

# 2013 ANNUAL REPORT



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## ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

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AA – ActionAid

AAI – ActionAid International

ALPS – Accountability, Learning and Planning System (ActionAid)

CAADP – Comprehensive African Agriculture Development Programme

CBO – Community-based Organisation

CD – Country Director

CEP – Country Engagement Plan (ActionAid)

CRSA – Climate-Resilient Sustainable Agriculture

CSP – Country Strategic Plan

DANIDA – Danish International Development Assistance (Denmark)

DECAF – Disasters Emergency Committee Accountability Framework (UK)

DFID – Department for International Development (UK)

EAGLES – Evaluation and Accountability Global Leaders (ActionAid)

EC – European Commission

ECHO – European Commission Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection

EFAST – Emergency Fast Action Support Team (ActionAid)

ELBAG – Economic Literacy Budget Accountability for Governance

FGM – Female Genital Mutilation

GBV – Gender-based Violence

GET – Global Engagement Team (ActionAid)

HAP – Humanitarian Aid Partnership

HRBA – Human Rights-based Approach

HROD – Human Resources and Organisational Development

HTP – Harmful Traditional Practices

ICT – International Communications Team (ActionAid)

INGO – International Non-governmental Organisation

IPD – International Partnership Development (ActionAid)

IS – International Secretariat (ActionAid)

**KCP – Key Change Promise (ActionAid)**

**LGBT – Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender**

**LRP – Local Rights Programme**

**M&E – Monitoring and Evaluation**

**MDP – Membership Development Plan (ActionAid)**

**NGO – Non-governmental Organisation**

**OIP – Open Information Policy**

**OP – Organisational Priority (ActionAid)**

**PIA – People in Aid**

**PRRP – Participatory Review and Reflection Process**

**PRS – Promoting Rights in Schools**

**PVA – Participatory Vulnerability Analysis**

**RAF – Resource Allocation Framework (ActionAid)**

**ROI – Return on Investment**

**SIP – Strategic Implementation Plan (AAI Strategy)**

**SLDP – Senior Leadership Development Programme (ActionAid)**

**SLT – Senior Leadership Team (Secretariat)**

**SMT – Senior Management Team**

**SO – Strategic Objective (AAI Strategy)**

**SRHR – Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights**

**TOC – Theory of Change**

**TPC – Tax Power Campaign**

**UN – United Nations**

**USAID – United States Agency for International Development**

**VAW – Violence against Women**

**VFM – Value for Money**

**VHDU – Very High Development Units (ActionAid)**

**YFP – Young Female Parliament (Ghana)**

## LETTER FROM THE INTERNATIONAL BOARD CHAIR AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE

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Welcome to our Annual Report for 2013, in which we share our achievements and lessons learnt during the second year of implementation of our international strategy "*People's Action to End Poverty*". In 2013 most countries across ActionAid's International Federation aligned their country strategies to the new strategy, allowing greater sense of cohesion and hence the visible progress toward our mission and organisation objectives. More importantly, there has been greater coherence on promoting our theory of change, through which ActionAid works as a catalyst for people living in poverty to bring about changes on the structural causes of poverty. In 2013 our people focus and rights based approach enabled change processes that increase poor women and men claim their rights in all the countries we work. It is inspiring to know that this happened against the backdrop of a difficult external economic, political and social context.

Poor men and women across the globe are increasingly being affected by the consequences of climate change, particularly the incidence of more severe and recurrent droughts and floods. The fact that ActionAid responded to 28 new or on-going disasters across 19 countries covering over 1.7 million people, is evidence of that. Increased competition for resources and markets also created new challenges for the poor particularly in relation to their ability to secure access and control over land, water, biodiversity and forests. The competition for natural resources is exacerbated even further by an economic growth model that further destroys the environment and increases the vulnerability of the poor. The shrinking political space for civil society created by repressive undemocratic regimes continues to affect our work and the work of people's movements across all continents. In several countries we worked with civil society to challenge proposed new laws and regulations aimed at reducing the democratic space and /or actions by powerful groups to intimidate civil society actions in campaigning for rights. It is equally sad that women's rights violations continued to increase in 2013, with an acute increase on violence against women in urban contexts.

The economic downturn in the European and North American economies continued to be an important feature, coupled with lesser growth in emerging economies. These trends continue to affect our ability to raise resources to match our strategic ambition, thus creating the need for further focussing our work to deepen impact. Across the globe, with few exceptions, youth continue to face the challenge of high levels of unemployment. However, in 2013 there have also been substantial advances where poor people achieved public policies that promote rights and reduce poverty and inequality, particularly where state capacity increased. It was also an important year where people actively mobilised for their rights and we saw the emergence of exciting new ways of mobilisation in all the regions we work.

It is within this complex external context we have implemented our rights based approach and progressed on delivering our strategy. This annual report reflects the key achievements in each of our objectives and key change promises. We have reasons to celebrate key achievements with our key stakeholders in 2013, some of which include:

- **Our work with partners that enabled close to 100,000 women reporting increased control over natural resources, and nearly 300,000 people reporting increased food security as a result of our work on climate-resistant agricultural practices.**

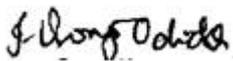
- **We mobilised over 730,000 youth to take action on sustainable change to reduce poverty.**
- **1.7 million people received humanitarian assistance from ActionAid in a manner that promoted their rights.**
- **ActionAid mobilised close to 190,000 women and girls (including 35,00 female youth) to challenge culture, traditional and religious norms that restrict women’s rights, and reject all harmful traditional practices, including early marriage and Female Genital Mutilation.**
- **Our Tax campaign, launched a year ago, has been successful on increasing awareness of unjust tax systems and exposing how powerful companies benefit from loopholes in the regulatory environment.**

The report also reflects on how we progressed against our organizational objectives. It highlights achievements in building programming capacity in countries through rolling out HRBA trainings, development of our M&E systems, launch of programme-led funding planning pilots; substantial increase of supporters and digital engagement; increase in our total income in spite of the slow economic recovery; successful growth in some emerging markets especially Brazil and India; successful launch of a Senior Leadership Development Program; and progress on membership development with over 10 countries making progress toward becoming associates and full affiliates.

Reflections on the lessons learnt over the past year are also reflected in the report, such as the need for greater coherence and cohesion on implementing the strategy across the different parts of the federation; implementation of our HRBA being fragmented and an apparent lack of full understanding across the organisation of our Theory and Change and HRBA; more work is needed to strengthen the use of evaluations and research to further document and communicate what difference ActionAid makes; and that we have not fully integrated our approach to accountability within our theory of change and HRBA. All these will require the attention of all of us in the coming years.

We feel deeply proud of our achievements in 2013. More importantly we are deeply committed to collectively learning from our successes and also from our difficulties and failures, so we can improve our work. Through the narrative annual report, financial report and International Board report to the Assembly, we hope to fulfil our multiple accountabilities.

**We wish you pleasant reading of the annual reports!**

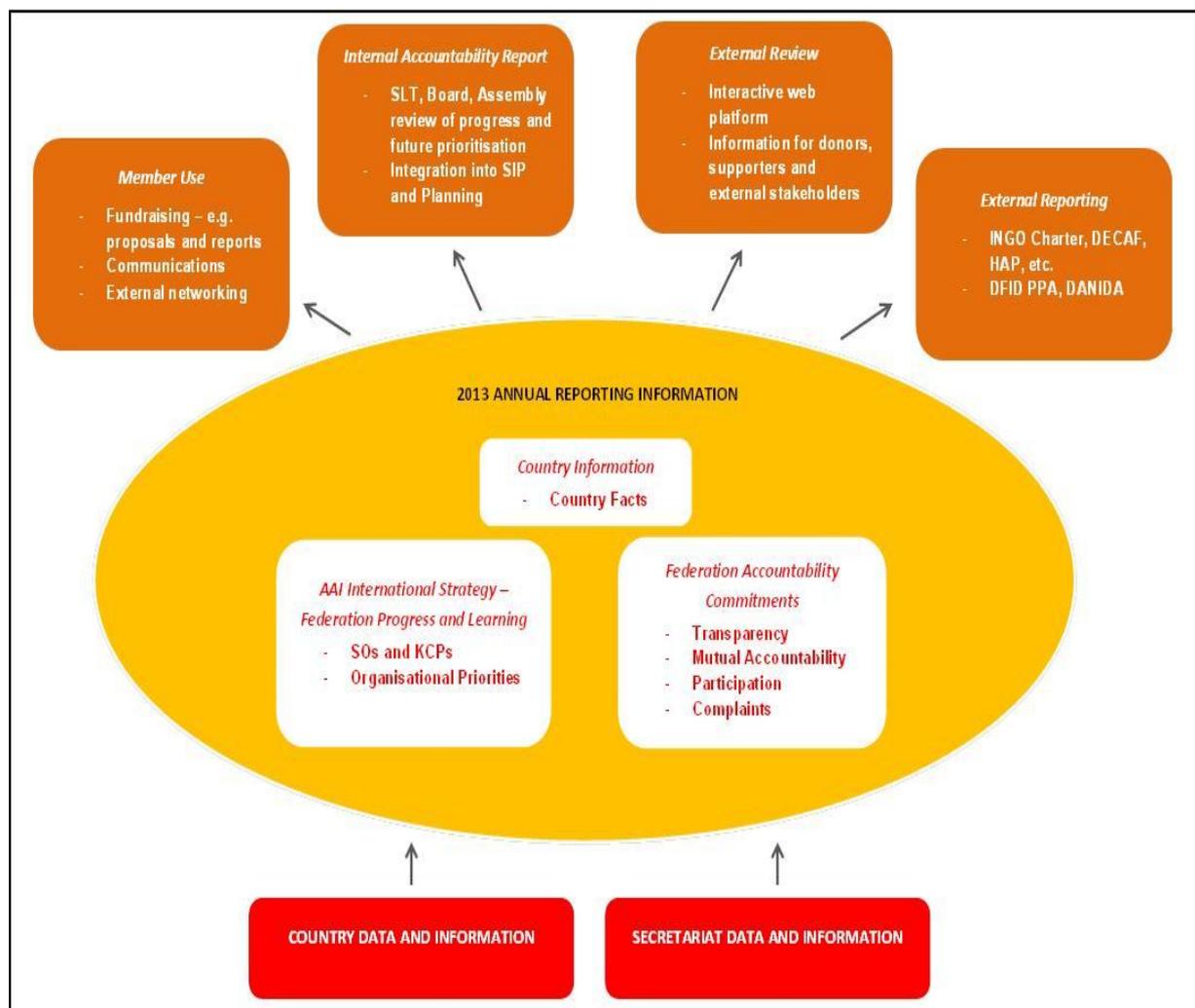


**Irene Ovonji-Odida**  
Chair of the Board



**Adriano Campolina**  
Chief Executive

## PURPOSE AND APPROACH



### Purpose

This is a report that aims to enable the leadership of the ActionAid federation (International Board and Assembly, Senior Leadership Team, National Boards and Country Management Teams) to review and assess:

- 1) **Federation-wide performance in 2013 as reflected through the implementation of the international strategy**, including the Strategic Objectives and Key Change Promises as well as the Organisational Priorities;
- 2) **Federation-wide implementation of accountability principles**, in accordance with our new Accountability Charter; and

- 3) **Basic country demographics**, including LRPs, partners, number of people engaged with ActionAid, etc.

As shown in the diagram above, the AAI international reporting process for 2013 has focused primarily on collecting information from countries and the Secretariat to enable us to fulfil a number of accountabilities without duplication and overlap with country processes, and provides us with the flexibility to communicate meaningfully with stakeholders based on their needs and interests – key elements of transparency and accountability.

This 2013 Annual Report aims to enable the AAI Assembly and International Board to fulfil their accountability functions in terms of maintaining oversight of federation performance, progress and direction, by providing an assessment of Federation-wide performance that can then be used for prioritisation and planning. This report will be submitted to and approved by the 2013 General Assembly, thus enabling them to fulfil one of their key accountability functions. The information in this report will also form the foundation for interactive sessions with the SLT, Board, Directors Forum and Assembly in June to discuss future direction and be incorporated into the development of the 2015 Strategic Implementation Plan, – thus applying a key accountability principle, as per ALPS, of integrating performance and learning into planning.

This narrative Annual Report is linked to the 2013 Annual Finance Statements and Accounts and the 2013 Board Report to the Assembly. This report should therefore be read in conjunction with the two reports.

### **Summary of the Report Structure**

In order to achieve the objectives listed above and facilitate review and action by senior leadership, this report has been designed to include the following:

- Review of progress for each Strategic Objective, including reflections on change and performance as well as the implementation of our HRBA, followed by identification of lessons learnt. Progress reporting is a mix of quantitative and qualitative information, and where applicable highlighted examples have been provided to better illustrate implementation and results. This has been done to support the levels of analysis, provide sufficient information for progress monitoring and future prioritisation, and be mindful of report length concerns.
- Review of progress for each Organisational Priority, including KPI reporting as well as general information on progress.
- Baseline assessment of federation-wide operationalization of the new ActionAid Accountability Charter, with focus on: links between accountability and our Theory of Change; transparency; participation; mutual accountability; and complaints. This includes assessment of areas of good practice along with key recommendations for future work.
- Provision of basic key facts of the federation, including: estimated number of people working with ActionAid, disaggregated by age group and gender; number and type of partners; governance structure; number of LRPs; and country commitments to the strategy Key Change Promises.

What this report is not:

- An exhaustive reflection of all of the work and achievements of the Federation. The aim of this report is to provide information on federation-wide progress against the strategy and suggestions for future prioritisation and planning. More detailed information should be found in country reports, Secretariat reports and other documents which will be accessible on the HIVE.
- Fully representative and accurate, as it depended on the quality of country submissions and subsequent analysis, both of which are areas for improvement (as noted below and in the report). However, enough information was provided to reflect on overarching progress and make evidence-based recommendations for the future.

### **Methodology for Data Collection**

The evaluation of the 2012 Annual Report identified a lack of clarity and consistent reporting on indicators as well as lack of understanding how the targets outlined in the international strategy were to be met as two key challenges for ActionAid. In response, a set of quantitative and qualitative global change and performance indicators (the 'Global M&E Matrix') along with key definitions and suggested means of verification were developed and launched in 2013. These indicators were integrated into 2014 planning processes, and as a step towards constructing a more coherent planning, monitoring and reporting system, for the 2013 global reporting process we asked countries to report against the Global M&E Matrix and Organisational Priority KPIs as well as provide case studies and stories of change, mainly through the StoriesHub platform. We received submissions from 45 countries, utilising an online platform.

As a result, the overall quality of reporting federation-wide progress against the global strategy has improved in that, as compared to previous years, there have been fewer generalised results, a stronger and more demonstrable ability to quantify and/or analyse or otherwise elaborate on qualitative results, and increased consistency in understanding information needs. It has become increasingly possible to assess and reflect on global progress, especially against global targets, using a combination of quantitative and qualitative information.

### **Participatory Approach for Analysis**

We employed a participatory and streamlined approach to analysis, drawing on the knowledge and expertise of Secretariat units. The Country Coordination Unit performed data quality analysis on the country reports, assessing and providing feedback on completeness, accuracy and reliability. Key Change Promise Coordinators, Senior Programme Managers and Organisational Priority Owners (International Directors) then analysed and synthesised the information, and provided summaries of progress, HRBA implementation, learning, and reflections/suggestions. Organisational Effectiveness team members provided coaching and support to the KCP Coordinators, Senior Programme Managers and Organisational Priority owners, as they completed the analysis and synthesis process. The resultant summaries were then reviewed and validated by the relevant Strategic Oversight Teams and Secretariat Teams. At the same time, the Accountability and Transparency Advisor analysed and synthesised country reporting on accountability, and provided a summary on key

accountability principles. These KCP, Strategic Objective, Organisational Priority and Accountability summaries form the foundation of this annual report.

### **Limitations**

Although we have seen benefits from the use of the new Global M&E Matrix, the timing of its introduction meant that countries had not yet fully tailored their data collection tools and systems to suitably respond to these indicators. This meant that countries were either not able to report on certain indicators or that they could not provide adequate information on the progress they were making. For example, in some cases countries could only provide qualitative progress and not quantitative or they provided data from only a selected number of local right programmes, and the provision of comprehensive and accurate age and gender disaggregated data is yet to be realised.

In addition, the compilation of this report has relied solely on the monitoring data and stories provided by countries, as well as the analysis provided by IS units. We are still developing a coherent and systematic approach to implementing and using evaluations that objectively define and evidence change, particularly at KCP and SO levels – although the need for these has been built into the Global M&E Matrix. What this means is that analysis of change described in this report has depended upon reports rather than objective assessment at a more strategic level. In addition, this also means that lessons learnt through evaluations and reviews have not been incorporated into this report.

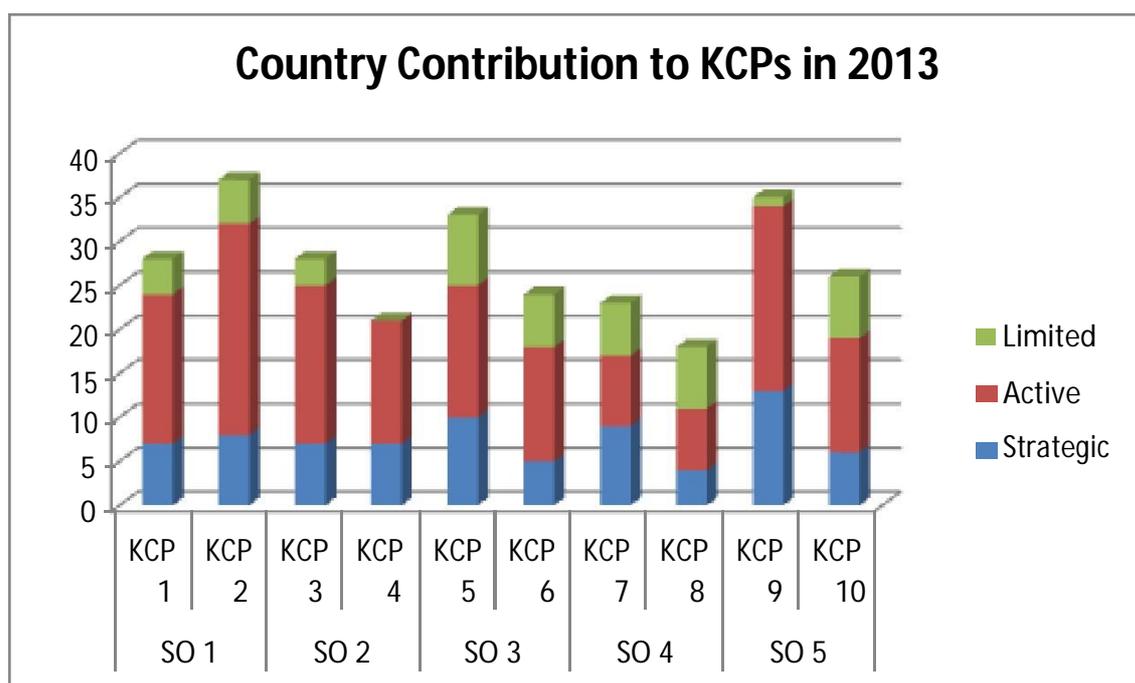
The majority of countries continue to use paper-based systems for data collection and storage, with the exception of those few countries that have developed electronic management information systems. A key resulting challenge has surfaced in the form of weak data analysis, particularly of trends and variances over time. We also lack adequate systems and or processes to facilitate routine monitoring and synthesis of key information connecting local, national and international. Even at international level, comparative analysis against last year's progress has only been performed in certain areas of this report. While this has largely been attributed to changes in data reporting formats, technological limitations have equally contributed, especially at country level.

Key milestones have been achieved in 2013 to further our commitment to deepening the impact of our work and improving our capacity to produce credible evidence as outlined in *People's Action to End Poverty*. We remain primarily committed to listening and promoting the voices of the people in communities that we are working with and as such our approach to accountability and monitoring and evaluations continues to embrace participatory methods and hinge on local and national ownership of programmes, systems and processes.

## 2013 HIGHLIGHTS

2013 was the second year of *People's Action to End Poverty*, and saw the federation move from alignment to a focus on implementation. This is evidenced by the progress we have made against our strategic objectives and organisational priorities, despite a challenging political, programmatic and funding environment. We have also seen successes in how we have made this progress, as the implementation of our human rights-based approach continues to take hold. We have many examples of our strengths in enabling people living in poverty to take action for sustainable change, and below are a number of highlights that reflect our successes in 2013.

### **ActionAid Country Contribution in 2013 to Strategic Objectives and Key Change Promises**



#### **Strategic Objective 1: Promote sustainable agriculture and control over natural resources for people living in poverty.**

- In 2013 close to 100,000 women in ActionAid countries reported increased control over natural resources, and nearly 300,000 people reported increased food security as a result of our work on climate-resistant agricultural practices (CRSA).
- Thanks to the contributions of ActionAid and our partners, India's Food Security Act 2013 was passed, which is landmark legislation on the right to food that when fully implemented will increase food security for 780 million people.
- As a result of ActionAid Ghana's combined approach to promoting sustainable agriculture through training women farmers, supporting solidarity through the formation of women farmers' groups, and helping to ensure agriculture extension agents provided extension services to women farmers, 6,000 women farmers now practice CRSA (an increase of 3,500 from 2012).

**Strategic Objective 2: Advancing the political influence of people living in poverty to hold governments and corporates accountable.**

- ActionAid worked with partners and people living in poverty to increase civic accountability on public services in 2,900 local governments. This has involved engaging with local government officials to build their capacities as well as strengthening communities' capacities, especially women and youth, through the use of participatory planning and accountability tools in order to amplify voice and decision making in securing public services.
- As a result of proactive participation of women and youth in local planning as well as the use of community accountability tools, over 46,000 people have benefited from improved water supplies, improved health services and improved transport in Mozambique.
- ActionAid Nepal used accountability tools in their Local Rights Programmes (LRPs) to increase community access to social security benefits. As a result, benefits have accrued and been paid timely to over 16,000 people living in poverty.

**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.**

- In ActionAid-supported areas in Africa and Asia, 27 district reports have been used to track performance and support local dialogue on the right to quality public education for all children. This has involved 87,468 parents and 8,422 teachers located in 2,100 schools. In addition, our work on education has contributed to 233,692 girls and 233,444 boys completing primary education.
- In Cambodia, one national citizen's report was compiled by consolidating data from 72 primary schools in 15 provinces. Following the national report, school improvement plans were developed in 24 primary schools, and ActionAid and partners mobilised to obtain an increase in teacher salaries.
- In 2013 the federation mobilised 731,418 youth to take action on sustainable change to reduce poverty. This in part due to new work started with more diverse youth groups, such as young men and women from slum communities in Liberia and young lesbian women in South Africa. This is also due to the expansion of Activista into Liberia and Malawi.
- As a result of ActionAid's integrated approach to youth engagement, which includes campaigning and policy advocacy, young people in Myanmar and Liberia are now actively calling for the legislation and development of National Youth Policies, which incorporate and reflect youth concerns.
- ActionAid Ghana convened its Young Female Parliament (YFP), which is made up of young women in school and in agriculture as well as members of young women's clubs. The YFP developed an advocacy agenda, which included engaging with the Ghana Education Service to review the school leadership structure and allow female students to become leadership candidates.

**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.**

- In 2013 a phenomenal 1.7 million people received humanitarian assistance from ActionAid in a manner that promoted their rights. ActionAid responded to 28 new and ongoing disasters spanning across 19 countries; key features of our response included addressing the immediate needs of the most vulnerable communities, especially women and children, ensuring accountability to disaster-affected communities and promoting women's leadership and rights during emergencies.
- As a result of training and support provided by ActionAid and our partners in 16 countries in building resilience, 12,000 community leaders (55.2% of whom were women) reported an increase in risk-reduction skills and knowledge.
- ActionAid Bangladesh introduced a "Women-Led Emergency Response" model, where women in LRPs took on leadership roles in responding to humanitarian crises. ActionAid built community capacity through tools and techniques as well as resources, targeting local women in particular. These women then led needs assessments, negotiated recovery activities, procured necessary materials and monitored overall implementation.

**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.**

- In 2013 ActionAid mobilised 187,734 women and girls (including 35,298 female youth) to challenge culture, traditional and religious norms that restrict women's rights, and reject all harmful traditional practices (HTPs), including early marriage and FGM. We supported school and community groups to monitor and challenge these HTPs, and worked with communities and groups of young women to ensure access to justice for survivors of violence.
- ActionAid also mobilised 35,571 women to engage in income generating activities, and 56,949 women reported having greater confidence in themselves and having a greater say in decision making in their homes.
- ActionAid Brazil supported the launch of the National Agro-ecology Policy, which was a significant achievement of Brazilian social movements fighting for family agriculture in light of the expansion of agribusiness. ActionAid-supported women's movements contributed directly to the policy, and one of the key recommendations was to expand women's participation in organic and agro-ecological farming.

**Organisational Priority 1: Deepen the impact of our work by having an effective programme framework that ensures integration, coherence and quality at all levels.**

- Significant progress was made in rolling out HRBA training across the federation to staff and partners, and ActionAid's participatory methods have been harmonised under the Reflection Action approach to programme design, monitoring and learning.
- Successful management of the Programme-led Funding Planning project with 3 successful pilots launched in 2013 in Uganda, Sierra Leone and Pakistan.

**Organisational Priority 2: Raise our profile and increase our supporter base to more than five million people around the world working towards achieving our mission.**

- Campaigns and non-financial supporters have increased by 92% and 70% respectively, along with a 23% increase in financial supporters, resulting in an estimated total number of 1.3 million supporters.
- In terms of digital engagement, ActionAid saw an increase in social media followers, with a 57% increase in Twitter and a 58% increase in Facebook along with a 76% increase in website traffic. Peaks included the Bangladesh Rana Plaza disaster coverage in October and Typhoon Haiyan in Philippines in November.

**Organisational Priority 3: Diversify and raise our global annual income to more than 350 million euros per year by 2017.**

- ActionAid International's total income in 2013 was €225 million. This is a good performance in the context of the slow recovery from the global recessionary environment and our exposure to European sources of funding. Total global income increased by 3% as compared to 2012.
- The total number of supporters making regular donations increased by 2% to 389,400. There were large increases in supporter numbers in Brazil, India, Denmark, Sweden and France, but declines in Australia, Ireland, UK and the USA. Most new supporters were recruited through TV advertising, street and door to door fundraising, and online.
- Focussed investment in new markets of €2.2m generated almost €4m of income during the year demonstrating the success in these new markets and supporting diversification of our income.

**Organisational Priority 4: 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.**

- The Secretariat worked with countries and with AA Denmark's Training for Change to train 16,527 ActionAid staff, partners and other stakeholders in 2013.
- The first diversity mapping exercise for the Secretariat was compiled; in 2013 Secretariat staff was made up of nationals from Africa (44%), Europe (34%), Asia (13%), Americas (8%) and Australia (1%), 64% of whom were based in the South.
- The Senior Leadership Development Programme, designed in partnership with the Syracuse University Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs and the Centre for Creative Leadership, was launched in 2013. The programme includes face to face sessions, individual coaching and action learning projects on key issues impacting ActionAid, and the first face to face session was held in Arusha in August with 23 participants from countries (70%) and the Secretariat (30%).

**Organisational Priority 5: Strengthen members and expand the federation, while enhancing mutual accountability, with support from an effective international secretariat.**

- In 2013 The Gambia was accepted as an Affiliate, and France and Bangladesh were supported to be on track for their Affiliation review in 2014.
- Membership Development Plans were developed for countries in the Association/Affiliation Plan approved by the 2013 General Assembly.

- ActionAid's Accountability Charter was approved by the ActionAid International Assembly and an initial assessment of application of the principles is provided in the Organisational Accountability section of this report.

**Organisational Priority 6: Establish effective systems and processes to improve financial management, planning and reporting and the monitoring of our work.**

- The Global M&E Matrix was approved and integrated into federation-wide planning for 2014, and a new network of monitoring and evaluation specialists (EAGLES) from across the federation was launched.
- A standard Chart of Accounts was developed to support delivery of the international strategy and assist with meeting our internal and external reporting accountabilities.
- Developed effective systems to improve planning and reporting, including the utilisation of a strategic implementation plan and a new Secretariat reporting process.

**Organisational Priority 7: Expand strategically into new countries to advance our mission, based on clear criteria and transparent processes.**

- Mexico, Turkey and Indonesia were identified and approved by the AAI Assembly for further exploration and scoping work/appraisals in the 3 countries is on-going. *(Progress on Priority 7 is also incorporated in the Board report to the Assembly)*
- Nicaragua, Palestine, and the Arab Regional Initiative (ARI) are now integrating into Secretariat systems and processes.

## 2013 REFLECTIONS AND KEY LESSONS FOR 2015 PLANNING

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The 2013 annual reporting process has provided rich information on progress of the federation against the international strategy. Utilising a mix of qualitative and quantitative data, along with a clear participatory approach, we have been able to highlight achievements, lessons and recommendations that will help the federation further its mission.

This exercise has also highlighted a number of critical strategic issues:

- Information and analysis provided suggests that coherence and cohesion across the implementation of the strategy could be improved. Connections and opportunities across strategic objectives, as well as linkages between organisational strength and delivery of the strategic objectives are not consistently apparent or utilised.
- Implementation of our HRBA is fragmented in many cases, and there is an apparent lack of full understanding across the organisation of our Theory and Change and HRBA as a framework for strategy and planning, implementation and evaluation.
- Although we have begun systematic evidence-based assessment and demonstration of the impact of our HRBA and Theory of Change, more work is needed to strengthen the use of evaluations and research to further document and communicate what difference ActionAid makes.
- We have made great progress in building the understanding and ability to implement our HRBA of ourselves, our partners and our key stakeholders – however, much more needs to be done to enable us to fully operationalise our HRBA and theory of change, and to communicate its benefits and impact.
- We have not fully integrated our approach to accountability within our theory of change and HRBA.

The lessons learnt, reflections and suggestions outlined in the body of this report suggest that in order to fully realise the achievement of transformative change in the lives of people living in poverty, the federation should focus on:

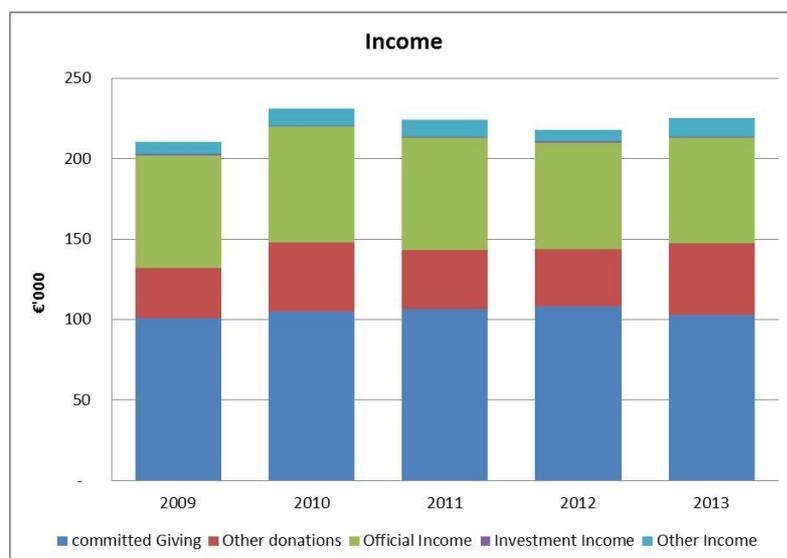
- 1) Creating a body of robust evidence that demonstrates the validity and impact of our Theory of Change and HRBA.
- 2) Enhancing common understanding across the organisation and with partners of ActionAid's Theory of Change and HRBA.
- 3) Enabling countries and partners to effectively strategise, plan, implement and evaluate programmes that more fully reflect the depth and breadth of our HRBA.
- 4) Communicating the differences that ActionAid can and does make, in clear, robust, evidence-based ways.
- 5) Strengthening our accountability commitments and practices, and clearly linking these to our Theory of Change and HRBA.

## 2013 FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE

### INCOME

ActionAid International's total income in 2013 was €225 million. This is a good performance in the context of the slow recovery from the global recession and our exposure to European sources of funding. Income increased by 3% as compared to 2012.

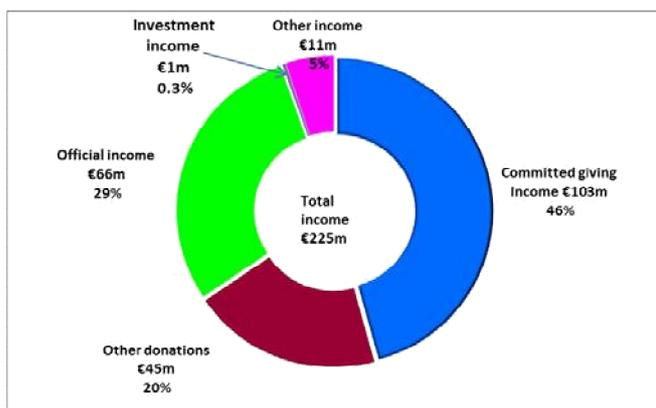
**Table 1: Income by Type (5 year trend)**



The performance on voluntary income in Euros (€) increased in 2013. Our voluntary income is derived mainly from Child Sponsorship and other committed giving fundraising products. Strong performance from growth in new markets in Brazil, India, Denmark and Netherlands as well as a strong recovery in Greece offset declines in Ireland, Sweden, UK and Italy.

The total number of supporters making regular donations increased by 2% to 389,400. There were large increases in supporter numbers in Brazil, India, Denmark, Sweden and France, but declines in Australia, Ireland, UK and the USA. Most new supporters were recruited through TV advertising, street and door to door fundraising, and online.

Other donations increased in 2013 with large one-off donations from high net worth individuals and corporates. Official income remains steady in 2013 and represents 29% of total income.

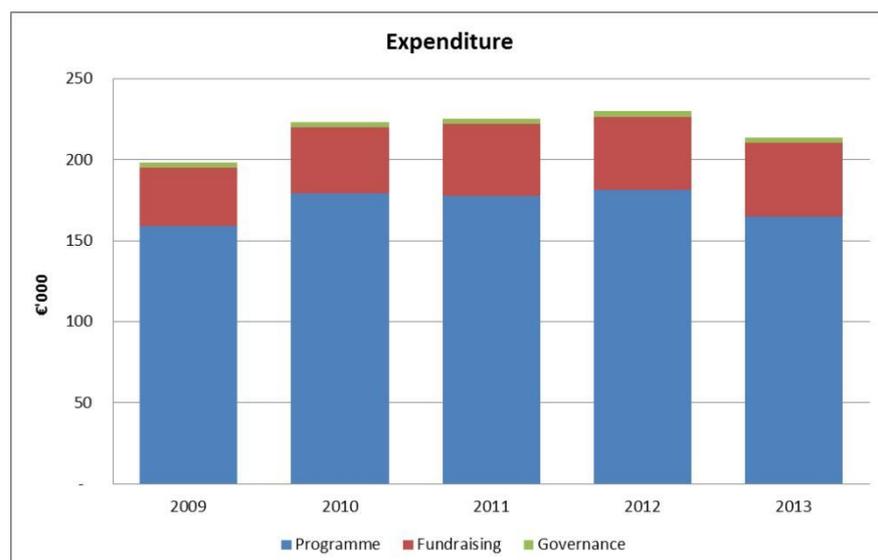


## EXPENDITURE

Total 2013 expenditure of **€213 million** was 7% lower than 2012, partly due to a decline in emergency-related activities in Afghanistan, Haiti and Kenya, and difficult operating conditions in high security risk countries. Fundraising remained steady in €, increasing on an underlying basis by **5%**, Programme costs decreased by **9%** and Governance costs decreased by **20% largely driven by a reduction in internal audit costs**. As a percentage of total costs, Fundraising costs increased marginally to **21%** in 2013. Fundraising costs as a percentage of total income remained at **20%**, with increasing investment in funding affiliates' own activities as well as new affiliates to diversify our income sources offset by currency impacts.

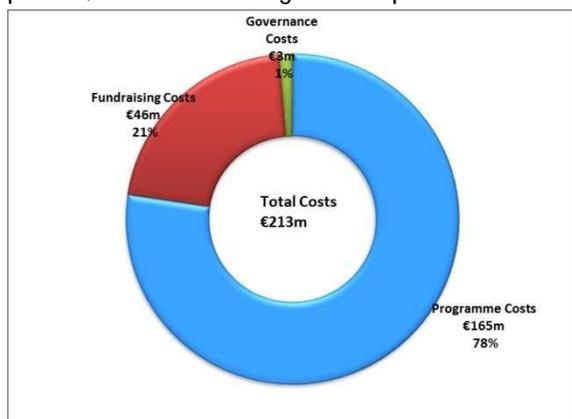
Support costs decreased by **4%** due to reductions in scale as major donor projects related to emergencies were phasing out. As a percentage of total costs, support costs remained steady at **18%**. Support costs are allocated to Programme, Fundraising and Governance based on head count.

**Table 2: Expenditure by Type (5 year trend)**



During 2013, a significant proportion of our costs were spent on Programme activities. Programme costs represented **78%** of total costs. As a strategic objective, the organisation continues to invest

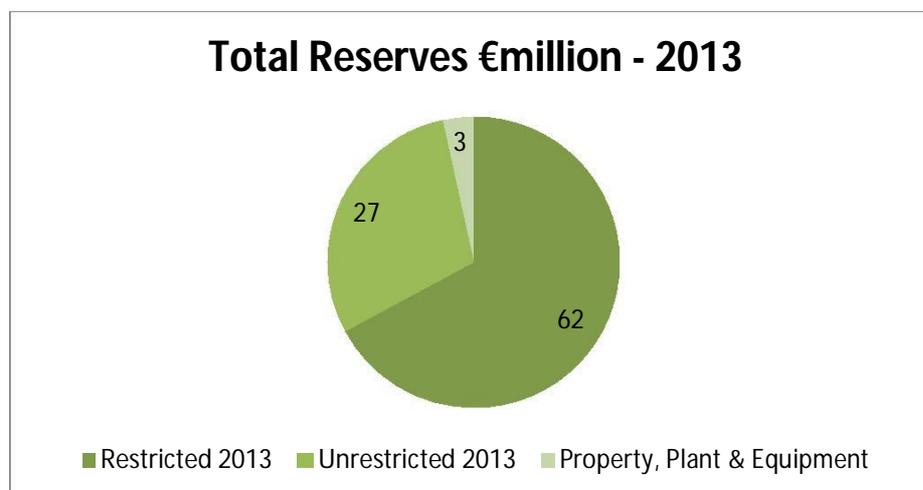
heavily in fundraising activities with a goal of diversifying and increasing income during the strategy period, thus fundraising costs represented **21%** of the total costs.



### Aggregated Statement of 2013 Financial Position

The aggregated balance sheet shows that net assets have increased to **€92m** in 2013; an increase of **€10m** due to higher cash balances. The balance sheet contains €80m of cash and short term bank deposits, which is higher than 2012 by **9%** due to timing differences between receiving income and incurring expenditure. The total Reserves are represented by Restricted of **€62m** and Unrestricted of **€27m**, an increase of **€5m** each over the prior year.

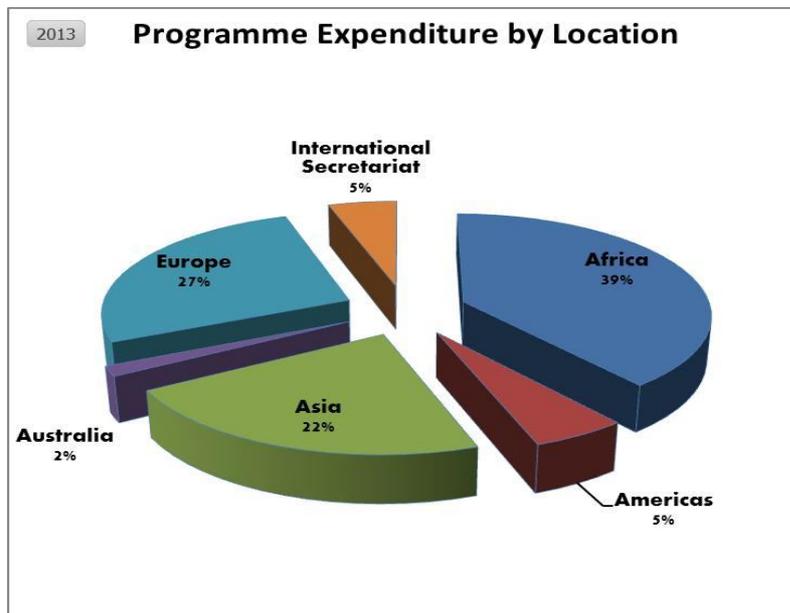
**Table 3: Total Reserves as at 31 December 2013**



### Programme Expenditure by Location

The majority of our local rights programmes are based in rural communities in Africa, Asia and the Americas. Most of our programmes are focused in Low Income Countries; however, we also do campaign and advocacy work in high income countries. In 2013 we spent a significant amount of funds in poor and marginalised communities in Low Income Countries, as illustrated below.

Figure 3: 2013 Programme Expenditure by Location



**Table 4: 2013 Programme Expenditure by Country**

Country	Grants to partners €'000	Direct programme €'000	2013 €'000	2012 €'000
<b>Affiliates &amp; Associates</b>				
Australia	-	2,152	2,152	4,896
Bangladesh	1,602	1,917	3,519	6,145
Brazil	2,689	820	3,509	3,868
Denmark	2,442	20,708	23,149	15,988
France	51	339	390	473
Ghana	893	1,866	2,759	2,928
Greece	-	526	526	459
Guatemala	238	1,634	1,872	2,028
India	6,746	4,044	10,790	10,414
Ireland	-	77	77	126
Italy	-	5,063	5,063	2,660
Kenya	701	10,524	11,225	17,846
Malawi	1,174	2,129	3,303	3,726
Mozambique	965	1,363	2,328	2,906
Nepal	1,677	1,659	3,336	3,255
Netherlands	230	480	709	851
Nigeria	1,693	1,833	3,526	6,203
Sierra Leone	475	1,761	2,236	2,507
Sweden	738	38	776	1,109
Tanzania	488	1,313	1,801	2,877
Thailand	168	148	317	435
The Gambia	1,212	878	2,090	2,011
Uganda	1,319	4,585	5,904	6,012
UK	1,251	4,083	5,334	6,435
USA	-	870	870	555
Zambia	-	1,996	1,996	2,537
<b>Country Programmes</b>				
Afghanistan	144	1,804	1,947	3,292
Burundi	82	615	697	887
Cambodia	1,132	497	1,629	2,366
China	439	497	937	1,070
DRC	115	894	1,010	699
Ethiopia	540	3,605	4,144	5,162
Haiti & DR	755	304	1,059	3,833
Lesotho	168	525	694	551
Liberia	166	780	946	906
Myanmar	2,680	1,442	4,122	2,595
Pakistan	1,682	984	2,666	4,546
Rwanda	556	1,005	1,561	1,131
Senegal	509	430	939	1,070
Somaliland	86	993	1,079	816
South Africa	303	651	954	869
Vietnam	977	656	1,633	1,697
Zimbabwe	1,374	660	2,033	2,566
<b>Other</b>				
AAI Secretariat	1,408	5,465	6,872	6,278
Regional Initiatives		666	666	745
<b>All countries &amp; units</b>	<b>39,869</b>	<b>95,275</b>	<b>135,144</b>	<b>150,329</b>
Support costs allocated to programme			30,018	30,773
<b>Total programme expenditure</b>			<b>165,162</b>	<b>181,102</b>

## STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES AND KEY CHANGE PROMISES

### STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 1

Strategic Objective	Promote sustainable agriculture and control over natural resources for people living in poverty	Countries Contributing to Key Change Promise		
		Strategic	Active	Limited
Key Change Promise	Rural women 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.	7	17	4
Key Change Promise	We 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, improving the food security of 25 million people.	8	24	5

Aligned to our theory of change and belief in transitioning to sustainable agriculture, we have worked to ensure that farmers, particularly women farmers, are able to adopt Climate-resilient Sustainable Agriculture (CRSA) models including continued organising around land. In 2013 close to 100,000 women reported increased control over natural resources<sup>1</sup>, and in terms of sustainable agriculture nearly 300,000 people reported increased food security as a result of CRSA<sup>2</sup>.

Key factors in women claiming their rights to land and natural resources is their awareness of their rights, their ability to organise collectively, and their ability and/or opportunity to gain support from officials and male family members. In 2013 AA countries reported that 191,571 women were now aware of their rights to land and natural resources<sup>3</sup>. There were 3,071 women's groups supporting women to organise and claim their rights and entitlements in relation to land and natural resources. In addition, 44,326 women reported increased support of local leaders and male family members in claiming access to land and other natural resources.

These reported figures represent a number of areas of focus and achievement across the Federation in line with our theory of change, including:

<sup>1</sup> 24 countries reported a total of 99,053 women now have increased access and control over land and natural resources. However, this figure includes significant totals from Brazil and Pakistan (28,711 and 20,515 respectively) and does not include three countries that reported an overall increase but did not provide supporting data.

<sup>2</sup> Our strategy target for number of women claiming their rights to land and natural resources is 1 million across the whole federation. The actual change figures for 2013 are likely to be higher than those reported, as several countries that indicated increased women's control did not provide corresponding numbers. However, one key question that we need to address is whether we will see a continued increase in these numbers in the coming years, or whether we are operating at our maximum capacity and therefore will only see a gradual increase going forward.

<sup>3</sup> It should be noted that a total of 145,582 was reported from just 5 countries, thereby constituting a large proportion of the overall total figure

- Women sensitised to report cases of land rights violation and supported in dispute resolutions and legal redress;
- Increased joint decision making between men and women;
- Increased participation of women in community decision making processes, including natural resource committees;
- Women engaging in drafting land policy; and
- Joint ownership of land, and registering land in women's individual or cooperative's names.

With regard to food security and sustainable agriculture, 22 countries reported approximately 295,000 people had improved food security in 2013 as a result of CRSA practices<sup>4</sup>, and over 270,000 farmers were reported by 27 countries to be practicing CRSA in 2013<sup>5</sup>. This is in part due to support and facilitation provided by ActionAid and its partners in training on CRSA, which reached a total of 156,761 farmers in 2013<sup>6</sup>, as well as our collaborative working with 12,399 farmers groups<sup>7</sup>.

The reported increase in food security has resulted from a number of different factors, including:

- Improved production due to better farming practices as a result of training and access to inputs;
- Diversified livelihoods promoted as part of CRSA including livestock production;
- Collective marketing;
- Strong focus on women's rights and strengthening women's groups and farmers groups;
- Networking with and support from likeminded CSOs; and
- Strengthening linkages with government agriculture extensionists and lobbying agriculture ministries and donors for increased support for sustainable agriculture and against policies that contribute to hunger such as biofuels in Europe.

A number of countries also saw progressive national legislation passed, thanks to the contributions of ActionAid and our partners, including India's Food Security Act 2013, which is landmark legislation on the right to food that when fully implemented will increase food security for 780 million people (65% of the total population of 1.2 billion). Brazilian CSOs, including AA Brazil, succeeded in securing the approval of 'Agroecology Plan and Organic Production,' an initiative to harmonise policies and actions for environment friendly agriculture. AA Brazil and partners also mobilised people to collect 56,000 signatures that helped

The Gates Foundation-funded Public Financing for Agriculture project remains a central focus of advocacy work in Africa. This has enabled ActionAid to empower smallholder farmers in Kenya, Nigeria, Rwanda and Uganda to engage in budget advocacy, influence policy and build networks and coalitions to promote investments in agriculture targeting women farmers.

In 2013, we mobilised 28,000 women to demand budget increase in project countries. As a result of our work:

- There was increased agricultural spending in Uganda at local (8-10%), district (50-60%) and national (\$3.5 million USD) levels. The national government has also begun revising its national extension service delivery system, increasing access by smallholder farmers.
- In Nigeria, agriculture budgets increased in Bauchi and Kwara States.
- The Minister of Agriculture in Rwanda expressed support for increased spending and prioritising the needs of women farmers, and agriculture spending increased from 10.2% to 13%.
- The US maintained funding for the two primary vehicles for government spending on agriculture, despite sequestration and overall budget austerity.

<sup>4</sup> 22 countries reported quantitative change data against a total of 37 countries reporting engagement in this KCP. The total of 295,441 includes 122,000 people reported by Burundi. However, it does not include 3,000,000 reported by Zambia, which is being further interrogated.

<sup>5</sup> This total includes 163,000 farmers reported by Brazil.

<sup>6</sup> As reported by 30 countries.

<sup>7</sup> 24 countries reported quantitative change data, and the total includes 8,500 farmers groups reported by Senegal.

successfully stop a bill aimed at releasing 'Terminator seeds' that could have undermined CRSA practices and food security. AA USA, Uganda, Nigeria, Rwanda, Kenya and France all successfully lobbied their national governments for increased budgetary commitments to support smallholder farmers.

ActionAid has also made strides at regional and international levels. 2013 was a developmental year for the Land Grab multi-country campaign, with the broad campaign strategy agreed by participating AA countries and preparations made for the campaign launch in May 2014. ActionAid also provided strong leadership to the Comprehensive African Agriculture Development Program (CAADP), developed materials to support civil society engagement with governments on CAADP processes and organised Rural Women's Assemblies alongside high-level CAADP events to provide women smallholder farmers with opportunities to engage directly with government officials on improved agricultural investment.

### **Implementation of our HRBA**

Empowerment through capacity building and awareness raising, and solidarity through networking, collectives and cooperatives gained further momentum in 2013. There continued to be a particular focus on women, and working with them to address structural barriers to improved food security. Linkages between empowerment and campaigning were strong, with countries linking awareness raising and organisational strengthening with research, advocacy and policy implementation. However, common understanding of solidarity and work on alternatives seemed to be limited.

Empowerment: the use of Reflect-Action methodologies has raised critical consciousness among communities, and provided space for women to analyse and challenge power dynamics surrounding land access issues. There was increased empowerment work with women farmers in agriculture and access to markets in Nepal, India, Bangladesh, Cambodia and Zimbabwe.

Solidarity: AA USA targeted new constituencies in the US to raise awareness of the dangers posed by the New Alliance to the land rights and livelihoods of women and their families in African countries.

Campaigns: In Nepal, Pakistan, Nicaragua, Nigeria and Uganda there was greater focus on policy advocacy, linking local issues with national policy changes. AA Netherlands continued its effective campaigning against biofuels through research and advocacy, including launching the Fuel to the Fire report and collaborating with a food rights network in Sierra Leone to present the impact of biofuel farming to government ministries and MPs.

Alternatives: Although work on alternatives was limited, there were some good examples from countries. ActionAid Nepal has developed collective farming practices as an alternative model of CRSA, and has used this to link smallholder farmers with government institutions, which has resulted in increased income. For example, farmers in Rasuwa District, in the Central Region, have generated \$27,000 USD through collective farming of herbs.

As a result of ActionAid Ghana's combined approach to empowering women farmers through training, supporting solidarity through the formation of women farmers' groups and helping to ensure agriculture extension agents were providing extension services to women farmers, 6,000 women farmers now practice CRSA (an increase of 3,500 from 2012).

### **Lessons Learnt**

- Include Activista in supporting interventions, as demonstrated by Gambia and Nigeria where we have seen young women more involved and where increased access and control over land and natural resources has been reported.
- Build partnerships and alliances. Of the 23 countries that reported changes in legal frameworks for protecting women’s rights to land, nearly all achieved this through partnerships with peer organisations as well as implementing partners.
- Realise that what is more interesting for the North is not always connected to the most important issues on the ground in the South. Deliberate efforts need to be made to understand these dynamics and use this to shape programming.

## Strategic Objective 2

Strategic Objective	Advancing the political influence of people living in poverty to hold governments and corporates accountable.	Countries Contributing to Key Change Promise		
		Strategic	Active	Limited
Key Change Promise	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.	6	19	3
Key Change Promise	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.	7	14	0

ActionAid and our partners have been working to advance the political influence of people living in poverty to hold their governments and corporations accountable, particularly in terms of achieving improvements in the quality, equity and gender-responsiveness of public services (KCP 3) and better redistribution of resources to finance public policies that reduce poverty (KCP 4).

In 2013 this involved efforts to increase civic accountability on public services in 2,900 local governments, and attempts were made to influence them to improve their quality of service delivery. A key element of such efforts has involved engaging with local government officials (as duty bearers) to build their capacities as well as strengthening communities’ capacities through the use of participatory planning and accountability tools. Such tools have included public expenditure tracking surveys (PETs), community score cards, citizen report cards, social audits, etc.

As a result of proactive participation of women and youth in local planning and the employment of community accountability tools, over 46,000 people have benefited from improved water supplies (11 bore wells), improved health services (5 maternity wards) and improved transport (226 km road repairs) in Montepuez province in Mozambique.

Another key element of this work has included training women and youth leaders as emerging voices in their communities. For example, in ActionAid country programmes in Myanmar, Bangladesh, Nepal, India, Uganda, Zimbabwe, Mozambique, Lesotho, Zambia and Nicaragua, we have facilitated the establishment of participatory planning processes with local government officials and communities, which has meant that the voices of the women, youth and people living in poverty

are now reflected in local development plans. One significant milestone was ActionAid Myanmar's participatory planning methodology for village development plans called The Village Book, which was recognized as useful by the national government and subsequently adopted by all townships across the country. Another successful example was the work of ActionAid Zambia within the Decentralisation Alliance Network, which influenced the national government to adopt a decentralisation policy that accords substantial participation for local communities in the planning and implementation of development projects. One new focus area of this work in 2013 has been undertaking efforts to achieve greater accountability for gender-responsive public services.

The institutionalisation of accountability through legislative mechanisms has been a significant achievement as demonstrated by, for example, reformed decentralisation laws in Uganda, changes in public procurement law in Sierra Leone, and the enactment of a citizen charter in Nepal. This work has included successes in building networks and alliances, youth mobilisation, women's leadership development, and training and capacity development for elected people's representatives at the ward, village, and local township councils, which have enhanced the voice, representation and decision-making by traditionally marginalised groups. This has resulted in, for example: women and

Through parliamentary advocacy and lobbying as well as coalition campaigning significant gains were achieved by ActionAid UK in increasing focus on the role of developing countries in framing international fair tax rules. UK Government commitments to review transparency laws related to UK companies abroad, create space for developing countries in global negotiations for fair tax rules and escalate these discussions from the G8 to G20 forums are expected to impact on international changes to tax transparency and tax justice.

Dalits engaged in planning processes in Nepal; achieving higher allocations of budgets for health and education facilities in Mozambique; improved sanitation in city municipalities in Zimbabwe; improved quality of public services in Vietnam; and the realisation of better wages and improved benefits for local public workers in India.

Regarding our work on improved redistribution of resources to finance public policies that reduce poverty, in 2013 countries demonstrated results in relation to tax justice programming. While the Northern affiliates addressed issues from a global rules perspective (and changes required in their countries) in order to achieve changes in the global system, Southern affiliates addressed tax justice issues from the point of view of lost

resources for the domestic tax base. This included advocacy to change regulations, resulting in reforms to the national tax system (Uganda, Zambia, Mozambique, and Bangladesh). For example, AA Bangladesh worked to get the value-added tax (VAT) on small businesses activities exempted. Other initiatives were focused on collecting evidence on tax inequalities, particularly at the LRP level, where women and youth leaders used this information to advocate for tax reforms at the national level. Seven countries were successful in collecting evidence on unfair tax practices (incentives for foreign investors) and revenue losses due to legal tax loopholes, etc. For example, ActionAid Malawi reported MK100 billion in losses due to tax incentives between 2008 and 2012, and ActionAid Bangladesh took steps to map their national tax system and existing fiscal policies.

With regard to improved redistribution of national resources, ActionAid has focused on establishing or improving national social protection policies in 10 countries. For example, ActionAid Brazil intensively engaged with the monitoring of national cash transfer programs, AA Vietnam collected evidence on the performance of social protection programs for migrant workers, LRPs in Nepal successfully facilitated the establishment of new

ActionAid Nepal has used accountability tools at the LRP level to increase community access to social security benefits. As a result, benefits have accrued to over 16,000 people living in poverty, and were paid timely.

social security benefits for the poor, and through coalition work ActionAid India addressed issues related to universal old age pension, social security charter for informal workers and housing security for urban slum dwellers. These countries are now working with partners to advocate for universal access to social protection.

### **Implementation of our HRBA**

Solidarity: Working in solidarity by building alliances and networks at the national level has been the fundamental approach in this strategic area for most countries. LRP partners, national partners, and local and regional networks have been supported by ActionAid to advocate for more accountable public services. Seeking and improving accountability of service delivery at the local level, demanding for higher or better allocations for public services, devolution and decentralisation of decision making to the local authorities, and decentralised and inclusive planning processes are some of the areas of work. Most countries supported the establishment of community based organisations (CBOs) consisting of leadership from people living in poverty in order to ensure that leadership is developed from within and not without.

Local – national – international Linkages: Linking local to sub-regional to national levels has also been a hallmark of ActionAid’s way of working in this specific area. However, there is no evidence at this stage linking the work on public services to our international engagement. This is an area that can be explored further as countries who are involved with the Tax Power Campaign visualise the need for gender responsive public services advocacy linked to the campaign. This needs to be a strategic focus for the Secretariat so that countries are supported with strategic thinking and development of action plans. The main challenge will be to ensure effective coordination at the Secretariat level as well as country levels. We need to acknowledge that programmatic foundations are the basis for our policy and campaign engagement, and building organic links with programme, and policy, advocacy and campaign elements is a major challenge.

### **Lessons Learnt**

- The rigour and systematisation of our public services analysis work needs to be greatly strengthened in terms of collecting and monitoring data, particularly with our new area of focus on gender-responsive public services, where it is imperative that immediate steps be taken to ensure local governments are collecting and publishing gender-disaggregated data.
- There is inadequate national-level ELBAG work, which threatens our ability to work effectively in a number of areas, not least the Tax Power Campaign.
- ActionAid’s work on gender-responsive public services and related civic accountability could and should be more comprehensively linked and coordinated with ActionAid’s other programmes on women’s rights and youth engagement. There is also a need to address public services accountability work more generally as cross-cutting, and ensure the benefits from improved coordination and support from different key change promises.
- Our work in this area provides ample scope for peer learning and sharing of experiences across the federation and beyond. Efforts to strengthen Communities of Practice should

be explored, and other opportunities such as the exploratory work around developing Knowledge Hubs (e.g. ActionAid Nepal's efforts to develop a knowledge hub on participatory democracy) should also be considered and supported.

### Strategic Objective 3

Strategic Objective	Improve the quality of public education for all children and support youth to become drivers of change towards a poverty-free planet	Countries Contributing to Key Change Promise		
		Strategic	Active	Limited
Key Change Promise	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.	10	15	8
Key Change Promise	We will have mobilised over 5 million youth to take sustained action towards building a poverty-free planet.	5	13	6

2013 was productive in terms of engagement on the provision of quality education as a fundamental right in Zambia, Guatemala, Lesotho, Nepal, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Burundi and Rwanda. Informed by community-led participatory data collection in Zambia, Guatemala, Lesotho, Nepal, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Burundi and Rwanda, 33 national citizen reports were compiled and disseminated to advocate for improvements to education systems, and guide policy engagement. In ActionAid-supported areas in Africa and Asia, 27 district reports have been used to track performance and support local dialogue on the right to quality public education for all children. This has involved 87,468 parents and 8,422 teachers located in 2,100 schools. In 2013 our work on education has contributed to 233,692 girls and 233,444 boys completing primary education in the areas where we work.

With the mainstreaming of Promoting Rights in Schools (PRS) in the above-named countries, it has been imperative that children's voices are heard through their involvement in this participatory approach. The education team has worked closely with fundraising colleagues to communicate with LRPs on the necessity of ensuring children's participation (including sponsored children). Children are gradually being perceived as change drivers and education accepted as a priority entitlement for children in the areas where we work.

Integrating a rights perspective into ActionAid's engagement on education has meant that communities in areas where ActionAid works are now more aware of their children's right to education, and as a result:

- Enrolment and retention have improved in critical areas of LRPs<sup>8</sup>.
- School governance has been strengthened through empowered school managed committees.
- There has been a strategic value addition from the involvement of partners and other actors, and therefore stronger community participation has anchored our impact at local level.

<sup>8</sup> No data provided.

In 2013 the federation mobilised an estimated 731,418 youth<sup>9</sup>. In addition, a number of key achievements have been realised:

- A number of ActionAid countries have begun working with more diverse youth groups. For example, young men and women from slum communities in Liberia have become involved with waste enterprises to enhance youth economic independence and create environmental sustainability for communities. In South Africa, safe spaces have been created for young lesbian women who have become increasingly involved in solidarity struggles in their communities.
- There has been a growing understanding that young people are not simply recipients of aid and development, but can be partners in the development process. For example, in Myanmar young people are helping to develop the monitoring and evaluation processes of ActionAid, including collecting baseline data.
- Key operational milestones have also been achieved, including:
  - The HRBA Youth Foundation Course was designed, piloted and rolled out, and nine ActionAid countries held training workshops.
  - A toolkit on youth programming across the programme cycle was developed and is currently being piloted in 3 country programmes.
  - Activista expanded into several countries, including Liberia and Malawi.

In addition, there is evidence that young people are increasingly taking sustained action across the strategic objectives, and with other initiatives within ActionAid organised platforms as well as outside ActionAid platforms. There are several notable examples that demonstrate the depth and increasing quality to our work with youth, such as:

- In Malawi 63 youth parliamentarians were trained in advocacy and public speaking, which contributed to their active participation in the September 2013 sitting of the Youth Parliament. As a result of various youth initiatives in solidarity with other youth networks, the National Youth Policy was launched in August 2013 and the President confirmed commitment to ensuring youth skills and employment development.
- In Liberia youth have created an Accountability Forum that engages with duty bearers to hold them to account for the provision of basic services.

### **Implementation of our HRBA**

The PRS framework aligns to our HRBA framework in terms of empowerment, solidarity and campaigns through promoting alternatives. The PRS as an alternative approach empowers the community and school through a participatory approach which permits the monitoring of the implementation of the child's rights to education. Together the community and civil society identify the rights violations on the ground, which are later translated through powerful solidarity in advocacy issues that boost the campaign for change from local to national and international levels.

For example, Malawi has an integrated approach to its education work at both local and national levels. In terms of planning, there is coordination between LRP plans and national policy engagement, and ActionAid works closely with national key actors to challenge the government. In Cambodia, one national citizen report was compiled at national level by consolidating data from 72

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<sup>9</sup> Data was not provided by 7 countries (1 strategic and 6 active) engaging in this work, so the actual total may be higher.

primary schools in 15 provinces. Following the national report, school improvement plans were developed in 24 primary schools and ActionAid and partners mobilised to obtain an increase in teacher salaries.

ActionAid countries have developed a more comprehensive approach to their youth engagement work by incorporating aspects of programming, campaigning and in some instances policy advocacy (such as in Liberia and Myanmar). Young people supported by ActionAid are currently campaigning for the development of National Youth Policies in Liberia and Myanmar. ActionAid Burundi has opened local political spaces and increased the participation of young people in community development committees. ActionAid Mozambique has supported youth groups to access local development funds, something that was previously out of reach.

Activista continued to act as a vibrant platform, and Activista coordinators and members have been engaged in youth leadership initiatives as well as in solidarity actions to support such issues as violence against women, tax justice, and safe cities.

The development of the HRBA Youth Foundation course, which has been a first for the federation in terms of seeking to combine programmatic and campaigning approaches, has also sought to connect local, national and international levels. The course has been designed to bring together a mixed base of participants, including LRP partners, youth and a variety of ActionAid staff.

ActionAid Ghana's Young Female Parliament (YFP) is made up of young women in school, youth in agriculture and young women's clubs. The YFP has met regularly to interact and plan their advocacy activities with duty bearers as well as reflect on activities implemented so far. The members have built their confidence and acquired knowledge and skills, developed an agenda for their advocacy and lobbying activities, and have accessed government pro-poor initiatives, such as the youth in agriculture programme. The YFP had two of its members appointed in district assemblies and engaged with the Ghana Education Service to review the school leadership structure and allow female students to become leadership candidates.

### **Lessons Learnt**

- It is clear from the 2013 achievements that the PRS framework is a tool that can be adapted to all the countries, including in countries like Ethiopia and Rwanda where the use of the word "right" is a challenge in itself.
- Countries need to improve their understanding of alternatives within the theory of change, and the Secretariat has begun to produce a programme development toolkit that will help fill this capacity gap. In addition, some countries are the baseline report as an end product rather than seeing it as the starting point of bigger policy engagement towards change and reform. The involvement of the community in the data collection process enables greater ownership and appropriation, critical for the next step in translating the gaps identified in advocacy issues. The aforementioned toolkit and subsequent training planned for 2014 should help address this.
- Because of its focus on children's rights to education, the PRS is attractive to donors and institutions that are child centred.

- When young people are able to see changes in their lives, they are more motivated to take action. For this reason, it is important that they are part of processes, such as planning, where they can identify and locate their needs and aspirations in a broader change agenda.

#### Strategic Objective 4

Strategic Objective	Build the resilience of people living in poverty to conflicts and disasters, and respond to disasters with people-centred, rights-based alternatives.	Countries Contributing to Key Change Promise		
		Strategic	Active	Limited
Key Change Promise	We will have built effective risk reduction and resilience systems and capacities in over 5,000 communities.	9	8	6
Key Change Promise	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.	4	7	7

In 2013 a total of 1,707,896 people received humanitarian assistance in a manner that respected their rights. Our emergency and humanitarian responses (both new and ongoing since 2012) spanned across 19 countries, including Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Cambodia, DRC, Ethiopia, The Gambia, Haiti, India, Jordan, Kenya, Lebanon, Malawi, Myanmar, Mozambique, Nepal, Pakistan, The Philippines, Vietnam and Zimbabwe. Key features of ActionAid’s responses included addressing immediate needs of the most vulnerable communities living in poverty and exclusion, especially women and children, ensuring accountability to disaster-affected communities and promoting women’s leadership.

ActionAid responded to over 28 new and ongoing disasters, of which 16 were yellow alerts. Two orange alert level disasters were declared in 2013 – the Uttarakhand floods in India and floods in Mozambique. The Syria refugee crisis and The Philippines typhoon Haiyan fell outside the alert system but were equivalent to an orange and red alert respectively. The EFAST roster remained at 72 members, due to staff turnover, and 14 EFAST members were deployed in 2013 to support the Syria and Philippines crises.

ActionAid Bangladesh introduced a “Women Led Emergency Response” model, where women in LRPs took leadership roles in responding to humanitarian crises. ActionAid built community capacity through tools and techniques as well as resources, targeting local women in particular. These women then led needs assessments, negotiated recovery activities, procured necessary materials and monitored overall implementation.

Disaster preparedness training and plan development were supported in 13 countries, bringing the total number of countries supported to 18 (out of 24 priority countries). Preparedness plans in Liberia, Malawi, Zimbabwe and Haiti were approved and integrated into planning and budgets. The number of LRP-level preparedness plans is also increasing – for example, 8 LRPs in Kenya were implementing a comprehensive drought response plan and have integrated disaster and emergency preparedness into their annual plans.

A new Accountability in Emergencies project began in July 2013 as part of our commitment to ensure our emergency responses are accountable to disaster-affected communities. The aim is to support ActionAid countries to operationalise accountability in emergency response programmes, in part through the development of practical tools and documentation of good practice, and to use this as a platform for promoting strengthened accountability in emergencies within the international humanitarian environment.

Denmark, Haiti, Kenya, Myanmar and Pakistan began working together in 2013 to develop expertise, build capacity, demonstrate how accountability can be operationalised in emergencies and share ActionAid approaches and experience externally. This group is taking on a leadership role for the wider Federation, promoting accountability in emergencies and becoming a resource for other countries.

Although thinking and implementation around resilience is a relatively recent phenomenon for ActionAid, encouraging results are coming both from countries and the IS. Attitude and practice changes have occurred at community, government and international levels. Most interventions have focused on community and government levels, and whilst this is important, there is still an urgent need to engage with regional and international policy processes. Reaching the target of 5,000 resilient communities by 2017 requires more intervention and attention in the coming years. AAUSA and AAUK have played a significant role, and our ability to reach our target would be increased if others adopted similar involvement and commitment. This includes countries that are frequently affected by disasters but are not working on resilience and instead are maintaining a strong focus on emergency response.

In 2013, 16 countries<sup>10</sup> increased the risk-reduction skills and knowledge of 12,000 community leaders (55.2% of whom were women). Afghanistan Disaster Risk Reduction Committees are now equipped and working with the government to reduce vulnerabilities, by establishing early warning systems, erosion protection, flood gauge stations and strengthening river banks. In Bangladesh, 21 women's groups in Dacop Upazila conducted vulnerability analyses and negotiated with community leaders to develop and implement participatory resilience plans. Vietnam has also introduced participatory disaster preparedness plans, supporting the central role of women and their ability to take ownership in disaster risk reduction.

Ten countries<sup>11</sup> worked to improve women's access to and influence over resources for resilience-building through strengthening and support provided to 236 women's institutions (out of a total of 545). In Pakistan, women have been active members of volunteer CBOs for emergency response, and have been trained in disaster risk reduction, early warning, first aid and rescue. They are also the focal members of early warning systems in their respective villages/clusters. ActionAid has also supported women to adopt alternative livelihood practices that are more resilient to disaster and climate change.

The IS and 12 countries<sup>12</sup> influenced risk and resilience-focused policies and practices at local, national, regional and international levels. As a result of linking village disaster preparedness plans, ensuring inclusiveness and mainstreaming disaster risk reduction, 10 township disaster management

<sup>10</sup> Countries included Afghanistan, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal, Myanmar, Vietnam, Nigeria, Ghana, The Gambia, Lesotho, Guatemala, Somaliland, Kenya, Uganda, Ethiopia, and Malawi

<sup>11</sup> Countries included Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal, Vietnam, Nigeria, The Gambia, Lesotho, Myanmar, Guatemala and Kenya

<sup>12</sup> Countries included Bangladesh, Nepal, Vietnam, India, Nigeria, The Gambia, USA, Myanmar, Guatemala, Tanzania, Kenya and Uganda

plans have been developed and 120 schools are now better prepared for potential hazards. As a result of AAUSA's work with the Green Climate Fund, gender issues must be mainstreamed throughout all policy documents and there must be a 50-50 balance between adaptation and mitigation financing (an unprecedented step).

### Implementation of our HRBA

Emergency preparedness, resilience and response work is the foundation of any rights-based work. Poverty and vulnerability are linked, and disasters erode development gains, but disasters are an opportunity to influence and change power relationships. Our HRBA, largely through our approach to empowerment, has been adopted, and there is an increasing trend of enabling women to take a leadership role in the responses. However, despite some interesting examples within countries, there is more work needed to increase solidarity, improve campaigning, clarify and develop alternatives, and strengthen linkages at all levels.

In Kenya, 8 LRPs are implementing a model comprehensive drought response and resilience programme that links preparedness, response and longer-term resilience with rights-based alternatives around women's leadership, local partnerships, and accountability to disaster-affected communities, along with scientific and local knowledge, and community-led policy advocacy.

Empowerment and Solidarity: Women were included in every step of the process in a disaster response, from needs and vulnerability analysis through to allocating distribution monitoring and complaints manager roles to women. Community accountability mechanisms were established, including transparency boards, community vigilance committees, complaints mechanisms, community-led procurement and public display of financial information. In Pakistan, community youth disaster management groups and disaster management committees were formed, and training was provided to enhance skills around disaster risk reduction. As a result of their work on women's empowerment, AA Bangladesh won the prestigious "Lighthouse Award", which was given in recognition of women's leadership and women centred initiatives for community-based adaptation with respect to climate change and extreme weather conditions.

Campaigns and Local-national-international Linkages: ActionAid countries were involved in advocacy initiatives at different scales which addressed existing and new policies at local, provisional or national level, National Disaster Management Acts, women's rights to land, restoration of livelihoods through the provision of improved agricultural services and inputs, women's participation in negotiation (Loss and Damage), financing local adaptation through local government, women's differentiated vulnerability in climate change, and engagement in Post 2015 discussions. AAUSA created a wide alliance at the COP19 conference, which staged a symbolic walkout from the UNFCCC process to provoke policy change in 2014-15. This was done as part of the campaign for a new international climate regime that delivers resources for vulnerable communities dealing with the impacts of climate change. As a result of campaigning in Uganda and Tanzania, local governments are now integrating and mainstreaming climate change and climate smart agriculture into plans and budgets.

### Lessons Learnt

- Linking emergency responses to long-term development change processes is an area that requires more effort. Connections between our rights-based approach, poverty and vulnerability should be more evident in country strategy plans and adequate resources

should be made available. Preparedness, response and resilience should also be integrated across the other strategic objectives.

- Campaigning should be improved and there is a need to invest in humanitarian policy capacity at local, national, regional and international levels. In addition, not all countries have prioritised linking local level evidence to local, national, regional and global level initiatives.
- There must be sufficient investment in conflict, preparedness, response and resilience, and fundraising for disasters must be prioritised at national and international levels

### Strategic Objective 5

Strategic Objective	Ensure that women and girls can break the cycle of poverty and violence, build economic alternatives and claim control over their bodies.	Countries Contributing to Key Change Promise		
		Strategic	Active	Limited
Key Change Promise	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.	13	21	1
Key Change Promise	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.	6	13	7

In 2013 we continued to build on our previous work addressing violence against women, having diversified to challenge a multitude of practices that impact women's ability to have control over their bodies and sexuality. We have challenged the structural barriers that deny women the full enjoyment of their rights and sought accountability from local and national governments. We continued to prioritise issues and activities related to access to justice, the state's responsibility to

establish institutional responses to the needs and rights of women and girl survivors of violence, and ending early/forced/child marriage and other harmful practices like witchcraft and female genital mutilation (FGM).

In 2013 ActionAid mobilised 187,734 women and girls (including 35,298 youth) to challenge culture, traditional and religious norms that restrict women's rights, and reject all harmful traditional practices (HTPs), including early marriage and FGM. We supported school and community groups to monitor and

As part of International Women's Day 2013, ActionAid Ghana and partners CARD and ASUDEV organised community "durbars" in 10 communities in Jirapa and Sissala East Districts where the incidence of marriage by abduction is high. Over 380 men and 530 women (including 167 youth) participated, and women and girl survivors seized the opportunity to express their anger and called on the men and their chiefs to end this practice.

challenge these HTPs, and worked with communities and groups of young women to ensure access to justice for survivors of violence. ActionAid also worked with partners to increase women's access to sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) information and services.

ActionAid Somaliland and partners have continued to take action with school youth clubs, girls' forums, teachers, traditional elders, religious leaders and school parent associations to eradicate FGM. Recent evidence has shown that over the last two years the practice of FGM in Somaliland has been decreasing.

ActionAid in Ghana, Bangladesh, Nepal, Tanzania, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Somaliland, Mozambique, Liberia, Zimbabwe and Ethiopia empowered and facilitated the formation of school clubs and community committees to monitor and challenge HTPs. To ensure governmental response to incidents of violence against women (VAW), ActionAid has employed several strategies, including: working in communities and with institutions to ensure support for survivors of violence; mobilising community-based women's groups to devise action plans to address VAW; and increasing awareness of as well as advocating for legal rights and support services for women. As a result, new legislation has been enacted, new laws and policies formulated, and mechanisms set up to respond to VAW. These ranged from a specialised

desk in police stations dedicated to addressing violence and crimes against women, one-stop centres for gender-based violence (GBV) and multi-sectoral responses at district levels, to hotlines for survivors of violence and medico-legal services to survivors of violence.

While our foray into women's economic rights and alternatives is new for ActionAid, we have made substantive progress on this<sup>13</sup>. In 2013 ActionAid mobilised 35,571 women to engage in income generating activities, and 56,949 women reported having greater confidence in themselves and having a greater say in decision-making in their homes. Some countries also mobilised women to lobby their governments to provide job opportunities and social security as well as dedicated government jobs for women. Advocacy initiatives, evidence building and coalitions were also involved in putting pressure on governments to recognise, reduce and redistribute women's unpaid care work.

It is important to note that our work on women's economic alternatives is groundbreaking and innovative work for ActionAid as well as other development organisations, in that we are attempting to do much more than provide income generating activities for women. We are attempting to challenge the economic subordination of women and their work, which are at the heart of gender inequality. Therefore the fact that ActionAid has been working on securing economic alternatives for women through collectives and ensuring that women's unpaid care work is recognised, reduced and redistributed between men and women and between families and states, itself marks progress. Interesting examples of women's collectives/cooperatives emerging from Pakistan, Rwanda,

ActionAid Brazil has an established history of supporting the agro-ecology movement and the rights of women farmers within it. In 2013 AAB supported the launch of the National Agro-ecology Policy, which was a significant achievement of Brazilian social movements fighting for family agriculture in light of the expansion of agribusiness. ActionAid-supported women's movements contributed directly to the policy, and one of its key recommendations is to expand women's participation in organic and agro-ecological farming. This is a good example of women defining their own economic alternatives!

Nepal, Ethiopia, Brazil, Bangladesh and India present an alternative to individual entrepreneurship

<sup>13</sup> It must be noted, however, that progress on KCP 10 is varied due to diverse understanding of 'economic alternatives' across the federation. This concept has been interpreted to include both income generating activities and much broader advocacy initiatives aimed at bringing about structural changes to economic policies and production models.

models or micro finance projects that support individual women rather than a collective. In Ethiopia women's involvement in savings and credit cooperatives has demonstrated that women are just as capable as men of engaging in paid work and leading their own organisations. In Bangladesh women involved in collective income generating activities have increasingly decided for themselves how to spend the money earned, either for their own personal use or for children's education and health, family essentials, and transportation to visit their own parents.

Progress on women's economic alternatives is also about changing government policies to support women's work – both paid and unpaid – either by improving access to public services or changing government policies that deprive women of their equal rights to decent work. In February 2013, ActionAid launched the 'Making Care Visible' Report that brought together research and outcomes of our programming on unpaid care work in Nigeria, Nepal, Uganda and Kenya. Several national coalition-building workshops were then held in these countries to introduce the links between women's unpaid care work, economic justice and human rights, and advocacy and capacity building initiatives were held with government ministries.

### Implementation of our HRBA

The greatest focus of activities related to this objective across most of ActionAid countries has been on empowerment. We have also seen women's political and social empowerment taking hold, with increased involvement of women in advocacy activities, demanding changes to local or national level policies. It must be noted that income generation activities may support individual women's empowerment, but do not necessarily lead to greater political voice and decision-making power beyond individual households.

ActionAid Ethiopia has provided support to women's leadership and engagement in savings and credit collectives through a Reflection-Action approach. This has enabled women to lead their own groups and set their own agendas. In addition, these women have stated that they are better able to negotiate power within their households and communities. Previously only men would take decisions on household assets, such as the sale of sheep and goats, but now women participate in both the decision to sell as well as how to utilise the resulting income.

Empowerment: There has been an important focus on empowerment, and LRP staff and partners have used participatory tools like Reflection-Action with women's groups to reflect on their economic, social and political marginalisation as well as supported the adoption of income generating activities. With support from ActionAid, women and girls have been organised and mobilised to challenge harmful practices and gender-based violence.

Solidarity: Brazil, Bangladesh, Nepal, India and Pakistan all reported supporting women's groups and linking them to broader social movements, trade unions or feminist groups. However, more work is still needed to link smaller women's groups to broader women's rights movements, producer groups, and civil society coalitions and platforms.

In 2013 ActionAid built alliances and allies with key actors in the safe cities and women's rights movements, linking up with, among others, Jagori, Women in Cities International and the Huairou Commission, and organising joint advocacy initiatives on the 57<sup>th</sup> Session of the Commission on the Status of Women, the Orange Day Campaign of Unite and the Delhi and Beyond campaign in Brazil, Ethiopia, Nepal and Thailand. As a result Nepal, Kenya and Cambodia are now connected with UN

Habitat on their safe cities programmes, while Kenya, Somaliland and The Gambia have made linkages with the UNJP programme to end FGM.

Campaigning: In Bangladesh, Brazil, Ethiopia, Somaliland, Myanmar and Nepal women supported by ActionAid have taken up leadership positions and made their demand heard to community leaders and government officials. Some of these demands were linked to their work as farmers or unpaid care workers, but also included demands to address gender-based violence or lack of public services. In Bangladesh, women's groups were involved in four major advocacy initiatives around gender responsive local government budgets, access to social protection schemes, fair and decent wages and women's access to government-owned land (khas land).

Local-national-international Linkages: The strongest example of local-national-international linkages has been through the ActionAid programme on unpaid care work. Complementing the launch of the unpaid care work report, the Secretariat, Nigeria, Uganda, Nepal and Kenya worked together to develop national advocacy strategies. In addition, ActionAid and partners actively lobbied the African Union to invest more in women smallholder farmers and provide more public services to recognise, reduce and redistribute their unpaid care work. These demands for change at the regional level were then taken back to Ghana and Rwanda to urge national government action.

### **Lessons Learnt**

Key lessons learnt focused on the power of collective action and reaching out to multiple actors, and the centrality of continuous training and capacity building of women's collectives.

- ActionAid has worked to facilitate women's collectives either to engage in economic activities or through Reflection-Action processes to claim their rights. This reflects our belief in empowerment through collective action, which can lead to changes in individuals' lives as well as within the broader community. In Bangladesh, Reflection-Action was used to make women aware of the eligibility criteria for social welfare and support, and to then demand these from the government, thereby challenging their indifference and 'nepotism'. In Pakistan women's collectives and cooperatives were observed as being a more effective approach to developing sustainable linkages with markets as well as to building a political agenda, instead of focusing solely on economic issues. In Ethiopia, supporting women's savings and credit cooperatives to form trade unions also helped to strengthen their collective voice.
- Rwanda, Vietnam, Ethiopia, Guatemala, Nepal and Somaliland noted that repeated trainings in business skills, leadership and management of collectives as well as women's individual businesses were useful in ensuring sustainability of income generation. For instance, in Nepal ActionAid provided cooperative education, orientation and cooperative management training to 567 women in 20 women's collectives as part of the European Commission-funded Women's Collectives project.

## ORGANISATIONAL PRIORITIES

<b>Organisational Priority 1</b>	<b>Deepen the impact of our work by having an effective programme framework that ensures integration, coherence and quality at all levels.</b>
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Organisational KPI	2013 Results	Commentary/Additional Information
<b>Percentage of LRPs that are systematically planned and implemented in accordance with ActionAid's mission objectives, HRBA principles and approaches, and based on ALPS standards.</b>	75%	The figure provided reflects LRPs with updated strategies aligned to CSP and International strategy (mapped to SOs and KCPS). However, Heads of Programmes report a higher level of alignment with HRBA principles (84% of LRPs). A lower percentage of 63% of LRPs have been actively engaged in national planning of a CSP programme objective.
<b>Percentage of staff, partners and community members trained in campaigning approaches and techniques.</b>	36%	The figure provided does not allow for differences, in terms of size as well as the definition of training, among others. Where countries are indicating training of huge numbers of staff and partners, these may be HRBA foundation courses where campaigning is one of the topics. Or, as in Cambodia, they might have organised their own bespoke campaign training. The indicator also includes three very different stakeholder groups, which if presented separately would probably indicate different trends. Revision of this KPI is therefore recommended.
<b>Percentage of staff whose job description includes responsibilities around campaigning.</b>	41%	<p>Based on our experience this self-reported figure seems unrealistically high. It may be true that a large proportion of staff have campaigning included in their job description. However, whether they are being asked to and are able to carry out campaigning work in addition to other responsibilities is something we need to further explore.</p> <p>A better indicator could be 'full-time responsibility for campaigning and advocacy' which would give us more accurate information. This would enable us to determine whether we are making investments in human resource capacity in line with our strategic commitments.</p> <p>We should carry out a survey of staff on these points when we do the HRBA comprehensive needs assessment or as part of a programme of work on building our campaign infrastructure.</p>
<b>Percentage of programmes included within the Funding Planning framework</b>	Not available	

### Summary of 2013 Performance

Progress was made in aligning work from local to national to international levels, but there are still challenges in ensuring programmes are genuinely designed in a collaborative way across these levels. Aligning an LRP to a CSP or international Strategic Objective is not the same as working

among LRPs, national partners and international allies to design a good quality and effective programme.

ActionAid also made significant progress in rolling out HRBA training, and with the harmonisation of participatory methods under Reflection Action, with core resource materials developed, and regional training workshops and pilot programmes starting.

We have had many more countries with national campaign strategies and plans aligned to the campaign strategies for the three multi-country campaigns, though there remain significant capacity gaps on campaigning and policy work at country level. A new campaign planning training curriculum was developed by the Secretariat and refined with Training for Change, and the revised curriculum was then piloted in November 2013.

Progress has also been made in terms of monitoring and evaluation, with the roll out of a prioritised set of indicators to measure progress against the objectives in the international strategy – i.e. the Global Matrix. Efforts were made to ensure the indicators were consistent with programme work and priorities, and a process for contextualizing indicators at the national level took place through building the capacity of country monitoring and evaluation staff. As a result, the number of countries with a national monitoring framework increased from 18 to 30.

Work has advanced in terms of updating ALPS and steps have been taken in the area of accountability<sup>14</sup>. A proposal for upgrading ALPS has been prepared, which is currently in need of further scoping and allocation of resources in 2014.

### **Lessons, Challenges and Risks**

We have learnt significant lessons about the challenges of supporting the development of good quality programmes, including linking local to international. There has been a tendency to follow CSPs with LRP strategies that have been developed in isolation from one another, creating challenges for implementing our HRBA. The coordinated programme visits in 2013 laid out a model for doing this differently, in a collaborative way, linking local and national partners and informed by international perspectives. A review meeting in December 2013 laid out recommendations from these coordinated visits to further guide our work, and helped to generate a rough guide to programme objective plans.

There are challenges in encouraging people to give up past associations with different brands of participatory methods – Reflect, Star, PVA, ELBAG, etc. – as each has played an important role and has strong followers. The majority of experienced practitioners have a good understanding of a number of these participatory methods and can clearly see the rationale for harmonisation. However, there are particular issues where there is a strong funding relationship linked to a particular approach, as is the case with ELBAG and DANIDA. Although there is a lot of experience with participatory methodologies amongst ActionAid staff and partners in Latin America, colleagues from Africa and Asia have so far been more actively involved in this work.

There are major challenges relating to becoming a more effective campaigning force, especially in terms of investment and capacity at country level. The first challenge has to do with orientation and a common understanding of ActionAid's roles with regard to campaigning nationally. In some countries, our role is still seen as only a supporter of campaigning by social movements, without independent action or strong contributions beyond financial support.

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<sup>14</sup> Also see reporting on Organisational Priority Four for more information regarding the approval of the ActionAid Accountability Charter as well as the Organisational Accountability section of this report

The second challenge has been developing national level campaign strategies that are context-sensitive and aligned to the global campaign strategy. For the first time since HungerFREE, countries had to be guided by their own national strategies as well as the global campaign strategy they helped shape. Many staff did not have this experience and therefore needed assistance in developing their strategies.

The third challenge has been ensuring we have the full-time staff required for a country to successfully and impactfully run a political and policy change campaign. This is an area of continuing concern since most national 'campaign managers' are also either technical advisers (who are also involved in other aspects of a KCP in that country as well as LRP advising and training), the communications officer (who is also involved in communications), the Head of Programme (who also manages LRP managers and all other aspects of the programme of a country) or the Country Director. To compensate for the paucity of full-time (dedicated) staff for campaigns and advocacy, countries have been advised to form 'campaign teams' involving different staff so the workload can be shared. However, campaign teams do not take away from the fact that someone needs to keep manage all campaign and advocacy activities, and to drive continuous planning, implementation and monitoring.

Two key challenges around monitoring and evaluation remain the reliability of data collected by countries as well as aggregation at the international level. These are related to a lack of management information systems at the international level, and the need to develop ways to systematically incorporate lessons learnt from monitoring and evaluation into actions and decision making processes.

<b>Organisational Priority 2</b>	<b>Raise our profile and increase our supporter base to more than five million people around the world working towards achieving our mission</b>
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Organisational KPI	2013 Results				Commentary/Additional Information
<b>Total Supporters by Type<sup>15</sup></b>	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>Financial Supporters</b>	<b>Campaigners</b>	<b>Other Supporters</b>	We have begun to see good reporting of 'other non-financial supporters' (volunteers) but some figures need further interrogation.  We need to agree whether we should use such qualifiers as 'active' and agree a common definition.
	1,312,297	630,879	258,043	232,221	
<b>AAI's "salience by market"</b>	Not available				Although 55.55% of countries reported that their general public was 'very familiar' or 'somewhat familiar' with ActionAid, only one ActionAid country reported as having conducted market research into brand awareness. Therefore the data is very limited.

<sup>15</sup> Definition of a supporter was agreed in 2013, and is the following: 1. We have the person's name and reliable contact details, allowing us to get in touch again, 2. We have permission to contact the person again, 3. The person has taken one of any of the following actions: made a donation, taken a campaigning action, volunteered with us, attended one of our events. As supporters were differently categorised and defined in 2012, it is difficult to give accurate year-on-year comparisons – however, we note that **the total number of supporters reported in 2012 was 1,016,663, with 459,294 financial supporters and 557,369 non-financial supporters** (campaigners were not reported separately).

## Summary of 2013 Performance

In 2013 we saw increases in supporter numbers reported, web traffic and media share of voice, which are indicative of increased global profile. However, it should be noted that there are issues with the robustness of the supporter numbers reported by countries. Initiatives such as the international supporter database (project led by ICT), the fundraising database (project led by International Fundraising) and the SMS-based supporter recruitment (project led by Global Engagement Team) should all start to contribute to more concrete numbers being produced for future reporting periods.

We have tools from which we can measure aspects of our digital communications – online media monitoring and website monitoring – as well as increased use of our communications tools more generally. From the robust evidence produced by these tools, we can report that:

- Online media share of voice has increased from 2.55% in 2012 to 2.7% in 2013. We are still in 7<sup>th</sup> place when compared to our peers, but the gap with 6<sup>th</sup> is now 0.32% as opposed to 2.76% in 2012.
- There has been dramatic growth in website traffic, with over 1.8 million visits in 2013 as compared to 1.02 million in 2012 (76% increase). However, much of this is attributed to new countries joining the web platform.
- Within the Secretariat we saw an increase in social media followers, with a 57% increase in Twitter and a 58% increase in Facebook. We also had 15,806 online media hits in 2013, compared to 8,805 in 2012 (80% increase). Highlights included 1,591 for the Rana Plaza coverage in October, and 2,497 hits for Typhoon Haiyan in November.
- There has been increased global use of CommsHub, which had over 4,000 visits in its first year, and StoriesHub, which had 21,546 visits in 2013 (as compared to 18,150 in 2012, a 15.8% increase) and 6,795 uploads (a 31% increase from 2012's 4,663).

In addition, we reached 800,000 people on Facebook through the Tax Power Caption Contest – the highest viewership ever for ActionAid International. We also supported five countries (Kenya, Zambia, Uganda, Nigeria and Mozambique) with SMS-based recruitment, with some countries reaching as many as 10,000 supporters as a result (most starting from zero). Additional growth in campaign supporter numbers has come from partnerships with digital campaigning organisations.

The Tax Power global launch appears to be one of the main reasons for the significant leap in supporter recruitment in 2013 (and is reflected in the success stories from countries involved). Campaigns and non-financial supporters have increased by 92% and 70% respectively, according to data submitted by countries, compared to a 23% increase in financial supporters.

## Lessons, Challenges and Risks

- We have had no baseline brand awareness data, which makes it impossible to measure change and communications effect in this area. This is a key risk as without this data we cannot robustly demonstrate the effect/impact of our investment in communications and campaigning. In addition, increased profile may draw attention to how we report and measure our progress, meaning there may be an increased risk of gaps being highlighted.

- Countries reported an average of 69% of their communications objectives fulfilled, which hints towards either the setting of unrealistic expectations or that there are key capacity and resources gaps which are inhibiting our successful delivery of these goals. We have also seen significant variance in communications outputs, resourcing and activities across the federation, providing opportunities for lesson learning.
- There is also a significant challenge around measuring progress towards our target of 5 million supporters (following the internationally agreed definition of a supporter), owing to the lack of reliable data being captured currently, particularly as related to campaigning in LRPs.

<b>Organisational Priority 3</b>	<b>Diversify and raise our global annual income to more than 350 million euros per year by 2017</b>
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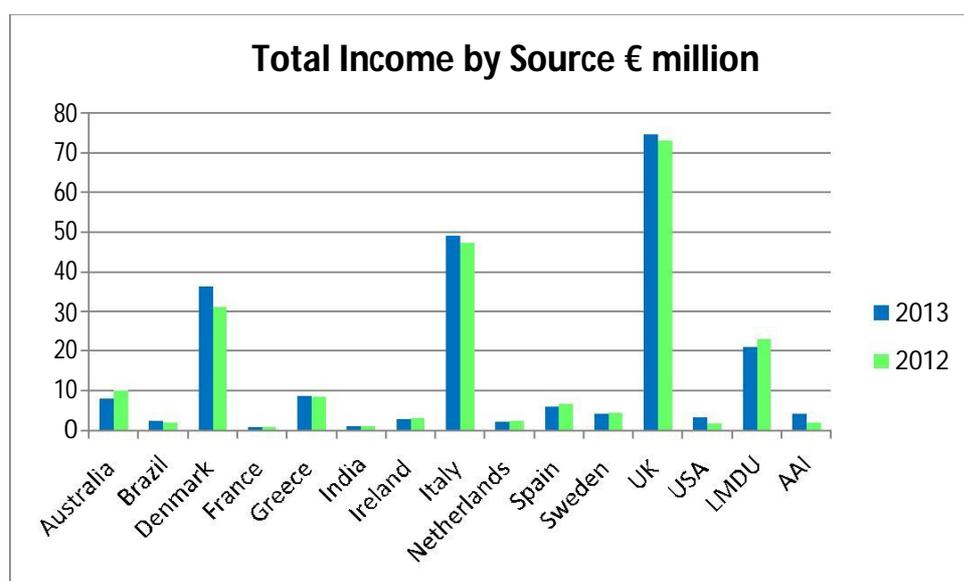
<b>Organisational KPI</b>	<b>2013 Results</b>
<b>Total income by type</b>	See table below
<b>Total income by source</b>	See graph below
<b>Total income by restriction</b>	See table below

## 2013 INCOME TABLES & GRAPHS

Total income by Type

<b>Type</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>% inc</b>
Regular giving	147	144	2%
Official income	66	66	0%
Investment	1	1	0%
Other income	11	7	64%
<b>Total income</b>	<b>225</b>	<b>218</b>	<b>3%</b>

## Total income by Source



## Total income by restriction

By Restriction	2013	2012	% inc
Restricted	148	147	0%
Unrestricted	77	70	10%
<b>Total income</b>	<b>225</b>	<b>218</b>	<b>3%</b>

## Summary of 2013 Performance

Overall income in 2013 was €225m, and the income totals in the table above represent a respectable level of growth against the backdrop of a very difficult external operating environment. The rate of growth is not, however, sufficient for the achievement of the €350m per year fundraising target that the global strategy envisaged us being able to meet by 2017. (The latest long term financial planning exercise we undertook generated a figure of just over €265m by the end of 2017).

As indicated in the Global Fundraising Framework, we are targeting and achieving a gradual shift in our fundraising portfolio in two major areas:

- Geographical trend to invest in more emerging fundraising markets (particularly in global South)
- Income source trend to invest in more high value and institutional sources. The motivation to raise more income from institutions is much stronger than before. Unlike a few years ago, institutional funding is now viewed as a key part of our financial sustainability.

In 2013 ActionAid launched the Asia High Value Hub, which placed the Secretariat in a direct revenue generation role in Asian high value markets where we do not have a country presence (Singapore and Hong Kong initially). Voluntary fundraising activities were extended to 10 new markets across the world in 2013. A major federation project of Programme Led Funding Planning

was developed and launched, which seeks to ensure we are raising funds that are aligned to our strategic objectives.

### Supporter Marketing

2013 saw us increase the overall supporter base by 2% to over 389,400. This still, however, left us 3% below our 2013 target. India and Brazil both did particularly well on supporter numbers, increasing their bases by over 50% compared to 2012. Australia and Ireland had difficult years, under-achieving against 2012 for supporter numbers by 18% and 6% respectively. In terms of retaining supporters, Italy achieved the impressive figure of over 90% retention. Australia struggled to keep its supporters with only a 67% retention rate. In terms of translating these numbers to return on investment, most of our members achieved lower ROI than 2012 and/or their plan. Greece and Brazil were the only countries that were able to improve on their 2012 ROI for child sponsorship.

### High Value

High value income is made up of 4 streams – major donors, trusts and foundations, institutional-style foundations and corporates. Total global high value income in 2013 was €27m, well above both the 2012 actual and 2013 plan figures, largely as a result of a major one-off donation realised towards the end of the year in UK/Italy. 2013 has seen start-ups in several new markets, with initial income streams planned for 2014.

### International Partnerships Development (IPD)

- 48 new contracts were secured in 2013 with a total value of €25million. Eight of these were multi-country contracts (€5.2 million) and 40 were single country (€20million). (This information excludes DFID for which data is not yet available). The six top institutional donors were: ECHO - €7.8m; EC - €7.4m; USAID (Nigeria & Sierra Leone) - €3.8; DANIDA - €3; UN agencies - €0.8m; AusAid - €0.35m.
- No large EC multi-country contracts signed in 2013 as there were no global calls launched.
- The 8 EC contracts signed reflect a significant increase in our success rate (86% success of full applications compared to 66% in 2012 and 50% in 2011). This was mainly due to IPD support and strategic use of consultants and other specialists.
- Two applications to UNTVAW were successful (Brazil and Myanmar) out of the 4 submitted.

The growth in EC income is worth specific mention. In an environment where funding is already limited and there is growing competition, fundraising for rights-based work presents an additional challenge. The EC is one of the few institutions that continue to make significant funding available to civil society with very strong alignment to our strategic priorities. EC grants have a lot of flexibility (within contractual limits) that allow us to implement work that is critical to achieving our key change promises without being significantly donor driven.

### **Lessons, Challenges and Risks**

- Economic stability of our key markets continues to be a key risk.
- In order to grow income it is essential that we increase the level of investment we are able to make in our fundraising work. We need to ensure that our new and emerging markets

continue to have access to the investment funds necessary to grow their supporter marketing.

- As we shift our focus towards institutional donors, we also need to ensure our southern members invest sufficiently in IPD in order to access locally delegated funding streams. The ability to produce high-quality proposals to match the competition is also a significant risk to successfully growing our institutional income.
- Systems are a further area of challenge. Good progress has been made with our Contracts Management database, but we now need to progress a more permanent solution. Until Finance Transformation delivers its full suite of benefits, fundraising monitoring and reporting is also challenged.
- Ambiguity and overlap between the Voluntary Fundraising, International Communications and GET teams around supporter engagement and supporter journeys continues to represent significant risk.

**Organisational Priority 4 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.**

Organisational KPI	2013 Results	Commentary/Additional Information
<b>Percentage of women in leadership roles</b>	44% (SLT, SMT, Function Heads, Country Directors and Country Management Teams).  60% of the SLDP were women.	This is down 3% as compared to 2012's 47%.  AAI's target for women staff members in leadership roles is 50% by 2015.  Across the federation there were 108 promotions, of which women promotions constituted 40% (43 promotions). There were 413 new women staff members as compared to 375 new men staff.  It is important to note that although ActionAid recruits a larger number of women than men, the percentage of women in leadership has gone down. It is also evident that promotions are considerably lower amongst women as compared to men.
<b>People in Aid (PIA) accreditation rating</b>	Secretariat and 26 associates and affiliates have maintained the PIA Quality Mark One (QM 1) accreditation.  AAI is in the preparatory phase for QM II by 2015 – Committed to the PIA Code of Good Practice	The preparatory processes include deploying the Global Staff Engagement survey in April 2014, and completing dedicated HR audits across the federation. In 2013 HR audits were conducted for 24 countries, and are planned for another 19 countries as well as the IS in 2014.
<b>Staff Turnover</b>	Total staff movement: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 788 new starters</li> <li>• 108 promotions</li> <li>• 813 staff exits</li> </ul> Total attrition rate at year end was 27.26% (2012 was 21.29%).  The total attrition rate of 27% is split into voluntary (15%) and involuntary (12%). Voluntary is up from 9% in 2012.	AAI witness a spike in overall attrition rates, as compared to 2012.  Analysis has shown that the majority of voluntary resignations (47%) were attributed to personal reasons, and another 27% of resignations were attributed to better career opportunities and enhanced remuneration offered by recruiting organisations.

### Summary of 2013 Performance

**Capacity Development.** In 2013 the Secretariat signed an agreement with AA Denmark on the delegation of capacity building, tapping into AA Denmark's expertise in training development and delivery to improve the impact of capacity development interventions across the Federation. The collaboration between the Secretariat and AA Denmark has been built around a blended approach to capacity development that includes people, face to face training, and online activities. AA Denmark's People for Change placements in 2013 provided 47 Advisors and 186 Inspirators at country level, a great resource for improving capacity. The Secretariat also worked with countries

and with AA Denmark's Training for Change to implement training identified by countries, with 16,527 people trained in 2013.

A successful pilot was completed for an online e-learning platform. Through our membership in LINGOS we offered staff access to over 500 high quality courses. Approximately 150 staff enrolled during the pilot and the top 3 courses selected for study were in project management, leadership and management and communications. Lessons from the pilot have informed the development of a new ActionAid Learning website, which will launch in Spring 2014 and feature selected LINGOs content plus custom-made ActionAid courses in our specific areas of work, such as HRBA and Reflection-Action.

**Senior Leadership Development Programme.** The Senior Leadership Development Programme<sup>16</sup> was launched in 2013, and this integrated programme included face to face sessions, individual coaching and action learning projects on key issues impacting ActionAid. A face to face meeting was held in Arusha in August with 23 participants from countries (70%) and the IS (30%). This highly engaging leadership group explored individual, team and organisational leadership in both theory and practice, and all committed to follow up coaching to ensure that the intense week of learning was embedded in practice. Feedback from participants indicate that the programme is having an impact and once the 2013 cohort have completed their coaching cycle an evaluation will be done.

**Diversity and Enabling Environment.** The first diversity mapping exercise for the Secretariat was compiled for 2013. Approximately 64% of Secretariat staff are based in the South. The largest cohort of our staff is based in Africa, mainly in our International Headquarters in Johannesburg, South Africa. IS staff nationalities across continents have the following percentage constitution; 44% staff are nationals from Africa, followed by 34% from Europe, 13% from Asia, 8% from Americas and 1% from Australia.

In terms of the ethnic makeup of Secretariat staff, Blacks constituted 45% of the staff population, followed by 30% Whites, 13% Asians and 3% Hispanic. Indigenous, Mixed and Coloured staff constituted another 8%. On the age distribution matrix, twenty five percent (25%) of Secretariat belongs to the age group of 34 – 38 years, followed by 18% in the age group of 39 – 43 years, 17% in the age group of 29 – 33 years and another 16% constitutes the age group of 44 – 48 years.

On employment tenure with AAI, 52.6 % of Secretariat staff have a tenure of 0 – 3 years, followed by 26.6% staff with service tenure of 3 – 6 years, 15% of staff with 6 – 9 years' service tenure and 4% constitute service tenure of 9 – 12 years.

**Women's Leadership and Staff Turnover.** A Talent Management toolkit has been developed to enable succession planning of all critical role holders and plans are to earmark critical roles held by women. The tool will help focus on monitoring of succession plans with specific time lines on destination roles. The Talent Management Toolkit will be piloted in IS and in due course the process will be cascaded to countries inclined to take the succession planning process forward.

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<sup>16</sup> The flagship programme has been an innovative partnership between ActionAid International, Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs at Syracuse University and the Centre for Creative Leadership. The programme is initially aimed at AAI capacity development and will be progressively offered to wider civil society leadership, especially Southern based INGO/NGO's.

## Lessons, Challenges and Risks

- **Women’s Leadership Development.** Engagement with groups within the women’s forum has highlighted the need to strongly focus on capacity building for women at middle management level; otherwise there is a risk of losing ground on women’s leadership.
- **Capacity Development Delegation.** The delegation of capacity development aims to harness the strength of a single member country to the benefit of the whole federation. However, delegation of a core Secretariat function has implementation risks, including:
  - Parties to the delegation need to be very clear about how the delegation is delivered, and who has responsibility for what.
  - Planning and delivery systems must be integrated so that the vision of blended learning is working as envisioned.
  - Sufficient human resource should be allocated to the management of the implementation of the delegation until it becomes business as usual.
  - Federation wide data on capacity development is needed.

Less than optimal management of these risks has resulted in some confusion about the delivery and cost of capacity development training among the Secretariat and some member countries.
- **Diversity** remains a challenge in ActionAid. As an equal opportunity employer, how far do we go with affirmative action and balancing the need for a diverse organisation with ensuring we recruit the best talent possible? This is an ongoing challenge in recruitment processes.
- There have been questions raised about the market competitiveness of some aspects of our current **Remuneration and Benefits Policy** which may have an effect on staff retention. This will be reviewed in 2014.
- The lack of **Succession Planning and Affirmative Action for Women in Senior Leadership** position may provide challenging for us in terms of meeting our target of 50% of women in leadership positions in 2015. This will need to be monitored closely.

<b>Organisational Priority 5</b>	<b>Strengthen members and expand the federation, while enhancing mutual accountability, with support from an effective international secretariat.</b>
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Organisational KPI	2013 Results
<b>Number of members progressing as agreed in Membership Development Plans</b>	<p>The Gambia was accepted as an Affiliate.</p> <p>France and Bangladesh were supported through their MDPs to be on track for Affiliation review in 2014.</p> <p>Thailand, Zambia, US, Kenya, Mozambique, Tanzania, Nepal and Netherlands were given support for governance reviews, capacity building and strengthening governance.</p> <p>Vietnam, Rwanda, Liberia, Nicaragua, South Africa and Cambodia were</p>

	supported for registration and association processes.
<b>Effectiveness rating of Secretariat based on country surveys</b>	To be developed in 2014
<b>Percentage of complaints received dealt with as per policy (in time and in correct manner)</b>	To be developed in 2014
<b>Number of units (countries and the Secretariat) operating outside stated reserve policies</b>	See 2013 financial accounts

### Summary of 2013 Performance

Association Guidelines linked to the Membership Development Criteria were completed and disseminated, and an overarching plan of Association and Affiliation was developed.

The following were approved during the 2013 Assembly General Meeting:

- The Gambia Affiliation
- Governance Model Review and Recommendations
- Expansion and Affiliation Plan
- Accountability Charter (for more information see OP4 and Organisational Accountability sections)

Support was provided to 20 national boards, and 65 participants from 30 countries participated in a workshop to strengthen governance. Ten country directors participated in a Harvard University course on governance, with special focus on the country directors from countries aiming for Association status.

The Secretariat was involved in country director recruitment and induction processes for 9 countries, and induction processes for 8 governance focal persons. National board and country directors in Tanzania, Denmark and Kenya were assisted with taking steps to come off the high risk list, and no country programme was added to the list in 2013.

Mutual accountability and transparency have improved with the introduction of a planning and reporting cycle and disciplines across the federation which are based on the international strategy. On a quarterly basis the Secretariat reports to the international board on its objectives and priorities, and the global annual report which is federation wide is now able to generate data and evidence as well as powerful stories of change. Collaborative working between the Secretariat and countries as well as across functions in the Secretariat has developed through a number of the strategic objective teams organised around mission objectives and through strengthened project management tools used to deliver on specific priority projects such as finance transformation and programme led funding. In 2013, the General Assembly approved the Accountability Charter which increases our ability to focus on accountability across the federation beyond the functions of planning and reporting. During 2013 we have complied with external accountability standards such as HAP and reporting to the INGO Charter – receiving very good feedback for our report.

### Lessons, Challenges and Risks

- Mutual accountability between countries as well as between countries and the federation. There is still inconsistent application of commitments in the Member Regulations, and an inadequate compliance framework.
- Roll-out of the Membership Development and Country Review processes is still a work in progress
- The principle of 'delegation' to countries (e.g. implementation of the AA Denmark delegation) is not clear to all country directors and board members
- There is a perception by countries that there are too many demands from the Secretariat and other affiliates
- Tools to enable more effective Secretariat collaboration with countries and increase country leadership were implemented in 2013 and require focused communication, promotion of a shared understanding of purpose and monitoring of effectiveness.
- Participation in country director appraisals is lacking as a result of board ownership of these processes as well as, in some cases, a lack of willingness to involve third parties. We are therefore missing an opportunity for mutual accountability and learning.
- With respect to AAI representatives on national boards, it is clear that we are not optimising this potential for mutual accountability for reasons that include availability of qualified, appropriate candidates, time constraints, expectations, and the tendency to desire senior Secretariat staff or country directors who are already overstretched. In addition, there are still some countries that have not managed to integrate an AAI representative on their board, and in one case the AAI representative was never even invited.

<b>Organisational Priority 6</b>	<b>Establish effective systems and processes to improve financial management, planning and reporting and the monitoring of our work.</b>
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Organisational KPI	2013 Results	Commentary/Additional Information
<b>Number of countries at risk</b>	6	Three of the countries have been on the At Risk list since 2011 and 2 new countries were added in 2013.  Reasons for being deemed At Risk are a combination of factors relating to weak financial management, breakdown in relations between finance and country leadership, and/or non-implementation of internal audit recommendations.  There has been good progress in a number of countries as actions have been taken to address underlying issues.
<b>Number of countries with Qualified Accounts</b>	0	All countries (except 1) undergo an external annual audit and all countries and Secretariat have achieved unqualified reports from their auditors. The Aggregation audit achieved unqualified report.  Progress has been made by country teams to provide evidence of activities to support the purpose for which funds have been raised, as well as to provide future funding and cash flows to demonstrate financial sustainability (or going concern) and to address risks raised by auditors.
<b>Proportion of Heads of Finance in place</b>	77%	Staff turnover remains a risk for the key leadership position in country, and where countries have been able to build in succession planning with strong Finance Managers, the risks are mitigated.

<b>for 12 months</b>		The main reasons cited for leaving are: breakdown in relationships, work overload due to inefficient systems and additional non-finance responsibilities being added to the role of Head of Finance.  ActionAid continues to attract good talent and our focus on ensuring the critical role of finance in supporting management teams and adding value needs to be maintained.
<b>Proportion of members producing quarterly forecasts (supported by quality narrative)</b>	79%	Improvement in the quarterly forecast was seen in the latter part of the year, as country teams became more familiar with increased forecasting. The need to produce accurate and timely forecasts is valuable for decision making during volatile times. We have seen continuous improvement in the accuracy of the forecast and quality of the supporting narrative which supports management decision making.
<b>Percentage of International Finance report produced on time</b>	50%	The production of timely reports is impacted by inadequate systems, which are mainly manual and reliant upon other dependent processes.  There has been an improvement in information flows – however, the need to better plan and coordinate information, and streamline systems and processes are part of the Finance Transformation priorities. A focus on improving systems has been a priority area in 2013, and the impact is expected to be seen in 2014.
<b>Percentage of countries investing in connectivity</b>	44%	Connectivity has improved in a number of countries, however in many countries investment in improving connectivity has been hampered by income challenges. Investment in systems and improvements in connectivity remains a priority for 2014.
<b>Percentage of countries aligned with Global IT Policy and Standards</b>	79%	Compliance with IT policies has been compiled from country self-assessments, and reflects an acceptable level of compliance. These policies will be updated in early 2014, in consultation with countries, and once finalised we will support countries to achieve compliance and continue annual monitoring.
<b>Number of units measuring operational greenhouse gas emission</b>	22 + IS	See explanation below

### Summary of 2013 Performance

**The demonstration of impact** has received considerable attention this year which was highlighted at the Secretariat Leadership Meeting in February. Out of this, key projects were identified and given SLT sponsorship and increased visibility, including Finance Transformation, Programme Led Funding, launching our Global M&E Framework, launching Programme Objective Plans and progressing with Contract Management, all of which will result in increased programmatic impact..

### Strengthening Monitoring and Evaluation

The Global M&E Matrix<sup>17</sup> was endorsed by country directors in June 2013, and integrated into federation-wide 2014 planning. One of the main objectives within our international strategy was to demonstrate progress against it to deepen our accountability to our stakeholders, as demonstrating our global impact is essential to leading the fight against poverty. The launch and implementation of the Matrix is a significant step towards achieving this objective.

All countries are now aligned to the Matrix, and monitoring and reporting in 2014 should demonstrate higher standards. All countries in the Federation now know in advance what is required in terms of annual international reporting against the international strategy. In addition, the creation of EAGLES (Evaluation and Accountability Global Leaders) as a federation network of Monitoring and Evaluation specialists aims to improve capacity and understanding.

### **Planning and Reporting**

In 2013 we began to develop effective systems to improve planning, reporting and monitoring of our work. The new planning system utilised a Strategic Implementation Plan as the unitary planning tool across the Federation, which articulated progress against the International strategy in 2012 as well as top-line priorities for each country in the Federation to integrate into their national plans. This is a unique planning tool suited to a global Federation, and resulted in a more cohesive understanding of the critical priorities and areas of focus necessary to achieving our international strategy.

In March 2013, the SLT approved a new Secretariat (IS) reporting process that would monitor progress and performance against IS plans, meet SLT, Country and Board requirements, and deepen the accountability of the IS. Key successes of this new approach in 2013 include: positive feedback from the AAI Board regarding consistently improving content of the Board Management report; regular evidence-based conversations regarding performance held in management team meetings at Directorate level, leading to increased focus on delivering Directorate plans; and the utilisation by the IS of quarterly reports to inform 2014 planning discussions and prioritisation.

The **Finance Transformation Project** was recognised as a priority project and launched with a Project Charter, appointment of a core team and programme scope defined. A disciplined project management approach has been adopted to ensure sustainable change, and key stakeholders have been identified and engaged through a monthly newsletter to Heads of Finance as well as through regional meetings and teleconferences. A self-assessment survey was conducted in August to provide a benchmark against which performance of the programme will be assessed.

Key deliverables in 2013 include:

- The development of a standard Chart of Accounts to support delivery of the international strategy, and to meet internal and external reporting accountabilities in a more efficient manner.
- SUN reimplementation approach and plans for the 33 countries that use SUN systems, thereby ensuring increased use of current functionality to improve efficiency. The reimplementation programme allows us to implement a standardised chart of accounts, which will facilitate better and more consistent financial

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<sup>17</sup> The Global M&E Matrix can be found on the ActionAid Hive (link is [HERE](#)).

management, reporting and analysis. Greater standardisation not only improves user experience but also makes the systems easier to support and facilitates training – particularly important given the historically high turnover of finance staff.

- Implementation of a new planning approach with significant changes to address known challenges and stakeholder requirements, including: financial planning horizon of 3 years; a single planning pack across all members, aligned to standard chart of account changes, improving analysis and automating insight; introduction of a 12 month cash flow forecast; incorporating a new format to facilitate programme led funding planning; greater visibility of how we plan to spend resources against RAF categories; and reporting against key change promises in the international strategy. These changes were accompanied by a significant level of guidance around completing the pack, the rationale for change and practical 'how-to' advice.
- Definition of the changes needed to update and improve Treasury Management, including assessing options for alternative models based on research with banks and other INGOs. New approaches to the remittance process were drafted and circulated for input.
- The Secretariat project plan was scoped, identifying changes in planning with the new funding source codes and activity based budgeting introduced for the 2014 plan, thereby providing more transparency and accountability.

**New leadership in IT focussed on building the foundations for the new strategy**, with a focus on improved supplier management, including implementation of Service Level Agreements, a review of contractual arrangements and improved governance over system changes. Other key deliverables in 2013 include:

- Utilisation of SharpCloud as a high level planning tool within IT, enabling the assessment of project benefits, cost and ease of implementation to prioritise key projects. The tool is now being used to manage the project portfolio through 2014.
- IT4D effectively supported the rollout of the tax justice campaign in several countries.
- Completion of a high availability environment for core systems – International Website and NK, and consolidated the servers in Savvis, achieving an annual cost saving of £53,760.
- Network upgrades in Johannesburg and Brussels to increase capacity to an appropriate level for effective operations within the Hub without increasing costs.

**Ensuring appropriate legal due diligence in all areas of our work has been a focus area**, and the continued relationship with DLA Piper ensured that pro bono legal support >£750,000 was received in 2013, including the secondment of a legal advisor. Legal support included:

- Ongoing support to the IS and Members in MDP-related legal issues or other issues arising out of local operations, along with hub registrations and completion of global insurance policies renewal.
- On-going project to develop AAI legal database: a suite of template contracts as well as a guide and checklist that could reference these and help staff across the

organisation to use the templates (Template contracts to be identified by each Directorate; Corporate MOUs and IP/content related contracts developed).

- Anti-bribery and corruption policy updated against US and international standards and approved, contributing to the harmonisation of policies across the organisation, which helps to efficiently manage legal issues arising out of the internationalisation process and serves as a powerful instrument for strengthening the Federation. The Data Protection policy for the Global Online Transaction System was finalised and legally checked against EU standards.

**Sustainability:** In 2013 we continued to measure operational greenhouse gas emissions among Federation members (approximately 22 countries in 2013) and the International Secretariat. The process of understanding and reporting emissions has had a dramatic effect on member country operations. For example, this was the second year of reporting for ActionAid Vietnam (AAV). In a single year, AAV reduced emissions associated with vehicle use, offices and paper by 18%. Past analyses have shown that these reductions have proportional accompanying cost savings.

Expanding participation in this effort beyond about half of the membership is becoming a concern. While there is a positive attitude toward the effort, sometimes members do not make this a priority. We hope that small projects that demonstrate the ways in which ActionAid programming can create environmental benefits will help engagement and demonstrate the connection to our mission. For example, an analysis of a community programme in one LRP in Vietnam showed ActionAid efforts reduced local emissions of greenhouse gasses by working with farmers to generate and use bio-fertilizer (compost) instead of commercial fertilizer. This benefit (a reduction of 192 tonnes of equivalent CO<sub>2</sub>) was larger than the operational footprint for all of ActionAid Vietnam (128 tonnes of equivalent CO<sub>2</sub>).

### **Lessons, Challenges and Risks**

- There is a need to reflect on the scale and scope of changes in systems and processes in Finance and IT, as well as readiness of units to adapt to change.
- There is a need for appropriate and sufficient financial and skilled human resources to deliver change, alongside systems, processes and behaviours
- There is a perceived culture of lack of compliance, which could impact on delivery of benefits of change. Through improved communication, the benefits of agreed changes would overcome this.
- There were delays in IT transformation due to SLT agreed re-prioritisation of activities.
- The continued under-investment in systems across the Federation could delay delivery of strategic and organisational objectives dependent on more automation.

<b>Organisational Priority 7</b>	<b>Expand strategically into new countries to advance our mission, based on clear criteria and transparent processes</b>
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Organisational KPI	2013 Results
Number of new programmes effectively integrated into AAI planning and reporting systems	3
Number of new countries where potential partner organisations against Priority 7 criteria have been identified and approached	3
Number of CDs engaged in Priority 7 task force or project teams	8
Number of other countries where AAI is operating programmatically (through cross border activities and others)	2 + Asia Regional Hub

### Summary of 2013 Performance

Three country programmes previously sat outside the Secretariat planning and reporting system. These included Nicaragua and the Arab Regional Initiative (ARI), which were previously the responsibility of ActionAid Denmark, and Palestine, where both ActionAid Denmark and ActionAid Australia had a presence. In 2013 these country programmes were integrated into the AAI planning and reporting system, although ActionAid Denmark continues to manage the ARI and work continues to further integrate all three programmes.

During 2013 there was success with regards to the strategic expansion of ActionAid into new countries. Mexico, Turkey and Indonesia were identified and approved by the General Assembly for further exploration, project teams were created, and partners and market study scoping were commissioned. Further discussions regarding Germany and Spain have started in response to exciting and unplanned opportunities. However, there have been some issues affecting overall expansion progress, mainly lack of availability of key stakeholders and budget allocation.

There has been increased and growing engagement by CDs with Organisational Priority 7 work. This is positive, although there continue to be challenges in terms of ensuring commitments are met with appropriate capacity. There are now five countries represented on the OP 7 task force (Denmark, Brazil, Bangladesh, Vietnam and Netherlands), three on the Indonesia project team (Vietnam, South Africa and Australia), two on the Mexico project team (Brazil and USA), and two on the Turkey project team (Netherlands and Greece).

In 2013 there were successes around cross-border fundraising, which were driven by both countries and the Secretariat. For example, cross-border fundraising work continued in Switzerland (AAUK and AA Italy), where a legal entity was established, a Board set up and an AAI representative appointed. In addition, the Asia fundraising hub continues to work well, and their main focus continues to be accessing money in countries where ActionAid currently does not have a presence. As an example of success, in 2013 £100,000 was secured from Nokia for work in Vietnam.

## ORGANISATIONAL ACCOUNTABILITY

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### Introduction

ActionAid has a long history of promoting accountable ways of working. We pioneered 'downward' accountability in the sector a decade ago, and over the years we have documented examples of good practice, mainly through external accountability reports such as INGO Charter, the Humanitarian Accountability Partnership International (HAP), DEC accountability framework, People in Aid accreditation, etc. However, to date there has been no regular internal federation-wide annual reporting on assessing our level of excellence and progress towards accountability.

The approval of the ActionAid Accountability Charter by the General Assembly in 2013 marked an important milestone to developing our accountability commitments and actions - defining ActionAid's understanding of "accountability" and outlining the principles underpinning the concept.<sup>18</sup> The Charter also clearly emphasizes the need to strengthen our multi-stakeholder and mutual accountability, and promotes a more defined and structured approach to accountability, which was partially built in ALPS<sup>19</sup> but extends far beyond its guidance.

What follows is a new dedicated accountability section in the global annual report, which aims to continue to advance our accountability practices by enabling us to understand our baseline position as a federation in relation to the Charter, so that we could plan specific actions for improvement. The questions in this section were therefore designed around the Accountability Charter's principles<sup>20</sup>. Although this was new, the response level was inspiring: overall, 40 entities completed the accountability section including 15 country programmes. Regionally, 6 responses came from Europe, 11 from Asia, 19 from Africa and 5 from the Americas<sup>21</sup>.

It should be noted that the major limitation of this qualitative analysis is the fact that assessment of accountability practices is solely reliant upon the quality of country reporting. Since the purpose of this report was to identify patterns and trends of accountability practices across the federation, conclusions in this report should only be considered as a broad federation wide pattern/trend, rather than a precise state of affairs applicable to all countries.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> ActionAid Accountability Charter (2012);

[https://hive.actionaid.org/OE/Evaluation%20and%20Accountability%20Unit/trans\\_and\\_account/Shared%20Documents/7%20%20Strenghtening%20Mutual%20Accountability%20in%20the%20Federation%20-%20Paper%207%201.pdf](https://hive.actionaid.org/OE/Evaluation%20and%20Accountability%20Unit/trans_and_account/Shared%20Documents/7%20%20Strenghtening%20Mutual%20Accountability%20in%20the%20Federation%20-%20Paper%207%201.pdf)

<sup>19</sup> ALPS (2011)

[https://hive.actionaid.org/OE/Evaluation%20and%20Accountability%20Unit/trans\\_and\\_account/Shared%20Documents/Alps2011\\_Revision\\_d11Aug2011%20with%20annex.pdf](https://hive.actionaid.org/OE/Evaluation%20and%20Accountability%20Unit/trans_and_account/Shared%20Documents/Alps2011_Revision_d11Aug2011%20with%20annex.pdf)

<sup>20</sup> Country reports were assessed and ranked from the perspective of demonstrating practice and answers coded as:

- **"Expected Practice"** – response demonstrated commitment, understanding and basic institutionalisation of the specific accountability practice;
- **"Satisfactory Practice"** – response demonstrated commitment and understanding but no example of basic institutionalisation of the specific practice;
- **"Poor Practice"** – response demonstrated commitment but limited conceptual articulation as well as practical application of the accountability practice;
- **"Inconclusive"** – response was irrelevant or unclear, or consisted of general statements like "participatory processes are extremely useful for increasing performance", etc.

<sup>21</sup> The Secretariat was not asked to complete the annual report template.

<sup>22</sup> This report does not contain specific analysis of the IS' accountability work and this limitation will to be addressed in the following year.

In terms of overarching reflections, accountability as ActionAid's way of working comes across strongly and is presented in the reports as 'business as usual' across the federation. It is hard to find an example of a country that does not consider their way of working as being accountable and a crucial part of their day to day work - as outlined in ALPs.<sup>23</sup> It is also clear that the federation maintains a strong focus on accountability to people living in poverty as well as both financial and non-financial supporters. It has been easy to see the importance given to the interaction with communities through various participatory processes, and the efforts made to strengthen the linkages between people living in poverty and supporters across the world.

## 1. Accountability and ActionAid's Theory of Change

Unlike other INGOs, in ActionAid accountability has two functions:

- a) **Quality and learning tool.**<sup>24</sup> Like most of our peers, we believe that accountability enables ActionAid to see what we are doing well and how we could do things better by informing and involving key stakeholder groups in making decisions, managing activities and judging/challenging results. This helps us determine what we need to change to achieve lasting results for people living in poverty. In this role, practicing accountability adds to our relevance, legitimacy, credibility and effectiveness as a federation.
- b) **Part of ActionAid's Theory of Change (TOC).** Unlike others, we believe that accountability is an enabler and a part of the change process: "Accountability is integrally linked to our mission; it is about empowering people and transforming power relations, thus it is part of our strategy and Theory of Change. Our accountability practices should empower poor and excluded people to claim their rights and shape their own development processes". This broad and bold assumption about the complex change process drives our pursuit for credible alternatives to achieving our mission and contributing to development efforts.

While the first role of accountability as a quality and learning tool is comparatively well explored (in fact originally initiated and promoted in the sector by ActionAid though ALPS), the second is relatively new and requires more analysis and rigorously documented evidence. By pioneering the inclusion of accountability in the organisational Theory of Change, ActionAid calls for federation-wide efforts to simultaneously formulate and answer important questions, validate our actions towards achieving our mission, and enable us to share credible approaches to the stakeholder groups we are accountable to. Therefore the key questions are:

- To what extent do ActionAid's long-established accountability practices contribute to empowering poor and excluded people? Can we produce evidence for this?
- What constitutes "empowerment", how do we measure it across the federation and what is the link/attribution of our accountability practices to building people's ability to act - challenging duty bearers in the hostile environments that they normally live in/face?<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> As part of the Accountability Project, ALPS 2011 needs to be revised in line with the new Accountability Charter. ALPS revision marks the second phase of the Accountability Project, which is under way. The suggestion to integrate ALPS 2011 into ActionAid's operating system was presented to the IS SLT in November 2013 and February 2014, and in principle was accepted but due to resource restrictions has not yet been launched.

<sup>24</sup> Outlined in ALPS 2011.

<sup>25</sup> The challenge is that ActionAid's willingness to be made accountable and open to respond to people's/partners or any other stakeholder's challenges creates a friendly/non-hostile environment for action, which is a great starting point in the process of

- Our Theory of Change assumes that solidarity and campaigning (as integral parts of the TOC) are ways of addressing hostility inherent to some of the contexts we work in (and people living in poverty face) or of strengthening the power of people's collective action. The question is how do accountability actions add value to the desired change process, bearing in mind the complexity of relationships and the nature of change, and what are the practical ways of measuring/assessing the contribution of accountability actions to solidarity, empowerment and campaigning?
- Can we produce rigorous and credible organisational evidence that demonstrates or otherwise supports our TOC<sup>26</sup> ? Can we also produce evidence that we have processes in place for correcting broad assumptions and expected results that we are looking to achieve with our strategy?

Analysis suggests that there is still some way to go before we can answer the questions above. Although the reports showed inspiring signs of an established culture of accountable ways of working (outlined in ALPs and supported through guidelines for Reflection-Action and PRRP), at the same time they made clear that the current understanding of accountability and its dual role in ActionAid is not as wide as presented in core organisational documents, including People's Action in Practice and the Accountability Charter. In addition, when it comes to the application of the concept on a day to day basis, existing practices and the analysis of their benefits or results do not always speak to the ActionAid TOC.

For instance, while describing the benefits of ActionAid's accountability practices to primary stakeholders, very few reports included an analysis linking our HRBA based programme work and TOC to accountability - as specified and promoted by People's Action in Practice.<sup>27</sup> In most reports/examples there is little recognition of the connection between accountability (particularly the principles of participation and transparency) and solidarity, empowerment and campaigning as constituent elements of our TOC.

Although the majority of the reports suggested that the testing of our TOC is either not in our radar yet, or at least not sufficiently analysed,<sup>28</sup> a few reports did lightly touch upon the potential linkages between stakeholder engagement and the TOC. Those countries heavily involved in campaigning highlighted the benefits of collaborative working, having a stronger voice, etc. For instance, Brazil, India, Ethiopia and the US clearly stated that, in line with ActionAid values, participation is one of the main strategies for achieving our vision and that in some cases wider stakeholder engagement is a main success factor for our work on campaigns.

However, these reports are in the minority, and the overall trend and perceived benefit from accountability actions appears to be facilitating stakeholder engagement, mainly because this helps achieve higher quality results and increased credibility. This could be seen in the majority of country

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empowerment but may not be enough for a straightforward transition towards active citizenship in a hostile environments, as many additional factors influence an individual's or groups' decisions to actually take action.

<sup>26</sup> In other words, how do we demonstrate what is the relation between our strategic objectives in their entirety and the aggregated result to be achieved through them while employing and testing our TOC?

<sup>27</sup> People's Action in Practice 2.0. p. 22;

<sup>28</sup> This confirms that more collaborative work is needed between the countries on debating the approaches towards testing the TOC and agreeing on implementation strategies for the benefit of producing evidence and understanding federation's progress towards the strategic organisational priorities.

submissions, as they struggled to articulate exactly how they assess the quality and benefits of specific accountability practices. Most of the submissions lacked specific examples and analysis of local experiences and/or identification of challenges associated with monitoring the quality and benefits of stakeholder participation, and one third did not directly answer the questions assessing quality and impact of stakeholder engagement.

Some reports indicated potential confusion between assessing the impact of programme activities as opposed to assessing the impact of stakeholder participation on the results of the programme work. For instance, one of the countries reported: *“Reflection processes are based on what we agreed to do, what we actually did, what recommendation for change is there, and how is our work contributing to our change promises and indicators. Tools such as score cards are also used to assess progress.”*

## 2. Transparency

Transparency is a constitutional value and an accountability principle for ActionAid, and our federation-wide transparency commitments are documented in several ways. In the Constitution, we commit to making information available to our stakeholders using channels that increase access to information and do not discriminate against groups with regard to language or technology.<sup>29</sup> ALPS seeks to fulfil our accountability requirements while retaining specific focus on accountability to poor and excluded people as primary, in part by requiring evidence, emphasising learning and promoting transparency.<sup>30</sup> The ActionAid Accountability Charter (2013) translates transparency as providing the means and information necessary for others to assess whether we live up to our promises and decisions, how well we use the funding we receive, and what impact we have as an organisation.<sup>31</sup> *People’s Action in Practice* also recognises accountability and transparency as part of our HRBA principles, and our commitment to transparency is also contained within our Open Information Policy (2003)<sup>32</sup>. Our compliance with external standards, including the INGO Accountability Charter,<sup>33</sup> the Humanitarian Accountability Partnership Standard,<sup>34</sup> People in Aid (2008) and the International Aid Effectiveness Transparency Initiative (IATI), includes transparency as a crucial element of accountability practices.<sup>35</sup>

The way we define transparency includes both a commitment to *proactively disclose* information (or *proactive sharing* as indicated in the Open Information Policy) about us and our work, and to *make ourselves available to respond* to any information requests in a specified timely and satisfactory manner. In order to assess these commitments, questions on transparency were designed to provide baseline insights into:

- How does our understanding of the purpose of transparency compare to our commitments?

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<sup>29</sup> ActionAid Constitution. Values, p. 5

<sup>30</sup> ALPS, 2011, p.4

<sup>31</sup> ActionAid Accountability Charter, p.4

<sup>32</sup> HRBA Manual

<sup>33</sup> INGO Accountability Charter principles <http://www.ingoaccountabilitycharter.org/home/the-charter-principles>

<sup>34</sup> Humanitarian Accountability Partnership International, Standard 2010. [http://www.hapinternational.org/what-we-do/hap-](http://www.hapinternational.org/what-we-do/hap-standard.aspx)

[standard.aspx](http://www.hapinternational.org/what-we-do/hap-standard.aspx)<sup>35</sup> International Aid Transparency Initiative (IATI) was launched in Ghana in 2008 as part of Aid Effectiveness agenda and the response to Paris declaration and its principles. IATI is a common standard of publishing data about aid flow from the resource providers to the recipients. IATI is a voluntary standard but is made compulsory by DFID for the organizations receiving strategic Programme Partnership Agreement (PPA) funds from British Government. ActionAid as one of the recipients of PPA is responsible for publishing the data about most income and expenditure flows. IS cross functional working group is currently considering the options for IATI compliance towards the set deadline of March, 2016.

- How well we are aware of all the commitments listed above?
- How are we doing in this area?<sup>36</sup>
- How does ActionAid's work in transparency compare to the "standards" set by our peers?

Country reports indicated that the specific organisational commitments to transparency outlined in the Open Information Policy are not completely understood by the majority of the federation. Out of 39 countries, only 9 made clear references to the policy, 10 countries made a general connection to the policy without clear articulation of established transparency practices aligned to the policy requirements, and 20 countries did not make any reference to the policy. This suggests that our area of focus for engagement on transparency issues should include clarity around understanding the Open Information Policy. It could also be that our current Open Information Policy is too demanding, and countries are unable to fully operationalise it. This may mean that we should evaluate our OIP and revise it to fit to both our current abilities of proactive disclosure and, more importantly, stakeholder information needs.<sup>37</sup>

The analysis also suggested a slight confusion between the *proactive sharing* of information with stakeholders as opposed to *enabling stakeholders to request necessary information* if they so desire. The latter is done by *communicating to them the process for requesting the information and the timeline for the response*. For example, the majority of relevant answers did not mention the need for a defined timeframe for responding to information requests.

It is encouraging to observe that for most ActionAid countries transparency and stakeholder engagement practices are focused on multiple stakeholders, including people living in poverty, partners, local NGOs, governments, other peer INGOs and other like-minded groups. As a common practice of transparency, especially in the Global South, a "signature" appears to be displaying transparency boards to inform communities and other stakeholders about ActionAid's activities and money spent. This established common practice is a success and it should be celebrated as an achievement.

However, along with celebrating long-established practices, it is necessary to also assessing their effectiveness. For instance, the qualitative data provided in the reports was limited in analysing the results of transparency practices, so analysis questions like: "Do we have documented evidence that the transparency boards provided all necessary information to the targeted audience?" or "Do we assess the quality of the disclosed information from the point of view of the stakeholders?" remained unanswered.

### 3. Principle of Participation

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<sup>36</sup> Although we are yet to develop the approach for IS's reporting on accountability activities, the analysis of country data has already provided some insights about the extent and the focus of the work needing to be facilitated by the IS. In addition, the recently finalised Stakeholder Expectation Study (final report yet to be released internally) also contains very useful analysis of IS's level of excellence in terms of accountability (mostly transparency) and includes suggestions for our potential work in the next couple of years.

<sup>37</sup> Stakeholder expectation survey conducted in February 2014 showed some interesting insights.

While transparency focuses on information sharing and enabling free access to all stakeholders without discrimination,<sup>38</sup> participation is about understanding and internalising the rights, interests and viewpoints of those with whom and for whom we work; committing to ensuring that our decision-making processes, strategic directions and lessons learnt are informed by the views of our primary stakeholders; and committing to address power inequalities in our consultation and decision-making mechanisms.<sup>39</sup>

However, analysis of country reports suggests that understanding of the benefits and results of transparency activities as opposed to those of participation/stakeholder engagement cause a degree of confusion. Most countries reported that transparency practices have built the credibility and trust of the organisation, facilitated coordinated action to avoid duplication, helped to manage expectations, reduced media backlash, and enhanced ActionAid's legitimacy. At the same time, around a third of 39 responses highlighted benefits of transparency that coincided with the benefits gained from participation, including that transparency actions created spaces for stakeholders to provide feedback, enabled design of programmes responding to stakeholder needs and challenges, empowered communities to demand that other organisations be transparent, and made people feel open to voicing their feelings and perceptions about ActionAid's work.

There is a "natural" overlap between the purposes and benefits of transparency and participation, which can be helpful. However, too much focus and effort on information sharing and transparency activities (and overestimation of their expected results towards contribution to people's empowerment) might weaken the efforts and/or limit the resource availability for the stakeholder participation activities, which in turn could potentially have a negative knock-on effect on progressing towards desired community empowerment results.

One example of overreliance on assumptions rather than on analysis of accountability actions, and confusion between transparency and participation, is the use of transparency boards, which are assumed to be effective in informing stakeholders.<sup>40</sup> Here are some of the reports regarding the purpose and the benefits of transparency:

*"Our transparency practices empowered communities and strengthened their involvement in all stages of programme design"*

*"Our transparency practices force partners and rights holders to also practice transparency and demand it from government authorities at their level"*

*"If they are informed, they will fully participate"<sup>41</sup>*

ActionAid is known in the sector for working closely with communities and for creating spaces for stakeholder feedback. The reports clearly demonstrate that across the federation countries have open and regular conversations with key stakeholders and subsequently document some of the

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<sup>38</sup> "We commit to making information related to the following areas available to our stakeholders. In doing so, we will use channels that increase access to information and do not discriminate against groups with regard to language or technology". Accountability Charter, p.6;

<sup>39</sup> Accountability Charter, p.6

<sup>40</sup> As transparency/open information boards are so popular and have such a long history, it is interesting to note that there is no suggestion about their effectiveness as a transparency tool in any of the country/member's report. It will be interesting to evaluate their effectiveness and usefulness to people living in poverty and partners.

<sup>41</sup> This is coming up as a major assumption in various places and needs some attention

resulting major concerns. These reported concerns differ and relate to various issues, from specific operational issues to issues related to working in an insecure and politically unstable environment. However, the most common theme arising, most notably from the stakeholders of African members, although reports from Pakistan, Afghanistan, Myanmar, Palestine and Haiti also highlight this, is ActionAid's human rights-based approach versus responding to the key immediate needs of the communities. Concerns around ActionAid's HRBA approach, both directly and indirectly, were raised by around half of the countries (except for the funding affiliates).

Some countries also expressed concern about our ability to close feedback loops with stakeholders (e.g. following up after agreements and consultations, including feedback in our work and communicating it back, etc.). Addressing stakeholder concerns related to ActionAid's approach to development is part of our accountability, our ethical commitment to people living in poverty<sup>42</sup> and also mutual accountability to staff members that face huge professional and moral pressure while working with impoverished communities. How we handle closing stakeholder feedback loops tests our ability to live up to our commitment to be open to scrutiny from our stakeholders.

#### **4. Mutual Accountability – Ensuring Compliance**

One of the drivers for developing the new Accountability Charter was the need to strengthen mutual accountability in the federation.<sup>43</sup> However, practising mutual accountability in a large and diverse organisation like ActionAid is not necessarily straightforward, and analysis and judgment is necessary to responsibly manage the potential tensions between different accountability relations. In order to understand this complexity in practical terms and assess our baseline position, we asked questions about currently established mutual accountability practices, potential benefits of mutual accountability to countries, and knowledge/understanding of existing federation-wide accountability commitments.

It is important to emphasise that we fully recognise the predominantly local focus of some countries in identifying key established mutual accountability processes, as this is in line with ActionAid's values, beliefs and ways of working. It is natural for mutual accountability to build on existing local accountability mechanisms, and links between mutual accountability mechanisms locally and at international level need to be strengthened further. However, maintaining "dual citizenship" and taking full responsibility for attaining a shared agenda remains the key for achieving mutual accountability. Losing this crucial oversight of dual citizenship weakens the power of collective action, and misses the advantages of collaboration as well as opportunities for learning.

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<sup>42</sup> "Fulfilling our accountability promises is important to strengthening our legitimacy as an organisation. Our reputation for being a trustworthy, effective and transparent organisation helps us to strengthen relations and ensure sustainability of our work. Furthermore, realising our accountability promises makes us stronger advocates and campaigners for change, and positions us as a credible organisation when seeking resources and support to sustain our work and multiply our impact." – ActionAid Accountability Charter, p.3;

<sup>43</sup> The concept of accountability intrinsically entails reciprocity of responsibility for actions and commitments of parties and from this perspective "mutual accountability" can be a little tricky to understand and articulate. The confusion comes from this natural question: if the accountability is already "mutual", what value does the "mutual accountability" concept add to the conversation? The classic understanding of accountability had not necessarily been considered as "mutual" or reciprocal in the development context. It rather was (and normally still is) understood as the one way process of responsible use of power by those who possessed it. Developments in the last decade in the global political economy and increased pressure on the main actors of official development assistance resulted in the emergency of "mutual" accountability. In this context, mutual accountability meant that not only donors but also recipient governments and wider civil society were declared to be responsible, and thus mutually accountable, for achieving the shared aid effectiveness agenda.

Analysis showed some encouraging results: at least half of the reports mentioned the importance of at least one of the three most critical elements of mutual accountability:

1. ***Having a shared agenda*** (joint and aligned national and global strategies, federation wide policies and plans, strong governance structure, etc).
2. ***Monitoring and reviewing commitments*** (through aligning the Global M&E Matrix to national and local frameworks, through generating credible evidence)
3. ***Space for reflection, learning and dialogue*** (through development of strong partnerships, joining coalitions, working closely with variety of stakeholders within and outside the federation).

Reports regarding currently established mutual accountability processes showed that for some members/countries mutual accountability processes relate to governance and internal audit; for others they relate more to engagement with communities and partners, and accountability to staff. Around a third of respondents emphasised that mutual accountability processes include country engagement plans, ALPS processes, other federation level policies, and both local and global monitoring and evaluation. However, only a handful of countries listed a comprehensive set of processes and efforts speaking to the above-mentioned elements of mutual accountability.

The reports showed that with regard to the benefits of/from mutual accountability practices, *increased opportunities for collaboration and learning* is the most popular advantage of mutual accountability among countries, and *extending support to countries as a mutual accountability mechanism* came up very strongly too. Interestingly, the third most popular category of mutual accountability benefits is the *clarity of roles and responsibilities*, which in most cases is closely linked to mutual accountability processes of collaboration and member support, such as development of clear MoUs, TORs, etc.<sup>44</sup>

It is interesting to note that understanding of federation-wide accountability commitments differs considerably across ActionAid.<sup>45</sup> Most countries only considered internal federation-wide obligations as federation-wide commitments, omitting external charters, standards and agreements we have committed to. To some countries, mutual accountability commitments are included in ActionAid policies like the Open Information Policy and Accountability Charter, or revolve around the decisions of review and reflection meetings and fulfilling financial requirements. A considerable number of countries highlighted a wider spectrum of mutual accountabilities/commitments, including ALPS, monitoring and evaluation, PRRPs, CEPs, federation policies and membership regulations.

## 5. Complaints

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<sup>44</sup> Although not explicitly expressed in the reports, this indicates that there is a concern regarding the existing gaps in successfully operationalising mutual accountability, and a big part of this concern is confusion around global roles and responsibilities of different entities.

<sup>45</sup> There could be a slight confusion regarding the terminology here despite the clarifications provided in the template. While the whole sub-section was designed around mutual accountability, at the end of this part of the accountability report we included the question regarding the federation-wide accountability commitments, which was mostly about external accountability commitments that ActionAid signed up to. Even though federation-wide accountability commitment quite obviously are mutual accountability commitments, members only considered internal mutual accountability commitments in their reports, which could either have something to do with the lack of information about external commitments (INGO, HAP, DECAF) or the confusion with the terminology, especially when Pakistan, constantly providing the case studies for INGO Charter report never mentioned it either.

Having a clearly communicated and functional complaints mechanism in place is one of the main indicators of organisational accountability. This also is one of the main requirements of some of the external accountability standards and commitments (INGO Accountability Charter, HAP) that we have signed up to. Although both are federation-wide external commitments, the reports suggested that most countries either do not have a formal complaints process or are not able to operationalise the process due to resource restrictions. In some cases the urgency and importance of having some sort of complaints mechanism was not well understood or at least reported.

Out of 39 countries describing their complaints mechanisms, around 12 appear to lack either a formal or informal complaints process. However, they noted that they have space for discussion in cases of dissatisfaction or complaints during the community engagement processes. Only 8 countries reported having a formal complaints mechanism, and 19 referred to employing ad hoc informal gathering of complaints from various stakeholder groups.

Around a third of the reporting countries only mentioned internal complaints processes, referring to HR policies like staff grievance and whistle blowing, HROD procedures, etc. There was almost no reference made to the existing “Complaints and Response Framework Mechanism” (2008), the federation-wide policy regulating the process of dealing with external complaints. This suggests that there is a very limited awareness about the existence of this policy.<sup>46</sup>

Another important issue that needs to be addressed at federation level is communicating the complaints and response mechanism to stakeholders. Reports suggest that even when a complaints mechanism is in place, information about the process is provided to stakeholders over the phone upon their request, in meetings via descriptions of relevant policies, during PRRPs or review meetings, or “whenever the opportunity permitted.” Even though most ActionAid countries have a strong presence in communities and trusting relationships with partners and other stakeholders, we cannot assume that stakeholders would not need space to express their dissatisfaction, file a complaint or simply request some information outside of the formally agreed and arranged meetings. We therefore need to promote the importance of proactive communication to key stakeholders about the ways they could request information from us and the channels for filing complaints.

Here are some federation-wide statistics related to complaints in 2013:

- Overall, 17 countries reported having registered complaints, totalling 57,414. However, 55,814 of these were registered by ActionAid Italy, who reported complaints related to issues with communication [(requesting more information (4,228), not receiving the reports at all or on time (9,450), and other communication by supporters (13,844)], programme work in countries (3,032), administrative issues (18,943), and other general issues (5,847).

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<sup>46</sup> Lack of awareness of the Complaints Policy and the fact that it is not in the list of the main policies made us question whether this policy was actually approved by the General Assembly or any other governance body. Unfortunately minutes of the General Assembly are available from 2009 only, but the Complaints and Response Mechanism appeared to have been approved in 2008 (as noted on the policy itself). This means that it could have been approved by the international board in 2008.

- Other relatively high numbers of complaints have been registered by ActionAid UK (720), Greece (395), Afghanistan (222), USA (150), Ireland (35), Netherlands (24) and Cambodia (19).

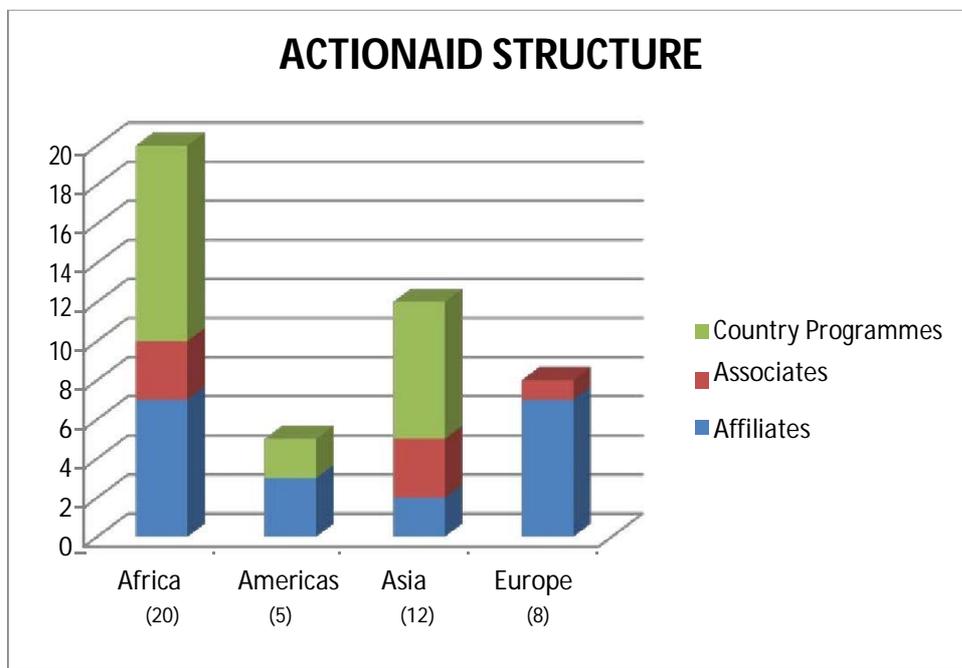
In terms of complaint categories, most complaints are registered under communications, administration, general/other and programmes. Relatively low numbers of complaints are related to people living in poverty, partners, child sponsorship, campaigns and HR.

## ANNEX – 2013 KEY FACTS AT A GLANCE

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### Federation Structure

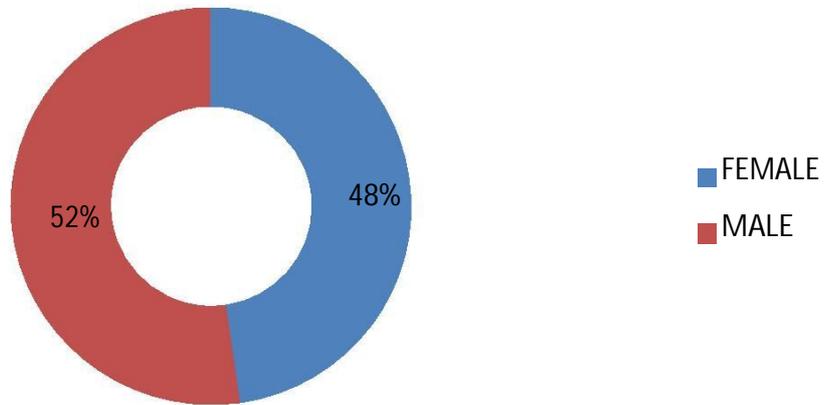
As of December 2013, ActionAid Federation was made up of 19 Country Programmes, 7 Associates and 19 Affiliates.



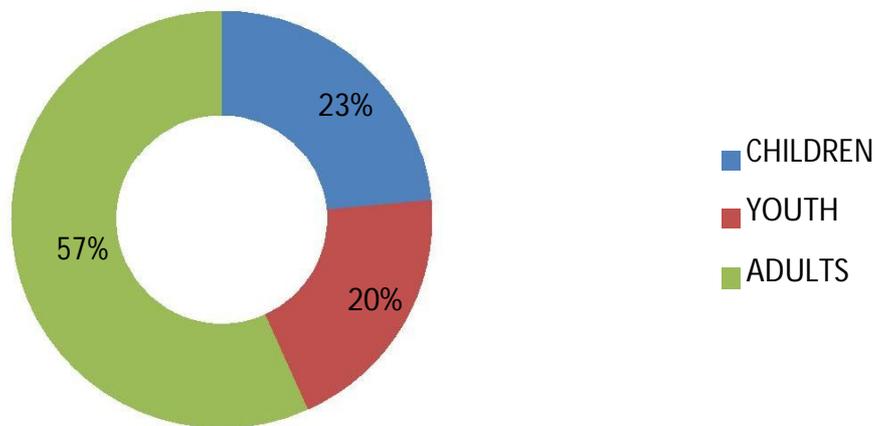
### Number of People Engaged with ActionAid in 2013

27,329,475 people were reported to have been engaged with ActionAid in 2013.

### PEOPLE ENGAGED WITH ACTIONAID IN 2013 (PERCENTAGE BY GENDER)

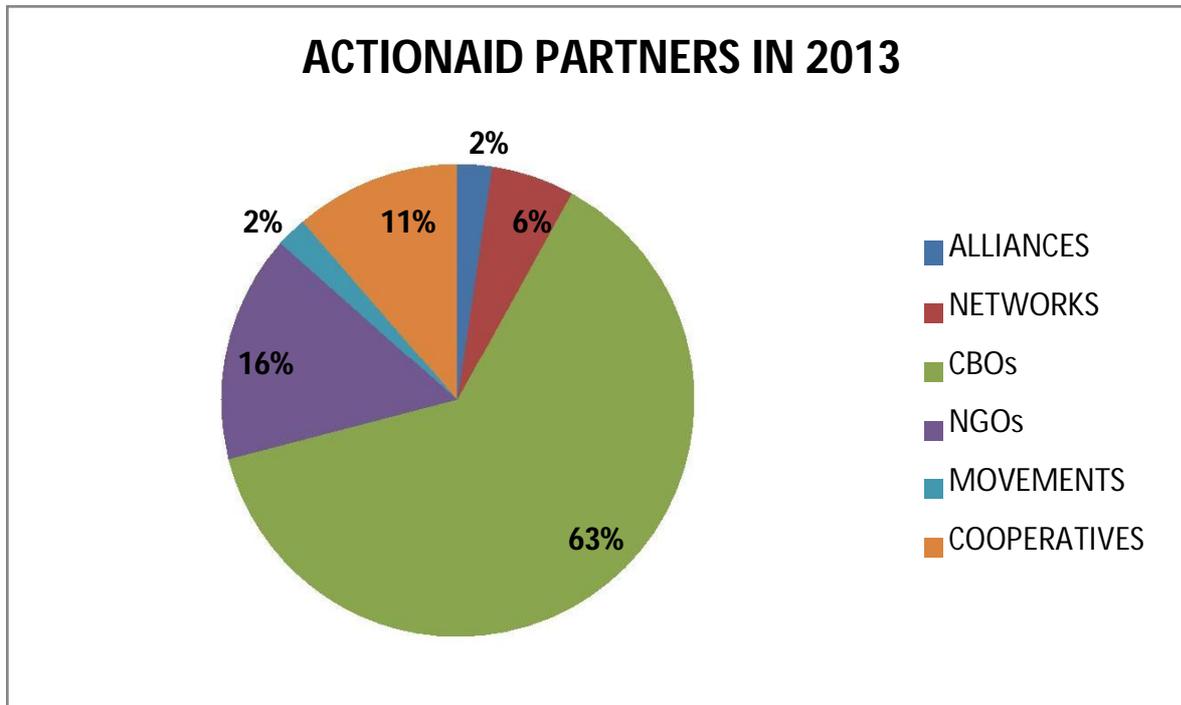


### PEOPLE ENGAGED WITH ACTIONAID IN 2013 (PERCENTAGE BY AGE)



#### Number and Type of Partners working with ActionAid in 2013

In 2013 ActionAid worked with 8,035 partners across the globe, including alliances, networks, community-based organisations, NGOs, movements and cooperatives.



#### Number of Communities working with ActionAid in 2013

ActionAid was working in 422 Communities (Local Rights Programmes) in 2013.

