. ActionAid believes that community organising is the fundamental foundation for securing change. A core goal of community organising is to build the power of excluded groups by bringing them together and building a collective organisation that will allow them to influence key decision-makers on a range of issues over time. Awareness and conscientisation processes as outlined above involve mobilisation and action on local issues. It is important to build on this organic mobilisation, to facilitate the emergence of new community organisations or the strengthening and democratising of existing community organisations. We also need to support grassroots organisations to connect as identity-based groups at district level and up to national level, creating new people's organisations and social movements or strengthening and democratising those that already exist at national level. ActionAid is committed to supporting the capacity development of organisations at all levels to help them make these connections.



In any particular context, a range of community organisations may emerge from conscientisation processes, for example, women's organisations, organisations of smallholder farmers, cooperatives, collective social enterprises, youth activist groups, local organisations of people living with HIV and AIDS, school management committees or parent teacher associations, adolescent girls' clubs, user groups (holding government services to account), identity-based groups (for example, for dalits, bonded labourers, migrant labourers or landless people) or issue-based groups (on land rights or women's cooperatives). Existing community groups may become stronger.

The precise range of community organisations we work with and support will vary enormously from one context to the next. But the way we support them in their organisational capacity development will have certain core elements.

We will:

- promote democratic and transparent practices within the organisation
- encourage their openness to new members and especially to participation from the most excluded groups
- ensure they respect women's rights and involve women as equals, including in leadership roles (which may require capacity-building of women and attitude change in men)
- continue to build their capacity for reflection and action, seeing conscientisation and rights awareness as an ongoing process
- facilitate links across organisations within the same community – so there is a broader process and a sense of common work (avoiding duplication or isolationism)
- facilitate links with like-minded community organisations in neighbouring communities and at district level
- facilitate links with like-minded national organisations, especially people's organisations and social movements that directly represent the voices of their constituency
- facilitate links with organisations and alliances from other social groups (including from the urban middle class) that may be allies acting in solidarity.

ActionAid and our local partners may support the capacity development of community organisations in many ways, with financing, training, strategic advice, communications and connections. In all cases, we need to be conscious of our own power and ensure that our agenda does not undermine the space for people's own analysis and action. We should avoid a situation where we or our partners are directly running or dominating organisations. While some community organisations may initially depend on our support, we need to foster their independence if they are to be sustainable.

In facilitating links between local and national organisations we need to be selective and strategic. There are many types of apex organisations, networks, coalitions, federations, alliances and movements that claim to have legitimacy and roots, but which are sometimes little more than "fronts" set up by governments, corporate interests, traditional leaders or powerful elites to advance their own interests. We need to understand the origins of these, their membership, their agendas, their credibility and their affiliations. And we need to help community organisations make their own informed decisions about which national organisations best represent their interests and add most value to their struggles. This is one area where our vantage point as an organisation rooted nationally (especially where we have national boards and assemblies) as well as locally, can truly add value.

The table below summarises some categories of national organisation we may link with.

ActionAid's unique federal governance model

ActionAid's own organisational model seeks to be a positive example for the organisations we work with and the movements we support. Our process of organisational change (called internationalisation-nationalisation) is leading to a unique federal model that:

- democratises our international governance, with perspectives and voices from all countries creating a global umbrella organisation national organisations own and govern
- increases our legitimacy and credibility at national level by constituting national organisations with national governance bodies composed of citizens of the country and more specifically our primary stakeholders (people living in poverty)
- increases our relevance, credibility and impact both nationally and internationally.

This process is NOT only about registering organisations nationally. It is a political project. It is moving us from our old identity as a British, "foreign," transnational NGO (rooted in the north-south transfer of aid) to being a democratic global federation consistent with our mission and values. Internationalisation is about ensuring our work is relevant, and determined and supervised by people (board or assembly members) who are nearer to, knowledgeable about and rooted in the countries and communities where we work. Internationalisation is also about pooling our resources and relationships to tackle the international causes of poverty and injustice, mobilising public opinion and actions across all the countries where we work. Through internationalisation, we aim to achieve greater unity in our diversity.

What is expected from boards/assemblies?

- to understand the political and technical aspects that led us to be an international organisation composed of national members
- to understand our HRBA approach and its minimum standards
- to ensure and monitor that HRBA is at the core of the organisation and decision-making
- to be political and take sides with people living in poverty
- to internalise and monitor ActionAid values within the board, assembly and individuals
- to think and act globally and locally: to ensure that national strategy and plans connect local rights violations to national and international contributing factors; connect local struggles with national and international movements; and connect local issues to national civil society change processes
- to contribute to the international federation and be an active member
- to embrace dual citizenship, as a national organisation but also as a member of the international federation
- to show solidarity to other ActionAid members by supporting campaigns and advocacy work.

Connections between local and national organisations should not be one-way. Where we have a national partnership with a credible, legitimate national organisation or movement we need to be working actively in our local rights programmes to facilitate connections, which will reinforce the base of these organisations. Another area where we can add real value as a global federation is in facilitating links between people's organisations and social movements, across issues within the same country (where there are common concerns) and across countries. We can use our engagement in international spaces/forums to open up space for the representation of these movements.

Organisational form	Characteristics	Example
Apex bodies **Federations** **Alliances of the marginalised**	Groups of people living in poverty from different local areas come together as rights activists to form a cluster or "new entity" at the next highest level (district, region, state or national). This does not necessarily mean the formation of a new organisation. However, there is typically an agreed and elected leadership or governing structure of sorts. They may form for a specific objective and then disband, or typically may have a longer life span to cooperate on shared interests on an ongoing basis. NGOs or middle class intellectuals may be involved in solidarity action (see chapter five) supporting the organisation, but are not part of it.	In Tanzania, more than 123,000 farmers organised into 10 apex structures secured an increase in the state purchase price for cashews and state backing for farner credit.
Social movements	A coming together of people with a common interest or from the same social group to fight injustice. Typically organised into units or structures at local up to state or national level. Members are typically people who share a common experience and identity of being excluded (although this is not always the case; consumer rights groups can also be social movements). Movements organise to challenge duty bearers directly. In some cases, social movements may enter into coalitions and campaigns. Social movements can be highly organised (trade unions and farmers' federations, for example) or more spontaneous (such as the anti-globalisation movement). NGOs and middle class intellectuals may support social movements, but ideally should not seek to lead the movement.	In Brazil, the Landless People's Movement (MST), whose members are landless peasants, struggle for land rights and agrarian reform. The movement is organised at local, state and national level, with elected and accountable leadership at each level. It does not include middle class intellectuals, although they provide political solidarity and support through a separate structure called the Friends of the MST. In Malawi, membership of the Coalition of Women Living with HIV and AIDS increased from 10,000 to 60,000 in 12 years. Their advocacy has led to improvements in health facilities, the construction of two new mobile clinics, and a promise from government to amend proposed criminalisation clauses in the HIV bill.
Networks and coalitions	A coming together of a diverse mix of organisations, where organisations of people living in poverty link with NGOs and other civil society organisations, in support of shared goals, and a common minimum agenda. Our focus may be to ensure that the voices and positions of those living in poverty drive such networks, while encouraging broad solidarity from other actors.	The Africa Network Campaign on Education For All (ANCEFA) links to national education coalitions in 32 countries, each involving NGOs, CBOs and teachers' unions. ActionAid co-founded ANCEFA in 2000. Its head office is in Senegal. ANCEFA has become the leading platform representing African perspectives in global education debates.

Defining collectives, cooperatives and self-help groups

- **Collectives** (or community groups/people's organisations) and farmers' groups (or farmers' associations/organisations/unions) tend to be issue-based with the purpose of political advocacy on social injustice and knowledge sharing. In collectives, nothing is bought, sold or owned; everything is the "collective" output of its members. They are managed without hierarchy, and every member has equal decision-making power.
- **Cooperatives** bring people together to increase their income and improve their livelihoods in different sectors, including agriculture. Cooperatives have different legal structures in different countries. They are based on membership and members are required to contribute. Cooperatives usually engage in a "buy/sell" arrangement with their members. Their members own and democratically govern them and they have a clear, hierarchical structure. Each member usually has one vote on major decisions as outlined in the organisation's bylaws.
- **Self-help groups** come together on various issues of common economic interest among members

(savings and credit, for example). They are usually member-based. They do not require formal registration like cooperatives. National governments normally do not have laws for self-help groups. Most of ActionAid's work revolves around self-help groups, and we do some work with cooperatives.

Source: Synthesis report, Asia Sustainable Agriculture Training Workshop, September 2011

Sometimes NGOs get defined as social movements. NGOs are not social movements, but may work in alliance with or in support of social movements. ActionAid, as a global federation, places particular importance on working with social movements, but we should never claim to be a social movement ourselves. We contribute to the building and strengthening of progressive social movements in various countries, offering funding, capacity development and political and social solidarity to social movements' struggles. We also support intermediary organisations that work in political alliance with social movements. These organisations act as "fronts" to and assist social movements that are not formally registered. In many cases, it is not advisable for social movements themselves to officially register as legal entities regulated by government, as NGOs do, because this creates bureaucracy and kills social struggles.

ActionAid may pave the way for and support the formation of a social movement in every way possible (including funding, strategising, capacity development and unifying rights groups across places) but we should not found social movements. Importantly, whatever form organisations take, we should only support those that share our values, are secular, are not party-political and are committed to non-violence.

Tips for working with social movements

- Discuss and explore what constitutes a social movement/people's organisation in your country/context. Different political and historical contexts/moments mean there is a huge diversity.
- Make stronger links between our local work and national social movements. Ensure we are reinforcing and democratising the base of movements in our local rights programmes and ensure we are linking local mobilisation to credible national movements.
- Do not seek to over-formalise/do not impose our accounting methods/do not projectise our engagement/keep flexible and responsive!
- Do not expect to agree with every position or action a social movement takes.
- Ensure women's rights/gender analysis is mainstreamed in our work with any social movement.
- Build a structured programme of exchange between social movements from different sectors/countries.
- Mobilise more partners and promote participation of more base groups in the World Social Forum as a means to keep it dynamic.
- Compile case studies of our work and ensure reflection on working with social movements is on the agenda of our internal meetings.
- Recognise that a social movement evolves and may have legitimacy at one moment and lose it the next, as leaders lose track or are co-opted or the context changes.
- Make quick links to new emerging movements as being there from the start can be important for building trust.
- While we are passionate about supporting movements, do not pretend we are a movement ourselves.

For ActionAid resources on social movements, visit the Hive – http://act.ai/N5BFQ4
Also see Tarrow, S. *Power in movement: Collective action, social movements and politics.* **Cambridge University Press, 1994. Visit** http://act.ai/L1Zirk **for more references.**

3. Monitoring public policy and budgets

"If you don't monitor you don't see." ActionAid Participatory Methodologies Forum, Bangladesh, 2001

Monitoring of public policy and budgets is an essential part of empowering people living in poverty to make claims and hold the state accountable. Often government policies and programmes promise people specific entitlements, but these are undermined in practice because of low awareness, poor targeting, inadequate budget allocation or misappropriation of resources. By monitoring public policy and budgets, people can build their own evidence base, strengthen their understanding of the role of the state, enhance their capacity for effective rights-based action and lay the basis for campaigning to bring about structural change.

There are many approaches ActionAid and our partners can use, including budget monitoring, social audits, citizen report cards, community scorecards, public policy monitoring and engaging in budget formulation and approval processes. We already have rich experience of these. We have developed a wide range of additional resources that can be drawn on for this work. As much as possible, you should closely link using these with conscientising and organising processes as outlined above. The precise approaches you use will depend on your context. For example, it will depend on the degree to which there is an effective legal framework and a right to information in place or whether any attempt to scrutinise government spending is regarded as a subversive political act. However, even in difficult contexts, there is usually some means you can use to monitor government policies and budgets, increasing accountability.

Below are a range of real examples as the political context can make a significant difference to the approaches you use:

Budget tracking forums, Brazil

Participatory budgeting was one of the first initiatives by the present ruling party to try to seize power at municipal level. ActionAid Brazil's partner organisation Conviver launched a campaign in Mirandiba, Pernambuco state, to monitor local government expenditure, investments and funds collected from taxes. The campaign slogan was "the public budget is your business". Conviver leads the Mirandiba Budget Tracking Forum, made up of around 25 organisations. They have been able to ensure that the final budget represents community priorities. Their power comes from the authorities knowing that "the forum is serious in defending the will of society". In this example, the "stepping stones" were groups joining the forum, getting the budget information and analysing it, and then publicly critiquing it. This led to actual changes to the budget, which is an indicator of greater public accountability.

Social audits, India

A social audit is an accountability tool to understand, measure, verify, report on and improve government's performance in the implementation of its policies and programmes. We can use the same social audit approach to track our own performance. In India, ActionAid has been supporting the Indian government to undertake a pilot social audit of the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA) in the state of Uttar Pradesh.

The NREGA is an ambitious anti-poverty programme, legally guaranteeing 100 days work a year to India's rural households whose adult members are willing to do unskilled manual labour. Social audit is an essential feature built into the Act to give citizens the chance to monitor, evaluate and feedback on how it is implemented. Since 2006, ActionAid has done 90 social audits in eight blocks (sub-districts) of a district, working with a local partner.

The social audits took place in three phases – preparation, verification and presentation. Generally, much of the process was completed in two days. On the first day, documents were reviewed and analysed and on the

second day the report was shared with the villagers during a public hearing. After the social audit in one block, Pratapgarh, actions were taken to address findings:

- Suspensions or warnings were given to officials found responsible for irregularities, and an evaluation was undertaken of work carried out by these officers.
- A NREGA helpline was set up to receive complaints and forward them to concerned authorities.
- Payment modes were adjusted, so that labourers' wages were paid through banks and post offices, while materials were paid directly by cheque to prevent corruption.

An impact assessment on completion of the social audits found that people's awareness of NREGA and its provisions had increased dramatically, and that NREGA was being implemented much more efficiently. The study also found that wages were being paid on time, but that gender discrimination remained largely intact. The baseline in this example was the level of take up of the NREGA entitlements before the audit. Developing the baseline allowed a deep analysis of what the barriers to take up were. Indicators or stepping stones were the adjustment of forms, schedules and ways of paying, until finally rights were claimed.

Social audits in Nepal

ActionAid Nepal has been doing internal national social audits since 2002, looking at their performance against their stated objectives (How well have we done what we said we would do?); the impact they have had on people's lives (What are the sustained changes we have brought about in people's lives?); views of stakeholders on their objectives, values and performance (What do people think about what we do and how we do it? Are we "walking the talk"?; and how they implement equal opportunities (Do we effectively encourage social inclusion?). Various organisational processes feed into the national social audit. Specifically:

- Participatory review and reflection on their annual programme performance, which takes place with communities they work with, partners and ActionAid Nepal staff.
- External evaluators and peers do periodic evaluations to give an in-depth assessment of local rights programmes, providing an analysis of programme impact.
- Financial audits (internal and external) are done annually.
- Representatives from communities ActionAid Nepal works with, partners, alliances, government agencies, international non-profit agencies and funding partners are invited each year to provide feedback.
- A national social audit thus provides a forum for collective review and dialogue where stakeholders can raise questions, share their concerns or contribute to ActionAid Nepal's strategic thinking. Annual reports, audit reports and information about partnership are shared with stakeholders.

Each year ActionAid Nepal's partners also do social audits in the districts and communities where ActionAid Nepal works with them. Social audits have contributed to enhancing ActionAid Nepal's critical awareness of their actions, and enabled them to proactively seek feedback from their stakeholders, to adjust/ensure their programmes are relevant to the local context, and to enhance financial and organisational performance and practice. Social audits have also contributed to ActionAid Nepal institutionalising the process in other programmes (funded through institutional donors). Social audits have not only contributed to ActionAid Nepal's performance accountability but to building stakeholders' capacity (primarily communities) to demand accountability.

Citizen report cards, Tanzania

Citizens can report on the performance of public institutions and public functionaries through what we call citizen report cards. Collected through surveys and focus group discussions, report cards give people an opportunity to assess the government's delivery of public services such as hospitals, schools and police. ActionAid Tanzania trained over 900 facilitators in eight districts to use community scorecards. The facilitators helped community groups monitor local government expenditure and performance. The analysis done in these local circles has fed into national advocacy on treatment, care and agricultural extension services for people living with HIV and AIDS. Other forms of citizen-state dialogue include public hearings and poverty dialogues.

Public policy monitoring of devolved fund, Kenya

The Kenyan government has pursued decentralised development policies since independence. The rationale is that public funds should be diverted to the local level as communities are best placed to identify their own needs and prioritise projects. The Local Authorities Transfer Fund (LATF), set up in 1998, is one of the mechanisms for devolving funds. ActionAid Kenya and its partner, the Coast Development Lobby Group (CDLG), have been monitoring the Municipal Council of Mombasa's use of LATF funds.

The two organisations have engaged the Municipal Council and undertaken social audits of LATF-funded projects. The CDLG demonstrated against misuse of resources, implemented grassroots campaigns such as the February 2006 Name and Shame Campaign and petitioned the Ministry of Local Government. As a result, the organisations have:

- created widespread community awareness about the LATF process and citizen rights
- contributed to greater accountability of public officials and political leaders in their use of public resources.

Monitoring agriculture subsidy programme, Malawi

In 2004, the government of Malawi launched a nationwide Agricultural Inputs Subsidy Programme. The programme gave roughly half of Malawi's smallholder farmers coupons to buy fertiliser and seeds at far below the market price. As part of the *HungerFREE* campaign, ActionAid Malawi has supported the Salima Governance Network, the Coalition of Women Farmers and the Coalition of Women Living with HIV and AIDS in three districts to monitor how the programme is being implemented, and whether it is reaching resource-poor farmers, including people living with HIV and AIDS.

The programme began by increasing farmers' knowledge about the right to food and giving them access to the subsidised seeds and fertilisers. The groups monitored this by counting and verifying if those who were registered were the ones receiving coupons. They also ensured that women living with HIV and AIDS were not left out during coupon distribution. When they saw anomalies they notified and questioned the division agriculture development officer.

This initiative has had many successes. For example, in one district, Rumphi, monitoring revealed that few women were receiving coupons. The coalitions called meetings with the chiefs and officials of the Ministry of Agriculture to ensure equal numbers of women received coupons. This is another great example of how monitoring is actually a programming intervention that can support and lead to change.

Using market research and public opinion surveys in India and Kenya

Sometimes we can gain new insights on the relevance of public policies by building an independent evidence base of what local people consider as important issues. Understanding people's opinions can help to challenge assumptions that underlie some public policies. For example, national policies on HIV and education were critically challenged in India and Kenya by collecting grassroots views in different local rights programmes about the teaching of HIV in schools from parents, youth, children and teachers. The results were striking, challenging the view that parents disliked sex education in schools and showing that the vast majority of parents wanted and expected their children to receive age-appropriate sex education. ActionAid has the potential to use public opinion surveys across a number of local rights programmes to bring new perspectives into national policy debates. And the process can be empowering for local people whose views are so rarely sought by those in power.

Our finance vision and values

ActionAid's financial systems strive to use HRBA values. How ActionAid manages its own finances becomes particularly important when we are tracking government budgets and holding others accountable. Recognising this, the Finance and Operations Directorate has developed a vision for their role in the organisation. They want to be "a valued, performance-driven and collaborative finance team, at the heart of the organisation and enabling the delivery of ActionAid's strategy/mission".

They seek to achieve this by:

- providing timely, quality, relevant financial information
- continuously improving internal controls
- ensuring appropriate systems support ActionAid's work, and are continually optimised and integrated
- reflecting, learning and two-way communication
- taking a disciplined, systematic and consistent approach to their work
- finding innovative ways to streamline processes
- strengthening organisational financial capacity
- being accountable to mutually-agreed policies, standards and procedures
- providing financial leadership in determining strategic business direction
- aligning financial processes, systems and policies to facilitate strategy execution
- deep financial analysis to drive business forward.

This is matched by a commitment to a values-driven working culture, which highlights:

- having minimum standards
- coordinating with other directorates
- integrating finance in key processes
- communicating!
- valuing innovation with cost effectiveness
- setting a clear direction and vision
- having a consistent approach (cross-divisional)
- ensuring ownership of processes
- working as a team
- developing common systems
- building a culturally-appropriate performance management system
- supporting an organisation driven by politics.

4. Communications for empowerment

Strengthening people's capacity to communicate – to elevate their voices from the grassroots to those in power – is a defining part of empowerment. In many cases, people need to learn some **foundation skills** in communication, often denied to them because of lack of education or opportunity. These may include basic literacy and language skills. Lack of these prevents people living in poverty accessing power. ActionAid has supported the *Reflect* approach for many years, helping people to make the connections between communication and power (see www.reflect-action.org). This work will continue to be a major part of our *Reflect!on-Act!on* process for conscientisation. There are many ways to consciously strengthen people's basic literacy and practical use of literacy skills within a conscientisation process, even without explicit teaching (though that may also be helpful sometimes).

Increasingly we need to move beyond basic communication skills to critically explore and enhance people's access to **different means of communication** and their capacity to understand and engage the audiences they want to reach. We have used community radio stations and participatory video to powerful effect for many years to support local and national struggles for rights. New technologies and developments in the mass media create new opportunities. Corporate media have immense power over the news agenda, which is in the hands of a few press barons and state outlets. But the growing Right to Information movement means there is space for people-centred media models. People from all walks of life are increasingly involved in compiling, sharing, filtering, discussing and distributing news. Video phones, SMS and social media can bring new information, new perspectives and new forms of dissemination. The internet and the rise of citizen journalism is making news more participatory, social, diverse and partisan, reviving the discursive ethos of the era before mass media.

Indeed, there is a marked **decline in people's trust** of formal institutions as sources of information. This is matched by the rise in person-to-person communication through SMS, mobile-to-radio, community radio, user-generated content, citizen journalism, blogging, recommendations, crowd-sourcing, transparency and anti-corruption initiatives and social-media-as-news. Online and offline, communities are increasingly using mass communication tools and platforms to tell their own stories, mobilise support, reach decision-makers and advance social change. And within companies, governments and NGOs, in-house newsrooms, multimedia teams and feature channels are growing in number and sophistication.

Ushahidi in Kenya

We saw the power of new media in the post-2007 election period in Kenya when the website http://kenya.ushahidi.com/ tracked events across the country. Citizens reported incidents like rioting, looting, sexual assaults, disappearances and deaths by SMS and email, and these were tracked on a Google map. The website became more reliable than most media coverage and enabled people to share what was happening in their own neighbourhoods.

ActionAid and our partners can **harness these new opportunities** to great effect, enabling people in our local rights programmes to develop their literacy and communication capacities, generate and share engaging content, and create and occupy media space in ways that motivate decision-makers to act. We can combine innovation in popularising accountability and transparency initiatives (such as www.ipaidabribe.com in India) with our experience of budget tracking and social audits to help spread and advance alternatives in this area. We can innovate with multimedia tools as part of our participatory processes, connecting people to relevant communication technologies, media and platforms – helping to sustain, spread and deepen progress made locally.

Community radio stations are an opportunity to provide local media in people's own language. We can use a range of other media to help people living in poverty to act as frontline witnesses, documenting and reporting rights violations, corruption and absenteeism. Creating a group of key women, girls, men or boys who can act as grassroots spokespeople, ambassadors, multimedia reporters or amateur journalists, can make a big difference. Give them training and support to get their stories and perspectives out into the mass media.

As much as possible, we should strengthen the capacity of people living in poverty to analyse for themselves the **opportunities different media present.** This may include raising awareness of the new media being developed and introducing a range of possible technologies which people can review for themselves before deciding which is best suited to their needs (see the box below on the *Reflect* and information communication technologies project). Working with people to articulate their stories can be a remarkable way to expose the human drama and reality of poverty and injustice. A well told story, in any medium, can be a powerful means to cut through abstract policy dialogue, engage influencers and decision-makers and reach the mass public to advance alternatives and drive social change.

It is particularly important to work with women living in poverty, whose stories so often go unheard or unrepresented in the dominant media. In part, this is because two-thirds of adults in the world denied their right to education are women. In most of our *Reflect* programmes focusing on literacy, more than 80% of participants are women. *Reflect!on-Act!on* processes can address basic skills and can thus be a powerful (and even necessary) foundation for enhancing women's voices in both new and traditional media.

There are also opportunities to **work with youth,** who may be more agile in taking up new technologies and media. This has the double advantage of enhancing the skills and potential livelihoods of young people, while at the same time bringing new voices into national and international forums.

We have a particular opportunity to use child sponsorship to raise the **voices of children.** Our commitment to show the impact of all our work on children's lives means we should be able to tell every story through a children's lens. Our sponsorship communications can become more than a routine message collection, instead drawing out powerful stories from children themselves, empowering them in the process of communicating with supporters.

In any media, traditional or new, a **powerful story** that responds to real events and key moments, from a person behind-the-scenes, at the grassroots, who has lived through the issues at hand, is worth its weight in gold. ActionAid is uniquely well placed to draw out these voices and stories, and to tailor them to the audiences we want to reach, motivating people to act. But the challenge is to ensure that this is genuinely part of an empowering process for the people involved – that in the process we are not disempowering or exploiting people, or indeed, exposing them to a risk of backlash. We need to develop a culture of excellence in giving people space and means to communicate as an integral part of the empowerment process, rather than just using their voices for our own ends.

To do this effectively, we need to **invest in our own staff and partners.** We need to boost their capacity to understand the different opportunities and the power of different media, messages and actions. When our own colleagues are using these media for themselves they will understand their power as part of the empowerment process. In a world of multiple and diversifying literacies we are all illiterate in some way and we need to invest in our own learning!

Reflect and information communication technologies (ICTs)

The highly innovative *Reflect* and ICTs project ran in India, Burundi and Uganda. People from *Reflect* circles were encouraged to analyse their access to and control of information relating to their livelihoods. They looked at the value of information to their own lives, the control of information resources, existing sources of information and communication mechanisms. This led to a planning process at community level, where people made choices and set priorities for the use of a grant for technology and staff. Participants monitored the "communications systems" they chose according to indicators and objectives the communities set themselves. This is our way of assessing what people living in poverty want from the new information technologies and media available today, and how we can meet these expectations.

For more information, visit http://act.ai/LHRCAC

5. Responding to needs through rights-based service delivery

ActionAid should not engage in delivering basic services (either directly or through partner organisations) where we are not also contributing to empowerment and a more sustainable process of change. We never seek to act as an ongoing substitute or replacement for the government. But we may respond to basic needs in the short term in ways that strategically strengthen the connections between people as citizens/rights holders and their governments as duty bearers. Service delivery conceived in this way does not see people as beneficiaries of our charitable works, but is rather a vehicle for empowering people as rights activists.

For example, consider a situation where ActionAid is working in an area where most children, especially girls, are not in school because the nearest one is five kilometres away. The community, particularly women, have prioritised education but have no link with the Ministry of Education. We may facilitate their analysis of the situation, raising their awareness that education is a human right and sharing details of the constitution or relevant laws. We may support them to organise a school action group to make the case for a local school, collecting details of the number of children out of school and the impossibility of travel. Children may provide testimonies to illustrate the case for a school. We may then help a delegation from the community (including women and girls) to go to the district education office to present the case.

But, the response may be negative, with government officials saying they have no resources to build another school. We may then support further reflection and analysis by the community, working out the cost of building a school and where they could secure resources to help. We may also help the community negotiate with the government, for example, asking, "if we can get a school built, will the government guarantee to provide three trained teachers?"

The details will vary enormously from one location to the next. But in the above example there may be a strong case for ActionAid or a local partner to support people to build classrooms, if the district education office will agree to supply trained teachers and maintain the school. Supporting the school construction may be an opportunity to challenge discrimination or raise awareness of rights. For example, we could challenge gender division of labour or ensure stigmatised local people are employed. We may help set up and build the capacity of a school management committee, with equal representation of women, raising awareness of other education rights beyond just access to school (using the charter of 10 core rights in the Promoting Rights in School framework).

We can support service delivery work in the short term, but in the long term reinforce people's awareness of rights, secure long-term commitments from the government to deliver on fundamental rights, help people to organise, and facilitate a direct connection between citizens and governments as the duty bearer.

In our HRBA we are very clear that **basic needs, like food, water, sanitation, education, welfare, health care and shelter, are basic rights.** Adequate provision of these to all people is a fundamental responsibility of governments. In extreme circumstances (in disasters or conflicts, for example) the responsibility may lie with a "replacement duty bearer" such as the UN or a humanitarian agency. In practice, many governments fall short. And while these rights continue to be violated it can be difficult for people living in poverty to find the time and space for processes of conscientisation, mobilisation and organisation.

Sometimes governments may agree that citizens have certain rights, but may lack the resources to realise these rights in practice. In other contexts, the government may have the resources to meet basic needs, but lack the capacity to follow through on delivery. Or in yet another context, the government may deny that people living in poverty have rights at all and may actively oppose their struggle to realise rights. Empowering and organising people remains our fundamental concern in all these contexts, but we may also need to take action to respond to people's basic needs. In doing so we always work in ways that reinforce people's awareness of rights, build critical consciousness and strengthen grassroots organisations.

Often we work in contexts where key responsibilities for governance and delivery of services has been decentralised to local government. This can create opportunities for us to work strategically with local government agencies to model new ways of delivering services, always ensuring our approaches are cost effective and replicable and that they reach the most excluded people. The work we do in one district may act as a model for others and may serve as a foundation for our advocacy and campaigning work. Our rights-based approach reinforces the role of local government and strengthens the relationships between people (as citizens) and their government.

Meeting basic needs to create alternatives

An additional motive for meeting basic needs is to model alternative ways of meeting a need or delivering a basic service. These alternatives, once piloted and assessed for their "success" can be advocated as "service delivery models" to duty bearers.

ActionAid Brazil, inspired by the *Women won't wait* campaign, began a new programme called *Girls united against violence and AIDS* in partnership with Centro das Mulheres do Cabo, a feminist NGO that has worked in the north coastal area for 20 years. The campaign offers legal and social support to survivors. The project, which started as an ActionAid funded pilot, has secured support from both the federal and Pernambuco state governments, and is a successful example of ActionAid's strategy of piloting innovative approaches for government to adopt as good practice.

A checklist for rights-based service delivery

In all the service delivery work we do to respond to basic needs, we need to ensure we are working in a rights-based way that is:

- deepening awareness of rights and the role of duty bearers, such as government
- creating deeper consciousness among people, facilitating a process of reflection and action
- building trust with local communities and strengthening their confidence to take rights-based action
- organising people as rights activists, and deepening the strength of their organisations and leadership
- strengthening people's communication and negotiation skills
- mobilising people to hold the government accountable for providing their rights
- empowering women and challenging the gender division of labour
- involving children and young people, beginning to demonstrate the important contributions and role they play in community life
- giving people a positive experience of successful mobilisation on a basic right – inspiring other actions on other rights.

Case study from Myanmar

Even in a post-emergency context we can promote rights-based approaches to service delivery. In Myanmar, after a terrible flood, agricultural production was impossible because of damage to a small dam responsible for irrigating more than 2,000 acres of land owned by five villages. We helped people get the irrigation department to agree to support engineering design and provide heavy machinery to rebuild the dam. But they needed US$40,000 to buy materials.

ActionAid Myanmar worked with communities to agree a clear strategy for how landless people would benefit directly from the project. Villagers came up with the idea that landowners would get irrigation water from the dam, but landless people would have the right to cultivate fish in the lake behind the dam. Landless people would get 70% of the income from the fish while 30% would be used to maintain the dam.

Villagers also decided that half of the dam construction project committee members would be women and a women's self-help group would be supported to create a "women-only space" for their economic empowerment. On the basis of this agreement, ActionAid agreed to provide materials for the dam.

6. Monitoring empowerment

Empowerment is a complex and qualitative process with inter-related subjective elements, embracing values, knowledge, behaviour and relationships as well as more tangible elements of basic conditions (for example, how much food, water and income is available). The empowerment process is non-linear and depends largely on experience gained from opportunities to exercise rights that are inherently context-specific.

To measure empowerment, it is important to privilege people's own experience, their perceptions and realities. Indicators should be derived from their own analysis of change. Indicators for empowerment must be agreed with those we are seeking to empower, forming the basis for the collection of baseline data. There are three areas we need to address in the monitoring of empowerment. These combined with changes brought about through solidarity and campaigns make sustainable change possible.

1. Individual consciousness and capacity. Changes to consciousness and capacity may relate to how people see themselves and their position; how they understand the causes of poverty; what they know about their rights and about government policies and benefits; and the types of actions they are taking. They may also relate to changes in the skills that people have for critical analysis, leadership or communication.

You should finalise indicators and baselines in strategic planning and collect gender-disaggregated data. For example, how much decision-making power do women have in households? What ideas do men have about women? What communication capacities do people have (literacy/language/access to different media)? Understanding the current situation, thinking about what needs to change, setting indicators for change and establishing baselines may in itself cause a shift in understanding, particularly in cases where oppression is very internalised, or where people take unequal relations between women and men for granted.

You can monitor these types of changes through diaries, interviews and observation. A good place to do this is in our *Reflect!on-Act!on* processes. One challenge is that people with low consciousness will set a very low bar for empowerment because their life experiences have given them low expectations. What a woman living in poverty in a very patriarchal context thinks is empowerment may not be the same as what ActionAid considers it to be. As people's consciousness and capacity increase, so their expectations and indicators of empowerment will increase. You should not see this as a problem, but rather as another indicator of empowerment!

2. Conditions. These are the actual tangible changes in people's lives, such as school enrolment levels, walking distance to water, amount of income and level of access to services. These are often the most straightforward to monitor, but we do need to think carefully about what capacity we have to gather, store and use information as we make our choices. You can measure tangible changes by gathering statistics (for example, government information on schools and clinics) or through participatory tools (mapping who has what livestock, for example). You should have gathered some of the baseline information for these changes during the appraisal, and refined it through your strategic planning.

3. Collective capacity. This is about the level of skill and organisation groups have to take collective action. Indicators for positive change in this area will change over time. For example, in the first year an outcome may be that an organisation is set up, and in the second year a positive indicator could be increased membership. But over time we need to move away from strictly process indicators (the signs of an organisation growing and developing skills or political cohesiveness) and start moving towards indicators of impact. Indicators need to tell us whether an organisation is contributing towards a higher level change, or achieving impact in people's lives.

For example, has the organisation started to capture a greater following behind an identity (homelessness, landlessness or being gay)? Or has it brought about a concrete change, for example, by supporting HIV-positive people to demand state-supported treatment? The appropriate indicators and "milestones" (indicators set annually) should be established with people and their organisations. Where the organisation is a partner, they should be set out in the partnership agreement.

Below are a few examples of empowerment indicators drawn from part two of this resource book related to our delivery of the key change promises:

- girls and boys are more aware of their rights, including sexual and reproductive health rights (individual consciousness and capacity – change promise five)
- women producers report that they have more income and greater control over how to use this income (conditions – change promise one)
- robust coalitions, networks and movements that advocate and campaign for the right to information and an end to corruption are in place (collective capacity – change promise three).

Visit http://act.ai/LzLbfO **for a link to the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency's useful *Measuring empowerment* resource book.**

Chapter 4

Campaigning

"First they ignore you, then they laugh at you, then they fight you, then you win." Mahatma Gandhi

1. Campaigning as core to our theory of change

ActionAid believes that the root cause of poverty is an unjust distribution of economic, political or social power resulting in oppressive structures at local, national and international level. Campaigns seek to address the structural causes of poverty, such as unfair policies or corporate practices, to bring about long-term systemic change. We will not achieve systemic change without campaigning, so it is central to our theory of change.

Campaigns seek to achieve very specific, time-bound objectives, integrating and building on advocacy and organising. They involve focused, sustained pressure on particular targets to bring about political change. A campaign incorporates a range of tactics to achieve its agreed objectives, such as research, advocacy and public engagement (a range of activities that seek to shift and mobilise public opinion). In short, campaigning is the most intensive and comprehensive form of influencing we do.

Campaigning seeks to shift and mobilise opinions, attitudes and behaviours. It aims to reach the people who can make a difference and motivate them to support the campaign goal and take action. Sometimes we need the support of a broad cross-section of citizens to gain traction with decision-makers. At other times a particular constituency or interest group may be able to help you achieve your objective. ActionAid defines campaigning as, "creating and harnessing people's power through organisation, mobilisation and communication around a simple and powerful demand, to achieve a measurable political or social change."

Campaigns have varying timeframes. Campaigns that seek to get new issues on the political agenda or shift views in a new direction may need to focus on building up a supporter base, which can take years. In other cases, there may be a relatively short window of opportunity, linked to a specific external opportunity. In all cases, it is important that campaigns can respond quickly to the changing environment and political reality. They should be able to change direction or tactics at short notice and stay reactive to external events.

Campaigning as core to our theory of change

Our People's Action strategy states the following about our view of campaigning:

"Campaigning and influencing is embedded in our rights-based approach. Some of the fundamental causes of poverty lie beyond the immediate location or borders where the effects are felt, and can be addressed by effective campaigns mobilising people to shift national or international policies or practices. This work can also include strategic actions behind the scenes – lobbying those in power with the right research, which can accelerate policy change. Sometimes challenges lie not in policies but in the attitudes and behaviours of people that perpetuate poverty. In such cases, media and mass communications is a critical part of campaigning for change.

So while local programmes are our fundamental base, they need to be linked upwards to national level (and sometimes beyond). We'll do this by linking local groups to wider movements, gathering strong evidence, promoting policy analysis, building campaigns and using mass communications and digital media."

For ActionAid to build distinctive campaigns, which respond to our theory of change, it is critical to integrate elements of empowerment (for example, empowering people living in poverty to advocate for their own rights as part of a campaign as well as monitoring policies and budgets) and solidarity (engaging people across communities and countries in pursuit of campaign goals). ActionAid's reach from local to global can also help build links and enable campaigning at different levels. In fact, coordinating these different types of work, at different levels, around a shared change objective and strategy can set ActionAid's campaigning apart.

ActionAid's campaigning can actually contribute to empowerment and solidarity work by building relationships between campaigners – from women farmers in local rights programmes and national ActionAid staff to young people across the world and ActionAid supporters. For example, generating evidence with women farmers' groups for a sustainable agriculture campaign can empower and build women's leadership. Linking these groups to one another to build a bigger and more powerful movement across different geographies is also empowering and builds solidarity too.

In this way, campaigning, empowerment and solidarity are mutually reinforcing. We can have more campaigning influence by improving people's power, organisation and capacity, whether they are our supporters, people living in poverty or any other constituency that ally with us.

ActionAid's campaigning is distinct for several other reasons, including:

- Our campaigns are based on a change strategy for shifting the power relations that block the change we want (locally, nationally, regionally or globally).
- Our close connections with people living in poverty, as well as our research and policy analysis, inform and strengthen our campaigns. Our connection with people living in poverty allows us to base our campaign priorities, objectives and strategy in real experience. Our constituents lead our campaigns.
- Our campaigns are strongly influenced by the need to link with and amplify the struggles and organisations of women and people living in poverty, while also being an effective actor in our own right, using our analysis and reach to influence national, regional and global power structures.
- Given our analysis of the importance and the central role of women's rights in the struggle against poverty and injustice, our campaigns should specifically focus on women's rights. We should include this throughout the campaign at all stages – in analysis, objectives, actions and choice of allies and partners.
- Our campaigns help build future generations of active citizens by fostering youth engagement and leadership.

2. Campaigning tools and methods: the whats and hows

Campaigns aim to get wins on very specific, time-bound objectives. So they must set clear objectives and strategy focus. We always need to set clear short-term objectives and focus, outlining how changes will happen one step at a time, where one successful step leads to another. This is sometimes called a "critical path" in campaigning. We should not address a holistic set of issues in all of their complexity all at once, as we often do in our programme work or policy analysis. Ultimately, campaigns win by taking successful steps along the way towards an eventual win and knowing how to measure, show and message those successes to activists.

A campaign may be "about an issue", but to engage people it needs a very tight focus, communicating clear, bold and simple demands in a way that creates an entry point for immediate action. Our theory of change and a power analysis must underpin this, to identify where power lies, who benefits, who does not and how to build sufficient people power to achieve change.

(For more information on critical paths and power analysis as a tool for campaigning, see pages 80 and 82 respectively.)

Biofuels in a village in Senegal

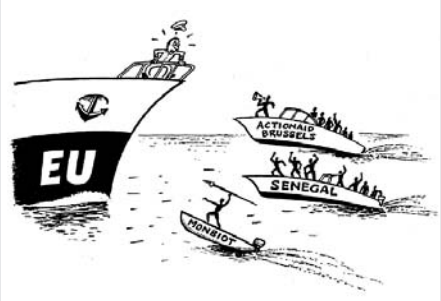
Working with several civil society organisations, ActionAid Senegal actively participated in the mobilisation of Fanaye's people (a village in northern Senegal) to say no to an Italian biofuel project. The authorities gave the project 20,000 hectares of land. However, more than 1,000 people from 30 villages were against it, and organised several mobilisations.

Rural communities thought the project was unacceptable mainly because it would have taken over a large area they used to raise livestock. It would have wreaked economic, social and environmental damage. Farmers who had lived there for centuries would have been evicted and grazing areas, arable areas, lakes and forests would have disappeared. Despite community protest, the government did little to stop the project until conflict in Fanaye killed two people and seriously injured several others. The prime minister has suspended the project temporarily to calm communities.

ActionAid Senegal and ActionAid Italy, working with an Italian TV programme, did some interviews and filmed the mobilisation for advocacy work at national and international levels. This has had some impact. For example, following a meeting in Italy, the Italian government committed to take the problems with the project into account in its new biofuel law. The government also promised to invite ActionAid Senegal to any event it organises related to biofuel. In addition, the EU impact assessment on biofuels and land is going to use the case in 2012 and the Mali International Peasants' Conference will discuss it. At national level, farmers' organisations, social movements, NGOs and human rights groups have set up a monitoring and alert committee to warn civil society actors, journalists and decision-makers about new land grabbing cases. ActionAid Senegal has a core position on this committee.

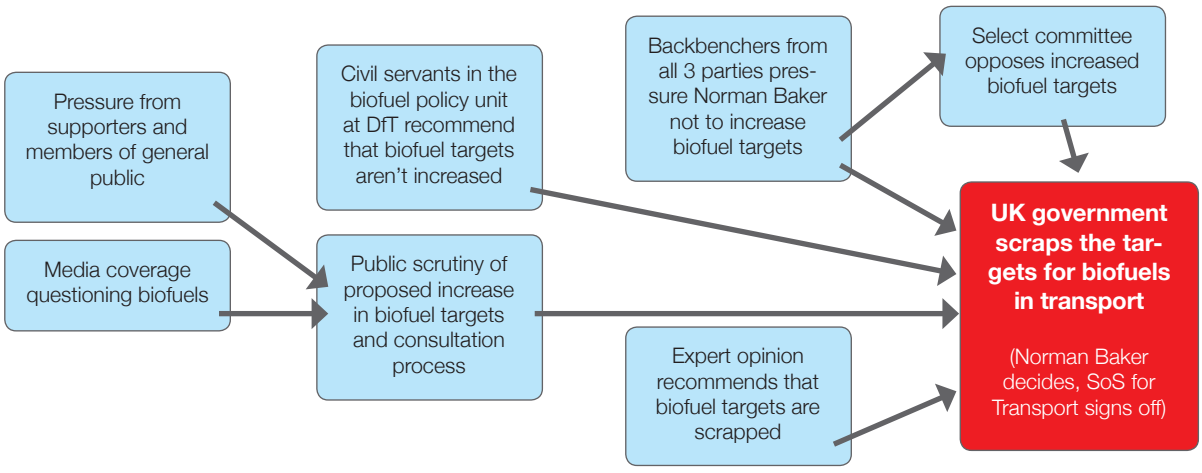
This campaign was successful because:

- People's organisations in Senegal led the movement.
- ActionAid was able to leverage change beyond the local level by engaging in national and international policy work, in Italy, and with the EU and G20.
- The campaign was grounded in evidence.
- The campaign made links with the media.



Critical path example for UK dimension of the biofuels campaign

Biofuel campaign critical path - Oct '10 to Feb/March '11



You can take several different approaches to developing a campaign strategy. Most campaigns take a relatively similar approach (see below for tips on designing campaigns).

Campaigns also have varying timeframes, and use a variety of methods, depending on their strategy. Campaigns aiming to get new issues on the political agenda require more emphasis on building up a support base and organisation, which can take years. However, campaigns seeking an incremental change to current laws or practice can be relatively short and capitalise on current public interest. Campaign tools and tactics could involve any mix of:

- research for evidence-building and campaigning impact
- advocating for rights and lobbying for change
- public engagement, recruitment of supporters, mobilisation and action
- using communication for change, for example, the media, digital marketing, advertising and publicity
- building alliances and coalitions.

There is more information on each of these tactics below.

Tips for designing a campaign

- **Identify the issue.** Do an initial scoping of the problem you are trying to solve, the potential solution, likely campaign objectives and what long-term change your campaign wants to bring.
- **Define your objectives.** What can you do about the problem in the short or medium term? Deeply analyse the problem, exploring potential solutions, examining the broader context, accessing the capacity to influence and developing a critical path to achieve change. An effective objective will be precise and realistic; say what you want to change; who will make the change; and how much change you want to achieve and by when. Objectives must be SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time-bound).
- **Power analysis.** We need to know where power lies, who benefits, who does not and how to build enough people power to achieve change (see page 82 for more information).
- **Critical pathway:** Describe the critical path for the campaign – the series of steps in which achieving one is necessary to move on to the next (best planned backwards from the objective). Completing each step is essential to achieve the end objective, and is a milestone along the way to campaign success (see page 110 for an example critical path).
- **Do you need a public-facing campaign?** This is the time to ask whether you can achieve your objectives through other means (advocacy or awareness-raising, for example).
- **Target audiences and key messages.** Describe briefly who your target audiences for the campaign are. What are the key messages for each target audience? What will actually convince your primary targets, and those in the influencing chain?
- **Influencing strategy.** Describe your strategy for influencing each target audience in a clear project plan. This should include a plan for each "phase" of the campaign detailing how you propose to achieve the campaign objective(s) and a detailed plan of activities and tactics for achieving your goals.
- **Evaluation criteria.** Explain how you will judge the success of the campaign. What are your indicators of success, both for your intermediary changes, and for overall changes?
- **ActionAid's added value.** Describe how ActionAid's campaign contributes to the work of others, and what specific contribution ActionAid will make.
- **Risks, assumptions and constraints.** Describe the main risks, assumptions and constraints your project may face (whether internal or external).
- **Create an action plan.** This needs to have a clear path with steps and a timeline for how to put the campaign into action and at which steps to monitor and evaluate.
- Do not forget to also outline a **monitoring and evaluation framework** (see page 94 for more information.

Identifying and monitoring milestones along the way towards the "big" change strengthens the movement of rights holders and supporters

3. Research for evidence-building and campaigning impact

Research and policy analysis (including gender analysis) is necessary in any campaign to build solutions and evidence to convince decision-makers and opinion leaders to make change happen. They are essential to establish the framework through which ActionAid understands the causes of and solutions to poverty, to build our theory of change, and to assess when we need to campaign to create change.

Campaigning research needs to make the case or argument to back our campaigning goals. It aims to influence policy and behaviour change. It will make recommendations for the policy changes we want to see, and should focus on supporting other campaign activities (lobby or media work, for example).

Research in support of our campaigning strategy broadly comes in two forms:

1. Research that supports setting the direction, focus and development of campaign plans. At the outset, research can help us get from broad goals to strategically-focused objectives. As the campaign develops we may also analyse emerging policy trends or develop positions in greater detail to shape future campaign plans.
2. Research that creates impact around our campaign goals. This often focuses on reaching a key external audience or target with facts and evidence. Sometimes its primary aim is to gain media coverage or profile for a specific campaigning goal. We will often launch it when we are trying to get profile for an issue or add pressure to a process.

Please note, it is very important that we test our research to check what risk level it has for ActionAid. To help steer clear of and mitigate legal risks we have produced a checklist (http://act.ai/NNNXm5). ActionAid does not seek to avoid libel risk completely, because that would mean never making negative statements about companies or individuals. On the contrary, we are proud of our track record of courage in exposing human rights violations. At the same time, it is important to know and understand the law so we do not expose ourselves to unnecessary and expensive wrangles that could tie up our campaigning in legal knots for years.

There is also a number of types of research that can support our **evidence-building** to ensure we make our arguments effectively. Our long-term engagement in particular communities means we can track issues over time, building evidence and bringing it to national and international attention. Moreover, given our closeness to communities and our theory of change's emphasis on giving people living in poverty a voice, our research should have a strong focus on offering solutions from our work with communities and highlighting the "real" issues facing the people we work with.

This kind of evidence gathering might include:

- **Drawing on our existing monitoring and evaluation systems.** These track progress against key locally- and nationally-defined indicators and their contribution towards meta indicators.
- **Action-research.** We test out an intervention and track its impact over time where we are seeking to collate evidence from different contexts. This may mean new field research, or finding ways to document the undocumented.
- **Collaborative research.** We do joint research with diverse groups including, for example, community leaders, government officials and smallholder farmers, so those with the power to take action own the research results.
- **Longitudinal research.** We use our long-term engagement in particular communities to track longer-term changes. We have good, relevant baseline data in communities where we work so we can collect data at any point to inform a campaign.
- **Market research/opinion polls.** We collect people's views on an issue and bring them to national attention.

We may form lots of different strategic partnerships to collect evidence for a campaign. Sometimes, linking with a leading national university or think tank can add credibility and weight. But we need to choose research partners strategically and ensure they can produce relevant research for our campaigning (and not just pure academic research, which often has very different purposes and framing).

What is a campaign power analysis?

A campaign power analysis helps to inform campaign planning, giving the underpinnings and foundations on which to build a campaign strategy.

When do you do a power analysis?

Analysis will be ongoing throughout your programming. Initially, it will help you outline the change you want to see. Your power analysis then looks at key actors and their positions in relation to an issue and context. Undertaking a power analysis helps you target the right actions to the right people at the right time to secure change. A power analysis enables you to develop:

- a clear understanding of the political, social and economic environment you are operating in
- an analysis of how you can make change happen within that context
- clarity on the key individuals you need to influence and tailor-made strategies on how to influence them.

What do you actually do when carrying out a power analysis?

Once you have a clear idea of the objectives of a campaign, here are some key questions to address when doing a power analysis (although it is not an exhaustive list):

- **What needs to change?** What laws, policies, practices, markets or relationships? What are the obstacles to change? Think about the political, financial, economic reasons or the attitudes of others which might block change.
- **Defining your targets.** What is the target's current position and what might influence them to change? Who has the power to make change happen? Who and what influences them?
- **Defining tools to influence your targets.** Which tools can you best adapt for a specific target? What is most likely to change their mind? Research? Lobbying key advisers? Criticism in the media?
- **Identifying allies and opponents.** Who might support you or work with you towards change (allies)? Are there other powerful key players who could block change (opponents)?
- **Identifying political opportunities for change.** Are there any key external events and milestones when you might seek to apply pressure? Elections? Policy reforms? Major events?
- **Make sure you do an assets assessment.** This will help you better understand and identify the resources and capacity to rally constituents to action.

4. Advocating for rights and lobbying for change

Advocacy is the deliberate process of influencing those who make policy. It is about engaging with power holders, and influencing them to adopt our preferred solutions. Advocacy can be defined as "pleading or arguing in favour of an idea, cause or policy".

Advocacy is heavily based on collecting facts and evidence and putting compelling solutions in front of decision-makers, sometimes accompanied by a targeted media or communication strategy for reaching our intended target. Essentially, advocacy is the strategic use of information to influence the policies and actions of those in positions of power or authority to achieve positive changes in people's lives.

Where possible, ActionAid's advocacy should focus on creating space and seeking to prioritise the voices of people living in poverty, and their representatives. Our links to programmes mean we can draw on our work in communities to build powerful alternatives and data to build up the evidence base for our advocacy. Empowering marginalised groups and civil society representatives to speak up for their rights can yield wider benefits, increasing these groups' political participation. Another added value of the ActionAid federation in our advocacy work is that we can build relationships and have access to key stakeholders in multiple spaces. We can access diverse institutions around the globe, including the G20, EU and the African Union.

Advocacy often involves an element of "insider lobbying" (where experts and senior civil society organisation leaders seek to persuade decision-makers directly, through face-to-face meetings). However, advocacy can also use participatory approaches, such as social audits, accountability monitoring, mass lobbies and bringing people to testify to government bodies. As such, advocacy generally involves a combination of policy work, lobbying and media interventions.

Although advocacy and lobbying are sometimes used interchangeably, we define **lobbying** more narrowly than advocacy. It refers to face-to-face meetings, or lobby letters, and engagements at events and other direct attempts to influence policy-makers, public officials and other decision-makers through personal interviews and persuasion.

The cornerstone of lobbying is shaping the agenda of meetings around a "deliverable" for the decision-maker. A key aspect to lobbying is building relationships. This might happen at any level, and may be the first step to building a wider advocacy strategy. Lobbying does not only happen at national and international levels. For example, at community level, *Reflect* circle participants may lobby local chiefs to oppose a biofuel deal.

Women's rights in our campaigning

ActionAid's analysis of poverty and inequality places women's rights as central to achieving change. Thus women's rights must be at the heart of our campaigning. However, far too often this doesn't happen meaningfully. Sometimes the campaign story is "about women" without bringing the underlying differences between women and men into the heart of the campaign. Likewise, adding in a gender perspective after doing the main analysis leads to including phrases like "especially women and girls", and it remains an add-on to the campaign's aims and approaches. You need to integrate and ask questions at each stage of the campaign design, including: Is gender integrated in the background analysis? Is this well reflected in the goals and objectives? Is it considered within the power analysis? Are women's organisations strong in the alliance?

5. Public engagement, recruitment, mobilisation and action

Campaigning seeks to shift and mobilise opinions, attitudes and behaviours, reaching out to people to persuade them to support a goal, and hopefully to contribute actively to the campaign with time or money.

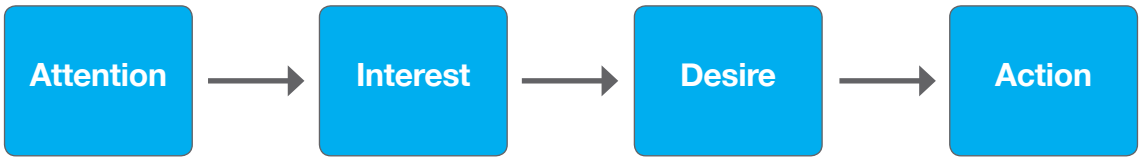
The first step in this process is **engagement and recruitment.** We have to reach out to people and inspire them to become engaged and involved in our campaigns. We often do this through our communications work (see below). As part of our campaign design we also need to ensure that we are clear about which parts of the public we are seeking to engage and motivate to join our campaign. ActionAid has a strong commitment to working with young people to inspire them to take action and join our campaigns. Youth are therefore a central part of our engagement plans. We want to massively grow our youth campaigner base (see below).

Once we have inspired and engaged our target audience, we also need to find ways for them to get involved in the campaign and to show their support for an issue by taking a **campaign action or mobilising** in support. We need to mobilise them at critical moments in our campaign plan (for example, when government is deciding a new piece of policy or when parliament is discussing relevant issues). We can then use our "people power" to demonstrate that there is mass public support for the changes our campaigns seeks.

It is important to note that while the number of people on the streets often characterises successful campaigns, a campaign should only seek to mobilise the people necessary for achieving its change. Sometimes the support of a broad cross-section of citizens is needed to gain traction with decision-makers. But at other times it may be a particular constituency or interest group that can help you win your campaign.

Campaigning can require organised ways of recruiting, communicating with and being accountable to participants. At local level this may be easy enough. But above local level it can be more complicated – and can often become a full time job! ActionAid is dedicated to growing our base of committed individuals campaigning together and to shifting ourselves towards a movement of activists. However, unlike many successful membership-based "campaigning organisations", such as Greenpeace, Amnesty and Avaaz, ActionAid does not have a membership structure. So finding ways to engage and be accountable to campaigners and activists will be an important part of improving our campaigning capabilities. Campaigning can help connect the policy goals and fundraising goals and initiatives of our organisations. Supporters who become activists are more invested in the organisation and activists who believe in a campaign are more likely to become supporters.

From engagement to action:



Youth activism and the Activista network

ActionAid has agreed to develop two inter-connected strands of work to mobilise more than five million youth by 2017:

1. Empowering and mobilising 3.5 million **young women and men living in poverty.** Of the 3.5 million, 50% will be female.

2. Empowering and mobilising 1.5 million young women and men as part of a **solidarity movement.**

These ambitious goals provide a bold new vision for ActionAid to build and consolidate on our previous work, particularly through the Activista network. They represent a radical scaling-up of our ambitions around engaging youth as key agents of change.

The majority of the world's population is now young people (about 65% are under 30). Youth are disproportionately represented in communities living in poverty. This makes them a powerful potential source of change. Youth are not only the leaders of tomorrow, but also drivers of change today. To build our capacity to ensure young people's sustained engagement as activists, we will need to significantly enhance our ability to capture their imaginations, reach out to them in larger numbers and find ways to continue this engagement. This will involve developing and using the channels that engage youth (social media, for example) and investing more effectively in digital activism.

As part of this we will continue to grow our Activista network. In the coming years, Activista aims to:

- empower and enable young people to actively participate in the decision-making and political processes that affect their lives, significantly improving ActionAid's efforts to end poverty
- build as a global youth movement, a platform for young people around the world, from low and high income countries, urban and rural areas, to unite, share ideas and act in solidarity
- raise the visibility of ActionAid as a dynamic, youthful, effective campaigning organisation, increasing our ability to attract campaigners and create social change.

6. Communications for change

Campaigns are all about **communicating** with people and targets and tapping emotions (not just logic) to motivate and mobilise them. Our campaigning must harness the power of mass communications. We can also use communications to amplify the voices of people living in poverty and injustice and facilitate their opportunities for dialogue with each other, with other stakeholders and with ActionAid.

Communication is one of the most important facets of a campaign. If you cannot effectively communicate, people will not be motivated to act, and you will not reach your campaign objective. To be truly effective we must be clear about what audiences we are targeting, why we want to reach them and which channels or mediums are most appropriate in each case. Mobile and social networking will be key for some audiences but letter writing, radio or TV may reach others.

Often campaigners become too close to the issue to be able to see what motivates other people, so strategic advice on communications is important. What motivates us now as committed and informed campaigners is unlikely to be what will motivate the majority into action. Do not be afraid to use emotive messaging. While it is important to offer logical, well argued solutions, emotions motivate most people more than logic.

The **media** is a very effective tool in our campaigning, from community radio stations to high profile national news. We can use it to reach out to the public to engage them with our campaign communications and also to reach political targets. Conventional TV, radio and newspapers remain important to decision-makers. But the rest of the population is better reached through "non-news" media. Digital media has a global audience and the potential for global impact. **Online activism** is particularly helpful in contexts where public demonstrations are illegal or risky. Social networking sites and email are the most obvious channels for campaigners to use, but effective use of digital channels still largely depends on what else the campaign is doing, away from the network itself, to make it interesting.

In both low and high income countries, text messaging, social networking and other forms of online interaction are becoming powerful. For example, an Avaaz campaign can now easily mobilise millions of voices. A number of campaigning organisations are beginning to invest more and more in SMS and mobile phone activism. For example, Greenpeace has used mobile phones as a tool in many different campaigns.

Campaigning is a multi-functional process and must involve a variety of different roles across the organisation. ActionAid is committed to developing our campaign strategies as part of multi-functional teams to maximise results. It is therefore important to include and integrate communications specialists early on in campaign design. They can help ensure messages are easy-to-understand for the public and media.

7. Building strategic alliances and coalitions

The right alliance has the potential to shift politics. For a campaign to have the momentum to secure change we often need to work in alliances and coalitions. Whether or not to run a campaign with an alliance or coalition, of course, depends on our campaign strategy and whether we are more likely to get a win by working with others.

Depending on the context and the issue, the kinds of people or groups we might work with, in coalition, could include middle class citizens, the media, trade unions, legislators, celebrities, faith-based organisations, other NGOs and business groups. While giving priority to campaigning alliances with rights holders' organisations and movements, we acknowledge that they cannot always achieve the desired social change.

An alliance needs to be big enough to build critical momentum, but focused enough to share common objectives. When building an alliance or coalition for our campaigns, it is critical to clarify the "rules of the game" from the start. It is common to build an alliance without being clear what it is for, which can lead to later problems. Is it for focused lobbying, for research and analysis, or for mass campaigning? The aim of the alliance will have big implications for how big it should be and who are the right partners. Once you know its aim, you can work to develop the right mix of skills around the table.

In making the decision about campaigning with others there will always be some tensions around:

- **Running our own branded campaign.** This gives us complete control to promote our own distinctive positions and can be great for raising our profile and public support for ActionAid (often yielding significant fundraising benefits). But it might mean we do not have as much influence (as we are a lone voice).
- **Seeking to build a wider campaign alliance/coalition.** Joining with others to build a larger critical mass can amplify the effectiveness of the campaign (many voices together count for more, especially in a campaign). But it may lead us to make compromises on our positions (respecting the views of others) and will mean less profile for our brand.
- **Joining an existing alliance or coalition.** This involves submerging our brand identity and simply adding our voice to an existing campaign because we believe it will make a difference and that our involvement can add momentum/value.

It is best to acknowledge the competing pressures (we want to change the world but we also need our organisation to thrive to continue making a change) and recognise that these choices are never easy. Our decision about the nature of the campaign we run or join should be framed fundamentally around what will ultimately have most impact for people living in poverty.

Top tips for working with coalitions

Commonwealth Education Fund. *Driving the bus: The journey of national education coalitions.* 2008.

- If we are funding or housing a coalition we should be very conscious of our own power. We need to make sure we do not abuse that power to assert our own agenda but rather use it to ensure democratic processes that engage the full membership.
- We need to ensure that the priorities of a national coalition are genuinely linked to national priorities rather than having an agenda driven by international pressures.
- We should ensure that a coalition remains open to new members joining rather than becoming a closed group. We also need to make sure that one agency or one tendency does not dominate or capture it.
- We should encourage coalitions to be open to a broad range of actors, for example social movements, faith-based organisations, private sector champions, parliamentarians and journalists. This can make their voice much more powerful.
- We should make sure that a coalition is connected to grassroots work on whatever issue it is concerned with, so that it does not just become a talking shop for people in the capital city, divorced from the voices and perspectives of people on the ground.
- We need to ensure that a coalition has clearly defined and achievable ends, and keeps focused on the political agenda that brought actors together, rather than chasing project funding and becoming an institution itself.
- We need to ensure that the secretariat of a coalition works to facilitate the active engagement of the membership, rather than becoming an organisation itself that replaces or displaces the efforts of its members.
- We should be wary of coalition coordinators becoming lifetime appointments, where the coalition becomes synonymous with the coordinator rather than a platform or voice for diverse members (in such contexts we need to empower members to take action).
- If a coalition becomes very successful and secures large-scale funding we need to be wary that it does not just become a fund manager, that members are not just there to get money and that the political voice is not lost.

8. Campaigning at different levels of ActionAid

ActionAid's reach, which goes from local to global, means we can campaign at a number of different levels. Our theory of change highlights the benefits of building on different power struggles and globalising local struggles, as well as localising global struggles.

As a global federation, with strong grassroots programmes, a global reach and good relationships with stake-holders at all levels, we have a unique ability to link constituencies to build change together. Campaigns can be purely local but because human rights are universal, participating in national or multi-country campaigns is a great way to link people, movements and issues across localities to make a bigger impact on the causes of poverty.

Depending on our analysis and theory of change, we will prioritise our campaigning at different levels. If our analysis shows that we need to campaign against local government to achieve the changes our programming identifies, we will do that. However, if our analysis shows that we can only achieve change on an issue if we target a global policy or institution, we will also campaign there.

Campaigning in different contexts

A campaign is more likely to work in certain contexts, for example where there is:

- space for civil society to act
- space for public protest or dissent
- vibrant, independent media
- socially aware, politically active citizens
- robust and active partners.

Different contexts may also dictate a different mix of insider/outsider tactics; a larger or smaller role for INGOs versus social movements and middle class groupings versus those directly affected.

However, even in repressive contexts, we can create different types of public space, or support the building of civil society to help gradually open space, still allowing people to make their issues visible to decision-makers.

Campaigning in local rights programmes

As part of our local rights programme analysis we may identify a local issue that is ripe for campaigning, as opposed to other methods of programming. The decision to initiate a campaign at local level is based on our analysis that we can bring about change on a particular issue that violates people's rights locally.

Local campaigning often focuses on improving the *implementation* of policies and identifies local level targets for bringing about the changes identified (for example changing local budget allocations, stopping corruption, changing local by-laws or regulations or holding office bearers accountable for the performance of officials). Since government spending is one of the most visible ways in which government acts on the lives of people, for better or worse, budget monitoring is often a useful foundation for local campaigning work. We are unlikely to campaign for policy changes at the local level, as this typically requires national level strategies and change, and thus national level campaigning.

We may also campaign on issues that are relevant locally but where our analysis shows that we need to link to other levels to reach our targets. In some cases, these might be out-of-country targets (see below for an example of local campaigning taking the struggle to international targets). As part of this, we may want to make connections and bring the issue to the attention of people locally, nationally or internationally. Local campaigning and organising can also link to strong national or international campaigns, where we want to ensure a strong engagement from people living in poverty and those directly affected. In this case, our local campaigning will link to a broader series of campaigning activities and organising of communities around agreed national/international campaign goals.

The type of campaigning work in a local rights programme may vary over its lifetime. In the early phases it sometimes makes sense to identify simple, easy-win campaigns that can help to build the confidence of people in campaigning as an approach and strengthen local organisations. For example, this may involve campaigning for a particular service from local government. At a later stage, when there are high levels of critical awareness and organisation, the campaign may be to challenge national government to shift policy on an issue that is relevant to the local area, requiring wider alliances with people in other areas.

Dalit rights in Nepal

In 1999, a group of dalit chamars in one local rights programme took a united stand against the age-old caste hierarchy system by refusing to dispose of an animal carcass. Other groups soon followed suit. They were members of *Reflect* circles ActionAid Nepal and local partners had set up to develop the political and critical consciousness of dalit men and women, eventually leading to a widespread dalit empowerment movement and rights campaign to eradicate all forms of caste-based discrimination. Now 95% of dalit children access education, and many dalits are key politicians and social activists.

The campaign has been successful because:

- Dalit communities have led it.
- It builds dalit critical awareness and empowers the dalit movement through Reflect circles, advocacy and budget literacy training and by seconding well known social rights activists to the project. All this led to the formation and raised awareness of sangams (indigenous dalit rights movements).
- ActionAid linked the different sections of the movement together and opened space for them to connect with the media, politicians and other movements.
- Dalit resistance was communicated widely, and public opinion changed as a result of peaceful demonstrations, such as a lantern rally.

Source: ActionAid. *Frontline story of change: Fighting for dalit rights.* **2010.** http://act.ai/MnDivj

The Vedanta campaign: taking local struggles to global targets

Niyamgiri mountain in the state of Orissa, India, is the ancestral home of thousands of one of the world's most vulnerable tribal peoples. The Kondh rely on the mountain for their food, medicines and culture. It is also the seat of their god, the supreme deity Niyam Raja.

ActionAid supported the Kondh in their battle with UK mining giant Vedanta Resources. The company wanted to build an open-pit bauxite (aluminium) mine at the top of Niyamgiri mountain. This would force the Kondh tribe to move elsewhere and their unique way of life would be lost forever.

The Kondh tribe were determined to protect the mountain. They held several demonstrations against the company. ActionAid India supported the Kondh community by providing legal support for the community's challenges; documenting environmental and human rights violations; creating media attention around the threat; facilitating the community's mobilisation; taking part in behind-the-scenes lobbying: and by maintaining a daily, on the ground relationship with the Kondh people.

However, it soon became clear that to have an impact on the power and might of Vedanta, it was important to take the Kondh people's struggle beyond the community level – and in fact beyond the national level. With Vedanta listed on the British stock exchange, campaigners and media staff at ActionAid UK and ActionAid International highlighted the issue to UK media and investors, using a two-pronged approach that covered the company's legal home-base (the UK) and the site of the human rights violations (India).

Using strategic media stunts, celebrity spokespeople, submissions to the UK government, investor lobbying, and by enabling the Kondh people to speak at AGMs, ActionAid's work outside India added power to the movement in Orissa. The Joseph Rowntree Trust and the Church of England, two major, high profile investors, pulled out of the company in February 2010. Both cited concerns about the rights of the Kondh tribe. This caused Vedanta's share price to drop and damaged the company's reputation considerably.

In August 2010, after six years of national and international campaigning, disinvestment by key Vedanta shareholders and protracted legal challenges, we had a breakthrough. The Indian government refused vital environmental permission for the mine to go ahead. The Environmental Minister Jairam Ramesh came out strongly against the mine, criticising the company on several grounds and accusing it of breaking the law. ActionAid continues to stand alongside the Kondh tribe to make sure the Indian government does not go back on its decision.

National campaigning

As outlined above, often our analysis within local rights programmes identifies the need for national level changes, for our work to have a wider impact on the communities we work with. We may identify a priority problem for a community, such as national policies or laws that cannot be tackled through our local level interventions alone.

Of course, there is always a multitude of issues that communities are grappling with at any one time and we have to prioritise our engagement in national campaigning issues. This might involve identifying issues from one or more local rights programmes, where we have recognised an opportunity for a clear, winnable change to occur through national level campaigning on a specific issue (for example, the government is considering a change in policies which we think we can have a positive influence over). Alternatively, identifying a national campaign may be driven by an issue which we think has the chance of large-scale public appeal to galvanise support behind or where there are opportunities to work with a broad set of allies to push for change.

Some national campaigns may also have links "upwards and downwards", where our analysis and strategies show that linking across multiple levels and geographies can secure change. As such, ActionAid has identified three major, multi-country campaigns which we will work on during the People's Action strategy period, building these upwards and downwards links.

ActionAid Brazil's national education campaign

Together with other organisations, ActionAid Brazil created the award-winning *Brazilian campaign for the right to education.*

The campaign saw a major success in 2007 when the Brazilian parliament approved the FUNDEB (Basic Education Fund), guaranteeing funding of basic public education in Brazil with an annual budget of US$30 billion. It ensured the right to education for 50 million students.

This is the kind of large-scale national legislation which can help secure widespread changes, not only in our local rights programmes but for all children across Brazil.

To get the law passed, civil society joined hands in a very focused campaign, with clearly defined objectives over the three years, targeting the federal government and parliament.

Some of the key elements and tactics in its success were:

- It was very broad-based, attracting a large cross-section of organisations, from businesses to women's groups, building and mobilising important partnerships and linking people living in poverty with their solidarity movements.
- It focused on winning the hearts and minds of the population by reaching out widely. There were radio and TV phone-ins, mobilisations in all areas of the country and public demonstrations. One of the key turning points was when a member of the movement placed a child on the minister of finance's lap.
- It was both strategic and opportunistic. While everyone's attention was on the football World Cup in Germany, the movement created a *Score a goal for education* campaign involving major Brazilian sports personalities. This came from the overarching and long-term strategy, while making the most of an opportunity.
- It was solutions-based. Rather than only being critical, the movement offered solutions, including providing new wording of the law's text.

9. ActionAid's multi-country campaign portfolio

National campaigning or campaigning across two countries will not secure some changes, which instead require campaigning across many countries. Such multi-country campaigns can unite constituencies in different countries around a clear global or regional goal that affects people in many places.

As an international federation, the more we work together and harness our collective power across the organisation – linking local, national and international campaigning – the more likely it is that we will secure large-scale, meaningful change in the lives of people living in poverty. Our People's Action strategy commits us to "develop and deliver a portfolio of at least three diverse multi-country campaigns that will bring people living in poverty and others together to win tangible victories against the global causes of poverty. Bringing to life the political vision behind ActionAid's internationalisation project, all members will be expected to participate actively in at least one of ActionAid's multi-country campaigns". Therefore, all member countries will have an opportunity to participate in and benefit from, but also a responsibility to contribute to, the delivery of the campaign portfolio.

Following consultation and strategy development, linked to identifying how our campaigning can help us reach our organisational goals in the People's Action strategy, we have defined a campaign "portfolio".

How we developed our portfolio was strongly linked to the development of our programming framework (and the development of this resource book, especially part two). While developing our programming around the strategic objectives and change promises, we have identified where the multi-country campaigns will help us to deliver local to international change.

Our commitment to a portfolio of multi-country campaigns (as opposed to, for example, only one multi-country campaign) recognises that:

- Our very ambitious mission objectives and key change promises require us to campaign across a number of issues to achieve the strategy's goals.
- Any one campaign is not equally relevant across all member countries. We need member countries to focus their campaigning where they are strategically relevant and can make the most difference.
- The strategy sets out ambitious targets in terms of profile-raising and mobilisation, including increasing our supporter base to more than five million people and mobilising five million young people as key change-makers. Our campaigning will be a key vehicle for making this a reality; therefore the multi-country campaigns need to be relevant and compelling for supporters across the federation.
- Every campaign goes through a natural cycle with periods of more active public work and some quieter times where the focus is on following up and preparing for the next active period. A portfolio of campaigns will allow us to have one campaign in an active phase at all times, which will help keep our profile high, mobilising money and supporters.

Our three multi-country campaigns (agreed in the Programme Meeting in Johannesburg in March 2012) are provisionally called:

- *Progressive tax, progressively spent*
- *From land grabs to land rights*
- *Safe cities and urban spaces for women and girls*

Each of these contributes concretely to the achievement of one or more of our change promises (as illustrated in the critical pathways in part two).

Progressive tax, progressively spent

This campaign is about ensuring governments raise more revenue through tax, and spend it on better public services. Tax is the major source of revenue for all countries, even those highly dependent on aid. Yet tax revenue collection mechanisms in many developing countries are weak and unfair. Powerful corporations negotiate exemptions and favourable conditions, paying less tax than ordinary citizens. Or they evade taxes altogether – and do not reinvest profits in developing countries. This is coupled with unfavourable international systems (tax havens, for example) that facilitate tax-cheating and undermine developing countries.

Tackling tax injustice could generate an additional US$198 billion in revenue for developing countries every year. Our campaign will also help ensure that this money pays for better public services for women and men living in poverty. The campaign will link progressive taxes and progressive spending, and will look at greater accountability and transparency on both sides (revenue collection and spending).

The campaign contributes primarily to mission objective two, change promises three and four. Tax justice work is already ongoing in ActionAid, with significant successful work so far that puts us in a good place to engage further. Tax justice is at the heart of a HRBA, as governments need resources to deliver on rights.

From land grabs to land rights

Land grabbing is a growing global phenomenon, now affecting communities on every continent. In Africa alone nearly 5% of all land – an area equivalent to Zimbabwe – has in the last few years been grabbed. Addressing this issue is urgent as it is critical to securing the livelihoods and rights of people living in poverty, and to securing women's equitable right to land in the longer term. Addressing land grabbing involves challenging unequal power relations through our campaigning at local, national and international levels.

Through our *Land grab* campaign we hope to achieve:

- secured land tenure with countries adopting and implementing the UN voluntary guidelines
- globally agreed, fair investment standards integrated in domestic policy
- fair investment standards applied by three major companies
- protection for communities through a moratorium on land investment
- removal of key drivers of global land grabs, for example, by 2017 the EU and US to drop targets and financial incentives for biofuels, setting a precedent for others.

This campaign contributes primarily to key change promise one.

Safe cities and urban spaces for women and girls

This campaign will make us the only INGO campaigning on issues related to urban poverty and women's rights. It will build on our expertise on rural poverty and our growing expertise on urban poverty, while recognising the increase in urban populations (in two decades, almost 60% of the world's population will live in cities).

Our campaign will offer cities an incentive to improve safety and highlight the impact of safety (or lack thereof) on the rights of women and girls living in poverty. We will encourage cities to improve their performance year-on-year by highlighting their relative safety levels on a global scale.

Our key targets are women and girls living in urban poverty. We will mobilise women to demand the changes necessary to end violence and for them to participate in public debates on the issue. We will target local and national governments in the north and the south to demand attention to unsafe cities and urban spaces and call on them to guarantee the necessary legal, policy and infrastructure reforms to make cities and urban spaces safer for women.

Our tactics will include using global events and sporting occasions, where we will launch a "kitemark" to rate cities against a set of "safety" or "freedom from urban violence" criteria. Our ultimate goal will be for this kitemark to be displayed at world events, like the Olympics and World Cup.

The campaign builds on our existing work under change promise nine, which addresses wider violence against women, including domestic violence, and should enable us to develop an edge and a niche in violence against women campaigning.

10. Bringing ActionAid's campaigning vision to life

As part of our People's Action strategy, we have committed to becoming a "more effective campaigning force". To do this we will invest in campaigning systems, skills, policy analysis and research, and tools to link, organise and energise our partners and supporters at all levels. We are committing to going much further than ever before and building on past successes in strengthening our campaigning.

Our ambition of becoming an effective campaigning force is closely linked to a number of other priorities in the strategy, including raising ActionAid's profile, increasing the organisation's supporter base to more than five million people and mobilising five million young people as key change-makers. Achieving these goals will involve the whole organisation and us planning and delivering our campaigns differently.

Integration is key to improving our capacity to campaign. Campaigning is a multi-functional process and must involve a variety of different roles across the organisation. To strengthen ActionAid's ability to work as an integrated organisation across functions, regions and national structures, we will develop and deliver our multi-country campaigns using cross-disciplinary global campaign delivery teams. Ideally, these teams will be replicated at national level. We will also create a transparent and systematic process for the ongoing review and planning of our multi-country campaigns. We will integrate annual workplans from the local to the national and international level, and identify synergies between functions for the coming year to help us make the most of external opportunities.

We need to dedicate adequate resources to our campaign systems, skills, policy analysis, research and tools to deliver effective campaigns that mobilise people in the north and the south to campaign with us. We will ensure all staff have a firm understanding of the political rationale for why campaigning is part of our HRBA. Staff more directly involved with campaigns, including fundraisers, programme staff, communications staff and management, need to have a basic understanding of campaigning. However, aside from general capacity-building for all staff, we need to specifically task a sufficient number of staff with delivering our campaigns at local, national and international levels.

Building campaigning capacity will also involve understanding and recognising the added value of the synergy between empowerment, solidarity and campaigning. Resources are much more than money, but we still need money if we are to realise our ambition to become an effective campaigning force. By integrating our campaign work better between local, national and international level and between functions, we will use the money we already invest in campaigning to greater effect. But in addition, we will need to invest additional funds in running our campaigns if they are to be able to contribute to increasing ActionAid's profile and income, especially of unrestricted funds.

11. Monitoring campaigns

Monitoring and evaluation are critical to improving our campaigning. Monitoring enables us to assess, over the life of a campaign, whether we need to shift our plans according to changes in or more information about the external environment (for example, changes in the external political context), or in light of lessons learned from the campaign to date. This is especially important as the pace of change in campaigns can be very fast, so the process of revision must be light and nimble.

Through evaluation we must demonstrate the impact of our campaigning. This will enable us to be more accountable to stakeholders and supporters, and generate more support. Change is a result of many factors and it can be extremely difficult to disentangle the role of ActionAid versus other actors or external factors. This is often referred to as a problem with "attribution". It might be that we are meeting our campaign goals but this could have very little to do with our campaigning and more to do with other factors. On the other hand, we could be doing excellent campaigning work, but not yet be able to achieve change because the balance of power is still too strongly against us. While the changes we aim to bring about through campaigning are inherently dynamic and often very complex, presenting challenges for proving impact, there are ways to mitigate this.

Firstly, the big changes we are often trying to achieve through campaigning can take time. To overcome this, we can measure progress as we go along by being clear – at the outset – about what the stepping stones to progress are. The "critical pathway" is a tool for doing this, and is used in part two of this resource book for the change promises.

Secondly, campaigning is likely to involve a number of actors, which may make it difficult to measure ActionAid's specific contribution to change, especially when we are playing a background role as we often do in our HRBA. However, clearly articulating the change we want to see and being very clear about what ActionAid's specific contribution will be can help us disentangle our role from others. Once we are clear on our specific contribution, how to evaluate our success becomes clearer. For example, if our specific contribution is to bring a stronger women's rights analysis to a policy process, we can monitor that specific element. If our contribution is to ensure links between national alliances and people living in poverty, or to broaden an alliance to involve new stakeholders, we can get feedback on that specific element. We can even monitor, and claim as a success, that we have not dominated a process.

Thirdly, it can be challenging to source the kind of evidence and data we need to effectively monitor and evaluate our campaigns. A few examples of data we can use are:

- **Media analysis.** Monitoring the media coverage campaign activities generate; asking journalists what they think the impact of our campaign was or about the quality of our work.

- **Public opinion.** We could measure this through web traffic to the campaign site or other sites where the campaign is prominent. A more expensive option is opinion polls of supporters or target groups. Affiliates who engage directly with supporters could build this into their regular contact questions, asking people if they have seen the campaign and what they think of it.
- **Other NGOs.** Asking fellow NGOs what they think about our campaigns and their impacts is a much easier option. An efficient way to manage this is to assign someone in your campaign team to check in with other NGOs throughout a campaign process (particularly after key actions) rather than waiting until the end of the campaign.
- **Decision-makers.** It is possible to ask targets if our campaigning influenced them. Unless we have a close lobbying relationship, access can be a problem, so it is good to identify from the outset, as part of the strategy, whether anyone has any contacts who can give insight.

Getting our monitoring and evaluation processes right means getting our campaign strategy right. The strategy should give clear goals for what we will monitor and evaluate over the lifetime of a campaign. In part two, we illustrate the relationship between our three international campaigns and their pathways to change and those of the overall change promises. This may be helpful to you in linking campaigns more closely to other long-term processes of change that bridge different organisational levels. You will also find indicators that you can draw on as you define your indicators for campaigns that aim to advance one or more of the change promises.

For more ideas on how to monitor campaigns, visit http://act.ai/LCgULK

Chapter 5

Solidarity

"International solidarity is not an act of charity: it is an act of unity between allies fighting on different terrains towards the same objective. The foremost of these objectives is to assist in the development of humanity to the highest level possible." Samora Machel

Solidarity is absolutely fundamental to ActionAid. It is part of the core of who we are and what we do – connecting supporters in one part of the world with people who are struggling in another. In taking solidarity action, we all become human rights activists. Solidarity can play a key role in linking our local, national and international work.

ActionAid defines two types of solidarity:

1. where people facing different rights violations (dalits and sex workers, for example) come together to support each other
2. where people who are not themselves living in poverty stand side-by-side with those who are.

It is important to note that when people facing the same rights violations ally with each other we consider this to be part of the empowerment process.

Our solidarity work is geared to supporting and sustaining a movement for change in which people living in poverty take the lead. Chapter three highlights the importance of organising and mobilising people living in poverty as an integral part of the empowerment process. **The additional dimension our focus on solidarity brings is the connection to people and organisations who are not themselves facing the same conditions, but who are sympathetic to people involved in a particular struggle against poverty.** Solidarity action can help to sustain those on the frontline, reducing their sense of isolation. It can strengthen campaigns and wider movements for change to policies, practices, attitudes and behaviours.

Solidarity may be manifested in many ways, such as:

- by sponsoring a child or making a donation
- by linking your struggle with the struggle of others
- by building wider alliances
- by deepening people's understanding of the issues/sharing knowledge or skills
- by joining a demonstration/taking direct action/signing petitions or sending letters
- by bringing wider attention to an issue/harnessing the power of communications.

Sometimes solidarity simply requires active listening, showing kindness and being empathetic to another person. This is a fundamental part of our humanity: an altruistic instinct that is deep rooted in our psyche and which we can harness to powerful effect to secure change.

Clearly there are strong inter-connections between solidarity, campaigning and empowerment. Rather than worry about definitions and overlaps we should celebrate the connections. When we are linking empowered people living in poverty to campaigners in other locations nationally and internationally we are drawing on the power of solidarity. Much of our best work may connect up in this way.

A simple video from Lead India captures the immense potential power of solidarity – http://act.ai/M14NKk

1. Sponsoring children and donating = solidarity

ActionAid's local rights programmes are mostly funded by regular giving, especially child sponsorship, which itself is a fundamental expression of solidarity. We facilitate connections between people living in poverty and those who empathise with their position. Historically, this has been premised on people in wealthier countries offering support. However, increasingly it is also about building solidarity links with the middle classes in the same country (within Brazil and India, for example).

Effective communication with sponsors and other supporters is essential to sustain this solidarity. Child sponsors want to know what difference their support is making. They want to understand the living conditions of the child's family and community and to know what ActionAid-supported interventions are changing the life prospects of children (see the paragraphs on our impact on children under each change promise in part two). In most cases, sponsors will have chosen to support ActionAid as an act of solidarity with children whose basic needs go unmet. Part of our role should be to take them on a journey, to deepen their solidarity and enrich their understanding that basic needs are in fact basic rights. This journey can be empowering for sponsors, as they come to understand how ActionAid helps to make change happen. It echoes the journey of people in many of our local rights programmes.

At the community level, ActionAid supports reflection-action processes that help empower people, moving them from a needs-based view of the world to a rights-based view. In many respects, ActionAid is involved in a similar empowerment process with its sponsors and supporters around the world. Many people who join ActionAid or donate money start from an impulse to respond to people's basic needs. Part of our role is to engage them more deeply and communicate effectively so they move towards an understanding that basic needs are basic rights and that effective change depends on linking local, national and international work. Ultimately, this can be empowering for supporters as they recognise that through their solidarity they too are becoming rights activists.

Any donation of money, whether from a millionaire major donor, from a trust or foundation or from a young child who has been moved to help by images of a recent disaster on television, should be seen as people expressing their solidarity. For many people, giving money is the most practical way to express their solidarity and to articulate their empathy with other human beings. ActionAid should celebrate the hundreds of thousands of supporters across over a dozen countries who are part of this incredible web of solidarity.

We need to respect all our sponsors and supporters in the same way we respect people living in poverty. Each person is helping to make a difference through the means available to them. ActionAid should take no one for granted and should seek to engage people fully, not looking at anyone just as a passive source of funding. Our engagement with people and our capacity to dignify their solidarity and communicate with them effectively is fundamental to sustaining their support. In every context we should be exploring how we can most effectively communicate the distinctiveness and effectiveness of our HRBA – both to attract new supporters and to communicate with established supporters.

While giving financial support is a powerful form of solidarity in itself, some of our sponsors and supporters are also able to help in other ways. For example, as well as sending messages to the children they support, sponsors may send letters to decision-makers locally, nationally or internationally, to add weight to local action for change. They may sign petitions, join demonstrations or offer their own expertise to support change processes. They may encourage their family and friends to take action too. Some sponsors want to become rights activists themselves, taking solidarity action that can enhance local or national struggles. There are many ways in which our supporters may be able to offer additional help, whether this involves offering more money or using their time, contacts or expertise in ways that support our work.

Our People's Action strategy recognises the potential power of harnessing this constituency more effectively to advance our mission. But as we seek to involve supporters in other ways we should not diminish the value of the fundamental solidarity which is expressed when someone simply wishes to make a donation or sponsor a child.

The voice of sponsors

- *"When I get a letter from my sponsored child it is really important to me. I've got an actual letter that he's written himself from thousands of miles away, so I know that he's doing well."*
- *"Just please carry on doing this work. We want to help every human being regardless of race, colour or religion. It is about humanity, care and love. And I will try my best as long as I am alive to carry on with every cause to eliminate cruelty and poverty."*
- *"Sponsoring a child is amazing – it isn't just giving money. I get such a lot of satisfaction from the experience because it's so much more personal. You really get to see the difference that you make."*
- *"I feel hugely privileged to be able to be involved with such an important opportunity to make a difference to people's lives. I am proud to be involved with ActionAid. All those letters you get from other charities – all this rubbish – it doesn't engage you or move you. You can feel as if you are being used and you send money because you feel guilty. I don't feel nagged with ActionAid. I have always been willing."*
- *"Such news is hugely inspiring and total justification for our sponsorship. Education is everything and we heartily applaud your successes and your efforts in helping to eliminate poverty, exploitation and ignorance."*
- *"It is always uplifting to receive your reports of successful projects, despite the mammoth uphill tasks you face. Thank you for keeping me informed, it is good to be included in the loop and prompted to respond."*

For more information on child sponsorship, visit the *One stop shop* **at** http://act.ai/KzrAzN

The journey of a Greek sponsor

Yiannis Ampazis, 36, a lawyer from Greece, is a child sponsor. Solidarity trips to Kenya and Ghana have transformed his life. He says:

"I grew up in an environment that taught me to appreciate my living conditions and to think of the people that do not have the things I have. Supporting ActionAid was easy practically: get on the internet, do a click, become a sponsor, receive newsletters. Development work meant education, schools, water and food with a prospect of sustainability.

My first trip to Kenya with ActionAid opened up a whole new perspective for me on the world, myself and my relationship to the organisation. I worked with a community on food and income sufficiency. I saw children going to school. I met financially independent women who had suffered violence and were now members of the local committees. I spoke with local staff. I asked questions.

This is when I really understood that the little I give makes a huge difference. I can now give a face to a positioning, a face to a definition. This is when I learned to look for the causes of poverty and to understand why ActionAid focuses on women. I am also more conscious that the way I live influences people on the other side of the world. I have a sense of universality, solidarity and mutual influence. Links that were not obvious before are now very clear to me.

ActionAid became a passion, a personal issue. I was never the person who would debate how the rich north treats the poor south. After the solidarity trips, I found myself debating strongly on such issues, with solid arguments. I've been there, I know. People want to see tangible results and this is important. I try to explain that not all work is visible and just because we can't see it, it doesn't mean that it is not there.

I feel I can be ActionAid's ambassador. I speak about the work ActionAid does and its campaigns, to my family, friends and colleagues, even to my niece's school. I have been on TV three times and I have spoken in front of audiences of 200 people or more. I want them to know that ActionAid is doing real work."

2. Linking struggles

While ActionAid's primary focus is on conscientising and organising people living in poverty, linking the groups we work with or linking them with others may add some value. We may want to link different groups we work with, for example a landless women's group and a group of people living with HIV. They may have no direct connection, but the solidarity can give each group a boost. We may also want to link with people in positions of visible power, such as local government, traditional leaders or religious authorities – or even with people like local elites whose power is less visible. While some of these groups may be targets for mobilisation and may be groups we are holding to account for delivering on rights, there is sometimes scope for engaging with them in other ways, so they act in solidarity with processes of transformation.

For example, in some contexts we may want to raise the awareness of local religious and traditional leaders, changing their attitudes so they actively advocate for the education of girls. We may want to work with a progressive company locally to promote fair trade practices. We may link with progressive councillors in local government so they represent the interests of people living in poverty. We may work with middle class women to challenge domestic violence. We may seek support from sympathetic people in a middle class neighbourhood to oppose the planned clearance of local slum dwellers. We may want to get local journalists or a local celebrity to write about certain rights violations. Or we may want to get free legal advice from sympathetic local lawyers. In each of these cases, we are not holding these people to account as such but rather we are looking to them for solidarity action.

It is useful to distinguish these types of solidarity action from our empowerment processes. It helps to ensure that in supporting empowerment we are clearly focused on the centrality of people living in poverty. This adds another dimension to our work but it is never a substitute for the work we do directly with people living in poverty. While sometimes we may seek the support of these people for campaigns, there are many individual or collective actions the middle classes can take which are not strictly part of campaigning. Indeed, even signing a petition or writing a letter in solidarity with a struggle is not always part of a formal campaign. There are many people and organisations who are willing to show solidarity, who will share their skills and resources in a wide range of ways to challenge duty bearers and redress power imbalances. ActionAid and its partners should always look to facilitate such solidarity, building relationships between people living in poverty and other sympathetic organisations and individuals that can support their struggles.

Another example of linking struggles is the growing convergence between campaigners in high and low income countries around tax justice. Research by ActionAid UK has exposed how the 100 top companies listed in the UK have over 8,000 subsidiaries, mostly in tax havens. Many of these companies are avoiding paying tax in the UK and are equally avoiding paying tax in low income countries. This provides a foundation for a new type of solidarity action, where there is genuine shared interest and potential for mutual benefit. We can play a role in linking people struggling for tax justice in Europe with those doing the same in Africa, Asia and Latin America.

Solidarity activism in Italy

ActionAid Italy's strategy 2012-2017 observes, "In Italy there is no strong and shared sense of belonging. It is a country held together by a national football team and religious symbols, rather than by a common perception of having a role in a wider global context. ActionAid Italy, as well as funding the activities of the other members of the network, has to join the efforts to contribute to democratic practice, including in Italy".

ActionAid Italy is thus supporting activism in local communities, bringing learning from other countries and seeking to overcome the south/north and rich countries/poor countries dynamic. It seeks to develop a sense of international solidarity which is grounded on interest as well as on ideals. This will help to root the organisation and enable its participation in new ways in debates on Italy's international, immigration and welfare policies.

3. Building alliances

At national level, ActionAid will often work with coalitions, alliances, networks and campaigns that can help us advance the struggles of people living in poverty. Many of these will involve people's organisations and social movements, but they may also involve NGOs, trade unions, progressive companies and a range of other actors that do not directly or exclusively involve people living in poverty. Our engagement with these groups is part of our solidarity work, which explicitly aims to extend the constituency of people working for change. While we may want to ensure primacy of the voices of people's organisations and social movements, many other actors will play an important role in advancing rights, ending poverty and transforming society.

Sometimes this involves people in different struggles lending their support to each other:

- across identities (for example, between women and gay rights movements)
- across issues (for example, between a trade union movement and an environmental movement)
- across countries (in the form of south-south solidarity, for example, Cuba sending doctors to Angola or Zimbabwe hosting activists from South Africa).

Working alone, people's organisations and social movements will often lack the political weight to advance people's rights. Building solidarity is thus an essential element if we are to secure change.

Teachers' unions, for example, can play a key role in advancing the struggle for quality public education for all. ActionAid has built a strategic partnership with them in many countries. As unions, they represent the interests of teachers, who may be seriously underpaid but are not themselves the prime constituency we are working for. Rather, we know that frontline workers will play a pivotal role in transforming education for people living in poverty and we have an explicit shared interest in increasing investment in education as a key means for advancing education rights.

We also work with national education coalitions who seek to get quality public education higher up the domestic political agenda. Many of the organisations that are part of these coalitions are not themselves social movements or people's organisations. But they are essential allies who work in solidarity with the struggles of people living in poverty.

ActionAid may be involved with broad coalitions and alliances in many ways. At times we may play a key role in initiating or facilitating the emergence of a coalition. At other times our focus is on strengthening or democratising an

alliance or platform. We may contribute in many ways, with information, analysis, training or leadership development, or with funding.

In all cases there are important power issues for us to consider, but especially if we take up a prominent role or are funding or hosting a coalition. We need to ensure that we use our power positively to promote transparency and democratisation and to create space for others, particularly for people's organisations and social movements, to take leadership positions. We may prioritise the rootedness of a national coalition, making sure that it is linked to grassroots mobilisation and that the voices of people living in poverty shape the agenda and are heard clearly in national level forums. Where relevant, we should ensure that our own local rights programmes effectively engage in coalitions and that not only the urban-based middle classes occupy the space at national level.

Solidarity work is not, however, restricted to the work of coalitions and campaigns. Securing the support of individuals can also be important, from journalists, lawyers, politicians and sportspeople to musicians and artists. There are many ways in which we can work with the middle class to get them to add their voice or contribute their skills to the struggle against poverty and injustice.

Building connections with the middle class may play a particularly important role when we are seeking to change not just policies and practices but also attitudes and behaviours. If we want to challenge social norms that tolerate child labour, female genital mutilation or early marriage then we need to engage everyone across society. If we want to challenge genetically modified crops or entrenched gender roles we need to change the beliefs, attitudes and behaviours of everyone in society. We need to work with mass communications in new ways to transform how people see an issue – whether those people are urban or rural elites or people living in poverty. Getting prominent individuals at national level to stand with us can make a real difference to the take up of the issue. There are many new media we can use to spread the word and help people raise their voices, from e-petitions to mobile phone campaigning. In this work we want to reach out to everyone to build mass solidarity.

4. Deepening people's understanding of poverty and justice issues

There is a rich history of work in ActionAid around building broad awareness, public consciousness and active citizenship on development issues, including with schools and youth. This is a key part of our solidarity work.

ActionAid Hellas (Greece) has developed an innovative venture *A world upside down* which aims to support school children in Greece to develop an understanding of ideas such as poverty and injustice, and help them think through ways to take action as global citizens. It is a three-dimensional interactive exhibit that allows children to journey to the Bama community in Kenya. It is divided into two main exhibits. One is an aeroplane where children watch an educational film that introduces them to Bama. The other allows the children to explore the village's school, market and a house. It opened in October 2009 and thousands of children have participated. Children who have visited indicate that they have been emotionally touched and "understand that there are people who have much bigger problems than ours". This is just one of many initiatives targeting schools in Greece aiming to create bridges of shared experiences and common humanity.

In the UK, ActionAid's schools and youth department has been producing education materials on development issues and active citizenship for over 20 years. Through their work on the Global Action Week of the global campaign for education they have worked in thousands of schools across the country. They have influenced over a third of members of parliament to visit schools in their local constituencies to learn about global education issues. They also do extensive work with young people at festivals, raising awareness and supporting campaigns. Their *Bollocks to poverty* campaign has proved particularly popular.

Using immersions to build solidarity

One of the most powerful ways of deepening someone's understanding of poverty and of building solidarity is through immersions. Immersions help to put a face to poverty. An immersion brings people committed to eradicating poverty together with people who directly experience it in an informal and highly personal way. Participants in an ActionAid-facilitated immersion spend a minimum of three days and nights staying with a family in a village and living, as far as possible, how that family lives. The idea is that by sharing, however briefly, in the lives of their hosts they will start to understand those lives – their richness and their challenges – in new ways.

The ActionAid immersions programme is designed for development professionals and the staff of aid agencies and governments. It helps people understand poverty in a less structured, more flexible way than sometimes heavily-planned itineraries, meetings or workshops held in capital cities. The essence of the immersion is that the visitor is not an important person, but a fellow human being. ActionAid is offering facilitated immersions on a regular basis.

Find out more about ActionAid immersions at http://act.ai/LcZlHc

5. Demonstrating and taking action

There have also been many examples of people taking direct solidarity action that has contributed to successful campaigning in other countries. The Vedanta campaign (see page 89, chapter 4) depended on linking local action in India to solidarity action at a shareholder meeting in London.

Another excellent example is the campaign against biofuels in the Dakatcha Woodlands in Kenya where ActionAid, together with other agencies, exposed the contradictions of growing biofuels destined for Europe in Africa. Research showed that it would result in up to six times the carbon emissions of fossil fuels. Our initial concern was the huge social upheaval created when whole communities lost their land, homes and jobs to make way for biofuels. But tracking the contradiction internationally and making the connections with the environmental movement (particularly the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds) proved a significant breakthrough. For more details go to http://act.ai/NNQ5dw

People's Solidarity (Peuples Solidaires) is ActionAid's affiliate in France and, as its name suggests, focuses all its work on building solidarity. Their starting point is that no government or company likes bad publicity and that informed citizens have the power to challenge the unacceptable and to show solidarity with those who are affected. They mobilise the support of people in Europe in solidarity with people who are fighting for their rights in other countries. One of the rights People's Solidarity is advancing is the right of farmers to land. They believe that defending farmers' rights to land is key to resolving the ongoing global food and hunger crisis. People's Solidarity has targeted its campaigns against the EU because of their role in liberalising the agriculture sector and pushing small farmers in developing countries away from subsistence crops. Their campaign brought together 350 activists from Latin America, Africa, Asia and Europe to pressure the EU to address the issue of access to land in developing countries.

6. Bringing wider attention to an issue/harnessing communications

One of the most powerful ways of acting in solidarity with a struggle is to help spread the word. Bringing public and media attention to what is happening can really shift the balance of power. Amnesty International have worked for many years to show political authorities that someone is watching them; that they cannot torture a

political prisoner or detain someone without trial and hope that no one knows. The simple act of showing that you know – of signing a petition or sending a letter – can be very powerful. It can stops rights abusers in their tracks because they become aware of being watched. This can shatter the sense of absolute impunity that many people in power feel.

This operates at every level. A journalist writing a story about a planned closure of a health centre can make a local health authority or local government think twice. National media picking up on the story of a single individual can dramatically shift the way in which an issue is perceived. This is the power of human interest – and it can be mobilised more simply today than ever as new and digital media open up the possibility of new voices being picked up. What one person tweets can become a phenomenon within hours. What one person blogs can stimulate a debate culminating in a parliamentary discussion.

When we are seeking to act in solidarity with a struggle many miles away we need to be acutely aware of the power of using communications strategically. Breaking the silence on an issue or breaking the isolation of people struggling in a forgotten corner of a faraway place can have a tangible impact on people's lives!

An example is the work of Avaaz, which is a global network of millions of people who choose critical issues that require urgent action and mass expressions of solidarity. They do not undertake sustained campaigns but come together in a particular moment to show solidarity with an issue, often shifting the positions of national or international decision-makers.

7. Monitoring solidarity

Solidarity is a means, not an end. It is a stepping stone towards bringing about impact in our empowerment or campaigning work. As such, the indicators we will use are process indicators related to numbers of people we mobilise and the actions they take, rather than the resulting changes in people's lives. Each programme should work out, during appraisal and planning, what solidarity outcomes are necessary to bring about the change, and from there determine how to monitor that change.

The primary metric (system or standard of measurement) we have for monitoring solidarity is the number of supporters and activists/campaigners and the actions they take. Some ActionAid countries count this very simply by, for example, estimating the number of people who participate in a specific campaign action such as a march, or the number and types of social groups who have been recruited to express solidarity to another group (for example, trade unions supporting an environmental cause, or a women's rights group and land rights group supporting a transgender citizenship cause).

Other ActionAid countries, whose primary work is with supporters and campaigners, have much more sophisticated systems, in which they define different levels of supporters and campaigners and the actions they take, and monitor what types of action lead to increased support and campaigning.

Here are a few examples of solidarity drawn from part two and related to the delivery of our key change promises:

- a global campaign against female genital mutilation supported by women's organisations, citizen solidarity and sympathetic media (key change promise nine)
- evidence of women and men increasingly expressing support for women's rights to access and control resources (key change promise 10)
- increased numbers and levels of participation of young people on ActionAid-sponsored and -supported social networking and solidarity sites (key change promise six).

Part two:
Operationalising ActionAid's 10 key change promises

Part two

Operationalising ActionAid's 10 key change promises

Our People's Action strategy outlines five strategic objectives and 10 key change promises we will deliver by 2017:

Objective 1: promoting sustainable agriculture and control over natural resources
Promise 1: securing women's land rights
Promise 2: promoting sustainable agriculture

Objective 2: advancing people's influence and holding governments and corporates accountable
Promise 3: holding governments to account on public services
Promise 4: achieving redistributive resourcing of development

Objective 3: improving quality public education and promoting youth mobilisation
Promise 5: transforming education for girls and boys
Promise 6: harnessing youth leadership to end poverty and injustice

Objective 4: building resilience and responding to disasters
Promise 7: building people's resilience to conflict and disasters
Promise 8: responding to disasters through rights

Objective 5: ensuring women control their bodies and have access to economic alternatives
Promise 9: increasing women's and girls' control over their bodies
Promise 10: generating women-centred economic alternatives

These very measurable change promises are balanced with our commitment to pursue credible alternatives under each objective, so we are not just fighting against poverty but pursuing clear solutions. This section outlines our broad **vision** under each objective and exactly how we will deliver on our promises (shown in **critical pathways**). There are definitions to clarify key **concepts** and **rationales** for why we have chosen particular approaches. There are some initial ideas for questions and tools that can help you **contextualise** your work under each promise, adapting it to your own local or national context. Finally there are some links to **additional resources.**

This part, in short, is an inspiration and a resource to help you design strategic and impactful programmes (involving empowerment, campaigning and solidarity work) at all levels (local, national and international), helping to deliver our People's Action strategy.

Strong programme design means clarity about what we are trying to achieve, and a strategy for how we will get there. You should build your strategy on an idea about how change is most likely to happen in your context over the given period of time. In this part of the resource book, we make it clear how we will achieve our 10 change promises. The critical pathways to change (a tool to help us design strong programmes) presented in this section are not what each and every programme should look like. They are intended as a guide and an inspiration, which you can draw on and use to design programmes to advance our work towards a change promise.

While the following pages are laid out with each critical pathway in a separate section, in reality it is important to work in a more integrated way. We need to look at the connections between our work on different change promises. For example, to ensure youth's mobilisation (promise six), it may be important to support sustainable livelihoods (promise two) for young people, defend their education rights (promise five), challenge gender-based violence (promise nine) and even build their resilience (promise seven). To achieve global change, we need to make links between the change promises and avoid working in silos. Tables starting on page 193, part two outline some of the key links between our work on different objectives.

We do not expect every ActionAid country, partner or local rights programme to work on all five objectives and all 10 promises. Countries with smaller programmes should be especially selective. Indeed, we have asked countries to indicate their relative level of interest on each.

However, where you choose to work on a particular objective or promise you should use this resource as a fundamental guideline, so we can harmonise our work and take full advantage of the added value of working at local, national and international level.

Each country had four options for its level of commitment to achieving each of the 10 promises (and the three multi-country campaigns):

- **Strategic role.** We fully commit and want to help guide this work for the whole federation.
- **Active role.** We will do significant work on this in our country, fully harmonising with proposed plans.
- **Limited role.** We will do some local work on this, in ways that are consistent with wider ActionAid positions.
- **No role.** We do not plan to do any work on this.

Based on this, ActionAid is forming horizontal groups:

- Countries that commit to playing a **strategic role** on a change promise are part of the **strategic oversight team** for the federation, leading work on the promise. This role will rotate through the strategy period, ensuring regional balance.
- We are inviting countries that commit to an active role on an issue to be involved in **communities of practice** and to join future multi-country projects (those presented to large external donors, for example).
- We are inviting countries that commit to a **limited role** to join a wider **community of practice** to keep up-to-date with our work, although they are likely to play a more passive role.

We will leave countries with **no role** alone. They will not receive any specific communications promises they have opted out of from the international secretariat.

The role of strategic oversight teams includes:

- tracking our progress towards achieving our promises/campaign objectives
- offering strategic direction/guidance for the organisation on the objective/campaign
- helping to leverage and harmonise internal and external resources (financial and human)
- providing strategic oversight of relevant multi-country projects/framing new multi-country projects
- ensuring strong external links (generating and bringing in learning/influencing internationally)
- providing short updates to ActionAid's senior leadership team twice a year.

The role of communities of practice includes:

- compiling and sharing learning/generating knowledge from practice
- promoting peer support and exchanges
- helping to connect local, national and international work into coherent programmes.

Monitoring and evaluating our change promises

At international level, we have decided to only monitor one meta indicator (very broad indicator) for each change promise. This will give us a sense of how we are progressing towards the numbers we have promised to reach globally. However, to actually learn from and improve our work, we need more detailed indicators and questions. We will include these in each programme. We provide a basket of possible indicators with each of the critical pathways for the key change promises. These indicators help to explain the change further, and tell us how we will know whether the change we envisage is being achieved. In all cases, we propose a balance of quantitative and qualitative indicators. These example indicators should inspire your work and offer guidance for locally relevant qualitative and quantitative indicators you could develop in consultation with local people to use in your own programmes.

You must translate meta indicators into more meaningful change in each local context, using the guidance to follow in this resource book. We expect each local rights programme working on any change promise to establish a baseline for the indicator they choose by the end of 2012. For example, a local rights programme working on food security and education would need to define what "food security" means in that context, how many farmers and children living in poverty need improved food security, what needs to be improved to achieve quality public education (for example, using the *Promoting rights in schools* framework), and how many boys and girls have or are denied that quality.

Our 10 meta indicators (one per change promise) are:

Sustainable agriculture and control over natural resource

1. number of women with greater access to and control over land and natural resources
2. number of people with improved food security as a result of climate resilient sustainable agriculture

People's influence on government and corporate responsibility

3. number of people living in poverty who secure improved public services
4. number of governments that have significantly increased their national budget allocations for key public services benefiting people living in poverty

Public education and youth mobilisation

5. number of communities who secure quality public education
6. number of youth actively participating in our local and national rights programmes and multi-country campaigns

Building resilience and responding to conflicts and disasters

7. number of communities with risk reduction and resilience systems and capacities
8. number of people who receive assistance after disasters in ways that respect their rights

Women's control over their bodies and economic alternatives

9. number of women and girls organised to challenge gender-based violence
10. evidence of women designing, testing and advocating gender-responsive economic alternatives

The People's Action Monitoring Framework also addresses a third element: counting who we reach and impact through our work on the change promises. We will do this by, firstly, agreeing a common definition for all programmes to use so that the numbers have consistent meaning. The second improvement is to disaggregate the numbers not only by gender and child/adult, but also by the other key target groups mentioned in our strategy, such as youth, and urban dwellers. Countries will have the freedom to identify other target groups. Thirdly, and most importantly, we now have to count those who actually experience **impact** under our change promises. We are currently looking at the best way to collect and store the data related to who we "reach" and our "impact", including by using existing systems.

Strategic objective 1

Promote sustainable agriculture and control over natural resources for people living in poverty

Vision

By 2017, at least one million women have improved livelihoods and enhanced rights to land and natural resources. In addition, 25 million people have improved food security as a result of sustainable climate resilient agriculture.

To achieve this effectively, ActionAid will identify, understand, support and promote local alternatives people living in poverty create. The starting point for our work on local alternatives is the community's knowledge and practices. We will also work with farmers' organisations, indigenous communities, local NGOs, research institutes and extension services to merge local alternatives with scientific knowledge. We will develop and test environmentally and economically just alternatives, including agro-ecological farming, seed banks, cooperatives and community agro-forestry production systems.

Working in alliance with other movements and NGOs, we will develop compelling policy change proposals to put innovations like these into practice at national, regional and global levels, building on our past learning and action on trade, corporate regulation and agrarian reform.

Our vision will include:

- **Innovation around monitoring the impact of livelihoods and agriculture programmes on children's food security.** Key causes of child under-nutrition include lack of access to adequate nutrition, women's educational and social status, families' incomes in general and lack of access to water and sanitation and to other social services. ActionAid traditionally has not worked on direct nutrition interventions, nor on child malnutrition.

  Now, we will develop integrated programmes on agriculture and nutrition, with objectives to specifically improve nutrition within the community, including among children. Our programmes will include raising general awareness of the importance of nutrition and the dangers of relying on a small base of crops. Through efforts to conserve and improve water quality, communities, including children, will have more water available.

- **Integration of a gender perspective and unpaid care work within food security programming.** Women in developing countries play an important role in food production, processing and provisioning. Yet they face multiple constraints, from poor access to land and productive resources, to a disproportionately high care burden and lack of power in decision-making. Through integrated programming, we will ensure food security programmes understand women's constraints and support women's multiple roles. This will include empowering women and addressing gender relations within households. ActionAid will study the link between empowering women and improving children's food security.

- **A clear link between sustainable use of natural resources, including sustainable agriculture and climate change.** ActionAid will continue to explore the links between land use change, overexploitation of natural resources, unsustainable farming and food production/distribution practices and climate change with a view to proposing key policy solutions that help communities adapt better. This will include an understanding of management practices such as local water users groups and forest dwellers groups at the community level that encourage sustainable use of natural and productive resources.

- **Links between the right to food and livelihoods and social protection.** Food-based entitlements and social protection schemes to supplement family incomes and food play a key role in ensuring food security. A particular focus of this work will be on those living in extreme poverty and hunger, including marginal farmers.

- **A comprehensive approach to hunger.** This will bring together production, sustainability and resilience, access and control over resources and rights to and within social protection. Bringing together our empowerment, solidarity and influencing work in these four areas, we will be able to further develop an approach that could inform both our policy claims in relation to a comprehensive response to hunger and our local food-related programming.

Other areas for innovation include work on systems to address chronic hunger to avoid emergencies; work on role of climate change adaptation, social protection, and sustainable agriculture in ensuring food and livelihood security; sustainable value chains; and the development of alternative energies to reduce reliance on biofuels.

Key change promise one

By 2017 we will have organised and supported rural women to claim access to and control over land or natural resources, leading to enhanced rights and improved livelihoods for at least one million women living in poverty.

Most rural societies, especially women and indigenous peoples, are losing their land and in effect, their livelihoods. Others are seizing it for financial gain. Globalisation and the pressures of market economies driving continual growth with finite resources mean governments and traditional governance institutions are enticed with quick financial gains. We want to see the rights of land-dependent local communities better protected, especially the rights of women.

To bring change, we'll have to:

- build women's consciousness, knowledge and literacy skills on their rights to land
- build the capacity of rural women and local communities through funding, training, information and supporting their actions at local and national level
- support and facilitate movement-building, mobilisation and organisation of rural women and communities
- develop policy options/models
- support women and communities' engagement with political leadership to demand change
- carry out policy mapping and campaign on identified policies
- document best practices for securing women's rights to land and natural resources through action research, and use these to lobby for policy change at local and national level
- hold public debates, including among youth, to positively promote women's control over land.

We anticipate that these actions will lead to the following intermediate outcomes:

- Local women, communities and national civil society know their rights, are organised and are actively claiming land rights while protecting common property resources from privatisation.
- There is demonstrable public support for women's rights to land and rights to common resources.
- National civil society is actively engaged in holding the state to account for common property rights.
- There is accountable leadership for governance of land and natural resources that puts gender and inter-generational equity at its core.
- There is a legislative and judicial framework in place (state).
- Leaders/politicians/civil servants have the political will and resources to protect common property.
- International agencies are providing technical support and recommendations to national governments.
- We are linking with international organisations (the Food and Agriculture Organization, World Bank and Committee on World Food Security for example) to efficiently regulate investments in smallholder agriculture.

These in turn will lead to more substantial outcomes:

- Women use natural resources sustainably.
- **Local** women have improved access to and control over land.
- Attitudes and practices change in support of women's ownership of and control over land and natural resources.
- The **national** state protects common property resources (for example, water and forests) from privatisation.
- There is support for adoption of international land governance guidelines that supports women's rights to land and common property rights.

Ultimately, we will achieve our **impact**: At least one million women will have improved livelihoods and enhanced rights to land and natural resources.

This is captured in the critical **pathway below:**

Objective 1 - Change promise 1

Monitoring change promise one

Our meta indicator for this promise is the **number of women with greater access to and control over land and natural resources.** Each programme contributing to this change promise must, with the participation of key stakeholders, agree one or more indicators relevant to their specific context which fit within the meta indicator. Programmes will monitor and report on their chosen indicator(s) annually. Programmes must develop a baseline for indicator(s) by the end of 2012. Below are some possible outcome and process indicators you could use. You can choose the ones most relevant to your context, or you can define your own outcome indicators. But they must credibly contribute to and be aggregated to track our progress towards the meta indicator.

Possible **outcome indicators** include:

- increased production output and yields from natural resources management
- reported improvements in conditions of land and natural resources used by women for livelihoods
- evidence of improved resilience to climate change and reduced impact of natural disasters on women's livelihoods and food security
- women producers report that they have more income and greater control over how to use this income
- national laws recognise and protect women's rights to land and natural resources
- extent of land which women farm and harvest from
- improved nutritional status of women and children
- reduced cases of land leases/agreements that dispossess women and other land users
- legislative reforms strengthen communal tenure systems and policies support strengthened governance arrangements
- number of corporates adopting a requirement for transparency and accountability in investments in land and natural resources.

Possible **process indicators** to track the progress of your actions include:

- number of resource user, production and processing groups formed and sustained over time
- number of lobbying and advocacy efforts women's groups and communities carry out to claim their rights to land and natural resources
- number of countries carrying out legislative reviews to strengthen protection of women's rights to land and natural resources
- number of media articles and debates in support of women's rights to land and natural resources
- number of countries undertaking land and natural resources institutional reforms to strengthen their support for women's rights and livelihoods
- enhanced transparency in land information management systems
- number of countries adopting and implementing regulatory frameworks to govern investment in land
- number of civil actions against privatisation of common property resources
- proportion of political leaders vocally supportive of protecting common property resources
- number of case studies demonstrating negative impacts of unregulated large-scale transactions in land
- number of countries making use of international instruments for land and natural resources governance
- increased public budget allocations to programmes that enhance women's control over land and natural resources
- women producers/users report reduced resistance to allocation of land and natural resources to women.

Linking change promise one to impact on children

Changing public attitudes and practice in relation to allocation of land and natural resources to women will have a significant impact on children, especially girls. Children continue to be socialised with the notion that women should not own land. The more that women secure rights to land and natural resources, the more these attitudes will change and the more it is likely that children, especially girls, will demand and retain their own rights to resources. Targeting children in schools can be an important part of this process. Of course, access to and control over natural resources plays a fundamental role in improving family incomes. Women are more likely than men to invest gains in income to support the education and welfare of their children.

Women's right to land in Sierra Leone

"I am one of dozens of women in Kambia district who no longer sits and sees men take what belongs to us. We go for it," says N'mah Damba, 61, a petty trader. ActionAid sponsored N'mah to attend our *Climate change and right to land* training in South Africa in November 2011.

"My husband died and left me with three children and a piece of land. His relatives mistreated us and the land was seized by one of his brothers and sold out unbeknownst to me. I had no alternative but to accept the situation because even the authorities that should have helped me believe a woman cannot own land."

"When I came into contact with ActionAid through the *Women's right to land* project during the general Violence Against Women community meeting, things started changing. After attending several Violence Against Women meetings and training in advocacy, land laws and the Devolution of Estate Act, I began to know my rights as a woman and what I should do to get back what belonged to me. Using the knowledge from the trainings, I sued the person who bought my land and my husband's brother. After several court appearances, I won the case and the land was handed over to me."

"I am planning to build a makeshift structure which I can rent out to raise funds to educate my children. It is also a way of securing the land from other grabbers. I thank ActionAid for giving me this opportunity through the *Women's right to land project.* I'll continue to use my experience to help other women who are in similar situations."

Key definitions

- **Secure access to adequate and safe food** is a universal human right (see International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, article 11), which all states are mutually obliged to respect, protect and fulfil. It includes an extraterritorial obligation not to violate the right to food of people in other countries. Olivier De Schutter, the UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food, has further elaborated, saying, "The right to adequate food is a human right, inherent in all people, to have regular, permanent and unrestricted access, either directly or by means of financial purchases, to quantitatively and qualitatively adequate and sufficient food corresponding to the cultural traditions of people to which the consumer belongs, and which ensures a physical and mental, individual and collective, fulfilling and dignified life, free of fear."
- **Food sovereignty** is the right of people to healthy and culturally-appropriate food produced using ecologically-sound and sustainable methods, and their right to define, access and control their own food and agriculture systems. (The Nyéléni 2007: forum for food sovereignty elaborated further and established six "principles". See www.nyeleni.org)
- **Food security** is defined as, "When all people at all times have access to sufficient, safe, nutritious food to maintain a healthy and active life." (World Food Summit, 1996)
- **Sustainable livelihoods** are those "which can cope with and recover from stress and shocks, maintain or enhance its capabilities and assets, and provide sustainable livelihood opportunities for the next generation; and which contribute net benefits to other livelihoods at the local and global levels and in the short and long term" (Chambers and Conway, 1992). This concept also includes lifestyles and workstyles that do not deplete the social and environmental capital of economies.
- **Good living** means living a life of dignity.
- The definition of a **smallholder** varies depending on the country, farming system and ecological zone. But all have common characteristics: smallholder owners, renters and community farmers cultivate a small piece of land that they derive their livelihoods from. They mostly depend on family for labour and income.

- **Marginal farmers** are those that are "farming yet hungry". Farming is a major livelihood activity for them, yet they have insufficient assets to produce a surplus from their agricultural activities. Their non-farm activities are not reliable or remunerative enough for them to rely on. Marginalised food producers are often pushed to more remote or marginal lands.
- **Pastoralists** are people whose way of life largely depends on mobile livestock herding. A widely-used definition is that pastoralist households are those in which at least 50% of household revenue (in kind or cash) comes from livestock or livestock-related activities. In contrast, agro-pastoralists are sedentary, deriving the majority of their household gross revenue (in kind or cash) from crop farming and 10% to 50% from livestock (FAO).
- **Fisherfolk** (artisanal or small-scale fishers) make a living from fisheries. The FAO defines this group as "involving fishing households (as opposed to commercial companies), using relatively small amounts of capital and energy, relatively small fishing vessels (if any), and making short fishing trips, close to shore, mainly for local consumption.
- **Forest dwellers** are (native) people who live in and primarily depend on forest resources for their food and livelihoods.
- **Rural women**, in the context of this objective, are those who are part of farming households and involved in making a living from natural resources. They include marginal and smallholder farmers.
- **Natural resources** are both renewable and non-renewable. Renewable resources include land, soil and biological resources, such as trees, plants, seeds, livestock, fisheries, wildlife, water and all genetic materials. Non-renewable resources include minerals and fossil fuel. **Productive resources** are integral to improving rural livelihoods and farm household livelihood security. Examples include land, credit, technology, agricultural inputs and extension.
- **Land reform** involves the changing of laws, regulations or customs and practices regarding how land is governed and controlled and the resultant reallocation of the control over territories. **Agrarian reform** is a broader term meaning the overall redirection of the agrarian system of the country, which often includes land reform measures.
- We denounce all forms of **land grabbing**, whether local, national or international. We denounce local level land grabs, particularly by powerful local elites, within communities or among family members. We denounce large-scale land grabbing, which has accelerated hugely over the past three years. We define land grabbing as acquisitions or concessions over land that are one or more of the following:
  - in violation of human rights, particularly the equal rights of women
  - not based on free, prior and informed consent of the affected land users
  - not based on a thorough assessment, or disregard social, economic and environmental impacts, including the way they are gendered
  - not based on transparent contracts that specify clear and binding commitments about activities, employment and benefits sharing
  - not based on effective democratic planning, independent oversight and meaningful participation.
- **Sustainable agriculture** is food, feed and fibre production that sustains the health of soils, ecosystems and people. It relies on ecological processes, biodiversity and cycles adapted to local conditions. **Climate resilient sustainable agriculture** identifies and mitigates the major risks climate change poses and/or is likely to pose to local communities. It involves designing and implementing site- and community-specific adaptation strategies, including more biodiverse and ecological methods (see Ensor. *Biodiverse agriculture for a changing climate.* 2009 www.practicalaction.org). These strategies aim to reduce vulnerabilities and increase the resilience of smallholder production systems to future climate shocks.
- **Adaptation** to climate change in agriculture is about making farming better able to cope with likely climate impacts. It could involve improving water storage facilities; growing different kinds of and diverse mixtures of crops; or keeping different kinds of and breeds of livestock.
- **Agro-ecology** is the science of applying ecological concepts and principles to the design and management of sustainable agro-ecosystems; it is developed based on traditional knowledge, alternative agriculture and local food system experiences.
- **Biofuels** are fuels derived from biological material. Some biofuels are produced from waste processes such as landfill off-gassing or recycled vegetable oil. If produced sustainably and in accordance with local needs they can help tackle climate change. For example, approximately two billion people use local biomass for cooking and lighting fuel. Other biofuels (known as agro-fuels) are produced from agricultural crops and are largely for export. This means they are made using crops which could provide food. ActionAid aims to cut production of these crops.
- **Access to and control over land and other natural resources** implies that people have a secure right to use resources, make independent decisions on how to allocate, transfer or share resources and to impose that decision on others (but often according to, for example, customary laws).

Rationale

- **Women rarely have ownership and control over land.** Even where there is formal recognition for women's ownership and/or control over land, actual control is still in the hands of male family members. Women and minority groups rarely sit in the governance institutions (traditional or formal) that make decisions on land. And where they do, the power relations with other members hinder the effective articulation of women's requirements and issues and their participation in decision-making. Lack of literacy often causes women's lack of power in these spaces.

- **Most women (and many men) in rural communities only have insecure land tenure.** This makes women more predisposed to dispossession. We have seen an increase in land dispossession of widows and orphans due to the HIV and AIDs pandemic. Land held in trust for rural populations by central or decentralised governments, or in communal or public land is most susceptible to land grabs. Land is being grabbed on a large scale for biofuels production, food production for export and the carbon market or extractive industry, with women particularly affected. The World Bank estimates that between 21% and 35% of all land grabs are attributable to biofuels. Much of the land being grabbed is not used for anything – it is a financialised asset only, a "hedge" or "bet" against future value increases.

- **Patriarchal practices subjugate women within families and communities.** In all forms of land tenure systems, communal, private, public or as commons, women's rights to land are often limited to access, which is often only at the whims of and subject to maintaining a good relationship with male relatives. Many national constitutions and laws treat matters of land ownership, inheritance and transfer and property sharing in marriage and divorce under personal law. This perpetuates discrimination on the basis of culture. Moreover, there is threat of real and potential violent backlash where women assert their rights to control land.

To address some of these challenges, ActionAid and our partners will **support rural women to have improved access to and control over land**, including supporting its sustainable use. At national level, ActionAid will lobby and campaign for changes in attitudes and practices to support women's ownership of and control over land and natural resources. We will lobby the state to protect common property resources (such as water and forests) from privatisation. At the international level, we will work with allies to ensure support for adoption of international land governance guidelines that support women's rights to land and common property rights.

Key questions and tools for contextualisation

Addressing the following key questions can help you take the first steps in designing an effective local or national programme in line with the critical pathway and change promise:

- What is the tenure regime in operation in the programme area?
- How are resources distributed and secured? Who makes decisions about resource distribution?
- What is the main source of livelihood for local communities?
- What kinds of laws and policies have been put in place?
- What is it about the content of the laws/policies that has made a difference? What difference?
- What implementation processes, administrative systems and structures have supported the changes on paper?
- What financial resources have been provided to support these changes and how have women accessed them to make the laws meaningful?

Additional resources

ActionAid. *What women farmers need: A blueprint for action.* 2011. (http://act.ai/L16f2e) This is a tool for civil society activists, including community-based organisations, women's movements and NGOs, who want to advocate for the rights of women smallholder farmers. It draws on international research reports on the status of women farmers across sub-Saharan Africa. It looks at why it is difficult for them to achieve food security and at interventions that could help them increase productivity. The tool also draws on research done with women smallholder farmers in two of ActionAid Kenya's development initiatives (in the Rift Valley and West Region) in 2009.

ActionAid. *Women's rights to land Position Paper.* 2012. This position paper explores contemporary and emerging issues affecting women's rights to land. It sets the direction for policy, legislative and institutional reforms necessary for the realisation of women's rights to land and the scope for other stakeholder's programmatic

actions for the same. The policy position makes demands for land redistribution, review of the legal and policy framework, institutional reforms as well as capacity building for actors, including women themselves, who have a bearing on the realisation of women's rights to land.

ActionAid. ***From marginalization to empowerment: The potential of land rights in contributing to gender equality.*** **2011.** This study shows that realising women's rights to land has a direct bearing on women realising other rights. These include everything from the right to non-discrimination, the right to sexual autonomy and the right to information, to the right to equal legal capacity and the right to property. The report draws on existing literature to illustrate the links. It shows the role of pro-women policy and legal and institutional frameworks in propelling women out of poverty and subjugation.

ActionAid. ***Land grabs position paper.*** **2010.** (http://act.ai/MFgR4t) Developing countries are witnessing a dramatic increase in cross-border acquisition of arable land by foreign companies, investment funds and governments. In this position paper, ActionAid calls for a moratorium on such transactions until legally-enforceable regulatory frameworks are introduced that safeguard the right to food for all citizens; ensure security of tenure for those dependent on land for their livelihoods; and protect women's equal rights to own and use land.

ActionAid. ***Conceptual framework on women's empowerment and food security.*** **2011** (http://act.ai/MLQUN6) and **ActionAid.** ***The long road from household food security to women's empowerment: signposts from Bangladesh and The Gambia.*** **2011.** (http://act.ai/L1aevB) These are practical guides to help with programme design at the local rights level, especially with designing food security programmes. Through analysing our food security programmes in The Gambia and Bangladesh, this paper helps pull out key elements that make a programme successful in terms of its impact on women's food security and empowerment, and improving gender relations.

ActionAid. ***Investing in women smallholders*** **– ActionAid International policy briefing. 2011.** (http://act.ai/PsOCqe) This is a policy briefing highlighting the importance of investing in women smallholders, and ActionAid's approach. We produced it as an internal background document for the G20 in 2011.

FAO. ***State of food and agriculture: Women in agriculture – closing the gender gap for development.*** **2011.** (http://act.ai/NSDSo0) This makes the "business case" for addressing gender issues in agriculture and rural employment. It documents the different roles women play in rural areas of developing countries and provides solid empirical evidence on the gender gaps they face in agriculture and rural employment. It is an authoritative reference document for our advocacy work around land and agriculture resource redistribution to women, and around public financing for the smallholder agriculture sector.

International Law Commission, International Institute for Environment and Development and CIRAD. ***Land rights and the rush for land: Findings of the global commercial pressures on land research project.*** **University of Pretoria, South Africa, 2011.** (http://act.ai/Lknrhx) This report aims to present, summarise and interpret the evidence that has emerged so far from a collective body of literature on land deals. It also draws conclusions from this body of evidence as to the key features of the land rush, its outcomes, the contextual factors shaping these outcomes, and the responses needed from civil society, governments and development partners.

The Land Portal. (http://landportal.info/) This is an easy-to-access, easy-to-use web-based platform to share land-related information, to monitor trends and to identify information gaps to promote effective and sustainable land governance. It aggregates existing information sources from around the web as well as facilitating the posting of information currently not online. It is an open space for information sharing, in which anyone can access, add or update information. The portal also generates discussion around land information with the aim of improving it.

The Land Matrix. (http://landportal.info/landmatrix) The Land Matrix is an online public database of large-scale land deals. It has records of land deals since 2000. By May 2012, the Matrix contained about 50% of the entire database. It is continuously updated as more data is cross-checked and verified.

African Union. ***Framework and guidelines for land policy in Africa.*** (http://act.ai/MriLG4) These provide a clear overview of the historical, political, economic and social background of the land question in Africa. They elaborate on the role of land as a valuable natural resource endowment in attaining economic development and poverty reduction. Based on lessons and best practices identified in land policy development and implementation across Africa, they also outline how the land sector should perform its proper role in the development process.

UN Committee on World Food Security. *Voluntary guidelines on the responsible governance of tenure of land, fisheries and forests in the context of national food security.* (http://act.ai/IHE0jC) These guidelines, developed through a consultative process led by the UN Committee on World Food Security, aim to serve as a reference and to provide guidance to improve the governance of tenure of land, fisheries and forests. Their overarching goal is to achieve food security for all and to support the progressive realisation of the right to adequate food in the context of national food security. Although they are voluntary, they are meant to provide effective guidance to national authorities to improve land tenure systems as well as an additional instrument to strengthen civil society and communities' requests for political change.

Wily, L. *Customary tenure in the modern world: Rights and resources initiative.* 2012. (http://act.ai/LqksSS) These five brief series analyse the roots of African land tenure systems, recent policy trends and put the phenomenon of large-scale land acquisitions in rich historical context.

Tsikata, D and Gola, P (Eds.). *Land tenure, gender and globalisation: Research and analysis from Africa, Asia and Latin America.* Zubaan and International Development Research Centre, 2010. (http://act.ai/L173nD) Drawing from field research in Cameroon, Ghana, Vietnam and the Amazon forests of Brazil, Bolivia and Peru, this book explores the relationship between gender and land, revealing the workings of global capital and of people's responses to it. The book addresses a gap in the literature on land tenure and gender in developing countries. It raises new questions about globalisation, particularly about who the actors are (local people, the state, NGOs, multinational companies) and the shifting relations among them. The book also challenges the very concepts of gender, land and globalisation.

Key change promise two

By 2017 we will have supported marginal and smallholder farmers to secure direct support and policies from their government, and effective accountability of corporates, enabling them to gain a good living from climate resilient sustainable agriculture, (CRSA) improving the food security of 25 million people.

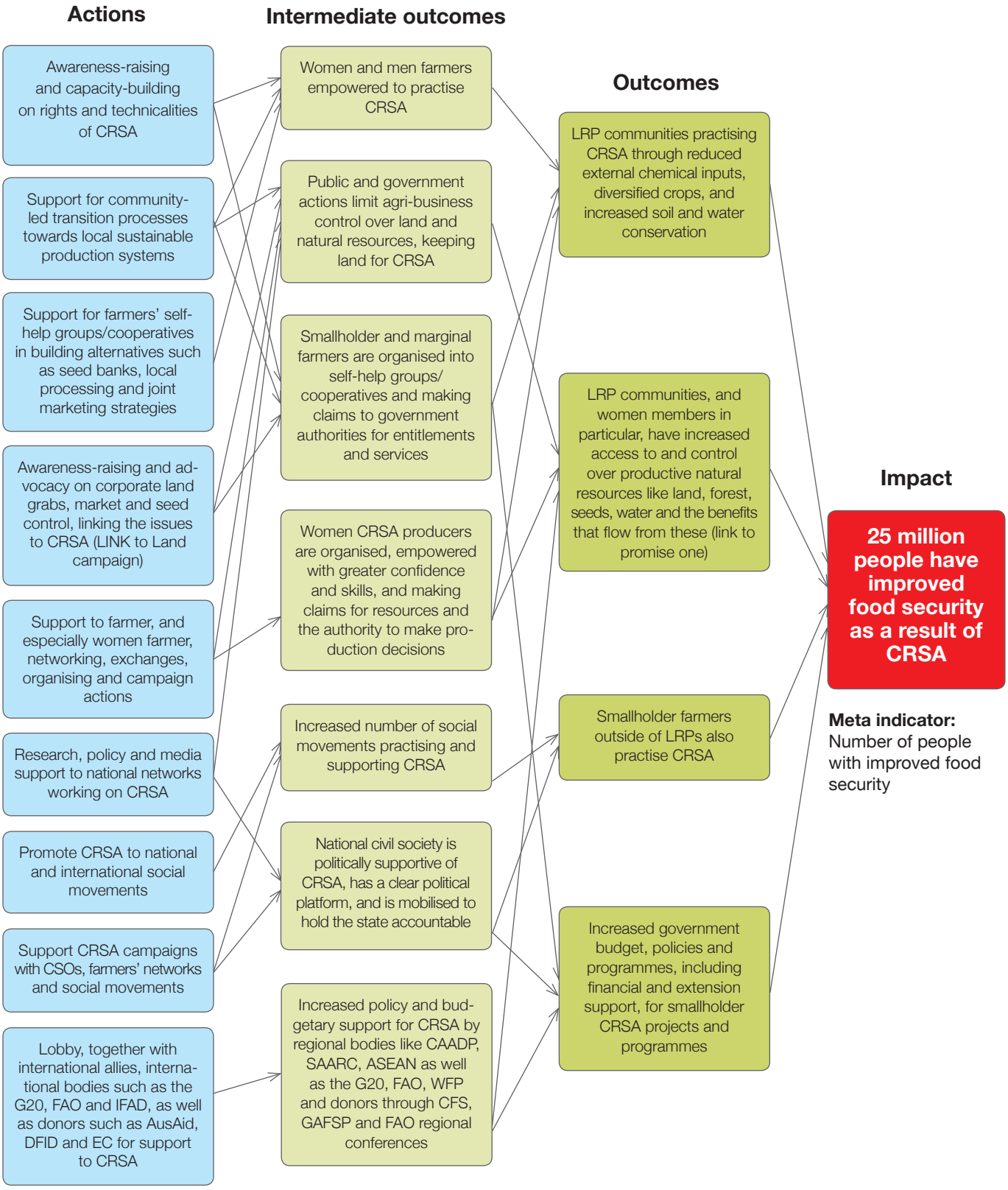
The critical pathway below shows the key outcomes and interim outcomes we need to achieve to meet this target through programme, policy and campaign actions at local, national and international levels. The core of this work revolves around developing CRSA.

At local level, we need communities to practise CRSA by reducing chemical inputs and using natural resources sustainably. To achieve this, local rights programmes will receive training, awareness-raising and organisation-building support, including on climate change conditions like droughts and floods. Conscientisation processes for women will empower them to control their production, income and expenditure. Communities, particularly women, will also need increased access to and control over productive natural resources (here there is a clear link to promise one) as well as better awareness on key issues and threats. These include threats from corporates and other influential actors around seeds, land grabbing, and distorted markets. Reducing the dependency of communities on corporations (for example, for inputs and marketing) will be important. We will be empowering people to do this through promoting seed/grain banks, local processing and value chains.

We will help communities to organise through self-help groups/cooperatives and networks/alliances to claim quality services from the relevant departments (extension, soil and water management departments, for example). We will also help build solidarity programmes for campaigns. Beyond the local level, we will strengthen work with social movements to expand and deepen their work on CRSA. To scale up the work, we will also connect local communities with national civil society networks and strengthen their capacities to hold the state and corporates accountable. Our campaigns and advocacy work will achieve increased government budgets and progressive policies on CRSA for smallholder farmers. Convincing, research-based arguments and strong leadership from national civil society organisations will also help. This will extend to global institutions and donors who will be the targets for increased international investment in agriculture through campaigns and advocacy with other like-minded civil society groups.

The **critical pathway** below shows this in a systematic format:

Objective 1 - Key change promise 2



Monitoring change promise two

At the level of **impact**, change promise two aims to see 25 million people with improved food security as a result of CRSA. Our meta indicator is **the number of people who have improved food security as a result of CRSA.** Each programme contributing to this change promise must, with the participation of key stakeholders, agree one or more indicators relevant to their specific context, which they will monitor and report on annually against a 2012 baseline. The first step is to be very clear what we mean by "food security resulting from CRSA". Once the changes required to achieve that are clear, indicators follow naturally.

Possible **outcome indicators** include:

- number of women and men with secure access to land
- number of evictions/legal challenges to land grabs
- number of seed banks and water management, soil conservation and forest management initiatives
- local rights programme communities actively engaging in and raising their concerns through relevant policy processes
- number of communities claiming legal entitlements to food, land or production support, for example
- numbers of social movements/farmers with CRSA demonstration plots, farmer school and support systems; extent of acreage under CRSA
- increased state budget for research, extension support and seed support aligned to CRSA
- number of farmers, and women farmers in particular, receiving CRSA support in extension, credit, soil and water conservation from government departments.

Process indicators could include:

- number of women and men farmers trained in CRSA
- number of farmers' groups involved in developing local CRSA practices
- number of women and men farmers practising CRSA by reducing agro-chemicals/use of compost/adopting crop diversification/practising soil and water conservation/using local seeds
- number of women who report having a greater say in household budgeting and decision-making
- number of women and men farmers facing floods and droughts trained in CRSA
- number of self-help groups/cooperatives developed
- number of self-help groups/cooperatives engaged in collective processing linked to local markets
- number of cooperatives that have crèche facilities, and meet at times suitable for women
- number of actions individual farmers and groups undertake to claim rights (visits, letters, marches, demonstrations)
- number of women with land held under secure forms of tenure/number of cases lodged for dispossession/against inheritance discrimination
- number and quality of research, briefs by national networks on CRSA
- positions and demands of national civil society platforms are aligned to a CRSA orientation
- increase in communities' collective actions on land, seeds and other resources.

Linking change promise two to impact on children

CRSA should provide safer, more diverse and nutritious food for children – a major challenge in many of the areas we work in, where the effects of malnourishment on growing children can be devastating. Often children are exposed to chemical fertilisers and pesticides, creating additional health challenges. A move to more sustainable practices will also reduce children's health risks, give them less contaminated water and allow them to live in a less polluted environment. A stable family income and diverse base of food (milk, eggs, chicken), along with the empowerment of women to manage its production, income and expenditure, is likely to improve food security and children's health.

From groundnuts to power in Senegal

ActionAid Senegal supports groundnut farmers, especially women, to organise themselves, increase productivity and build their processing and marketing capacities. This helps to increase their income and to develop a sustainable, localised food system.

To begin with, ActionAid Senegal supported farmers to organise themselves at local level, share their experiences on groundnut farming, build solidarity and overcome common challenges. They then supported them to become members of the Groundnut Producers' Consultation Framework (CCPA), a powerful groundnut farmers' organisation working at national level.

ActionAid Senegal has also helped build groundnut processing units in two communities, facilitated farmers' access to credit from rural banks, and trained women farmers in processing and marketing skills. This meant they can increase their income by making products like groundnut oil, cake, soap, paste and flour. Improving access to local markets has been particularly important in rural areas, where farmers are not well organised and often exploited by middlemen.

ActionAid Senegal also supported CCPA and the Senegalese Institute of Agricultural Research to implement a seed multiplication programme, giving farmers access to good quality, certified seeds. The programme has helped take production from 1.4 to 2,964 tons. As a result of this success, the government certified CCPA as an organisation capable of producing and multiplying selected seeds. CCPA now participates in negotiating groundnut prices and continues to influence the government to give farmers adequate subsidies. Moreover, CCPA has now become a credible and respectable farmers' organisation, able to access credit from the national agricultural development bank.

In 2010, CCPA supported ActionAid and Activista to launch the *HungerFREE* journey, mobilising over 20,000 people around the issue of hunger and middlemen exploitation using media (national and community radio), public hearings, field visits with journalists and lobby meetings with government officials. As a result, the issue of middlemen is now at the heart of public debate and the state's position is constantly mentioned in the media.

Rationale

- **Nearly a billion people go to bed hungry every day and over half the world's hungry live on small farms, making a living from agriculture and associated natural resource-based rural livelihoods.** Food and oil price rises; financial crisis; climate crisis, including soil and water degradation; and food waste, including through post-harvest loss, is making an already precarious situation worse. Climate change is wreaking havoc on food systems and on the livelihoods of smallholder farmers. Low food prices, trade liberalisation and dismantling of state enterprises in many countries mean governments have left production and distribution of food to the vagaries of the market and in the hands of a few multinational corporations who control most of the world's trade.

- **Lack of investment in agriculture over several decades by national governments and donors alike remains a key challenge.** In 2009, the G8 launched the L'Aquila Food Security Initiative at their L'Aquila summit in Italy. It pledges to mobilise US$22 billion over three years in support of country-led plans for agriculture, with a coordinated, comprehensive strategy. Continued advocacy is needed to make sure governments fulfill this commitment and to push for increased public investment in smallholder-led sustainable agriculture.

- **Corporations that own factory farms often control the entire process of production (which is called "vertical integration"), from raising the animals to slaughtering, processing and distributing the final products.** This makes it easier for factory farm corporations to squeeze traditional family farms out of business, and gives more power to retailers.

- **The food system is broken, with a billion undernourished and the same number obese, and many more suffering from micro-nutrient deficiency.** This situation is not sustainable. The recent food crisis – and ensuing price volatility – was a wake-up call for governments to take their duty to ensure their citizens' right to food seriously, protecting the environment through sustainable farming practices at the same time.

- **Producer organisations, peasants and artisanal fisherfolk have developed their own alternative way of organising rural livelihoods and food production under the framework of food sovereignty – to counter the neoliberal model.**

ActionAid will support marginal and smallholder farmers and their families to make the transition to CRSA by supporting alternatives, reducing their dependence on external chemical inputs, diversifying their crops, increasing soil and water conservation, and empowering women farmers. We will also support smallholder and marginal farmers to organise and take collective action by building their awareness of rights.

At national level, ActionAid will campaign for more government support for CRSA and increased accountability of food and agriculture corporations. We will demand more public financing for sustainable agriculture, support decentralised food systems and demonstrate the successes of alternative models. At international level, ActionAid will work with farmers' movements and like-minded allies to ensure greater support for CRSA through increased funding, and policy support by donors and the UN.

Key questions and tools for contextualisation

One key framework that can help you design and develop your own national and local programme on this key change promise is ActionAid's three-prong approach to CRSA. This involves:

1. undertaking participatory appraisals to identify local conditions, potentials and challenges for making the transition to agro-ecological farming systems
2. identifying, documenting, testing and disseminating local knowledge and alternative agro-ecological practices, and encouraging local innovation
3. promoting long-term sustainability through appropriate agricultural research and extension services based on technologies that reduce dependence on external inputs and agro-chemicals, help farmers adapt to climate change, and build on and reinforce local knowledge
4. CRSA should be based on seven key pillars:
    - gender equity and women's rights
    - soil conservation
    - sustainable water management
    - agro-biodiversity preservation
    - livelihood diversification
    - improved processing and market access
    - supporting farmers' organisations and collective action.

Undertaking a participatory appraisal of agriculture in a local area

Some of the key issues a participatory appraisal will look at include:

1. **Understanding the local situation on agricultural practices, farming communities, markets and other stakeholders**
   - identification and analysis of various sections of farming communities in the area, for example:
     — small-scale and large-scale farmers
     — landless, peasant and agricultural labour
     — women-headed farm households
   - identification and analysis of major cropping patterns in the area
   - analysis of prevailing cropping methods with their pros and cons
   - situational analysis of local markets and their links with agricultural production.

2. **Analysis of agriculture-related natural resources**
   - land ownership patterns, marginalisation and vulnerabilities
   - availability and quality of water resources and the irrigation situation
   - quality of soil and the situation of forest resources.

3. **Analysis of climatic conditions and challenges of climate change**
   - recent patterns of droughts, floods, extreme weather and respective challenges
   - local climate change adaptation methods and their results.

4. **Analysis of organisational capacities and institutions of smallholder and landless women and men farmers**

5. **Situational analysis of capacities of women and men farmers on CRSA practices**
   - level of understanding of and capacity for CRSA among women and men farmers
   - CSRA success stories and challenges faced by local communities.

6. **Mapping of relevant local and national policies on agriculture**

Elements to consider in supporting CRSA

Based on the results of a participatory appraisal, we may support work that includes:

1. **Capacity development**
   - capacity development plan on CRSA methods for the target farming families
   - capacity development plan on policy issues and organisation of smallholder farmers into farmers' organisations, self-help groups or cooperatives, depending on the situation and discussion on ground
   - raising awareness of the importance and challenges for women and youths in farming and potential for contribution towards CRSA.

2. **Practising CRSA**
   - documentation plan for success stories, challenges, case studies etc
   - CRSA adaptation plan for climate change challenges, depending on local situation. For example, drought, floods, extreme weathers
   - initiation of farmer field schools with target farming families
   - plan for seed banks, grain banks, water harvesting, soil and water reclamation
   - diversification of farm income for increased livelihoods.

3. **Networking/alliance-building for policy change and knowledge exchange**
   - formation of farmers' organisations, self-help groups or cooperatives depending on the situation and discussion on ground
   - networking and alliances with other farmers' networks and national civil society organisations for learning and sharing and policy change initiatives
   - creating links with universities, research institutions, extension departments and soil and water departments to promote CRSA.

4. **Marketing plans**
   - value addition plans for farm produce at local level
   - joint marketing plans by self-help groups for better prices.

Tracking the environmental impact of our work

Our People's Action strategy commits us to "become respected innovators in developing and testing economically and ecologically just alternatives to commercial over-exploitation of ecosystems and food production".

We are developing a holistic view of our work's environmental impact. As part of our promises, we are assessing our negative impact on the environment by measuring our consumption of key resources and our carbon emissions. Understanding and reducing these is a first step. However, it does not give us a complete view of our environmental impact, nor does it promote innovation in reducing our impact. We promote programmes that have a measurable impact on the environment, for example. However, we do not collect baseline data, or data that would help assess this benefit. Examples of beneficial activities include afforestation, promotion of sustainable principles of farming such as agro-forests, soil conservation, erosion control, sustainable water management, cessation of agricultural land burning, composting, green manure, multi-cropping, inter-cropping and implementation of appropriate technologies such as low particulate cooking stoves, solar panel energy, solar panel fences, windmills, treadle pumps and small-gravity irrigation systems.

There are four reasons for assessing the environmental impact of our programme work:

1. Measuring environmental benefits, along with social and economic benefits, will promote an integrated approach to sustainable development, which recognises the inter-connected nature of livelihoods, gender-responsive economic alternatives and resources and ecosystem services.
2. Quantifying our environmental benefits will help us tell effective stories. For example, "Not only did ActionAid's work promote livelihoods for smallholder farmers, it reduced carbon emissions by X% per hectare."
3. It will enable us to report positive quantitative environmental impacts next to the negative ones that we already provide to the INGO Accountability Charter and the UK's Department for International Development.
4. Identifying and understanding the environmental impact of our programmes gives us the background data we need to optimise environmental outcomes, and to drive innovative solutions to social, economic and environmental problems.

Additional resources

ActionAid. *Climate resilient sustainable agriculture toolkit, draft 3.* 2011. (http://act.ai/NXYjzU) This toolkit highlights broader ways to employ the CRSA approach and presents the principles and main pillars that support our work on sustainable agriculture.

ActionAid. *Climate resilient sustainable agriculture: Experiences from ActionAid countries and partners.* 2011. (http://act.ai/NXYjzU) This report highlights how communities are successfully using CRSA in Kenya, South Africa, Senegal, Brazil, Cambodia and Nepal.

ActionAid. *Smallholder-led sustainable agriculture: ActionAid International policy briefing.* 2011. (http://act.ai/M92ULy) This policy briefing documents credible and research-based evidence on the successes of smallholder-led sustainable agriculture in different countries.

***CAADP Toolkit for Civil Society Organisation Engagement and Advocacy. Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme* (CAADP), 2011.** (http://act.ai/MluuGR) This toolkit guides civil society organisations on how to run advocacy initiatives around CAADP.

De Schutter, O. *Agro-ecology and the right to food.* Report presented at the 16th session of the United Nations Human Rights Council, 2011. (http://act.ai/M93Jnu) Olivier De Schutter is a strong supporter of agro-ecology. This report is a useful resource for clarifying the links between agro-ecology and the right to food.

Altieri, M and Toledo, V. *The agro-ecological revolution in Latin America: Rescuing nature, ensuring food sovereignty and empowering peasants.* Journal of Peasant Studies, 38 (3), 587-612, 2011. (http://act.ai/M9eLeW) This paper presents the basics of agro-ecology, success stories in Latin America, and its role in achieving local self-reliance and empowering peasant organisations.

UN High Level Task Force on the Global Food Security Crisis. *Updated comprehensive framework for action.* 2010. (http://act.ai/MluYN8) This is a joint framework from all the UN agencies, including the World Food Programme, FAO, the International Fund for Agricultural Development and the Conference on Trade and Development, on policies to achieve food and nutritional security. It shows the broad thinking of the UN on these areas.

International Fund for Agricultural Development. *Rural poverty report.* 2011. (http://act.ai/M9f3lO) This report highlights challenges facing communities due to inter-connections between food prices, climate change, rural poverty and on-farm and non-farm economies. It also talks about the crucial role that policies, investments and good governance can play in reducing risk and helping rural people facing poverty to address these challenges.

UK government Office for Science. *The future of food and farming: Challenges and choices for global sustainability.* 2011. (http://act.ai/NTMidE) This report documents the vulnerability of the global food system and the need to build greater resilience. It calls on governments, the private sector and civil society to prioritise global food security, sustainable agriculture, fisheries, reform of trade and subsidy, waste reduction and sustainable consumption.

International Assessment of Agricultural Knowledge, Science and Technology for Development. *Agriculture at a crossroads.* 2009. (http://act.ai/M9artW) This is a seminal report with contributions from hundreds of stakeholders, including government policy-makers, the private sector, NGOs, producer and consumer groups, international organisations and the scientific community from all continents. It highlights the problems of industrial agriculture and discusses the sustainable agricultural options that can change the course of food production for a better future.

Mulvany, P. *Competing interpretations of sustainable agriculture* (http://act.ai/NcWaKO) and ***Comparison of ecological, sustainable intensification and industrialised production models.*** (http://act.ai/KAVse0) These two documents are useful guides to help clarify the different terms, ideas and concepts framing the current debate around sustainable agriculture. A must read to understand the real politics behind these terms and the concepts helping ActionAid to align its own strategy most closely behind agro-ecology/CRSA.

Strategic objective 2

Advance the political influence of people living in poverty to hold governments and corporate accountable

Vision

Firstly, at local level, five million people will have secured improvements in the quality, equity and gender-responsiveness of a broad range of public services, including, but not limited to, health, education, agricultural extension, social security and public administration (citizenship papers, for example).

Secondly, at national level, service delivery policies will reflect a fairer redistribution of resources, an increase in funding and improvements in management, staffing and professionalism. We will also work with others to promote the most advanced thinking and practice globally in accountable governance, social protection, taxation, the care economy, development finance and other redistributive measures for ending poverty and injustice. We will tap into the experience and thinking of allies, partners, communities and social movements. Specifically, our work will aim to develop alternative, new models and processes of inclusive decision-making that allow women living in poverty and excluded groups to have greater political influence.

We will promote strategic interventions such as:

- **Promoting accountable and just public service provision and financing.** We want to see universal, free public services as rights. We recognise there are both supply- and demand-side challenges to improving basic services. We will address these in appropriate ways. We will include corporate accountability in the cases of privatisation of public services and will hold governments to account for the regulation of corporates. At local level, we will support communities and civil society organisations to demand improvements to a broad range of public services, especially for the most marginalised.

- **Supporting people's demands to improve accountability mechanisms** between service providers and users as well as between frontline staff (teachers, doctors and nurses, for example) and their managers. We will also focus on demanding that service providers coordinate with local government and encourage a greater focus on decentralised and devolved service delivery. We will focus on women's active participation in accountability processes for both state and corporate providers and will promote the use of ELBAG approaches for accountability work. We will ensure that our experience from the local level is used at national level in advocacy and campaigns focused on service delivery policy reform. Issues and concerns covered will include, but not be limited to, service quality, uniformity, coverage, administration, management and accountability systems, and problems associated with service privatisation and fees.

- **Increasing the voices and representation of women and youth in decision-making.** Recognising deficits in democracy at local, national and international level, we will consider carefully how and when to enter into democratic spaces. We will analyse whether they are "invited" or "created" spaces and who is allowed into the space. Our initiatives will go beyond just challenging power, leading to changes that consolidate democratic processes and secure real influence for marginalised women and youth. We will strengthen leadership by women and youth living in poverty, building their capacities and advocating and campaigning for space for them in local and national governance. We will mobilise supporters and campaign to increase representation of women and youth in international institutions.

- **Promoting the right to information and anti-corruption initiatives.** We will advocate for increased access to information, to combat corruption and to fight impunity to corruption with preventive, educational and enforcement actions. We will analyse the type, sources, actors and dynamics of hidden powers, including patriarchal, ethnic, religious, corporate and traffic gang interests, in political decision-making spaces, looking at their impact on corruption of public service financing and provision for people living in poverty.

We will also strengthen and link right to information and anti-corruption partnerships and alliances at national, regional and international levels.

- **Promoting tax justice and budget transparency.** At local level, our tax work will intrinsically link to budget tracking and accountability efforts (via ELBAG). At national level, our main focus will be a more equitable tax system, including greater taxation on transnational corporations. At international level, we will press the G20 to ensure transparency and accountability of corporations. We will promote country by country reporting by transnational corporations. We will also demand changes to transfer pricing rules so companies cannot avoid paying taxes. Targets include local government officials, finance ministries, revenue authorities, parliaments, the UN tax committee, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), G20, rich country governments and tax-avoiding companies.

- **Promoting aid effectiveness.** We will promote advocacy, coalition-building and lobbying so that southern governments reduce their dependency on aid over the medium and long term, increasing aid effectiveness and the role of real aid in building capacity to raise more and more fair taxes. We will promote citizen engagement, development priority setting and monitoring of commitments, including budget tracking. Greater efforts to take into account the voice of people living in poverty must underpin all these actions.

- **Promoting transformative social protection.** We will promote and advocate for donors and governments to increase their investments in social protection and social service provision. We will promote research, coalitions, advocacy, lobbying and campaigning to influence countries where ActionAid works from within (empowering communities to work with others to monitor government policies and pilot alternatives) and from outside, to adopt:

  — appropriate, universal transformative and redistributive social protection systems financed by public resources (including social assistance schemes like old age pensions, disability pensions, widow pensions, midday meals and cash transfers)
  — social insurance (such as health insurance, life insurance, property insurance, weather-based crop insurance and non-farm enterprise insurance)
  — social security (for workers in informal occupations).

  These would aim to achieve social justice and reduce multiple inequalities, such as between men and women. At international level we can work with the G20/EU and other key international targets and donors to lobby to finance a system that is nationally-driven but based on the International Labour Organization social floor model.

- **Promoting alternative national development strategies.** Using a combination of country research, coalition-building, advocacy and lobbying, we will influence governments to adopt alternative national development strategies that recognise the social and economic rights of all citizens and lay out a practical vision for state-citizen-led development. This should be founded on principles of transformative social protection and redistribution of wealth for social justice; a self-reliant and inclusive economy; ecological justice and environmental sustainability; deepening democracy; and tackling women's disproportionate burden of care. Our role is to create/facilitate a platform for civil society organisations, progressive social groups, citizens' groups and communities to analyse, reflect and share experiences, aspirations and visions for innovative and fair national alternatives.

- **Promoting the latest thinking in areas such as accountability, budget, anti-corruption, hidden power, tax justice, social protection and care economy** (all with a special focus on women's rights). We will develop knowledge hubs – country-based units responsible for creating knowledge and managing support to the ActionAid federation and partners in a specific area. Each will manage a network of specialists and practitioners (within and outside ActionAid). Units will track research and academic studies, produce advanced thinking and practice about alternatives, develop specific methods and tools and facilitate platforms for learning and sharing.

As a result of this work, our long-term vision is to achieve new models of democratic practice, based on political spaces which recognise the rights of social minorities (women, youth, ethnic groups and the disabled, for example) and governments that are committed to (and held accountable for delivering) rights-based national development strategies which redistribute wealth and power.

Key change promise three

By 2017, through holding governments and corporates to account, we will have secured improvements in the quality, equity and gender-responsiveness of public services for five million people living in poverty.

Under this change promise, ActionAid strives to improve basic services (publicly delivered) for over five million people living in poverty. Basic services such as education, health, water and sanitation, food, housing and human security are important as they are basic rights. They make it possible to progressively realise other economic, social and human rights for all citizens, especially the marginalised. This promise aims to enhance communities' capacities to demand accountable, transparent, equitable and gender-responsive basic services for people living in poverty.

Using participatory methodologies, the starting point for action is to build the capacities of women, youth and excluded groups to conduct ongoing research and analysis on the status of and gaps in public service provision. They should identify gaps, priorities and spaces to influence decision-making and to hold government to account.

We will build the capacity of women, youth and excluded communities to understand their rights to public services. We will promote solidarity and networks to influence decision-making locally and seek accountability from governments on public service provision. To reinforce our actions towards achieving transparent, accountable, equitable and gender-responsive public services, we will promote people's movements at all levels and support a global community of practice. We will also facilitate reflection-action processes, promote dialogue and encourage documentation of innovative experiences in providing quality, equitable and gender-responsive public services.

Advocacy and campaigning need to accompany this work to fulfil people's rights to basic services and to enhance legislative frameworks and processes, addressing local, provincial and national governments and corporates in ways that will facilitate more accountable public services. This may involve promoting the right to information, anti-corruption, grievance redress and genuine decentralisation which provides women and the most excluded groups with enhanced decision-making power. Where corporates are playing a role in providing public services, we will campaign and advocate nationally and internationally for governments to adopt strong accreditation, regulatory and accountability mechanisms.

These actions should secure some important outcomes to help us advance towards our impact. Women and excluded communities should realise significant gains in terms of access to and quality of basic public services. Local governments should demonstrate accountability and transparency in delivery of public services thanks to the collective advocacy and campaigning of local communities. National governments should demonstrate commitment towards local accountability and transparency by enacting enabling legislation and creating institutions which local communities can effectively use to demand accountability from service providers. Empowered groups of women and excluded groups should be able to participate more effectively in decentralised governance structures and steer decision-making towards the welfare and well-being of people living in poverty. Coordinated action should lead governments to allocate more resources for public services which prioritise women and excluded communities.

This is captured in the **critical pathway** below:

Objective 2 - Key change promise 3

Monitoring change promise three

The **meta indicator** for this promise is clear: **the number of people living in poverty who secure improved public services.** We will aggregate data from across countries to determine our overall progress towards this. Locally and nationally context-appropriate outcome indicators will be developed that can credibly contribute to this meta indicator. You may draw from the following basket of outcome indicators or set your own in consultation with people living in poverty.

Possible **outcome indicators** include:

- number of governments with policies, procedures and mechanisms to strengthen their accountability, decentralise service planning and provision, and open space to women, youth and excluded communities to make decisions on public services
- number of governments that have reformed legislation or procedure around public services to prevent discrimination or exclusion of particular groups of people
- increased accessibility of a public service (for example, average distance of users to that service) or quality of a service (for example, ratio of teachers to children or ratio of health professionals to population in a rural area)
- number of governments that have enacted and/or implemented existing laws and policies for accrediting, regulating and ensuring corporate accountability in the provision of public services
- number of privatised public services reclaimed by government for delivery and maintenance
- new policies and mechanisms of regional and international organisations such as the African Union, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, the EU and the UN, promote the right to information and combat corruption. Increased evidence of national governments identifying and prosecuting public services corruption cases
- right to information policies and mechanisms exist and are being enforced in x number of countries
- increased implementation at local and national government level of best practices, innovations and alternatives for achieving more quality, equitable and gender-responsive public services.

Possible **process indicators** that show you are on the right track include:

- status and levels of access, and gaps and failures in public service provisions have been mapped at local rights programme level
- number of requests for information on plans, budgets and expenditure on public services by women, youth and excluded groups. Evidence of organisations of women, youth and excluded groups networking, advocating and campaigning for better public service provision
- strong coalitions and networks advocating for greater regulation of corporations providing privatised public services and for the state to assume its responsibility in providing universal public services
- robust coalitions, networks and movements that advocate and campaign for the right to information and an end to corruption
- pilots to develop alternatives for equitable and gender-responsive public service provisions implemented, monitored, documented and advocated
- knowledge hubs on best practices and alternatives for fair and equitable public services provision exist in x number of countries.

Linking change promise three to impact on children

Our analysis of public services gaps gives us the opportunity to understand better how these failures affect children. At local level, our work to build empowered communities and more accountable governments will lead to better quality and equitable public services, directly benefiting children. Through reflection-action circles and other community groups like mothers' committees and education committees, people will be empowered to monitor public services like local schools, child care centres, public health centres, water supply systems and public distribution systems, improving their quality. These actions will contribute to achieving children's rights to education, health, food and wider improvements in their living conditions.

Building active agency for accountability in Brazil

"It was only after ActionAid's project that I understood that it was the National Company of Supply (CONAB) that was buying our produce to distribute in schools meals. Until then I thought it was a favour of the local mayor to our community," says Francisca Nascimento. Francisca, from the Brazilian state of Piauí, is one of 500 people living in poverty who managed to change their role as a mere beneficiary of a public policy to being an active agent of it following ActionAid Brazil's two-year accountability initiative to strengthen monitoring of public policies.

The initiative worked on three issues: food rights, women's rights and the right to just and democratic governance. It built local forums and "accountability networks" in six local rights programmes in four states, working with local groups from partner organisations. ActionAid Brazil also invited three national partners to provide knowledge on the issues at national level.

ActionAid Brazil developed charters of demands and created public spaces where people could start a dialogue with the authorities responsible for policy delivery. Some workshops were exclusively for women and some were mixed. People assessed policies based on their own experiences, while the national partners provided information to the local forums about the wider impact of each policy. It became clear that the delivery of policies varied from region to region according to local political alliances and/or arrangements.

The groups developed and presented charters to the authorities responsible for the implementation of each policy. These charters looked at the design and the delivery of the policies and were used for wider campaigning, including informing *HungerFREE* campaign actions. The authorities managing Brazil's Food Acquisition Programme acknowledged the importance of ActionAid's work as a way to improve policy delivery in the poorest northeast region. Another example of impact was the creation of the Maria da Penha Forum, an accountability network set up by the women's group of São João de Meriti in Rio de Janeiro. The forum successfully pressured the local authorities to open a special police station for women victims of domestic violence.

Key definitions

- **Public services provision and financing:** Universal and free (no cost at the point of use) public services are people's right. The range of public services available, their quality and access for all people are also crucial issues for overcoming poverty. The state should take the lead in financing and providing basic public services for all. Therefore it is necessary for the state to have sufficient and sustainable resources to finance these public services. Services such as education, health, water, sanitation, a basic supply of food as well as access to housing and security are basic human rights enshrined in human rights covenants and declarations. Services such as employment opportunities, agriculture extension and credit are also part of a wider raft of essential services which uphold and enable a decent and sustainable livelihood, essential for rural and urban communities.
- **Accountability** involves a relationship between duty bearers and rights holders. A HRBA to public service delivery emphasises the participation of citizens and the ability of excluded groups to ask questions, claim rights, make decisions and hold institutions to account. There is a clear link between poor service delivery and failures in accountability. Corporations must also be held accountable and must not violate human or environmental rights in their pursuit of profits. National and international regulatory frameworks should enforce respect for rights.

- **Democratic and transparent management and administration of public services:** Effective and inclusive service provision requires the effective and inclusive governance of delivery mechanisms. Demands for accountability must go hand in hand with demands for improved governance and regulation. Key focus areas are authority mandates; the exercise of executive power; financial and resource management and procurement; the implementation of vertical and horizontal accountability mechanisms; and quality assurance of professional standards and professional staff.
- The **right to information** is a fundamental entitlement guaranteed by national and international human rights instruments, where every human is able to access, request and receive information affecting their livelihood. It empowers and widens space for excluded communities to confront unjust decision-making processes; helps in the fight against corruption; provides access and influence in political spaces; and provides an enabling environment for accountability of public services.
- **Inclusive decision-making – participation, voice and representation.** Democracy is a process, constantly under development, through which women and men exercise control over decisions which affect their lives. People living in poverty can only influence decision-making by demanding their rights and establishing democratic forums and organisations, with equal participation of women.

Rationale

Public services are failing for people living in poverty. In many developing countries, the state is often not able or not willing to live up to its responsibility to provide basic services. Many services, such as education, health, water and sanitation are often poor in quality and incompatible with the needs of, or completely absent for, the majority of people living in poverty. Women are the primary users of services and are therefore specifically affected when services are not delivered in accordance with recognised minimum standards.

The reasons for services failing people living in poverty include:

- **Weak or fragile states.** The rights-based approach often focuses on the demand side. Working for quality, equitable and gender-responsive public services requires actions on both the supply and demand side. The neoliberal dominant model has promoted a weak state. Donors' conditionality has distorted national government priorities. States have neither sufficient financial resources nor capacity to finance and deliver quality public services for people living in poverty. States often do not provide an enabling environment for people's participation in the setting of public policy priorities. Consequently, democratic accountability is compromised due to the weakening of state institutions by the adoption of neoliberal policies and donor priorities. Delivery is poor as politicians are unaccountable and see no political advantage in promoting service delivery for people living in poverty. Government policies are inadequate and unresponsive and programmes are plagued by a lack of political will and commitment, distorted priorities, and lack of institutional capacity.

- **Increasing power of transnational corporations and privatisation of public services.** In many countries, service delivery is under pressure from transnational corporations. The state is in many cases keen to abdicate its responsibility for service provision by promoting privatisation and other forms of delivery by non-state actors. Transnational corporates become more powerful than states and less accountable. Many public services are no longer public goods and people living in poverty cannot afford the fees, contributing to increasing marginalisation and exclusion.

- **Failure in health and HIV and AIDS governance.** Millions of people die because the current treatment approaches for health, particularly in the case of HIV and AIDS, are not sufficient to provide access to all who need it. The corporate interests of the pharmaceutical industry harm the right to health of the people who cannot afford to pay. The public health system is failing due to lack of resources and governmental commitments. The increasing privatisation of the system excludes more and more people from accessing the services and medicines they need for a dignified life.

- **Lack of corporate regulation by national governments and international organisations.** There are no clear national or international regulatory frameworks for transnational corporations, presenting challenges for governments in all countries, but especially in low income ones. Corporations end up with disproportionate power, able to avoid taxation and regulation.

- **Persistent corruption.** Corruption (the misuse of entrusted power for private gain) is highly institutionalised, even in the provision of public services. This impacts heavily on people living in poverty. Corruption takes place at all levels. It can involve exchanges of favours and money for preferential treatment or access to services. Transnational corporations often pay "facilitation fees" to national governments in exchange for lucrative contracts. This contributes to institutionalising corruption and disempowering people in poverty and excluded communities. Most developing countries lack stringent anti-corruption legislation. Even if it exists, ineffective institutional mechanisms and lack of political will mean it is often ignored. Many developed countries (the UK and Australia, for example) have introduced legislation in recent years making it illegal for transnational corporations to pay facilitation fees. However, due to the lack of right to information laws in developing countries, monitoring implementation of this legislation is extremely difficult.

- **Increasing hidden power.** The primary responsibility of the state to protect, respect and fulfil rights is increasingly being captured by powerful groups with vested economic, religious, ethnic or political interests to sustain their power, privilege and position in public arenas, political spaces and financial institutions. They operate from behind the scenes, as hidden powers. They undermine formal governance structures and state systems and manipulate them to their own advantage. Hidden powers undermine people's power, voice and social contracts with the state as the primary duty bearer.

- **Increase in social and cultural bias.** Discrimination blocks access to basic public services, marginalising women, children and minority groups. Patriarchy is one of the more persistent sources of social and cultural bias, and exists in all systems of governance. For example, formal accountability mechanisms are designed to prevent women from participating.

- **Weak civil society.** Lack of access to government information, fragmentation of society, poor capacity and lack of an enabling environment, in addition to transnational corporations' co-option of the state, have all resulted in disorganised, ill-informed and disinterested civil society in some countries. This has a negative impact on the provision and financing of public services as people are not able to hold governments and power holders to account.

Key questions and tools for contextualisation

At local level:

- Is there an objective and documented overview of the quality and range of public services available at community level (health, education, water, sanitation, housing, and security, for example), especially in relation to people living in poverty?
- At local level, is public service provision and financing accountable, both upwardly to management and downwardly to communities?
- Are accountability mechanisms adequate and effective?
- Are communities sufficiently prepared and organised to engage effectively with authorities on matters relating to accountability, mandated power and authority and public service budgeting and financing? Additionally, are communities sufficiently prepared to ensure that they can democratically and inclusively voice their concerns and represent people's interests? (ELBAG tools)
- Are women and youth living in poverty developing their leadership capacities to advocate for space in local governance?
- How do elite and other hidden powers affect public service provision and financing?
- How could you make these hidden powers accountable?
- What access to information about service provision and financing do people living in poverty have?
- What are people's practices for democratising access to and the quality of public service provision? Could these become alternatives or credible solutions?

At national level:

- How are basic public services financed? What are the sources of funds, funding mechanisms and authority mandates?
- To what extent can the state finance and provide universal public services and to what extent are they sufficient and sustainable?
- What are the strengths and weaknesses of key institutions/ministries involved in service delivery?
- In the state system, who are the potential allies for improving basic service delivery?
- Seen from the state's perspective, what are the key issues around service delivery and possible improvements?
- What basic services are privatised? How is the government regulating the corporate provision of basic services and what more could it do?
- Which are the key civil society organisations that could work together to demand improvements in state provision of public services, financing and oversight?
- Which are the key civil society organisations that could be networking to promote public awareness about the right to information and anti-corruption?
- How could we connect specialists and practitioners to generate and share knowledge to improve practices around, for example, accountability, budgets, anti-corruption and hidden power?

At international level:

- How could we track transparency and accountability in donor support for public service delivery initiatives?
- How could we mobilise supporters and advocate for flexibility in patents so people in poverty have access to life-saving medicines?
- How could we mobilise supporters to link and build alliances with the right to information and anti-corruption forum?
- How could we mobilise supporters and campaign to increase the voice and representation of women and youth in international institutions?
- How could other ActionAid countries/partners become involved in producing and sharing knowledge and alternative approaches to improving service delivery?

Additional resources

A series of governance handbooks developed in 2011 by ActionAid's Democratic Governance Team in close collaboration with ActionAid Denmark supplement this resource book. Each handbook focuses on a key challenge area for advancing democratic governance:

Democracy: Justice and accountability at the local level. (http://act.ai/M9k6Tp) This handbook is a foundation for the HRBA governance handbook series. It introduces governance issues central to HRBA for promoting democratic governance at local levels. It presents people-centred, participatory and rights-based approaches to local democracy. It analyses democratic and decentralised local governance and explores the challenges civil society faces. The book also examines the crucial link between the political mandates that determine the scope for local democracy and the fiscal and administration requirements needed to support them.

Accountability: Quality and equity in public service provisions. (http://act.ai/LDHwgP) The accountability handbook explores the meaning of accountability as a key feature of democratic governance and provides steps towards improving accountability for public services. It looks at how to organise people to know their rights to public services and to demand accountability; how to strengthen accountability mechanisms; and how to use accountability tools to improve service provision, governance and development outcomes. The accountability tools outlined include scorecards, participatory expenditure tracking surveys, social audits, public hearings and also media and performance tools.

Voice: Representation and people's democracy. (http://act.ai/M9khy8) This handbook is about people's participation in decision-making and their rights to have a "voice", to be heard and to choose their own representatives.

It looks at the spaces for people to engage politically in democratic processes; how democracy can become more inclusive and participatory; how people's voices can be heard in local governments and other decision-making forums; and how people can claim more democratic spaces. It outlines approaches and tools to increase people's voice and collective action in democratic processes. These include public speakers mapping, voice in public meetings, stakeholders analysis, citizens' jury, boost your representation, power and democracy mapping, democracy audit, communication matrix, and strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) analysis of social media.

Power: Elite capture and hidden influence. (http://act.ai/MNg5PA) This handbook focuses on power relations in social change processes at local level. It explores the theme of power and discusses key issues about what power is, how it is used and what role power plays in change processes. It presents tools for analysing power and practical strategies to manoeuvre and negotiate through the webs of hidden power towards more inclusive, people-centred development. Tools include stakeholders analysis, power analysis (naming the powerful), the onion (position, interest and needs), power mapping, risk analysis grid and force field analysis.

Budgets: Revenues and financing public service provision. (http://act.ai/Lm5Llz) This handbook defines budgets and explains the different types of revenue and taxes at the local level. It also introduces tax justice and decentralisation. The book includes tools for analysing budgets and understanding the political economy at local level. The book has economic literacy and budget analysis tools, including for calculating VAT, tax and redistribution, identifying sources of revenue, tracking changes in revenue over time, calculating per capita revenue, and comparing per capita revenue between geographical areas.

Accountability sourcebook: Using evidence to establish accountability: A sourcebook on democratic accountability for development practitioners and learning facilitators (http://act.ai/MBY3iG) The sourcebook provides an analytical framework for understanding accountability relationships between the state and its citizens. It focuses on how NGOs and civil society organisation can hold state institutions, service providers and duty bearers to account using an evidence-based approach. Its key tools include surveys; community scorecards; public hearings; social audit; power analysis; tree of change; resource, authority and value analysis; charting accountability spaces and mechanisms; identifying gatekeepers; extracting indicators from codes of conduct; government budgets; financial regulations; and procurement contracts.

Other useful resources

Democracy

- Prezeworksi, A, Stokes, S and Manin, B. *Democracy, accountability and representation.* Cambridge University Press, 1999. (http://act.ai/KWcsYS)
- Transparency International. *Tools to support transparency in local governance.* 2008. (http://act.ai/Nn7MOF)
- International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance. *Assessing the quality of democracy: A practical guide.* (http://act.ai/M9lx4g)
- Cornwall, A. *Deliberating democracy, scenes from a Brazilian municipal health council.* Institute of Development Studies Working Paper 292, University of Sussex, 2007. (http://act.ai/LlW9qS)

Accountability

- International Budget Partnership. *Our money, our responsibility: A citizens' guide to monitoring government expenditures.* 2008. (http://act.ai/LiH9fj)
- Oxfam, ActionAid and Save the Children. *Driving the bus: The journey of national education coalitions.* (http://act.ai/Nd7y9t)

Power

- VeneKlasen, L and Miller, V. *A New weave of power, people and politics: The action guide for advocacy and citizen participation.* Practical Action Publishing, UK, 2002. (http://act.ai/MxDNkE)
- Chapman, J and Mancini, A (eds.). *Critical webs of power and change.* ActionAid, 2003. (http://act.ai/MJsd7q)
- Fisher, S et al. *Working with conflict: Skills and strategies for action.* Zed Books, London, 2000.

- Gaventa, J. *Reflections on the uses of the "power cube": Approach for analysing spaces, places and dynamics of civil society participation and engagement.* Learning by Design, Netherlands, 2005. (http://act.ai/LDRizC)

Voice

- Cornwall, A et al. *States of citizenship: Contexts and cultures of public engagement and citizen action.* Institute of Development Studies Working Paper 363, University of Sussex, 2011. (http://act.ai/O3M0lF)
- Gaventa, J and Barrett, G. *So what difference does it make? Mapping the outcomes of citizen engagement.* Institute of Development Studies Working Paper 347, University of Sussex, 2010. (http://act.ai/MB3WPl)
- Earle, L. *Social movements and citizenship: Some challenges for INGOs.* INTRAC policy briefing paper 20, Oxford, 2008. (http://act.ai/NZqs8D)

Budgets

- Transparency International/UN Human Settlements Programme. *Tools to support transparency in local governance.* (http://act.ai/Nn7MOF)
- The International Budget Partnership. *Who does budget work?* (http://act.ai/MB55Xd)
- The National Democratic Institute. *South African budget dictionary* (http://act.ai/PAEwUm)

Key change promise four

By 2017 people and their movements supported by ActionAid will have won significant victories in achieving fair redistribution of resources to finance public policies that reduce poverty.

Under this change promise, members of the ActionAid federation will facilitate realisation and implementation of progressive taxation policies and other redistributive policies to finance quality public services and reduce poverty. Through processes of empowerment, solidarity and campaigning, we will establish links between our local, national and global level work on taxation and resource mobilisation, leading to significant victories in the redistribution of resources.

A starting point for action is building the awareness of local communities and national actors about the links between resource mobilisation (tax policies) and the financing of public services. Through reflection-action empowerment processes, data analysis and the use of right to information and anti-corruption tools, we will support people to make the connections. We will also seek to expose the unethical and illegal practices of corporates and others who avoid and evade tax obligations and illegally transfer resources outside the borders of countries. Strong local to national links will build sustained pressure and campaigning for corrective measures and for the introduction of fair and just redistribution policies.

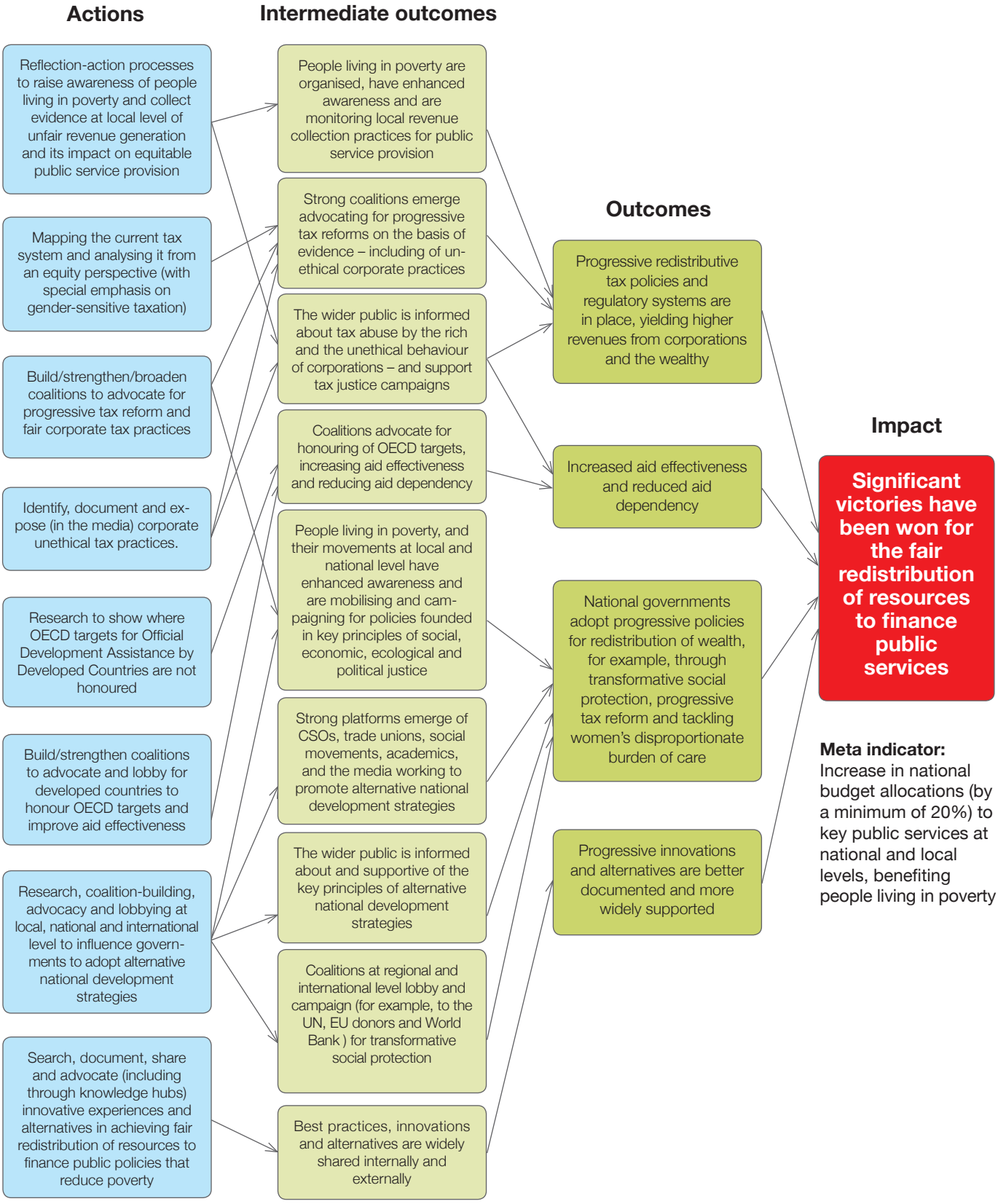
Coordinated campaigning and solidarity action from local to international levels should lead to governments pursuing more progressive taxation policies, equitable growth policies, transformative social protection and other progressive policies (including ones that seek to recognise and redistribute women's unpaid care work). We will be advocating for such progressive economic alternatives within the overarching framework of alternative national development strategies articulated by broad coalitions of people's organisations and their allies.

We will also be supporting people to place corporations under greater pressure to adhere to ethical practices, particularly complying with their tax obligations. We will seek to make paying tax the number one criteria for judging ethical corporate behaviour, so that rather than chasing individual misbehaviour by companies we can shift the forces around them, making it in their corporate interests to be able to transparently prove that they are paying tax. ActionAid's multi-country campaign will be fundamental to such an ambitious shift.

The connection between progressive taxation and progressive spending should be firmly entrenched so that increasing revenues lead to progressive public policies, including transformative social protection policies and policies to accommodate the care economy to redistribute resources, reduce poverty and improve public service delivery.

This is captured in the **critical pathway** below:

Objective 2 - Key change promise 4



Monitoring change promise four

The meta indicator for this change promise is the **number of governments that have significantly increased their national budget allocations for key public services that benefit people living in poverty.**

Possible **outcome indicators** include:

- number of countries that have adopted progressive tax reform policies and/or put in place the necessary infrastructure to implement existing policies
- evidence of governmental and international action against corporations guilty of tax malpractice and fraud
- number of governments that have put in place and adequately resourced monitoring mechanisms for the regulation of tax payments by transnational corporations
- number of donor countries that have honoured the Overseas Development Assistance (ODA) targets established by the OECD
- evidence of increasing aid effectiveness – better harmonisation, less conditionality, less phantom aid
- number of countries that have adopted and promoted policies informed by key principles of alternative national development strategies identified by ActionAid
- evidence of governments, international development agencies and financial institutions supporting, promoting and implementing redistributive measures for the mobilisation of resources to finance progressive public policies
- number of governments that pass legislation or create policy expanding public participation in national budgeting.

Process indicators that might show we are on track include:

- evidence of people living in poverty increasingly requesting and accessing information to monitor local revenue collection, and holding officials and corporations accountable to tax policy and law
- number of countries that have mapped the current tax system, loopholes and weaknesses, and opportunities for strengthening; number of countries that have mapped the status of overseas development assistance
- existence of strong and active coalitions and campaigns on tax justice, alternative development strategies and/or quality aid at local, national and international levels
- number of documented case studies at local, national and international level
- increased media coverage of both tax violations by corporations, and progressive taxation and spending possibilities
- knowledge hubs on public sector financing set up in key countries.

Linking change promise four to impact on children

Our advocacy and campaigning work at local, national and global level on progressive taxation for progressive spending, and our exposure of the corporate sector's corrupt tax practices should enable national governments to realise higher tax revenues to use for improving public services. This will in part be spent on education, health, food and other public services to realise children's rights. Redistributive policies like social protection, direct cash transfers and conditional cash transfers would also help families living in poverty – and are often linked to children's (especially girls') continuing participation in school. Progressive national development policies should also result in more secure employment for people living in poverty, improving incomes so families can spend more on children's education, health and well-being.

Influencing national development strategies

ActionAid's national development strategy (NDS) project recognises the social and economic rights of all citizens and lays out a practical vision for development founded on principles of redistribution of wealth, self-reliant growth, ecological justice and women's rights, through recognition of the care economy. The NDS project uses a combination of country research, coalition-building, advocacy and lobbying to influence governments to adopt alternatives that emanate from reflections and aspirations of people living in poverty, especially women.

In 2011, the NDS project began high quality research and advocacy in Kenya, Nigeria and Nepal on the current financial system and its redistributive elements. The intention is to influence long-term visioning processes about how systems might change in these countries. The project is also doing participatory research on tax in Nigeria, Kenya, Nepal, Zambia, Tanzania and Cambodia. This aims to show how domestic resource mobilisation can finance an alternative NDS. Activities include country-specific research on the state of the taxation and resource mobilisation architecture and an analysis of tax justice issues. The campaign will also include dissemination and advocacy around progressive tax policies by civil society and academia at national, regional and global levels.

In Kenya, ActionAid is leading civil society engagement with Vision 2030, the country's blueprint to transform into a newly industrialising, middle income country by 2030. Participating in a civil society summit on Vision 2030, the director general of the Vision 2030 delivery secretariat expressed his excitement about the meeting saying, "This forum presents us with an opportunity to engage, given that in the past, only a handful of civil society organisations had played any meaningful role in the development, implementation and oversight of Vision 2030."

In Nepal, ActionAid has been instrumental in establishing the Nepal Dialogue Forum, which aims to bring together citizens, social movements, policy-makers, academics and politicians to deliberate on historical, contemporary and emerging social policy issues. The forum contributes alternative ideas for national development strategies, especially in the areas of women's rights, land rights and education.

Key definitions

- **Tax justice – progressive tax reform:** The state needs to raise substantial domestic resources to guarantee the provision of quality public services in a sustainable way. An efficient, effective and just tax system will not only raise these domestic resources but can also promote redistribution of income and wealth for social justice and thus reduce current social inequalities. By raising its own resources, the state is in a better position to fund its own strategies and policies and provide public services free from interference and conditionality of international donors and international financial institutions. Rather than just increasing the tax rate for all, it is possible to increase the revenue base in a democratic and equitable way through progressive tax reforms. A tax is progressive if it requires higher income people to pay a larger share of their income in tax than lower income people. A regressive tax, like most VAT, represents a smaller share of income for higher income earners than lower income ones.
- **Transformative social protection:** ActionAid's vision builds on the initiative of a "social minimum", specifically the UN's "social protection floor" (UN, ILO, WHO, 2010). This "social minimum" comprises of both transfers and basic rights provision and entitlements, and allows a staged process to achieve a full social protection package. It is regarded as transformative as it addresses unequal power relations, aims to reduce inequality by linking cash transfers to a broader rights framework and seeks to deliver long-term and universal impact.

- **Care economy** refers to the paid and unpaid care services provided in an economy. "Care" implies that the services nurture other people. These services are essential for maintaining societies and a healthy labour force. Women largely undertake unpaid care work such as cooking, cleaning, caring for children, the ill and elderly, and collecting firewood and water. As it is often seen as women's responsibility, unpaid and not seen as work, it remains invisible. Paid care work includes the work done by employees in the public, private and NGO sectors such as doctors, nurses and social workers. As women are disproportionately responsible for unpaid care work, the care economy is gendered.
- **Aid effectiveness and aid dependency:** Aid is a vital source of finance in many of the world's poorest countries. **Official development assistance** is often the primary source of finance for capital and development projects. **Development cooperation** includes aid grants, loans and debt relief and a broader range of financing relationships between all donors, including technology transfer, trade agreements and provision of technical assistance. **Aid dependency** describes the situation where a country cannot fulfil the core responsibilities and functions of government without foreign aid and expertise. It more often than not results in governments being more accountable to donors than they are to their own citizens, and consequently foreign donors wield tremendous influence over domestic policy. **Aid effectiveness** seeks to reduce aid dependency by putting in place national aid policies and aid exit strategies that set out plans to increase domestic resource mobilisation and provide details on the critical role and engagement of civil society in priority setting and resource allocation.
- **Corporate responsibility and accountability:** National and transnational corporations have become increasingly powerful agents of economic and social change in developing countries. While some of these companies act as a positive force by providing investment, jobs, skills, new products and technical know-how, they can also perpetuate poverty by exploiting workers, violating human rights and destroying natural resources people depend on for their livelihoods.

  National governments in both developing and developed countries need to have legislation in place to regulate transnational corporations and hold them legally accountable for actions which have a negative impact on workers, communities, suppliers and the environment in developing countries. The legislation needs to ensure that corporations report annually on their wider social impacts, and that companies will be legally liable for all negative impacts their actions have on local communities and the environment where they do business. An enforceable set of international rules that would hold all transnational corporations to a decent set of employment, human rights and environmental standards everywhere in the world is critical.
- **National development strategy** is a country's plan, vision or pathway for achieving its economic, political and social well-being. The current financial, food, climate, social and economic crises opened the opportunity for building, through participatory processes, alternative national development strategies. These are founded on key principles such as redistribution of wealth for social justice; reduction of different types of inequality; self-reliant and inclusive economies that achieve social justice and promote full and fair employment; ecological justice and environmental sustainability; deepened democracy processes; and fulfillment of women's rights by tackling women's disproportionate burden of care.

Rationale

In addition to the issues and challenges related to change promise three (weak state institutions; increasing power of transnational corporations; persistent corruption; increasing hidden powers; increasing social and cultural bias; and weak civil society) there are the following additional challenges for change promise four:

- **Economic hegemony remains.** Despite the recent financial crisis, the conventional global economic order is still strong. Feminist and other heterodox economists have challenged the dominant neoliberal economic system and suggested policy changes in the wake of the 2008 financial crisis. This was a great opportunity to mobilise against neoliberal policies, however civil society was not united and was too slow in putting forward an alternative agenda for politicians and the general public.

- **Women's unpaid work remains unrecognised.** Women's reproductive, productive and care roles remain unrecognised and policies reinforce discrimination against women and undermine their other rights. For example, not only is there under-expenditure in social sectors which women particularly benefit

from, there is also a lack of acknowledgement of this. Women are more likely to engage in insecure and informal employment to balance their multiple roles. Furthermore, women are not engaging in political processes and decision-making, and girls continue to miss out on their education to take care of household chores. Our analysis and action on this issue is closely connected to work under objective five, key change promise 10.

- **Increasing tax evasion and global financial flows steal from people living in poverty.** The state's capacity to provide public services through efficient revenue generation has reduced due to increased tax evasion, particularly the increasing use of tax havens by multinational companies and corrupt elites. At the same time, the use of tax incentives, exemptions and creation of special economic zones to compete for investment has imposed a country-to-country tax race to the bottom. This has significantly impacted developing countries' ability to raise taxes to pay for public services and other development priorities.

- **Environmental standards and wages have reduced to attract foreign direct investment.** Extractive industries have intensively exploited natural resources. The globalisation of financial flows has created many new opportunities for companies and individuals to evade taxes in developing countries, undermining the revenue base desperately needed to promote public policies. The increase in regressive tax policies leads to resource loss and increase in inequality. Informal taxes fall disproportionately on women who are more likely to work in the informal sector.

- **Poor quality aid.** There is too much "phantom aid" which is not targeted at poverty reduction and is unpredictable and difficult to use. It is tied to donor goods and services; overpriced and ineffective technical assistance; double counted as debt relief; wasted through poor coordination; and spent on excessive administration costs. Poor quality aid is undermining development, reinforcing high levels of aid dependency and leading to situations where governments have become more accountable to donors than they are to their own citizens.

- **Powerful institutions resist redistribution**. Working for fair redistribution of resources addresses power relations at all levels. This is a highly political process, and risks incurring conflict. Conflict is often a necessary and constructive element of change processes, yet can too easily escalate into violence and intimidation as power wielders attempt to further their own agendas and suppress the interests of the majority. Security is a prerequisite for development. Elites often perpetuate violence, using it to preserve an unequal distribution of resources. Such elites may ally with criminal and violent groups, and may tolerate or even encourage routine abuses by state security forces. These factors create a climate of insecurity where the powerful offer despotic power as a solution, while preserving their privileged access to wealth and resources.

- **National governments do not use taxation policies for redistribution and reducing income inequalities due to the hegemonic power of the rich and powerful.** Too often, tax policies place the greatest burden on people living in poverty, contributing to a deepening of inequality. Identifying the extent to which national tax policies are progressive or regressive is essential. We need to win the primary argument that taxation policies should be designed to facilitate redistribution of wealth!

Key questions and tools for contextualisation

At local level:

- How can we raise awareness of, monitor and collect evidence of the impact of present revenue generation/taxation policies locally? What direct/indirect taxes are people living in poverty paying and how can we make them more aware of this?
- How can we enhance public awareness of the redistributive potential of public policies, particularly taxation policies? Which tax reforms will be most progressive and which redistributive spending policies will have the greatest impact on reducing poverty locally?
- How can we develop the capacity of community-based organisations to advocate for progressive public policies, redistribution, care economy, etc?

- How can we use participatory methodologies to raise awareness of, monitor and collect evidence about and advocate for progressive social protection, social insurance and social security policies?
- Are there transnational corporations making a profit locally and, if so, are they paying their fair share of tax?
- How can we identify and promote credible alternatives and solutions in this area?

At national level:

- Is the country's tax system progressive or regressive?
- How can we promote a more equitable tax system, including fair taxation on transnational corporations?
- Which are the largest transnational corporations making a profit in the country, and are they paying their fair share of tax? Are tax contributions fully transparent?
- How can we promote citizen engagement, coalition-building and lobbying to reduce aid dependency and demand an enabling environment for civil society to operate?
- How can we build broad alliances and advocate for government policies that promote transformative social protection, and policies that are redistributive in nature? How can we promote advocacy, networking, platform-building and evidence-building for progressive public policies/national development strategies (redistribution and the care economy, for example)?
- How can we "audit" current public policies for their effectiveness as redistributive policies with equity concerns?
- How can we network specialists and practitioners to generate and share knowledge around practices on, for example, social protection and the care economy?
- How can we establish links between spending priorities and resource mobilisation and advocate for protecting/improving spending levels and quality for public service provisioning?
- How can we build national consensus (with people living in poverty, the middle classes, the media and other interest groups) on the need for a progressive tax agenda, focusing on spending on public services?
- How can we expose the corrupt practices (and nexus) of various actors, including government and the corporate sector, in tax affairs and practices, like transfer pricing, which is a drain on public resources?
- How can we build national debates/focus on issues of tax reform and link to anti-corruption and resource drain for the government?
- How can we work with other stakeholders like tax professionals on ethical practices, including building standards and self-regulation to combat corrupt practices like tax evasion and avoidance?

At international level:

- How can we best promote advocacy and lobby the G20, OECD and UN tax committee for transparency and accountability of corporations?
- How can we use the media and social networking mechanisms to build public opinion on corporates' unethical tax practices and seek consensus on progressive global and national tax regimes?
- How can we advocate and network on real/better aid to honour agreed OECD targets and promote aid effectiveness policies, including protecting and expanding civil society roles in the development architecture?
- How can we network and lobby the UN, EU, donors and international financial institutions to promote transformative social protection policies?
- How can we promote advocacy in the G20, EU and UN for progressive national development strategies based on, for example, redistribution and the care economy, and embed these in an alternative, post-Millennium Development Goals agenda?
- How can we advocate protection and promotion of spending levels and quality of spending on public services by national governments to meet development goals and progressively realise social and economic rights?
- How can we involve other ActionAid countries/partners in the production and sharing of knowledge and alternatives in this area? How can we join in the global *Progressive tax, progressively spent* campaign?

More detailed ideas for working together around tax justice will be developed through the multi-country campaign on *Progressive tax, progressively spent.* Working together on a common framework on the tax campaign should lead to mutually-reinforcing benefits for our local and national work.

Additional resources

Several of the resources outlined under promise three are relevant for promise four too.

You may also find the following resources helpful:

- ActionAid. *Accounting for poverty.* 2009. (http://act.ai/NnnZ6u)
- ActionAid. *Calling time on tax avoidance.* 2010. (http://act.ai/NnnZ6u)
- ActionAid. *Social protection Q&A.* 2011. (http://act.ai/MxLQxF)
- ActionAid. *Real aid 1: An agenda for making aid work.* 2005. (http://act.ai/M9vQoX)
- ActionAid. *Real aid 2: Making technical assistance work.* 2006. (http://act.ai/M9vQoX)
- ActionAid. *Real aid 3: Ending aid dependency.* 2011. (http://act.ai/M9vQoX)
- ActionAid. *Basic overview of the national development strategies project.* (http://act.ai/MxLQxF)
- ActionAid. *Benchmark report: Taxation to achieve redistribution in national development strategies.* 2009.
- ActionAid. *Growth for beginners* (internal document). 2009. (http://act.ai/MxLQxF)
- ActionAid (Melamed, C). *Inequality: Why it matters and what can be done.* 2011. (http://act.ai/LiUrs5)
- TJN Africa and ActionAid. *Tax competition in East Africa: A race to the bottom?* 2012. (http://act.ai/Knoysy)
- Christian Aid and SOMO. *Tax justice advocacy toolkit.* 2011. (http://act.ai/L83Xbk)

The **Tax Justice Network** promotes transparency in international finance and opposes secrecy. Its website is a valuable reference point: www.taxjustice.net

Another useful source of alternative thinking on economic affairs is the **New Economics Foundation:** www.neweconomics.org

The Centre for Social Protection at the Institute of Development Studies in Sussex is a repository of knowledge- and practice-related material on social protection: www.ids.ac.uk/go/centreforsocialprotection

A useful Asia-focused research and advocacy network is: www.socialprotectionasia.org

ILO, UNICEF, UNRISD, UNESCAP and **UNDP** are some of the UN family organisations promoting social protection, pro-poor growth policies and policy alternatives towards reduction of inequalities.

Strategic objective 3

Improve the quality of public education for all children and support youth to become drivers of change towards a poverty-free planet

Vision

- **ActionAid will be known for its inter-connected work at all levels to promote education rights and advance alternative paradigms of education.** We will develop a reputation for making the case for transforming education and taking that case beyond the education sector to the wider public. We will be known for our ability to energise and mobilise youth movements across the globe. By 2017, we intend to have ensured that girls and boys in 5,000 communities where ActionAid works enjoy higher quality public education and we have used these experiences to leverage wider education reforms. We will also have mobilised over five million youth to take sustained action towards building a poverty-free planet.

- **Our broader vision is to shift the global paradigm on education so that schools play a transformative role in society.** They should actively contribute to social, economic and political justice. We need to recognise that in unequal and unjust societies, education can often maintain and even exacerbate inequalities and injustice. However, education can and should be conceived differently, as a pivotal area of struggle for transforming societies, embracing democratic values and creating a better future. This means moving from a narrow "banking" or domesticating model of education to a liberating model (in line with the ideas of Paulo Freire). In this liberating model, students are active rather than passive, learning is relevant rather than alienating, and schools challenge inequality and discrimination rather than reproducing them. Our experience with the *Reflect* approach gives us a rich foundation in alternative pedagogy, which we can adapt and apply to our work with schools and to building the broader *Reflect!on-Act!on* process.

- **A necessary foundation for pursuing this transformative agenda is to embed a rights-based approach to education.** Existing rights commitments, if popularised and internalised, offer an agenda that can be transformative, as captured in the *Promoting rights in schools* framework (see below). This means moving on from the inadequately narrow Millennium Development Goals and Education for All frameworks and advocating to replace these post-2015 with renewed political commitments to deliver on the education rights already embedded in legally-binding international conventions. The *Right to education* project (www.right-to-education.org), which we coordinate with Amnesty International and the Global Campaign for Education, provides an excellent foundation for us to be at the forefront of this transformation.

- **On a systemic level, we cannot achieve change without the active engagement of frontline workers and teachers.** In many countries, these are the largest (and most unionised) part of the public sector. Teachers' unions can be conservative forces, defending their professional status and self-interest. But they can also become highly politicised agents of change. **Students and young people** likewise can be a self-interested group, or a highly active and progressive voice for transformation (and often leading actors in revolutionary movements). Both teachers and students can become powerful advocates for a radical rethinking of education. Our unique strategic partnerships with teachers' unions and our strong links with national, regional and global education campaigners provide us with powerful allies for and curriculum development. Much of the existing practice in education frustrates both teachers and students,

as it comes from a lack of public financing, which makes more progressive practice impossible. The fight for alternatives is closely linked to the struggle to improve financing of public education and to secure basic education rights within the present system – which will create space for change.

- **The struggle to transform public education becomes an iconic struggle for the public sector as a whole.** It is trying to define and redefine the role of the state. One of the fundamental responsibilities of any government should be to redistribute resources and create more equal societies. The struggle for equal education cuts to the core of this, as it is about redistributing opportunities for the next generation. ActionAid should seek to be a leading actor in the struggle to make public education what it should be – **an equalising force in society.**

- **In our education work, we draw on key materials from our work on all our other strategic objectives.** This will help children, young people and adults (in *Reflect* circles) critically analyse and learn about sustainable and resilient livelihoods, just and democratic governance, disaster risk reduction and women's rights.

- **Our child sponsorship funding base becomes a powerful resource for advancing towards our vision of transforming education.** Our supporters are driven by the fundamental desire to transform children's lives – or at least to give a child a fair start in life. Education plays a big part in this. There is a lot of potential to weave our child sponsorship and education work together more coherently so we are clearly communicating this shared vision.

- **We are equally committed to ensuring that we maximise the potential of youth as powerful drivers of change.** We will work more systematically than ever with young people. We will respond to and learn from their concerns and harness their energy and innovation to mobilise against poverty and injustice, both within ActionAid campaigns and outside. Our vision is to connect with youth in every local rights programme. We will build on many years of training and leadership development with young people, on our youth network Activista and on our fellowship programmes to build young people's capacity (through education, employment or other activities) and to help them engage with their own and their communities' issues around poverty, livelihoods and rights.

  We will empower young people to organise, connecting them with national and international networks around issues they define. Our vision is to have supported the mobilisation of over five million youth, promoting alternative forms of organisation from local to global levels – alternatives which are already practised by youth networks today. We will be exploring digital ways of organising and campaigning. We will also bring new issues and perspectives to the table, promoting inter-generational justice.

- **All programmes consider young people in their context analysis.** All programmes should seek to understand how young people experience poverty, and recognise the potential of engaging with young people to achieve change. This will require internal investment. We will need to recruit staff and partners who have or can create effective working relationships with young people and organisations working with or comprised of young people. Our vision is that, at the end of the strategy period, our approach for working with youth is gendered, consolidated, well monitored and recognised.

Key change promise five

By 2017, we will have ensured that girls and boys equally enjoy a quality public education that respects their rights in 5,000 communities where we work, leveraging system-wide education reforms designed to improve equal opportunities for all.

ActionAid has 40 years of experience working on education, and learning from our past informs our interventions today. We are committed to translating rights-based approaches into practice at local level by *Promoting rights in schools*. This *Promoting rights in schools* approach is based on a charter of 10 core rights that all schools should respect. These can become a foundation for our local engagement, enabling parents, teachers and children to track the performance of local schools against internationally-agreed standards. On the basis of this community assessment, we can develop and support practical, rights-based school improvement plans. Within this broad approach our action includes a strong focus on girls' education, women's literacy and female teachers, recognising the transformative potential of these.

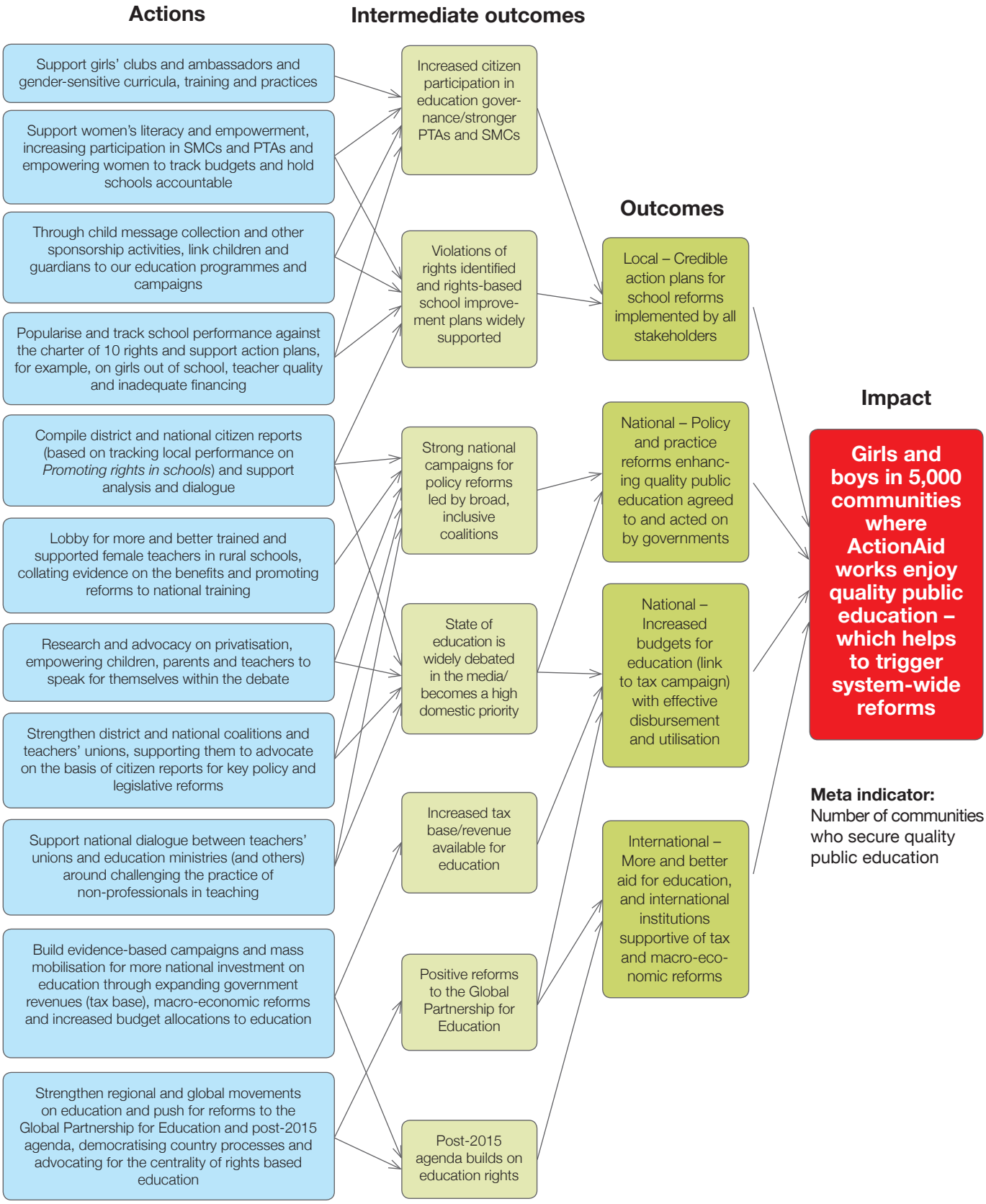
Linking our local work to district and national work is essential. A key means for doing this is through producing district and national citizen reports based on the *Promoting rights in schools* framework. We can compile these using data from communities using the framework. This can strengthen district and national coalitions' evidence base to use in dialogue with ministries of education about reforms to policies and practices. A key actor in this work will always be teachers' unions, who are our important strategic allies, based on our "Parktonian agreement" (http://act.ai/MGcvGx). Together we can make strategic breakthroughs on the financing of education, particularly through expanding the revenue base (linking to our multi-country *Progressive tax, progressively spent* campaign) and reforming macro-economic policies.

We are well positioned on the board of the Global Partnership for Education to reform donor policies and practices. We will also engage in the post-2015 discourse on Education for All to influence it to be more rights-based. In the coming years we will be particularly vigilant in challenging public-private partnerships that undermine education rights.

This combination of local, national and international engagement will enable us to achieve the combined impact of tangible change in the communities where we work directly and wider change to policies and practices affecting millions of other children.

Below is the **critical pathway** outlining how we believe we will achieve this key change promise:

Objective 3 - Key change promise 5



Monitoring change promise five

This particular change promise is at the level of outcome (of girls and boys enjoying quality public education). **Our meta indicator for the promise is the number of communities who secure quality public education.** Each programme contributing to this change promise must, with the participation of key stakeholders, agree one or more indicators relevant to their specific context which fit within the meta indicator. They will monitor and report on these indicator(s) annually. Programmes must develop a baseline for their indicator(s) by the end of 2012. The *Promoting rights in schools* framework is an effective way of collecting baseline data and tracking change over time in relation to the 10 core education rights. You may prioritise tracking the rights/indicators most relevant to your context. Below are just a few possible examples. You may define your own outcome indicators beyond these and beyond those in the *Promoting rights in schools* framework. However, these must credibly contribute to and be aggregated to track our progress towards the meta indicator.

Possible **outcome indicators** include:

- number of schools which make significant progress on two or more of the 10 core education rights
- number of girls who complete primary education and transfer to secondary
- improved awareness of girls and boys about their rights, including around sexual and reproductive health
- reduction in early pregnancies/marriage/cases of female genital mutilation
- decrease in incidents of violence against girls in and around schools
- increase in the number of professional teachers with higher level competencies for professional teaching
- improved quality and availability of appropriate teaching resources, infrastructure and aids
- volume of aid increases for education
- decrease in macro-economic restrictions on education spending.

Possible **process indicators** to track the progress on your actions include:

- number of school report cards prepared using the *Promoting rights in schools* framework
- number of girls' clubs supported and number of girls in them
- increase in women members of school management committees and parent teacher associations
- number of schools where there is budget tracking
- improved results in reading and writing at different stages of primary school
- number of district and national citizen reports
- increased media coverage of privatisation and other constraints to the right to education
- increased overall national budget for public services
- stronger coalitions of teachers' unions, civil society organisations and student bodies taking up questions of policy and practice reforms and a widened revenue base for quality public education
- expanded base of regional and global partners participating in advocacy and campaigning for the reform of the Global Partnership for Education.

Linking change promise five to impact on children

Children are at the heart of what we intend to do to fulfil promise five. Through the *Promoting rights in schools* framework, we will equip children with education as a right and as a tool to claim their other rights. This will prepare them to become active citizens of the future. It will sow the seeds of rights-awareness in their minds and teach them how to think and not what to think. An outcome of our work under this promise will be both girls and boys enjoying quality public education, in schools with adequate resources from governments and monitored by communities. Simultaneously, we will identify and work with marginalised, excluded and out-of-school girls and boys to bring them into the public education system. This will lead to a reduction in inter-generational poverty and injustice.

Violence against girls in schools in Africa

Stop violence against girls in schools is a five-year project aiming to ensure girls can enjoy their right to education in a violence-free environment in Ghana, Kenya and Mozambique. In each country, three partners work on the project: a local implementing partner, a research partner and an advocacy partner.

Intensive baseline research across 45 schools helped to frame the project design. For example, the partners identified teenage pregnancy and early marriage as major challenges to girls enjoying their right to education in all the countries.

To deal with this, they supported girls' clubs in schools, trained teachers, promoted more female teachers, provided capacity development for school management committees and raised community leaders and religious authorities' awareness.

Facilitating links between local, district, national and international work has been fundamental for the project. A mid-term review said that, "The project has raised awareness about violence against girls in schools, has created the necessary mechanisms for girls, teachers, parents and other community members to report cases of violence and in some rare cases has prosecuted the perpetrators of sexual violence. The project has also promoted girls' education by increasing primary school enrolment, attendance and progression in project schools in all countries and by decreasing school dropout."

Close collaboration with government officials has been key to success. In all three countries there is buy-in and high level support from the ministry of education, other ministries and the district level administration. This has been important in helping spread good practice from the project areas to other schools. The advocacy dimension of the project, involving national education coalitions and the Africa Network Campaign on Education for All, will help to spread learning from Ghana, Kenya and Mozambique to neighbouring countries.

Key definitions

- **Quality education** is understood by ActionAid in a rights-based framework, documented in ***Promoting rights in schools*** (http://act.ai/Lm7SpA), which **outlines a charter of 10 basic rights that all schools should respect** (derived from international conventions like the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, and echoed in most national constitutions). Each of the rights is gender-sensitive and linked to measurable indicators describing what good quality education should look like and the roles of the state and other actors in achieving this goal.

The 10 rights in this groundbreaking framework are:

1. **Right to free and compulsory education.** There should be no charges, direct or indirect, for primary education. Education must gradually be made free at all levels.
2. **Right to non-discrimination.** Schools must not make any distinction in provision based on sex, race, colour, language, religion, political opinion, nationality, ethnicity, ability or any other status.
3. **Right to adequate infrastructure.** There should be an appropriate number of classrooms, accessible to all, with adequate and separate sanitation facilities for girls and boys. Schools should be built with local materials and be resilient to natural risks and disasters.
4. **Right to quality, trained teachers.** Schools should have a sufficient number of trained teachers and a good proportion of them should be female. Teachers should receive good quality pre-service and in-service training with built-in components on gender sensitivity, non-discrimination and human rights. All teachers should be paid domestically-competitive salaries.

5. **Right to a safe and non-violent environment.** Children should be safe en route to and in school. Clear anti-bullying policies and confidential systems for reporting and addressing any form of abuse or violence should be in place.
6. **Right to relevant education.** The curriculum should not discriminate and should be relevant to the social, cultural, environmental, economic and linguistic context of learners.
7. **Right to know your rights.** Schools should teach human rights education and children's rights in particular. Learning should include age-appropriate and accurate information on sexual and reproductive rights.
8. **Right to participate.** Girls and boys have the right to participate in decision-making processes in school. Appropriate mechanisms should be in place to enable the full, genuine and active participation of children.
9. **Right to transparent and accountable schools.** Schools need to have transparent and effective monitoring systems. Both communities and children should be able to participate in accountable governing bodies, management committees and parents' groups.
10. **Right to quality learning.** Girls and boys have a right to a quality learning environment and to effective teaching processes so they can develop their personality, talents and physical and mental abilities to the fullest potential.

- **Citizen education reports.** You can produce these at local, district and national level based on communities analysing school performance against the 10 rights above. These reports may focus on particular priorities, for example collating evidence around discrimination against girls, violation of specific rights or the right to quality teachers (and the spread of non-professionals).

- **Transformative education.** In the language of Brazilian educator Paulo Freire, this is education for liberation rather than domestication; education that opens minds through critical thinking rather than closing them through rote learning and regurgitation; and education that transforms societies rather than replicating existing injustices. The *Reflect* approach is premised on this philosophy and we need to draw on it in all our education work. Achieving Freire's vision requires us to transform teachers, reform curricula and teach innovative methodologies. The 10 rights above lay the essential foundations for this.

Rationale

- **Rights frameworks need to be popularised and understood at local level and enshrined in national policies.** Most people focus just on the right of access to education, ignoring other education rights as they are buried in international conventions and treaties and written in obscure language. ActionAid and the *Right to education* project have done groundbreaking work to communicate the essence of education rights with our charter of 10 core rights. We can use these to engage parents, teachers, children, community leaders and others in more systematic reflection and practical action locally – and to link this work to district and national level research and campaigning. We want to see a review of national education policies and legislation to enshrine these rights.

- **Curricula need to be transformed to make them responsive to people's lives.** Most of the curricula used in schools do not respond to the realities of children's lives, especially in rural schools when they have little to do with the local environment or livelihoods. Schooling sometimes alienates children from their own parents and communities and leaves them without the skills and knowledge they need. Yet they have the right to relevant education. Part of building a responsive curriculum in areas where ActionAid works involves drawing on all the other work we are doing and ensuring that this is reflected in what children learn in schools.

- **It is time to engage strategically on the financing of education.** We need to increase the sensitivity of the education budget to policy priorities (to include more girls' education, for example). We need to increase scrutiny of the education budget (tracking budgets to make sure money arrives). We often need to increase the share of the budget going to education (to at least 6% of gross national product or 20% of national budget). Finally, we need to increase the size of the budget overall.

- The above point means looking at **the big picture of government revenue**; arguing for a larger and more progressive tax base (supporting tax justice campaigning, especially on corporation tax); holding donors to account to deliver a fair share of aid for education (the Global Campaign for Education argues for 10% of aid to go to basic education); and challenging neo-liberal, macro-economic policies that constrain

education spending. It also means a balanced investment in inputs to education and not a disproportionately high focus on test-based assessment systems (a particular trend at present).

- **We need to prioritise the education of girls and challenge violence.** Many girls are unable to complete their education because they are forced into early marriages and withdrawn from school to take on domestic responsibilities. Early pregnancy also results in girls missing out on education, either because their families withdraw them from school or because the school itself excludes them. Schools often fail to provide comprehensive sex education (even where it is nominally on the curriculum), exacerbating the problem.

- **Violence against girls,** and complacency towards it, remains one of the biggest barriers to girls' education. Girls are often attacked on the way to and from school, at school they may be targets for sexual and verbal abuse by teachers and boys, and at home they may be vulnerable to abuse by male relatives. In conflict situations, girls are the first to fall victim to violence and terror tactics. This contributes to girls' high dropout and low primary school completion rates. And girls face particular challenges in making the transition from primary to secondary school, which is a major bottleneck. ActionAid has been at the forefront of taking action to transform girls' education with innovative programming, particularly across Africa.

- **Exclusion from education needs to be defined locally but is never acceptable.** Some groups of children are routinely excluded from school. Beyond girls (whose exclusion cuts across all these groups) this includes children living in poverty, pastoralists, ethnic minorities, orphans, children with HIV and AIDS, children of migrant workers or from displaced communities, dalits and children with disabilities. Sometimes natural disasters and conflict lead to exclusion.

- **Inclusion of children with disabilities** poses particular challenges as schools are rarely equipped to cater for them and teachers are not trained to deal with their different needs. However, research has shown that successful interventions focused on children with disabilities can benefit the learning of all children. ActionAid should take a zero-tolerance approach to children being out of school in the areas where we work directly. We need to mobilise parents and communities to ensure every child goes to and stays in school. We also need to oppose child labour. The direct and indirect costs of education (user fees in some cases, but also uniforms, equipment, books, transport and exam fees) remain a major obstacle for children living in poverty and violate their right to free education.

- **There is an urgent need to defend the teaching profession.** Many governments (under pressure from the World Bank and others) are engaging low-paid, untrained teachers to reduce costs or fill the gap where there are not enough teachers, particularly in rural schools. This compromises education quality. Although we recognise the difficulty many governments face in recruiting and training teachers, using untrained staff should be a short-term measure. They should have plans in place to ensure all teachers receive adequate training and continued professional development. We need to work closely with teachers' unions to challenge de-professionalisation and highlight the obvious links between quality teachers and quality education. There is often a case to be made for bringing in a new cadre of trained teachers (for example, from indigenous communities) and promoting more trained female teachers, especially in rural schools, to act as role models for girls.

- **Greater parental participation and school accountability are key to reform.** Evidence has shown that parents' involvement in their children's education improves learning. In most public schools, parental involvement is very limited. There is often no school management committee or parent teacher association. Where these exist, they are dominated by local elites or have members who are unaware of their roles (beyond providing bricks, sand and labour for infrastructure). Democratising these structures and increasing the involvement of women can make a major difference.

- **Women's literacy can be transformative and cuts across everything we do.** In most communities where we work, parents, especially women, have poor literacy skills. This impacts on their empowerment and on their capacity to contribute to their children's education. Most adult literacy programmes are of appalling quality, failing to measure up to the 12 international benchmarks developed by ActionAid and the Global Campaign for Education, and using infantilising methods. ActionAid's *Reflect* approach, where implemented well, is proven to be much more effective for improving literacy and promoting wider empowerment – helping us to achieve all 10 key change promises.

- **Advancing early childhood care and education may be a local priority.** Evidence has shown that good care and education in the early years gives children a better start. While this is not a major focus for ActionAid internationally, there may be a strong case for local engagement to give children living in poverty a fair start in life so they do not enter primary school already disadvantaged.

- **Public-private partnerships present a new threat.** There have been many ideologically-driven attempts to undermine free public education for all. These include voucher-based models promoted by the World Bank, and growing donor support for supposedly low-cost private schools. There is an urgent need to collate learning about what is happening in all variations of public-private education partnerships. Some actors see education as the next big frontier for privatisation (for example, Rupert Murdoch's News International Corporation has invested massively in a new education arm). Public funding should not support private schooling for those who can afford to (and choose to) pay. Poverty-focused aid budgets should not support such ideologically-driven models. We need to be vigilant to this and contest it whenever it violates the rights framework.

- **Connecting child sponsorship and education is mutually reinforcing.** ActionAid's flagship fundraising proposition creates a direct link between a child living in poverty and a sponsor. This personal connection is both a successful way to fundraise and a great means for raising awareness (for "educating" sponsors who tend to stay with ActionAid for many years and who are keen to learn more about the child, community and country they support). We collect messages from children for sponsors. This is an opportunity for a creative learning moment with children (whether in school or outside). It is a chance for them to understand and engage with the wider development work ActionAid supports. We send these messages with reports to sponsors, deepening their understanding and engagement (and perhaps motivating further solidarity actions). Sponsorship should be conceived as part of our programme work and you should always explore the potential for strategic connections with our education work.

Key questions and tools for contextualisation

The **Promoting Rights in School** framework is built on the charter of 10 core education rights outlined above. Below are some ideas for steps you might take to adapt this and use it in your local or national context:

- **Develop posters and leaflets** based on the charter, including in national languages. You could use these to raise local and national awareness of the 10 rights. You could produce versions of the charter to use with children and for training school management committees/parent teacher associations.

- **Identify key stakeholders** (children, parents, *Reflect* circles, mothers' groups, teachers and community leaders, for example) and build a wider alliance with other actors (for example, human rights activists, teachers' unions, national universities, women's rights and youth organisations) and NGOs keen to use the methodology or draw on the results.

- **Nationalise the charter**, adapting it to your context and supplementing the international legal references with references to your own national constitution, legislation or key policy documents. This will show that national laws/policies also affirm rights. If your national laws and policies do not include some of the rights, you can campaign to make the policies rights-compliant. You could also add in regional information, for example in Africa or Latin America.

- **Do a participatory survey of schools** to assess how they are performing in relation to the 10 rights (or choose to focus on just one or two of the rights that are most relevant locally). We have developed a series of indicators for each right as well as detailed guidelines for doing surveys.

- **Consolidate evidence from across schools into a Citizens' Education Report** – at local, district or national level.

- **Develop school improvement plans** (with school management committees/parent teacher associations) based on addressing the 10 rights. Or you can focus on just one or two of the rights that are most relevant locally. Track the implementation of your plan.

- Help local communities **develop advocacy campaigns on specific rights** that are not being respected, including work with local media and politicians to raise awareness and highlight violations.

- **Engage local elected bodies and representatives of local government** to support the development of schools that respect the 10 rights.
- Write letters to and meet with, for example, **government officials, UN agencies, parliamentarians, human rights institutions** and **ombudsmen** to share findings from local or national surveys.
- **Mobilise a parliamentary caucus on education** to promote the charter of 10 rights. Or you could work with an existing caucus or committee to adapt the rights to the national context and guide policy-making.
- **Produce shadow reports** or challenge the conclusions and limitations of reports government submits to international treaty monitoring bodies (such as the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights) and the Universal Periodic Review Process.
- **Challenge and test the justice system** when required by supporting strategic public interest litigation or parliamentary judicial reform.
- **Review your existing education work** against these 10 rights to define possible new interventions (especially once you have evidence from a participatory survey).
- Support school management committees/parent teacher associations to **develop school improvement plans** based on priorities in relation to these 10 rights.
- **Encourage *Reflect* circles to engage** with schools and track performance against these 10 rights.
- **Encourage the UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Education to visit** and report on education rights in your country.

Possible actions on right to – quality, trained teachers

- **Document who is teaching in schools,** what training/qualifications they have, and the impact this has on learning outcomes (for example, see the publications of the **improving learning outcomes in primary schools** project in Uganda, Burundi, Senegal and Malawi).
- **Strengthen partnerships with teachers' unions** both locally and nationally, for example, drawing on the Parktonian recommendations (especially those relating to non-professional teachers and financing of education). (http://act.ai/MGcvGx)
- **Support in-service teacher training,** including for unqualified or under-qualified teachers.
- **Campaign to ensure all children are taught by a properly trained teacher** who can impart quality education.
- Work with teachers' unions and ministries on **nationally agreed minimum standards for the teaching profession** (referring to the international recommendations of ILO/UNESCO 1966) and ensure teachers are recruited through transparent, professional processes.
- Ensure the rights of untrained teachers to unionise (International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, article 22).
- Work with teachers' unions to ensure untrained or under-trained teachers have **access to training (pre- and in-service) through distance courses,** for example.
- **Review existing teacher training** programmes and ensure they are of sufficient scale to meet demand and of good quality. Training should cover issues such as gender, HIV prevention and participatory methods. Support efforts to address any gaps.
- Ensure governments are following the **recommendations of the Bamako+5 conference** that pledged an end to the recruitment of non-professional teachers by 2015.
- Document and popularise not only pupil-teacher ratios but also **pupil-to-trained-teacher ratios.**
- **Support the demands of teachers** to receive domestically-competitive salaries.
- **Work with teachers' unions to campaign for tax justice!**

Additional resources

ActionAid. *Promoting rights in schools.* 2011. The *Promoting rights in schools* approach is based on 10 core education rights, includes indicators on each of them and ways of engaging people as active citizens in tracking these rights at local, national and international levels. This approach provides a simple, uniting, rights-based framework on quality education that is easy to use. There are also some helpful **implementation guidelines for *Promoting rights in schools*** at http://act.ai/Lm7SpA

***Right to education* project website** (http://act.ai/NnFHXw) Housed in ActionAid and jointly run with Amnesty International and the Global Campaign for Education, the *Right to education* project aims to promote social mobilisation and legal accountability, focusing on the legal challenges to the right to education. Katarina Tomasevski, the first UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Education, originally set it up. The website is the definitive global reference point on education rights, with a database of every national constitution and all relevant treaties and conventions.

ActionAid and Education International. *Education financing toolkit.* 2008. (http://act.ai/MCFzi0) The toolkit is targeted at national education coalitions, teachers' unions, NGOs and anyone else promoting the right to education and committed to campaigning for more funding for basic education. It comes with posters, bookmarks, practical resources and background briefings on everything from budget tracking to macro-economics and tax justice.

ActionAid. *Parktonian agreement/strategic links between NGOs and teachers' unions.* (http://act.ai/MGcvGx) This is our unique global agreement linking ActionAid and the international federation of teachers' unions. It lays out seven areas for collaboration and partnership nationally and internationally.

ActionAid. *Reflect mother manual* (1996), *Communication and power* (2003), *Seeds of change* (2008) and more on *Reflect* at the *Reflect* website (http://act.ai/MsIIEc) An innovative approach to adult learning and social change, *Reflect* uses participatory methodologies extensively.

ActionAid and the Global Campaign for Education. *Writing the wrongs: International benchmarks on adult literacy*. (http://act.ai/KBeuAV) This groundbreaking work sets 12 simple benchmarks on adult literacy that you can use for advocacy and programme design. Drawn from the most comprehensive review of the best literacy programmes around the world, with input from leading literacy experts, this is an essential tool for any adult education activist.

ActionAid and The Global Campaign for Education. *Fund the future: A 10-point plan for transforming aid to education.* 2011. (http://act.ai/NUIEjC) This concise report identifies what is wrong with the education aid system, and what needs to be done to make it more efficient, effective, transparent and democratic. ActionAid facilitated this briefing's production, engaging members of the Global Campaign for Education.

EFA. *Education For All Global monitoring report.* (http://act.ai/Lm8Hi0) This is a comprehensive annual report examining the state of education around the world according to EFA's goals, with one specific focus every year. Full of research, data and case studies, it contains very useful information and analysis of education.

Privatisation in Education Research Initiative. (http://act.ai/MI91Lo) This is a global research initiative from the Open Society Foundation examining education privatisation through a lens of social justice. Its website is becoming a one-stop resource centre on education privatisation issues.

The Global Campaign for Education. (http://act.ai/Lj8o9y) A global network of national education coalitions (ActionAid is one of its founder members), the Global Campaign for Education distils civil society's advocacy efforts and brings them on to a global platform, while sharing global information with local relevance. The campaign's annual Global Action Week usually mobilises more than 15 million people in over 100 countries.

Key change promise six

By 2017, we will have mobilised over five million youth to take sustained action towards building a poverty-free planet.

Change promise six requires us to mobilise five million young men and women as a result of our work across the federation. The end impact will be stronger programmes and campaigning, and we will be more able to influence change. We aim to facilitate the empowerment and mobilisation of 3.5 million young women and men living in poverty. Of this, half will be female. In addition, we aim to empower and mobilise 1.5 million young women and men as part of a solidarity movement.

Youth living in poverty

We will support young men and women living in poverty to organise around violated rights. We will empower youth in schools by engaging young people in tracking their rights and by targeting and joining together girls' and boys' clubs. Out of school, youth will work with reflection-action circles or other consciousness-raising processes to critically analyse their environment and livelihood options. We will link children who have "outgrown" child sponsorship to youth groups and networks, enabling them to address their livelihood and other issues – and linking them between local, national and international levels so young people's voices are heard in both informal and formal policy spaces.

We are committed to working with young people on each of the other key change promises in our People's Action strategy. We will support youth (especially young women) to secure access to land and natural resources so they can develop sustainable livelihoods. We will support young men and women's involvement in governance structures, enabling them to secure more responsive and relevant services from local and national government. We will support girls to go to secondary school, working to make schools more gender-responsive and empowering their voices in decision-making processes. We will build young people's understanding of and ability to adapt to climate change and their resilience and preparedness to face disasters.

We need to place particular attention on working with and for young people transitioning between education and the labour market, helping them secure decent work and livelihoods. This is a challenging and crucial time. The success or failure of the transition can impact an individual (and their family) throughout their entire life. Ensuring young people's right to non-discrimination is upheld is crucial. A lot of our work in promoting economic alternatives for women will focus on young women, reducing the multiple responsibilities of care work they juggle and helping them find new forms of sustainable income. With our support, youth can be social entrepreneurs and will often create and advance economic alternatives.

The process of supporting young people to fulfil their own basic human rights and building their collective voice will empower young people to unleash their potential as drivers of wider change.

Youth not living in poverty

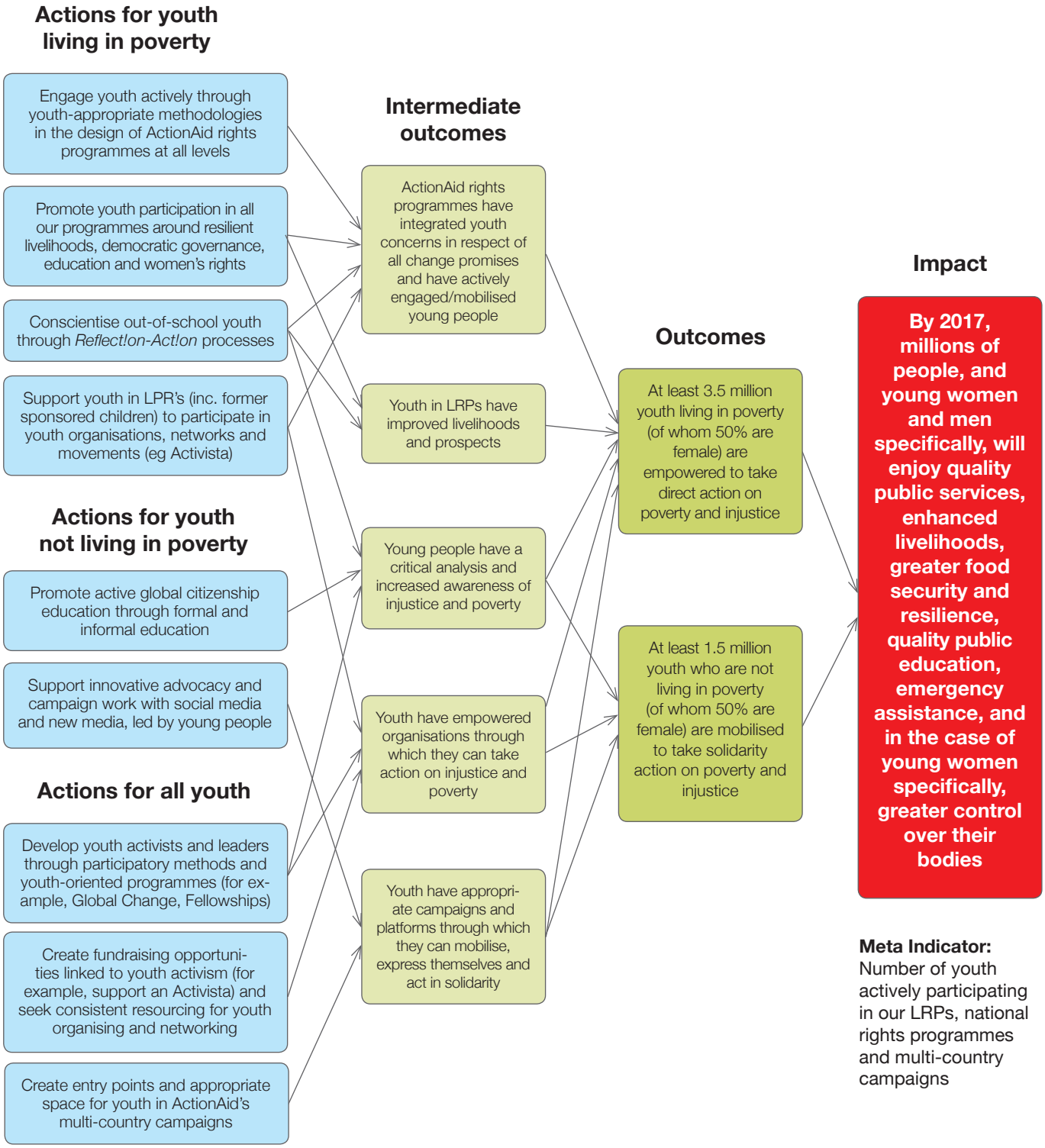
The challenges which face young women and men living in poverty will require changes to systems, attitudes and behaviours. Young men and women across the globe can work in solidarity with their peers if they are aware of the rights and justice challenges affecting them. We will take action in schools and universities globally, developing young people's leadership capacity to take solidarity action.

Our youth movement

Young women and men living in poverty, with the solidarity of their peers, will form a global movement for change – linking mobilisation of young people locally, nationally and regionally. ActionAid will connect members of this movement together and ensure they feel empowered to achieve positive change. Youth will be active participants in decision-making around issues that impact them, at local, national and international levels. They will lead on innovative ways of communicating, organising and challenging unequal power dynamics.

The **critical pathway** below shows this an a systematic format:

Objective 3 - Key change promise 6



Meta Indicator:
Number of youth actively participating in our LRPs, national rights programmes and multi-country campaigns

Monitoring change promise six

This change promise is at the level of outcome (the mobilisation of five million youth) with the impact being the achievement of our other change promises as a result of their mobilisation and enhanced voice. In simple terms, this means we are not aiming to directly impact the lives of young people through our work. Instead, we understand that by mobilising five million young people and supporting their enhanced participation in our programmes and campaigns, we will make greater progress towards our other change promises. This will, in turn, positively impact these young people. The agreed meta indicator for this promise is the **number of youth actively participating in our local and national rights programmes and multi-country campaigns.**

Possible **outcome indicators** include:

- number of young people, and young women specifically, participating in our local rights programmes and national rights programmes
- number of ActionAid programmes and campaigns addressing the needs and interests of young people, and especially young women, within the framework of the other nine change promises
- increased numbers of youth, and young women specifically, participating in local, national and international campaigns
- number of former sponsored children who join ActionAid youth networks
- evidence of solidarity networks and actions between youth in poverty and youth out of poverty
- existence of local, national and international platforms through which young people are organised and influencing governments and international institutions
- increased media profile of the concerns and interests of young people, in and out of poverty, and their demands for change.

Possible **process indicators** include:

- the number of local rights programmes and national rights programmes with comprehensively mapped youth issues and problems in their geographies or sectors
- the number of strategies and strategic plans that incorporate objectives for work with young people, and young women specifically
- increased programme level budget allocations for work aiming to mobilise and empower young people
- increased number of youth forums, trainings, meetings and other assembly spaces
- existence of appropriate popular education and communication materials targeting youth and enabling youth expression
- increased numbers and levels of participation of young people on ActionAid-sponsored and -supported social networking and solidarity sites
- the number of youth, and young women specifically, participating in Training4Change/global platforms in both the global south and north
- increase in the outreach and quality of campaigning guidelines that address youth interests and have been developed with their input
- number of youth advisers on boards/senior management teams/strategic decision-making structures within ActionAid
- an increased proportion of income for youth work is mobilised from middle class young people in the north and also the global south
- an ActionAid knowledge hub on youth is actively supported and used.

Linking change promise six to impact on children

Under this change promise, a diverse mix of young people will actively align with and participate in issues of poverty and injustice. They will become both child rights defenders and role models/peers for children who will follow in their footsteps. We will nurture youth (including former sponsored children) as future leaders and they will claim democratic spaces for decision-making processes. We will strengthen their capabilities and agency for challenging injustice and rising beyond the poverty trap. Inter-connectedness and empathy among young people everywhere will ensure that the children of the past become citizens claiming their rights through collective struggle.

Youth fellowship scheme in Myanmar

In Myanmar, ActionAid is promoting a programme to support the development of youth leaders and their capacity to facilitate participatory and empowering change processes in communities. Community-based organisations nominate young women and men living in poverty to take part. Young people undergo an intensive six-week training, before living in a community and supporting its people to "stimulate change and development, according to the communities' priorities". Follow up training empowers the young people to deepen their work, and builds solidarity between young people from different areas. The young people involved facilitate and galvanise potential community leaders into action and mediate between groups in the community. By linking people inside and outside the community, and creating the space for debate, they are building the basis of a solidarity movement.

Changes in the young people

The major change is in young people's behaviour and attitude, and their increased sense of empowerment. This has led to young people becoming counter-cultural and having the courage to go against gender, age and religious norms. The majority of those who have finished the programme continue to pursue community development work, becoming national youth leaders.

Changes in the community

There have been many physical changes, such as new bridges, schools and roads. However, communities have also seen important intangible changes, such as an increased sense of community cohesion. Communities say they are better at working together across religious, ethnic, age and gender differences and that they have succeeded in shifting the power dynamics that prevented this.

Wider changes

There have also been changes outside the project. Working with fellowship management structures and other development actors has strengthened local organisations. The fellowship scheme clearly shows how working with young women and men to achieve change not only empowers the individuals involved, but also catalyses broader social change.

For more information, see ActionAid Myanmar and UN Democracy Fund. *The fellowship programme in Myanmar: We do it together for our village.* **2010.** (http://act.ai/Lj8o9y)

Key definitions

- The definition of a **child** and **youth** strongly depends on the social, cultural and legal context. A single definition is challenging. The UN definition of a child is someone 0 to 18 years old. It defines youth as 15- to 24-year-olds. The African Union defines youth as 15- to 35-year-olds and the EU defines it as 15- to 30-year-olds. We use the UN definition for children. For youth, the EU definition seems most appropriate, considering that in most African countries the definition stretches beyond 24 year olds and Activista is already using this definition. We have to acknowledge that the overlap (15- to 18-year-olds) presents challenges in terms of programme design and monitoring. We must ensure our programme work clearly involves this audience.

- We will consider multiple dimensions of **diversity** among young women and men. Young women and men's socio-economic status (where they live, rural-urban locations, their family income, their education

and health status) impacts on their political position and ability to take action for change. A young male farmer will often have less capacity than a young male unemployed urban youth. Young women and young men also lead very different lives. For example, young women are often forced into marriage at an early age or face early pregnancy. Analysis can be challenging since young women are often excluded from meetings. We need to include all young women, whether single or married, with or without children.

- **Mobilisation of over five million youth** is a quantitative measure. We will also do qualitative evaluation. We will assess the degree to which the people we mobilise are, for example, ongoing drivers of change; agents for reflexive and critical learning and analysis on local, national and global policy; engaged in critical reflections on their own as well as their communities' challenges and possibilities; and empowered to continue their work for change beyond ActionAid's support.

Rationale

- **Young women and men globally face huge challenges in today's political and economic climate.** These include poor access to education, low quality education, poor health care and lack of decent work opportunities. Lack of representation means that policies fail to acknowledge the challenges young people face. In some places, young people are becoming politicised and their concerns are at the forefront of an alternative agenda. In other places, there is no space to engage outside partisan politics or even in civil society. Young men and women experience different socio-economic problems. Trust in and identity with political institutions is diminishing.

- **ActionAid believes that young people's energy and analysis are key to driving change.** ActionAid's programming approach aims to guide and develop young men and women to achieve change by supporting them to open civic and political space. There are about 1.8 billion people in the world between the ages of 12 and 24, and 1.3 billion of them live in the south. Many have no influence in economic and political processes. This limits their opportunities to access good quality education, health and decent employment, and leaves them vulnerable to injustice.

- **Youth are often seen as a problem rather than a resource, due to perceptions that they are dangerous and destabilising.** By taking young women and men seriously, recognising their skills, energy and ability to build up structures based on their own agenda and analysis, ActionAid invites them to become agents for change. This means empowering them, improving their livelihood and education options and confronting and changing their lack of influence in formal structures. It means creating space for young people to meet and discuss matters of their own within their own constituencies and with others through solidarity networks. It also means supporting young women and men to take action on the changes they want to see, working with ActionAid or other campaigns.

- **ActionAid recognises that capacity development of young women and men, particularly those living in poverty, is a key foundation for youth empowerment and active citizenship.** This empowerment will drive change. Excluded young women and men need training, guidance and role models to support their struggles. We will draw on our experience in this area, working with young women and men inside and outside school, including children who have outgrown child sponsorship, through training (Training4Change, for example) and fellowship experiences. We will use these opportunities to build economic, financial and educational support, and to provide young women and men with the skills to become confident rights activists and strong campaigners through Activista or other campaigns.

- **ActionAid also recognises that developing the economic and social capital of young women and men living in poverty is key for their empowerment.** Multiple barriers prevent young women and men from accessing education, decent work and livelihoods. ActionAid will ensure that young women and men in local rights programmes participate in groups and networks (for example, *Reflect!on-Act!on* processes for out-of-school youth, and school clubs for in-school youth) where they can analyse their challenges and find alternatives, such as local employment schemes. ActionAid will link these groups to national networks, Activista and others, and facilitate youth-led advocacy and campaigns to change the context for young women and men.

- **Youth empowerment is a basis for policy and advocacy work on issues facing young people and their communities.** We will support young people's struggles within our own campaigns and by linking them to other campaigns. We will draw on our experiences to support youth-led alternatives around issues such as employment, social protection, labour and climate.

- **Our analysis will need to distinguish between the challenges faced by young women and men.** While we seek to engage young people as a whole, there will always be differences and we need to ensure we create space to recognise the separate issues faced by young women and men. There will be times when separate organising spaces for young women will be useful for building their confidence and analysis, and for dealing with sensitive issues.

- **The youth movement is diverse and needs to be considered in its entirety.** On the one hand, there is a growing urban youth movement of (often) unemployed and (usually) unmarried (mostly) young men who are politically aware and adept in new forms of protest. On the other hand, there are huge numbers of young women and men who are excluded, living in both urban and rural areas, with no access to positions of power within or outside their family. ActionAid has an opportunity to support different intiatives to ensure that all excluded youth are empowered and their voice is heard.

- **There is a crucial role for youth solidarity and mutual support across countries.** ActionAid's youth training and capacity-building methodologies, including Activista, Training4Change, People4Change and our fellowship scheme, have built up a strong global reputation for empowering, mobilising, organising and building solidarity between young people from different backgrounds. This work needs to be gendered, and capacity initiatives must consider and accommodate young married women's constraints to attending training. The old slogan "act locally, think globally" still resonates. There are opportunities to unpack inspiring and relevant issues, such as unemployment, which impact on young women and men across the globe, and use these as the basis for engagement. We will prioritise both mobilisation of youth in their own location and linking youth together across countries and regions, through schemes such as Activista and the fellowship scheme. We will create strong communities of action and ActionAid identity among youth.

- **Social media and new media will play a role in buidling solidarity.** We must recognise that this is not accessible to all young people, for example rural young women. However, it is important to draw on these alternative methods of communicating and organising, to better understand new forms and structures of protest.

- **In networking and campaigning with youth we need to strike a balance.** A key part of building credible national and global networks of youth is to get the delicate balance right between ownership and guidance. That is, to ensure we support networks like Activista and engage their members in our wider campaigning, while giving them independent space to build their own analysis and ways of working. We also need to ensure that youth are not working in isolation from decision-makers and from other youth networks working on similar issues.

- **Aside from the activities mentioned here, we need to engage with youth under all the strategic objectives in the new strategy.** We must look at the sustainability of their livelihoods and their access to resources, their voice in holding governments to account, their education, their role in risk reduction, resilience and response to disasters, their experience of gender-based violence and their economic alternatives.

Key questions and tools for contextualisation

- How is youth defined in your country?
- There is a wide definition of youth – how will your work support the different youth cohorts (for example, older young people, urban youth and minority youth)?
- What schemes do you already have in your country to support young people (Activista, global change, fellowship, internship, schools and youth)? Do you need to expand or re-energise these (for example, introducing a women's rights perspective)?
- How will you work with young women?

- How will you work with excluded groups of young people, and those who are not able to easily access forums (young farmers, fisherfolk, pastoralists, slum dwellers)?
- What are the issues preventing young men and women from influencing political spaces?
- The youth change promise focuses on mobilisation. How will you effectively mobilise young women and men on issues relevant to them and to ActionAid's strategy?
- What are the key issues in your context that you can use as a rallying call for young women and men to take action to claim their rights?
- Is your work with young women and men sufficiently externally-focused and responsive to not only ActionAid's strategy but the dynamics of the youth movement?

Additional resources

Internal resources

- **Activista website** (http://act.ai/activista) Activista is made up of youth activists and creates powerful and creative campaigns. The network empowers and enables young people to actively participate in the decision-making and political processes that affect their lives. Please also refer to *Activista strategy and working plan 2011- 2016* and national toolkits.
- **ActionAid Myanmar and UN Democracy Fund. *The fellowship programme in Myanmar: We do it together for our village.* 2010.** (http://act.ai/LzKzXu) This has more infomation about our fellowship programme in Myanmar, following up on page 157.
- **ActionAid's youth scoping. 2011.** This study analysed trends in youth movements and their important issues, and analysed ActionAid's experience in youth engagement.

External resources

- **Department for International Development. *Youth participation in development guide.* 2010.** (http://act.ai/Mw8vwo) This guide aims to help build and harness young people as assets. It has been developed through an innovative process led by young people, which itself reinforced their capacity to participate and lead. The guide challenges negative stereotypes of youth and demonstrates how young people can positively contribute to development in four areas: organisational development, policy and planning, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation.
- **UNICEF. *Children and youth participation resource guides.* 2009.** (http://act.ai/KPAhX0)
- **UN. *World youth report.* 2011.** (http://act.ai/LE54lO) For the first time, inputs gathered from young people around the world through an extensive online consultation form.
- **UN Department of Economics and Social Affairs, Social Division on Youth** (http://act.ai/MNvdfG) The department has a list of global resources and updates (including information on the World Programme of Action for Youth).
- **UN-HABITAT. *State of the urban youth.* 2010/2011.** (http://act.ai/KWChb9) This report is based on data from UN-HABITAT's Global Urban Indicator Database, as well as surveys of, and focus group discussions with, groups of young people in five major cities in four developing regions: Rio de Janeiro (Brazil), Mumbai (India), Kingston (Jamaica), Nairobi (Kenya) and Lagos (Nigeria).
- **African Union. *The African youth charter.* 2008.** (http://act.ai/MCILdl) This gives governments, youth, civil society and international partners a continental framework showing the rights, duties and freedoms of youth. It also paves the way for the development of national programmes and strategic plans for youth empowerment.
- **Commonwealth secretariat. *Commonwealth plan of action for youth empowerment* 2006-2015. 2006.** (http://act.ai/LE5ybw) This provides a blueprint for youth development. It is relevant for governments, development partners, youth networks and young women and men who are valued partners in the process.
- **The Council of Europe** (http://act.ai/Mm0QBl) The council seek to encourage young people to become actively involved in strengthening civil society in Europe and to defend the values of human rights, cultural diversity and social cohesion.
- **Global community and knowledge base on youth policy** (http://act.ai/MHvyE9)
- **Child Rights Information Network** (http://act.ai/MlcCJs) This is a global network for children's rights. It presses for rights, not charity, and advocates for a genuine systemic shift in how governments and societies view children.

Strategic objective 4

Build the resilience of people living in poverty to conflicts and disasters and respond to disasters with people-centred, rights-based alternatives

ActionAid takes a **human rights based approach to emergencies and building resilience.** People living in poverty are vulnerable to a constant series of shocks and risks, and they have a right to retain a minimum quality of life and level of human security with dignity, defined by the UN as, "freedom from fear, freedom from want and freedom to take action on one's own behalf." These rights are most compromised during disasters. A rights-based response treats basic needs as basic rights, and strives to achieve respect for, protection of and fulfilment of these rights.

ActionAid takes sides with people living in poverty and exclusion who are hit hardest by emergencies. For example, disasters exacerbate women's everyday experiences of discrimination and multiple denials of rights. Unless there is affirmative action and commitment to take sides with women, they are likely to be excluded from emergency preparedness and response, and their issues will go unaddressed. This affirmative action includes addressing basic needs/rights and building awareness as part of empowerment initiatives, followed by building solidarity and campaigning for assertion of women's rights. ActionAid's HRBA to emergencies and resilience-building also seeks to respect and uphold the dignity and agency of rights holders at all times, ensuring that we build on local capacities, and put the concerns and priorities of vulnerable communities at the centre of our work.

Vision

By 2017, people living in 5,000 communities where ActionAid works are resilient and have the capacity to absorb shocks and uncertainties, recover after disasters and adapt to climate change. Furthermore, five million people experiencing conflict or disaster receive assistance in a way which respects their rights, supports their livelihoods, and empowers women.

To achieve this, we will facilitate communities where we work to identify the multiple vulnerabilities and risks (social, political, environmental, policy and economic) they face and draw up action plans to address these at local level, while linking them to influence national and international policies and practices. We will ensure that women are empowered to be leaders in this process, resulting in increased protection, promotion of rights, access to justice and reduction of risks and vulnerabilities. We will work with allies to promote community-centric and rights-based humanitarian approaches, changing national and global policies and practices around risk reduction, disaster prevention, climate adaptation and coordinated and accountable emergency responses.

We will work to ensure:

- **Vulnerability analyses and comprehensive resilience frameworks are in place.** Vulnerability analysis will be an integral part of our comprehensive analysis of power and rights using the *Reflect!on-Act!on* process. Recent developments in the disaster risk reduction and climate change sector have led to strong interest in the concept of resilience. ActionAid already takes a comprehensive approach to resilience in much of our work. For example, we use *Participatory vulnerability analysis* methodology; build a culture of safety through our disaster risk reduction and disaster preparedness work; engage with local government; link up to national and global level policies on climate change adaptation; do community-led conflict risk reduction work; and build institutional capacity to reduce risk.

- **Our focus is building communities' comprehensive resilience against multiple threats and hazards,** including climate change-induced "new" slow-onset disasters such as sea level rises, glaciers melting and increasing water salinity. ActionAid links rapid assessment after disasters to vulnerability analysis (integrated with wider participatory processes of reflection-action) and longer-term change processes as part of its comprehensive resilience frameworks developed in the aftermath of emergencies. We have already taken steps to engage with others in the sector to explore the development of a common comprehensive resilience framework. This is an evolving concept and conversation.

- **Disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation are integrated.** Practitioners and policy-makers are recognising more and more the importance of bringing together disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation and the value of mainstreaming climate change adaption into disaster risk reduction and development activities to reduce vulnerability and increase resilience. ActionAid has collaborated with the Institute of Development Studies to develop an innovative approach to mainstreaming climate change adaption into disaster risk reduction programmes and policies. Risk and vulnerability analysis needs to be included in ActionAid's regular asessment and programming frameworks to mainstream resilience within the organisation. We can share our practical learning on how to do this to influence policies and other agencies.

- **Women are leaders in disaster risk reduction, climate adaptation, preparedness and emergency response.** Facilitating women's leadership in these areas builds a sense of self-confidence and empowerment which can help to transform power relationships in societies where women have traditionally been excluded from decision-making. Empowering women to take leadership roles is a key part of our work on emergencies, climate change adaption and disaster risk reduction. We have championed the importance of facilitating women's leadership at key humanitarian forums, including the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction 2011 and UN climate conferences. In the new strategy, we will build on this work, ensuring there is sustained investment in women's leadership and representation at all levels.

- **States and the international community uphold rights to community-based protection.** ActionAid's protection approach involves building protection strategies as part of empowerment initiatives. These enable people living in poverty and exclusion, especially women, to achieve their rights in safety and dignity. Disasters and violent conflicts increase violence against women, create new vulnerabilities and threaten their safety and security. For example, increased violence, including sexual abuse, increases the risk of HIV transmission. There is a major gap in preventing and responding to violence against women during conflicts and disasters. Our approach involves campaigning at the national and international level to influence governments and the humanitarian sector (including the UN, INGOs and local partners) to amplify their efforts to prevent and respond to violence against women during conflicts and disasters.

- **Conflict-sensitive approaches are mainstreamed.** Conflict sensitivity recognises that any initiative in a post-conflict or conflict-affected area will interact with that conflict. That interaction could have positive or negative effects on the conflict. It is also essential to recognise that a HRBA will inevitably create tension in any context. Conflict sensitivity involves being mindful of these interactions, and designing/altering interventions accordingly. It emphasises the importance of in-depth analysis of the context. ActionAid's experience in the UK, Kenya and Sierra Leone on the consortium project *Conflict sensitivity - from concept to impact* (implemented between 2008-2012) provides relevant learning in this area. We recognise that working with women and promoting their leadership is critical in a conflict context.

- **Women are able to advocate for and gain access to justice.** Disasters and conflicts increase violence against women. ActionAid's work on access to justice for women addresses formal and informal justice systems and the demand and supply side of justice. On the supply side, we aim to increase justice for women by bringing about pro-women government policies, judicial system reform and changes in cultural practices at national, local and community levels. This includes capacity-building activities to improve the legal infrastructure for dealing with violence against women. On the demand side, we aim to enhance the

capacity of affected women to access justice. ActionAid's *Access to Justice for Women* project, funded by the UK Department for International Development and Danida, developed methods and strategies for this work.

- **The humanitarian system is transparent, accountable and effective.** The link between poverty and the impact of disasters is clearly established. When disaster strikes, the humanitarian system is expected to help affected people, the majority of whom are living in poverty and exclusion. To bring sustainable changes in the lives of these people, the humanitarian system has to be transparent, accountable and effective. ActionAid's approach to humanitarian reform emphasises the importance of putting affected communities at the centre of humanitarian response, accountability to affected communities, and a bottom-up approach which listens to the perceptions and experiences of those disasters affect. We have engaged with humanitarian reform mechanisms at country and global levels. We are an active member of the *NGOs and humanitarian reform* project, which aims to strengthen the effective engagement of local, national and INGOs in reforming humanitarian financing, accountability and coordination mechanisms at global and country levels.

ActionAid will develop policies, practices, skills and resources to address the causes of vulnerabilities, and prepare for and respond to disasters with speed and quality. We already have a "rights holders security policy" in place. We plan to operationalise this across the organisation and develop related policies and practices. We have also mobilised an emergency fast action team from across the ActionAid federation.

Key change promise seven

By 2017 we will have built effective risk reduction and resilience systems and capacities in over 5,000 communities.

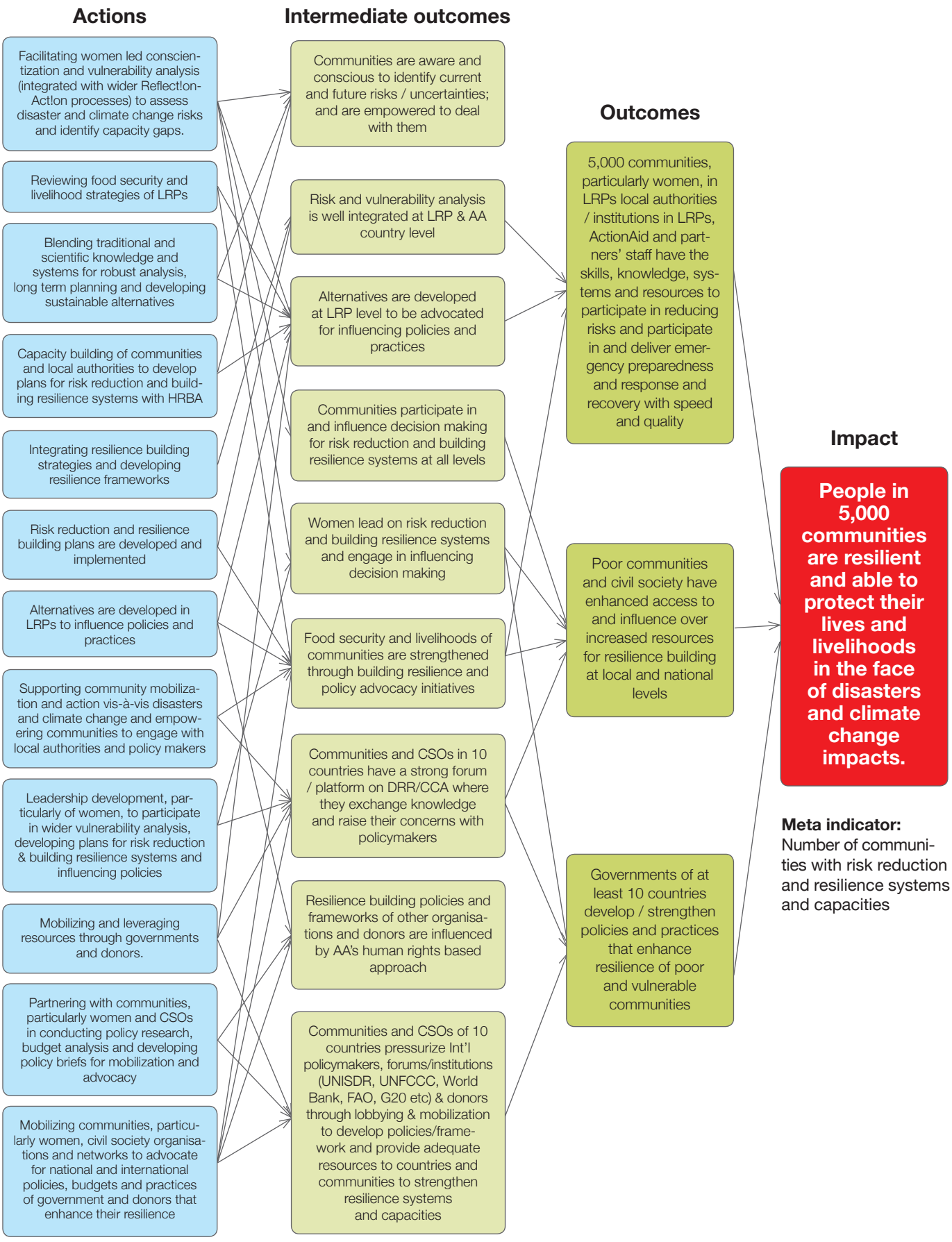
Change promise seven aims to ensure that by 2017 people in 5,000 local rights programme communities are resilient to disasters and climate change impacts. To build the resilience of these communities, it is important that they and their institutions have the capacity and resources to reduce risks and recover from disasters and climate change impacts. We will empower communities, particularly women and their organisations, to assess their vulnerabilities from existing and future risks. We will mobilise and support them to participate in and influence decision-making processes and forums at national and international level. We will help them build long-term resilience so disasters and climate change impacts do not threaten their food security and livelihoods.

Our strategy needs **a different way of thinking and planning,** where **women lead vulnerability analysis** (integrating disaster risk reduction, climate change adaptation and climate resilient sustainable agriculture in *Reflect!on-Act!on* processes) to assess disaster and climate change risks and identify capacity gaps. Our HRBA will enhance the capacity of communities and local authorities to develop plans for risk reduction and build resilience systems. We will mobilise and leverage resources from governments and donors to implement these plans. We will review local rights programmes' food security and livelihood strategies and **integrate resilience-building strategies**, developing resilience frameworks and capacity-building programmes. We will **test these resilience-building plans** on the ground.

We will create and promote alternatives within and outside the organisation. These will involve awareness-generation, conscientisation and political mobilisation around disasters and climate change. We will mobilise and empower communities, particularly women and their leaders, civil society organisations and networks, to review and **advocate for government, international agency and donor policies, budgets and practices** to enhance their resilience.

The **critical pathway** below shows this in a systematic format:

Objective 4 - Key change promise 7



Monitoring change promise seven

This change promise is at the level of outcome, with 5,000 communities developing systems and capacities for greater resilience and reduced risk to emergencies. The meta indicator we will collectively monitor across the federation is the **number of communities with risk reduction and resilience systems and capacities.**

Possible **outcome indicators** include:

- number of communities and their governing institutions with resilience-building plans built on traditional knowledge, scientific practices and earmarked budget
- number of communities and their governing institutions with increased knowledge and skills to reduce risks and respond to disasters and climate change impacts
- number of communities claiming state and non-state resources to deal with disasters and climate change
- existence of community and civil society platforms campaigning to government for policy changes to increase their resilience
- increased budget allocations at national and international level for resource redistribution/distribution/allocation which enhances the resilience of poor communities
- government policies and practices on resilience have increased focus on the most vulnerable, particularly women.

Possible **process indicators** to track the progress of your activities include:

- number of women and men in local rights programmes that have contributed to community level vulnerability analysis
- number of women and men at local rights programme level informed about their rights and entitlements
- number of local rights programmes that have integrated risk reduction strategies and allocated budgets to address capacity gaps
- number of policy level interventions taken up by ActionAid country programmes on resilience-building
- level of budget allocated/leveraged/raised for resilience-building work in local rights programmes
- increased access of women and men to early warning and weather forecast systems
- number of families with disaster-resistant housing
- evidence of farmers having improved climate resilient farming practices
- number of women and men having two to three meals in post-disaster situations
- increased engagement of women and community members in policy research and budget analysis to inform policy positions and advocacy strategies
- approaches of other organisations and governments reflect some of the core features of ActionAid's HRBA to resilience
- media coverage of ActionAid's research reports and policy papers on strengthening resilience.

Linking change promise seven to impact on children

Children are one of the most vulnerable groups to climate change and disaster impacts. Children from families struggling with poverty are likely to bear the brunt of environmental disasters linked to climate change. They have a right to participate in decisions which affect them now and in the future. Interventions that analyse risk and vulnerabilities and develop strategies to reduce them in households, the community and schools help to reduce risk and build resilience. Promoting disaster risk reduction and the tracking of climate change locally within the school curricula can help empower children as active agents for reducing risks and adapting to a changing world.

Change promise eight

By 2017 at least five million people experiencing disasters or conflicts will have been assisted in ways which respect and strengthen rights, support recovery of livelihoods, empower women and promote solutions for long-term change.

ActionAid will support people living in poverty who are affected by disasters not only to meet their basic needs (which we recognise as basic rights) but to overcome poverty and injustice by ensuring they can lead their own recovery. We will place women and other particularly vulnerable groups at the centre of all our activities.

We will achieve our desired impact by facilitating women's empowerment and leadership and building and strengthening their institutions at community level; strengthening preparedness at all levels; and supporting the creation of an effective humanitarian system which is accountable to disaster-affected populations.

Our focus at local level will include capacity-building and mobilisation of women and their institutions to lead emergency preparedness and response. Ensuring integration of community-based protection and access to justice for women will be a priority. This will include ensuring systems, plans and budgets are in place, and are informed by the experiences of disaster-affected people. In the process of promoting women's leadership in emergencies, we will be careful to ensure we do not increase women's unpaid care work burden.

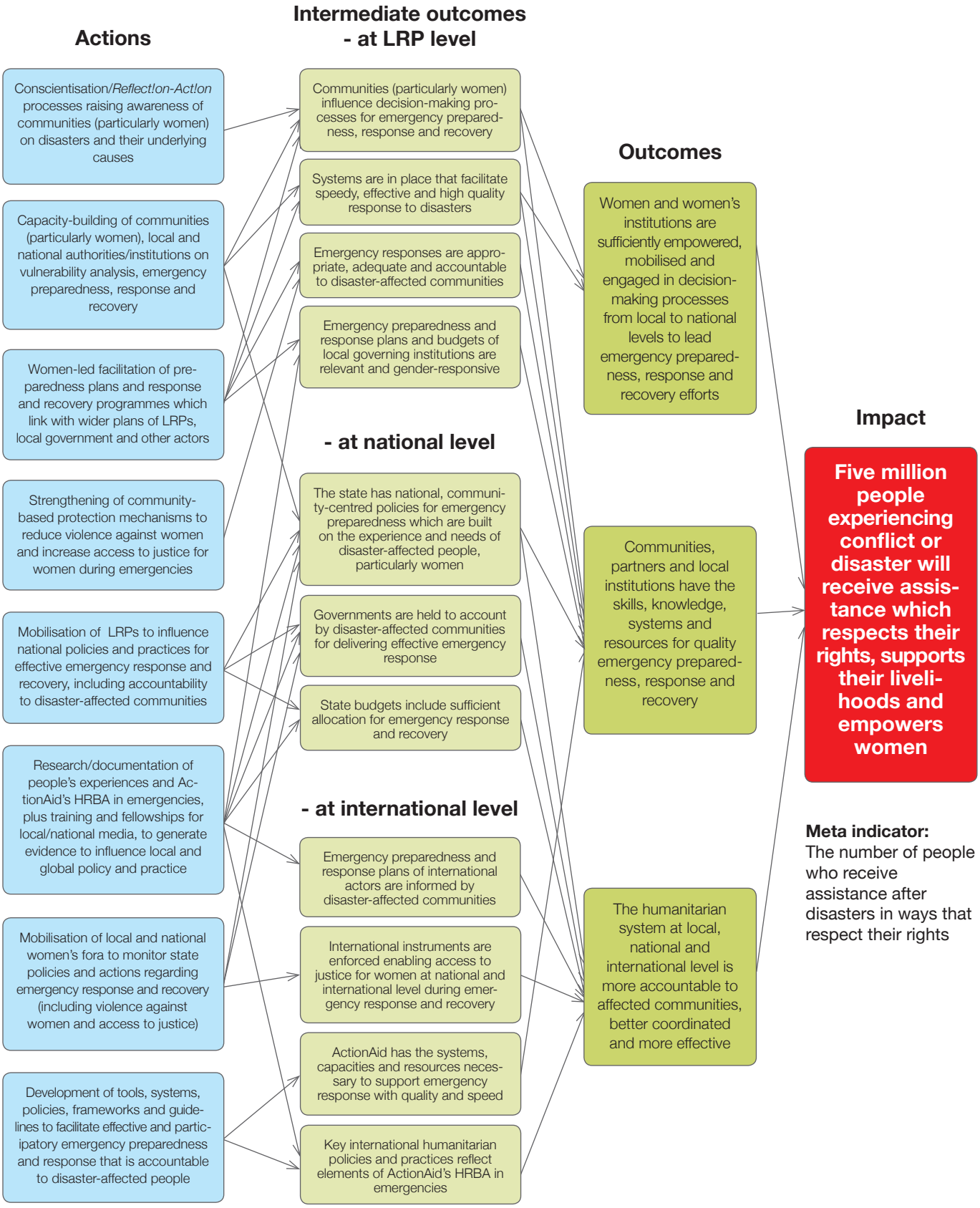
At national level, ActionAid will invest in developing and operationalising robust preparedness plans at country programme level, in collaboration with partners and communities. In partnership with communities, we will advocate for national policies, practices and budgets which enhance the speed and quality of emergency response.

Our focus at international level will be on monitoring, reviewing and lobbying for an international humanitarian system which is adequately resourced, informed by the realities of disaster-affected people and accountable to them. Strengthening ActionAid's institutional capacity and systems around emergency preparedness and response will also be key to ensuring we respond to disasters in a timely and effective way. In addition, we will engage with and seek to influence international instruments and policies to deliver positive outcomes for disaster-affected people.

It is important to note that the above goals are closely linked to key change promise seven, on building resilience.

The **critical pathway** below shows how we will achieve our goals:

Objective 4 - Key change promise 8



Meta indicator:
The number of people who receive assistance after disasters in ways that respect their rights

Monitoring change promise eight

This change promise is at the level of impact, as it aims to ensure that our assistance to five million people experiencing disasters or conflicts respects rights, supports livelihoods, empowers women and enables long-term structural change. Our meta indicator is **the number of people who receive assistance after disasters in ways that respect their rights.**

Possible **outcome indicators** include:

- women report that emergency response efforts are more responsive to their needs and interests, providing appropriate services, supporting women's participation, and ensuring their safety, for example
- empowered women's organisations exist, are highlighting women's needs, holding duty bearers accountable and leading certain aspects of the emergency preparedness and response work
- disaster management policies have specific mechanisms for women's participation in disaster preparedness and response
- number of active community structures (for example, relief committees and volunteer groups) that have participated in and supported the coordination of disaster response efforts
- data indicates a reduction in the loss of life and assets during disasters, resulting from implementation of effective early warning systems at local, national and international levels
- strategies in place and implemented by ActionAid at national and international levels to facilitate mobilisation of funds for emergency response
- development, dissemination and operationalisation of ActionAid's standard operating procedures for emergency response in orange and red alert level emergencies
- evidence that national/international humanitarian responses incorporate community participation as standard practice
- disaster-affected communities report increased satisfaction with emergency response interventions implemented by international humanitarian actors
- number of governments which allocate sufficient contingency funding for emergency response in their national budgets
- evidence that funds mobilised by the international community match funding gaps identified.

Possible **process indicators** to track the progress of your actions include:

At local level:

- number of women leaders of community structures (relief committees, for example) leading emergency response at local level
- data indicating a reduction in the loss of life and loss of livelihoods during disasters, resulting from implementation of effective early warning systems at community level
- number of women-led local groups trained in emergency preparedness and able to coordinate rescue and relief efforts
- number of active community structures (for example, relief committees led by women) that have participated in and supported coordination of disaster response efforts
- relief supplies delivered reflect needs of the most vulnerable people, particularly women, in the disaster-affected community
- evidence of pro-active information sharing by ActionAid and partners through community meetings, transparency boards and other initiatives
- evidence of community-centred policies for emergency preparedness being developed, rolled out and implemented at local levels
- best practices, innovations and alternatives to traditional models of humanitarian response have been disseminated in partnership with communities.

At national level:

- mechanisms exist for communities, particularly women, to feed into national level planning on emergency preparedness

- evidence that sub-national and national level systems for disaster response are joined up, reducing duplication and increasing coordination between actors at different levels
- level of funding allocated in state budgets and contingency funds matches country-wide hazard analysis
- schedule in place for regular updating of ActionAid preparedness plans, and these are monitored for compliance.

At international level:

- emergency preparedness, response plans and budgets of international actors evidence a responsiveness to the needs of disaster-affected communities as gleaned from evaluations of previous response efforts
- evidence of formal and informal justice systems referencing international instruments in women's rights cases
- number of funding proposals successful in securing income for emergency response
- number of ActionAid fundraising affiliates with humanitarian strategies/plans in place to support emergency response through mobilisation of funds, profile-building and support to policy-advocacy initiatives
- key international policy documents on emergency preparedness and response reflect elements of ActionAid's HRBA.

Disaster risk reduction and climate adaptation in Bangladesh

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change has identified Bangladesh as one of the worst victims of climate change, despite being one of the lowest per-capita emitters of carbon. Just some of the impacts facing the country include increasingly frequent and severe tropical cyclones, erratic rainfall, river bank erosion, melting of the Himalayan glaciers, sea level rises, increasing salinity in the coastal belt and warmer and more humid weather. These changes are causing reduction in agricultural production and a shortage of safe drinking water, resulting in food insecurity, forced internal migration and ill health among people living in poverty.

However, Bangladesh has not surrendered to the monumental crisis it faces. The country has achieved phenomenal success in reducing disaster-related deaths and developing strong disaster management mechanisms over the past two decades. It is now emerging as a leader on adaptation and building resilience to disasters and climate change. Civil society organisations have played an instrumental role in achieving this milestone. ActionAid is regarded as one of the key players.

In 2008 we began our *Assistance to local communities on climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction in Bangladesh* project with support from the Danish embassy. The project involves forming community research teams using the *Reflect* approach for vulnerability analysis and assessing climate change impact. It promotes alternative solutions that link local and scientific knowledge around flood-resistant housing, cyclone-resilient storage bunkers, water-efficient toilets, salinity-resistant crops, climate-resilient handlooms, solar panels and tree and bamboo plantations. The project also facilitates a reframing of relationships with decision-makers. The project, from a human-rights perspective, puts social justice and the active agency of the most vulnerable at the centre, promoting the incorporation of their adaptation demands into local level plans and budgets.

ActionAid Bangladesh has also been at the forefront of influencing policy-making at the national and international level, in collaboration with other civil society organisations. They have been actively involved with the assessment and development of national government's climate change policy and plans. They have been a leading partner on longer-term adaptation work, and they are a member of the Rio+20 National Steering Committee of Bangladesh and have been included in government delegations to climate change negotiations. The foundation of their approach has always been to empower communities and bring the voices of the most excluded groups into national and international policy spaces.

Key definitions

- **Shocks** is a broad term which encapsulates the full range of stressors faced by communities, including physical, social, economic, cultural and political. Disasters and conflict are also encapsulated within this concept. **Hazards** are dangerous phenomenons, substances, human activities or conditions that may cause loss of life, injury or other health impacts, property damage, loss of livelihoods and services, social and economic disruption or environmental damage (UNISDR). **Disasters /emergencies** are serious disruptions to the functioning of a community/society with impacts exceeding the community's ability to cope (UNISDR).

- While natural **hazards** are undoubtedly an empirical phenomenon, natural **disasters** happen when hazards impact upon people living in poverty and conditions of vulnerability, overwhelming their ability to cope. Because poverty and vulnerability are caused by power imbalance and the unjust action and inaction of individuals/institutions, disasters are largely avoidable, and not simply "natural". This presents both a challenge and an opportunity: by tackling power imbalance, poverty and vulnerability using ActionAid's rights-based approach, we can reduce the impact of "natural" disasters to a large extent.

- **Conflict**, for ActionAid, refers to organised, armed, systematic/systemic, violent conflict, where at least one party uses direct violence. **Positive tension** (sometimes referred to as **non-violent conflict**) is often a precursor, and sometimes a precondition, for social change and to attain rights and justice, so is often a result of ActionAid's work. The destruction of natural resources due to climate change and other factors is exacerbating conflict. It is undeniable that conflict exacerbates poverty and vulnerability, destroying communities' resources, skills and capabilities, and eroding human security and development gains. ActionAid recognises the need to work on conflict.

- ***Participatory vulnerability analysis*** engages communities and other stakeholders in identifying and understanding the threats and hazards they face. It starts with the premise that human beings have a fundamental right to human security. It is a way of facilitating people living in poverty and exclusion to identify and analyse underlying causes of vulnerability at community, national and international level. It should lead to action plans to target these vulnerabilities through empowerment, solidarity and campaigning. ActionAid has used *Participatory vulnerability analysis* in 28 countries. It is a key foundation for our *Reflect!on-Act!on* process. During this process, the action plans communities develop often focus on recovering livelihoods following an emergency, as well as community-based protection initiatives. Addressing the causes of vulnerability also requires moving beyond the community/district level to the provincial, national and international level. Advocacy around the national level policy and structural causes of vulnerability forms part of the community action plans.

- **Risk reduction** refers to the techniques, tools, policies, strategies and practices that minimise vulnerabilities and disaster risks in a community to avoid and/or limit (mitigate and prepare for) the adverse impacts of hazards, within the broad context of sustainable development. ActionAid supports a participatory approach to risk reduction. We believe risk reduction should increase the resilience of communities, reduce their vulnerability to disasters and link local experiences to national and international frameworks by adopting a HRBA, with its core components of empowerment, solidarity and campaigning. ActionAid's approach to risk reduction places women's rights and empowerment at the centre. It also includes climate-induced hazards and adaptation measures, and risk reduction measures in emergency response.

- **Adaptation** means "adjustments in ecological, social or economic systems in response to actual or expected stimuli and their effects or impacts. This term refers to changes in processes, practices and structures to moderate potential damages or to benefit from opportunities associated with climate change" (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, 2007). Adaptation will be necessary to address impacts resulting from the already-unavoidable warming caused by past emissions.

- **Protection** encompasses all activities aimed at obtaining full respect for the rights of the individual, in accordance with the letter and spirit of relevant bodies of law (such as human rights law, international humanitarian law and refugee law) (ICRC). Women's rights to live free from violence are enshrined in human rights instruments and reflected in numerous UN Security Council resolutions, such as Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security. The protection of people's human rights and the prevention of/response to coercion, violence and deprivation is a critical component of ActionAid's work on conflict and disaster. **Community-based protection** strategies are critical for communities to claim their rights to safety and dignity. Both states and the international community need to take more action to uphold their obligations to fulfil these rights.

- **Social capacities** are determined by physical, social, economic and environmental factors as well as attitudes and behaviours which increase resilience and reduce an individual or community's susceptibility to the impacts of hazards, threats and risks, and enable them to respond effectively. **Organisational** capabilities refer to the ability of an organisation to organise effective emergency preparedness, response and resilience-building. We are committed to building capacity for the development and implementation of country contingency plans, the formation and strengthening of human capacity to respond, and to ensuring cross-learning and innovation.

- **Resilience systems** enable people to effectively prepare for, respond to and recover from disasters, including addressing underlying causes of vulnerability. They enable communities to cope with multiple hazards, shocks and threats, including unpredictable climate stress. We support the building of comprehensive resilience systems in the communities we work with. Comprehensive resilience stems from an analysis of all factors driving vulnerability – institutional, political, cultural, social, economic, environmental and physical – and focuses on how communities can address these. It seeks to join up the multiple layers – local, national, regional and international – which impact current and future vulnerability.

- **Resilient communities** have the capacity to absorb stress or destructive forces through resistance or adaptation. They can manage or maintain certain basic functions and structures during hazardous events and recover after an event (Twigg). We emphasise enhancing communities' capacity before and during disasters and climate change rather than just concentrating on their vulnerability to hazards and their needs in an emergency. We acknowledge the importance of wider institutional, policy and socio-economic factors in supporting community-level resilience.

- **Comprehensive resilience-building** links together all five of our objectives. We recognise that it is essential to develop comprehensive community resilience that enables people to secure rights and entitlements gained during development processes as well as in periods of disaster, conflict and shocks. The role of women, as leaders and key participants, is critical to community resilience.

- **Conflict transformation** involves the transformation of the parties involved in a conflict. It seeks to change the practices of society and governance to strengthen conflict resolution capacities for the future, not simply resolve the current conflict. It is integral to, and indeed demanded by, a rights-based approach. According to an ActionAid paper, "Conflict transformation is the inevitable goal of a rights-based approach to development. Conflict management, which tends to focus on the armed parties, is highly likely to exclude conflict-affected communities. Conflict resolution, which focuses on dealing with those issues that are related to the current violent conflict, will not necessarily address the underlying structural inequities. Conflict transformation, which requires a process approach and inclusivity, has a goal of peace with justice and is not 'peace at any price'".

- **Complex emergencies** arise for multiple reasons. They lead to disrupted livelihoods, threats to life from warfare, civil disturbance and large-scale movements of people (WHO). A complex emergency is a humanitarian crisis in a country, region or society where there is total or considerable breakdown of authority resulting from internal or external conflict which requires an international response that goes beyond the mandate or capacity of any single agency and/or the ongoing UN country programme (IASC).

Rationale

- **The number of disasters is increasing.** According to Munich Re, in 2010 a total of 950 natural disasters were recorded, nine-tenths of which were weather-related events. This total makes 2010 the year with the second-highest number of natural catastrophes since 1980, markedly exceeding the annual average for the last ten years.

- **Disasters increase people's vulnerability.** The recurrence of disasters is inextricably linked to the inability of people living in poverty and exclusion to access and control the resources that might mitigate the impact of ever-increasing hazards (both human-made and so-called "natural" events), thus leading to poverty, increased vulnerability and, finally, disasters.

- **Disasters disproportionately impact on women.** Structural inequalities, existing gender discrimination and unequal power relations mean that women are often hardest hit by disasters, take longer to recover and may not recover fully. The way women experience vulnerability is also very different to men. Lack of access to and control over resources due to their social, economic, political and cultural status, and exclusion from basic entitlements increases women's vulnerability and undermines their ability to cope with impacts of disasters. Interventions in conflict- or disaster-affected communities must not only consider the different needs and roles of women, but also take into account the power relations that affect the respective abilities and capacities of women and men to access support. This means humanitarian actors must take power relations into account when designing and implementing interventions so they meet the needs and fulfil the rights of all affected people.

- **Shocks and disasters impact on children.** Children are particularly vulnerable to disasters. They can be excluded from education; exploited; trafficked; coerced into becoming child combatants; and affected by increased migration and changes in family circumstances (taking on an adult role, caring for siblings or becoming an orphan). Disasters traumatise children and they can take a long time to recover.

- **People living in poverty lack a voice.** People living in poverty barely have a voice when it comes to decisions on how they should build resilience, prepare for and respond to shocks and in deciding the assistance they receive from emergency response. Furthermore, at the national and international level, affected people are not engaged in the development of policies and practices which impact their lives.

- **There is a lack of women's leadership.** The voice and leadership of women need to be brought to the forefront. There is a need for sustained and systematic investment in women to promote their leadership so they can reach their full potential. Our new strategy marks a commitment and an opportunity for such investment.

- **States are abdicating their responsibilities.** States are increasingly retreating from their role of delivering basic services and social protection to their citizens. This is due to the centrality and dominance of the market, or can even be the result of bad governance and corruption. It should be noted that NGOs and the private sector can contribute to this retreat by only engaging in service delivery without empowering communities to demand their rights from the government, and advocating for the state to fulfil its obligations. States can also perpetrate disasters through their policies. For example, bad governance exacerbates people's vulnerability to disasters through corruption, exclusion and poor access to information.

- **There is a deficiency in leadership, coordination and accountability.** The existing aid and humanitarian architecture does not adequately recognise, incentivise or promote accountability to communities.

- **Shocks have a dramatic impact on the lives and livelihoods of people living in poverty.** Shocks can particularly affect people living in poverty, which can undermine or distort local markets, causing increases in food prices and food insecurity. Lack of recognition of women's livelihoods means there is often little investment of resources for women in disaster response and risk, undermining their role and contribution.

- **Resilience efforts and disaster preparedness and response are not adequately conflict-sensitive.** They often do not address issues of conflict transformation despite conflict affecting an increasing number of people. Our new strategy marks a turning point and an opportunity to build conflict analysis expertise and capacity within ActionAid.

- **Donor responses can be part of the problem.** Donors' tendency to provide short-term funding for emergency response discourages linking emergency work to longer-term development. Funding tends to be tied to specific and defined "sectors" which the humanitarian sector creates and imposes. These do not reflect the holistic experience of vulnerability in communities. This creates barriers for innovations around resilience-building, strengthening links between disaster risk reduction and climate change adaption, and the integration of conflict analysis and conflict sensitivity into development and humanitarian programmes.

- **We need more links between the development and humanitarian communities.** This would facilitate a move to a comprehensive resilience approach, and ensure long-term change. In the area of disaster risk reduction and climate change adaption, these communities of practice need to speak to one another. The scientific climate change community needs to interact with communities on the ground, drawing on local knowledge and experience. This is true both externally and internally.

- **Resourcing and integrating key areas of work is essential to a HRBA.** Even though ActionAid has made considerable efforts to build resilience, risk reduction, conflict sensitivity, preparedness and response mechanisms, this remains an under-resourced area of work in terms of systems, human resources and financing, and in that it is not sufficiently integrated into ActionAid's development programmes. Yet disasters and shocks provide an opportunity to change power relationships and consequently the lives of rights holders, to raise the organisation's profile and to recruit/mobilise supporters. ActionAid's new strategy requires closer collaboration between all development and humanitarian areas of work, moving towards a comprehensive resilience approach.

Key questions and tools for contextualisation

At local level:

- Are local rights programme communities aware of disaster risks, the causes of climate change and its impact on their life and livelihoods? How resilient are these communities currently? That is, what is their capacity to cope with shocks, respond to and reduce disaster risks and climate change impacts? What needs to be done to integrate resilience into existing programmes? Have risk assessments been integrated into local rights programme appraisals so that community resilience-building becomes an integral part of the local rights programme's strategy?
- Are people, particularly women, and their institutions aware of their right to be protected from disasters and climate change impacts? Are women living in poverty and exclusion and their institutions informed and linked to other institutions and able to demand justice?
- Have communities, particularly women and children, their institutions and local authorities been trained (including on scientific knowledge of climate change) and have skills to conduct vulnerability analysis (including around food security)? Are they able to develop disaster risk reduction and long-term resilience-building plans that are linked to local governing institutions?
- Do communities and local authorities have access to resources, for example, skills, capital and technology, to implement their plans?
- Do communities have forums/platforms to share and exchange their knowledge with other communities, civil society organisations and policy-makers?
- Are local rights programmes creating alternatives to influence policies and practices?
- Are women and their institutions involved in monitoring and reviewing the implementation of these plans?
- Are ActionAid and other agencies transparent and accountable?

At national level:

- Have ActionAid and our partners leveraged resources to build and document alternatives to be shared with civil society organisations and government to influence policy and practices?
- Have ActionAid and our partners mobilised communities and networked with like-minded civil society organisations on disaster risk reduction and climate change adaption?
- Are communities, particularly women, and their institutions informed, represented and engaging with government on and to influence policies, practices and budgets related to risk reduction and adaptation?
- Is the capacity of women leaders/representatives strengthened to engage in policy processes from local to national level?
- Do ActionAid and our partners have the capacity to support community institutions to advocate for disaster risk reduction and adaptation policies that are community-centric, rights-based, gender-sensitive and adequately resourced?

At international level:

- Are communities, particularly women, and their institutions informed, represented and engaging at the international level to influence policies, practices and budgets related to risk reduction and adaptation?
- Are countries providing evidence and alternatives on disaster risk reduction and climate change adaption to engage international actors around accountability to communities, resourcing and participation?

Additional resources

- ActionAid. *Participatory vulnerability analysis guidelines* (http://act.ai/HS_toolkits)
- ActionAid. *Resilience principles* (being developed by Programme Partnership Agreement resilience group/ BOND disaster risk reduction group)
- ActionAid. *Disaster risk reduction cornerstones.* (http://act.ai/NUVxKt)
- ActionAid. *Emergencies manual and toolkit.* (http://act.ai/HS_toolkits)
- ActionAid. *Safety with dignity protection manual.* (http://act.ai/HS_toolkits)
- ActionAid. *Women in emergencies manual.* (http://act.ai/HS_toolkits)
- ActionAid. *Psychosocial in emergencies manual.* (http://act.ai/HS_toolkits)
- ActionAid. *Livelihoods in emergencies manual.* (http://act.ai/HS_toolkits)

Strategic objective 5

Ensure that women and girls can break the cycle of poverty and violence, build economic alternatives and claim control over their bodies

Vision

Our vision for 2017 is a world in which women and girls are empowered to rise up against violence, demand a more equitable share of care work between themselves, men and governments, have greater access to land, food and other resources and have control over their time. Women's control over their bodies, sexuality, reproductive health, time, labour and earnings are critical aspects of their empowerment, particularly for women and girls living in poverty and exclusion. It must be at the centre of ActionAid's work across all countries.

Living in patriarchal communities, women and girls, particularly those living in poverty, are subject to discrimination and gross violence. They face frequent denial of their human rights, including enjoyment of their sexual and reproductive health and their right to health care, education, employment, livelihood and a violence-free environment. The impact of these rights violations is exacerbated when the family, communities and the state are violators.

Our People's Action strategy is about mainstreaming women's rights and integrating them throughout all our strategic objectives. However, it also recognises the strength of stand-alone women's rights programmes. Objective five presents an opportunity to specifically address some of the structural barriers and social and cultural values that continue to perpetuate the marginalisation, exclusion and secondary status of women and girls in society. We need to support women and girls to break this vicious cycle of poverty, patriarchy and violence.

We will mobilise and organise women, especially women living with HIV, adolescent girls, migrant women, women who transgress gender norms, sex workers, women living with disabilities and women living in conflict, post-conflict and disaster situations in rural and urban areas, to claim their rights.

Our ultimate goal is to see women have greater access to resources, and more control over their bodies, time and income, leading to an improvement in their well-being. As an organisation, we will deliver cutting edge programmes where:

- women's leadership is nurtured and valued
- women have control over all decisions related to their bodies
- women's unpaid care work is balanced with their paid work
- the environment is respected and protected
- women have sustainable incomes
- we link women's groups to advocacy platforms calling for national and international policy change.

Our priorities include:

- **Pushing for a comprehensive understanding of violence against women.** When it comes to women's safety, there is a strong tendency to focus only on domestic violence, ignoring women's daily movement between public and private spaces (from the home to the farm to schools to shops and educational

institutions). We will promote an alternative and comprehensive vision and respond to violence against women in conflict and non-conflict settings, inside and outside the home, in rural and urban communities.

- **Promoting a transformative understanding of sexual and reproductive health of women as central to development and poverty reduction.** Development policies for women's sexual and reproductive health have traditionally been associated with population control, prevention of unplanned and unwanted pregnancies and limiting the spread of infectious diseases like HIV and AIDS. Now, all stakeholders and actors need to embark on a development discourse that reflects the central importance of women's sexual health, sexuality and control over their bodies when it comes to eradicating violence against women and tackling women's social, economic and political exclusion.

- **Promoting post-conflict justice for women.** What alternatives can we advance that recognise women's diverse experiences in conflict (or disasters) and guarantee women post-conflict (and post-disaster) justice for human rights violations? A central part of a feminist approach to transitional justice must address the normalisation of violence in post-conflict and post-disaster settings.

- **Pushing for an alternative paradigm that guarantees women full enjoyment of their human rights.** Women's movements globally have been mobilising for decades to advocate for change, including equal opportunities. Under the People's Action strategy, ActionAid will focus not only on empowering women to organise in their advocacy, but also on supporting women to have the opportunities to research, develop and test the alternatives necessary to create the society they envisage.

We have experience in these approaches and continue to advance such mobilisation today, for example, through our *Safe cities and urban spaces* work supporting women to take back their cities and to define the types of cities they want to live in (see our *Safety audit toolkit*). We will commit to applying a feminist analysis of macro- and micro-economic policies that draws from our programme work on agriculture, social protection, tax and unpaid care. We will support women to define, shape, test and advance these economic alternatives.

Feminist economic alternatives:

- **Recognise the significance of unpaid care work for producing and maintaining human resources.** Valuing care work means shifting economic priorities away from profit maximisation towards fulfilment of human rights. One way to do this is greater public service provision that supports women and men to provide better care in their households and their communities, for example, guaranteeing accessible child care in policies on agricultural extension services for women smallholder farmers.
- **Understand that women have less access to decent jobs and economic resources to undertake income-generating activities due to gender biases embedded in cultural norms and poverty.** We will support cooperatives and social enterprises as alternative models of production that respect equality and environmental sustainability, so women can make additional income and become advocates for alternative production models.
- **Acknowledge that households reflect gender inequalities in society and do not act as a unit in supplying labour and allocating goods, income and other resources.** ActionAid can support women's empowerment through collective action to gain greater control and say over the resources they produce and own within the household and collectively in the community.

Key change promise nine

By 2017 we will have organised over five million women and girls in rural and urban areas to challenge and reject gender-based violence that would have denied them control over their bodies and sexuality and made them vulnerable to HIV and AIDS.

Under this change promise, we will measure our success in organising women and girls to challenge and reject all forms of gender-based violence in the personal sphere and in public spaces. It is essential to note that a broad spectrum of work on women's rights contributes directly and indirectly to our goal of mobilising women and girls to say no to violence.

One of the key areas of our work will be empowering, conscientising and building the capacities of women and girls to analyse, understand and respond to violence. This will include work around **harmful traditional, ritual and cultural practices** which lead to physical, psychological and sexual subjugation of women and girls. We will support women and girls to challenge practices such as child marriages, female genital mutilation and widowhood practices, and reject all forms of sexual violence, including molestation, rape, trafficking and acid attacks.

We will broaden our lens beyond violence in the private sphere to include **violence in the public sphere.** To focus only on domestic violence and making homes safe spaces for women and girls perpetuates the stereotype that the home is the only domain for women. It fails to comprehensively enhance women's safety and mobility. In today's world, women and girls have to go to spaces beyond the home to make a living. That is why we will focus on violence in the public sphere, particularly in urban and peri-urban areas. Our *Safe cities* campaign will be a key means for progress on this (http://act.ai/Lnm5ma).

Another major area of work is around sexuality and sexual and reproductive health rights of women and girls. Sexuality and sexual rights are viewed as "luxuries" rather than as human rights. This is despite international instruments, such as the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women and the Beijing Declaration, recognising the importance of women's sexual health and control over their bodies to prevent unplanned pregnancies and sexually-transmitted infections. We will focus on **comprehensive sexuality education** for young girls and boys, women and men to understand their bodies, sexualities, and sexual and reproductive health rights and services.

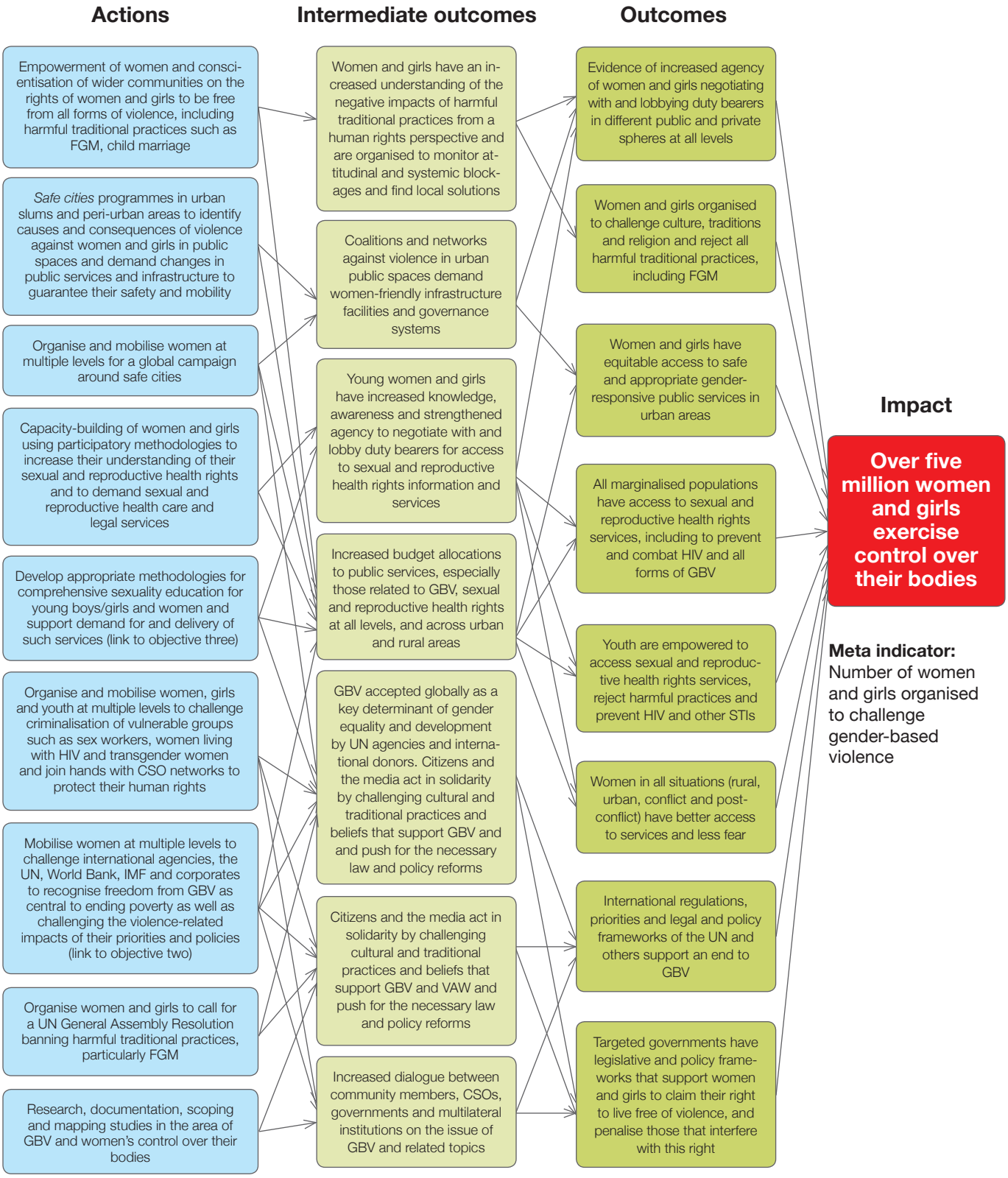
A fourth set of work will revolve around challenging **heteronormativity** and **homophobia.** We will also address issues facing women in sex work, transgender women, young unmarried mothers, women in women-only relationships and women living with HIV. We want all women to be able to claim and enjoy spaces and opportunities, and take decisive steps towards choices in relationships, their sexual lives and reproductive health. This will also involve work around challenging criminalisation and HIV-related discrimination.

We will mobilise women and girls to identify the changes they want to see in their homes, communities and countries to eliminate violence and the fear of violence. We will do this not only at local level, but also at international level, demanding the implementation of UN systems and calling for resources and policies to bring an end to gender-based violence. We will also mobilise women and girls to campaign for a safe and enabling environment through legislative reforms and good governance. In achieving these goals, we will engage with men and boys, who are at times perpetrators, but also change-makers, and an essential part of work aimed at women enjoying a violence-free life.

The **critical pathway** below covers the four aspects of our work:

- preventing violence against women and harmful traditional practices
- preventing violence against women in urban public spaces
- promoting sexual and reproductive health and rights
- promoting comprehensive sexuality education.

Objective 5 - Key change promise 9



Monitoring change promise nine

This change promise is at the level of outcome, as we are aiming to organise five million women and girls to be able to exercise control over their bodies. Our meta indicator is the **number of women and girls organised to challenge gender-based violence.**

In each local and national programme you will need to define outcome indicators that can credibly contribute to this meta indicator. Possible **outcome indicators** include:

- number of women's groups and organisations involved in work on violence against women and harmful traditional practices at different levels
- number of cities where key services are in place to protect women and girls from violence, such as street lighting, safe ablution facilities and public transport
- increased levels of reporting of violence against women/gender-based violence cases; women report increased confidence in the justice system
- number of locations which have increased public health and sexual and reproductive health and rights services, such as maternal health centres and HIV testing and counselling centres
- number of sexual and reproductive health and rights services for sexual minorities and people with HIV
- reduced numbers of girls falling pregnant before the age of 21
- reduced HIV infection levels among young women in villages where we work and at national level
- reduced numbers of forced marriages and early marriages and sexual debuts among young girls and boys
- number of countries that have decriminalised or legalised sex workers, sexual minorities and people with HIV.

Possible **process indicators** to track the progress on your actions include:

- women in communities report that they speak out more frequently on their perspectives and experience of harmful traditional practices
- number of interventions made in communities to protect women and girls from harmful traditional practices
- number of safety audits
- increased media coverage on sexual and reproductive health rights seen from the perspective of women and girls and seeking to challenge harmful social and cultural practices and beliefs
- number of women's groups involved in urban planning and budgeting processes
- number of city plans that budget for and deliver key services for women's safety
- number of schools providing comprehensive sex education
- a global campaign against female genital mutilation supported by women's organisations, citizen solidarity (north and global south) and sympathetic media
- evidence of national organisations, networks and movements drawing on supportive international policies and rights frameworks to challenge discriminatory laws, policies and practices.

Linking change promise nine to impact on children

Children often lack access to the information they need to lead a healthy life, enjoy their rights, prevent unplanned pregnancies and HIV, recognise violence (including sexual violence) and find the appropriate help. Early pregnancies, female genital mutilation, early marriage and violence continue to impact girls' school enrolment and completion. Studies show low numbers of students return to school after giving birth. ActionAid's work to empower girls and youth and to seek policy and legislative reform will help to combat the barriers children face in accessing age-appropriate sexual and reproductive health information and to end violence against girls when they travel to and from schools, in rural and urban settings. We will help put girls' control over their bodies back in their hands by working to end practices such as female genital mutilation, and early and forced marriage.

Cambodian women raise their voices for a violence-free life

Three hundred export garment factories in Cambodia employ more than 330,000 workers, making them one of the main contributors to the Cambodian economy. Women make up 80% to 90% of these workers. Rural poverty pushes women to migrate to urban areas to earn money to support themselves and their families. Cambodian women garment workers face rights violations in their work life as well as in their personal lives. ActionAid Cambodia, with the Worker's Information Centre, has been mobilising women garment workers who experience abuse, harassment, violence and rape in private and public spaces. Many of these women meet regularly at a drop-in centre in Dangkor, near where they live and work.

ActionAid Cambodia began by raising the women's awareness of their rights to freedom from violence, to decent work, improved health and living conditions, and formal and informal protection mechanisms to prevent violence. In July 2011, ActionAid Cambodia did safety audits with the women to identify the problems they face in the workplace and during their daily journeys to and from work. These also identified the key stakeholders responsible for their safety. Safety audits allow women to discuss their environments, imagining a violence-free life and identifying the changes they want to see to make their community safer.

The next step is to empower and mobilise women across a further five drop-in centres and conduct gender-sensitive trainings for groups, including police officers, university students, journalists and village chiefs. These will increase their understanding of women's rights and law reforms to ensure a gender-sensitive response to violence against women. ActionAid Cambodia also plans to call for stronger accountability from the Cambodian government and relevant stakeholders such as factory owners, trade unions and buyers on the issue of violence against women in the public space.

Taking this message to the global community, ActionAid Sweden created awareness among Swedish supporters about the plight of the Cambodian garment workers on International Women's Day, connecting global north and south to create a network of women across the world saying no to urban violence.

Key definitions

- In 1993, the United Nations Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women defined **violence against women** as, "Any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life." This definition includes violence occurring in the family, in the general community, and violence perpetrated or condoned by the state. Gender-based violence includes, but is not limited to, domestic violence, sexual abuse and rape, sexual harassment and harmful traditional practices. ActionAid is committed to tackling all forms of violence women suffer in public and private spaces, in rural and urban communities.
- **Ending harassment, backlash and violence towards women seeking change.** Women human rights defenders are frequently attacked due to their gender and/or the nature of their work. This backlash has been witnessed across the globe, in all the countries where we work.
- **Challenging political, religious and cultural rationales to control female sexuality and movement and justify harmful practices.** We challenge any justification of control over women's bodies. This includes the resurgence of religious fundamentalism, which has had devastating impacts on all human rights. Harmful traditional practices and other factors that inhibit women's ability to control their bodies include:

  - **Female genital mutilation.** This is the collective name given to cultural practices that involve partial or total cutting of the female genitals. It is primarily designed to control women's sexuality, and performed on girls between four and 12. Prevalence rates vary, from 80% to 90% in The Gambia, Somalia and Sudan and 92% in Mali to 28% in Senegal.
  - **Early/child marriage.** This refers to marriage of a child younger than 18 years old. While child marriage affects both sexes, girls are disproportionately affected, deprived of rights to health, education, development and ability to negotiate safe and wanted sex.
  - **Unplanned pregnancies.** This is a pregnancy resulting from a range of factors, including lack of comprehensive sex education in schools, denied access to family planning services, denied access to scientifically-based, accurate information and sexual violence. Women facing unplanned pregnancies often lack access to factual information about pregnancy options, including abortion, and fail to receive family planning information to prevent future unplanned pregnancies.
  - **Sex-selective abortion.** This is the practice of terminating a pregnancy based on the predicted sex of the foetus. It relates to cultural norms that value male children over female. It is prevalent in China, India and Pakistan. The resulting adverse sex ratio both causes and exacerbates women's low status in society.
  - **Honour killings.** These are murders or attempted murders of women on the grounds of preserving family or community honour in relation to the woman's sexual and familial roles. Adultery, premarital relations, rape and falling in love with an "inappropriate person" can all "violate family honour".
- **Other harmful practices** include: **chaupadi** (where women are deemed unclean and excluded from the home and school during menstruation); **harmful widowhood practices** (including sati – burning Hindu women to death on their husbands' funeral pyres, either by force, and occasionally the use of drugs, and/or due to the cultural value placed on this type of suicide; widow cleansing (for example, in Zambia, Kenya, Malawi, Uganda, Tanzania, Ghana, Senegal, Congo and Nigeria) where a widow is forced to have sex with someone from her husband's family; and widow inheritance). Other practices include **fatwahs** on women (for example, in Bangladesh and other Islamic countries), travel **restrictions** on sex workers (for example in the US and Russia), **denial of condom use** for HIV prevention (for example, in the Holy See), **initiation** of women into sex work by tradition (in India, for example), **infanticide, dowry** systems and **celebration of puberty**.
- **Addressing the neglect of sexuality in mainstream development discourse.** The development industry's long history of engagement with the issue of sexuality has been largely negative and normative, to do with population control, HIV and AIDS prevention or treatment, and violence prevention. Positive enjoyment of rights to sexuality is rarely discussed in development discourse, although there are some exceptions, including the work of the Ford Foundation and the Swedish International Development Agency.
- **Asserting women and girls' control over their own bodies.** Women and girls have a right to make autonomous decisions about their sexuality, sex lives and bodies. Lack of such control has widespread consequences, many of which are explained above (unplanned pregnancies, sexual violence and early marriage, for example). A further example is the coercive sterilisation many women living with HIV face. Research by the Guttmacher Institute suggests that women living with HIV also wish to have children. It is therefore important to address their sexual and reproductive health needs and rights. Given the violence towards and harassment of sex workers, it is also important to emphasise their rights to control their bodies, choose their livelihoods and access sexual and reproductive health services.
- **Heteronormativity** refers to practices and institutions that legitimise and privilege heterosexuality and heterosexual relationships as fundamental and "natural" within society, and also promote stereotypes regarding men and women's roles and occupations.

Rationale

- **Violence is pervasive and allowed to exist with impunity because of gender inequality and lack of political will to address the issue.** Although ActionAid, our partners and numerous global actors have worked on domestic and intimate partner violence, it remains a global problem of huge scale. This may be due to normalisation of violence, inadequate laws, lack of access to redress, lack of reporting (due to fear of reprisal and expectations of impunity), women's economic disempowerment and inability to leave abusive relationships, the impact of stigma and cultural norms.

- **The violence women suffer in urban and peri-urban communities is as grave as the violence rural women suffer, but is frequently given less attention in laws, public policy and civil society interventions.** Our new global strategy identifies urban poverty and the urban context as a new site of struggle. Women experience urban life differently to men, including levels of fear and types of violence. Rapid urbanisation and rural to urban migration creates new challenges, particularly in relation to the adequacy of housing, transport, sanitation and the provision of basic services, particularly in slum/informal settlements. Women continue to be labelled as "good" and "bad" depending on their choice of dress, while violence and harassment is frequently normalised in public spaces (on the streets and on public transport, for example), restricting women's mobility and security. The rights of informal workers, such as sex workers and entertainment workers, in urban spaces are also often ignored, increasing risk of HIV infection.

  In 2011, ActionAid piloted work in Brazil, Cambodia, Ethiopia, Liberia and Nepal using participatory tools (rapid situation analysis and safety audits), addressing violence on public transport, on university campuses, in market areas and violence facing garment, squatter and informal workers. We will scale up this work under the new strategy in these and other countries where we work. Our response must centre on empowering women to claim their right to the city.

- **Five women die every hour due to complications from unsafe abortion in developing countries, amounting to 13% of maternal deaths globally.** Access to safe, legal abortion is a central factor in maternal health. Ninety-nine per cent of maternal deaths happen in the global south.

- **Female genital mutilation continues to be a widespread example of women's lack of control over their bodies** in a large number of countries where we work, creating opportunities for joint advocacy and campaigning, including regionally. There is a widespread and growing push for a UN General Assembly Resolution calling for a global end to female genital mutilation.

- **Forced sterilisation continues to deny women control over their family planning options.** In March 2011, the International Federation of Gynecology and Obstetrics released a new set of guidelines on forced sterilisation. These in particular noted the risks of coercive sterilisation facing ethnic and racial minorities and HIV-positive, low income and drug-using women and women with disabilities.

- **Women's decision-making in post-conflict and post-disaster settings is key to reducing violence, but is frequently limited.** Violence is frequently normalised in post-conflict settings and women often lack redress for sexual and reproductive rights violations that occur during disasters and conflict (rape, forced pregnancies, unplanned pregnancies, heightened risks of maternal death, fistula and sexually-transmitted infections resulting from rape, for example). Further research is needed on whether current responses to conflict and disasters and "transitional justice" help or hinder women from securing long-term change. Researchers have begun to investigate the questions: Where are women, where is gender and where is feminism in transitional justice?

- **Sexual minorities face criminalisation and widespread rights violations, leading to further marginalisation of already marginalised groups.** ActionAid has experience working with sexual minorities in south and southeast Asia. Our cutting-edge work with transgender communities has achieved greater representation and entitlements from the state for sexual minorities, particularly in India. Given our reach and links with economically poor, urban/rural communities, ActionAid is well placed to amplify the perspectives of excluded sexual minorities whose voices are rarely heard, particularly regarding murder, rape and other forms of violence perpetrated against people on the basis of their real or perceived sexual orientation and gender identity.

  As a reputed anti-poverty agency, we are well placed to highlight the links between poverty and sexual rights, which development and poverty discourse often ignore. In June 2011, the United Nations Human Rights Council passed a resolution asking the High Commissioner for Human Rights to prepare a study on violence and discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity. The report was released in November 2011, and details how people are killed or endure hate-motivated violence, torture, detention, criminalisation and discrimination in jobs, health care and education because of their real or perceived sexual orientation or gender identity around the world.

- **HIV and AIDS remains a global emergency despite significant reductions in global aid.** In June 2011, the UN General Assembly adopted the political declaration *Intensifying our efforts* to eliminate HIV and AIDS. It recognises that "despite substantial progress over the three decades since AIDS was first reported, the HIV epidemic remains an unprecedented human catastrophe inflicting immense suffering on countries, communities and families throughout the world". According to UNAIDS, 76% of all HIV-positive women live in sub-Saharan Africa. UNAIDS estimates that more than three-quarters of young people living with HIV in sub-Saharan Africa are young women aged 15 to 24. 16.6 million children aged 0 to 17 have lost their parents to HIV, demonstrating how denying women control over their bodies has ongoing and widespread impacts on poverty and development.

- **We need to challenge the criminalisation of HIV transmission, which undermines the gains made in the fight against the epidemic and has a particular impact on women.** Across the globe, including in Zimbabwe, Malawi, Cote d'Ivoire, The Gambia, Malaysia and Singapore, bills or laws criminalise the transmission of HIV. These endanger and oppress women further by heightening women's risk of violence as they are typically tested first and accused of HIV transmission by partners and family members; strengthening prevailing gender inequalities in health care and family settings; promoting fear and stigma; and increasing women's risks and vulnerabilities to HIV and HIV-related rights violations. Criminalisation of sex workers and individuals marginalised because of their sexual orientation and gender identity are other related issues.

- **Abstinence-only education is a serious threat to the empowerment of and access to scientifically-based information for adolescent men and women. Comprehensive sexuality education needs to be defended.** Religious and governmental bodies continue to promote abstinence-only education, which exclusively endorses abstinence as the way to prevent unplanned pregnancies and sexually-transmitted infections. The most prominent of these campaigns has been the US President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief ABC model, Abstinence, Be faithful and use Condoms. Under curricula that teaches abstinence-only, young people frequently get false or no information about contraception. Abstinence fails to recognise the lack of power women often have in patriarchal societies to negotiate sex with partners. It also requires mutual faithfulness to be effective in preventing sexually-transmitted infections.

  Comprehensive sexuality education should be promoted as an empowering tool for women and girls in school and non-school settings through age-appropriate, medically-accurate information about contraception, relationships, decision-making and skills-building. ActionAid is uniquely positioned to promote gender and sexuality discourse at all levels. Using some of our existing tools, we are also uniquely placed to advance comprehensive sexuality education at community level and thus reduce women and girls' vulnerability to HIV and unplanned pregnancies. Social mobilisation and people-centred advocacy are ActionAid's niche and are central to both issues. We already have strong relationships within the HIV and AIDS sectors, and over the years have implemented effective programmes focusing on HIV and AIDS.

Challenges to our programming

- **Religious and cultural fundamentalisms.** Fundamentalist thinking often imposes a heteronormative, marriage-normative model. Laws emerging from fundamentalist thinking undermine women's health, particularly in relation to family planning, and reverse many of the poverty-reduction gains made in response to the **HIV epidemic.** Fundamentalisms also marginalise certain groups, such as lesbian women, homosexual men, individuals who identify as transgender and sex workers. Conservative codes that privilege husbands over wives, male heirs over female and reinforce women's unequal burdens in the home exacerbate domestic and intimate partner violence. Current examples of **fundamentalist practices** include advocacy by bodies such as the Holy See to restrict women's sexual and reproductive rights in UN language (for example, on comprehensive sex education in schools), abstinence-only education promoted under the US Bush administration, laws to criminalise same-sex sexual relations (and the role of global north religious groups in these debates) and raids on civil society groups working on these rights.

- **Lack of political will.** There is a lack of political will to increase women's representation in decision-making bodies where decisions regarding sexual and reproductive health rights, HIV and social protection

policies are taken. This pertains not only to political spaces but other forums (economic forums, for example) in which women are underrepresented or entirely excluded. There is lack of political will to address the state's harmful cultural practices through legislative or other measures. Lack of domestic resources as a result for both the unpaid care response, as well as responding to women's sexual and reproductive health needs, is a major challenge.

- **Engaging men and boys.** Engaging men and boys has become the mantra of many donors, development NGOs and even some women's groups over the last decade. There is significant funding, attention and programming to engage/include men and boys in women's rights work. What is less clear is the extent to which this is helping to fundamentally alter power relations between women and men and achieve gender equality. ActionAid needs to explore the meaning of engaging men and boys. What role do we think men can have in creating the changes needed to achieve our strategic objective? How can we contribute to the current debates and critically unpack when engaging men is strategic and when it is not strategic? What are the dangers around men taking up women's spaces? We recommend soliciting case studies and other research/evidence to begin to answer these questions.

Key questions and tools for contextualisation

- What forms of violence do women face? At home? In their communities (female genital mutilation, honour killings or trafficking, for example)? At work? In cities and urban spaces at large? Does this differ in rural and urban communities?
- What factors make particular women more vulnerable than others? Marital status? HIV status? Age? Transgression of gender norms (being a lesbian or a sex worker, for example)?
- Who are the primary perpetrators? Intimate partners/husbands? Other family members? Gangs? The state? Armed militia? Strangers?
- What social and cultural norms perpetuate or normalise this violence against women? Long history of conflict? Women's secondary status in the home? Impunity for perpetrators? Women are unaware of their rights? Women are unwilling to stand up because of fear of reprisals? Women are blamed, based on their dress or behaviour, for example?
- Do local and national level policies exist? Is there a law on domestic violence? Is there a law on harassment against women in the workplace? Are women's rights to freedom from violence in public spaces protected?
- Are these local and national level laws and policies implemented? Is there adequate, gender-sensitive policing? Are women able to report violence? Is impunity for perpetrators the norm? What services exist for survivors of violence, for example, emergency contraception, post-exposure prophylaxis kits or counselling?
- In what ways can ActionAid support women to organise to challenge and reject violence? Are women aware of their rights and the laws? What existing groups of women have been mobilised to fight against violence? What have been the main successes of past mobilisation? What are the gaps in past mobilisation of women to combat gender-based violence? How can we better reach marginalised women?

Additional resources

Internal resources

- **ActionAid and Social Development Direct. *Safety audit participatory toolkit.* 2011.** (http://act.ai/LL7H8B) We developed this toolkit as part of our work on making cities and urban spaces safer for women and girls. We piloted it in Brazil, Cambodia, Ethiopia, Liberia and Nepal before refining it and rolling it out to ActionAid country offices globally in July 2012. The widely-recognised benefits of safety audits include that they can help improve physical environments, including installation of better lighting, cleaner spaces, reduced hazards and added security; they can identify programmes, policies and practices needed to enhance safety; they can increase awareness and understanding of people's concerns and provide important information for planners and elected officials; and they are an excellent tool for including people in community decision-making processes.

- **ActionAid. *Sexual rights and reproductive health: A resource guide* (to be updated). (Visit** http://act.ai/KCFO1D **for the current guide).** This guide will help you understand concepts including

sexual rights, reproductive rights for women, rights to non-discrimination on the basis of gender identity and sexual orientation, and their links with development. The guide defines and explores issues of sex, gender, heteronormativity, homophobia, gender-based violence and violence against women. It will help you plan and implement programmes in communities. The guide documents some of the major challenges to the respect, protection and fulfillment of women and girls' rights to a violence-free life, safe and wanted sex and reproductive choices. It is based on the original *Sexual autonomy and bodily integrity* (SABI) *resource guide 2010-2011* but revised to reflect the spirit and strategies of our People's Action strategy.

External resources

- UN General Assembly. *Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women.* UN Doc. A/RES/48/104, 85th Plenary meeting, 20 December 1993, article one. (http://act.ai/MnLc8v)
- UN Rapporteur on the Right to Health. *Right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest standard of physical and mental health.* UN Doc. A/66/254. (http://act.ai/MnMY9x)
- International Center for Research on Women and CARE. *Tools for learning and action on gender and sexuality.* (http://act.ai/MAxZXs)

Key change promise ten

By 2017 we will have supported women to build and advocate gender-responsive economic alternatives at all levels from cooperative enterprises to national and global policies that recognise unpaid care, guarantee comprehensive social protection and enable the most marginalised women to break the cycle of poverty.

At the heart of this change promise is a feminist analysis which will inform how we understand and analyse government policies. We will measure our role in supporting women to build and advocate for gender-responsive economic alternatives. We are guided by three key principles in analysing existing economic and social policies and advocating for alternative policies:

- Unpaid care work plays a significant role in sustaining society.
- Households do not act as a unit in allocating goods, income, time and other assets. Instead, there are differences between household members. Women often lack control and power in negotiating for more resources and time.
- Poverty and social practices make it more difficult for women than men to access decent jobs and the productive resources needed to participate in income-generating activities.

We will support women to come together in women-only or community groups to participate in alternative production models such as collectives, cooperatives and social enterprises. The innovative ways in which these models balance women's paid and unpaid care work, generate income and protect the environment are all evidence of women designing and testing economic alternatives. This change promise is also about women mobilising to advocate for economic and social reform. This can include women organising to demand reforms and the implementation of social protection schemes. It can also include women coming together with other groups, such as economic justice organisations, to call for tax justice.

Our work on this change promise involves pursuing change at individual, local, national and international levels.

Individually

Our aim is to enable women to see and value the contribution they make to their households, communities and the economy with their paid and unpaid work. We will work to ensure women understand better how their lack of access to and control over resources and the unsustainable demands made on their time are a result of pervasive gender inequality and patriarchal systems that value women's contribution less than men's. We

will help women to link their situation of poverty with government policies that do not adequately resource public services, ignore their unpaid care work, harm the environment, privilege the economic interests of elites and large corporations and fail to provide decent work for all. This work will strongly connect to strategic objectives one and two.

Locally

We will raise awareness among women and other members of the community about women's unequal workloads and lack of access to and control over resources that result from gender inequality and obstructive government policies. We will also build and scale up successful alternative production models in rural and urban areas that provide decent work for women, ensuring a more balanced workload and striving to do no harm to the environment (for example, working on sustainable agriculture collectives of women smallholder farmers). We will support women to organise and advocate for public services from local government (for example, calling for the local implementation of national social protection schemes). We will also link local women's groups to larger national women's organisations and movements (around unpaid care work, for example).

Nationally

We will build and support movements where women lead and their voices are heard calling for:

- recognition of alternative production models that are designed, tested and promoted by women (for example, government increases support for sustainable agriculture and labour-saving technologies in rural areas)
- increases in public spending that will improve women's access to decent work opportunities and reduce their heavy workloads (for example, budget tracking by women's groups shows an expansion of the social protection programme to cover the most marginalised women)
- greater government support in the form of additional resources, investments and access to networks that strengthen women's alternative production models (for example, increased financial and institutional support is provided to collectives, cooperatives and social enterprises led by women)
- changes to economic policies that lead to greater inequality, destroy the environment and confine women living in poverty to low-skilled and insecure employment (for example, government increases taxes on multinational corporations to spend more on public services that will benefit women).

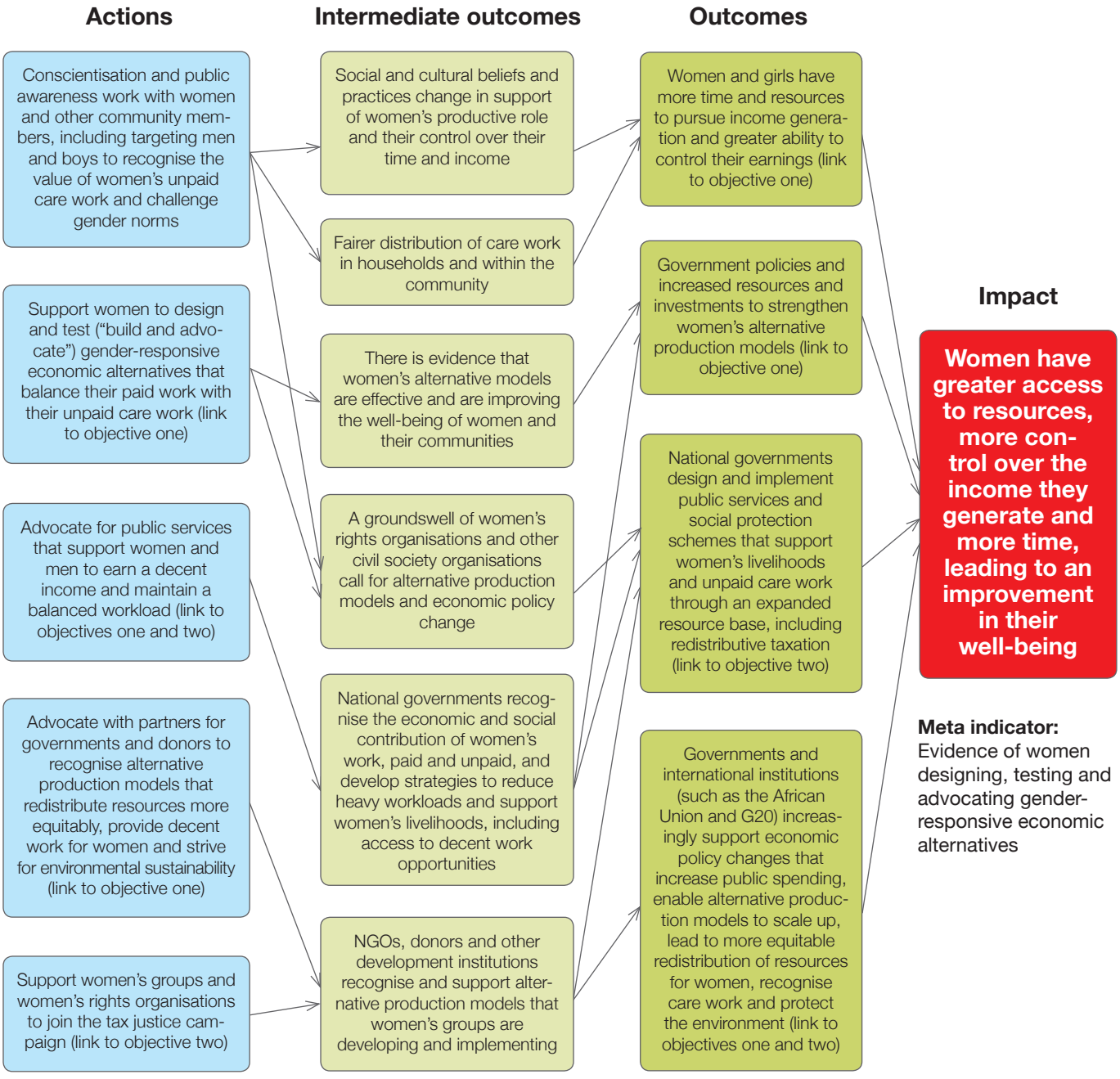
Internationally

Our success in supporting women to build, test and promote alternative models will generate interest from civil society, governments and development agencies globally and show that other production methods are possible, but can only be scaled up if economic policies change. We will raise awareness of these different models and link women's rights organisations and national movements to international platforms and groups advocating for:

- Fairer taxation of multinational corporations through ActionAid's *Progressive tax, progressively spent* tax justice campaign so more resources are available to spend on gender-responsive public policies (for example, women and their organisations are among the ActionAid partners calling for tax justice)
- Increased donor funding and support for alternative production models that are working for women (for example, the UN or a donor government establishes a new fund to support women-led collectives and cooperatives around the world).

The **critical pathway** below shows how we will carry out this work:

Objective 5 - Key change promise 10



Meta indicator:
Evidence of women designing, testing and advocating gender-responsive economic alternatives

Monitoring change promise ten

Change promise ten is different from the other promises, as it explicitly focuses on building alternatives that may start to yield benefits to marginalised women over the course of the strategy. However, we do not promise this will happen before 2017. This promise has no quantitative targets. Its meta indicator is therefore at the level of action: **evidence of women designing, testing and advocating gender-responsive economic alternatives.**

Possible **outcome indicators** include:

- increased access to resources (natural and agricultural resources, property and tradable goods, for example) by women for their use in generating income
- women report increased availability and control over their time for unpaid work (for example, subsistence agriculture), paid work and unpaid care work (housework and child care, for example)
- women report increased control over resources and greater negotiating power within the household
- increased government spending on credit, training, and market development for women-led production models (collectives, social enterprises and savings groups, for example)
- change in government policy that makes it easier for women's alternative production models to scale up (business registration or protective trade tariffs, for example)
- number of governments that adopt more progressive economic policies supporting higher levels of public spending
- increased government spending on basic infrastructure, social protection and public services (for example, child care and health care facilities) that reduce women's workload
- increased donor funding for alternative production models that support women
- international institutions commit to economic policies that increase public spending to reduce women's unpaid care work.

Possible **process indicators** to track the progress of your actions include:

- evidence of women and men increasingly expressing support for women's right to access and control resources
- reduced backlash to and resistance within communities with regard to women's changing roles
- increased proportion of time spent by men on unpaid care work
- number of women's rights and civil society organisations demanding more government support for women-led economic alternatives
- number of women's rights organisations engaged in the tax justice campaign for more public spending that benefits women
- number of governments that commission a national time use survey to calculate women's and men's unpaid care work
- increased reference to women's unpaid work (for example, subsistence agriculture) and unpaid care work in public announcements and political charters of governments
- number of women's rights and other civil society organisations working with ActionAid on alternative production models
- number of donors engaging with ActionAid on alternative production models that support women.

Linking change promise ten to impact on children

Responsibility for care within households tends to fall on the shoulders of women and girls. Our work for increased recognition of and reduction and redistribution of this care work will help to reduce these care burdens on young girls, which often result in them leaving school early. Coming out of our unpaid care work programme, our partners may call for increased access to early childhood education, which will not only help reduce the care responsibilities that mothers would otherwise face during these years, but also help children access the education system sooner, better preparing them for school. The aim of building alternative production models, such as collectives and cooperatives that benefit women, is to increase living standards in households. Children will benefit from women's improved earnings.

Women's unpaid care work: our pilot project

In 2011, ActionAid Nepal, Nigeria, Kenya and Uganda initiated an unpaid care work programme in both rural and urban communities. They mobilised women living in poverty into *Reflect* circles with the aim of improving their literacy skills. They also supported women to get government, community leaders and men in their communities to **recognise, reduce and redistribute women's unpaid care work.** The programme is piloting an innovative time diary tool that tracks *Reflect* members' activities over a year. The time diaries are effective literacy and numeracy tools and are also generating data that highlights women's many contributions to the economy through their paid work, unpaid care work and subsistence agriculture. Unpaid care work refers to all the activities that go into caring for household members such as cooking, cleaning and caring for children, the ill and elderly. Though men also engage in unpaid care work, women and girls do a disproportionate amount of this work in their homes and communities.

The time diaries show that women in urban areas have a mix of paid work and unpaid care work, but are still struggling to make ends meet. In rural areas, many women do not have any access to paid work relying only on subsistence agriculture. **Unpaid care work, including housework, fuel and water collection and child care in both rural and urban areas takes up most of women's time across the four countries.** Without government support in service provision, women living in poverty will never be able to find the time to engage in paid work, participate in political processes or enjoy a bit of leisure time.

One of the central aims of the project is to link community demands to national policy change. Some of the emerging issues from community discussions include access to early childhood education centres in rural and urban areas, revising existing social protection policies to recognise women's unpaid care work and enabling women's involvement in local budgeting and planning processes to allocate more resources to public services that can reduce their heavy workloads. Each of these different advocacy demands will help to make unpaid care work more visible and make government more accountable for supporting care provision in areas where public services are lacking.

In 2012, the data from the time diaries in each country will be collated into a report to support **evidence-based advocacy** to make unpaid care work more visible to community leaders, government officials and the general public **nationally.** ActionAid staff and partners will lobby policy-makers, raise awareness through the media, and link women's *Reflect* circles to broader national women's coalitions and social movements. At the **international level,** ActionAid will use the evidence generated from the project to demand more donor recognition and support for women's unpaid care work and will link to feminist economists, women's rights organisations and economic justice groups to advocate for policies that can reduce women's unequal and debilitating workloads.

ActionAid is breaking new ground as so few development organisations are even looking at women's unpaid care work. Through this pilot project and the many innovative women-led collectives ActionAid is supporting (see key change promise two) women are already starting to design, test and promote feminist economic alternatives.

Key definitions

- Governments rely on mainly women's **unpaid care work** to reduce their own spending on public services such as infrastructure, health care and early childhood education. It is women who walk long distances to collect water when rural infrastructure is lacking, and who spend long hours caring for the ill and elderly when primary health care centres are not accessible, available or affordable. Unpaid care work is one component of the care economy (see strategic objective two). The United Nations Development Fund for Women says, "The term 'unpaid' differentiates this care from paid care provided by employees in the public and NGO sectors and employees and self-employed persons in the private sector. The word 'care' indicates that the services provided nurture other people. The word 'work' indicates that these activities are costly in time and energy and are undertaken as obligations (contractual or social)."
- The **3R strategy** demands **recognition, reduction** and **redistribution** of unpaid care work. We aim to make unpaid care work more visible to policy-makers; challenge women and girls' disproportionate share of unpaid care work; and advocate for government economic policies and resources that will relieve the responsibility of care and the resulting social insecurity, time poverty and violation of women's other rights.
- **Paying for unpaid care work.** ActionAid is not calling for unpaid care work to be paid directly within households. Instead, we are calling:
  - on the state to provide more public services and social protection schemes to reduce arduous unpaid care work
  - on governments to recognise that the current economic model exploits women's labour and time through heavy workloads, low wages and insecure employment
  - for innovative models of production (such as social enterprises and cooperatives) that help employees balance their paid work with their unpaid care work while earning a decent wage
  - for unpaid care work to be redistributed more equally between women and men, so women no longer bear a disproportionate responsibility for it.
- **Campaigning for comprehensive social protection and for macro-economic policies that deliver decent employment.** Social protection consists of policies and programmes designed to reduce poverty and vulnerability by diminishing people's exposure to risks and enhancing their capacity to protect themselves against hazards and loss of income. However, when implemented within an economic system that generates inequalities in income and repeated crises, social protection policies only serve as a safety net and alone cannot support women and men to move out of poverty. Therefore, alternative macro-economic policies that focus on stable employment and redistribution are needed. Policies will specifically be needed to address groups like women living with disabilities and HIV.
- **New forms of cooperative and social enterprise.** These are models of production that differ from the common profit-making form. Cooperatives, collectives and social enterprises are not solely motivated by profits, but also seek to bring about social change through their activities. They tend to be less hierarchical, respecting equality among female and male producers. Many support more environmentally sustainable production methods. Models based on these principles provide better working conditions for women, with women having increased opportunities for leadership positions and greater earning power. The most effective models are designed so that women and men are better able to balance their care responsibilities alongside their paid work.

Rationale

- **Current economic policies are leading to rising inequalities.** Unfair tax rules and a misallocation of public spending leads to insufficient investments in the public services that women living in poverty most need to support them to access decent work opportunities. Coupled with lax employment policies and gender discrimination in the labour market, women are trapped in low-paying or unpaid informal employment that must be done alongside their unpaid care work. This leaves women with little time, income or assets. Women's right to decent work, leisure time and access to basic services is violated. Girls miss out on their right to an education, and those who are most in need of care, such as children, the ill and the elderly, do not receive the attention they require. **Women perform 66% of the world's work** and produce 50% of the food, but only earn 10% of the world's income and own 1% of the property (UN Women).

- **Women are concentrated in insecure jobs in the informal sector with low income and few rights.** They tend to have few skills and only basic education. Women's disproportionate responsibility for unpaid care work is one of the main reasons why women accept informal and insecure jobs that allow them to balance these many responsibilities keeping them in poverty.

- **A gendered division of labour** frequently sees men as primary breadwinners and economic agents outside the home, while women remain secondary breadwinners even when their income and farming activities support the household.

- **Unpaid care is seen primarily as "women's work" and is not shared evenly between women and men, and between women and the state.** In the labour market, women usually do paid care work such as nursing, teaching and paid cleaning. It is paid at lower rates than other work for which people have similar levels of education and training. It seems that care work, because it involves looking after people, is valued less than work that looks after "things", including money (in financial services), machinery (in factories), goods (in factories and shops) and minerals (in mines).

- **In the context of HIV and AIDS, women carry a significant burden of care – a labour that tends to go unrecognised and unpaid.** ActionAid may consider revisiting its home-based care strategy for HIV and AIDS to assess to what extent the epidemic is reinforcing women's responsibility for care provision and articulate how social protection for HIV and AIDS caregivers can help redistribute this unpaid care work (this could involve cash transfer programmes and strengthening primary health care systems to relieve women who have been filling gaps left by the state).

- **We need to make the private sector work better for women.** The private sector can exploit women but can also provide economic alternatives through cooperatives, collectives and social enterprises. These models respect core labour standards and can build solidarity between women and the broader community. ActionAid is already using these models by setting up food processing collectives run by women in Senegal and agro-ecology farming in Brazil led by women smallholder farmers. ActionAid can further develop these models to prove that they work and demand more support from the state for cooperatives, collectives and social enterprises that are led and supported by women.

- **We need to challenge economic hegemony.** Despite the financial crisis in the north, the global economic order is still standing strong. How will our programming and advocacy on feminist economic alternatives contribute to a larger critique of dominant economic policies? How will we use our influence, networks and partnerships to present an alternative economic analysis that places care, employment and redistribution at its core to support women's rights and social justice? We also need to challenge the notion that economic policy debates are the domain of men.

Key questions and tools for contextualisation

- Why do women earn less than men? Unpaid care work takes time and is arduous? More women are involved in paid care work that is low paid? Women are more likely to work in the informal sector? Women have less education and skills training? Social norms prevent women from working? Unequal wages for men and women?
- What kind of unpaid care work do women do? Collecting water and firewood? Child care? Care of the ill and elderly? Cooking? Cleaning? Preparation for events (funerals or festivals, for example?)
- What social and cultural norms prevent women's economic empowerment? Women's secondary status in the home? Unequal distribution of unpaid care work? Women's lack of mobility in public spaces? Gender discrimination in the labour market?
- What policies are hindering women's economic empowerment? Low spending on public services to support care work? Regressive tax policy? Discriminatory labour regulations? Lack of government support for small-scale producers?
- Are existing local and national level policies working for women? Do policies consider women's unpaid care work? Is the policy adequately budgeted for? Were women's groups consulted in developing the policy?

- In what ways can ActionAid support women to build and advocate for gender-responsive economic alternatives? Are women involved in budget tracking programmes? Do women and women's groups participate in national platforms calling for economic alternatives? Do collectives, social enterprises and cooperatives recognise women's double workload and provide a fair wage? How can more women and women's organisations be involved in mobilising for economic alternatives? How can we better reach marginalised women?

Additional resources

Internal resources

- **ActionAid. *Unpaid care work resource guide.*** ActionAid colleagues and partners from Kenya, Nigeria, Uganda and India developed this guide. Later drafts also benefited from valuable inputs from ActionAid Nepal. The guide is intended for ActionAid staff and partners who want to learn about the women's rights team's unpaid care work programme. It outlines the key components of the programme and includes the time diary templates that are used to track women's and men's time use. It can be used both as a programme reference guide and a facilitator's guide to support country programmes in holding their own national workshop on women's unpaid care work. (http://act.ai/Ll9XDV)

- ActionAid. *Power, inclusion and rights-based approaches: The ActionAid gender equality and rights-based approach resource kit.* 2006. (http://act.ai/Mo6Cj9)

- Further unpaid care work materials are available on the Hive. (http://act.ai/Ll9XDV)

External resources

- UN Research Institute for Social Development. *Why care matters for social development.* UNRISD research and policy brief no. 9, Geneva, Switzerland, 2010. (http://act.ai/LGoHrT)
- Institute of Development Studies. 2009. *Agenda for change: Women's empowerment needs a people-centred economy.* In: Institute of Development Studies. *Pathways of women's empowerment.* Sussex, 2009. (http://act.ai/McxQus)
- Balakrishnan, R and Elson, D. *Auditing economic policies in the light of obligations on economic and social rights.* In: Essex Human Rights Review vol. 5, no. 1, July 2008. (http://act.ai/NNCddb)

Mapping the inter-connections

The table below looks at the connections between our different objectives. It looks at what you may do if, for example, you are working on objective one and want to link to work on objective five. On the flipside, it also looks at what links are possible if you are working on objective five and want to find links to objective one.

	Objective one: Resilient livelihoods	Objective two: Democratic governance	Objective three: Education and youth	Objective four: Resilience and response	Objective five: Women's rights
OBJECTIVE 1	Without basic sustainable livelihoods people cannot pursue other rights.	**Key change promise three:** **Connect** work on public financing for agriculture with wider budget tracking. **Analyse** the tax and pricing policies towards primary commodities. **Promote** alternative development paradigms around ecological justice and self-reliant economy. **Key change promise four:** **Ensure** rural development, rural infrastructure, and basic provision of food security see the benefits of redistributive policies. **Analyse** how large corporations control the current global food system and natural resources, often without paying adequate taxes, yet having undue influence on government policies.	**Key change promise five:** **Recognise** that quality basic education is key to empowering people to claim their rights to land and food and especially for girls and women to claim their right to land and control over resources. **Do focused work** on making the school curriculum relevant to local livelihoods (including school farms or gardens), so children learn practical skills and are not discouraged from local livelihoods. **Adjust** school calendars to the agricultural calendar. **Support** pastoralist education as a particular challenge/priority. **Promote** locally-sourced midday meals to benefit local producers. **Key change promise six:** **Motivate** and energise rural youth as they have a pivotal role to play in the future of farming. **Promote** agro-ecology as this can inspire youth to return to farms. **Link** with national youth parliaments and the youth wing of farmers' unions.	**Key change promise five:** **Recognise** that quality basic education is key to empowering people to claim their rights to land and food and especially for girls and women to claim their right to land and control over resources. **Do focused work** on making the school curriculum relevant to local livelihoods (including school farms or gardens), so children learn practical skills and are not discouraged from local livelihoods. **Adjust** school calendars to the agricultural calendar. **Support** pastoralist education as a particular challenge/priority. **Promote** locally-sourced midday meals to benefit local producers. **Key change promise six:** **Motivate** and energise rural youth as they have a pivotal role to play in the future of farming. **Promote** agro-ecology as this can inspire youth to return to farms. **Link** with national youth parliaments and the youth wing of farmers' unions.	**Key change promise nine:** **Document** (and take action on) how over-exploitation and insecure tenure of natural resources means women are exposed to more sexual violence/ demands for sexual favours from unscrupulous males. **Explore** how lack of food may also place women and girls in vulnerable positions, including exposing them to violence at home. **Key change promise ten:** **Analyse** how women are not only key in food production but also spend a disproportionate amount of time in unpaid care work—providing food for their families (and associated work collecting fuel and fetching water), limiting time available for economic alternatives. **Explore** how women's empowerment and food security issues (including nutrition, health, economic empowerment, labour rights, maternity and child benefits) can be understood from the perspective of eco-feminism. **Ensure** that the role of agriculture is addressed in shaping feminist economic models.

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	Objective one: Resilient livelihoods	Objective two: Democratic governance	Objective three: Education and youth	Objective four: Resilience and response	Objective five: Women's rights
OBJECTIVE 2	**Key change promises one and two:** **Strengthen** mechanisms of accountability at local level, not just for basic services but also for livelihood promotion and food security. **Link** to national development strategies' work on promotion of a self-reliant and inclusive economy and ecological justice. **Map** the agencies responsible for supporting resilient livelihoods/land reform locally and analyse their present capacity, effectiveness, responsiveness and relevance. Use ELBAG skills to do comprehensive budget analysis and monitoring of these agencies/	Holding governments accountable cuts across everything we do.	**Key change promise five:** **Connect** work on holding government schools accountable for delivering on rights with wider work on improving accountability of all public services. Ensure that there is learning both ways. **Use** deepened democracy of school governance, including parental involvement in parent teacher associations and school management committees, as a catalyst for engaging people in holding other government agencies and institutions to account. **Use** our base in financing education as a reference point/human face for making the case for tax justice. Use teachers as strategic allies. **Ensure** *Reflect* groups are supported with resources to deepen analysis of democracy and accountability. **Key change promise six:** **Mobilise** youth as a key constituency for all our accountability work.	**Key change promises seven and eight:** **Make** connections between provision of quality basic services and the resilience of communities. **Ensure** there is transparency of information from government about disaster preparedness plans. **Ensure** we focus on holding governments accountable during emergencies.	**Key change promises nine and ten:** **Support** strategic work on women's unpaid care – closely connected to redistributive national policies and transformative social protection. **Hold** governments accountable for delivering on women's rights. **Ensure** that government systems to take action on gender-based violence are in place and effectively implemented.

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	Objective one: Resilient livelihoods	Objective two: Democratic governance	Objective three: Education and youth	Objective four: Resilience and response	Objective five: Women's rights
OBJECTIVE 3	**Key change promises one and two:** **Ensure** schools address local environmental and livelihood issues (see *Promoting rights in schools* charter, right six, right to a relevant education). **Support** *Reflect* circles that can help women to understand, claim and sustain their rights to land and other resources (including the literacy needed for land registration, titles, effective use of resources and new training).	**Key change promise three:** **Explore** connections between critical literacy and access to information. **Connect** basic numeracy learning and ELBAG to broaden base of economic literacy. Use and adapt ELBAG resources in *Reflect* circles. **Track** the connection between girls and women's literacy and their participation in processes that hold government to account. **Key change promise four:** **Make** connections between the struggle for tax justice and education – as thehuman face. Education budgets stand most to gain from tax justice. **Explore** how education coalitions, especially teachers' unions (often the most powerful section of the public sector workforce) can be key allies on tax justice.	Activista and youth work cut across the five objectives. The *Reflect* approach – linking literacy and conscientisation – is integral to achieving all the objectives. Education is a fundamental right and an enabling right – helping people to secure other rights.	**Key change promise seven:** **Draw** learning from our extensive experience of work on disaster risk reduction through schools. **Track** climate change through schools. **Link** *Reflect* and *Participatory vulnerability analysis* processes to ensure all *Reflect* programmes include comprehensive vulnerability analysis. **Ensure** school curricula address peace-building/tolerance/prevention of conflict. Provide second chances to learn, through *Reflect*, for those who missed education because of shocks. **Key change promise eight:** **Ensure** the recovery of education systems is a key part of emergency responses (respecting rights-based Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies guidelines). Support psycho-social counselling for children.	**Key change promise nine:** **Draw** learning from our extensive experience of work on violence against girls in schools to design local programmes. **Demand** sexuality education including HIV prevention in the school curriculum. **Ensure** *Reflect* processes address gender-based violence as a key issue for reflection and action and collate examples of *Reflect* participants who have taken action. **Key change promise ten:** **Use** *Reflect* processes to build women's own analysis of viable economic alternatives and to link local and national alternatives.

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	Objective one: Resilient livelihoods	Objective two: Democratic governance	Objective three: Education and youth	Objective four: Resilience and response	Objective five: Women's rights
OBJECTIVE 4	**Key change promise one:** **Analyse** how the recurrence of disasters is linked to people's lack of access to and control over the resources that might mitigate the impact of hazards. **Support** women to build improved, more resilient and sustainable livelihoods that will help to reduce the impact of disasters and help them recover more quickly. **Diversify** incomes to reduce people's vulnerability. **Key change promise two:** **Link** resilience and sustainability of agriculture to climate change adaptation work. **Build** a comprehensive resilience approach. **Recognise** disasters as potential opportunities for transformation of power relations for women smallholder farmers.	**Key change promise three:** **Ensure** that after a disaster our focus is on empowering citizens to demand their rights and holding governments to account for delivering on them. **Recognise** disasters can provide opportunities for rapid social change. **Make** public services more responsive and better quality as this is a key part of risk reduction and building comprehensive resilience. **Key change promise four:** **See** disasters as opportunities for redistribution – mobilising demand for and bringing in new systems and policies. **Support** people to fulfil their basic needs (as basic rights) when they are most vulnerable, as a key foundation for more strategic rights-based redistributive action when they are stronger.	**Key change promise five:** **Support** education in emergencies in rights-based ways that provide a foundation for long-term, quality public education (especially for girls and women). **Include** disaster risk reduction in the school curriculum, build a culture of safety and involve parents and children in building plans for more resilient communities. **Key change promise six:** **Address** youth as a key constituency in any effort to build resilience and in responding to disasters. **Recognise** the key role of youth in conflict prevention work. **Ensure** school curricula build tolerance and values of peace for young people and support outreach from schools to youth out of school.	Everything we do should be working to build people's resilience.	**Key change promise nine:** **Track** the increase in gender-based violence during disaster and conflict (especially where it is used as a dehumanising weapon of war) and the impact of this (for example, on HIV rates) and design strategies to respond. **Increase** women's access to justice in post-conflict contexts. **Promote** women's access to sexual and reproductive health services during emergencies and conflict. **Promote** women's leadership in disaster preparedness and response. **Key change promise ten:** **Mobilise** women to advocate for their rights and to change power imbalances during and after disasters, including advocating for gender-responsive economic alternatives. **Promote** women's access to justice during and after disasters – as a key foundation for economic empowerment. **Focus** on the livelihoods of the most vulnerable women in emergency responses, as they are often overlooked.

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	Objective one: Resilient livelihoods	Objective two: Democratic governance	Objective three: Education and youth	Objective four: Resilience and response	Objective five: Women's rights
OBJECTIVE 5	**Key change promises one and two:** **Identify** how women's increased control over land increases independence and women's control over their bodies. **Analyse** the limited access to sexual and reproductive health services for women living in rural communities, especially women farmers. Look at the impact of poor nutrition on maternal health and HIV. **Analyse** how the heavy burden of HIV impacts agrarian economies. **Research** how sex is used to bargain for access to resources.	**Key change promises three and four:** **Analyse** women's political leadership and women's representation in decision-making bodies at local and national levels. **Support** gender-responsive budget tracking for spending on health care, infrastructure and agricultural extension services to improve women's sexual and reproductive health and to reduce women's unpaid care.	**Key change promise five:** **Support** violence-free schools to enhance girls' access to and achievement in education. **Promote** comprehensive sex education in schools. **Challenge** heteronormativity in school curricula. **Key change promise six:** **Empower** young women as leaders and change	**Key change promises seven and eight:** **Support** specific vulnerability analysis for women. **Promote** access to sexual and reproductive health services for women and girls in times of emergencies and conflict. **Look** at the impact of interrupted sexual and reproductive health services on women's health. **Promote access** to emergency contraception and post-exposure prophylaxis in cases of rape in conflict and during emergencies. **Analyse** violence against women during conflicts and emergencies and access to justice for women. **Look** at the impact of limited economic alternatives on women's ability to leave abusive relationships. **Advance** women-centred alternatives to current transitional justice processes.	Women's rights work is mainstreamed across all our work. Placing women at the heart of everything we do is a key principle.

Part three:
Our People's Action Monitoring Framework and ActionAid's programme cycle and policies

Part three

Our People's Action Monitoring Framework and ActionAid's programme cycle and policies

Please note that our monitoring framework and guidelines for our programme cycle are being reviewed and updated on an ongoing basis. This means that some of the links in the text below may change over the strategy period. Please contact people-action@actionaid.org **if you have access problems, or if links appear out of date.**

1. Our People's Action Monitoring Framework

In our new strategy we make a strong commitment to deepen and better **evidence the impact of our work** on the lives of people living in poverty, holding ourselves collectively accountable for delivering on our key change promises, and strengthening our monitoring and evaluation system. We also commit to **elaborating and testing our theory of change**, which means being very clear about what we are trying to change and how we plan to make that change through our strategies, programmes and projects. We will test and adjust this "theory" through our monitoring and evaluation system.

How will we fulfill these promises to show greater impact? One way is through our updated **monitoring and evaluation requirements**. All countries are aligning their strategies to our People's Action strategy and to our 10 key change promises. All local and national rights programmes will have agreed indicators and baselines relating to relevant change promises in their context. Programme summaries of every local, national and international programme will be available online, including funding planning information, the numbers and categories of people we are targeting and baseline data about each relevant change promise meta indicator.

The international secretariat will simplify and synergise our multiple accountability systems into one **mutual accountability framework** in 2013, which will ensure that there is no unnecessary duplication between our governance, sponsorship, fundraising, planning and monitoring and evaluation systems.

At a strategic, agency-wide level our key means for evidencing our impact is our **People's Action Monitoring Framework** (PAMF). Elements of this have been explained in previous parts of this resource book and we now pull them together here to provide a simple reference point.

The new global strategy specifies **four clear, inter-connected elements that we must monitor** at all levels, through all programmes, and across all countries:

1. **Our HRBA/theory of change** (at the heart of the diagram). The loops depict empowerment, solidarity and campaigning, which show our theory of change when woven together and delivered in line with our programming principles.
2. **Our impact.** This is achieved through our five objectives (the five trees in the diagram), each with two change promises (depicted as fruit) and our work on alternatives (seeds for the future). Each change promise has an agreed meta indicator to allow us to collectively monitor progress (through aggregated data) towards it across the whole federation.
3. **The people living in poverty, supporters and allies we work with** (represented by the groups under the trees). We will monitor how many people (men, women, girls, boys and youth) have participated in efforts to achieve change and how many have been impacted by our work (building on element two).
4. **Our organisational priorities and values** (represented by the ground the people in the diagram stand on). What we need to change and deliver organisationally (increasing our supporter base, raising more money, strengthening members and building staff capacity and women's leadership, for example) to be able to deliver the promised change.

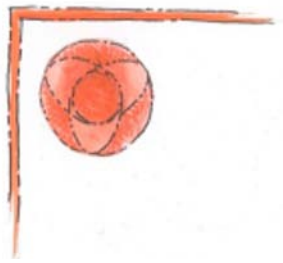
The PAMF does not insist on a multitude of standardised indicators across the organisation. The most it requires is 10 global meta indicators (one for each change promise), which we will monitor together with our own locally responsive and appropriate indicators in our programmes at local, national and international level. Through our global monitoring system we will track our progress against these meta indicators (using both qualitative and quantitative elements) year-on-year, culminating in a global impact assessment. We also have global indicators to assess our seven organisational priorities.

You should integrate all four elements of the PAMF into your ongoing monitoring and evaluation of programmes, whether at local, national or international levels. But it should not replace your current monitoring and evaluation.

The PAMF is simply a framework, a guide to help you assess your progress towards your strategy and programme objectives, and for us to see how we are progressing towards the realisation of our People's Action strategy. In summary, **the PAMF is applied through the ongoing monitoring of programmes at all levels, and the information it requires is captured through existing processes in our programme cycle.**

PAMF element one:

Monitoring and evaluating our HRBA theory of change and principles



This first element of the PAMF addresses how we think change happens, or what we call our theory of change. People, power and rights lie at the heart of our theory of change, and thus at the centre of our PAMF. Our theory is that if people living in poverty are **empowered** and act to address their poverty and exclusion, and that if this is combined with **campaigning** and the **solidarity** of supporters and allies, power relations will be transformed and the rights of people now excluded, will be secured. ActionAid's three HRBA programmes areas each represent an area of change that overlap and mutually reinforce each other, like the three circles in the centre of the diagram.

We advise staff and partners, when strategically planning or designing programmes, to consider the **three programme areas**, thinking about the outcomes you will need to achieve in and across the areas of empowerment, campaigning and solidarity to achieve your desired overall change. You should set a few simple indicators or guiding questions for these programme areas, and establish baselines for them, so you can monitor whether your changes happen. You must ensure that your programme design addresses the different experiences and needs of men and women for change, and that the indicators you choose give you markers showing what change will look like in practice for women.

For example, if your outcome is better land access for people in poverty, you will need to bring about smaller changes (intermediate outcomes) along the way if women are to enjoy the same access as men. One intermediate outcome may be decision-makers politically supporting equal land access for women. An indicator of this would be key decision-makers endorsing a campaign for legislative change giving women productive land in cooperatives, for example. In the chapters on the programme areas in part one, we discuss how to monitor each of these areas and suggest some indicators (drawn from the critical pathways to change outlined in part two) you could use to monitor changes brought about through interventions under the three programme areas.

A very important aspect to think about is that we are not just monitoring outcomes within each of the programme areas (or circles in the diagram), but rather what actions lead to these outcomes and how they combine (or not) to bring about change. A new tool we have introduced to support integrated, linked-up thinking about change is the **critical pathway to change**. Visit www.doview.com (free copies available on request from ActionAid – contact Hamlet Johannes for a tool to help you to create these pathways). The critical pathways are a very important part of our monitoring process. They help us monitor and evaluate whether our actions lead to the desired outcomes and if these then lead us to the change we have promised. We call this **triple loop monitoring and evaluation**.

In part two we outlined a critical pathway and a basket of indicators to monitor the outcomes for each change promise. These indicators address the three programme areas and, together with the critical pathways, lay the basis for assessing progress towards and the achievement of our 10 key change promises. Staff and partners can use these critical pathways and indicators as guidance and inspiration for their own work to design programmes at any level, and to identify the key indicators they will monitor over time. Their purpose is to help

programme designers spell out how actions lead to outcomes and eventually to impact. They are a critical tool to inform the design of monitoring and evaluation frameworks for our work.

Our theory of change also encompasses the **minimum standards against our eight HRBA principles** outlined in part one. We should refer to these as we design our programmes, addressing them in our pathways to change and in our indicators for monitoring purposes. We should also ensure we build in the minimum standards as a feature of our programme monitoring, and that we incorporate them as a very specific component of our evaluations. Some of the principles have their own tools we can use in our programme design, monitoring and evaluation, such as gender budget analysis for women's rights (see the UN Development Fund for Women's guidance at http://act.ai/KkaEqS); methodologies for power analysis, (see page 82, chapter 4); participatory reflection and review processes for accountability and transparency; and annual partnership reviews.

While we do now monitor (collect and analyse information and data) using qualitative and quantitative indicators (see critical pathways and baskets of indicators in part two), we retain **critical stories of change** as a key mechanism for analysing and communicating impact. Stories of change are a powerful process through which we can, with partners, allies and people living in poverty, identify the changes that have or have not happened, analyse the factors underlying these, communicate how change has happened, and, very importantly, derive important insights to feedback to our theory of change. Guidance on frontline stories is available at http://act.ai/M3m8Ci and guidance on critical stories of change is available at http://act.ai/NRLsiP

PAMF element two:

Monitoring and evaluating impact (strategic objectives, promises and alternatives)

Element two of the PAMF is how we monitor and evaluate our five objectives and 10 change promises. In part two, we presented the critical pathways, meta indicators and baskets of outcome indicators you can draw on to design your own programmes at local, national or international level.

To restate, at the international level, we have decided that we will only collectively monitor one meta indicator for each change promise. Our **10 meta indicators** are:

Sustainable agriculture and control over natural resources

1. number of women who have greater access to and control over land and natural resources
2. number of people who have improved food security as a result of climate resilient sustainable agriculture

People's influence on government and corporate accountability

3. number of people living in poverty who secure improved public services
4. number of governments that have significantly increased their national budget allocations for key public services benefiting people living in poverty

Public education and youth mobilisation

5. number of communities that secure quality public education
6. number of youth actively participating in our local and national rights programmes and multi-country campaigns

Building resilience and responding to conflicts and disasters

7. number of communities with risk reduction and resilience systems and capacities
8. number of people who receive assistance after disasters in ways that respect their rights

Women's control over their bodies and economic alternatives

9. number of women and girls organised to challenge gender-based violence
10. evidence of women designing, testing and advocating gender-responsive economic alternatives.

If you are working on particular change promises you cannot "drop" the related meta indicators. However you will need to translate them into more meaningful and relevant change in your context, whether at local, national or regional level. All programmes will have to identify specific local indicators which contribute to the global meta indicator. For example, our agreed "meta" or global indicator for change promise six is "the number of youth actively participating in our programmes in local rights programmes, national rights programmes and multi-country campaigns". What "active participation" will look like will vary from one local rights programme to another, and from one country to another.

For example, in one local rights programme, there may be little youth mobilisation at the outset and so active youth participation may be understood as youth joining and regularly participating in youth groups. Another local rights programme in the same country may focus specifically on young women, and youth participation may be understood as the mobilisation of young women into a local women's network. While the understanding of what active participation is will vary across local rights programmes and countries, we will gather information on this agreed broad meta indicator on a regular basis to give us a sense of progress towards the number we have promised to reach globally. The same applies across all our meta indicators. The guidance and definitions on each objective and change promise in part two aim to give you insights, analysis and ideas to enable you to translate the meta indicators to your particular context.

Each programme working on any change promise will be expected to establish a baseline for the indicator(s) they choose. Developing the example given above further, a local rights programme working on change promise six would need to work out a baseline of how many youth or young women are "actively participating" in the local rights programme at year zero. If a local rights programme is contributing towards three change promises, they would need a baseline that addresses the selected indicator(s) for each of these change promises.

Some ActionAid staff have expressed a worry that we are moving away from understanding qualitative change to the crunching of numbers about our impact. To be clear, we believe that to actually learn from and improve our work, we need to have detailed qualitative (and quantitative) indicators and monitoring questions, and associated baselines that go beyond the 10 meta indicators.

But given the great diversity of our federation, we have collectively agreed that we should address this next level of detail in the monitoring frameworks of countries and specific programmes (local, national and international). A selection of indicators for high level outcomes and intermediate outcomes or results (the stepping stones towards outcomes) has been provided with each of the critical pathways for the key change promises in this part two of this resource book. These indicators, which are both qualitative and quantitative, and speak to the HRBA programme areas and principles, are helpful in explaining the change further, and in telling us how we will know the change we envisage is being achieved. It is important to emphasise that these are sample indicators offered as inspiration and guidance for relevant qualitative and quantitative indicators you could develop with target groups and participants in your programme.

As a final note on this element of the PAMF, we also need to monitor our work on **alternatives** under each of the strategic objectives. Much of our work to develop "alternatives" is at an early conceptual stage and will probably remain deliberately open-ended to encourage innovation and "out of the box" thinking. Alternatives work will need to be carefully designed from the outset to support exploration and learning, including through well designed and thoughtful monitoring and evaluation.

We will need baselines, built upon clear indicators, forming part of a clearly articulated process of change (critical pathways will be helpful here). Ongoing monitoring of these indicators, with well designed mid-term and end of programme/project reviews will be critical to the success of our alternatives work. Story-telling (to see critical stories of change go to http://act.ai/NRLsiP) and other forms of documentation (visit http://act.ai/MqBBNJ for material on **systematisation**, for example) about the shape and impact, and key lessons and insights derived from the alternatives work under each objective will be important features of our monitoring. It is unlikely, in this strategy period, that our work on alternatives will impact on the lives of people living in poverty; we consider it to be a strategic, longer-term investment.

A note on alternatives in relation to value for money: When looking at a programme's value for money, it is important, at the appraisal and design stage, to consider different ways of bringing about the desired change, developing clear criteria for making the necessary decisions, and being clear about the rationale for the final decision you make. This process of decision-making should be clearly documented.

PAMF element three:

Counting who we reach: coverage and impact numbers

This element of the PAMF closely relates to element two above. Our change promises give us our targets, our outcomes tell us how we will get there, and our indicators tell us how we will measure our impact. This element gives us more guidance about **how** we will measure, track and aggregate data across the globe.

We have collected information on the number of people we reach (our coverage) for many years using the metric "numbers of people (boys, girls, women and men) we work with". We now want to improve this metric in three ways:

- By **agreeing a common definition** to be used by all programmes so that the numbers have consistent meaning.
- By **disaggregating the numbers** by gender and by child/youth/adult (with additional disaggregation by other key target groups mentioned in our strategy, depending on context).
- By counting those who actually experience **impact** under our change promises. Without this we will not be able to show the impact of our new strategy. This is critically important for our accountability to our donors, who are increasingly making results-based monitoring a non-negotiable requirement, and to our assemblies, boards and supporters.

To achieve the above we are developing supporting guidance to ascertain the following globally:

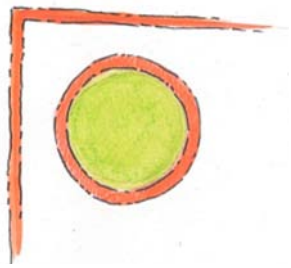
- **People we reach.** "Number and **category (social group)** of people we reach through **specific activities**", for example, the number of people in cooperatives or groups that we support, or the number of supporters who take action in a campaign. The minimum level of engagement will be defined at country level.
- **People who have experienced positive change as a result of our programmes.** "Number and **category of people** who benefit directly from our work towards or achievement of the **change promises**." We expect these impact numbers to be smaller than reach numbers. For example, if there are 1,000 participants in a land rights programme, our work may actually impact on 50 of them (they may receive land or greater tenure security as a direct result of our work, for example). For an online campaign in a rich country, you might define the number of participants by those who take an action such as sign a petition or give some money, and the number impacted might be those who take sustained action (as per our youth promise), staying engaged over time. Countries will define who gets counted.

Disaggregation across all our work will allow us to improve our reporting on impact on children, which is a specific promise of the new strategy. With this combination of the "numbers and categories of people we work with" and the change promises, we will be able to report how many children have improved food security, how many have improved education and how many have more resilience to disasters and conflict, as well as how many have benefited from rights-based emergency assistance.

Currently we do not have a system capable of capturing this wide-ranging data, but we are identifying the best and most cost effective way to do this. Irrespective of the final means of collection, each country will be responsible for collecting and aggregating data and making it available annually for the rest of the organisation. All programmes will need to agree with partners and communities who will collect the information and analyse it.

Visit http://act.ai/MOE4xC for the latest notes and guidance on the numbers and categories of people we reach.

PAMF element four:
Our organisational priorities and values



If we are to achieve the ambitious change agenda set out in People's Action, it is essential we look inwards to transform ourselves into a better governed, more effective and mutually accountable federation, steered by our shared collective values. Our global strategy has seven clear organisational priorities and we will be monitoring these alongside the changes that we seek to make in people's lives. The indicators will be diverse, drawn from the specific commitments in the strategy. Some are simple and measurable (the amount of money we raise) and some are more complex (how we have improved our mutual accountability).

The international board has yet to approve the indicators set out below and they are a draft only. This approval is necessary as the indicators will drive the collection of all data supporting them, and the creation of appropriate systems to collect those which are not already captured. Visit http://act.ai/MOE4xC for the final, approved version of these indicators.

We expect that data on these measures will be collected at the same time as other data collection (for example, financial data through quarterly reporting) and will be reported to the international board and management regularly. The exact frequency will differ for each measure but will range from quarterly to annually. We are investigating which systems to use to collect data.

We need to do more work to understand how the individual frameworks of countries will support the collection of this data. But that work has started, and we will produce more detailed guidance over time. For the latest guidance, visit http://act.ai/MOE4xC

Priority one: Deepen the impact of our work by having an effective programme framework that ensures integration, coherence and quality at all levels.
Indicators:
- percentage of programmes compliant with the guidelines in this document
- percentage of programmes that have been considered within the funding planning framework

Priority two: Raise our profile and increase our supporter base to more than five million people around the world working towards achieving our mission.
Indicators:
- number of supporters, broken down by appropriate category
- ActionAid's awareness scores, tested on a market-by-market basis (exact measure to be defined).

Priority three: Diversify and raise our global annual income to more than 350 million euros per year by 2017.
Indicator:
- amount of income and percentage breakdown by type, source and restriction.

Priority four: Increase our own people power, valuing our diverse staff, building their capacity to deliver on this ambitious strategy, and specifically investing in women's leadership.
Indicators:
- People in Aid accreditation rating (an external measure of our overall effectiveness within human resources and organisational development)
- percentage of women in leadership positions
- staff turnover.

Priority five: Strengthen members and expand the federation, while enhancing mutual accountability, with support from an effective international secretariat.
Indicators:
- number of countries classified by internal audit as "at risk"
- a measure of our mutual accountability (yet to be defined)
- the effectiveness of the international secretariat, measured annually through a survey of members and the international board.

Priority six: Establish effective systems and processes to improve financial management, planning and reporting and the monitoring of our work.
Indicators:
- percentage of financial reports produced on time and correct first time
- percentage of "key data points" available from all management information systems.

Priority seven: Expand strategically into new countries to advance our mission, based on clear criteria and transparent processes.
Indicator: to be defined as we further develop our work in this area.

The PAMF and ActionAid monitoring and evaluation frameworks and systems

We have agreed that all countries must have a monitoring and evaluation framework and systems aligned to the ActionAid international strategy by the end of 2012. We also expect all programmes (from local to international level) to have their own monitoring and evaluation frameworks, although we do not expect this within the same timeframe.

ActionAid understands the monitoring and evaluation **framework** to be the overall description of what you are monitoring, when and how. The monitoring and evaluation **system** is the description of how you are going to operationalise the framework (including your plan for specifically how to monitor, when, who is collecting, analysing and reporting on data collected and to whom, with reporting deadlines).

ActionAid requires all programmes to develop a monitoring and evaluation framework to:

- ensure we consistently and systematically track our work, for both accountability and learning purposes, providing evidence of the value of our efforts and obtaining feedback to improve our work
- cost effectively gather information to meet the needs of different stakeholders (donors, supporters, board and colleagues), avoiding duplicate parallel systems
- provide data and analysis to support our advocacy work
- generate insights and learning on which strategies and approaches are more or less effective in different contexts and circumstances, leading to ongoing improvement of programme quality
- help you track and take account of the changing context and ensure a timely response.

Some of the key building blocks of monitoring and evaluation frameworks and systems are:

- strong programme design, incorporating monitoring and evaluation
- the development of clear change objectives and resulting outcomes
- key indicators and guiding questions
- baseline data
- tracking the numbers and categories of people we reach.

The four elements of the PAMF, adjusted to your programme context and complemented by your own content priorities for monitoring and evaluation, lie at the core of what we monitor through all programmes, at all levels, across the whole federation. For more information and guidance on what monitoring and evaluation frameworks and systems are, and how you can develop them, visit http://act.ai/Lip9lb

2. Our programme cycle and policies

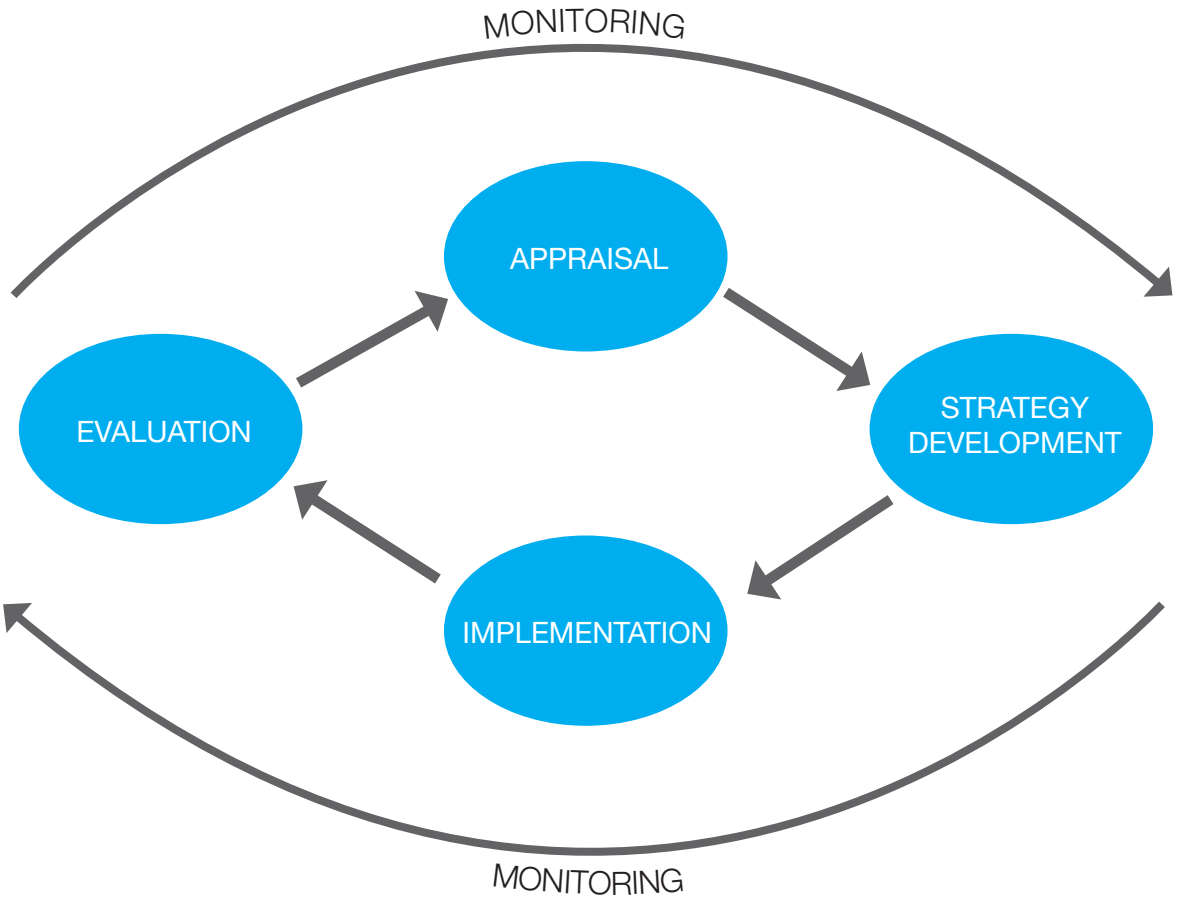
Introduction

Over the past decade, ActionAid has become well known for our simple and participatory Accountability, Learning and Planning System, known as ALPS. Our ALPS document is at http://act.ai/MF70vF. **All the essential programme management elements from ALPS are now integrated into this section of the resource book so ActionAid staff and partners can access the key information in one place.** However, there are many supplementary resources that put much more flesh on this. As we develop new requirements and guidelines, you can access these on the Hive (http://act.ai/Lip9lb). We will integrate other aspects of ALPS into a new mutual accountability framework in 2013.

ActionAid's programme planning cycle applies to all levels of our work and to different timeframes (from annual to medium and long term). Our programme cycle has four basic stages, which are common sense and echo the *Reflect!on-Act!on* process that we use to work on conscientisation with excluded groups. The stages are:

1. analyse (or reflect on) the context
2. decide what to do (plan/strategise)
3. take action/implement
4. review or reflect on the action taken.

This reflection-action cycle is the basis for everything we do!



This basic programme cycle applies equally to:

- **local rights programmes** (our long-term engagement in particular communities)
- **national rights programmes** (where we have national partners/sustained engagement on an issue that may involve multiple local programmes and national work)
- **international programmes** (where we are working together on a multi-country programme or campaign, linked to achieving a key change promise or some element of a promise).

This cycle also applies over the long, medium and short term.

- **long term**, we will have an initial appraisal for any new programme, develop a long-term strategy (for example, over six years or 10 years), have a clear monitoring framework, implement and then conduct a final evaluation
- **medium term**, within the overall framework of a longer-term programme, we may have two or three periods of a three-year cycle, where we do updated appraisals/context analysis (to respond to a changing environment), three-year planning, implementation and a mid-term evaluation
- **short term**, sitting within a three-year cycle, we will have an annual process, updating our appraisal of the context and monitoring framework, developing an annual plan, implementing it and then reviewing and reflecting on it.

Beyond these more formal processes, the essential process of reflection and action becomes embedded in the way we work at every level, every week and ideally every day!

Our own process needs to echo the *Reflect!on-Act!on* process we support locally

Phase one: appraisal/context analysis

Further internal guidance notes are at http://act.ai/Mh3nfV

"*An appraisal is an exercise undertaken to explore and understand the context, feasibility and value of new medium- and long-term partnerships and programmes on the basis of financial, technical and political considerations.*" Interim ALPS, 2011

A strong rights programme, whether local, national or international is built on a sound and deep analysis of the context. This requires intensive appraisals, which we require before starting any:

- new country programme or allowing a new affiliate/member to join the federation
- new long-term local, national or international rights programme
- significant new partnerships (carried out within the larger programme appraisal).

As a full appraisal for a new programme is an intensive process involving multiple stakeholders, we recommend doing a rapid pre-assessment or **pre-appraisal**. A pre-appraisal lets us identify partners or programmes we can build relationships with over a year to test their suitability for longer-term engagement and investment. A crucial part of this is exploring the feasibility and appropriateness of different funding sources.

The essence of a strong appraisal is a deep analysis of the context: of power, of institutions, of vulnerabilities and of rights. These are the same lenses of analysis that we seek to guarantee as part of the integrated community level *Reflect!on-Act!on* processes. Your appraisal or context analysis process becomes part of this. It should always aim to help people living in poverty, your partner organisations, allies and ActionAid staff to deepen their understanding of the position and condition of excluded groups, the specific situation of women, the rights violations people face, the different forms of power, the actors who could be allies or enemies and the risks faced.

We do this by integrating different types of analysis within a *Reflect!on-Act!on* process to build a comprehensive analysis of rights and power. These elements include:

- **rights analysis**, identifying people living in poverty and excluded groups and their condition and positions; the key areas of rights violations; the perpetrators and duty bearers; and the state of people's rights awareness and organisation
- **power/resource analysis**, identifying the economic, social and political resources people have (disaggregated for men and women); and exploring different forms of power (visible, hidden and invisible; public, private and intimate) and how these are manifested
- **actor and institution analysis**, identifying the actors and institutions that are friends/enemies/neutral/not to be trusted, and analysing the reasons for their action or quietness
- **women's rights analysis**, identifying the division of labour; productive and reproductive roles; unpaid care; economic status; decision-making power; patterns of violence; and harmful practices that violate rights
- **vulnerability analysis**, identifying the disasters people are most vulnerable to (for example, floods, conflict, drought, earthquakes, landslides and loss of productive ecosystems and/or natural resources); the groups that are most affected in such situations; their problems; and institutions that can help them
- **communications analysis**, identifying the most powerful media and the skills people living in poverty have to access them; and developing plans to support people to enhance the skills they need to contribute to changing power relations
- **risk analysis**, identifying the risk to ActionAid, partners and people living in poverty, including frontline rights activists; exploring political risks (harassment and arrests); operational risks (funding, closure of the organisation or inability to deliver, for example); socio-economic risks (social marginalisation in the family or community or risk to future employment opportunities, for example); and risk to human lives.
- **feasibility analysis**, identifying the funding, partners and staffing available and their suitability.

These cannot and must not be separate processes of analysis. Integration and coherence are everything! Over the years, ActionAid has drawn on a wide basket of participatory tools to advance different forms of analysis. The integrated *Reflect!on-Act!on* process will draw on the full range of these (from *Reflect*, STAR, PVA and ELBAG, for example) to help us build, with people, **a unitary and comprehensive process of analysis at different levels.**

Beyond the need to ensure that we have a comprehensive and coherent process, there are other challenges involved in any analysis/appraisal process. The following reflections and insights can help you ensure that your appraisal process is effective:

- **Do a pre-appraisal before conducting a full appraisal.** This will give you a top-line overview of whether you should start a new programme, identifies potential partners and enables us to justify the investment in a more comprehensive appraisal – which you should only do after an entry phase of at least one year.

- **Use the entry phase to build a relationship with key partners and the community.** This will deepen our understanding of the context and our analysis of issues alongside people. In this period be very conscious of principle four (see chapter 2) and use our partnership policy as a key reference point. Testing the feasibility of child sponsorship and doing some funding planning is important in this entry phase. With regard to child sponsorship, key things to look at include the presence of other NGOs using sponsorship, the stability of the population, the number of children, the administrative capacity of the partner and the willingness of communities to engage.

- **Recognise that from the moment we engage in an appraisal, we enter the power dynamic.** We are never invisible or neutral and we need to be critically conscious of our own power – of the fact that our involvement in the process will influence the responses that people provide.

- **Accept that visible power is obviously easier to perceive!** It is clear that invisible power will be more difficult to perceive, but we need to keep this actively in mind and ensure that we do not let the surface appearances of power limit our analysis. People may not be open to discussing sensitive issues when we meet them for the first time, so we need to build trust if we want to dig deeper.

- **Involve people at every stage in the process – not just as informants.** If we want to build trusting relationships with people living in poverty we need to engage them in analysis of data and drawing of conclusions.

- **Find and use the data that is already available!** There is often data already available from secondary sources that has already been collected by government agencies or others. Unless there are clear flaws in it we should draw on what is already there.

- **Prioritise the analysis of information over the gathering of it!** Data collection is simple but critical analysis of it is much more challenging. One powerful statistic may be more valuable than a hundred Excel sheets. Less is more!

- **Make sure your process and analysis are linked across levels and issues.** If you are doing an appraisal for a local rights programme, make sure that it is linked to national processes and that your local analysis is informed by and informs your national analysis. At national level, ensure that you are informed by and inform local and international analyses. Similarly, ensure that your analysis of education and food security is connected to women's rights and budget or policy analysis.

- **Use the appraisal to inform your programme design.** This should be obvious, but sometimes huge data collection takes place revealing a complex reality, yet programmes are still designed based on prior assumptions and prejudices. The appraisal must be useful to those who are doing it.

- **Collate data so you can use it to inform a baseline.** As well as informing programme design, the appraisal will collate data to inform a baseline. You should develop a full baseline once you have a strategy in place and have agreed indicators. However, the appraisal process can be a rich resource of information for this. Visit http://act.ai/Lip9lb for guidelines on baselines and indicators.

- **Store data in an accessible way so it can be revisited and used.** Information is only useful if you keep it in an accessible format – and if people access, review, update and use it. This can be a key part of ensuring we are transparent and accountable.

- **Consider the value for money of a potential programme.** You can find a quick guide to multiple criteria analysis on the Hive (http://act.ai/LDoGVN).

- **Establish a timeframe and parameters for exit.** No programme will continue indefinitely. Understanding the time-limited nature of the work from the start helps to frame our programme design to foster sustainability.

- **Consider the potential impact (positive or negative) of programming on the environment and natural resources.** Include environmental criteria in baseline data collection. Given the inter-connectedness of livelihoods to the availability of resources/quality of the environment, we should seek to understand any trade-offs between social, economic and environmental outcomes, and make informed programming decisions.

Criteria for selecting new programmes

The following are minimum guidelines for good practice in identifying new programmes.

New programmes should:

- **be driven by our strategy,** drawing on the international strategy and country strategies as relevant
- be clear about the **excluded groups** we plan to work with
- be clear about how they will **contribute to advancing our theory of change**
- be sure that they will be able to **comply with our eight HRBA principles** outlined in the resource book (see minimum checklist on page 30, chapter 2)
- ensure that we will be able to find appropriate partners (see principle four on page 30, chapter 2)
- consider whether they have or could leverage the necessary **competence or technical expertise** to work in a particular geography, on a particular issue, or with a particular group of excluded people
- ensure that **sources of funding** have been researched and where confirmed, that there is the capacity, competence and systems to ensure donor accountability and compliance requirements
- assess the **technical feasibility.** Can we work cost effectively? Can we mitigate against risks so overall risk is reasonable?
- consider their potential environmental impacts and compare these with alternatives
- ensure they are clear that they are adding value!

Starting in new countries

Our People's Action strategy commits us to **expanding strategically into new countries.** This is an essential part of adjusting to a fast-changing world and helping us to secure the resources, partnerships, skills and political influence to achieve our strategic ambitions. We commit to expanding to new countries based on their potential for:

- political influence, programme impact and mobilisation of resources
- partnerships relevant to furthering our mission and objectives
- raising ActionAid's general credibility, visibility and profile
- bringing in significant knowledge, skills and experiences
- forging mergers with like-minded organisations that can contribute to the federation
- becoming affiliates within a clear timeline.

It is important to recognise that as we undertake this comprehensive analysis with people living in poverty, we are supporting an empowerment process. Good programme design is ongoing and is part of the core of our HRBA. You can explore all the analysis questions above and all the different threads of analysis we support in-depth through a *Reflect!on-Act!on* circle or some other community process which is an integral part of our programme. Appraisal and context analysis should not to be seen as one-off or extractive processes (that serve only our institutional interests). They are ongoing, need continual refreshment and can be woven into the fabric of the programmes we design with people living in poverty.

The questions in the table below are indicative and while they are listed under different subheadings, in practice you need to address them in an integrated way. You will also need to adapt them depending on your context. You will frame questions differently depending on whether you are appraising a local rights programme, a national programme or an international programme. However, all these threads of analysis will be relevant at all levels.

Analysing rights: some key questions	Possible tools
• Who are the key excluded groups (and sub-groups within these) whose rights are most systematically violated? • What are the most serious rights issues/denials/violations? • Who are the primary/secondary duty bearers in relation to these rights? • What is the particular experience of women within these groups? • What key legal entitlements do people have, who is aware of these and who enjoys these? (differentiate between men, women, girls, boys, people with disabilities etc) **Analysing the content of laws and policies** • Is there a law or policy that contributes to the problem by protecting the interests of some people over others? • Is there a law or policy that helps address the particular issue you have chosen? • Is adequate government money budgeted to implement the solution described in the policy or law? **Analysing the structures that implement laws and policies** • To what extent do the police enforce the law fairly? • To what extent do the courts enable men and women to find a solution? • Is the legal system expensive, corrupt or inaccessible? • Are there support services where people can get help to access the system fairly? • Through what policies and programmes are rights implemented and monitored for achievement? • What challenges are there with the implementation of these policies and programmes? • To what extent do existing programmes and services work in a discriminatory way? • Does a government or non-governmental agency exist to ensure the law is implemented? **Analysing culture** • Are there any political or social values and beliefs that contribute to the problem? • In what way do cultural beliefs contradict basic rights? • How do different groups get to know their rights and how to access their rights? • Do family and social pressures block a fair solution? • Do psychological issues play a role? Do people lack belief in their self-worth?	• Analysis of existing data/statistics • Semi-structured interviews and group discussions • Rights analysis tree • Constitutions, declarations and laws • Fish bone (rights analysis in the middle with causes at the bottom and effects on top).

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Analysing rights: some key questions	Possible tools
• What level of control (ability to access or make decisions) do people living in poverty have over: — economic resources (for example, land, finance, forests and machinery)? — social resources (for example, information, groups or networks, religious or cultural institutions)? — political resources (for example, ability to vote and participate in decision-making)? • Who has most power over these resources formally and informally (or visibly/invisibly)? How are local power dynamics in respect of these resources connected to district level/national/international power dynamics? • What are the power dynamics that affect decisionmaking within households (between men/women/older generation/children etc) • What examples are there of people living in poverty gaining power, for example through organisation and mobilisation? • What examples of positive/transformative use of power are there?	• Power over, power to, power with, power within • Public, private and intimate power • Power cube • Mobility mapping • Social mapping • Resource mapping • Faces of power – visible, hidden and invisible power • A participatory matrix focusing on different forms of power and who holds them • Access and control profile • Resource value tool.

Analysing actors and institutions: some key questions	Possible tools
• Which actors and institutions are: — friends of people living in poverty/excluded groups? — enemies? — neutral? — potential allies for specific objectives? • What are the interests, agendas and mandates of these actors/institutions? • Which institutions and actors are duty bearers or have the power to advance respect for key rights? How are they connected from local to national and international levels? What have they done to date? What more could they do and what blocks them from doing more? How might we influence them? • Are there differences within these institutions – progressive and regressive voices or forces – and can we exploit these to good effect? • Are these institutions transparent – can we and others access information about them and their budgets, for example? What information do we need to advance the struggle for rights? • What organisations are our allies in the struggle for rights and what support can they bring? • What institutions and actors will actively seek to block change and what can be done to neutralise them?	• Force field analysis • Venn diagrams • Friends, foes and fence sitters • Stakeholder analysis • Relationship mapping • Village and social mapping • In-depth interview schedules.

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Analysing women's rights: some key questions	Possible tools
Many questions are already posed in sections above. On the whole, we should integrate women's rights analysis into all our other analysis, but there may be some additional questions to explore: • What is the division of labour between men and women within the most excluded groups, in respect of productive, reproductive and social roles? • Is there a difference in women's access to and control over different resources? Or differences in their level of awareness/capacity/organisation/education that affects their ability to demand and secure their rights? • What impact does this have on women's rights, including their health, economic status and decision-making power? • Do powerful institutions (and allies) treat women differently than men and if so how can this be challenged? • What violence do women face?	• *Power, inclusion and rights-based approaches* has over 100 pages of practical tools on how to do feminist structural analysis, stakeholder analysis, mapping of rights contexts and priority group analysis.

Analysing vulnerability: some key questions	Possible tools
• What exposes people to vulnerability in this context? • Is this location exposed to floods, conflict, drought or earthquakes? If so, how are people's rights affected when these occur? • What types of violations do women face in different situations in any of these disasters? • For the key rights violations you have prioritised, analyse: — where violations happen — when they started and how often they happen — who experiences violations most severely (men, women, boys, girls or the elderly?) — who is/are the main perpetrator(s) of the violation(s)? • What impact do these violations have on you or on women in your community? What have you, as a community, done in the past and what are you doing now? • What have other people or organisations done, or what are they currently doing, to address the problem? • Who do you think is responsible for resolving the issue? • What do you think they should be doing to resolve the issue? • What structures are in place to resolve this problem? • Do you have access to and support from these structures? • Are the services working or not? If not, why not? • What actions can be taken to respond to the causes and effects of the violations at community, national and international level? • How do we assess progress of the actions? • Whose responsibility is it to monitor progress and who should the progress be reported to? • What has been the nature of climate change in the area? How has it affected people? And how has this impacted on women specifically?	• Our *Participatory vulnerability analysis guide* • Timeline to show changes over time.

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Analysing communications: some key questions	Possible tools
• What are the dominant means of communication locally (language/literacy/media) and to what extent can people gain access to and control these? • What are the communication practices associated with key spaces where power is wielded and decisions made? • What communication capacities do people need to develop to ensure a sustainable shift in power relations and how can we support these? • What new media/information communication technologies are available or affordable and can be used to most effect to enhance the voices of people living in poverty?	• *Communication and power* and related resources on www.reflect-action.org

Analysing risks and feasibility: some key questions	Possible tools
It is important to address both risks that apply to communities and risks that apply to ActionAid staff and partners. • What are the political risks to ActionAid, partners and rights holders? (by political, we mean harassment, arrests etc) • What are the operational risks to the programme? (this refers to risks to funding, closure of the organisation and inability to deliver objectives, for example) • Is there potential for conflict of methodologies between ActionAid and other organisations/actors? • Are there risks of natural and/or man-made disasters occurring in the community? Which disasters could occur? • What are the socio-economic risks to individual staff or staff of partner organisations? (this refers to social marginalisation in family or community or risk to future employment opportunities, for example). • How likely are these risks – high, medium, low? • What can we do to reduce these risks? • Is suitable funding available to deliver a programme and are staff and partners available to run programmes cost effectively? • Are we confident that our work will represent value for money? How does our intervention fit in with our comparative advantage? Are we avoiding duplication with other actors? What results do we hope to achieve from the resources we put in and are there multiplier effects?	• Risk matrix • Risk register.

Some useful tools for power analysis

We have compiled some examples of practical analytical tools that can advance your analysis of power and rights. You can use these during appraisal and context analysis, for strategic planning, for participatory review and reflection or for evaluation. To access them, go to www.people-action.org

The first set of resources looks at different conceptions of power and different frameworks that may advance our analysis of power in a particular context. They include:

- **Defining power and ideology**
- **Mapping forms of power: Visible, hidden, invisible**
- **Mapping spaces of power: Closed, invited, created**
- **Mapping levels of power: Local, national, global**
- **Alternative forms of power: Over, to, with, within**
- **Public, private and intimate power**

A second set of tools helps us build an analysis of power from our own experience, and includes:

- **Body mapping power**
- **Calendars of gender roles and relations**
- **Starting with ourselves: Personal experiences of power**
- **Revealing and tracking power within your group**
- **The real power of participation: Participation ladders**
- **Visualising power in a Chapati diagram**
- **Reflecting on ActionAid's own practice of power**
- **Analysing power in our partnerships**
- **How power is not always the problem**

We will add other tools over the coming months and years to create an interactive basket of tools constantly refreshed by practitioners and trainers. The People's Action site will be navigable in multiple ways, so you can search, for example, for resources on power, rights or vulnerability or search for resources by strategic objective/key change promise.

Others have developed similar resources. These include:

- www.powercube.net from the Institute of Development Studies
- www.policy-powertools.org from the International Institute of Environment and Development

See also: *ActionAid. Critical webs of power and change.* 2005. (http://act.ai/MJsd7q)

Analysing natural resources and environmental impact

To develop an understanding of whether the impact on the environment (positive or negative) of programming is relevant, and whether you should collect baseline information and monitor data on it, consider the questions below.

This is not an inclusive list, but is intended to stimulate thinking about how to integrate environmental issues into programming and operations.

Natural resources/ecosystem services/land use

- Will the programme promote a significant increase or decrease in the amounts of natural resource materials people or communities use? For example, water, minerals or wood? **Reducing resource use is a (+); increasing is a (-).**
- Will the programme promote a significant shift in current land use? For example, forest to agriculture, one dominant crop to another, diverse agriculture to mono-cropping, significant addition of non-permeable/built areas? **Shifting to sustainable agricultural practices is generally a (+). Shifting from one crop to another may need more assessment to know if it is a (+) or (-). Generally, keeping native ecological systems and resources is a (+). Afforestation is also generally a (+).**
- Do changes in land use increase or decrease the area's biodiversity? **Increasing biodiversity is generally a (+).**

Energy

- Will programmes promote a significant change in requirements for electricity and/or fossil fuels? **Requiring more fossil fuel or grid electricity is a (-). Increasing the amount of distributed sources of generation and generation from renewable sources is generally a (+).**
- Will the programme promote a reduction in carbon and/or particulate emissions, for example, through deployment of smoke-free stoves? **Improving efficiency of existing sources of emissions is a (+).**

Inputs/toxins/waste

- Will programmes promote a significant change in requirements for synthetic inputs such as (synthetic) fertiliser, pesticides and dyes? **Reducing synthetic fertilisers and pesticides is a (+). Reducing industrially-produced inputs such as dyes is a (+), but may need further assessment.**
- Will programmes promote a change to the amount of waste people/communities generate?
- Will programmes promote a change in the disposal of this waste? For example, in a river versus in a field or aerobic composting (active composting) versus anaerobic composting (burying).
- Will changes in land use or practices have an impact on the emissions or sequestration of carbon?

Infrastructure

- Will programmes promote significant infrastructure development? For example, roads, sewers, waste water treatment facilities, water supply, ports and power transmission? These kinds of developments might be a (+) as they reduce untreated waste in a resource area, but may be a (-) as they increase use of vehicles or increase rainwater run-off.

Other operational considerations

Additional operations will almost always result in additional impact to the environment. Our goal is to have the greatest programmatic/mission impact with the least environmental impact. Therefore, in most cases, operational impact will be relative to other alternatives. For example, if the mission and programmatic outcomes of two options are the same, then consider whether the energy (electricity, fuel), paper and/or air travel impacts will be the same as well. You will need to use your judgement when the mission/programmatic goals for two options are not the same. In these cases, the goal is to make informed choices about environmental impact when it comes to strategic decision-making.

Phase two: Strategic development and planning

Further internal guidance notes are at http://act.ai/Mh3nfV

"Strategies are key documents that guide ActionAid International's work at the international, national and local levels, creating a sense of politics, purpose and priorities. Strategies create inspiration and focus. Strategies help to create a common understanding and guide the planning process, building synergy and coherence across our work at different levels. Strategies are effectively our statement of intent and commitment or promise." Interim ALPS

Strategies are required for:

- international strategy (every five to six years)
- country strategies (every three to six years, starting from within one year of approved appraisal).

Strategic plans are required for:

- local, national and international programmes
- international secretariat (twice within the six-year strategy period).

This resource book lays out a strategic framework that will guide ActionAid programmes everywhere in delivering our People's Action strategy. It should help you in your strategic planning at all levels. If you are working on a strategy or plan in a local or national rights programme, it is essential that you align to the HRBA principles. It is also important that you connect as much as possible to the critical pathways for delivering on the key change promises that are most relevant in your context. It is important that you have a **combination of a long-term strategic perspective (strategy paper) and a short-term practical plan (strategic plan).** While annual plans are key for working out what you can deliver within the available budget, we should never get caught up with short-termist thinking. One of ActionAid's strengths has been and should continue to be a long-term engagement in change processes, enabling us to be strategic in outlook rather than projectised.

In most contexts, we are **working with partners** who have their own strategies and plans. It is important to respect these, and to work together to find common ground. Our strategies should not override those of our independent partners. We should not be trying to mould them in our image. Instead, we should seek to work in a harmonised way, helping them to adapt our strategic thinking to their practical context. Again, this involves a careful balance based on trust and mutual respect.

Whether you are developing an international programme, new country strategy or a strategic plan for a local rights programme, some useful insights to guide you include:

- **In every context, a strategy should:**
  - be underpinned by a deep and thorough power, rights and vulnerability analysis
  - clearly set out the specific rights that we will be seeking to advance
  - be very clear about the change we are trying to bring about
  - identify the people we will be aligning with and empowering
  - specify the duty bearers we will be targeting
  - identify the allies we may engage in solidarity and campaigning work
  - clarify whether we are seeking to hold government responsible for efficiently delivering existing entitlements or whether we are seeking to change rules, policies or laws
  - identify how we might respond to basic needs in a rights-based way
  - show how the strategy inter-connects with work at other levels (relating to our People's Action strategy, country strategy paper and local rights strategies).

- When developing a new strategy, the **process is as important as the product.** Implementation of the strategy will depend on ownership. The process needs to be as inclusive as possible, for example involving governance structures, management, staff and partners. This is about ensuring that we are applying all the principles of our HRBA (see chapter 2) to our strategy processes.

- In any strategy process, you will need to **deal with some really knotty issues.** The first step is to be able to name them and then you need to enable people to look at them critically, from a distance. When developing the People's Action strategy, this involved constructing fictional future scenarios that followed through the logical consequences of taking different positions. This helped everyone see issues in a new light and rise above immediate tensions and conflicts. Using a scenario-building methodology can make a difference to your level of analysis.

- Everyone wants focus, but you can often better achieve this through looking at **coherence and inter-connections** than reducing the scope of work. One of the biggest challenges is to ensure that there is coherence in the HRBA that we use in every sphere of work (including in fundraising and communications with supporters).

- **An external perspective is essential** to enrich internal discussions. It is always dangerous to assume that you already understand your own organisation or the challenges of the external environment. It is important to be informed by:
  - an external review/evaluation of the previous strategy period
  - an external review of the context/environment in which you are working.

- **An internal perspective is equally crucial.** Your own internal evaluation and peer reviews from colleagues can add new insights. It is of course essential to ensure you are drawing on insights from your appraisals/context analysis/review and reflection processes as you develop your strategy.

- **Clear indicators and a monitoring framework need to be defined as part of the strategy process.** You should develop these collaboratively and they should enable us to track changes in the lives of people living in poverty, their level of empowerment and their access to rights and entitlements. You should also define performance indicators to help us measure ActionAid's own contribution to the process of change. You should include environmental indicators if relevant to the programme. To determine relevance see page 218.

- **A comprehensive baseline should be elaborated as part of the strategy process.** Drawing on material from the appraisal, the baseline is only really complete once you have made strategic choices and agreed indicators. The baseline should describe the initial status of the indicators set to help monitor progress against the strategic objectives, for example including initial levels of empowerment as perceived by rights holders themselves or initial levels of support for a campaign objective.

- **Annual plans should be clearly rooted in and connected to the strategic plan.** The context is always changing so you cannot slavishly follow a strategy. Recognise that it needs to be adapted, fleshed out and actions designed based on the practical realities of resources available (financial and human).

Key questions on cost effectiveness at strategy development and planning stage

Development and planning stage

- Do we have a clear and exhaustive theory of change based on evidence?
- Is the budget linked to the theory of change?
- Do we have clear objectives, targets and baselines?
- Can we compare the costs of different interventions to achieve similar outcomes?
- Have we included all costs: staff, volunteer time and other inputs such as land and community engagement?
- Is this intervention sustainable in the long run?
- Have we decided which type of value for money method we will choose and its implications for data collection systems? Are systems in place or do they need to be developed?

Developing a campaign plan

When developing a campaign plan, the following chain of questions may help:

- What is the problem/rights violation you are addressing? What are its root causes? What aspect of the problem can you make a difference to now? Who does it impact on? (remember to consider the ways it will impact differently on women and men) Who benefits and in what ways from the existence of the problem? How do they benefit?
- What is the particular solution that you are advocating? Is it credible and compelling? Are there solutions that rights holders have already started to build in practice? Could we partner with rights holders to create alternative solutions to a problem that we could then advocate through the campaign?
- What needs to happen to bring about the solution? What specific outcome or decision do you want? For example, what is your campaign objective? What are the "stepping stones" (the actions that need to be taken, the things that need to be done) to bring about the objective?
- Who has the power to bring about that outcome (your campaign target)?
- What is the best way to get to them? Who or what would influence them to do what you want? Who do you need to work with/convince/mobilise? Your campaign allies, partners, secondary targets or audiences? Who will be working against you (your campaign opponents)?
- What action do you want your allies and audiences to take?
- What does your audience believe/need/want in order to take the desired action? How can you craft the right call to action (your campaign action message) and use the right people or media to reach your audience (your campaign channels)?

We outline some key steps for developing a campaign on page 80, chapter 4.

Developing a country strategy paper: Linking macro-micro level analyses in India

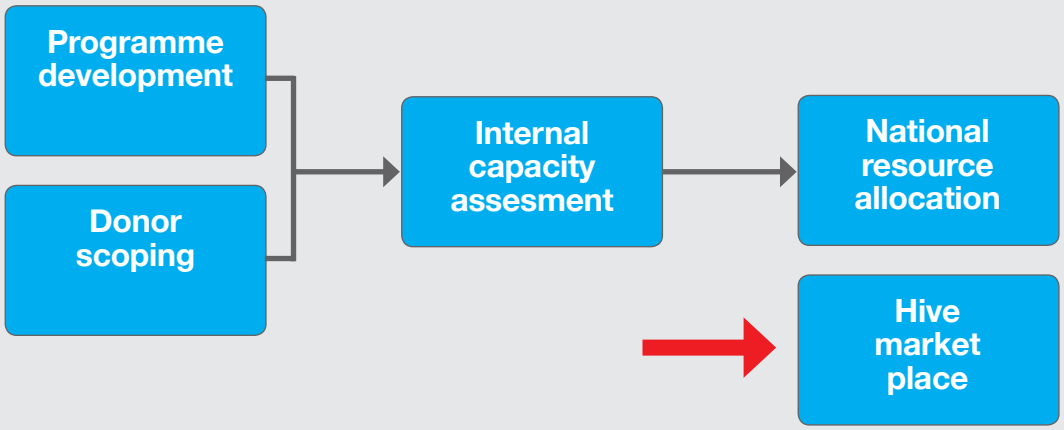
ActionAid India works with a wide range of social movements and organisations taking up various issues at multiple levels. In an attempt to build alliances between diverse groups of marginalised people, ActionAid India facilitated a "platform" process to bring together different movements, organisations and networks around issues of common concern. By using this platform process, ActionAid India facilitated community participation in developing its country strategy paper at all levels, ensuring links from the grassroots to national levels.

At the grassroots level, they worked with partners to facilitate extensive consultation processes with different social groups. The process helped to promote political awareness and confidence among the groups to discuss how rights and responsibilities are perceived, who has access to and/or is denied entitlements and why, and to develop a clear idea of the changes people want.

At the state level, ActionAid India facilitated a sharing of issues that emerged from the grassroots level between partners and people representing different social groups. Subsequently, they connected different movements, organisations and networks, and built platforms around those common issues. At the national level, these platforms and networks fed into ActionAid India's overall strategic direction.

Understanding funding planning

Funding planning



Funding planning (as illustrated above) is not a process in itself, rather a way of combining existing processes in a coherent way to meet a number of objectives:

- to ensure ActionAid's fundraising processes do not result in the organisation being donor-driven
- to prevent developed and aspirational pieces of work being lost during the planning process
- to make funding transparent and to match the demand for funding with funding opportunity.

Programme development: Staff with content/context specialism must design programmes. These must follow a rigorous appraisal and strategy development process, whether at local, national or international level. There is a close inter-dependency between programme quality and the capacity to raise funds (the quality of funding proposals). Coherent analysis, clear logic, commitment to demonstrable change and a clear link between activities and costs must underpin programmes.

Donor scoping: A parallel requirement to programme development is scoping funding opportunities. This assesses what sources of funds are available, whether the funds match the programme and how/where they are accessed.

These processes allow you to develop a resourcing strategy targeting appropriate sources of funding and seeking assistance where required from other members of the federation and from the international secretariat. You will need to take part in other processes, however:

- **Internal capacity assessment:** Unless you assess capacity it is difficult for others (such as the international secretariat) to judge the support you need and difficult for fundraisers to be confident that implementation is feasible.

- **National resource allocation:** This is the point at which available funds are allocated to the developed programme and to support functions. Much of the funding available will be restricted to certain (usually programme) activities and this needs to be allocated first. The golden rule when allocating funds to programmes is to use the unrestricted income for the elements of the programme that are the most hard to fund. For example, allocating unrestricted money from child sponsorship for drilling a well is a waste. It is easy to raise funds for this type of expenditure. Save the unrestricted funds for campaigning or even support costs, which are much harder to raise funds for.

- **Programme summaries and Hive market place:** At the end of the allocation process there will be gaps in funding. The final stage of the funding planning process is to ensure that fundraisers are aware of funding needs across the federation. The completion of simple "programme summary" tables will enable everyone to see the funding gaps on our intranet site, the Hive, with information being updated throughout the year to show new programme work and new funding.

The Hive has more information on funding planning and institutional fundraising (http://act.ai/MtFAqH).

Phase three: monitoring during implementation

"Participatory review and reflection processes (PRRP) are the core component of ActionAid's approach to regular and ongoing monitoring of the progress and outcomes of our work. The term 'PRRP' refers to ongoing participatory monitoring mechanisms and to periodic moments of more in-depth review with key stakeholders on the progress of our work, where data collected through our monitoring processes are gathered, analysed and consolidated for learning and accountability purposes. PRRPs enhance our relationships with and accountability to primary stakeholders, keep us focused and energised and help ensure that we are on track in achieving our objectives." Interim ALPS, 2011

Having done an appraisal and developed a strategic plan, we move into the implementation period, which is of course the heart of our work. However, in this core phase we do not blindly follow our plans. Rather, we

always review and reflect to ensure that we are on the right track and making progress. We need to continually question whether our assumptions are correct and whether wider changes in the context mean we need to revise our plans. This keeps us flexible and responsive to a changing world. The PRRP process is our main means of doing this, ensuring all stakeholders are involved.

The People's Action Monitoring Framework in the previous section outlines the full spectrum of areas that we will monitor during any programme, including our approach/theory of change; our delivery on our promises; our coverage and impact on people; and our organisational priorities and values. All these will be relevant within PRRP processes. Our monitoring and evaluation requirements for all programmes specify having monitoring frameworks with clear objectives, outcomes, indicators and baseline information. You should use these in PRRP processes (http://act.ai/KTjayH) so you are clear about what to monitor, why and what information to collect. You can collect critical stories of change (http://act.ai/MtFAqH) through rigorous review and reflection processes to generate evidence/stories of change which provide qualitative information. There are many other tools too, such as rights registers and outcome mapping (http://act.ai/MFfUZZ).

Some important insights we have gathered over our years of supporting participatory review and reflections include:

- **Everyone at all levels of the organisation needs to do PRRPs**, including local staff and partners, senior leadership teams and trustees.
- PRRPs **should be ongoing with synthesis moments** linked to planning (usually around July) and reporting (usually between December and February).
- **People living in poverty should be involved** in the review and reflection processes wherever possible, as it is part of the empowerment process.
- As most of our work is with partners, we need to **agree the parameters of PRRPs as part of our memorandums of understanding**, so we are clear and transparent from the start about the processes we expect.
- The most common mistake is to see PRRPs as one-off moments once a year. You should see them as **ongoing, with particular synthesis moments** (at least twice a year) to inform planning and reporting.
- An **ongoing process of evidence collection** against agreed indicators is crucial to inform a good review and reflection process.
- **PRRPs should include** reflection on changes in the external context; on the relevance and effectiveness of our activities; on the progress made against our objectives based on agreed indicators; and on an analysis of our assumptions/theory of change. There should be some specific reflection on whether programmes have been designed and delivered in line with the eight principles/minimum standards of our HRBA programmes (see chapter 2).
- **We can learn as much from failures as we can from successes.** We need a culture that embraces failure and the drawing of learning from it. Every report should highlight at least one major failure and what we learned from it. As Laozi said, "Failure is the foundation of success; success is the lurking place of failure." We should always reflect on whether programmes have unintended impacts, and whether they are positive or negative.
- **The main value of a PRRP is to inform/guide the people involved in doing the PRRP.** It is not to satisfy an external requirement. It is not just about producing a report to satisfy a line manager or donor, it is about enriching our own practice.
- **In the PRRP we should see "triple loop learning".** We want to see if we did things right (did we carry out the actions we planned and achieve the right outputs?); if we did the right things, were our objectives rightly framed for achieving strategic outcomes?; and if our assumptions were right, will our theory of change really deliver impact/achieve our goals?

Triple loop monitoring for learning

Value for money at monitoring and implementation stages

To analyse the value for money of a programme on a regular basis, you should ask some key questions to analyse cost effectiveness at monitoring and implementation stage:

- Are we flexible enough to track unexpected/unintended impacts and modify objectives and data collection accordingly?
- Where results vary from expectations, are we able to explain why?
- Are stakeholders involved in identifying benefits? How are their perspectives included?
- Are we systematically collecting data and is there evidence that we are achieving what we aimed for?

Sometimes your monitoring will lead to a change

Phase four: Evaluation

Further internal guidance notes are at http://act.ai/Mh3nfV

We use a range of peer reviews and external evaluations to analyse progress against our strategic plans, to hold ourselves accountable and to inform future strategies. We review our international and national strategies at the end of each strategy period (usually five or six years) and review our local rights programmes at least every six years. Mid-term reviews (often after three years) are recommended but optional.

It is never easy to review or evaluate objectively. There are always pressures on us to prove our successes and the effectiveness of our work, to satisfy donors, supporters and managers. But an honest, critical approach to evaluation is essential if we are to learn and adjust our strategies based on learning – this has been one of ActionAid's strengths over many years. Whether reviews or evaluations are done in local rights programmes, at country level or for international programmes or campaigns, there are some common considerations:

- It is important to **bring in external perspectives** so that we see our work through the eyes of others. However, we need to make sure that external consultants understand our mission, values, principles and approach and that the way they work is consistent with our principles. There should be a gender specialist on every external evaluation team and their approach should be participatory, engaging people living in poverty in the process in an empowering way. We need to avoid situations where evaluators have a conflict of interest which might limit their objectivity.
- All evaluations and reviews should, as a minimum, **assess programmes against the eight principles** of our HRBA as laid out on page 30, chapter 2.
- We need to **be proactive in creating space for the participation of women and other excluded groups in the evaluation process.** We need to make a conscious effort to create safe spaces for women to participate without fear during evaluation, ensuring the location and time of meetings is appropriate, the language accessible and the facilitation suitable. A women's rights lens should inform our whole evaluation process.
- We need to **be conscious of our own power in the evaluation process.** We need to find the right balance between providing adequate support while not compromising the independence of an external evaluation. We need to recognise that some respondents may be unwilling to speak freely in our presence.
- We need to **ensure that external reviews are rigorous in selecting case studies,** focus communities and countries – against clear criteria in a random manner (to guard against positive selection). Too often, organisations seek to manipulate what external evaluators see, which distorts findings and limits learning.
- **We should offer a management response to all external evaluations or reviews.** This will help us be transparent about how we see the process and what we have learned/drawn from it. We should not do this in a defensive manner, but in the spirit of recognising that we can often learn more from failures or difficulties than from simple successes.
- **A peer review dimension should be integrated with external evaluations (or should follow them).** At one point, we encouraged peer reviews after external evaluations, but now we increasingly see the opportunity of linking these, and having peers join external teams. This enhances mutual accountability and learning and internal solidarity. This can be extended to having local partners involved in peer evaluations of other local rights programmes where there are connections. These are excellent means for us to generate and share learning, building a more cohesive organisation.
- **An evaluation is always a moment to review exit plans,** even if we are only mid-way through the planned timeframe. You will have defined a timeframe for exit during the appraisal process. You should review and revisit this, considering the options for how to phase out, including through a sustainability period or solidarity phase.

Checklist for evaluations (from notes to accompany ALPS)

- Be very clear about the scope and objectives for the evaluation – you cannot look at everything from all angles – and set the terms of reference/recruit the consultants accordingly.
- Create an evaluation team with a team leader, liaison points in the programme staff and clear stakeholder representatives or contacts.
- Develop guiding questions for the evaluation based on the focus and objectives.
- Ensure a gender and women's rights focus; one of the review team should have this responsibility.
- Map out key stakeholders and select those to be involved according to the objectives and focus of the evaluation.
- Time the evaluation well to ensure strong participation of those stakeholders.
- Involve staff throughout the planning to foster a cooperative, non-threatening atmosphere.
- The methodology for the evaluation should be designed to ensure meaningful and critical participation of stakeholders.
- Ensure that the responsibility and accountability for implementing findings and recommendations are clear from the start.
- Create strong feedback loops so that those participating can see what happens to their comments.
- Apart from the final report, consider other media and formats to share findings and learning with different audiences.

Key questions to ask to analyse cost effectiveness at evaluation stage

- Are we incorporating learning into future programmes?
- Was this a good use of resources relative to alternatives? What should we do differently next time?
- What value did this intervention create and for whom? How can we describe it in concrete ways?
- Is there evidence that our theory of change worked in practice?

Linking programme work and sponsorship

In the past there has been a gulf between our programme work and our main funding mechanism, child sponsorship, with staff having little connection and little joint planning or coordinated work. But in local rights programmes these two threads work with the same communities and the same people. Making stronger connections is win-win. There are many opportunities for child sponsorship and programme teams to work together at all stages in the life of a local rights programme.

Here are some areas and practical tips:

Appraising new local programmes

- **Ensure that both child sponsorship staff and programme staff are recognised as key stakeholder groups** in new appraisals and work together from the start; present a united team from the onset!
- **Ensure programme-led funding planning.** "The need comes first and then comes the funding." But when child sponsorship has been identified as a potential funding solution it is important to factor into programme design the reporting requirements, child protection and child sponsorship policies.
- **Include and consider children's issues** in the appraisal process, alongside other stakeholders, and these should be considered within an integrated approach to work locally.
- **Make the capacity to manage sponsorship a factor in partner selection.** Lead discussions about selecting potential partners and assessing the new area together.

Implementing joint activities

- **Use sponsorship activities as opportunities for programme activities.** Child message and child profile collections and photo updates are excellent opportunities to link child sponsorship and programme work (see box on page 41, chapter 2).
- **Sensitise about sponsorship during programme activities.** Do not treat sponsorship as a separate activity. Organise joint field visits and reinforce each other's work.
- **Connect around education work.** Make sure sponsorship activities connect with schools as much as possible and contribute to *Promoting rights in schools* and wider education programme work.
- **Link sponsorship and engagement with youth.** When children outgrow sponsorship, create new means for them to be involved through youth networks and Activista.

Providing training to ActionAid staff and partners

- **Deliver joint programme and sponsorship training.** Programmes and sponsorship share a key stakeholder – the partner or local rights programme staff. These stakeholders often have to deliver on both sponsorship and programme requirements, so they should be trained jointly.

Preparing annual plans

- **Include child sponsorship activities in the annual programme planning process.** Child sponsorship activities should be part of the local rights programme annual planning process, and children, parents, and other community members must know what is expected of them in relation to child sponsorship activities; they should be involved in deciding when activities are done and how.
- **Use planning to set report themes.** The wider planning process is an ideal opportunity to set themes for sponsorship reports and activities.

Doing PRRPs

- **Plan PRRPs and reviews jointly.** Programme and sponsorship teams should plan PRRP exercises together, so that conscious efforts are made to engage children and tap into children's views and opinions, alongside other stakeholders.

Planning for phase out

- **Ensure there is joint planning of phase out** from an early stage and that this is communicated clearly and transparently to communities, including children.

Postscript

Operationalising this resource book

The HRBA programme support team is dedicated to supporting local, national and international programmes to internalise and operationalise this resource book.

The team will help to design curriculum materials and support training workshops. It will facilitate peer support and exchanges to strengthen practice. It will accompany programmes in real time processes to apply HRBA when you are developing a new strategy or doing an evaluation.

There will be an exciting interactive website on People's Action – creating a home for practical resources from around the world to advance our HRBA and our delivery of the 10 key change promises. This will be a forum for trainers and practitioners, a space for exchange and refreshing ideas. It will be a space for dialogue and critical reflection to keep us open and flexible and responsive to a changing world.

Importantly, this website will also be a space where policy analysts are helped to produce simple, accessible versions of their work – to guide practical analysis at local and national level. Every time someone produces a high level national or international report they will be expected to produce a one-page summary and a tool that can help people everywhere integrate this with their work locally and nationally.

This is a bold vision – one that binds us together into a coherent organisation – linking local, national and international work, and linking long-term grassroots empowerment work with campaigning and solidarity work. It is ambitious but it is essential! Our theory of change recognises the essential role that we all play in finding lasting solutions to poverty and injustice.

The strength of our unique global federation will be realised when we fully recognise our dual citizenship – a national and international identity – and when we come to recognise that we all have an essential role to play, whether we are a community facilitator, a country director, a sponsorship administrator or a high flying policy expert. It is through our collective efforts to promote people's action that we will deliver on the long-term promise of a poverty-free planet.

actionaid

ActionAid is a partnership between people in rich and poor countries, dedicated to ending poverty and injustice. We work with people all over the world to fight hunger and disease, seek justice and education for women, hold companies and governments accountable, and cope with emergencies in over 40 countries.

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