



**ActionAid Vietnam Country Strategy Paper
2018-2023**

**ADVANCING HUMAN RIGHTS
FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE**

“We cause a revolution to fight for equality,
men and women will have equal rights”

-President Ho Chi Minh-



Foreword

2017 marks the 25th anniversary of ActionAid Vietnam's operation in country. Among a number of remarkable points along this 25-year journey, there is a fairly meaningful coincidence: 25 years of AAV's presence in Vietnam almost coincides with the country's Doi Moi (renovation) journey. AAV is proud to have made a modest contribution to Vietnam's great achievements, which have seen one of the world's poorest countries become a middle-income country within the span of 25 years.

From a different angle, the results of our 25 years of operation, especially the implementation of AAV's Country Strategy Paper 2012-2017, and the contribution to Vietnam's poverty alleviation process, have seen AAV make significant progress towards affirming our status in the ActionAid International federation. Since our association in June 2015, we are moving forward to affiliation and even greater opportunities for contribution.

The time at which AAV was reviewing the implementation of the country strategy 2012-2017 and developing the country strategy for 2018-2023 coincided with Vietnam's review of 30 years of renovation,

deciding changes to promote the principles of progress and social equity, building the rule of law for the people and by the people. This was also the time in which ActionAid International announced the “Action for Global Justice” international strategy 2028, which continues efforts to promote social change for a more just, equal and sustainable world.

This context, space and vision have enabled AAV to see the results, experiences, lessons, and directions for our next strategy.

With a firm belief in our achievements, and a critical review of our operational context and conditions, internal weaknesses and future external challenges, AAV has a rigorous basis on which to formulate the **2018-2023 country strategy “Advancing human rights for social justice”** which strongly reinforces our belief in *“a just and sustainable world where everyone has the right to live in dignity.”*

With this belief in mind, AAV commits and aspires to continue partnership with all its stakeholders to strive for an advanced Vietnam in a world free of poverty and injustice!

And we are happy to invite you all to join us in this journey.

*Journalist **Ta Viet Anh***

Board Chair

Aid for Social Protection Programme Foundation Vietnam

Strategic Partner of ActionAid Vietnam



**Advancing human rights
for social justice**

Acronyms/Abbreviations

AAI	ActionAid International
AAV	ActionAid Vietnam
ALPS	Accountability, Learning and Planning System
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
CSO	Civil Society Organization
CSPV	Country Strategy Paper 5
CSPVI	Country Strategy Paper 6
GBP	British pounds
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HCMC	Ho Chi Minh City
HRBA	Human Rights - Based Approach
NGO	Non - Governmental Organization
LRP	Local Rights Programme
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
M&E online	Monitoring and Evaluation Online
MDG	Microsoft Data Gathering application
MOLISA	Ministry of Labor, Invalids and Social Affairs
NGO	Non - Governmental Organization
OP	Organizational Development Priorities
PFG	People's Participation in Improvement of Forest Governance and Poverty Alleviation in Vietnam project
PVA	Participatory Vulnerability Analysis
RG	Regular giving
S-city	Safe City evaluation application



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Advancing human rights
for social justice

INTRODUCTION



ActionAid is an international Federation working closely with people living in poverty to end poverty and injustice. Established in the United Kingdom in 1972, ActionAid is present in 45 countries around the world and is actively involved in poverty eradication and development efforts in Asia, Europe, the Americas and Africa.

In 2003, ActionAid established itself as an international federation, registered under the law of the Netherlands, with its head office based in Johannesburg, South Africa, working in a progressive apparatus that encourages the participation of country members in the decision-making process of the federation, particularly enhancing the role of members from poor and developing countries in the South.

ActionAid Vietnam (AAV) is an organic part of ActionAid International (AAI), and officially became an Associate Member of the AAI Federation in June 2015. Opening the Representative Office in Vietnam in 1992, AAV has been operating in the country for 25 years through long-term local rights programmes in the Northwest (mountainous areas), Central Highlands, the Mekong Delta and disadvantaged urban areas.

Over the last 25 years, with an average annual budget of £2-3 million, AAV has directly supported millions of people across the country, with particular focus on women, children, people from ethnic minorities, migrants, landless people and those who have lost land, and disadvantaged people who are left behind by development processes. In 2016 alone, AAV provided direct and indirect support to more than 2.6 million people in

disadvantaged areas, helping them to have better lives.

AAV has contributed approximately 40 million pounds in donations, equivalent to over 1,200 billion VND over the past 25 years, to Vietnam's poverty eradication and development. Although Vietnam has become a lower middle-income country, and a number of organizations have shifted priorities and closed their programmes, ActionAid affirms its long-term commitment to Vietnam. With long-term programmes maintained and developed, ActionAid Vietnam continues to seek and implement solutions to urban poverty, climate change, governance, and improving the leadership of youth and people's organizations, in ways that further emphasize the role and position of women and girls.

During 2012-2017, research and mobilization activities that ActionAid initiated and actively participated in have been acknowledged by national partners and donors, and have had significant impacts. In 2015, the findings of our research on safe cities for women and girls prompted the HCMC People's Committee to promulgate regulations for installation of video cameras on public buses in Ho Chi Minh City. The Department of Gender Equality within the Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs (MOLISA) appreciated the recommendations of the research and made the development of safe cities criteria an activity of the National Target Program on Gender Equality. AAV has joined and supported the Vietnam Lawyers Association in the process of developing and disseminating the Referendum Law adopted by the National Assembly in 2015



– 2017. ActionAid Vietnam’s research on unpaid care work over 2015-2017 has been valued by academia and policy makers as the first of its kind in the entire country. Policy makers have recognized this research, which has contributed to the discussion on adding unpaid care work to the agenda for calculation of Gross Domestic Product (GDP).


During 2014-2017, information technology has been applied to expand the political and economic space for disadvantaged people to raise their voices in local governance, with smartphone applications such as S-City, PFG, and MDG opening opportunities for democratization for thousands of people. For the first time, ActionAid Vietnam has upgraded its own Facebook page and interactive information sharing has attracted the participation of communities, particularly the youth. The online monitoring and evaluation system in programme management has contributed to accelerating the process of planning and approvals and enhancing stakeholders’ transparency and accountability.

In 2016-2017, ActionAid Vietnam’s introduction of the Community Initiative Fund (CIF) was well received by the communities and local governments in Ha Giang, Cao Bang and many other provinces and cities. The Ha Giang Provincial government even decided to apply the model of CIF to all districts in the Province, providing the political space and financial resources for communities to

decide and implement their own development priorities. In Dak Nong Province, the Krong No District authority decided that, from 2017 onward, all of its cash and non-cash support programmes to people from ethnic minorities will apply people’s monitoring tools through an unconditional cash voucher provision programmes, as introduced by AAV (in cooperation with the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization) in an emergency drought response programme. In Lam Dong Province, the Lam Ha District authority decided to replicate the revolving fund model to apply it to all government funding support to local groups, seeing the effectiveness as well as strong local support for this fund management mechanism, which recognizes the active agency of the poor in making a better life for themselves.

ActionAid activities have created real changes in the perceptions and behavior of people in the communes and wards in which AAV programs and projects are implemented. In addition, AAV has also contributed to improving the capacity of partner staff, advocating for changes in policies and practices, and advocating for their application at different levels relating to people living in poverty, disadvantaged people, and women.

These results are the stepping stones that form the basis for more extensive and intensive interventions in AAV’s country strategy 2018-2023.

A photograph of a woman with dark hair, wearing a red long-sleeved top, smiling warmly. She is looking slightly to the right of the camera. The background is dark and out of focus.

FORMULA- TION OF COUNTRY STRATEGY PAPER 2018-2023

ActionAid International's global strategy 2018-2028 was developed and approved in December 2016. This global strategy, entitled "Action for Global Justice," outlines the direction for the Federation in the next 10 years, focusing on issues of equal rights for women and girls, providing sustainable livelihoods solutions that are resilient, and expanding political space for vulnerable groups to participate in decision making as well as supporting vulnerable communities before, during and after emergencies. The strategy seeks to build a just society in which women and girls have the right to determine their lives in dignity. In the process of developing ActionAid International's global strategy, ActionAid Vietnam's Board, staff, partners and communities have actively contributed their inputs to make the global strategy close to the reality of Vietnam, reflecting Vietnam's priorities.

Inheriting the key directions of the AAI Federation's Global strategy, this ActionAid Vietnam Country Strategy Paper 2018 - 2023 (CSP VI) has been developed based on the fundamental principles of ActionAid International's Accountability, Learning and Planning System (ALPS). External consultants were invited to evaluate the performance of CSP V (2012-2017) and to analyze the external context for the 2018-2023 strategy.

Different consultations were conducted with ActionAid Vietnam's Board members, staff, partners, communities and donors to ensure that appropriate interventions were identified and reflected in CSP VI. Consultations with team members and peers in the AAI federation also took place and inputs were taken for review and reflection while drafting this strategy document. The information and inputs of all parties have been consolidated, absorbed and translated in this paper.

WHO WE ARE?

ActionAid Vietnam is an organic part of the ActionAid global federation, an organization working to promote the rights of women and children, and develop stakeholders' capacity to act on governance for social justice.

Vision

A just, equitable and sustainable world in which every person enjoys the right to a life of dignity.

Mission

To achieve social justice, gender equality and poverty eradication by working with people living in poverty and exclusion, their communities, people's organizations, activists and social movements.

Values

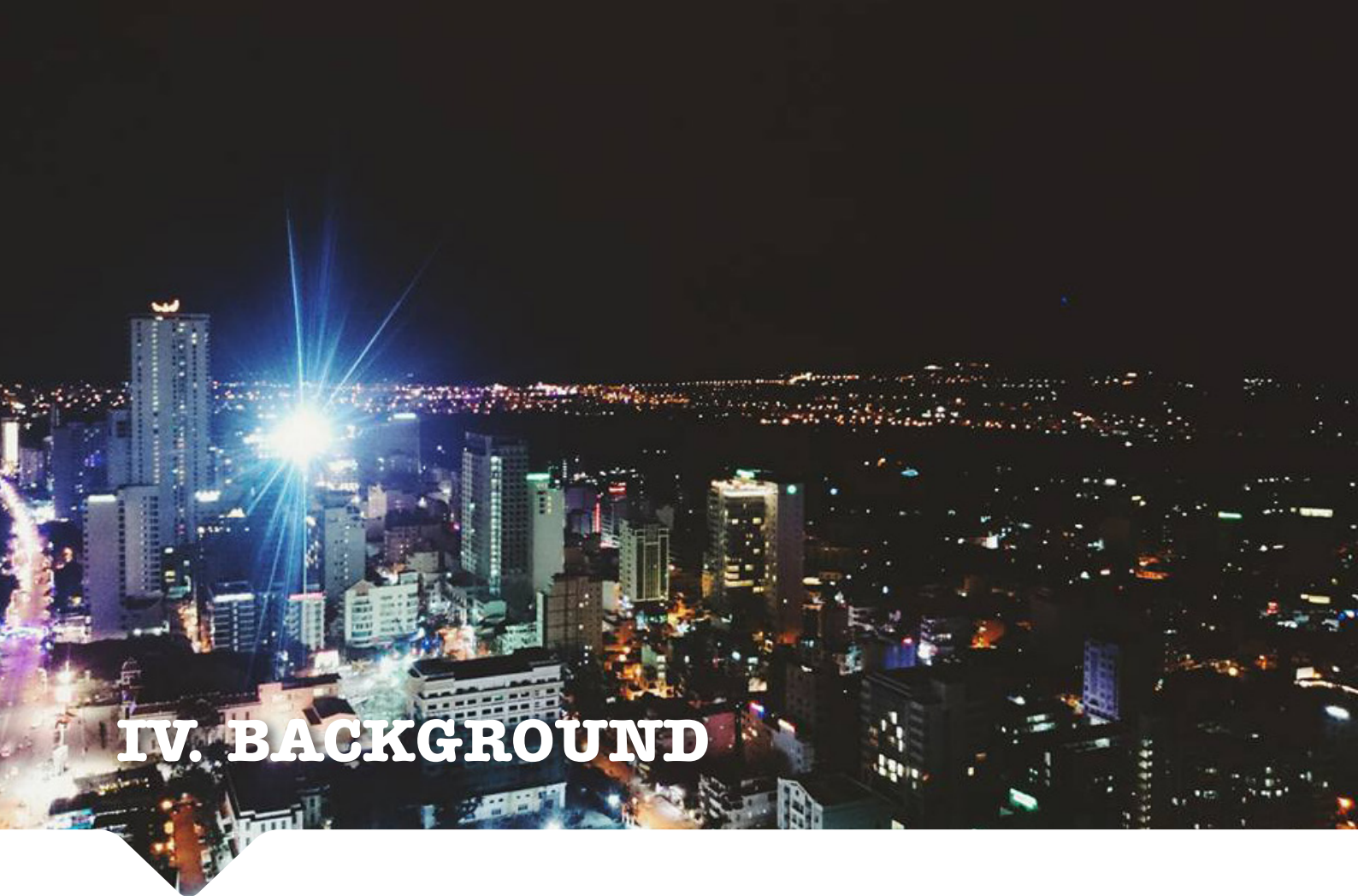
- **Mutual respect:** requiring us to recognize the innate worth of all people and the value of diversity.
- **Equity and justice:** requiring us to ensure the realization of our vision for everyone, irrespective of gender, sexual orientation and gender identity, race, ethnicity, caste, class, age, HIV status,

disability, location and religion.

- **Integrity:** requiring us to be honest, transparent and accountable at all levels for the effectiveness of our actions and our use of resources and open in our judgments and communications with others.
- **Solidarity with people living in poverty and exclusion:** will be the only bias in our commitment to the fight against poverty, injustice, and gender inequality.
- **Courage of conviction:** requiring us to be creative and radical, bold and innovative – without fear of failure – in pursuit of making the greatest possible impact on the causes of poverty, injustice, and gender inequality.
- **Independence:** from any religious or party-political affiliation.
- **Humility:** recognizing that we are part of a wider alliance against poverty and injustice.

The ActionAid Federation commits to applying a feminist lens and values in our work, which will guide us in interpreting and advancing our mission and these values. ActionAid Vietnam is guided by the human rights-based approach and principles, seeking to shift and transform power through empowerment, using solidarity, campaigning and generation of alternatives to ensure that every person can enjoy a life of dignity, with freedom from poverty.





IV. BACKGROUND

The world has experienced many changes that have shaken the centuries-old environmental, economic, political, cultural and religious systems and global society. Armed, religious and political conflicts in all regions around the world, including those generally considered peaceful, force us to look back at our own insights about and relations with the world of the future.

In 2016, more than 50% of United Kingdom voters confirmed their wish to leave Europe (Brexit) and the new policy choices of the United States government are showing that economic protectionism is taking its toll. The

legitimacy and suitability of global financial and trade mechanisms such as the World Trade Organization, International Monetary Fund and bilateral, multilateral and trans-continental trade agreements in the new era are being challenged.

In 2015, members of the United Nations adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals. Of these goals, AAI focuses its work on Goal 1: End poverty in all its forms everywhere; Goal 2: End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture; Goal

5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls; Goal 6: Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all; Goal 8: Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all; Goal 11: Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable; Goal 12: Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns; Goal 13: Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts.

Drivers of Vietnam's development process

Unpredictable climate change has been causing increasingly serious impacts, pushing millions of people into poverty and vulnerability. Vietnam is one of the countries in the world most affected by climate change and sea level rise¹. In Vietnam, abnormal climatic conditions and extreme weather across the country, as well as irregular salinity intrusion in the Mekong Delta and droughts in the Central Highlands, have severely affected the heavily agriculture-dependent economy. This in turn directly pushes vulnerable people living in poverty deeper into poverty, challenging the sustainability of poverty reduction and development programmes that have just begun to produce results.

Since *Doi Moi* (renovation) in 1986, Vietnam has transformed itself from one of the poorest countries in the world to a lower middle-income country. The Government of Vietnam has encouraged the foreign-invested economy to develop in many forms,

popularizing tax incentives, exemptions from compliance with environmental protection regulations, and reduced responsibility for workers. However, after more than 30 years of *Doi Moi*, both the State and the people have realized the costly lesson that the environment and society cannot be traded off for economic development, and sustainable economic development means no one is left behind.

Over 30 years of renovation, Vietnam has amended and promulgated the Constitution three times, amending and promulgating more than 150 laws and over 70 decrees. Most recently, Vietnam's National Assembly adopted the revised Constitution 2013 and a series of laws to institutionalize it. Articles in the 2013 Constitution provide the legal basis for fulfillment and protection of human rights, and set the foundation for social and environment justice for the first time in Vietnam.

Public services have changed in society; the one-stop shop system has changed the quality of the local administrative system. However, many people, especially ethnic minority people, women, youth, people with disabilities and disadvantaged children do not have the opportunity to benefit from these services, notably health, education and public administration. Along with rapid urbanization, millions of hectares of farmland have been converted to other land uses, resulting in many farmers losing their land without alternative livelihoods. Migrating from rural to urban areas to make a living is a difficult

¹ World Bank (2011) Vulnerability, Risk Reduction and Adaptation to Climate Change, Vietnam. Washington: World Bank, available at: http://sdwebx.worldbank.org/climateportalb/doc/GFDRRCountryProfiles/wb_gfdr气候_change_country_profile_for_VNM.pdf



choice, while the regressive household registration policy set up in the 1960s has resulted in internal migrants being forgotten in social welfare policies. Immigrants face many barriers in accessing public services, especially women, the elderly and children, who find it difficult to access education and health services. According to ActionAid's research in two major cities (Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City) in 2014, more than 90% of informal workers in urban areas do not have health insurance or pensions.

Chapter II of the 2013 Constitution addresses Citizens' Rights and Human Rights. This opens a completely new space for social organizations to discuss topics of human rights more freely, and to implement programmes and projects based on the principle of human rights in sustainable development. Many social and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have been established in Vietnam to utilize this space, however, many of these organizations have problems with a shortage of qualified staff specialized in social work, governance and organizational development, as well as utilizing advanced tools in working with the communities, identifying issues to address and mobilizing the community to participate in finding solutions for these issues.

Civil society and the media are increasingly accessible to the public. As at 2015, Vietnam had a population of about 90 million people and there were almost 128.6 million mobile phones in use across the country.² As a result, social relations are more open, cyber-related and more exposed to the public. Development of technology has increased access to information, people, mass organizations, societies, non-governmental organizations and social groups have more spaces to raise their voices in the policy-making and implementation process at all levels.

Since Vietnam achieved lower middle-income status in 2010, donors have shifted their official development assistance and phased out of Vietnam. International NGOs have also cut budgets and shifted their support to developing countries in Africa and the "poverty centers" of the world. The fact that ActionAid continues to stay in Vietnam and work with Vietnam to fight poverty entails a great deal of effort and requires a focused, innovative but consistent approach to the principles of equality of human rights in development.

² <https://www.slideshare.net/tinhanhvy/vietnam-digital-landscape-2015>



THEORY OF CHANGE

Social justice, gender equality and poverty eradication are achieved through purposeful individual and collective action to shift unequal and unjust power, whether it is hidden, visible or invisible, from the household level to local, national and international levels. Empowerment of people living in poverty and exclusion is crucial. Active and organised people develop and drive change; which will transform power when led primarily by those who are directly affected, and by individuals committed to deepening democracy and achieving social justice. Improving women's and girls' positions creates transformative change in power relationships and social

justice. Promoting the rights of women is an integral part of our viewpoint and action.

AAV believes that **people living in poverty and the disadvantaged are central and fundamental agents of change** in development. Poverty and injustice can only be eradicated when they can determine their lives and act to claim and exercise their rights. In all our actions and initiatives, we will continue to support individuals and groups, especially women and those deprived of human rights, dignity and justice. We take sides with marginalized people to shift and transform power relations at all levels,



challenging patriarchy and other root causes of poverty and injustice.

The **human rights-based approach** underpins all our activities based on the principles and lens of **feminism**. Components of this approach including **empowerment, solidarity, campaigning, and alternatives** will guide the entire AAV programme's implementation. We assert that human rights are indivisible and interrelated, acknowledging that for people to claim and enjoy their rights, we need to change not only political and socio-economic policies and practices but also our own attitudes and behavior.

We commit to long term work with the communities where we work to build their strength, and at the same time link our programme activities with higher levels. The inter-connectedness between local, national, regional, and international programming will be central to our planning and implementation of actions. By working with communities, we will have opportunities to learn from their experience, knowledge and useful initiatives so that they can be shared and integrated into methods, processes and specific solutions to replicate in other places.

Today, the use of information technology, digital media and the internet, smart phones and applications has become easier with effective, reasonably priced devices. These will therefore be an effective resource to help AAV reach out quickly to the communities,



partners, and supporters to collect and share information and build networks. AAV will continue to apply many software applications successfully implemented in disaster management and climate change adaptation, as well as use applications for public service monitoring (S-City), and programme management, monitoring and evaluation (M&E online). We will also improve, add and refine these applications and systems, while developing more applications and systems to meet further working requirements and create suitable alternatives.



ACTIONAID'S PARTNERS

ActionAid identifies women and children as the central partners for all interventions towards social justice. We pay attention to ethnic minority groups, migrants and informal workers, children, people with disabilities, and youth.

Women, ethnic minority children and people with disabilities regularly experience discrimination and suffer violation of their basic rights. Migrants and informal workers are currently not guaranteed safe working conditions and entitlement to statutory benefits. Youth in ActionAid's activities are

willing and pioneering agents for all positive social change.

In addition, social and media organizations working in the development sector will also be partnered with for provision of capacity building services needed in the process of social change.

ActionAid works with governments, research institutes, associations and domestic and international non-governmental organizations that have a common vision, mission and values, with a strong commitment to programme activities, relevant experience, and competence to ensure mutual trust, mutual respect, effective implementation and quality of programmes. In addition, ActionAid will also work with people's movements, reputable organizations and influential individuals on issues of concern to attract the support and involvement of stakeholders, and promote women's and girls' rights.

During this period, ActionAid Vietnam has identified the need to find reliable partners from the private sector who share a common interest in supporting people living in poverty, the disadvantaged, people with disabilities and children. We acknowledge that there are always companies and individuals from this sector who are interested in helping the disadvantaged, and we look forward to helping them reach the right people, with interventions that deliver sustainable results and dignity.



WHERE WE WORK

AAV will implement development programmes and projects in rural and urban areas representative of the three regions of the country where the poverty rate and ethnic minority population are high and where they face issues that are relevant to AAV programme priorities.

Decisions on Programme funding allocation; selection of, opening in or exiting from locations; partnership; or themes to work on in this CSP VI will be based on the following criteria, in order of priority:

- (i) (Extreme) poverty and/or inequality in the location, seriousness of the violation of rights of women, children, ethnic minorities, people with disabilities, civil society organizations, impacts of climate change and emergencies
- (ii) Commitment and capacity of local partners, cooperation of local authorities and support of local people
- (iii) Absence of overlapping of funding methods or similar programmes by the Government or organizations, donors or partners
- (iv) Possibilities of replication and strategic balance between rural and urban poverty
- (v) Innovation and new issues that will ensure AAV's pioneering position in the programme formulation, implementation and impacts.

As at the end of 2017 ActionAid Vietnam is working in 11 provinces across the three regions in Vietnam, including Northern Mountains, Central Highlands and Mekong Delta. It is the plan that ActionAid Vietnam plans to work to ensure sufficient funding to maintain its presence in all three strategic regions, however, this will be subject to change, based on several factors, including the criteria from (i) to (v) above.



PROGRAMME FRAMEWORK 2018-2023

PROGRAMME OVERALL GOAL

To contribute to the development of social justice by advancing people’s rights, enhancing the quality of gender responsive public services and building community capacity



PROGRAMME PRIORITY 1:

Improve people’s capacity to build safe communities, and adapt to climate change and disasters with alternative sustainable livelihoods

.....

ActionAid acknowledges that women, children, and people with disabilities in rural and urban areas, especially women living in poverty, ethnic minority children and ethnic minority people with disabilities, are the most vulnerable when risks arise. Their basic rights are denied or delayed, including economic rights (sustainable livelihoods and stable income), health care rights, the right to education in a safe environment, and most importantly, the right to participate in making decisions for their own future.



Given that 70% of Vietnam's population derives a living from agriculture, the growth in value of Vietnam's agricultural production at an average rate of 4.06% per year (1986 - 2015) shows the great potential of agricultural development. However, unsustainable, fragmented production and lack of linkages between smallholders leads to poor product quality and low economic efficiency in rural communities. In addition, there is limited connection between producers and the market, and smallholders have limited capacity to negotiate fair market prices, greatly affecting the incomes of small-scale producers and the sources of safe products.

The consequences of climate change have been affecting people's resilience, coping capacity and adaptability, especially vulnerable groups', and affecting livelihoods and threatening lives and wealth. Calculations show that each year Vietnam loses more than US\$ 40 billion in damage relating to climate change.³

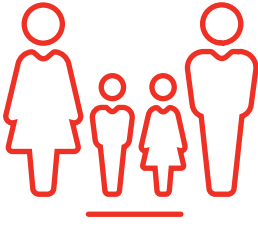
Despite the Vietnamese Government's adoption of international conventions prohibiting violence against women, 87% of women and girls report having been sexually harassed in public places such as streets, parks, buses, and public toilets.⁴ Notably, the majority of survivors and witnesses took no action. In addition, child abuse is on the rise, with incidents becoming increasingly serious with more complications. According to the Ministry of Labor, Invalids and Social Affairs, over 8,200 child abuse cases were reported between 2012-2016, affecting nearly 10,000 victims, of which sexual abuse cases accounted for up to 5,300 cases.⁵

To build safe communities with greater resilience and improved livelihoods, the ActionAid Vietnam Country Strategy 2018-2023 expects the following results:

³ http://www1.wider.unu.edu/recomenvironment/sites/default/files/Research%20brief%20-%20The%20cost%20of%20climate%20change%20in%20Vietnam_0.pdf

⁴ Reports Safe Cities for Women and Girls: can dreams come true? (2014) and For a Safe City for Women and Girls (2016) conducted by ActionAid, available at: <http://www.actionaid.org/vietnam/publications>

⁵ Reports Safe Cities for Women and Girls: can dreams come true? (2014) and For a Safe City for Women and Girls (2016) conducted by ActionAid, available at: <http://www.actionaid.org/vietnam/publications>



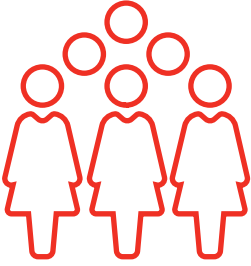
EXPECTED RESULT 1.1

By 2023, at least three urban and rural areas in Vietnam will be applying the Safe Cities/ Safe Communities Criteria in their master planning and /or budget allocation for public services.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES:

- a) Support the development, promulgation and implementation of the Safe Cities/Safe Communities Criteria .
- b) Pilot the implementation of the Criteria in specific locations, with a view to refining the Criteria so that by end of 2019 the set of proposed Criteria will be officially recognized and ready for use.
 - Build the knowledge and capacity of women and girls where AAV works, especially women and children belonging to ethnic minorities and children with disabilities, in order to build cities and communities that are safe for women and girls, accessible to people with disabilities, free from sexual abuse and with better quality public services.
 - Support people’s monitoring of public services – community score cards and public hearings.
 - Hold policy dialogues to improve the quality of public services.
 - Initiate communication campaigns for promotion of safe cities and communities.
 - Network with world urban campaigns as part of the New Urban Agenda for 2030.
- c) Mobilize the state and organizations to allocate more resources for investment in gender responsive public services including priorities for migrants, informal workers and people with disabilities in communities and schools.





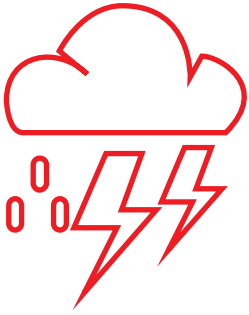
EXPECTED RESULT 1.2

By 2023, **5,000 people**, especially women and ethnic minorities, will have resilient and sustainable livelihoods.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES:

- (a) Together with local partners, authorities and communities, identify three potential locations for resilient livelihood programs involving community based sustainable tourism, community-based forest management or organic products through value chains in rural and urban areas.
- (b) Connect with potential partners in the private and/or public sectors to identify suitable products that are adaptable to climate change (in the sustainable tourism, community-based forest management and organic products value chains), focusing on supporting women living in poverty and ethnic minorities in the establishment of cooperative groups.
- (c) Set up a safe manufacturing or production process and create collective power in price negotiations with distributors.
- (d) Bring environmental friendly, culturally and socially responsible products to consumers via stable distribution channels. Technology will be utilized to save costs and time. In particular, during this process, we will emphasize the importance of ensuring that consumers have the right to access and use safe food sources.

Conducting research and policy dialogues, communication and sensitization campaigns to mobilize public support for the model and seek to adapt policies towards responsible consumption and sustainable production.



EXPECTED RESULT 1.3

By 2023, about **900,000 people** in rural and urban areas will have improved their resilience to disasters and climate change.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES:

- (a) Support the establishment of community resilience pioneering groups and build their capacity and skills related to disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation/resilience through participatory vulnerability analysis, using information and digital technology.
- (b) Generate baseline data and map disaster and climate change impacts in the relevant locations to support the preparation of comprehensive programmes for disaster prevention, mitigation and climate change adaptation, ensuring the necessary and appropriate support will be available when disaster strikes.
- (c) Conduct relevant research on implementation of community-based disaster preparedness and climate change adaptation/resilience, building plans for policy dialogues at all levels, so that suitable resources will be allocated to such plans.
- (d) Support vulnerable groups, community groups, local government officials and related agencies to jointly integrate, allocate and contribute funding to implement the above-developed plans for disaster preparedness and mitigation, and community-based adaptation to climate change.
- (e) Encourage innovative communication and documentation methods in campaigns to mobilize communities and stakeholders

When/if a disaster strikes, AAV will mobilize resources to provide timely support to vulnerable groups affected by disasters to help them recover.





PROGRAMME PRIORITY 2:

Promote grassroots democracy to advance people's rights to gender responsive public services.

Over the years, Vietnam has made many changes in its policies to ensure a just and democratic society. According to the 2016 report of the Vietnam Provincial Governance and Public Administration Performance Index, the issues with which Vietnamese people are most concerned are poverty (24.53%) and the environment (12.53%)⁶. In the process of industrialization

⁶ PAPI 2016, The Viet Nam Provincial Governance and Public Administration Performance Index, available at: http://papi.org.vn/eng/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/PAPI2016_Report_Final_ENG-1.pdf

and modernization in Vietnam, groups such as migrants, formal and informal workers, people with disabilities, women, children and youth are the most disadvantaged and excluded in society.

Internal migrant workers are among the social groups marginalized by the current pattern of rapid economic growth and urbanization, despite their participation in both the formal and informal workforces. Migrant workers account for 7.7% of the population (excluding short-term migrants).⁷ Currently, most migrants are not able to access the benefits of social security policies on health and social insurance due to low and unstable incomes. Many workers are unaware of the provisions of the Labor Law, social insurance and health insurance.

Vietnam has among the highest numbers of people with disabilities in the Asia-Pacific region. Vocational training and job creation for people with disabilities is still inadequate.⁸ Public services and infrastructure are not synchronized, leading to limited participation, inclusive development and integration of people with disabilities.

Gender equality and domestic violence are significant social concerns. On average, women spend over five hours per day on unpaid care work for their family and community, two hours more than that spent by men.⁹ This restricts women's access to learning opportunities, career development or time for self-care and restoration of their energy for production. In addition, the lack of public services such as preschools are keeping many women at home looking after children instead of participating in other social, economic, or political development activities, or entertainment and relaxation.

Vietnam's current model of economic development raises concerns around availability of decent jobs. Access to decent jobs can greatly improve the lives of women, youth and people with disabilities. In addition, investment in public services such as kindergartens and preschools will help women increase their chances of participating in the labor force and improving their lives.

⁷ Source: MOLISA, see: <http://www.molisa.gov.vn/vi/Pages/chitiettin.aspx?IDNews=23022>

⁸ Office of National Committee for Vietnamese persons with disabilities

⁹ See ActionAid Vietnam, Unpaid care work: Make a house become a home (2016) available at: <http://www.actionaid.org/vietnam/publications/>





EXPECTED RESULT 2.1

Budget allocations for gender responsive public services, including kindergartens and health care centers, will have been increased in at least **six locations**.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES:

- (a) Support the establishment of community development groups and build their capacity to understand their rights and responsibilities so that they can participate more meaningfully in the process of budget allocation and implementation of development priorities in their localities. This will be done through innovative awareness raising and capacity building activities, and encouraging spaces for dialogue between the people and the government to increase transparency and accountability.

The focus of this cluster of activities is on women's rights, children's rights, rights to information, rights to association, legal support services, and social protection (health care, kindergartens for children under 36 months) and the recognition, reduction and redistribution of unpaid care work.

Innovative communication and documentation methods will be used in campaigns.

- (b) Mobilize people and social organizations to set up and implement community initiative funds (CIFs) to promote access to information, legal support services, safe working environments, information technology, and capacity building, in order to protect the interests of workers in formal and informal sectors, people with disabilities, women and youth.
- (c) Support vulnerable groups, community groups, local government officials and related agencies to integrate, allocate and contribute funding to implement jointly developed plans for primary health care and kindergartens, promoting budget transparency and accountability.
- (d) Mobilize more investment in public services by promoting people's participation in the organization of research, campaigns and forums on issues faced by formal and informal workers, people with disabilities, women and youth, in order to affect suitable policy change with the active participation of local authorities, government agencies, donors and the media.



EXPECTED RESULT 2.2

Workers and people with disabilities, particularly women and youth, will see their rights to decent jobs recognized and fulfilled.

One of the most important rights enabling every person to live in dignity is the right to work, and to have decent work. Vietnam's labor and employment policies, despite a large number of provisions that are beneficial for workers, have not been adequately enforced for worker groups in the formal sector, and are not accessible by the informal sector. Informal workers are minimally aware of their basic rights, and are abused and exploited. People living in poverty and people with disabilities are often denied the opportunity of a decent job.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES:

- (a) ActionAid and its partners, especially companies, labor unions and workers' groups in the formal and informal sectors, will work together so that
 - Workers will know about their rights and organize towards collective negotiation of contracts, fulfillment of 100% statutory insurance, formalization of labour contracts, monitoring the implementation of such contracts, and ensuring a safe environment inside and outside the workplace.
 - Trade unions and lawyers' associations at all levels will act to protect the rights of workers, especially informal workers, people with disability and ethnic minority people.
 - ActionAid functions as a bridge between employers and the state, the media and consumers in promoting good employers that ensure workers' rights to a decent job, especially those of women and youth.
- (b) Strengthen workers' initiatives funds, further refining and replicating the application of information technology to promote the interests of formal and informal workers, and inclusive development for people with disabilities, especially women and youth, to ensure transparency, accountability and effectiveness.
- (c) Implement workers' initiatives funds to support workers' priorities and to ensure decent jobs for related groups, both informally and formally.





PROGRAMME PRIORITY 3:

Support partners, communities and organizations with practical capacity (skills, knowledge, space and networking) to advance social justice

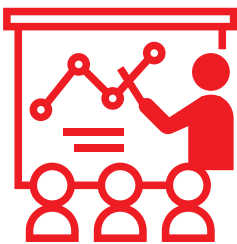
As Vietnam has attained lower middle-income country status, a large number of donors and foreign NGOs have closed their programmes in Vietnam. Those international and national organizations committed to continue operations in Vietnam are facing various challenges, particularly when funding is shrinking. In this context, these organizations need to have better qualified staff in lower numbers, accountable and effective governance structures and an operating system with greater flexibility to adapt to the new context.

On the other hand, the demand for knowledge on the design and implementation of development projects has emerged and is growing, especially among young people and enterprises. Projects implemented by ActionAid and its partners are also in need of qualified and highly committed trainers and implementers.

It is therefore necessary to have practical capacity building programmes that focus on organizational development, general development issues, and opening up of a policy discussion space to meet this need. AAV's training programmes will be different from other current training programmes in Vietnam. AAV will combine basic professional knowledge and highly practical contents, introducing new technologies, advanced practical toolkits, and evidence directly from its programmes and projects.

Professional capacity building activities provided by AAV will ensure that local partners from grassroots to international levels will be able to take action building on the practical skills and knowledge, spaces and networks that are provided through training and coaching/mentoring services.

By providing capacity building programs for partners, communities and organizations, AAV will contribute to creating a network of people and organizations who believe in its values and mission; share, support, and participate in AAV's activities and programs; and, most of all, make sustainable social change.



EXPECTED RESULT 3.1

Partners, communities and institutions with capacity building needs will have improved their institutional governance, programme quality and operational systems for greater effectiveness in addressing development issues.

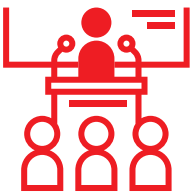
SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES:

- (a) Set up or assist partners in setting up facilities to support and provide consultancy services to build capacity on civil society governance and system development.
- (b) Collect, and integrate, refine and localize a set of training materials for the use of participants in AAV's capacity building programmes with integration of the human rights-based approach to development principles through the feminist lens.



- (c) Develop a core team of capable trainers, who are readily available for capacity building services on different issues or application of tools.
- (d) Support the establishment and development of an Alliance for Community Knowledge Advancement for coordinated action on capacity building, and finding solutions to issues in development programmes, together.

AAV will convey knowledge to trainees in an innovative manner to ensure the training courses' practical effects. We will also optimize new technology and use ActionAid Reflection-Action tools for this purpose.



EXPECTED RESULT 3.2

An open space for dialogue on development issues will have been developed and made available to the community and partners.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES:

- (a) Conduct practical research or documentation on issues of policy on social protection, climate change, accountability and inclusion to serve as data and evidence for policy advocacy.

Priorities are given to innovative research or documentation highlighting the lives of women, children, people with disabilities and youth. Those that reflect the voices and the views of related groups with proposed concrete actions or solutions will also be prioritized.

- (b) Organizing and promoting online and offline seminars, forums, exchanges and dialogues to build networks and advocate for policy change on issues raised in (a) above.

To promote social justice and transformative change, it is important to create opportunities and increase people's participation so that the voices of marginalised and vulnerable groups are amplified. Solutions may derive from open and straightforward forums, seminars, and dialogues. Therefore, our activities aim to create relevant legal spaces and build capacity for participants to innovate and best use new technology.



OP 1:

Stabilize and diversify our funding base, and build our organizational profile to mobilize public involvement in social change

Seven years after Vietnam achieved lower middle-income country status in 2010, official development assistance to Vietnam is in sharp decline. Some multilateral and bilateral institutions have already closed their offices or are planning to withdraw from Vietnam. ActionAid faces increasing competition from social organizations accessing funds from institutional donors. In addition, more and more individuals and businesses in Vietnam are able and willing to finance development programmes.

The organization's average income is around £2 million per year, including regular giving funds, institutional funding and corporate funding. Notably, ActionAid Vietnam's funding base has changed significantly over the past five years: regular giving from foreign individuals dropped from 80% to around 60%, institutional funds increased from 15% to 35% and corporate funding now accounts for an average of 5% of the total revenue of the organization. Domestic revenue has also begun to increase, accounting for about 20%



of total revenues as a result of funds from new projects and introduction of a local fundraising programme.

In the period 2018-2023, to continue fulfilling its commitments to Vietnam, ActionAid Vietnam needs to develop a diversified and sustainable funding base, which:

- (a) strengthens connections with overseas child sponsors and promotes local fundraising programs to maintain and increase regular contributions from individual donors
- (b) develops innovative and effective project proposals to maximize funding from official donors, international NGOs, and foundations
- (c) promotes fundraising from the business sector, through connection and cooperation with domestic and foreign enterprises

(d) promotes application of information and communication technology in fundraising.

In the period 2018-2023, AAV seeks to diversify for a sustainable funding base, with annual revenues of around £2-3 million, of which:

- regular giving funds account for 30-50% of the funding base, and the number of individual donors increases to 12,000 in Vietnam and abroad
- funds from institutional donors and international NGOs account for 40-50% of the funding base
- funding from companies/ foundations / high value donors accounts for 10-20% of the funding base.

Our financial projections for income, expenditure and reserves over the CSP period are estimated as follows:

Years (GBP 000)	2018		2019		2020		2021		2022		2023	
	R	U	R	U	R	U	R	U	R	U	R	U
Income (Amt)	1,815	1	2,441	0	2,605	0	2,600	0	2,600	0	2,600	-
• Regular giving	1,297	1	1,190		1,555		1,600		1,600		1,600	
• Non-Regular Giving	518		1,251		1,050		1,000		1,000		1,000	
Expenditure (Amt)	1,443	50	2,432	25	2,358	0	2,400		2,400		2,400	
Reserves (Amt)												
• Overall	419	25	191	-	197	0	220	-	220	-	220	-
• National	75	25	92	-	102	0	120	-	120	-	120	-
• LRPs	60	0	89	-	95	0	100	-	100	-	100	-
• Projects	284	0	10	-	-	0	0	-	0	-	0	-
Overall RG Reserve (no of months)	1.8		2.2		2.3		2.5		2.5		2.5	

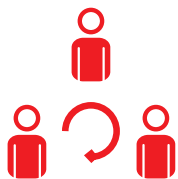
ActionAid Vietnam's cooperation with partners and donors - including multinational corporations, foundations, multilateral institutions and individual donors - has proven to be very successful. Each contribution will help us and our funding partners move closer to our common mission, based on AAI policies and national regulations, and we highly appreciate each one.

Communication building the organization's profile supports community linkages, engages public participation and helps to create solid alliances for the mission of ending poverty and injustice. In this strategy period, we will continue to leverage technology and communications to establish and strengthen our connection with the public, and ensure change in attitudes, actions and policies. Our main target audience includes youth, media, policy-makers, peoples' representatives, the community, other civil society organizations, corporates and academia.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES:

- (a) Support a network of media members to attract public attention and action for social justice, creating pressure for policy change. This could also include (organizing and facilitating) training and workshops for media on the theory and practice of women's and children's rights, just governance and civil society. This should be done at least once a year based on project and programme commitments.
- (b) Build capacity on communication and advocacy for internal stakeholders at least once a year through training or exposure.
- (c) Promote effective, innovative or digitally based documentation, stories of change and evidence of AAV's and its partners' programmes on ground to foster public support. This should be done on regular basis.





OP 2:

Continue to strengthen organisational governance and build an agile, committed and professional team.

In preparation for AAV to become an Affiliate of the ActionAid Federation by 2018, strengthening governance will be our priority. The Board structure, diversity and gender balance will be enhanced to ensure the compliance with local requirements and compatibility with AAI standards.

ActionAid always attaches importance to the development of competent, committed and professional staff. AAV staff will need to be able to apply the human rights-based approach (HRBA) to identify and analyze new dimensions of poverty, understand the impact of climate change on multi-dimensional poverty, and analyze the influences and impacts of free trade agreements on workers' access to decent jobs, especially informal workers in newly developed urban areas. In addition, AAV staff are required to improve their understanding and be able to analyze new issues such as environmental justice; sustainable development-oriented planning; the rapidly widening

wealth gap in rural and urban areas in Vietnam and in the region; and the development of inequalities between people with disabilities and people without disabilities, women and men, children and adults.

In addition, AAV staff should have an organizational culture that is committed to the organizational values, including feminist values and practices, AAV's mission, learning and sharing. There will be facilitated opportunities for AAV staff to develop expertise, learn skills in a professional environment, implement a green office, reduce emissions, and participate in physical and mental training to maintain good health and a positive attitude in daily work.

The human resource management system will be enhanced concurrently to ensure responsiveness to manage the employment of temporary staff on short-term contracts, consultant contracts, internships and volunteer support positions. This system will also help to engage volunteer participation based on specific events or tasks from potential supporters, donors, or youth in our Local Rights Programmes (LRPs).

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES:

- (a) Build an organizational structure that combines different human resources to ensure flexibility and multi-disciplinary contents of ActionAid's work in Vietnam
- (b) Continue to improve AAV's performance-based management system, including promotion so that it will further encourage high-performance team members
- (c) Further develop staff fora such as the Women's Forum and Colleague Fund to ensure a suitable working environment with suitable qualified staff.

Invest in employees with potential through providing access to intensive training activities as trainers/facilitators as well as participation in international platforms and networks to learn new knowledge, skills and experience, while at the same time contributing and sharing their experience and good practices.





OP 3:

Invigorate the management system to improve organizational effectiveness and efficiency and monitoring, evaluation and measurement of change, and increase our own accountability and transparency.

AAV is known for its appropriate and effective management system with strong application of technology in the design and monitoring of programme and financial activities in recent years. However, in the face of the need to maximize efficiency and productivity with limited resources and to increase accountability to stakeholders, it is more urgent than ever to conduct research and improve our systems to make use of technology to a larger extent. In this period, the following actions and results are expected:

- (a) Review and refine policies and systems to be more user-friendly, convenient, and effective so that by mid of 2019 all of AAV's policies and systems are digitalized.
- (b) Refine and develop fundraising, programme and partners' monitoring and evaluation, financial management, reporting and compliance systems using informatics and digital technology.
- (c) Enhance the accountability of stakeholders in the application and adherence to policies on management systems, including a thorough introduction and implementation of the partner accountability policies.
- (d) Strengthen employees' environmental awareness and institutionalize green practices and behaviors.

Monitoring, evaluation and measurement of change will be implemented based on the principles and requirements of ALPS; the approach, strategy and monitoring and evaluation framework for AAI 2018-2028 "Action for Global Justice"; and the monitoring and evaluation (M&E) framework for this AA Vietnam Country Strategy 2018-2023. With the successful introduction and implementation of online M&E software, ActionAid Vietnam's transparency and accountability internally and towards its partners have been significantly improved.



SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES AND RESULTS:

- (a) Complete the M&E Framework 2018-2023 and online M&E system. This should be done by mid-2018.
- (b) Support LRPs to develop or revised their own strategies for the period 2018-2023. This should be done by the end of 2018.
- (c) Improve and enhance the collection of evidence of change, documentation of lessons learned, and build alliances with stakeholders involved in program monitoring and evaluation. This will be done on regular basis, with at least one story of change made available per month from 2018 onward.
- (d) Conduct a partnership forum on annual basis using data from M&E processes to improve the accountability and transparency of ActionAid and its partners.





RISK ANALYSIS

ActionAid and its partners have witnessed the space for programme implementation and policy advocacy in-country shrinking recently. Registration of projects under Decree 93/2009/ND-CP as well as permissions to have meetings and events under Decree 76/2010/ND-Ttg still face obstacles due to restrictions from the State agencies leading to delayed implementation or suspension. Unclear and changing tax policies and the laws governing international NGOs and local NGOs also affects the organization's compliance and funding. Given that, AAV

should keep up to date with relevant policy information, conduct consultations with related stakeholders and participate in dialogues promoting international NGO profiles and impacts in country.

ActionAid Vietnam works with different stakeholders and not all of them are open to higher demands on professionalism, transparency and accountability. It takes a lot of time for ActionAid to identify suitable partners and convince them to work with ActionAid. To overcome this challenge, it is important that ActionAid continues to refine

¹⁰ Decree No. 93/2009/ND-CP issued on 22/10/2009 by the Government on regulation on management and utilization of aid from international non-governmental organizations - http://www.ngocentre.org.vn/webfm_send/2071

¹¹ <https://luatminhkhue.vn/en/decision/decision-no-76-2010-qd-ttg-dated-november-30--2010-of-the-prime-minister-on-organization-and-management-of-international-conferences-and-seminars-in-vietnam.aspx>

its management policies, at the same time investing in building capacity for partners. ActionAid will also need to refine its policies on selection and management of partners, so that a more transparent and accountable relationship will be further developed and applied.

The third risk identified is that ActionAid Vietnam's human resource base does not meet the changing demands of the strategy and context. To address this, AAV aims to build an effective working environment, improve the capacity and leadership skills of staff, and at the same time be open to different solutions to have a flexible and capable team.

The funding available for international NGO work is decreasing so significantly in Vietnam that it may be non-existent in 2023. This shrinkage appears to be due to the impact of economic crisis / recession in fundraising markets and changes in donor objectives and priorities. AAV will diversify its funding base and continually improve its donor reporting and information sharing system to make it compact, fast and interactive. We will test different, diverse and innovative fundraising products to construct lasting partnerships with new donors, especially in the private sector.

CONCLUSIONS

This ActionAid Vietnam Country Strategy Paper 2018-2023 (CSP VI) represents the collective mind, commitment and faith of the ActionAid Vietnam Board, staff and partners to our contribution in the coming years to a world free of poverty and injustice in the future, for development.

We aspire to contribute to making change and building a more equitable, just, and democratic society, because human beings are conscientised to take proactive action to bring about change. AAV supports these changes alongside communities and partners, and brings people together in this journey for social justice.









**ADVANCING
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FOR SOCIAL
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