

The background of the cover is a photograph of two farmers in Vietnam. They are wearing traditional conical hats and are smiling while holding large bundles of harvested rice. The scene is set in a field, and the lighting is warm, suggesting a golden hour or a sunny day. The overall tone is positive and focused on rural development.

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**VIETNAM STRATEGY PAPER V  
2012-2017**

**UNITE AND ACT ON  
JUSTICE AND  
DEVELOPMENT**

**Hanoi, October 2011**



# FOREWORD

In Vietnam, every family has lost at least one member in the fight against imperialism, expansionism and in protecting the country. This has inspired Vietnam's faith in peace and development towards a just and democratic society. Vietnam has grown out of painful wounds from war and achieved remarkable success in bringing down the number of people living in poverty from 58% in 1993 to 11.6% in 2010. This is certainly a result of the unconditional investment by the Government before, during and in the decades after the end of the war. It has ensured free education, health care, housing and employment for the people. Through the new developments and being a member of the wider community, Vietnam has started to reform its macro-economic policies and been aligning itself more to an open market economy. This has brought substantive changes to the lives and livelihoods of all people in country, especially impacting the people living in poverty.

ActionAid, amongst 800 international non-governmental organizations (INGOs) in Vietnam to date, has contributed by bringing in resources, new approaches to poverty reduction, and most importantly it continues to commit to the equitable and sustainable development of the country.

In the last 20 years, ActionAid has assisted communities in the most difficult areas of the country, mainly in the North-west, Central Highlands and Mekong regions. Changes have been seen in physical infrastructure in irrigation systems, schools, water wells, production models of sustainable agriculture, livestock raising. An increased number of women are taking part in local governance structure, the capacity of girls from ethnic minorities to join higher education is improving and a significant number of women can read, write and plan their own lives after joining AAV's supported *Reflect* circles.

With this Country Strategy Paper V (CSP V), ActionAid reconfirms its commitments to be in Vietnam, to be a part of the poverty reduction and sustainable development process in country, to bring another Vietnam to the world in the search for solutions and alternatives to neoliberal philosophy of development paradigm.

Guided by AAI's key principles Accountability, Learning and Planning System (ALPS) and being aligned with AAI's global strategy for 2012-2017, the process of building this Paper has been fully consultative, open and critical to search for solutions and alternatives. AAV staff members and partners, communities and donors, all have contributed to the reviews, discussions and writing of the CSP V.

We wish to thank all colleagues from AAV, AAI, partners and donors, particularly members of communities who have spent time sharing with us their views and critiques which have shaped this Paper. With their continued guidance, support and company, it is trusted that expected change results will be achieved.

HOANG PHUONG THAO  
Country Director  
October 2011



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# ACRONYMS/ABBREVIATIONS

AAI	ActionAid International
AAV	ActionAid International Vietnam/ActionAid Vietnam
ADB	Asian Development Bank
AFTA	ASEAN Free Trade Area
ALPS	Accountability, Learning and Planning System
APF	ASEAN Peoples' Forum
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
CBI	Capacity Building Initiative
CBO	Community-Based Organization
CC	Climate Change
CP	Country Programme
CSO	Civil Society Organization
CSP	Country Strategy Paper
DA/DI	Development Area/Development Initiative
EFA	Education for All
ELBAG	Economic Literacy and Budget Accountability for Governance
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
GDI	Gender Development Index
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GMF	Global Monitoring Framework
HDI	Human Development Index
HRBA	Human Rights-Based Approach
HROD	Human Resources and Organisational Development
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organization
LNGO	Local Non-Governmental Organization
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MIC	Middle Income Country
ODA	Official Development Assistance
PLWHA	People Living with HIV/AIDS
PRS	Promoting Rights in Schools
REDD	Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation
<i>Reflect</i>	Regenerated Freirean Literacy through Empowering Community Techniques
SME	Small and Middle Enterprise
VHLSS	Vietnam Household Living Standard Surveys
WSF	World Social Forum
WTO	World Trade Organisation





**VIETNAM STRATEGY PAPER V  
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**Hanoi, October 2011**



## INTRODUCTION

ActionAid International Vietnam (AAV) is an organic part of ActionAid International (AAI), targeted to be a full member of AAI global federation. AAI is present in over 40 countries in Asia and Pacific, Africa, Americas, and Europe with its head-quarters in Johannesburg, South Africa.

ActionAid started its programme in Vietnam in 1989 and in 1992 the Representative Office was registered. Over the two decades, AAV has expanded its presence and programmes to more than 20 provinces in the poorest pockets of the country in the Northwest, Central Highlands and Mekong regions. AAV has been recognized and known well in country for its contribution to the development of Vietnam.

Since the beginning, the poor and the excluded have been at the centre of our actions in country. AAV works with different stakeholders in the specific context of Vietnam and contributes to Vietnam's advancement of people's rights to development and dignity.

It is recognized by Vietnam's Communist Party XI Congress in January 2011 that the current growth model of the country is not sustainable and not promoting equality. Although the number of people living below the poverty line has been reduced drastically in the last 20 years, poverty and disparities have reached crisis levels. Poverty has come to its core and the rich-poor gap has been extensively widened. New development prospects have heightened the individual rights and broken the strength of collective rights.

AAV has gone through four different strategy phases, each identifying our understanding on the context of Vietnam and directing our actions to eradicate poverty. Country Strategy Paper V (CSP V) for the period of 2012-2017 has been developed with participation and cooperation of AAV's different stakeholders, including communities, partners, academicians, media, policy makers and ActionAid team members. CSP V inherits the results and lessons from the last four CSPs. Based on processes of critical reviews and comprehensive consultations CSP V seeks to confirm our solidarity with the poor and marginalized, our belief in their capacity and agency in changing the power relations and undertaking alternatives for a life with dignity.

CSP V aims to build solutions and alternatives, open space for AAV to work with youth (the leaders of change), and start building its collectives of supporters and volunteers, who will want to contribute their part in the eradication of poverty and injustice. To further increase its accountability, AAV commits to invest significantly in refining the Monitoring and Evaluation system and procedures to better ensure programme quality and consolidation. It will have a special investment in knowledge building and to find and promote alternatives to the current model of unjust and unsustainable development. In this new period, AAV will also seek to improve its internal governance with a governing board and be an equal member of AAI federation.

The journey guided by this document is our aspiration, shared vision and commitments for change to a sustainable, just and equal society.

## CONTEXT

The comprehensive socio-economic reforms initiated by the Government of Vietnam (GoV) in the late 1980s have significantly changed Vietnam's economy. It has changed from severe stagnation before the 1980s to an average annual growth rate of around 7% during the past two decades. According to Vietnam Household Living Standard Surveys (VHLSS), the poverty incidence decreased from 58% to 11.6% between 1993 and 2010. Simultaneously, Vietnam's progress in human development has been evident in the improvement of the human development index (HDI) and gender development index (GDI)<sup>1</sup>. With these achievements, Vietnam has been exemplified as one of the greatest Millennium Development Goal (MDG) successes in Asia and the world.

In the international arena, Vietnam has joined the Southeast Asia Association of Nations (ASEAN) since 1995. It has slowly become an active member of the ASEAN Free Trade Area (AFTA) and became the 150<sup>th</sup> member

of World Trade Organization (WTO) in 2007. In 2010 it joined the club of Middle Income Countries (MIC). Overcoming the painful past, the country now opens its arms to integration into the wider world. It is believed that by opening up to economic reforms and international trade, Vietnam will benefit immensely in terms of greater access to the world market, more foreign direct investment, and access to instruments for "protection against protection". At the same time, gaps between the development levels of areas in the country, poor class and "new rich group" have also significantly increased. Integration of Vietnam into international institutions especially free trade areas (FTAs) creates challenges in domestic economy production, impoverishes thousands of poor people who are at the fragile near-poor level. It may also prevent the marginalized from being able to access and control resources and decision making related to their own life.

Vietnam is generally considered a rural

**Vietnam has been exemplified as one of the greatest Millennium Development Goal (MDG) successes in Asia and the world.**



<sup>1</sup> Rating available. Sources: UNDP Development Reports 2005 - 2010



economy in transition to industrial society, where more than 70% of population live and earn a living in the rural sector and less than 30% in urban places, the urban-industrial sector accounts for 80% of its GDP in 2006, while the rural sector contributes only 20%. At the beginning of the reforms in 1990s, the respective numbers are 61% and 39%.

The non-inclusive nature of the current phase of rapid growth has worsened the inequalities as never before. There are different inequalities. Income inequality has increased



**Economic growth does not necessarily bring wealth or livelihoods. Urbanization, pollution, migration, corruption are clearly observed.**

between regions, within regions, between sectors and amongst the sectors. State development programmes and projects have helped improve infrastructure and create new opportunities for economic growth. However, thousands of households have lost their land and livelihoods options. Urbanization, pollution, migration, social unrest, corruption are clearly observed.

Land and natural resources are vital productive assets for the poor. In Vietnam, around 70% of poor people depend on agricultural production as their main source of income. Land is relatively evenly distributed in Vietnam, which is a crucial factor contributing to the success of Vietnam in hunger eradication and poverty reduction in the past decade. However, in the years to come, with the pressures for urbanization, industrialization and market oriented

production conversion of agricultural land for industrial and commercial use will be unavoidable. This raises serious concern about the adverse effects on displaced households in terms of livelihood disruption, food insecurity and social and cultural dislocation. The massive exploitation of limited natural resources has changed the livelihood structure of communities in rural and remote area, making them vulnerable if there is no effective support for ensuring their sustainable development.

There are severe ethnic inequalities. In 1993, ethnic minority groups had a poverty rate of 1.6 times the rest of the population. In the decade till 2010, the ethnic minorities had poverty rates of 5.1 times higher than the rest of Vietnamese society. A statistic by UNDP estimates that the income of 44% of the Vietnamese population is close the poverty line and they may fall into the poverty trap at any time if encountering a shock.

Gender based violence puts obstacles on the access of women and girls to different public services, limiting their participation in the political process. This in turn makes them more vulnerable to different forms of social, economic, political and cultural discrimination and stigma, affecting their rights to live with dignity. Women and children are both excluded.

Vietnam is hard hit by the impact of climate change and the rise of sea level. If the sea level rises 1 meter 10% of the population will be directly affected and a loss of 10% of GDP may happen. If there is not any solution, by 2100, Vietnam will loose at least 12.2% of land, which is home to 23% of the country's population. Many places will be flooded for months and economic damage may reach USD 17 billion every year. As a country prone to natural disasters and with climate change tendency, Vietnam will face more natural disasters in the years to come. These will seriously affect the achievements of the

poverty reduction process. Most hard hit would be the Mekong delta which is home to 25 million people and occupies 67% of total rice production in the country.

Vietnam's listing as an MIC implies a decreasing attention on poverty reduction, but increasing investment on economic growth. The direction of "socialization" of public services results in less access of the poor people to essential public services such as health care and education. MIC status has constricted official development aid (ODA) to Vietnam from development grants to loans.

In 2010, the total foreign exchange earning to the tune of about USD 80 billion, import of about USD 96 billion. Vietnam's trade balance has always been in deficits resulting from so high influx of luxury goods, showing the big gaps in income of different groups in the society. The trade imbalance has also significantly increased the dependence of Vietnam in Dollars as a currency and the economy has been dollarized popularly. Inflation in the last few years have been rocketing, with the highest in 2008 of 26.7% and 2010 of 18%. Labour costs therefore become much higher and Vietnam is losing in the international competition on product sale. This shows vulnerabilities of Vietnam's economy as it fails to support the vulnerable in the storm of price rocketing, sky-rise inflation and scattered social protection system.

Together with the shift from a centralized planning and bureaucratic economy to a "market with socialist orientation economy", Vietnam has been changing in a more open way in governing the country towards a more democratized process. Recently it is possible to see a stronger power of the National Assembly and the critical role of the media in policy formulation and monitoring. The political awareness and influence of the middle class and youth has been seen as the driving force of social debates and actions over certain

issues. The expansion of internet coverage has also played an important role in promoting a more open society. However, there is a wide gap between speed of changes in the superstructure and in the infrastructure. The infrastructure has swiftly improved, under the driving forces of economic liberalization, especially by the private sector. Whilst the influencing power of the elites, market forces and interest groups have increased there are a number of obstacles hindering the active participation in the political processes for people living in poverty, particularly women, ethnic minorities, youth and other disadvantages groups. For the first time, alongside with conventional meetings and dialogues within the Party, a free and open web-based consultation with people across Vietnam on the socioeconomic strategy development till 2020 by the Party shows that the space is opening up and people voice is now more heard through institutional channels.

Significant efforts by the State were put in a thorough reform of the Public Administration and Judicial systems, spearhead the ways forward for Vietnam to be a country that rules of law will prevail. It is commendable also because Vietnam has shown its actions to ensure that people views and voice are an integrated part of the reform processes, through different laws and legal policies. Civil society organizations are the bridge bringing the wills of these laws and policies to actions on ground.

Against this backdrop, one can see this as an opportunity to underscore the reality and bring to the forefront the question and debate of growth, exclusion, inequality, discrimination and solutions. The CSP V has been developed to explore available spaces, highlighting the areas of concerns for the poor and marginalized and engaging in policy dialogues influencing and making positive changes. It also seeks for alternatives and solutions for poverty reduction and sustainable development, to end injustice.

**Climate change could impact up to 12.2% of Vietnam's land and 23% of the country's population.**





# OUR VALUES, VISION AND MISSION

**Our Values:** these are the values guiding all of our work to transform ourselves, the society, the community, the culture and to free people from poverty and injustice.

- **Solidarity** with people living in poverty, the powerless and the excluded.
- **Transparency and Accountability**
- **Independence and neutrality** from any religious or party-political affiliation.

**Our vision:** A world without poverty and injustice in which every person enjoys the right to life with dignity.

**Our mission:** To work in solidarity with people living in poverty to eradicate poverty and injustice.



# OUR IDENTITY AND UNDERSTANDING OF POVERTY AND INJUSTICE

**AAV is a national-international organization working alongside people in the struggle for a world free of poverty and injustice.**

## OUR IDENTITY

AAV is a national-international organization working alongside people in the struggle for a world free of poverty and injustice.

Seeking alternatives to a situation of poverty and injustice requires a collective understanding and actions for change, AAV works together with different groupings of poor and marginalized people, communities, knowledge institutions, civil society organizations, and other stakeholders to make change sustainable.

AAV is rooted with communities to learn from communities on possible alternatives for progressive social change. AAV commits to be internationalist, independent, feminist partner of all who share the same vision and mission with us.

## OUR UNDERSTANDING OF POVERTY

To AAV, **poverty is a consequence of a historic process of exclusion and injustice.** Poverty brings more injustice and keeps people undignified. With the current socio-economic and political agendas of globalization, poverty and injustice are deepened and furthered. Poverty is human-made and can be changed. It has both national as well as international dimensions to it.

AAV has been known in country for **pioneering human rights based approach to development**, which promotes agency of people living in poverty and injustice for a change to dignify their lives. In this CSP V period,

AAV seeks to continue its commitments and confirmation of the approach with refinement, so that poverty eradication will be addressed from people's angles that will enhance environmental friendly solutions for sustainable and equal development.

It is our belief that **poverty will not end if patriarchy is not challenged and eradicated.** Changing the position of women and girls will bring about substantive changes in the power balance and social justice. Promotion of women's rights is an integral part of our position and actions.

AAV believes that poor and excluded **people are at the center and are the primary agents of change** in the development process. Poverty and injustice can be eradicated only when they are able to take charge of their lives and act to claim and enjoy their rights. In all our actions and initiatives we will continue to take sides with individuals and groups, more so with women, who are denied to their human rights, dignity and justice. While **taking sides** we will not be constrained by the divide between public and private spheres or by any geographical or political boundaries.



# WORKING APPROACH

## PRIMARY PARTNERS

AAV works with many different partners, primarily including: the poor, the excluded and marginalized people. These can be women, people from minorities, land-lost & landless people, migrants and other groups suffering from social discrimination and poverty. Within these groups, we specifically engage with women, youth and children.

With the experience gained from our initiative on youth empowerment and mobilization, we recognize that youth are an important socially aware & politically active group. They are powerful drivers of change and in this strategic period, we commit to working more with young people and their organizations. We will invest in the capacity of youth to find rights-based alternatives, to be the active group on our mission implementation process at local and national levels, to organise and to run campaigns.

## HOW WE WORK

The **human rights-based approach** defines all our work. Elements of empowerment, solidarity and campaigning will guide us on programing. We are committed to asserting the indivisibility and inter-connectedness of rights, recognizing that for people to enjoy their rights we need to change not only the political, socio-economic policies and practices but also our own attitude and behaviour.

**Empowerment** elements of the approach will continue. In the empowerment process, different skills such as household economic

analysis, communication, power and rights, public service assessment, budget monitoring will be discussed and improved. These empowerment processes are crucial for building effective mobilization and strategic action, supporting grassroots organisations and strengthening social movements that represent excluded groups and their causes.

**Solidarity** elements will be further strengthened by connecting and organizing people committed to a common cause. Learning from the past, AAV will play an active role in enhancing country to country friendship and solidarity, strengthening our work on the regional, global forums such as ASEAN Peoples' Forum (APF), World Social Forum (WSF) and similar processes to promote alternatives.

We will improve our work on **campaigning and influencing** to ensure the sustainability of the change. Advocacy and policy analysis at local and national levels, engaging more meaningfully in policy reforms with our evidence based researches, sensitizing and working with the media as well as improving our documentation will be at the core.

Our **partnerships and alliances** are important to our approach. We build long-term partnerships with community-based groups/organisations and their networks. Whilst respecting their autonomy we will support to share learning across issues, sectors, movements and geographies to build a formidable movement for change. We also work in alliances with many different actors, including NGOs, networks, unions, campaigns.

**AAV will maintain the strategic presence in the key regions in rural and urban poor areas, while enhance the programme quality consolidation.**

With the increasing role of private sectors, consumers in the country, we will consider and may build alliances with consumers' unions and selected & progressive companies.

Given the political environment available, we will continue our efforts to explore the potential for policy influencing and advocacy possibilities through our innovative approach to advance alternatives for change.

## WHERE WE WORK

In the past strategies, AAV has presented itself through our support development programs in more than 20 provinces from north to south, from rural to urban and in the poorest areas of the country. In the coming period we will improve our work in urban areas while continuing our engagement with rural and mountainous areas. AAV will maintain strategic representation in the poorest areas of the country with a clear priority to consolidate programme quality. Expansion will be considered carefully, taking into account the resources available and the potential opportunity for making change, working on strategic issues and bringing about pro-people alternatives.









## PROGRAM PRIORITIES (PP)

### PP 1: PROMOTE ALTERNATIVE LIVELIHOODS AND SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE

Vietnam has gained significant successes in promoting export oriented agriculture production, but this model is now recognised as unsustainable. Peasants have been introduced to advanced farming practices, modern varieties/breed of crops, poultry and livestock. While there are certain groups of people that have benefited from the increased production, export-oriented agriculture production has raised serious concerns regarding the negative impacts on the environment and agriculture ecosystems. Land and natural resources are being depleted. It makes poor peasants become dependent on expensive technologies and certainly puts more burdens on the shoulders of women.

Market has been a significantly influential actor in vulnerability of livelihoods and poverty in Vietnam. There has also been initiatives by different actors showing the possibilities of engaging peasants with scientists, distributors and therefore making their access to market easier. One of the main concerns is about sustainability of the production and equity of distribution. Peasants are also exposed to serious loss due to fluctuation of the market resulting from speculation, amongst others.



**By 2017, four thousand women living in poverty, peasants in 70 communities and 2,000 landless and landlost people will have improved living conditions by livelihood alternatives.**

**Advancing alternative:**

Working with peasants, women and ethnic minority people, to secure their rights to food, AAV will support women and indigenous groups to strengthen their control over land and natural resources. AAV will collect, introduce and replicate alternative livelihoods that have been generated against neoliberal mechanisms. Through working with unions of farmers, labour, youth, academia, media and networks at all levels farmers collective power will be strengthened. We will support their demands for policies that support just and sustainable governance of food systems and natural resources.

**Interventions:**

- Facilitate, document, replicate and advocate for models of environmental friendly and low-input production as alternatives to commercial over-exploitation of ecosystems for food production.
- Strengthen peasants' collective power and market competitiveness via improving value chains, supporting their

organizations, promoting different forms of collaboration including cooperatives.

- Support landless and land-lost poor people to pursue off-farm and non-farm livelihoods in both rural and urban areas.

**Expected results:**

- By 2017, four thousand women living in poverty will have improved livelihoods with more ecological production practices, better control of land and natural resources and resilience to climate change.
- By 2017, peasants in 70 communities will be better organized and have stronger collective power, in order to improve their production efficiency and market competitiveness, resilience to climate change
- By 2017, two thousand landless and land-lost people will have improved living conditions by pursuing suitable livelihood alternatives.
- Government and other stakeholders will pay more attention and investment to support alternative livelihoods for the benefits of peasants, of women and marginalized people.



## PP 2: ADVANCE ACCOUNTABILITY AND PEOPLE-TO-PEOPLE SOLIDARITY FOR SOCIAL CHANGE, INCREASE YOUTH LEADERSHIP AND CIVIL SOCIETY CREDIBILITY

During the wars, Vietnamese people became known for their patriotism. After the wars, they have become known for their commitment to peace and development. Lessons from Vietnam's experience of reconciliation, peace building and poverty reduction should be a starting point for anyone who looks for solutions to development from ground, for reasons to proceed with socialism and social equality.

People taking part in the process of decision making, implementing and monitoring processes that impact their lives is not strange to the governance of Vietnam. People voice their views generally through mass organizations and people's councils. In fact, there have been a number of progressive policies ensuring legal frameworks for people to participate in deciding and monitoring policies and public services. The Grass-root Democracy Act is one of them. Although there are achievements, the implementation of the Act and other related policies has been impeded by the lack of supportive mechanisms, limited awareness, and insufficient information to the people.

It is seen that recently the National Assembly has performed a more significant role in the political life of the country. Media, especially social media has been widely recognized for its power of information and as a tool of mobilization, particularly used by the young and middle class groups. Non-government groups and non-formal institutions at all levels are expected to play a stronger role in the changing context. Inadequate organizational capability, credibility, experience and political perspectives to take forward a process where people's views and voices are better heard, all obstruct progress. Networking and alliance

building among members of civil society is fragmented.

Vietnam has started working with different countries from the South in Asia, Africa and Latin America, in poverty reduction. Vietnam's agronomists have been supporting Algeria to improve its agro-extension systems, telecommunication technicians have been reaching Haiti to help poor children to access to high speed and quality internet, volunteer youth have been in Cuba, Brazil for medical care, teachers in Laos and Cambodia, and millions of migrant workers from Vietnam have been working in Germany, East



Europe, Malaysia, Japan, Korea, Middle East, contributing their own young and energetic lives to the wealth of the countries.

### **Advancing alternative:**

AAV works with the most excluded groups to enhance their capacity and build the agency of change. Accountability and participatory tools will be extensively promoted and used. By facilitating and mobilizing direct engagement of women and excluded people in issues of local importance we will support frontline struggles to secure quality public services, open up democratic space, and confront corrupt practices. AAV will



support and work with youth, middle class, people's formal and non-formal organizations/networks to critically engage with the media, academia and policy makers to promote the government's efficiency, transparency and accountability. AAV facilitates and supports the facilitation of people to people exchange for solidarity, to mobilize young people for shared-learning across the regions, across countries, and continents.

AAV, in collaboration with related organisations in available networks, conducts quality research as an input for campaigning and policy advocacy. It holds trainings to strengthen the capacity for development stakeholders.

Internationally, AAV identifies key countries that it wants to focus the investment in people to people exchange in Asia, Europe, America and Africa.

### **Interventions:**

- Support to build the critical analysis capability of poor women, minority groups, middle class, media and youth via awareness raising campaigns, capacity building activities and the operation of local governance groups. Different accountability and participatory tools are used to facilitate direct engagement of target groups in local administration reform and in the monitoring of different political and development processes.
- Support to advance the capability of youth, non-government institutions and formations by interactions with various stakeholders at different levels, strengthening their networking nationally and building solidarity with regional and international networks.
- Sensitise and unite youth, young-minded and enthusiastic people to help different groups of people against poverty and

social exclusion. AAV continues to bring Vietnam to the world and the world to Vietnam through its people to people solidarity programmes, exchanges and peer learning for social change.

### **Expected results:**

- By 2017, women, youth and minority groups in more than 70 communities where AAV works will have critical ability to understand and analyze poverty and political economy, public administration and development issues. They will be empowered to take action holding the government accountable for its services to people, influence the legal frameworks on rights to information, to social protection and employment.
- In at least 50 communities where AAV works, women, youth and minority groups will have active participation in the process of monitoring and assessment of public administration and services (education, healthcare, extension) and development projects.
- From 2014-2017, AAV will have built a hub that provides capacity building and a networking platform for non-government groups and informal institutions in Vietnam and other neighboring countries in Southeast Asia. It will increase the capacity, credibility and solidarity of these organizations for leadership in social change.
- By 2014 onwards AAV will have been a leading organization for the sensitization, mobilization and networking of the youth, young-minded and enthusiastic people in Vietnam. The people who take action to help the poor and the excluded in Vietnam lead a life with dignity.
- People to people exchanges with key countries identified are supported at least two times during the period of 2014-2017.

## PP 3: PROMOTE EQUAL ACCESS TO QUALITY EDUCATION FOR CHILDREN

Education is recognized as the right and responsibility of every citizen in Vietnam's Constitution. Despite the Government commitments, social recognition and legal frameworks available, education remains a luxury for many children, women and people of minorities. Education and training facilities are poor or absent for many. It is much more difficult for children not having a birth certificate to access. Education suffers from a high drop - out rate; geographical and ethnicity disparities; inadequate roles of parents' and teachers associations and community participation in governance and monitoring education. Further key barriers include language barriers, discrimination against girls, children with HIV/AIDS or disability, lack of quality teachers and an appropriate curriculum relevant to the needs of the children. Vietnam may have made progress towards achieving the six EFA goals adopted in 2000 but it is a visible risk that the 2015 EFA targets may not be universally met.

Since economic growth has been prioritized, spending and investing in education have been "socialized". This implies that private and social source of funding is promoted for education (and other public services). With this, education and rights to education for all, especially for vulnerable children is not fully accessible, affordable or acceptable.

### Advancing alternative:

We will work with children, youth, parents and school teachers in their core roles to work with other stakeholders ensuring rights to education for all, especially children. We want to ensure appropriate schools for all children and where rights of girls and boys are respected, and where values of equality and justice are nurtured and promoted. We will link this work to local, national and international

movements of school management, teachers, parents and community to reform policies and practices so that we can realize the potential of education to promote a more equal and sustainable world.

### Interventions:

- Improve the access to compulsory and quality education for all by promoting a safer and non-discriminatory learning environment. This focuses on removing the language barrier for the children and active teaching for the improvement of quality education.
- Mobilize participation to school management and governance by strengthening the roles of communities, teachers-parents associations and monitoring school governance to improve accountability in schools.
- Support our allies and networks at all levels (local to international) to develop alternative models of promoting rights in schools (PRS), teacher training and curriculum development. To improve financing for education, so that education contributes to wider social, economic and ecological justice.

### Expected results:

- By 2017, 90% of girls and boys in 100 schools in the communities where we work will have enjoyed good quality education which respects their rights, and school governance will have been significantly improved.
- By 2017, 3,000 youth will be mobilized and supported to organize their local activism on equal rights to quality education and increased public financing for education.
- By 2017, 5 initiatives will be piloted and replicated in the areas where we work to promote equal access to quality education.

**By 2017, 90% of girls and boys in 100 schools in the communities where we work will have enjoyed good quality education which respects their rights, and school governance will have been significantly improved.**



## PP 4: RESPOND TO DISASTER AND CLIMATE CHANGE IMPACTS WITH PEOPLE-CENTERED ALTERNATIVES

Vietnam is one of the most disaster-prone countries in the world, with about 70% of the population at risk of typhoons, torrential storms and flooding. The country's long coast line, mountainous terrain, large number of rivers and tropical climate all make storms, heavy rains, flooding, landslides and typhoons regular and damaging. Mekong Delta is one the three most vulnerable deltas in the world.

Annually, disasters cause losses equivalent to 1.5% country's GDP. The over-exploitation of natural resources as trade-off to economic growth contributes to the climate change (CC) impacts on the country and its people. It is expected that Vietnam will face increasing frequency of disasters and extreme weathers. These disasters kill people, demolish homes and destroy farmland, leaving people with no way to earn a living, pushing them back into the poverty trap.

In the recent years, the GoV has put efforts into responding to disasters through risk reduction and preparedness and by building different scenarios for CC impacts. However no clear progress or alternatives has emerged. Political commitment is clearly strong but there are still big gaps in resilience building for communities and capacity building for local authorities. At the same time, a start has been made to visualize experiments and solutions that people can adopt to cope with disasters and adapt to climate change impacts.

### Advancing alternative:

Drawing on our disaster risk management experience, our participatory

methodologies and our focus on climate resilient agriculture and livelihoods, AAV will work with the most vulnerable groups. Women's leadership will be encouraged in the building of local resilience in disaster risk reduction, climate change adaptation and reduced vulnerability to CC and disaster. AAV will also start documenting and replicating good practices and people-centered solutions to CC and disasters.

### Interventions:

- Promote women leadership to efficiently respond to disasters; develop resilience and preparedness for communities at local levels and enhance networking, researches, especially in the Me Kong River area for advocacy campaign and solidarity building at national and international levels.
- Identify, promote and replicate people-centered alternatives to disaster preparedness and response as well as coping strategies by the people to CC impacts through engaging with youth, media, policy makers, corporates, academia and donors.

### Expected result:

- By 2017 over 100 villages will have built effective disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation systems and capacities.
- By 2017 at least 100,000 people experiencing disasters will have been assisted in ways which respect and strengthen rights, support recovery of livelihoods, empower women and promote solutions for long-term change.
- AAV will have identified, documented, promoted and replicated at least two concrete people-centered alternatives to CC impacts with active participation by women, youth, media, policy makers, corporates, academia and donors by end of 2017.

**100,000  
people will  
join hands to  
have identified  
people-  
centered  
alternatives  
to climate  
change  
impacts.**

## PP 5: BUILD SOCIAL AND POLITICAL ALTERNATIVES FOR WOMEN AND GIRLS

Vietnamese girls and women participate actively in poverty reduction and development of their own families, communities and country. However, they continue to suffer from discriminations, violence, obstacles and gender disparities in access to public services, employment and economic opportunities, income, control over their body, and most importantly to political share. Most of the time, their work at home and at work is unpaid, inappropriately recognized and seen as done by women only. The model of export oriented production, disaster and climate change impacts and the “race to the bottom” escalates migration both within country and across countries. Women migrants may have more opportunities to improve their lives through economic independence but are exposed to an increased risk of abuse and exploitation at work and at home. Worldwide, Vietnam has the third highest abortion rate for teenagers. Traditional norms and practices, social biases by the community, school teachers, parents,



teenagers and youth on sexual reproductive health prevail. Lack of essential life skills and political views against gender inequality for teenagers and youth maintains the exploitation and sexual abuse and violence

against girls and women.

The first GoV’s National Strategy on Gender equality from 2011 to 2020 has laid an important foundation for women’s empowerment and advancement in different spheres. Believing that gender inequality is one of the critical causes of poverty and injustice, AAV has been advancing women’s rights with support from all communities where we work for many years. Working together to build social and political alternatives for women and girls will be both a stand-alone and a mainstreamed priority for AAV’s programme throughout.

### Advancing alternative:

Women and women’s leadership will be supported promoting women’s rights to a better control over their body; their time and labour. In this process, AAV will work with all, especially boys and men who support the change and seek to educate and improve the recognition of women’s rights in others. Different stakeholders at all levels will be mobilized and supported for policy advocacy and campaigning on social and political alternatives for women’s rights and gender equality.

### Interventions:

- Strengthen awareness and capacity for women and girls so that they can protect themselves from any forms of gender based violence and have access to free of discrimination to health care, social, economic, legal services, decent jobs and equal employment.
- Build potential women’s capacity on leadership and support them to become women leaders in both social and political spheres.
- Strengthen community groups and link them with networks and movements at

**Vietnamese girls and women participate actively in poverty reduction and development of their own families, communities and country.**

**Most of the time, their work at home and at work is unpaid, inappropriately recognized and seen as done by women only.**

national, regional and international levels so that they can fight against gender based violence and injustice.

- Facilitate campaigns and advocacy focusing on changing stereotyped norms, practices and any forms of discrimination against women. Advocate for an increased budget allocation for the women's rights agenda.

**Expected result:**

- By 2017 over 15,000 women and girls in rural and urban areas will have been organized to challenge and reject all kinds of gender-based violence that would have denied them to control over their bodies, time and labour; discrimination against economic and employment opportunities and active participation at public spaces.
- By 2017, 10,000 women and girls will have secured their access to quality health, social, economic and legal services free of discrimination through a progressive social protection mechanism.
- By 2017, 1,000 women will have been able to exercise their rights to participate in social and political spheres.
- By 2017, people's institutions in Vietnam will have actively engaged in national and international processes to significantly influence the policies for increased State budget allocation for protecting the rights of women and girls.







- No limited class
- Convenience
- Information
- Social construction
- Join family members
- Time
- Skill

**TOT Training on**  
Ho Chi Minh C





# ORGANISATIONAL PRIORITIES (OP)

## OP 1: IMPROVE AAV'S GOVERNANCE TO BECOME A FULL MEMBER OF AAI

AAV began in country in 1989. It is recognized and registered in Vietnam as an INGO. Whilst it is highly recognized by partners for the contribution to poverty reduction in country, being an INGO prevents AAV from having a national identity in policy advocacy or fund raising campaigns locally.

At the AAI Federation, AAV has been a country programme (CP) and represented at the AAI federation by AA UK Board and management. This however misses a local and southern view from Vietnam to the decision making processes at AAI global level. Having a Board of Trustees will help AAV to significantly improve its governance and management for better programme quality, more accountability and efficiency.

Taking the current legal framework available in Vietnam, AAV will seek for alternatives to improve its governance while maintaining the status of being a national member of an international federation, whose aim is to end poverty and injustice.

Advancing alternative: A Board of Trustees will be formed with members who are known for their expertise and leadership in human rights, people's mobilization, development and people to people solidarity.



**Interventions:**

- Review legal frameworks of Vietnam, compare with AAI governance requirements for being a full member
- Disseminate and consult with AAV's staff, partners and other stakeholders on the transition of AAV
- Form the National Board of Trustees with

honoured members and enhance internal governance of AAV and of the Board.

**Expected result:**

By 2017, AAV will be a full member of AA federation with National Board of Trustees, while enhancing mutual accountability with support from International Secretariat.

**OP 2: INVEST IN OUR STAFF CAPACITY AND WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP**

**Thorough application of the highest standard of accountability, transparency, and effectiveness of the organisation is practised to poor and excluded people, other stakeholders and ourselves.**

AAV has been well known for its quality team and its commitment to building staff capacity. Colleagues in AAV are recognized for their state-of-the-art knowledge and extensive experience in working with communities and stakeholders at policy level on issues and pro-people solutions for development.



of HRBA in development and ensure they acquire the necessary attributes for accomplishing our organizational missions.

**Interventions:**

- Build an organizational culture that promotes knowledge building and nurtures staff capacity. Develop women's leadership through incentives, core training, policies, procedures, strategies and programmes
- Reinforce the learning practice and sharing of all policies in staff inductions, promote secondment, immersion and staff exchange with other organisations.
- Introduce a "green office" and encourage staff to practice "green work and life style" as part of practicing organizational commitments and contributing to reducing climate change impacts.

With CSP V, it is time for AAV to take the team to a new level of expertise, consolidation and commitment by applying the Human rights based approach (HRBA) to development by addressing new scenarios of poverty, especially with impacts of climate change, issues in urban areas, as well as possible contributions to wider ActionAid and civil society in the region and internationally.

**Advancing alternative:**

AAV will create opportunities for staff to enhance their knowledge in the application

**Expected result:**

- By 2013, there will be a comprehensive management system. This will support the sharing of values and culture, through the implementation of policies and procedures and the following up of performance appraisal outcomes. It is to the delivery of our strategy and highlight staff capacity, women leadership and green practices.
- Thorough application of the highest standard of accountability, transparency, and effectiveness of the organisation is

practised to poor and excluded people, other stakeholders and ourselves.

- By 2013, 100% F&F staff and 50% of AAV staff will be provided with F&F specific skill training. 100% AAV staff will be fully conscious of and proactively practise green

work and life style. 100% of women staff will be provided with leadership training and at least 1 woman member developed to be a Senior staff or qualified to work regionally or internationally.

### OP 3: IMPROVE PARTNERSHIP MANAGEMENT AND M&E FRAMEWORK

Working in partnership is a crucial approach for AAV in empowerment, mobilization, solidarity and campaigning. During the last two decades, AAV has been able to build relations and cooperation for poverty reduction with hundreds of partners at all levels. They have included communities, non-formal local institutions, government organizations and authorities, mass organizations, academia, elected bodies and representatives, peer INGOs, networks of like-minded local NGOs, donors, media and others. A common vision has been built and changes to eradicate poverty delivered.

In this strategic period, AAV will continue to deepen its work in partnership with new levels. While continuing to consolidate our relations and cooperation with current partners, AAV will strengthen its assistance to partners in 20 provinces and various bases of supporters. It is vital for AAV to revitalize its well-grounded system of partnership management. This system will help AAV to design an M&E framework to fulfill the multiple accountabilities of AAV– both upward and downwards accountability, ensuring that stakeholders and rights holders are kept well informed.

**Advancing alternative:**

AAV seeks to develop a partnership management system and an M&E framework to ensure better delivery of our programmes at effective costs while contributing

to enhancement of CSOs legitimacy, accountability and credibility in country.

**Interventions:**



- Review and improve the current partnership management and monitoring policies, procedures and systems.
- Set up and implement in consultation with all related partners the operation principles, responsible staff, indicators, local participatory baseline for the M&E system to measure the change and ensure accountabilities

**Expected result:**

- By end 2012, Partnership Management and monitoring policies, procedures and systems in AAV will have been reviewed and revised for operation.
- Participatory baseline and indicators are completed for the M&E system by the end of 2012. From 2013, indicators or areas of change are defined and being used in daily management and monitoring.

**Participatory baseline and indicators are completed for the M&E system by the end of 2012. From 2013, indicators or areas of change are defined and being used in daily management and monitoring.**

## OP 4: STABILIZE AND DIVERSIFY FUNDING BASE

**By 2017  
our regular  
supporter  
base will have  
increased  
to 15,000  
people (both  
from inside  
and outside  
Vietnam)**

Vietnam's recent achievement of MIC status means that AAV will face fiercer competitions among INGOs to get bilateral or multilateral support while greater portion of aid will either be streamed to Government's stakeholders or to civil society organizations that have local identities. At the same time, it also means that there will be more Vietnamese people being able and willing to contribute and finance development works. In order to achieve ambitious and challenging objectives in CSP V, a diversified and sustainable income and supporter's base should be in place. AAV aims to raise more fund locally, not only to connect but also to influence people's views and actions on poverty and injustice.



### Advancing alternatives:

We will mobilize resources from different supporters in innovative and compelling ways to ensure sustainable growth of our income with adherence to AA's fundraising ethical principles and policies. Through partnership with different supporters and donors, AAV

will be able to bring to their attention poverty situations, people's solutions for change and further its commitments to end poverty and injustice in Vietnam.

### Interventions:

- Build Funding Strategy and Planning with active participation of AAV's staff and partners to ensure the number of supporters from existing markets be maintained and new emerging markets increased.
- Develop new voluntary and innovative fundraising programmes by organizing campaigns and events for specific target groups and issues. Income could both come from local and international sources.
- Maximize the income from institutional and high value donors.
- Design and organize specific trainings for AAV staff and partners to stabilize and diversify funding resources

### Expected result:

- By 2017 AAV will have a diversified and sustainable funding base with a gradual increase of annual income to 4 million GBP.
- By 2017 our regular supporter base will have increased to 15,000 people (both from inside and outside Vietnam) giving our organization massive potential to improve our resources, influences and mobilization for progressive social change in Vietnam.
- At least two innovative fund raising products will be initiated and experimented.

## OP 5: TRANSFORM COMMUNICATION FOR CAMPAIGNING

In the last 20 years, with new achievements in technology, people to people connection has been brought to a new high level. Social media sites and innovative tools of communications provide ever substantial loops of opportunities for AAV to mobilize supporters for social change. Youth and middle class groups in particular are the main audience and agents of changes seen in many contexts.

New means of mass communication will become a stronger part of our work everywhere, supporting our efforts to empower people to know and exercise their rights, and to challenge harmful social attitudes and behaviours in the public at large. Our communications and public engagement work will be highly responsive to external events, establishing relevance of our voice with a wider target audience and creating space for the voices of the communities we work with.

In the past, AAV has maintained a soft branding approach but it is now our priority to build a new profile in order to occupy more public attention and space to secure changes in policies, practices, attitudes and behaviors.

### **Advancing alternative:**

We will raise our profile and enhance our capacity for external communication. We will become a more externally-facing organization, building support, alliance and momentum behind our organization, our partners and our campaigns in the national, regional and international level. We will invest in the campaigning systems, skills, policy analysis and research, and tools to link, organise, and energise our partners and supporters with successful stories of our programmes, case studies and digital

products. We will work with movements of people that seek to address structural causes of poverty such as unfair policies or corporate practices.

### **Interventions:**

- Build internal capacity on social media and campaigning skills, strengthen our documentation system so that AAV can actively contribute to telling the story of change and alternatives, to improving quality of our campaigning work.
- Develop our social media strategy and communication products to build a well-grounded supporter base, and enhance our networking and alliance building in order to achieve changes and meet the needs of our current and potential supporters and partners.
- Establish a volunteer base by setting up forums for youth, middle class and consumers to contribute and participate in development issues.

### **Expected result:**

- By 2017, we will have a well-grounded profile and understanding amongst the staff, partners and supporters on issues of poverty and AAV's approaches and positions on them. We will have solutions and alternatives available on the ground to address those, as well as on possibilities that will enable all those who are concerned and want to be able to actively contribute to the change.
- By 2017, there will have been at least two campaigns for the mobilization for social change. These will address the causes and consequences of poverty and organized with the participation of a wide range of stakeholders. These campaigns will be strong connections with other campaigns regionally or internationally by AAI members.

**By 2017, there will have been at least two campaigns for the mobilization for social change.**



## RISK REGISTER

It is expected there could be some main risks that might affect to our achievement of the CSP objectives:

- Economic, financial and environmental crises may lead to (i) the number of people living in poverty and being pushed back to poverty will increase significantly; (ii) lack of funding due to reduction and dropping out of regular sponsors and drying up of institutional support. AAV must prioritize programme consolidation, partnership management, M&E enhancement and reviews carefully when it comes to expansion, so that resources will be used wisely.
- Although possibilities of conflicts happening at regional or bordering countries are low, these could significantly affect our work at different levels. This requires AAV to keep on high alert and seek guidance and support from International Secretariat and partners

for possible solutions depending on the contexts at different times.

- HRBA application in the Vietnam context particularly in some sensitive provinces may require a very clear process and plan. HRBA will have to be reflective of the local culture & context whilst at the same time maintaining the core/minimum standards.
- It is envisioned that AAV will face with fierce competition from peer and similar organizations for its high quality staff team. It is planned to provide staff with opportunities for career development, to have effective feedback systems as well as other motivations and incentives.

In order to be highly relevant to its resources, capacity and contexts, it is the plan that AAV will conduct a thorough mid-term review for its projected actions in 2015. Implications for adjustment, realignment, reduce or expansion will be thoroughly reviewed, discussed and presented in the Mid-term Review of CSP V (2012-2017).

## CONCLUSIONS

CSP V is not a mere document. It is a collective intelligence and commitments and belief of the AAV team. It attempts to visualize our contribution to a world without poverty.

From 2012-2017, AAV plans to be an interactive part of AAI federation, delivering our commitments through five programme priorities enhancing (i) People's control over resources for life and livelihoods; (ii) People's participation in the decision making processes in society, economy and policies at all levels; (iii) Women's and girls' rights as Human rights; (iv) People's alternatives in disaster preparedness and responses;

and (v) Solidarity with the people beyond boundaries. At the same time we will continue our search to improve internal governance, working with children and youth as leaders of change and contributing to the building of a healthy, credible, accountable and representative civil society.

It is important to note that transformation required for a more equal, just and democratic society is possible because people are conscientised to act to bring about the change. AAV supports such changes together with communities and partners and brings people together in this journey.

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