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COUNTRY STRATEGY PAPER II

2018 - 2023

TRANSFORMATIVE DEVELOPMENT BASED ON RIGHTS AND DIGNITY
TOGETHER FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE

The logo for ActionAid, featuring the word "actionaid" in a bold, lowercase, sans-serif font. The "a" in "action" is red, while the rest of the letters are black. The background of the entire page is a faded, grayscale photograph of people working in a field of large-leafed plants, likely cabbages.

actionaid

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Acknowledgement

ActionAid Rwanda (AAR) extends its gratitude to the communities we work with, our partners in civil society and public sector that made important inputs to this strategy, the entire AAR staff team who tirelessly contributed to drafting this strategy and coordination of processes of gathering all the ideas and inputs - without whom this document would not be alive today.

Special thanks go to the AAR Board Members who provided oversight and valuable inputs to the document.

We also thank ActionAid Global Secretariat especially from the Programme Unit and Peer Countries - particularly the staff and Country Directors of ActionAid Uganda, ActionAid Ethiopia, ActionAid Kenya and ActionAid Burundi for their constructive reviews, encouragements and comments.

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Acronyms

AAI	ActionAid International	Landnet	Land Network
AAR	ActionAid Rwanda	LRP	Local Right Programme
AU	African Union	MEAL	Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning
CAADP	Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme	M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
CBOs	Community Based Organizations	NINGO	Network of Non-Government Organizations
CSP	Country Strategy Paper	MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
CRSA	Climate Resilient Sustainable Agriculture	NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo	PI	Partnership Income
ECD	Early Childhood Development	PTC	Parents-Teachers Committee
EDPRS	Economic Development & Poverty Reduction Strategy	RCSP	Rwanda Civil Society Platform
GBP	Great Britain British Pounds	RENCP	Rwanda Education NGO Coordination Platform
GBV	Gender Based Violence	RECs	Regional Economic Communities
GDP	Gross Domestic Product	RGI	Regular Giving Income
GoR	Government of Rwanda	SRHR	Sexual Reproductive Health Rights
HR	Human Resources	TSR4	Taking Stock Review 4
HRBA	Human Rights Based Approach	VAWG	Violence Against Women and Girls
HROE	Human Resource and Organizational Effectiveness	3Rs	Rights, Resilience and Redistribution
IMF	International Monetary Fund	3Rs	Recognition, Redistribution and Reduction
IT	Information Technology		



Women smallholder farmers supported by ActionAid working in their garden in Musanze district.

PHOTO: ACTIONAID







Women smallholder farmers supported by ActionAid working in their garden in Musanze district.

PHOTO: ACTIONAID

Foreword

ActionAid Rwanda Strategy Paper (CSP2) has been developed over the past two years, building on over a period of three decades of development work, detailed reviews of the valuable lessons we have learnt, recommendations from stakeholders' consultations and on a wide-range analysis of the most current information on Rwanda development agenda and strategies including the Vision 2020 and EDPRS1&2.

As an Associate Member of ActionAid Global Federation, this strategy is aligned to the international strategy 'Action for Global Justice' (AGJ), as contribution to achievement of the Federation's aspirations at the same time informed by the local context.

To achieve this overarching goal, AAR Strategy 2023 has two key programmatic priorities that address the critical issues of the Rwanda context while aligning to the ActionAid Federation's global priorities.

In alignment to the Global Strategy and National priorities, AAR will ensure coherence in the implementation of 2 key priorities in this strategy guided by the 3Rs (Rights, Resilience and Redistribution) to achieve social justice and transformative development geared to the Country's aspirations for prosperity for all.

The two key priorities include Address the structural causes of violence against women and girls and secure women's economic justice, in addition AAR commits to strengthening resilient livelihoods

and to secure climate justice.

Under the priorities above AAR will address the following specific focus issues; Address the structural causes of VAWG; Unpaid Care and Productive Work for women's economic justice and Women and girls 'participation in leadership and decision making positions and policy influence; access to land, resilient livelihoods and food Security; Secure climate justice through Agro-ecology & sustainable environment and Access to market and financial services.

It is worthy to mention also that AAR will address issues of Humanitarian and Emergencies under Priority Two while specific interventions around public services will be covered under priority One.

We identify People living in poverty and the marginalized with a focus on

women and girls as both our targets and agents of change. We recognize that fighting poverty and injustice requires collective participation of all communities, women movements, and other like-minded organizations.

ActionAid Rwanda will ensure partnering and networking with various partner organizations, supporters through networks, coalitions and alliances for broadening support, voice and actions to strengthen the power of people living in poverty and exclusion.

ActionAid Rwanda will continue strengthening working with the vulnerable women, girls, youth and children; while reinforcing strong partnerships, networking and other working relations with various key strategic stakeholders and Partners including Communities, Community based Organizations, Non-Governmental Organizations, Civil Society Organizations, International Development Partners, Corporates, Media, Think-Tanks, Research and Academic Institutions in addition to

other key duty bearers including the Government of Rwanda,

In order to achieve this strategy despite the ever changing global development context, AAR will instill in staff and partners a strong performance-based culture of confidence, transparency and accountability.

The organizational effectiveness will be achieved through promoting strong leadership culture, retention of competent staff, enhanced

performance-based culture, and effective communication, systems and processes.

In all that we do, AAR is committed to nurturing uniquely vibrant relationships of trust and mutual transformation with partner communities and supporters.

It is our honour to invite all our stakeholders including supporters, partners, GoR and well-wishers to join us in the journey to make the aspirations of this strategy a reality for a country free from poverty and social injustice.



Isaac Nyarwaya
Board Chair



Josephine Irene Uwamariya
Country Director

External Context

This section explores and highlights internal and external factors that may influence effective implementation of AAR operations in the next five years of this strategy:

Country Context

Rwanda is a small landlocked country in East Africa. It is bordered by the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) to the west, Tanzania to the east, Uganda to the north, and Burundi to the south. According to World Bank data, the population of Rwanda is approximately 11.61 million, of which 52% are women. With the support of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank, Rwanda has been able to make important economic and structural reforms, and sustain its economic growth rates over the last decade.

Political Economic Context

Despite the traumatic hostilities that culminated into the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsis; both political will and citizens' commitment in nation building, unity and reconciliation have enabled a social cohesion and harmonious coexistence. Rwanda's long-term development goals are defined in a strategy entitled "Vision 2020".

The strategy seeks to transform the country from a low-income agriculture-based economy to a knowledge-based, service-oriented economy with a middle-income country status by 2020.

In order to achieve these long-term development goals, the Government of Rwanda has formulated a medium-term strategy.

The second Economic Development and Poverty Reduction Strategy (EDPRS 2) outline an overarching goal of growth acceleration and poverty reduction through four thematic areas: economic transformation, rural development, productivity and youth employment, and accountable governance.

The EDPRS 2 aims to achieve the following goals by 2018: raise gross domestic product (GDP) per capita to \$1,000; have less than 30% of

the population below the poverty line; and have less than 9% of the population living in extreme poverty.

These goals build on remarkable development successes over the last decade which include high growth, rapid poverty reduction and, since 2005, reduced inequality. Between 2001 and 2015, real GDP growth averaged at about 8% per annum. Recovering from the 2012 aid shortfall, the economy grew 7% in 2014 and 7.5% in 2015, up from 4.7% in 2013.

Social Context

Rwanda met most of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by the end of 2015. Strong economic growth was accompanied by substantial improvements in living standards, evidenced by a two-thirds drop in child mortality and the attainment of near-universal primary school enrolment.

A strong focus on homegrown policies and initiatives contributed to a significant improvement in access to services and in human

development indicators. The poverty rate dropped from 44% in 2011 to 39% in 2014 while inequality measured by the Gini coefficient reduced from 0.49 in 2011 to 0.45 in 2014.

Development Challenges

Going forward, the private sector, which is still largely informal, will have to play a bigger role in ensuring economic growth. Poor infrastructure and lack of access to electricity are some of the major constraints to private investment.

As Rwanda's investment relies significantly on foreign aid, stable inflows of this foreign aid are critical to keep the current high investment rate at around 25% of GDP.

In addition, reducing the country's dependency on foreign aid (which represents 30% to 40% of the budget) through domestic resource mobilization is critical.

While Rwanda has been effectively using aid for development, the country remains vulnerable to fluctuations in aid flows.

Women holding some of the baskets they've woven using the skills taught to them in their cooperative through ActionAid support.

PHOTO: ACTIONAID



Internal Context

ActionAid Rwanda has a significant history in Rwanda, formally initiating operations on 7th May 1982.

Overview

On 23 October 1986, following an agreement with Aide et Action, AAR moved to Burundi with the former managing activities in Rwanda. In 1996, AAR assumed work as a cross-border initiative under ActionAid Uganda and eventually in 1997 became an independent country program.

Between 2001 and 2005, AAR returned to being a joint program under Aide et Action. During this period, AAR was part of the regionalization process under the Great Lakes Initiative and resumed status as country program in 2006.

AAR works through a decentralized structure where Local Rights

Programs (LRPs) are the units of operation. LRPs are geographically-focused integrated programs with long-term programmatic interventions that work closely with communities and individual right holders to identify and address development issues. Currently, there are seven LRPs throughout the country.

AAR is recognized as a people driven NGO committed to support Rwanda in socio-economic sector with focus on women. In delivering on CSP1 Development Based on Rights and Dignity, AAR has aligned all interventions to people's needs and national priorities.

AAR is keen to listening to community member's issues which

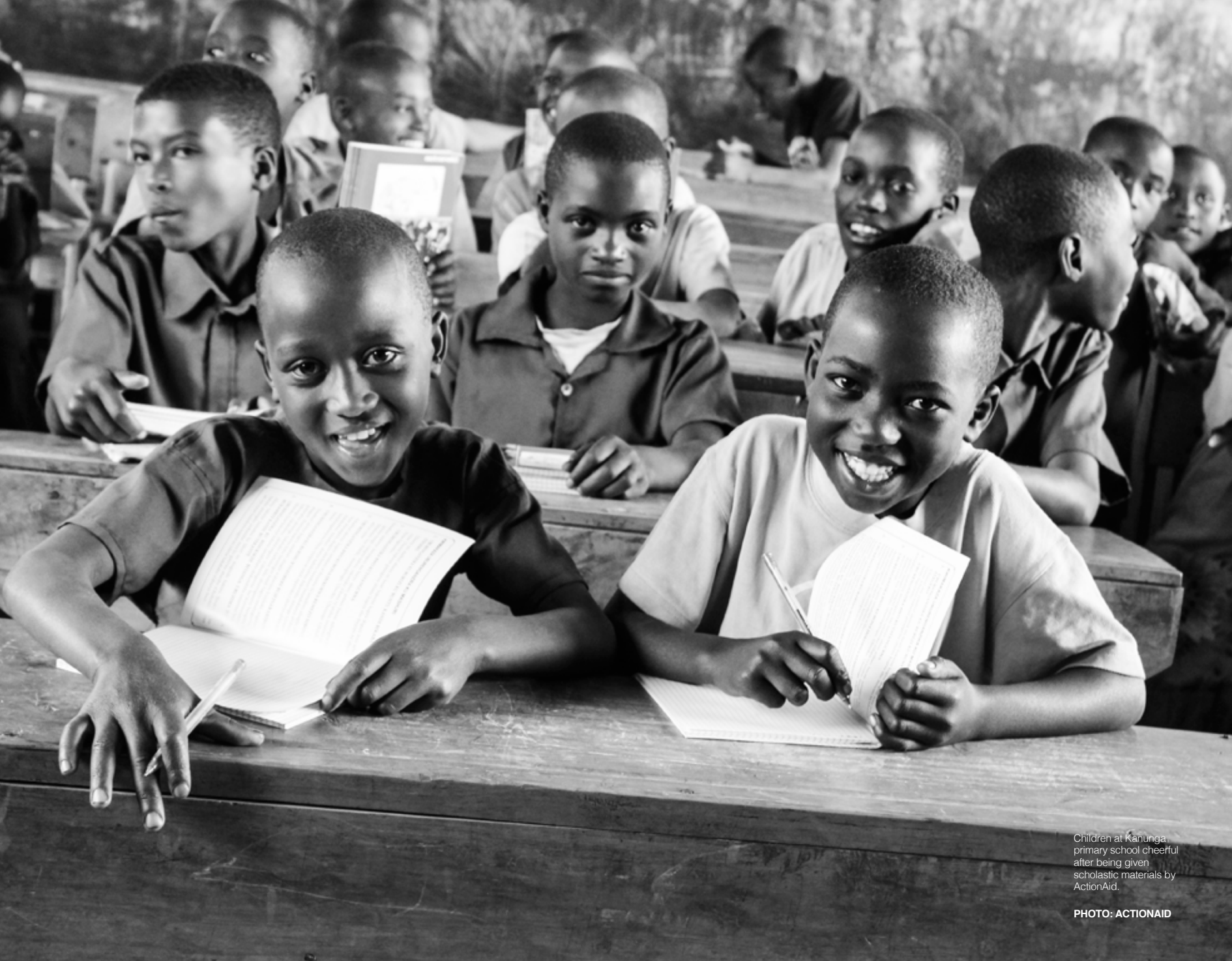
created its credibility among right holders, partners and other national stakeholders.

CSP1 Achievements

AAR's Country Strategy Paper 1 (2013-2017) has focused on three strategic objectives:

- ▶ Climate Resilient and Sustainable Agriculture (CRSA)
- ▶ Public Quality Education and;
- ▶ Women's Rights & Economic Empowerment. Governance has been a cross-cutting issue.

In total 57,889 direct targets have been reached under the three objectives. Technical trainings to 8,745 women and 2008 men smallholders on CRSA, contributed to increased production and diversified alternative opportunities (e.g.: small businesses). Through HRBA AAR's work around women's Rights and Economic Empowerment enabled Rightholders to organize in 215 solidarity groups increasing their voice for collective engagement with duty bearers and 40% of the groups are registered as formal cooperatives.



Children at Kanunga primary school cheerful after being given scholastic materials by ActionAid.

PHOTO: ACTIONAID

For public quality education, 23,831 girls (58%) and 17,139 boys were sensitized on their rights to quality education and actively engaged in advocating for a conducive environment through clubs.

Empowerment of smallholder farmers

Empowerment of smallholder farmers especially women, in their rights, leadership, advocacy and management skills has hugely led to mobilize community members to ask for more investment in agriculture; support to women's empowerment initiatives and focus on quality of education. Today Government officials at all levels have understood that bottom-up approaches are more sustainable than top-down approaches.

Transfer of knowledge and technical skills to smallholder sparked food security:

Technical trainings to 8,745 women and 2008 men smallholders on CRSA combined with the distribution of agricultural inputs to a total of 57,889 farmers, tripled food production as confessed by of 87.42% respondents to our TSR4 process.

Trained farmers have become trainers of trainers and are used by the Ministry of agriculture to multiply seeds and develop Farmer Field Schools for community demonstrations. The multiple effects of cooperative movement moved beyond solidarity and synergy, to health and economic gains.

Increased Food Production;

Reduction of big losses of agricultural produces: In all LRPs targeted farmers are reporting more than doubling their food production and livestock as a result of distributed improved seeds and livestock.

The establishment of community-based gain banks and construction of storage and cold rooms facilities

These have significantly reduced the losses of agricultural produces. For instance in Muko sector alone, about 1500 farmers have managed to store about 27 tons of maize as a surplus of their food demand and started transformation of maize into flour.

The profit on 1 Kg of maize has just quadrupled; and this only in 2 days of operating the milling machine.

The increased of food production is calling for access to market and more finance.

Increased Women's Dignity and Voice:

Women's Rights and Economic Empowerment led to establishment of 215 women's groups of which about 40% are registered as formal cooperatives. Women participate in sector and district planning and evaluation processes. The discussion around land and inheritance rights has increased their say in the management of domestic issues. Their cooperatives have nurtured the saving culture, synergy and solidarity among them; and led to linkages with the markets, and investors such as banks.

Even though Gender Based Violence is still rampant in Rwanda, majority of target women (67.6%) and key informants including local government officials and (78%) confess reduction of GBV.

As far as men's mindset change is concerned, targeted women acknowledge that economic gains

from cooperative profits have increased women's respect and value in the their eyes of their male counterparts. Today women are viewed as active economic development actors and not as passive consumers.

Women's networks have also provoked national debates on public financing of the agriculture sector attracting media houses, government officials and other development partners to question the allocation of the national budget to agriculture; as a result Rwanda has been able to reach and maintain the CAADP

requirement of 15% of the budget allocated to Agriculture.

At individual level, women's groups/ cooperatives have offered women smallholder farmers' safe/free space to share their stories, previously not shared, to exchange and learn from each other's' experiences. Cooperatives are becoming centers to heal and re-build hope for a bright future. Women smallholder farmers today, take up leadership positions within their communities.

Promotion of Rights in Schools A successful Promoting Rights in

Schools program has enabled 23, 831 girls (58%) and 17,139 boys to study in good conditions in 78 supported schools.

Both community and school leaders report reduction of drop-outs and influx of pupils after construction of decent classrooms well equipped. The Parents-Teachers' Committees enhanced parents' involvement in the education of their children; and increased accountability in 56.41% (44 out of 78) of schools.

The teacher-pupils ratio has reduced from 95/1 to 57/1; the ratio of pupils per cabin girls from 76 to 31 while for boy it reduced from 76 to 33. Support to girls' clubs improved knowledge, attitudes, behaviours and practices of students and teachers vis-a-vis gender roles, Sexual Reproductive Health Rights which led to a safer environment for girls during their menstruation days though the support with girls' rooms in line with Government policy.



Women happily weaving baskets using skills gained through AAR- organized capacity building trainings

PHOTO: ACTIONAID

Operational Context

AAR has been able to undertake robust fundraising and effective financial drives in order to maintain level of growth and diversified funding mix despite the challenges associated with volatility in the markets. Identified opportunities have been capitalized on to mitigate the adverse effects of such situations.

In order to strengthen and enhance national ownership of the 35 Year presence achievements AAR undertook vigorous processes to establish a national Board that has registered a number of successes to date including formal registration of AAR as a national organization leading to attainment of Association status within ActionAid Federation.

The Board is composed of members that are part of AAR communities which enable that the voice of the voiceless is heard.

AAR has ensured low levels of staff turnover rates through enforcing learning and growth opportunities, enforcing people's management

through policies and practices stemming from the organization's values, embracing feminist leadership principles and promoting Human Rights particularly Women and Children's Rights.

AAR is actively engaged in both local and international networks such as Landnet, Umwana ku isonga, GBV network, RENCPC, RCSP, PROFEMMES TWESEHAMWE, NINGO, African Rising Movement for justice, peace and dignity, this has led to evidence based policy influence for impact on key issues affecting the community, AAR has also strengthened relations for both implementation and fundraising partnerships leading to consistent reduction of reliance on regular giving as one source of income, engagement of communities with like-minded organizations for a stronger voice and effective implementation and rights promotion.

Strong political will coupled with citizens' responsiveness and resilience have also supported AAR contribution to stimulating rightholders to break the vicious

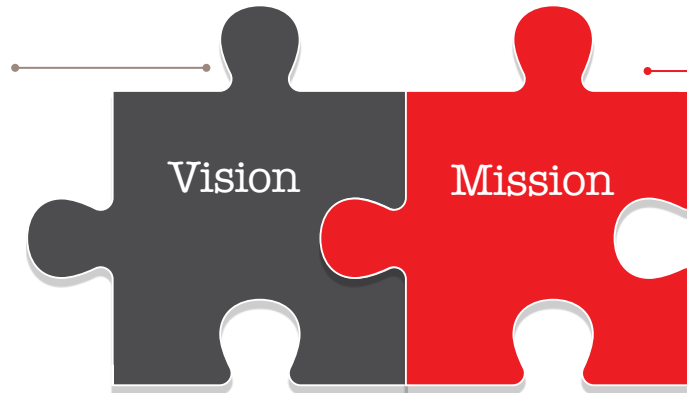
cycle of poverty and injustice.

Rightholders capacity building has increased their embracing of home grown solutions demonstrating ownership and role of the community to drive the development agenda bearing in mind that the recent progress in spite of the gravity and effects of 1994 Genocide against Tutsis is a motivation for collective efforts towards a united society with a brighter future.

Who we are

Our Vision

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



Our Mission

We work with people living in poverty with a focus on women and girls to eradicate poverty and injustice

Core Values

Courage of conviction

We are committed to be open, creative and constructively engage without fear - in pursuit of making the greatest possible impact on the causes of poverty and gender inequalities.

Mutual respect

We recognize and appreciate the inherent value of each human being and the significance of diversity.

Equity and justice

We work to ensure that all people irrespective of gender, ethnicity,

location, political affiliations, social class, health status, religion, sexual orientation have fair and equal opportunities.

Independence

Independence from any religious or political affiliation

Humility

In all our actions and behavior, we acknowledge and recognize that we are a part of a wider alliance against poverty and injustice.

Honesty and transparency

We are committed to being accountable at all levels for the effectiveness of our actions and open in judgments and communication with others.

Solidarity with the people living in poverty (women, children and youth)

In the fight against poverty we align ourselves with the powerless, marginalized and excluded to empower them to be the drivers of change.

Theory of Change

We believe that justice, gender equality, freedom from want and dignified life for all people are achieved through empowering and educating people living in poverty, especially women, youth, children and their agencies to challenge power structures and negotiate their interests with duty bearers aiming at effectively addressing the structural causes of poverty that prevent them from enjoying a life of dignity.

This theory of change is informed by our context, as well as experiences amassed over time. Consequently, we believe that supporting women and youth to become the agents of change is the ultimate solution to overcoming poverty and inequality.

Approach

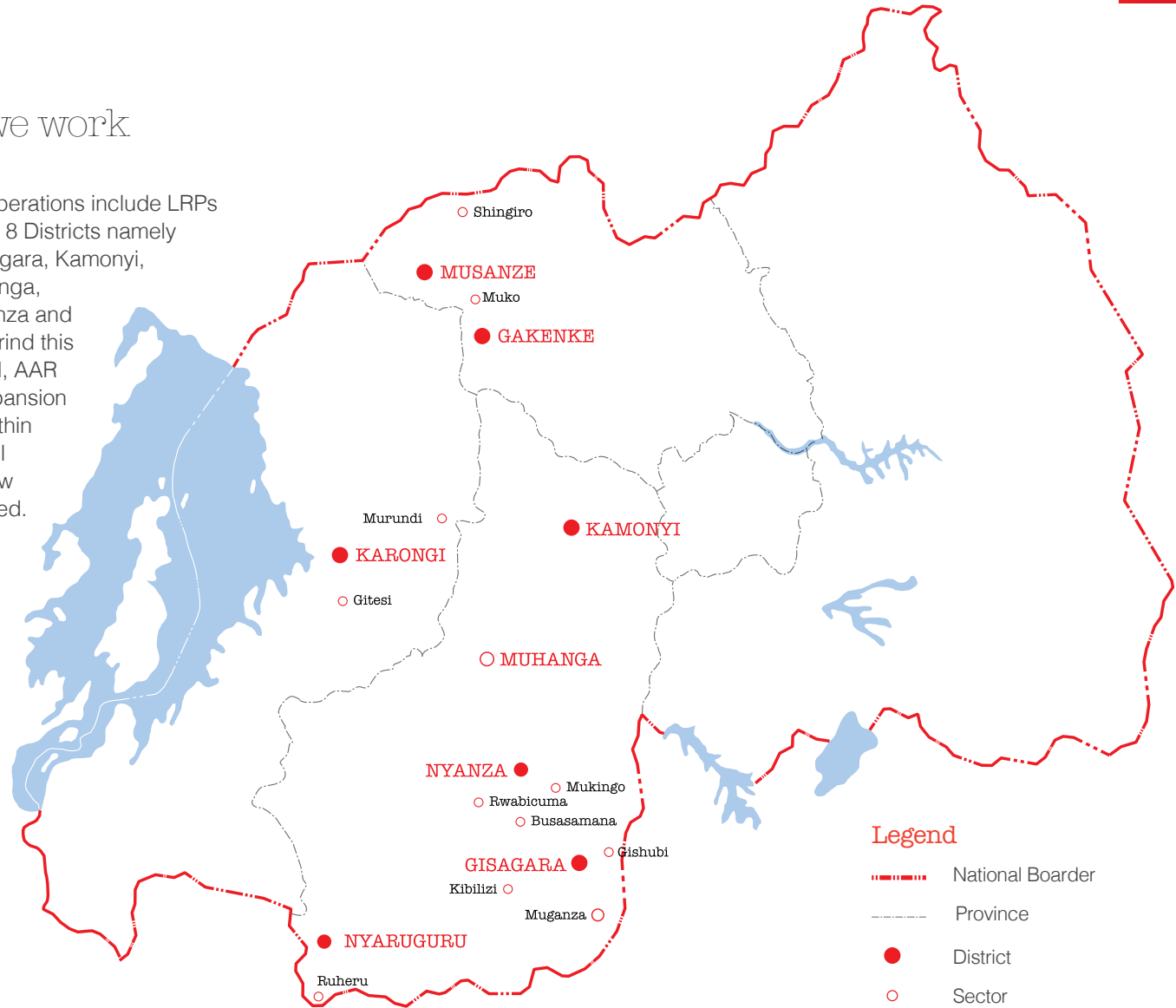
ActionAid Rwanda will ensure that our work is built on the Human Rights-Based Approach (HRBA) and commits to affirm that rights of all people are indivisible and inter-connected.

HRBA pillars are primarily: empowerment; solidarity and campaigns. We will continue to empower women, girls and other marginalized people to assert for their basic needs and fundamental rights, modelling sustainable service delivery alternatives that strengthen their rights while holding duty bearers to account.

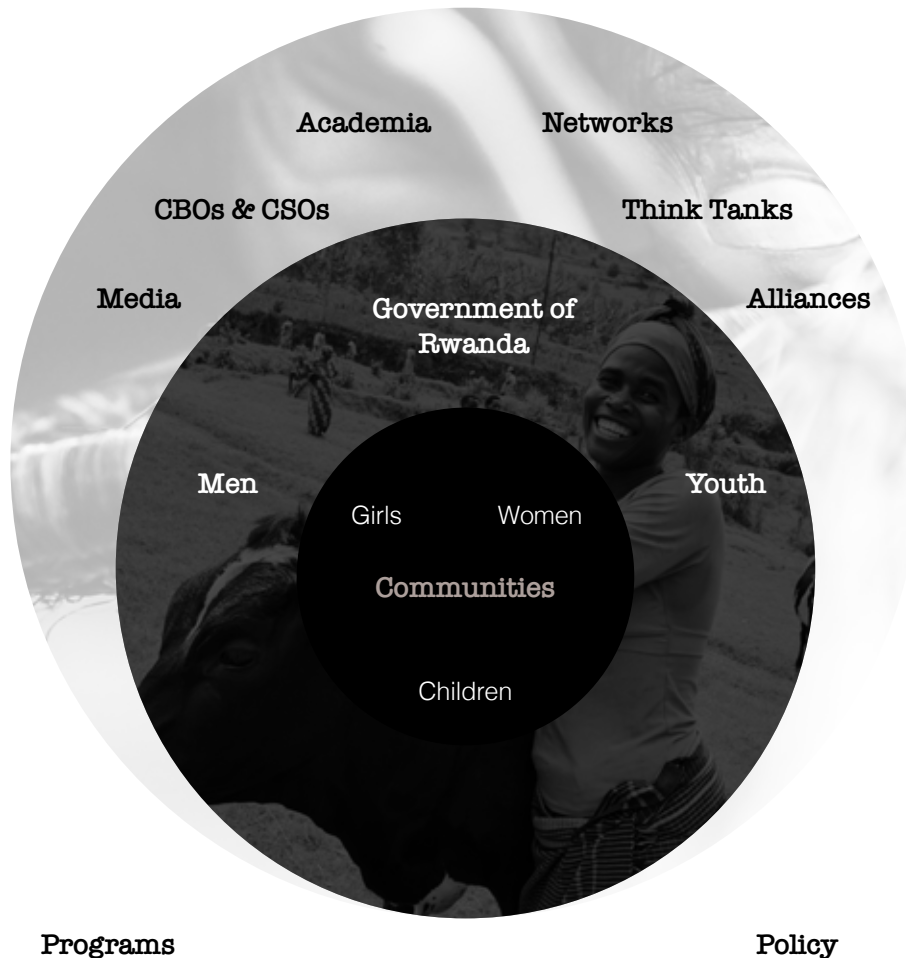
In addition to HRBA, Feminist and participatory Approaches shall be applied as AAR shall continue to build power from below as we mobilize women, girls and socially marginalized to organize themselves into cooperatives, networks and social movements in solidarity and collective strengthened voice, to engage and challenge deeply entrenched inequalities informing adequate policies at local, national and international levels while supporting equitable practices in favour of people living in poverty and exclusion upholding their rights to effectively graduate from poverty and drive transformational change.

Where we work

Current AAR operations include LRPs and Projects in 8 Districts namely Gakenke, Gisagara, Kamonyi, Karongi, Muhanga, Musanze, Nyanza and Nyaruguru. Durind this strategy period, AAR anticipates expansion of coverage within Districts as well moving into new locations of need.



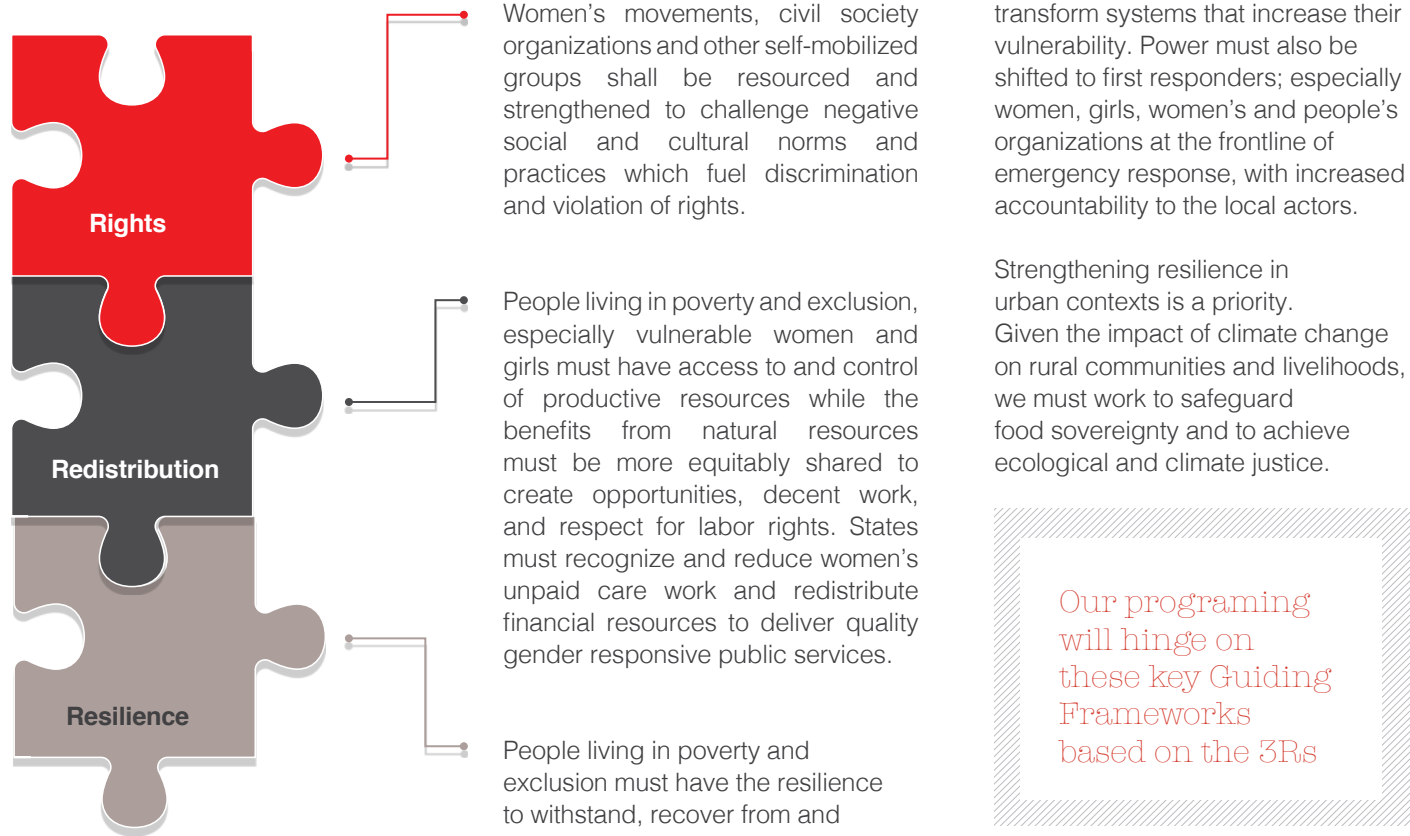
Who we work with



Primarily AAR will work with people living in poverty and the marginalized. We recognize that fighting poverty and injustice requires collective participation of all communities, women movements, and other likeminded organizations. ActionAid Rwanda will ensure partnering and networking with various partner organizations, supporters through networks, coalitions and alliances for broadening support (including money) voice and actions to strengthen the power of people living in poverty and the marginalized.

ActionAid Rwanda will continue strengthening working with the vulnerable women, girls, youth and children; while reinforcing strong partnerships, networking and other working relations with various key strategic stakeholders and Partners including Communities, Community based Organizations, Non-Governmental Organizations, Civil Society Organizations, International Development Partners, Corporates, Media, Think-Tanks, Research and Academic Institutions in addition to other key duty bearers including the Government of Rwanda.

Strategy Guiding Frameworks



Overview of Country Strategy Paper II (2018-2023)

Figure 1 is a graphic representation of our central focus and the strategic shifts we must make to affect change. In the center of the diagram are the words, “people living in poverty and the marginalized” Surrounding this focus are key concepts that underlie the strategies envisioned to make lasting impact⁽¹⁾ and key points of the organizational shift we will need to consider affecting change.

Social Justice, Gender Equality, and Poverty Eradication: We will continue our commitment to social justice, gender equality and poverty eradication in everything we do.

Social Movements/ People’s Organizations: We will work with and deepen our engagements with women’s networks and cooperatives, girls’ clubs and other collectives and coalitions, committed to social justice to influence change in laws, policies,

and strategies supporting women’s rights. Becoming closer to the people we work with by strengthening their inclusion and participation in programme planning, implementation and our governance.

Diverse Funding Sources: To ensure that AAR is economically stable even in times of economic downturns and to achieve intended goals and objectives, funding will be secured through diverse sources including bilateral and multi-lateral donors, Trusts and Foundations, private sector cooperation and individuals.

Shifting All Power: Guided by feminist principles and Human Rights Based Approaches, we pursue to shift and transform power, through empowerment, solidarity, campaigning and the generation of alternatives.



Women leadership: We will prioritize the leadership of women and young people, especially those living in poverty, in the efforts to achieve social justice, gender equality and poverty eradication

▲
Women smallholder farmers giving their views in parliament, advocating for increased agriculture budget allocation.

PHOTO: ACTIONAID



Efficient and Effective Decision making:

We recognize that our effectiveness is dependent on making timely decisions and while at the same time working in unity with our partners and federation. Therefore over the next 10 years we will work to make timely decisions for effective response while strengthening collaboration with our partners.

Learning & Communicating Impact:

We will generate knowledge and learning from our social change processes. This will be important for our internal learning and improvement as well as improving our ability to communicate our impact to others.

Innovation and Technology:

Considering that information technology is quickly advancing in Rwanda and regionally we will need to embrace all available digital platforms to inform and enhance collective collaborative actions as well as collect real time information for decision making.

Rootedness: We recognize change is rooted in the individual and collective empowerment of the people most affected by inequalities. We will enhance people’s ability to know, claim and defend their rights; active civic participation; and campaigning for alternatives in collaboration with collectives, movements and coalitions, supported by global solidarity.

People power is our greatest resource in ending poverty and achieving a just, equitable and sustainable world for all so we must be rooted in it.

Mutual Accountability: We will strive to be accountable to the commitments we have made and be transparent about all of our action. At the same time we expect our partners, program participants and the AA Federation to be accountable to us for the commitments they have made.

Feminist: We will apply a transformative feminist

leadership and values in our work which will guide us in interpreting and advancing our mission and values.

Young People & Women: We will increase our engagement with young people as important drivers of change and as the majority of the population in all the communities where we work. We will continue to ensure women living in poverty and exclusion are central in our work.

Figure 1: Strategic Shifts Diagram



A smallholder farmer
weeding her garden.

PHOTO: ACTIONAID



Strategic Priorities

The framework for the CSP II directly responds to the continued challenges faced by people living in poverty and exclusion in Rwanda.

The priorities were identified through analysis of stakeholder feedback, review of our ongoing country strategic position, relevant key national priorities “gender and poverty disparities⁽²⁾, National and global instruments⁽³⁾ as well as alignment to AAI global instruments¹ as well as alignment to AAI global strategic objectives. We recognize that overcoming the structural causes of poverty and injustice will require long term commitments, global collective action, and the ability to adapt to rapidly changing contexts.

Over the next five years, AAR seeks to increase its impact through empowering a larger number of vulnerable persons and

the increasing the size/scope of operations, while at the same time promoting sustainable change through advocacy initiatives. The following presents our overarching goal, our two key priorities and the objectives to achieve these.

Over the next 5 years AAR will work toward achieving the following goal:

To achieve social justice, gender equality and poverty eradication by shifting power, redistribution of resources, strengthening the resilience of communities and enforcing rights of people living in poverty and exclusion.

To achieve this overarching goal, AAR Strategy 2023 has two key programmatic priorities that address the critical issues of the Rwanda context while aligning to the ActionAid Federation’s global priorities. In alignment to the Global

Strategy and National priorities, AAR will continue to promoting social cohesion through established structures and home grown initiatives.

AAR will ensure coherence in the implementation of this strategy based on two key priorities with the six specific focus issues:

² Annex2 Country Specific Information

³ Annex3 Global and National policy instrumentsa

PRIORITY 1:

Address the structural causes of violence against women and girls and secure women's economic justice.

**Specific Focus issues**

- Structural causes of VAWG
- Unpaid Care and Productive Work for women's economic justice
- Women and girls' participation in leadership and decision making positions and policy influence



One of Imbereheza cooperative members gleefully poses for a photo in her kitchen garden.

Photo: ActionAid

PRIORITY 2:

Strengthen resilient livelihoods and secure climate justice

**Specific Focus issues**

- Access to land, resilient livelihoods and food Security
- Agro-Ecology & Sustainable Environment
- Access to market and financial services



Women in one of the Musanze based cooperatives holding a meeting to collect their weekly savings.

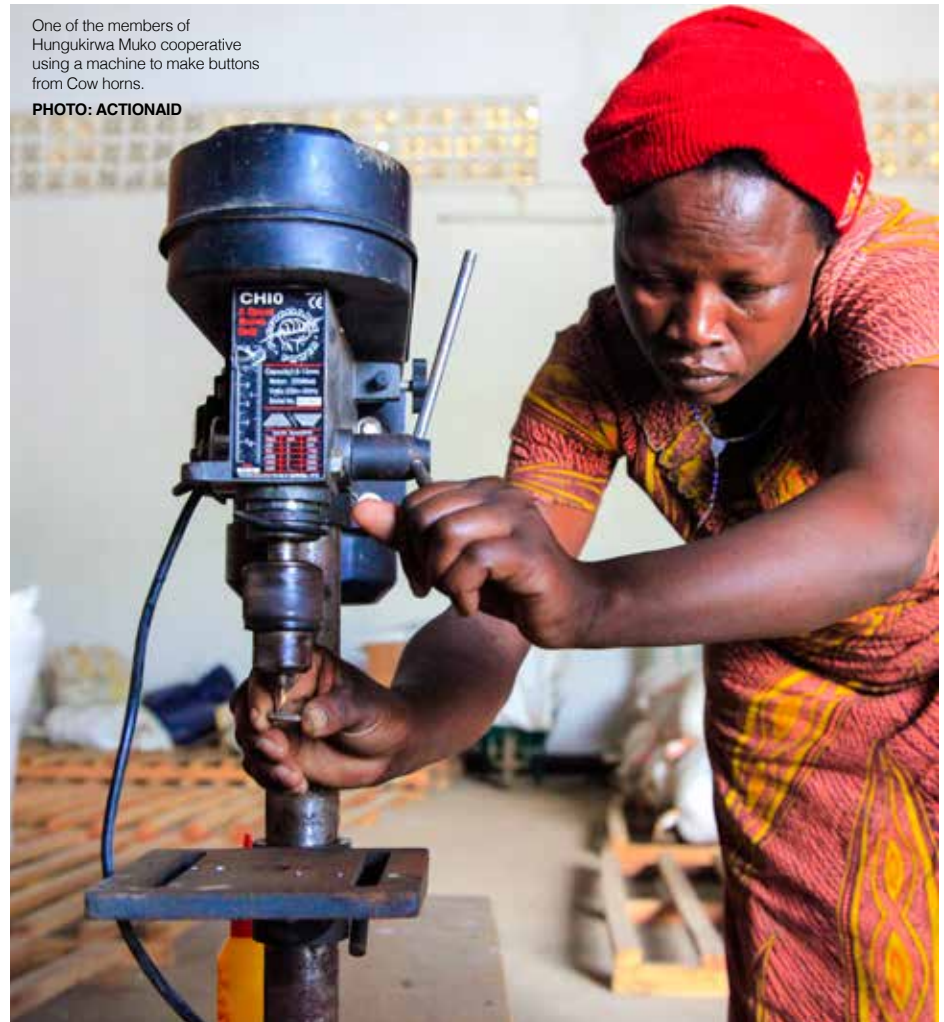
Photo: ActionAid

In addition to the priorities stated above and given the fact that Rwanda is at low risk in terms of shocks and disasters, AAR will address issues of Humanitarian and Emergencies under Priority 2 while specific interventions around public services are covered under Priority 1. Specific focus interventions on the former will be to;

- Provide capacity building in areas of prevention and response to GBV to women and girls in case of external crisis and disasters
- Solicit and provide immediate basic needs support to victims of conflicts, shocks and disasters

AAR will channel its interventions related to Education through the work on gender responsive public services advocacy; efforts will be specifically geared towards advocacy on financing for Early Childhood Development Centres (ECDs) , supporting PTCs to effectively lead accountability, governance and resource mobilization around public schools. We will continue to work with girls and their clubs in order to promote rights in schools with a special focus on safer environment for the girl's education and performance.

In addition to these, AAR will work with girls out of schools through supporting them to have life skills for resilience.



One of the members of Hungukirwa Muko cooperative using a machine to make buttons from Cow horns.

PHOTO: ACTIONAID



Women smallholder farmers join Africa in the campaign to claim their land rights through the Kilimanjaro initiative.

Photo: ActionAid

Priority 1:

Address the structural causes of violence against women and girls and secure women's economic justice

AAR will continue to address the structural causes of VAWG through working with women's movements, groups and organizations to ensure equality for all with a special focus on women. Building on our previous work in ending VAWG, we will increase awareness for economic justice to end exploitive practices.

This will mean increasing our advocacy strategies to more effectively hold corporate and government accountable for increased opportunities for women to engage more in productive work, conducive working conditions and freedom from violence and harassment. By increasing women's access and control over productive resources while ensuring protection

of rights we will create the necessary preconditions to challenge the patriarchal structures that have historically kept women marginalized.

AAR will support interventions aimed at mobilizing women and empowerment of women's associations to lead advocacy for policy change thus working with women groups will help to cascade influence, AAR will strengthen the capacity of people's organizations, women's movements, networks and other allies to overcome the structural causes and consequences of poverty and injustice.

We will shift and transform power, through empowerment, solidarity, campaign and the generation of

alternatives to ensure that women enjoy a life of dignity and are free from all forms of oppression. By 2023 we will be able to make greater advances in sustaining gender equality and equity by engaging decision makers at local, national, regional and continental levels.

Expected Outcomes

Outcome 1.1: 26,448 women and girls are able to challenge and overcome all forms of violence and abuse and they enjoy their economic and social lives with dignity.

Outcome 1.2: RECs & AU member states embrace women's demands through effective policies and laws.

Outcome 1.3: 528 Women Groups and Women Organizations promote and advocate for adequate implementation of policies and laws protecting Women's Rights.

Strategies to support Priority 1

- We will increase awareness among women small holder farmers and girls about the causes of VAWG, Gender Based Violence, reporting mechanisms,

availability and access to survivor-focused services of high quality as well as enhancing the capacity of service providers in areas of our operations.

- AAR will support girl child focused interventions to ensure their retention in schools through promotion of girls' room and other SRHR initiatives.
- AAR will support women groups and networks that promote the protection of women and girls from violence; building their capacity to engage, challenge and promoting establishment of their networks at various level (grassroots, national, regional and global)
- We will support women cooperatives, CBOs, civil society platforms and networks for inclusive engagement to influence decision makers for the adoption and implementation of gender responsive laws, policies and strategies.
- Evidence-based knowledge, tools and practices around VAWG & GBV will be shared with local, national authorities and partners.
- AAR will promote an enabling environment for dialogues between policy makers and networks that advance the right of women and girls;
- AAR will conduct mapping of the policy environment to enhance and promote public dialogue to influence policies and practices.
- We will support and promote leadership and participation of women smallholder farmers in Networks; provide support for peer-to-peer learning across women's associations and women's rights networks.
- We will conduct awareness raising, sensitization as well as training to vulnerable women and girls for better understanding of their rights and be able to enjoy the rights and live a life of dignity.
- We will engage and advocate for increased investment in quality and accountable gender responsive public services.
- Collectively with Women Networks, Organizations, and other partners AAR will engage with gender machineries for effective gender-mainstreaming in national planning and budgeting processes.





A smallholder farmer working in her garden in preparation of the planting season.

PHOTO: ACTIONAID

Women smallholder farmers working in their Irish potato plantation, to remove weeds and prepare for the planting season.

PHOTO: ACTIONAID



Priority 2:

Strengthen Resilient Livelihoods and Secure Climate Justice

While seeking to promote resilient livelihoods and secure climate justice, AAR will prioritize interventions for women smallholder farmers, strengthening their capacity to adapt to climate change, enhance food security, access to credit and market for their produce, and ensure appropriate use of natural resources and clean energy alternatives. We understand the interconnectedness of all natural resources as critical to ensuring resilient livelihoods for all of humanity and for ecology.

We will achieve this priority by empowering women and girls to form social and economic collectives to ensure women smallholder farmers have access to sustainable agriculture and secure livelihood and access to natural resources.

We will also increase the capacity of women smallholder farmers to be resilient to shocks and uncertainties in as far as food access and financial independence are concerned. In addition we will increase the capacity of women smallholder farmers to practice Agro-ecology. AAR will promote and advocate for policies of climate change adaptation to benefit women small holder farmers as well as national Disaster Risks Reduction Committees.

Women's economic alternatives will be promoted through reduction of women's Unpaid Care Work to break the cycle of poverty and VAWG while at the same time increasing capacity to engage in productive activities and ensure access to social protection schemes.

In addition women will be mobilized into cooperatives and social enterprises to both build strengthened community networks and to create alternative means of production.

Expected Outcomes

Outcome 2.1: By 2023 26,448

Women smallholder Farmers are able to practice agro ecology, increase productivity, advance value chain management and are linked to financial Institutions for credit to expand their businesses.

Outcome 2.2: By 2023, 13,224

Women smallholder farmers are supported with enabling policies to adapt and respond to risks, shocks and uncertainties in relation to climate change

Outcome 2.3: By 2023 17,000

women in Rural and urban settings have improved wellbeing through increased access to agricultural extension services, effective alternative production models and off farm activities.

Outcome 2.4: By 2023 10,000 Women and girls living and poverty and exclusion are engaged in appropriate small scale business for income generation and financial independence.

Strategies to support Priority 2:

- AAR will support Women smallholder farmers to practice CRSA through the planting of agro-ecological trees for environmental protection, increased food production and access to market.
- AAR shall strengthen and promote effective implementation of Home Grown Solutions and alternatives to enable social change and increased shared learning at all levels.
- We will focus on building the ability of the most vulnerable women and women smallholder farmers to organize and claim their rights, and to uphold good governance.
- We will support the poor communities especially women small holder farmers and their associations in emergency

preparedness, risk reduction and response, through intensive capacity building and partnerships, by assisting women and girls to safely voice their concerns and hold duty bearers accountable.

- We will promote the use of technology to enhance access to information such as early warning signs, weather forecast and markets needed by women small holder farmers to participate in decision making and climate change adaptation in the event of shocks, stress and uncertainty.
- Continue to engage in CAADP at the national, regional and continental level to ensure the attainment of the Malabo commitments through the implementation of the National Agriculture investment plans



Women farmers who have gained knowledge from ActionAid trainings on practicing sustainable agriculture, working in their garden

PHOTO: ACTIONAID





Smallholder farmers from Twivane mu bukene cooperative all clad in their African fabric attires bought from their profits,made through their savings

PHOTO: ACTIONAID

Operational Objectives

In order to increase effectiveness and efficiency in addressing the priorities stipulated above, AAR will embark on organizational shifts. The new Ways of Working shall include embracing a culture of innovation while actively undertaking digital transformations that modernize our ways of doing business leading to the reduction of international travels.

AAR will increase investment in people's capacity, retaining committed skilled staff and employment of interns and volunteers throughout the strategy period. We will pursue and provide peer support within the Federation.

AAR will promote a strong organizational culture founded on internal systems, structures, rigorous Participatory Review and Reflection Processes (PRRP) for effective planning, monitoring and mutual accountability. AAR strategy will

be aligned to the ActionAid Global strategy (Strategy 2023: Global Action for Social Justice) and national priorities derived from EDPRS, Vision 2020 and 2050. The operations will be anchored on 'Rights, Resilience and Redistribution' framework guided feminist principles and implemented through the Human Rights Based Approach." ⁽⁴⁾

AAR's organizational objectives will be:

Operational Objective 1: By 2023, AAR will have sufficient resources mobilized and will ensure rigorous and agile financial management systems to enhance effective and efficient program implementation.

Operational Objective 2: By 2023, we will ensure Organizational effectiveness and governance structures leading to a strong member of the federation.

Operational Objective 3: AAR will ensure robust MEAL system that generates evidence-based knowledge and shared learnings for enhanced accountability and innovations.

Operational Objective 4: By 2023, AAR will strengthen its brand through visibility and communication strategies, impact documentation and dissemination.

Operational Objective 5: By 2023, AAR will work with partners and collaborate with other like-minded organizations to promote global social justice.

Operational Objective 1:

By 2023, AAR will have mobilized sufficient resources to support the strategy ensuring rigorous and agile financial management systems to enhance effective and efficient program implementation.

AAR will strategically be positioned to remain resilient in challenging economic situations while exploring new emerging opportunities. While it is impossible to accurately predict the level of available funding over the next 10 years, we assume that certain political and economic shifts may occur (both positive and negative).

Through a programme led funding approach, we will maintain strong and sustainable programs at the same time seek to diversify our sources of funds and donors. Our annual income shall increase from GBP £1.9M to GBP £2.2M and hence allow expansion of AAR operations' scope, we aim at reaching 60% partnership and high value income; we will remain compliant to AAI Child Sponsorship Standards as well as maintain unqualified audit opinion.

Expected outcome

AAR financial sustainability ensured through the increase, diversification and appropriate management of income

Strategies to ensure AAR's stability until 2023

- AAR will develop a fundraising strategy with clear funding plans as well as tangible and trackable results that will lead to effective implementation
- AAR will continue to make income projections and liquidity plans to help identifying current sources of funding, funding gaps and to diversify donor base that provides sustainable funding to deliver AAR's mission
- AAR will continue to build strong funding planning process and system, positioning the organization as programme-led and ensure the integration of financial and contract management systems with programming and planning framework
- AAR will ensure diversified funding streams to withstand political and economic adversities by tapping into a

variety of local and international resources.

- AAR will continue to build and strengthen the capacity of the core fundraising, program and finance staff in contract management, building and managing donor relations and proposal development to increase and diversify AAR's income portfolio and ensure effective grant management.
- AAR will maintain a focus on innovative approaches to seeking and achieving funds; for example AAR to seek for joint funding opportunities (proposals) with reputable organizations and where possible collaborate with other organization with similar goals for cost sharing on projects implemented within same location, and same target group in alignment with priority goals
- We will partner with private sector actors who are socially and environmentally responsible and share our vision for social justice, gender equality and poverty eradication
- We will create a better operating environment to support the

development and management of grants, including building a robust contract management system

- We will continue to strengthen our internal systems, procedures, policies and practices to achieve cost efficiency, proper contract management, enhance compliance and meet reporting requirements.
- We will ensure strong CS operations sustaining quality supporter communications while demonstrating impact on the child
- We will promote transparency and value for money through regular audit reviews
- We will ensure skills development for AAR and partners non-finance staff in financial management
- We will Prioritize regular monitoring and evaluation of partners' financial management systems and enhance effective utilization of resources as part of accountability mechanisms



Mukangemanyi from Duhagurukiramajambere cooperative teaching a Greek supporter how to weave baskets.

Photo: ActionAid

Summary of the income projections and funding mix for 2018-2023:

Type of Income in GBP'000	2018 (BY)	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	Total
Partnership Institutional	1,451	1,458	1,378	778	750	825	5,189
Partnership High Value	-	500	620	500	300	306	2226
Total Partnership Income (PI)	1,451	1,958	1,998	1,278	1,050	1,131	7,415
Partnership Growth rate		35%	2%	-36%	-18%	8%	
Regular Giving Income (RGI)	970	980	989	999	1,009	1,019	4996
RGI Growth rate		1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	
Funding Mix (RGI-Share)	40%	33%	33%	44%	49%	47%	
Total Income	2,421	2,938	2,987	2,277	2,059	2,150	12,411

Operational Objective 2:

By 2023, we will ensure **Organizational effectiveness and governance structures leading to a strong member of the federation.**

AAR is only as strong as the capabilities, determination and desire contribute to our overall vision. Over the next five years we will become an affiliate of ActionAid Federation and strive to be a more

impactful organization through attracting the best and continuously build skills and knowledge to ensure we are equipped to effectively and efficiently implement our programs..

Expected Outcomes

Strengthened HR frameworks fostering innovation and promoting feminist leadership

Strong governance systems ensuring a stable sustainable organisation

Strategies to ensure AAR's HROE (Human Resources and Organizational Effectiveness) capacity

- Integrate research, learning and knowledge management to sustain impact of AAR
- Staff capacity development to enhance their skills in designing, implementing and effectively supporting AAR programmes.
- AAR will maintain human resource management

- processes to ensure skilled staff with technical expertise committed to perform quality work.
- AAR staff will be multi-skilled to deliver effectively on the organizational objectives and enable them to generate lessons and experiences for shared learning.
 - AAR will maintain skills development and capacity building of staff through various training programmes, coaching and mentoring in all domains relevant to development.
 - AAR to have high quality institutional frameworks to consistently monitor implementation of the strategic plan, generate lessons and inform decision making while fostering accountability to enhance transparency.
 - AAR will continue to strengthen internal governance and management systems, procedures, policies and practices to achieve cost efficiency, proper contract management and maintain compliance.

- AAR will maintain staff safety and security of all forms with special focus on women's rights while embracing feminist leadership principles.

Operational Objective 3:

AAR will ensure robust M&E system that generates evidence-based knowledge and shared learning for enhanced accountability and innovative quality programming.

Basing on the achievements of the last strategy despite changing the language of Change Promises, over the next ten years AAR will effectively monitor and evaluate the implementation of programs in a harmonized feminist transformative integrated approach to enhance shared learning, accountability and HRBA evidence based programming.

AAR will employ to gauge its progress towards achieving this strategy in response to the fundamental question on whether

our work helps shape the relations of power in such a way that poor and excluded people, particularly women and girls, are able to gain and exercise power within a human rights framework. Thus the framework seeks to understand not only what changes are achieved, but how, and by whom, and who is empowered in the process.

Expected Outcomes

Effective Impact tracking system and assessment of the quality of results-based management within the organization at all stages of programming.

Improved evidence based programming enhancing accountability and informed agile decision making.

Strategies to support robust MEAL system

- Emphasize on assessing power shifts through

participatory approaches to enable empowerment and accountability to right holders.

- Embracing technology in data collection, storage and management through effective use of IT based systems and tools
- Ensure the collection of input, output, outcome and impact data to enable learning, sharing and value for money
- Carry out periodical reviews to adopt, align and refocusing in line with the social economic trends, home-grown initiatives and other national established structures (Umugoroba w'ababyeyi, Girinka, Abunzi, inkongoro y'umwana, Health Insurance, National Dialogues, Children's Parliament, Umuganda, Malaika Murinzi)

Operational Objective 4

By 2023, AAR will increase visibility

through robust communication, impact documentation and dissemination approaches. AAR has a substantial history in Rwanda and is a well-recognized organization in the country.

With that said, for greater impacts to contribute to social justice, gender equality and eradication of poverty AAR will seek ways to increase its visibility and communication particularly to advance policy advocacy. In this regards the following organizational strategies should be considered:

Expected Outcomes

Strengthened AAR's brand and impact of interventions while influencing systems, programmes, policies and practices

Increased access to information for effective accountability and partnerships

Strategies to support accountability, networking and visibility

- Promote use of technology and digital tools to support increased networking and open communication pathways
- Ensure greater networking and engagements with like-minded organizations and policy makers
- Strengthen interventions aimed at disseminating AAR work to stakeholders for accountability and visibility
- Enhance branding of the organisation for image building both internally and externally
- Reinforce documentation of the organisation's work through audio-visual and print channels

Operational Objective 5

By 2023, AAR will nurture partnership relationships to enhance effective collaboration and fruitful engagements towards social justice

The successful implementation of this plan requires strong partnership and collaboration with Government of Rwanda, communities, academia, civil society organisations, private sector, regional economic





communities (RECs) and African Union. In addition, we will also work people movements/coalitions and alliances, development partners and other like-minded organisations will form part of this partnership.

Expected Outcome

Increased voice for advocacy and policy influence leading to development and social justice.

Strategies to support increased partnerships

- Strengthen AAR representation and participation in national, regional and continental economic communities.
- Promote interventions/initiatives supporting dialogue among stakeholders in development and social justice

Coordination, Monitoring and Evaluation

The successful implementation of this strategy paper will require the commitment of staff, board members, supporters and partner organizations.

It is a roadmap which, when followed, will enable AAR further achieve its vision and mission. It is a living document meant to adjust to adjust with the changing development trends, national policies and organizational realities. Its achievement will require putting in place appropriate systems, processes and structures regarding planning, Implementation, Monitoring and Evaluation for effective learning and realignment.

AAR will develop three-year plans from which annual plans showing priority activities and associated budget will be derived allowing inclusion of new emerging priority activities.

Mid-Term & Final Evaluations

Mid-term review and evaluation will be carried out to assess and document progress recommending adjustments according to issues identified, challenges encountered or changes directly affecting program environment.

At the end of the 5 year period, a final evaluation should be conducted by an external evaluator.



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