

people challenging poverty & exclusion

ActionAid International Bangladesh | 4th Country Strategy Paper | 2012 - 2017



**People Challenging
Poverty and Exclusion**

**4th Country
Strategy Paper**

ActionAid International Bangladesh

2012-2017

credits

and acknowledgements

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The 4th Country Strategy Paper (CSPIV) of ActionAid International Bangladesh encapsulates the five-year (2012-2017) strategic plan built on the journey of almost thirty years. AAIB articulates in the CSP its strategic positions on the key development issues that the organisation will work on and advocate for at both grassroots and national level. It is rewarding to note that the development of the CSP followed a thorough consultative process starting from the community level and concluded at the Executive Board level.

The strategic document will guide AAIB to facilitate movements from the grassroots to national, international campaigns and policy reforms globally contributing in the building of an equitable society.

We acknowledge the contributions of the Executive Board, senior leadership, all members of staff, partner organisations, donors, supporters, allies, and mainly of the community. We hope to co-create a just society in future.

foreword

ActionAid International Bangladesh (AAIB) believes in the innate worth of all people. In our mission of working with the poor and excluded to eradicate poverty and injustice, this belief has been the pole star. Since inception we have declared our solidarity with the marginalized in ensuring equal opportunity for everyone, irrespective of identity, sexual orientation, class, economic status or disability. Honesty, transparency and humility are our core values while our courage of conviction makes us independent from any religious or party-political affiliation.

Our journey towards a world without poverty and injustice, in which every person enjoys a right to life with dignity, has not been a solitary one. Diverse categories of people and groups including the poorest and most excluded men, women, children and youth together with sponsors, donors, state and non-state actors and institutions, media and other stakeholders have been an integral part all along.

Our journey of close to three decades has strengthened our understanding of the priorities and enabled AAIB to be focused and committed to its goal. AAIB is entering a new phase with its fourth five-year strategy (2012-2017). The strategic shift under Country Strategy Paper (CSP) IV indicates a clear move from thematic to more integrated approach of programmes with an aim to deepen the 'impact' for a broader social transformation that we envision as 'change'. The two tier governance structure of AAIB is also a step in this new direction. The Executive Board of AAIB along with the management and staff are committed to use human-rights based approach with partner organisations, people living in poverty and excluded community to co-create a world with dignity for all.

AAIB, as a dual citizen of AA Federation, strongly believes that the solidarity and partnership of AA International will contribute in this endeavour for change. We do hope that the cooperation received from the policymakers and other strategic allies over the years will continue in this new phase, which will enable us to realize the broader vision of a poverty-free and just society for all.

Abdullah Abu Sayeed
Chairperson
ActionAid International Bangladesh

preface

“

*Weary of struggle, I the great rebel,
Shall rest in quiet only when I find
The sky and the air free of the piteous
groans of the oppressed.*

(Kazi Nazrul Islam)

ActionAid International Bangladesh (AAIB) is venturing into the fourth strategy period 2012-2017 setting itself new goals in its effort to fight poverty and injustice. AAIB has gained confidence on the back of its achievements including successes in influencing policy reform and advocacy for legislation in partnership with communities, national organisations and people's movements. Learning from challenges and difficult experiences, AAIB will build on the grounds gained in past 27 years aiming to deepen its' engagement as poverty and injustice has not ceased.

Formation of its national Executive Board was one of the prominent developments for AAIB in respect to the architecture of its governance. AAIB today is an associate of the ActionAid International Federation aspiring to graduate to the affiliate status. AAIB Executive Board intends to invest in the development of a General Assembly in this strategy period and establish a two-tier governance structure. AAIB envisages greater contribution towards ActionAid International with the intent to influence policy, programme and campaign.

The focus essentially of CSP IV remains working for people's collective voice and agency building. The thrust will be on women's rights, particularly of poor and marginalised women, which includes but is not limited to women farmers, women with disability, women living with HIV/AIDs and women from indigenous communities. AAIB continues to prioritise sponsored children and their families to reinforce its commitment and accountability to these communities. With the understanding that youth equipped with appropriate skills and knowledge can improve their lives and livelihoods, safeguard right and contribute towards shaping public opinions and driving social change, AAIB will engage with youth at multiple levels to harness the innovative thinking of the youth.

CSP IV was developed through a consultative process primarily driven by national context and priorities aligning with ActionAid international strategy and regional initiatives. AAIB aspires, among other areas, to critically influence internal and external stakeholders, decision-makers and political actors on the issues of climate change, justice and community based adaptation, access and control of poor and marginalised women over natural resources, especially to land. It also emphasises on the rights of indigenous people, persons with disability and other persons from the disenfranchised communities. AAIB also sees itself investing in new thinking and ideas to be innovative in order to encourage and develop alternatives. AAIB will undertake change management and invest in developing the skills and capacity across the organisation.

AAIB is indebted to the communities, partner organisations, policymakers, frontline staff and senior management for their contribution to CSP IV. The robust strategic contributions of the Executive Board both shaped the thinking and developed agreed outcome. ActionAid International Bangladesh foresees great opportunities during 2012 to 2017 given the potential while recognising the challenges ahead.

Farah Kabir
Executive Director
ActionAid International Bangladesh

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acronyms

and abbreviations

AAI	: ActionAid International
AAIB	: ActionAid International Bangladesh
CCA	: Climate Change Adaptation
CEDAW	: Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
CSP	: Country Strategy Paper
DRR	: Disaster Risk Reduction
EFA	: Education For All
ER	: Emergency Response
HDI	: Human Development Index
HRBA	: Human Rights Based Approach
MDG	: Millennium Development Goals
M&E	: Monitoring and Evaluation
NAPA	: National Adaptation Programme of Action
NDS	: National Development Strategy
NGOs	: Non-Government Organisations
PLWHA	: People Living with HIV and AIDS
PWD	: Persons with Disability
REFLECT	: Regenerating Freirian Learning and Empowerment through Community Techniques
RTI	: Right to Information
SAARC	: South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation
UNCPRD	: United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Persons with Disability

chapter 1

identity and principles

ActionAid International Bangladesh (AAIB), an associate member of ActionAid International, aspires to become an affiliate in this strategy period. The governance structure of AAIB began to evolve with the formation of the Executive Board during the associate status and will culminate into a two-tier system of governance when the General Assembly is formed.

In its effort to accelerate action of people, mainly poor, to end poverty, AAIB shares the common vision, mission and values that bind together ActionAid Federation worldwide. Under an international federated governance model, AAIB is accountable to its national Executive Board and ActionAid International.

vision

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

mission

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

values

ActionAid International lives by the following values:

- Mutual respect, requiring us to recognise the innate worth of all people and the value of diversity
- Equity and justice, requiring us to work to ensure equal opportunity for everyone, irrespective of race, age, gender, sexual orientation, HIV status, colour, class, economic status, religion, ethnicity, or disability
- Honesty and transparency, requiring us to be accountable in our actions, objective in our judgements and open in our communications with all
- Solidarity with the poor, powerless and excluded, requiring us to be committed to fighting poverty and injustice
- Courage of conviction, requiring us to be creative, bold and innovative – without fear of failure – in pursuit of making a poverty free society
- Independence, requiring us to be free from any religious or party-political affiliation
- Humility, in our presentation and conduct, requiring us to recognise that we are part of a wider alliance against poverty and injustice

approaches

Poverty as we believe is a violation and denial of human rights including the right to dignity, arising from unequal power relations. These relations are hierarchically structured with different social groups having varied access to power and status, which in turn creates social discrimination and exclusion. These unequal social relations and exclusion are shaped and perpetuated by institutions from family to global level, i.e. structures, systems, and rules that govern the behaviours and attitudes of individuals in a society. ActionAid as an institution has, therefore, opted for Human Rights Based Approach in its work with the poor and excluded who are denied of their rights most.

People we work with

AAIB engages with diverse categories of people and groups including the poorest and most excluded, men, women, children and youth, sponsors, donors, state and non-state actors and institutions, media and other stakeholders. AAIB works in partnership with communities and local / national organisations. Such relationships tend to be long term and intensive.

We believe drawing from analysis, experience and learning that women mostly bear the brunt of poverty, injustice and exclusion due to prevailing gendered practices, structures and stereotypes. Therefore, women rights is at the centre of all initiatives, programmes, plans, process and cycle undertaken by AAIB. Gender analysis in program planning, addressing women's rights in strategic interventions, measuring change with gender indicators, and even gender budget analysis is a step in that direction. We also prioritise our work with children and youth in order to nurture their potentials to grow and develop with skills and knowledge so as to lead and become agents of change.

How we work

Human Rights Based Approach defines our work, which are ingrained in three broad and interconnected programming components - empowerment, solidarity and campaigning.

Our empowerment approach includes, amongst others, Reflect (Regenerating Freirian Learning and Empowerment through Community Techniques), Self-Help Groups, Participatory Vulnerability Analysis, which target the most excluded and vulnerable people at the local level. We aim to develop the understanding of people living in poverty and equip them with the tools for critical analysis of rights and power dynamics.

Through solidarity, we engage as well as facilitate people's movements, organizations and other civil society networks to assist the poor and excluded in challenging injustice and fighting for rights.

AAIB undertakes dialogues to lobby and advocate with duty bearers as part of its campaigning efforts for influencing changes in attitude, policy and practice. Such initiatives or campaigning are in partnership with its allies, social movements or sometimes individually spearheaded as and where relevant.

The success of these components rests on:

Fostering partnerships and alliances

Strategic engagement with government and other state actors and institutions

Strategic engagement with media

Research and knowledge sharing



chapter 2

Bangladesh at forty: analysis of development potentials and challenges

Forty years of independent Bangladesh holds a history of political upheavals. Each upheaval brought with it some degrees of hope for people, but sometimes the hopes turned illusory. The non-democratic practices in politics and criminalisation of politics characterised by use of black money, guns and goons have hindered democratic practices and culture.

The limited spaces offered to citizens for political participation only promoted electoral democracy, not a culture of inclusive democracy. The critical challenge now is to develop a pluralistic socio-political environment that promotes equity and justice. At the same time, it is imperative to recognise these structural barriers that inhibit democratic values and practices.

The present government declared a charter of change-vision 2021. Bangladesh is envisioned to become a middle-income country by 2020/2021 where development will be fast-tracked with ever-increasing growth which will eventually reduce the proportion of extreme-poor. The number of absolute poor is expected to be lowered to 45 million (or 25 per cent) by 2013 and 22 million (or 15 per cent) by 2021.

In order to materialise these, a vision plan entitled Outline Perspective Plan of Bangladesh 2010-2021 has been formulated. It entails the potential for achieving the milestones set around various normative commitments such as the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and Education For All (EFA) agenda. MDGs and other related commitments target 100 percent net enrolment in primary level education and literacy rate by 2010 and 2014 respectively. Outline Perspective Plan also envisages that the optimisation of food production and stock will contribute to food availability and accessibility for people in poverty and disadvantaged groups including Persons with Disability (PWD).

Given the vision, commitments and strategies mentioned above, progressive realization of rights, political will of the government and the capacity of the state to deliver resources to the poor continue to remain a matter of grave concern. The existing policies and programmes of the government do not address the root causes of poverty and discrimination. There is an expectation that the graduation into middle income country will automatically address the issue of inequity and injustice. The experience from other countries to date, however, has been that of leaving the poor behind in a growth-led development paradigm. Arguably, the same may occur in the context of Bangladesh unless we challenge structural inequality and injustice.

Bangladesh has traversed through decades of economic reforms under the framework of global economic order which essentially changed the development landscape, making the state subordinate to unjust global policies followed by Washington Consensus¹. This legacy of market-driven fundamentalism has historically exposed Bangladesh to a highly liberalised regime. Reduced public sector on one hand and expanded private sector on the other have become the characteristic feature of development. Economic reform has over time de-legitimised the capacity of the state. The state has failed to deliver basic services like health and education, especially to the poor and marginalised. Achieving the agenda for development envisaged in various policy documents is viewed with reservation by many quarters.

With a growth rate of 5 to 6 percent on an average, Bangladesh has a tremendous opportunity for development. It calls for developing the public sector for improved delivery of basic services for the poor. The development of national policies is a crucial first step; however, these policies must be translated into action for tangible outputs at the national level while at the same time ensuring compliance with international commitments.

Successive governments have formulated policies which have contributed towards decreasing poverty to some extent. Progress in terms of certain MDGs and HDI targets and indicators are evident, although poverty alleviation has been slow. The dictates of the international financial institutions and other donors contributed to the expansion of the 'rich-poor' gap. The recent global economic recession and food price hike have had negative effect on the overall poverty situation in Bangladesh.

The decision of the current Government to revert to a 'Five Year Plan' is seen as a pragmatic step, albeit with some reservations. The 'Sixth Five Year plan' remains a top-down process and is yet to demonstrate an inclusive participatory approach. Other National Development Strategies (NDS) have also been formulated without people's participation. Gendered policies remain the norm.

Women's participation in various national strategy and policy development has always been an afterthought, resulting more often than not, in marginalisation of their voices, opinions and rights. There are achievements such as the enactment of legislations to combat violence against women, Acid Crime Prevention Act 2002 etc.

Adoption by the Government of the Women's Development Policy in 2011 is considered to be a significant step in the direction towards promoting women's empowerment, despite that it is a watered-down version of the expectations of women and women's movement. However, the big challenge is to organise, mobilise and translate the policy into actions in the face of prevalent patriarchal biases and anti women socio and political forces. CEDAW was ratified by the government with reservation due to similar opposition to women's emancipation. Government's actions are similarly inadequate in addressing questions of inclusion- people with disability, cultural diversity, and the rights of indigenous people and marginalised groups.

¹ The term Washington Consensus was coined in 1989 by the economist John Williamson to describe a set of ten relatively specific economic policy prescriptions that he considered to be the "standard" reform package for crisis-wrecked developing countries promoted by Washington, D.C.-based institutions such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF), World Bank (WB) and the US Treasury Department. The prescriptions encompassed policies in such areas as macroeconomic stabilization, economic opening with respect to both trade and investment, and the expansion of market forces within the domestic economy.

Food security is the critical aspect that requires government attention with supportive policies and programmes. Agriculture in all its dimensions is at the core of ensuring food security, therefore it needs to be supported by

pragmatic & meaningful policy initiatives, particularly targeting the poor, especially women and marginalised. The government’s approach to agriculture sector in Bangladesh is divided into three components - Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries, and Food and Disaster Management. However, lack of coherence, complementarities and effectiveness as well as the ambiguities in various policies have restricted their (*full*) implementation ².

In the absence of a long term strategy to tackle food security issues, the government is dependent on short term social safety-net programmes, employment generation schemes etc. Although these programmes are bringing a substantial number of people into its fold, there are concerns about adhocism, pilferage and corruption.

In this backdrop, ActionAid International Bangladesh in its fourth Country Strategy will undertake initiatives for advocacy on policy reforms and relevant legislations in the following areas



It is often left to the civil society to fight discrimination and violations of rights. There is criticism that civil society has been observed to behave in a fragmented and partisan manner and therefore has not been fully successful in its efforts to safeguard democratic spaces and pluralistic thinking. As such strengthening democracy beyond electoral processes and nurturing pluralistic thinking is of utmost importance. This is the area where AAIB is considering in partnership with communities, particularly with poor and excluded people, to contribute.

² A study commissioned by FAO has brought out issues around compatibility as well as contradictions and lacunae within policy especially in the context of changing situation. For more please see Mandal, MAS., *A Synthesis of Agricultural Policies in Bangladesh* (FAO, 2006).



chapter 3

journey from csp iii to csp iv

2005 onwards ActionAid Bangladesh has been working to realise CSP III entitled 'Equality, Citizenship and Justice' in difficult circumstances both internally and externally impacting the organisation as well as having a bearing in the context of national politics. The transformation from CSP III to CSP IV is in line with growth and deepening of understanding. ActionAid International is also striving to deepen the impact in a fast-changing world.

CSP III outlined the strategic direction AAB wished to undertake at that juncture in time. It was, indeed, an ambitious strategy that aimed to achieve four goals and twelve strategic objectives under selected themes.

In June 2010 an external review followed by Peer Review comprising a team of ActionAid international colleagues was undertaken. Both reviews observed that AAIB had spread itself too thin even though there were significant achievements in each of the themes in the said strategy period. They maintained that prioritising and condensing the themes and issues, and

implementing them in a coordinated way would have had a greater impact. Both the reviews suggested that we go deeper to facilitate a social change that promotes pro-poor agenda. Issues and work that were suggested to be taken forward in CSP IV were women's rights, sustainable agriculture/food rights, governance, livelihoods and work with the marginalised groups. Amongst the numerous challenges AAB experienced during CSP III included multiple challenges in regards to partnership. There were issues of capacity and orientation of the selected partners not to mention the essence and spirit of CSP III and its objectives impacting on the partners' ability to deliver.

In an effort to develop CSP IV, consultations were held amongst partners, communities, policymakers, members of the civil society, AAIB staff and the Executive Board. The development of the International Strategy of ActionAid International simultaneously offered an insight for national strategy building from an international perspective and an opportunity to both align influence the global strategy of the Federation.

The process of developing CSP IV has brought to the forefront the need to change the structure and management to deliver CSP IV and realise the promises built in the strategy. It is expected to impact partner relations and management on one level and engagement with policymakers and other stakeholders on the other.



chapter 4

strategic priorities

Major changes in the programme structure and modalities were introduced to roll out CSP IV. AAIB opted for an integrated approach having eight strategic priorities in view of the evolving organisational context and changing national context. It is envisioned that the strategic modality shall enhance coherence and efficiency in programmatic interventions.

strategic priority 1

FOOD RIGHTS AND SUSTAINABLE LIVELIHOODS

Food security encompasses food production, utilisation and distribution. Bangladesh, characterised by agrarian economy, has traditionally been self-sufficient in food production. However, existing agriculture policy coupled with international food politics has created food dependency of the country. This situation has led to distributional injustice posing a growing threat to food insecurity of the country's large population and consequently exacerbating the poverty situation. The strategic objective of this priority is to **'ensure food rights and sustainable livelihoods for the poor and marginalised people'** given that food rights and sustainable livelihoods are interwoven with reciprocal dependencies.

Core area

The overall focus of this strategic priority will centre on comprehensively developing, deepening and strengthening processes for ensuring food security and livelihoods of the participating families especially women, by way of a holistic, environment friendly, and climate resilient approach. The following issues will be central to our engagement:

- | | |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| [i] sustainable agriculture, | associations and collectives / cooperatives, |
| [ii] control over seeds in view of increasing corporatisation of agriculture, [iii] promoting ecologically sustainable management of the natural resources, [iv] agrarian reform, [v] supporting farmer's | [vi] strengthening / developing the livelihood options for non-farming communities, [vii] promoting women's equal wage, access to markets and environment for working in 'on and off farm' activities, [viii] supporting people's struggles against aggression by public, private and corporate sector, [ix] addressing poverty, livelihoods and food rights of the urban poor. |

Policy spectrum would focus on developing a comprehensive agriculture policy framework for enhancing pro-poor development and realising people's 'Right to Food' through legislation. On regional level, we would continue to support Bangladesh's 'Right to Water' from international trans-boundary rivers and promote comprehensive 'river eco-system' management framework for accessing peoples' rights to natural resources.

Intended outcomes

- | | |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| [a] Legislative advocacy for right to food initiated | [e] Access of poor and marginalised communities to natural resources increased and sustained |
| [b] Agriculture policy reform with climate resilient components developed | [f] Livelihoods of rural and urban communities secured |
| [c] People's alliance with farmers and women representation formed | [g] Women recognised as farmers on equal footing with men |
| [d] Market access of the poor and marginalised farmers strengthened | [h] Alliances developed and strengthened at regional level within SAARC for comprehensive 'river ecosystem' management framework & 'right to water' from international trans-boundary rivers |

LAND RIGHTS

In Bangladesh, 15.62% total families are landless³. According to the record, women own 6.3% of total private land⁴. Land rights of the indigenous communities have been a long standing political issue with multifarious complications sharpened by existing legislation. Moreover, there are different laws pertaining to indigenous people of the hill districts and plain land. Land ownership, distribution and reform are at the centre of land rights issue. Unjust law, structures and practices are manifested in the form of land grabbing and litigation.

Above 80% of total cases in all courts are related to land dispute. One fourth of total land is under litigation which affects about 120 million people adding up to a total loss of BDT 115,195 million per year. It is opined that there is an incidental expenditure of BDT 248,599 million, 50% of which is claimed to be given as bribery⁵. Urbanisation, industrialisation, commercialisation or grabbing have all led to 1% loss of agriculture land every year⁶.

Access and control over land, water and forest by poor people encompass the whole gamut of Land Rights issues. It also has certain implications for the portfolio of work under strategic priority Food Rights and Sustainable Livelihoods, i.e. regional initiative around Right to Water, particularly the multi-country campaign on water commons. The strategic objective of this priority is to **'promote pro-poor and people-centred land reform in Bangladesh'**.

Core area

- [i] Legislative advocacy for land use and land distribution,
- [ii] accountable land management
- [iii] land rights for women, indigenous, ethnic communities,
- [iv] access to water bodies and forest by poor and marginalised; regional initiative on water common

Intended outcomes

- [a] Legislation on land use followed by its implementation
- [b] People's movement for accessing land, water body and forests strengthened
- [c] Distribution of *khas* land for poor ensured
- [d] Digitalisation of land management system strengthened
- [e] Separate land commission for the indigenous communities of plain land incorporated in public agenda.

³ Agricultural Census 2008.

⁴ Agricultural Census 2001.

⁵ D. Abul Barkat and Prosanta K Roy, *Political Economy of Land Litigation in Bangladesh* (ALRD).

⁶ Ministry of Agriculture, *Introduction Statement of National Agriculture Policy* (2013).

strategic
priority 3

RIGHT TO JUST AND DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE

Bangladesh has been experiencing governance deficit in many areas including in the area of delivery of basic services. This state of affairs essentially had negative impact on the poor and marginalised people. The governance in Bangladesh is deemed fragile which is attributed to the characteristic features of state institutions such as weak legislature, executive members' influence over judiciary, deteriorating law and order caused by absence of rule of law, further accentuated with the institutionalisation of corruption.

Politics of confrontation, mistrust and male chauvinism have constrained the potentials for people-centred governance, particularly at the local level. Besides, the traditional relationship between central and local government and the existing dynamics have not supported the transformation. The strategic objective of this priority is to **'promote and establish pro-poor and inclusive governance'**.

Core area

[i] strengthen people's agency particularly women and marginalised communities at local level; [ii] strengthen and promote women's leadership across class and ethnicity; [iii] advocate for gender sensitive

institutions and governance mechanisms; [iv] promote democratisation of national & local budget; [v] promote poor people's inclusion in policy formulation processes; [vi] advocate for tax justice; [vii] advocate for people's Right to Information (RTI); [viii] increase people's awareness in basic services; [ix] build strategic alliances with development partners for pro-poor initiatives.

Intended outcomes

- [a] People's organisations developed to demand government accountability.
- [b] Representation of women and marginalised people in local government structures enhanced.
- [c] People's access to basic services improved.

- [d] A decentralised budget for district level incorporated in public agenda.
- [e] Solidarity of rights-holders with local, national and global platforms on social movement strengthened.
- [f] Government and development partners become accountable and responsive to poor people's needs in national level planning process and implementation of development projects.

strategic
priority 4

WOMEN RIGHTS AND GENDER EQUITY

Patriarchy and gender discrimination have traditionally obstructed women from taking control over their social, economic and political lives. Although the situation of women has improved over time, feminisations of poverty, social and economic inequalities, and emergencies etc, continue to deprive Bangladeshi women of their rights & entitlements. AAIB will make conscious efforts to mainstream women rights recognising diversity of women as a constituency and thereby covering women with disability, poor and marginalised women. Women rights is at the centre of all initiatives, programmes, plans, process, cycle including management and evaluation of its programmes. The core objective of this priority is to **'promote women's equal right and gender equity'**.

Core area

[i] develop women's leadership, particularly in the communities AAIB is working; [ii] support women in the working areas of

AAIB to gain control over their own bodies; [iii] fight all forms of gender based violence; [iv] advocate for women's right to property and livelihood opportunities through legislative and policy reforms.

Intended outcomes

- [a] The existing laws related to property inheritance enforced.
- [b] Women's influence in decision making processes both in public and private spheres enhanced.
- [c] Capacity of women leadership including that of women with disabilities strengthened.
- [d] Social movement against all forms of violence against women and girls strengthened.
- [e] Women, particularly poor and marginalised, determine their reproductive role.
- [f] Legislative and policy reform for women's rights including minority women's right to property initiated.

strategic priority 5

JUSTICE FOR EXCLUDED AND MARGINALISED

We intend to reach out to the excluded and marginalised social groups who are systematically denied, dispossessed and discriminated against, and often left behind in development planning and implementation processes. Disparate attitude and cultural practices further perpetuate inequality and injustice of identity amongst socially marginalised. The strategic objective of this priority is to **'promote equal rights and justice for the excluded and socially marginalised'**.

Core area

This priority area will work with a number of selected socially marginalised and excluded groups, namely Persons with Disability (PWDs), Indigenous People, Dalits, People Living with HIV and AIDS (PLWHA) and Sex workers. We will explore opportunities to work with the transgender (third gender)

given the extent of discrimination and exclusion endured by this population group. In the policy arena, AAIB will continue its efforts towards ensuring constitutional recognition of marginalised groups, integrating their agenda in development programmes, planning, implementation and policy adoption. AAIB will consider group-specific advocacy initiatives such as legal reform around disability rights in line with UNCRPD, statutory provision for care and treatment support for the PLWHA.

Intended outcomes

- [a] Leadership capacity of marginalised groups developed and strengthened.
- [b] Social movement for recognition of indigenous identity and protection of their rights strengthened
- [d] Legal recognition of marginalised groups gained and their inclusion in policy agenda ensured
- [e] Law for PWDs in line with UNCRPD enacted
- [f] Platforms and networks of marginalised groups promoted and strengthened

DISASTER RISK REDUCTION AND CLIMATE JUSTICE

Bangladesh is one of the most disaster prone countries in the world. Climatic changes have increased the frequency and intensity of hazards leading to severe damages of assets, properties and loss of livelihood. People living in poverty are the worst affected. It is, therefore, imperative to invest in disaster risk reduction (DRR) and climate change adaptation (CCA) to manage emergencies and protect peoples' dignity, lives and livelihoods. Building the capacities of communities and institutions will play a major role in sustainably mainstreaming climate smart DRR.

AAIB will accept disaster and other climatic impacts as an affirmative chance to address existing power imbalances and create peoples' access to and control over their entitlements, resources and services. AAIB will ensure that humanitarian aid is a right and not an endowment for disaster and climate affected community. The strategic objective of this priority is to **'establish an inclusive Rights Based Disaster Risk Management and advocate for Climate Justice'**.

Core area

[i] facilitate different strategic priorities to incorporate climate resilience in their programme designing and implementation;
[ii] promote women-led, people-centred, innovative human rights based alternatives on emergency response (ER), DRR and CCA for policy influence at institutional and national level;
[iii] facilitate collective agency of poor people to enable their access

to and control over resources to better manage risks of disaster and climate change; [iv] enhance the capacity of communities and local institutions to respond to and recover from shocks and crisis; [v] initiate quick and timely human rights based humanitarian response to disaster; [vi] initiate and facilitate research to generate, articulate and document knowledge and evidence base; [vii] influence national plans and policy instruments, and their implementation for the benefit of people living in poverty; [viii] engage with national and international processes, networks and campaigns to advocate for fair, transparent and equitable allocation, distribution and utilisation of funds.

Intended outcomes

- [a] DRR and climate justice integrated into ActionAid programmes
- [b] Women taking an active and leadership role in emergency response, disaster preparedness and climate justice programmes
- [c] People collectively demanding for transparent, accountable and pro-poor institutions to ensure better resource management in dealing with risks and uncertainties
- [d] Skills, capacities and commitment of duty-bearers for humanitarian response, disaster preparedness and adaptation enhanced
- [e] Knowledge and practice on human rights based ER, DRR & CCA generated, documented and used as evidences for policy advocacy and campaigns
- [f] Legal framework for DRR in conformity with international standards developed
- [g] ActionAid, in partnership with national, regional and international networks, contributed to policy change for climate justice

strategic
priority 7

RIGHT TO EDUCATION

Education is critical to human development, enlightenment and emancipation. AAIB is committed to education for all and thus envisages inclusion of poor and marginalised from both development and rights perspective. It is equally important to enable poor people to participate and compete in order to avail equal opportunities in all aspects especially in respect of livelihood options. The strategic objective of this priority is to **'promote right to education in constitution, adequate education financing and quality, transformative education for children'**.

Core area

[i] legislative advocacy for recognising education as a fundamental right; [ii] advocate for adequate budget allocation for education; [iii] raise people's

awareness on citizen rights to public services; [iv] utilise REFLECT for meaningful achievement of EFA goal and community empowerment; [v] reinvigorate adult education, particularly targeting women and youth groups from marginalised communities

Intended outcomes

[a] Legislative reform for education as a constitutional right incorporated in the public agenda
[b] Adequate public financing in

education incorporated in the public agenda
[c] Right to education and democratic governance promoted by communities, particularly at local level
[d] Policy processes influenced for pro-poor interventions and reforms

strategic
priority 8

YOUTH

Bangladesh is a country where 55 million people or 34%⁷ of the total population is between 15 to 34 years of age. Despite this, rights, voices and agencies of children and young people are consistently denied. Building on our decades of achievements and our strong partnerships with children, ActionAid, during the end of CSP III, started building engagement with young people to support emergence of youth movements in our local rights programmes and linking them with other youth movements nationally and globally as they seek to find solutions to their problems and influence the wider community for lasting change. The strategic objective of this priority is to **'promote youth as social change agent and support sponsor children into leadership'**.

Core area

[i] build engagement with young people and their movements;
[ii] advocate for effective design and implementation of policies

responsive to young people's needs; [iii] increase the chances of young people for meaningful participation in decision-making and leadership processes; [iv] enable sponsored children to take up leadership

Intended outcomes

[a] Young leaders, activists and sponsored children graduated to influence social change

[b] Participation of young people in social transformation & decision-making processes increased
[c] Rural and urban youth volunteer base developed

⁷ British Council, *Bangladesh the Next Generation* (2010).



chapter 5

international campaigns

ActionAid Federation has been working to develop a multi-country campaign portfolio for the new international strategy period while it is committed to HungerFREE as an international campaign until the end of 2012. In Bangladesh, HungerFREE is working on two campaign objectives: a) a constitutional amendment to guarantee the right to food, and b) a set of laws designed to guarantee implementation of the universal right to food. The campaign plan also involves strategically mobilizing youth to put pressure on policymakers and concerned officials to take this agenda forward.

AAIB will campaign on these policy objectives throughout the strategy period and beyond until these campaign objectives are achieved. HungerFREE may or may not continue as an international campaign post-2012, therefore, AAIB will link up with any international and regional campaigns including Right to Food relevant to national context. Where appropriate, HungerFREE could be sighted as a good example of an ActionAid campaign, as the organisation continues to define its relationship to campaigning as a tool to achieve its strategic objectives. International campaigns will be prioritised where there is a clear distinct connection with national priorities.

Other international campaigns

AAIB is actively engaged in the conversations, and contributing strategically in respect of the development of the portfolio and approach related discussions at the international level to determine what these campaigns may develop into, keeping in mind the needs of AAIB partners and communities on the ground in Bangladesh. AAIB will develop a plan to join one or more campaigns in the international portfolio so as to enrich the campaigns and embed those at national level.⁸

⁸ In 2013, two multi-country campaigns were launched at the AAIFederation level - Tax Power and Safe City for Women and Girls.



chapter 6

organisational priorities

During this strategy period, AAIB will work to retain its reputation as a quality organisation and focus on strengthening the federal model of governance through open, accountable and interdependent processes of decision making. The following six organisational priorities are agreed for the fourth CSP:

priority 1

Develop a two-tier governance system to graduate from associate to affiliate within the ActionAid International Federation

AAIB's two-tier governance framework consisting of a General Assembly and Executive Board will be contributing both at national and international level as a member of the AAI Federation to deepen the strategic thinking and bringing the southern perspective. The General Assembly will comprise of right holders, community representatives, including partner organisations of AAIB.

We aspire to be inclusive in inviting diverse communities including youth, women, persons with disability, Dalits, sex workers, indigenous communities to name a few. Early in this CSP period, the General Assembly will be formed and expected to take on its role. Also in this CSP period, the review of the associate will be undertaken and AAIB expects to graduate to affiliate status i.e. full independence within the AAI federation, assets owned and managed nationally within framework and agreements with AAI and right to vote (two votes) and propose Special Motions in the Assembly and nominate candidates to the Board.

priority 2

Promote an enabling, inclusive and diverse organisational culture and environment and increase our 'own people power', especially investing in women leadership

With guidance and support from the Board and General Assembly, AAIB will promote and instill core organisational values and principles among the staff and partners and will promote diversity and equity in terms of gender, ability, ethnicity, religious orientation etc. We will boost women leadership and their role in decision making processes.

Maximum effort and investment will be given in capacity building for staff and partners on core strategic competencies and operational skills for effective and efficient delivery. Performance assessment system will be designed to promote merit, innovation and growth. We will promote an enabling organisational culture and environment that boosts staff motivation, encourages career growth, unlocks potential, incentivizes innovation and facilitates multilayer exchange of knowledge and learning. Mutual trust, respect and togetherness will garner our collective fight against poverty and injustice.

priority 3

Ensure quality of our work built on coherent and integrated rights-based program framework, accountability and innovation to deepen impact

AAIB will review, design and develop integrated program framework based on the standards and principles of human rights based approach (HRBA) while having coherent linkages across levels. As part of our multi-level accountabilities with diverse stakeholders, participatory monitoring and evaluation (M&E) framework

and systems will be strengthened. M&E framework will outline the broad areas of change and their indicators in line with HRBA framework whereas the systems guide the tools and processes for measuring the changes. This priority is also intended to deepen understanding of the changes that will be sought through continuous and shared learning. We will strengthen information and knowledge management systems and processes to promote mutual learning while appropriate technological solutions will be used to harmonise these systems & expedite work process.

priority 4

Mobilise, diversify adequate resources for expansion of program & policy interventions

We aspire to raise and sustain 50% institutional funding from multiple sources for the entire duration of the CSP period. We will make deliberate effort to improve contract management, competencies, credibility with development partners to uphold both the track record and profile of AAIB and AAI in managing development projects. In the backdrop of AAI strategy and long term funding plan, we will develop comprehensive resource

mobilisation strategy and funding plan. It will outline resourcing plan for program interventions, sponsorship-grant ratio etc. Moreover, as an affiliate during the CSP period, AAIB would develop a strategy to explore and initiate local-level fundraising from individuals in Bangladesh. With support from the Board, AAIB will deepen relationship with its supporters through effective supporter servicing, which includes developing inspiring and engaging communication materials that reflect children's growth and creativity, accommodating update on tangible development work and sharing on the time. We will attempt to link supporters with campaigns as mark of their solidarity with the mission.

priority 5

Strengthen management policies and practices to improve financial accountability, professional integrity, management information system and operations and initiate

We will strengthen financial accountability, monitoring and transparency in line with the national and international accounting standards and simultaneously enhance understanding and skills of staff and partners at both individual and institutional level on financial accountability, financial policy and procedure, cost effectiveness, donors' compliance, reporting and documentation to strengthen financial management.

We will continue monitoring fund utilisation, compliance of policies and internal and external auditing processes for stringent financial transparency, accountability, control and statutory compliances. We will enforce appropriate safety and security measures for staff and organisation as part of overall security management. We will also continue preparedness and risk management efforts for emergency period. We will continue overall operational support in terms of logistics, procurement and other services by maintaining organisational policies and standards. As part of Green AAB initiative, we will monitor and work to reduce carbon emissions from sources. We will also encourage programs in plantation process and invest our fund in that against the 'Green House' effect.

priority 6

Raise our profile and brand our identity nationally and internationally

Building on 28 years of dedicated efforts, experience, operations and goodwill, AAIB will further enhance public engagement and mass communication to profile its identity across the country, region and globe as a pro-poor organisation, working with human rights based approach. In this strategy period AAIB Board will be engaged at both national and international level in regards to profile building and media presence. Building on the stories of change, AAIB will

profile its past achievements, good practices to position the voices of the community at media, government, bilateral and multilateral development partners, international NGOs, corporate, trusts and foundations, ActionAid International and other audiences. AAIB's communication process will be upgraded with a long term vision and operational strategy, appropriate to achieve the change promises in CSP-IV. We will partner with national media through strengthening linkages and creating public spaces to escalate our national advocacy and campaigning efforts for the poor and marginalised. Initiatives will be taken to share core essence of communication and vision to common citizenry. Best practices and learning will enable stakeholders, policymakers and citizens alike to identify AAIB as a pro-poor organisation.



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