



2018–2027 Country Strategy:
Action for Social
Justice

- Myanmar -

Executive Summary

The previous strategic planning period 2012-2017 witnessed tremendous changes in Myanmar, with the 2015 landslide victory of the National League for Democracy and subsequent efforts to move the democratisation, peace building and economic development forward. However, the political context remains unpredictable and unstable, and space is shrinking again for civil society.

With this Country Strategic Plan (CSP), AAM chooses to anchor its work at the local level, engaging in long term, bottom-up and empowering processes. We follow a human rights-based approach (HRBA), which guides our external and internal organisational priorities. At a programmatic level, the HRBA translates into a justice framework which recognises that change happens when focus is given to social, economic and ecological justice.¹

Our programmatic priorities for the next three years will be the “3R”: (1) Realisation and enjoyment of rights, with a focus on women’s rights; (2) Redistribution of power and resources and; (3) Resilience of people and communities. Our programmatic focus on rights will prioritise women’s economic empowerment, freedom from gender-based violence and the right to participation. We will also support local NGOs and CSOs to strengthen civil society participation and action towards a just and democratic governance that ensures the provision of basic public services and social protection in response to both the humanitarian and sustainable development needs of the most vulnerable populations, especially women. We will continue to encourage sustainable and resilient agriculture, while also emphasizing and supporting communities with disaster and conflict preparedness and resilience.

For this CSP, AAM will retain powerful methodological triangle of the Village Book, the Fellowship programme and the participatory bottom up planning process, which will remain the cornerstone tools to operationalise our 2018-2027 CSP. We continue to mainstream women’s rights across all three programmatic priority areas, as we ensure we work with and for the most vulnerable, excluded and hardest to reach people in Myanmar, especially women and youth. Aiming to become a more ‘networked’ organisation, we will ensure we create synergies with all partners: civil society, public and private, to mobilise for solidarity and support around shared values.

Working in partnerships remains at the core of AAM’s approach, and we promote programme-led funding, where partner communities and organisations are the co-creators of the humanitarian response and development agenda. We will expand our funding mechanisms beyond traditional fundraising, through the pursuit and development of social enterprises and partnerships with philanthropic networks and private companies that share our values and agenda. We are expecting a total of about USD 28 million to be raised in the 5-year period 2018-2022, with a sustained increase of 5-8% a year.

¹ Fully embracing feminist values and supporting the most vulnerable people to understand and realise their rights, ActionAid Myanmar prioritises social justice, while recognising all three justices are interconnected and indivisible.

Table of Contents

Note from Senior Management Team (SMT)	1
Introduction	2
Who We Are	3
The Changing Context in Myanmar	5
Core of Our Work	12
Theory of Change - Myanmar	13
The Justice Framework	14
Who We Work With: Rights Holders Framework	15
Where We Work: Geographical Framework	15
Who are our Stakeholders: Partnership Policy	16
2018-2020 Programme Priorities	18
Priority Goal 1: Realisation of Rights	19
Priority Goal 2: Redistribution of Power and Resources	20
Priority Goal 3: Resilience of People and Communities	21
2018-2020 Organisational Priorities	22
Organisational Design	23
Culture	24
People	25
Communication, Learning and Accountability	25
Resource Mobilisation: Income and Expenditure	26

Acronyms

AAI	ActionAid International
AAM	ActionAid Myanmar
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
CSP	Country Strategy Paper
CSR	Corporate Social Responsibility
FDI	Foreign Direct Investments
FNCCP	Federal Political Negotiation and Consultative Committee
GDI	Gender Development Index
GRPS	Gender Responsive Public Services
HRBA	Human Rights Based Approach
(I)NGO	(International) Non-Governmental Organisation
MEHL	Myanmar Economic Holding Limited
NCA	National Ceasefire Agreement
NLD	National League for Democracy
NSPAW	National Strategic Plan for the Advancement of Women
NSS	Northern Shan State
UN	United Nations
USDP	Union Solidarity Development Party
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SEZ	Special Economic Zones
SMT	Senior Management Team

Note from Senior Management Team (SMT)

Our previous Country Strategy Paper (CSP) “Empowering people for change” (2012-2017) emerged as the country was embarking on a much needed democratic transition. The 2010, 2012 and 2015 elections were key milestones for the implementation of a “disciplined democracy” and the launch of in-depth reforms aiming at peace building, economic growth and democratisation.

Action Aid Myanmar (AAM) delivered our strategic work with cautious optimism as the space was opening up for civil society to engage with the reforms, which attracted overwhelming international support, especially after a civilian political party took part in the 2012 elections. AAM has always recognised that the sustainability of the on-going transition would depend on the progress of the peace process and deepening the democratic culture in the wider society. There were very high expectations that the elected quasi-civilian government would address long standing humanitarian crises, particularly in terms of protracted conflicts and the aspirations for Myanmar’s people, especially of ethnic minorities.

The process is still at its early stages and Myanmar is now at a crossroad. Various reforms have laid the foundations for improvements, but the expected positive economic, political and social impacts are yet to be realised. AAM’s core constituency (children, young people, and women) are especially vulnerable in this rapidly changing context.

ActionAid Myanmar works at the intersection of social, economic and ecological justice, with a stronger emphasis on the former, to deliver its work on the “3 R” priorities that are both a continuity of previous work, along with a bolder emphasis on the most vulnerable stakeholders, especially women and youth: 1) realisation and enjoyment of Rights, 2) Redistribution of power and resources, 3) building Resilient people and communities, in order to promote their agency, through programmes that bring about long term structural changes that lead to the nurturing of self-governing socially inclusive communities.

The great challenge – and opportunity – for Myanmar, is how to combine this promising democratic transition, the rapid increase in international engagement, space for CSOs and an expanding private sector, to catalyse and sustain this momentum for change and sustainable development, while still responding to humanitarian needs.

ActionAid Myanmar is excited to embark on this new phase and grateful for the support of friends and partners to its mission.

Senior Management Team

ActionAid Myanmar

Introduction



This Country Strategy Paper (CSP) is the product of an intensive consultative process involving staff, partners and communities. It is a dynamic document, under ongoing review and lays out ActionAid Myanmar's strategic direction for the next 10 years.

This CSP guides AAM's framework and priorities for 2018 – 2027 presenting AAM's commitment and ambition to respond to humanitarian needs and to contribute to sustainable and equitable development in Myanmar. In consideration of the country's rapidly changing context and development, AAM will roll out more detailed annual operation plans three-year implementation plans. This will enable AAM to maintain a long term strategic focus and commitment to our broader change agenda while allowing AAM to improve and adapt as necessary in response to external contextual changes and internal organisational learning and developments.

This CSP is informed by over a decade of our rooted and diverse experience and learning from our engagement with more than 1000 communities in 91 townships across 13 states and regions, with more than 3000 youth leaders, over 100 local CSOs and approximately 1 million people. While committing to deepen and build on our existing community relationships, successful projects, policy gains and our participatory approaches, AAM commits to transform itself as an organisation. We will build new capacities and strengthen our programmes, projects and priorities to become more relevant, impactful, legitimate, accountable and transparent to respond to both the humanitarian and sustainable development needs of the communities we serve. This CSP is also informed by ActionAid International's Strategy 2028: Action for Global Justice.

Who We Are

ActionAid International (AAI) is a global justice federation working to achieve social justice, gender equality and poverty eradication. In 1999, AAI began operating at a limited scale in Myanmar as part of their regional Asia initiative. In 2006, this initiative expanded with the implementation of the 'Fellowship Programme' in Kachin State - a programme that has since become AAMs flagship approach - and AAI's humanitarian response to cyclone Nargis in 2008. Since then, ActionAid Myanmar has progressively scaled up operations and was established as a country programme in 2011 with the aims to build national momentum for social, economic and environmental justice, driven by people living in poverty and exclusion.

The ActionAid Federation has committed to applying a feminist lens and values in our work.

Vision

A just, equitable and sustainable world in which every person enjoys the right to a life of dignity, freedom from poverty and all forms of oppression.

Mission

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

Values

Mutual Respect, requiring us to recognise the innate worth of all people and the value of diversity.

Equity and Justice, requiring us to ensure the realisation of our vision for everyone, irrespective of gender, sexual orientation, 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 judgements and communications with others.

Solidarity with the people living in poverty and exclusion will be the only bias in our commitment to the fight against poverty, injustice, and gender inequality.

Courage and 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 religion or party-political affiliation.

Humility, recognising that we are part of a wider alliance against poverty and injustice.

ActionAid Myanmar is a strong civil society organisation rooted in local contexts at the country level, working with people, and especially women that are socially excluded and living in poverty. AAM seeks to address the structural causes of poverty, including power imbalances, injustice and inequalities, while applying a feminist lens to our work. We have a particularly strong commitment to the empowerment and leadership of women and youth through community-led participatory development processes that influence policies nationally and internationally. AAM is strongly rooted at the community level through its trained community mobilisers known as the 'fellows', paralegal volunteers, community, volunteers and through social platforms and networks at local level, regional and national levels. A locally embedded approach is of paramount importance for ActionAid Myanmar, as it contributes to building active citizens and supporting grassroots leadership as a foundation for long term sustainable change.

We work with all people and institutions in the ecosystem: Knowledge institutions, civil society organisations, social movements, state institutions, private sector, and non-state actors and individuals to find solutions to poverty and injustice.

ActionAid Myanmar's flagship 'Fellowship' programme of developing community based cadres of youth leaders, mobilisers and facilitators, that develop the 'Village Book', through an empowering bottom up process enables communities to jointly assess their needs and claim their rights from the authorities, are indicative of AAM Human Rights Based Approach (HRBA).



The Changing Context in Myanmar



Development status:

- Myanmar is a lower middle-income country, positioned at 148 out of 189 countries and territories on the Human Development Index, 2017². Since 1990, Myanmar's HDI ranking has increased by 61.5% and the country has seen significant progress in the reduction of poverty, as rural poverty steadily declined from 35.8% in 2004/05 to 23.3% in 2015 and urban poverty declined from 21.5% in 2004/05 to 9% in 2015. However, the HDI is an average measure of basic human development achievements in a country and like all averages, the HDI masks inequality in the distribution of human development across the population at the country level. 37% of people still live near or below the poverty line.
- Along with the adoption of the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) by the government, progress was also made with the property rights of divorced women and gender parity in education at primary and secondary level (27.1% of adult women have reached at least a secondary level of education compared to 20.0% of their male counterparts). Yet, patriarchal values and practices are enforcing gender stereotypes that contribute to the gendered division of labour and limit women's access to and control over resources as well as influence in

² Human Development Indices and Indicators: 2018 Statistical Update, Briefing note for countries on the 2018 Statistical Update, Myanmar, UNDP

decision-making process at all levels of society.

- Myanmar has a Gender Inequality Index (GII) value of 0.456, ranking it 106 out of 160 countries in the 2017 index. Women play an essential role in the economic development of the country, with participation in the labour market at 51.3% (compared to 79.9% for men). Yet, gender segregation across all industries is massive, with the differential ratio of women's to men's hourly wages as large as 90% in some sectors. The lack of infrastructure and provision of public services, added to a lack of awareness on shared domestic responsibility results in women carrying the disproportionate burden of unpaid care work (ABD, UNDP, UNFPA & UN Women, 2016)
- Women struggle to attain leadership positions. This results in extremely low participation and presence of women leaders in public and political spaces with only 10.2% of Parliamentary seats held by women; no women other than Daw Aung San Suu Kyi sits in the 21-member Cabinet; and only 0.25% of women within the administration at village-level.
- Despite the government's efforts for better redistribution of economic gains, the benefits of the recent economic growth are realised by only a very small number of business and political elites. Moreover, the current government's economic model lacks inclusivity, widening inequalities - the majority of Myanmar people are left behind economically, socially and

politically. Substantial investments in the education and health sectors, as well as a revision of the tax system are critical to achieve the redistribution agenda that ActionAid defends, empowering local communities and promoting inclusion to enable social cohesion.

- Many of the existing manufacturing and extractive industries are largely controlled by a couple of industrial conglomerates with military ties, such as Myanmar Economic Holding Limited (MEHL). The revenues generated tend therefore to be disproportionately used to invest in military rather than social sectors such as health and education.
- There is also a significant gap between the government's economic ambitions and the reality of a poorly skilled workforce and weak infrastructure networks.
- However, some social improvements have been initiated including: The National Strategic Plan for the Advancement of Women 2013-2022 (NSPAW), youth and education strategies and health policies. The overall reach and quality of social policies however are limited due to a lack of government resourcing and capacity.

Economy:



- With 67% of the population living in rural areas and 66% of the economically active population working in agriculture, Myanmar's economy is mainly agrarian. Economically active women work mainly in agriculture (52.3%), followed by wholesale and retail trade (8%). The last agricultural census enumeration in 2010 informed that in rural households, 98% of those headed by males had access to agricultural land, against only 61% of female-headed households. Women's right to own and access land is difficult, due to legal barriers including land tenure contracts, unequal divorce settlements and lack of inheritance rights (ADB, UNDP, UNFPA & UN Women).
- The Asian Development Bank's analysis is that "industry growth continues to accelerate with higher investment, both public and private, in garments and other light manufacturing, while services are getting a boost from buoyant tourism and expansion in the nascent telecommunications industry".

Myanmar offers a fertile terrain for economic growth and employment, with very low wages, a large youth population (55% of the population is below 30 years old) and rich natural resources.

- Rapid economic growth (sustained at around 7% annual growth rate since 2012) and intensifying urbanization (35.2% of the population is assumed to live in urban areas in 2017) continue to accompany low-wage labour intensive industrialisation (such as the clothing industry) of the economy which is likely to lead to increased vulnerabilities and regional disparities. Young people and especially young female workers are rushing to urban areas in search of job opportunities, which often fall short of guaranteeing their right to decent work. Uprooted from their rural social environment, they are often vulnerable, due to the weakness of the social protection system.
- Multi-stakeholder partnerships with the private sector are promoted as a modality to realise the SDGs. There is a risk that corporates may drive the process to maximise their interests and promote their image rather than prioritise the development impacts.

Myanmar's journey towards a democratic system:



- Many in Myanmar expected that civil society would have more space for political involvement with the recent transition to democracy compared to the previous authoritarian regime. 2010 was the turning point for the democratic transition after decades of military ruled authoritarianism. Though the election was not free and fair, the first civilian ex-military government led by the President U Thein Sein, made efforts to undertake the transition from authoritarianism to democratic development.
- The country has undergone substantial political changes by passing an amnesty law and allowing for peaceful demonstrations and unions in 2011 (UNDP and NOREF, 2012), significant legal amendments in freedom of expression by easing, and finally abolishing, censorship of the print media in 2012, in freedom of association by enacting Association Law 2014 taking inputs from civil society consultations although not meeting international best practice yet (ICNL, 2013), and Right to

Peaceful Assembly and Peaceful Procession Law in 2014 (Asian Development Bank, 2015).

- 2015 was a historical year for Myanmar in the journey of democratisation. The first non - military civilian government came into power with a landslide victory in the election, which is one of the key moments in the democratic transition in Myanmar. Following the election, the winning party, the National League of Democracy (NLD), led by Aung San Suu Kyi, formed the government and took power in April 2016. Despite this second transition, there are no significant amendments yet with regards to the freedoms of association, assembly and expression.
- The hybrid decision making system that includes the military and the civilian government on the one hand and the Ethnic Armed Organisations (EAOs) on the other, further adds to the complexity of how civil society should negotiate with these actors. The on-going conflict in Rakhine has also directly impacted relationships between international and local actors. Finally, the Tatmadaw (Myanmar's military) remains a powerful political actor in Myanmar and its policies and positions dictate the pace and direction of political reform.

Civil society:



- The response to the 2008 Cyclone Nargis marked the beginning of expanded space for civil society, the international community, and national social movements to support the government's self-claimed priorities (peace building / economic growth / democratic transition) to move the country towards the realization of the SDGs.
- A growing urban middle class and digitally- connected young people are expected to continue to take interest in and engage with broader societal and national issues. This, combined with the effect of the 'foreign aid industry', is spurring the growth in the number, quality, capacity and influence of Myanmar local, regional and national CSOs. Social media are a double-edged sword in Myanmar's nascent democracy, and 'fake news' and propaganda abound, when a responsible use of social media should be promoted.
- There is growing concern regarding the decreasing space for civil society

and for the expression of views that are critical of or disagree with government narratives. This is evidenced in recent reports in which a member of parliament threatened to take legal action against people and organisations who "damage the dignity" of Myanmar by cooperating with the United Nations. This concern has triggered increased self-censorship. In addition to the wielding of problematic, outdated and repressive laws and policies the scope of work for civil societies could be further limited.

Peace and conflict:

- The peace process started under the 2012- 2015 Thein Sein government got a fresh start with the current NLD leadership. However, despite efforts at further peace building, via the conduct of the 21st century Panglong conference, there has been little tangible improvement as people had hoped. The progress of the ceasefire negotiations and peace agreements is constantly jeopardized by the changing events and power dynamics.
- Despite their central role in human rights and democratic activism in Myanmar, women have been marginalized in the government's various peace process initiatives, and their concerns have been noticeably absent from the negotiations. Women are underrepresented in the leadership of ethnic armed organizations despite being highly affected by conflicts. Only 3 of the 14 non-state armed groups that have bilateral ceasefire agreements with the government had women in their

negotiating teams, and women's rights groups' observers were also side-lined at the 21st Century Panglong Conference.

- In mid-2017, an unprecedented crisis unfolded in Rakhine state, where over 909,000 Rohingya people fled to take refuge in Bangladesh (OCHA, 2018). This prolonged humanitarian crisis has shifted the political dynamics with Myanmar allies, both internally and externally. In the absence of a resolution of the situation faced by the Rohingya communities in Rakhine State, the western international community is critical of the Government and has started to initiate punitive measures, while powerful players such as China and India are shielding Myanmar.
- Conflicts have re-emerged in regions where ceasefires had been in place for decades, such as in Kachin state, a symptom of the mistrust between the people and the State. Tensions between Ethnic Armed Organisation (EAOs) and the state military are high, contributing to the unique and complex nature of governance in Myanmar. Since the initial signing of the National Ceasefire Agreement (NCA) in 2015, Northern Shan State (NSS) has witnessed an escalation of protracted conflict. Of the seven EAOs present in NSS, only one is a signatory to the NCA signed under the previous Union Solidarity and Development Party (USDP) government. Critically, three EAOs are prevented from participating in the NCA, with the Tatmadaw insisting that they first sign bilateral ceasefires, terms they will not currently accept. In a significant development, the

Federal Political Negotiation Consultative Committee (FPNCC) was formed in 2017 - a UWSA led political alliance of northern EAOs in opposition to the NCA. The alliance is mainly political in nature, but commands significant combined troop strength outside of the Tatmadaw, and has increasingly drawn China into the peace process. These developments pose serious challenges to the reformist agenda of the current NLD-led government and its stated goals of resolving Myanmar's decades-long civil wars through a multilateral peace process.

- The South East Myanmar faces a different problematic: Armed conflict between the Myanmar Government and the Karen National Union, in Kayah State has reduced since ceasefires in 2012, however a 2018 survey conducted by Saferworld demonstrates that people in the Karen ceasefire continue to face severe insecurity and trauma caused by severe and regular violence, abuse and exploitation.
- Covenant Consult's Interim Arrangement Report (2018) highlights the need for aid organisations to help to meet the widespread needs of conflict-affected communities in an effective and conflict-sensitive manner and provide governance measures necessary for achieving development goals. It also raises the importance of supporting a peace process that does not undermine ethnic stakeholders' authority. Successful Interim Arrangements could help to build federalism in Myanmar "from the bottom up".

International cooperation and investments:

- Pro-poor land reforms and more sustainable land governance strategies are needed to redress past injustices, after decades of development policies which prioritize large-scale export-led commodities, land confiscations, inadequate conflict resolution efforts, and lack of access to justice, which have led to numerous land conflicts.
- Recent years have seen overwhelming support from the international community for the reform process and increasing international foreign investments from corporations indicating optimism regarding the potential of the country. Aiming at attracting Foreign Direct Investments (FDIs) at any cost, the government has so far developed very permissive investment laws, placing Myanmar as the country with the lowest fiscal revenue to GDP ratio in the ASEAN region.
- The strategic geopolitical positioning of Myanmar has attracted the attention of the regional economic superpowers: China, India and Japan; competing for the country's resources and aiming to absorb it within their sphere of influence, with massive projects such as the Chinese belt and road initiative or the recent MoU on the Bangladesh, China, India and Myanmar Economic Corridor (July 2018) (Nan Lwin, 2018).
- The influx of foreign investments, the establishment of Special Economic Zones (SEZ) and large scale development projects are also increasing the risks of exploitation and expropriation of natural resources, as well as land grabs and forced displacements, threatening people's livelihoods.
- The privatisation of basic services and unfair and unsafe working conditions are other challenges that emerged from FDI focused neo-liberal policies.
- In 2017, Myanmar received approximately USD 2 billion in Official Development Assistance (ODA), making it the fastest growing aid recipient in South East Asia, with a 451% increase since 2012. Coupled with an exponential increase in FDIs and trade, Myanmar's GDP has risen from USD 50 billion in 2010 to an estimated USD 81 billion in 2017 (OECD).

Core of Our Work



In line with our overall values, vision and mission, justice remains the primary guiding light of all our work.

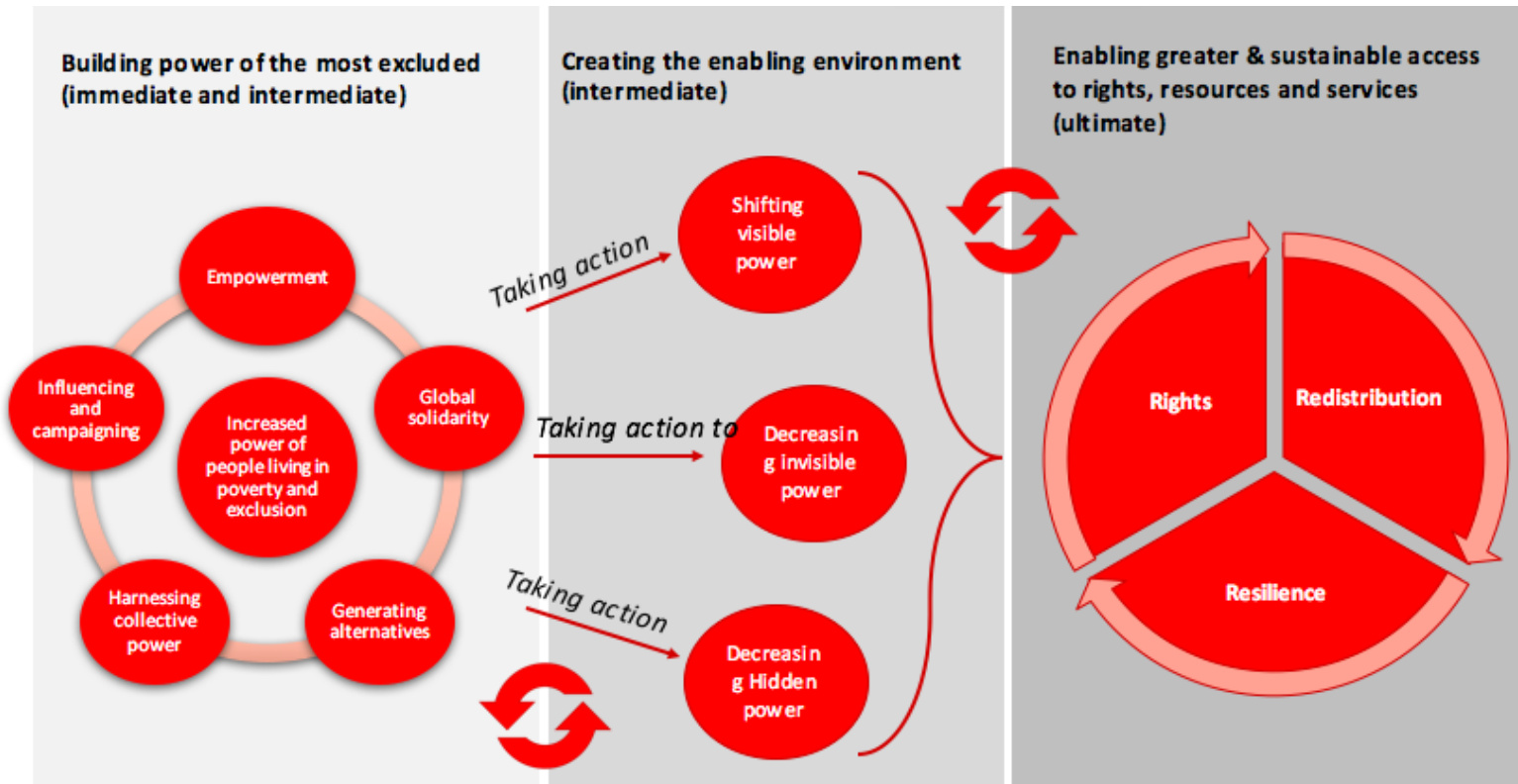
ActionAid Myanmar believes that the causes of poverty and injustice can be challenged and overcome through realizing people's rights, building local capacities for people themselves to improve their wellbeing, and ensuring that communities, especially women and youth, are empowered and democratic in their functioning. We focus on the intersection between humanitarian needs and sustainable development programming, taking a human rights based-approach, with a feminist perspective. This feminist perspective requires us "to drive a deeper analysis of power and its many manifestations, enabling us to better work towards more equitable redistribution of power and resources, as well as enhancing women's ability to claim and enjoy their rights" to overcome the objectification, oppression, domination and exploitation resulting from patriarchal systems and practices (ActionAid, 2017, P.4).

We believe that sustainable change in Myanmar can only be achieved if we work on social, economic and ecological injustice at the local level, working with poor and excluded people, especially women and youth. These three justice components are interlinked, mutually interactive, and indivisible. Since the challenges are interconnected, so are the solutions we advocate for. We won't work on any of these three aspects in isolation, but we will focus on their linkages.

AAM's programme and organisational priorities keep the justice framework at the core of our strategy implementation and delivery with a clear objective to advance our mission towards social justice with cross-cutting references to economic and ecological priorities. AAM will prioritise social, with a focus on our primary constituency of women. While economic justice is understood as a tool to achieve better social justice, ecological justice ensures every intervention promotes ecological sustainability and doesn't harm the environment.

Theory of Change – Myanmar

ActionAid works to achieve social justice, gender equality and poverty eradication in Myanmar through three main domains of change: (1) Building power of people living in poverty and exclusion (2) Creating an enabling environment (3) Greater access to and control over services and resources. The first domain involves nurturing the agency of the most excluded and their movements to build individual and collective power and generate learning and knowledge from the bottom up. The second relates to changes that need to occur in the environment around people living in poverty to shift power dynamics in their favour. The third focuses on the most tangible changes in people's lives in terms of rights, redistribution and resilience, and is significantly linked to the state and its role as a primary duty bearer. Whilst changes in the first domain are more directly felt by those affected by a problem, and can be attributed to or seen as a direct result of Action Aid's intervention, change in the other two domains usually occurs over a longer period of time and are often due to multiple causes.



The Justice Framework

In line with AAI's 'Strategy 2028: Action for Global Justice' AAM will build momentum for social, economic and environmental justice.

Social Justice

AAM understands that social injustices occur at all levels in society. Injustices result from unequal power distributions, based on differing identities, leading to discrimination, exploitation, exclusion and marginalisation of individuals or groups. Injustices also result from unequal economic resource distribution and environmental laws and policies that structurally discriminate against people who are poor and excluded. To challenge such injustices in Myanmar, AAM will work with purposeful individuals, communities, social movements and at all levels.

Economic Justice

Economic injustice results from unequal access to, and control over economic resources. In Myanmar, power is rooted in a patriarchal system at the individual and family level, led by elites across national, regional and international arenas. AAM envisions addressing key challenges to promote economic justice: by challenging gender stereotyped discrimination that results in women's lack of access to economic and productive resources; by promoting alternative livelihoods in the context of growing inequality and injustice, exacerbated by climate change and rapid on-set disasters and conflicts, impacting disproportionately on women; by advocating for pro-poor institutional policies to combat the market economy

influence (both national and international) which reinforce negative impacts on poor people, especially women, and marginalised communities.

Environmental Justice

Ecological justice is ensuring the equitable distribution and ownership of natural resources and sustainable consumption of the earth's resources. AAM will work to identify and change the relevant policies for land, water and forest management to benefit the population instead of a few individuals / corporations. Unequal distribution of natural resources has a disproportionate impact on women and shifting the imbalance will require addressing the existing patriarchal norms and putting an end to the concentration of resources in the hands of a few.

How Change Happens

Change happens when individuals are empowered to mobilise and act. Through power analysis, collaboration, campaign and individuals can challenge discrimination, exploitation and exclusion to ensure their active participation in social and political processes and institutions. Ultimately, a shift of power and resources is expected. We will present alternatives to the liberal market economy and the privatisation of public services which widen the gap not only in terms of economic disadvantage but also social and environmental injustice.

There is a need to change behaviour, attitudes and mindsets towards all these interconnected issues. Raising awareness of climate, ecosystems and environmental rights will encourage individuals to change behavior and become active global citizens.

Who We Work With: Rights Holders Framework

In line with the mission statement, people living in poverty and injustice are AAM's primary constituency. More specifically, women, youth and children are the primary focus of our work.

AAM recognises that people are marginalised and impoverished through a systemic process of discrimination, exclusion, exploitation and persecution. We believe that women in poor and excluded communities suffer the most due to the pervasive patriarchal system which exacerbates rights violations. Young people and children also remain amongst the most vulnerable to injustice due to structural causes.

AAM prioritises working with young people, whether from urban or rural areas or from poor and non-poor communities. The focus of work with young people is to strengthen their motivation, agency, engagement and leadership as the new generation of change agents and activists to fight against poverty and injustice.

There are many social groups in Myanmar who face poverty and injustice. AAM ensure equity and justice for everyone by working with all irrespective of their gender, sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, caste, class, age, HIV status, disability, location or religion. We stand in solidarity with the most marginalised in addressing the root causes of poverty and injustice.

Where We Work: Geographical Framework

AAM will work in geographical areas where there is need and where we can be strategic and impactful. AAM will focus its longer-term engagement in locations which will give us optimum experience of diverse situations and adequate legitimacy to advance our mission objectives, influence and gain leverage to impact national level policies, practices and performance. AAM will remain flexible for short term engagements in the geographical area/s where context demands us to address immediate needs and harness potential opportunities to support changes in the lives of communities as well as advance our organisational priorities. AAM will be agile in reaching out and exiting the location of intervention if the engagement is no longer strategic and impactful for the communities we work with.

More specifically:

- We will continue to work with our LRPs in the Dry Zone and Delta regions that are prone to climate induced challenges.
- We will intensify our work in Kayin, Kayah, Mon, Kachin, Shan, Tanintharyi, Chin and Rakhine States/Regions to engage in conflict sensitive programming, working with both government and NSAs on social inclusion.
- AAM will focus its work in the parts of the country where unjust and unsustainable extraction or expropriation of natural resources and extraction of natural commons endanger and deprive people and

communities – for example in Special Economic Zones (SEZ).

- Our focus in urban locations will be in Yangon and Mandalay where there are large numbers of informal labourers (mostly women) and vulnerable new migrants without provision of adequate basic services or social protection systems.
- AAM's policy advocacy work and campaigns will remain nationwide.
- AAM will engage with the ASEAN region or global issues and institutions that affect Myanmar people who are poor and excluded, and stand in solidarity with people and civil society groups in ASEAN countries.
- AAM's current approach of longer term area based programmes known as Local Rights Programmes (LRPs), funded through regular giving will be reinvigorated by exploring diversified funding opportunities so that the programmes can reach an operational level where they are influential, replicable and impactful.

Who are our Stakeholders: Partnership Policy

As stated above, people living in poverty and injustice are AAM's primary constituency and AAM will work directly with their groups, communities and organisations. AAM will also work closely with diversity of stakeholders, in a range of relationships, as below:

Civil society

AAM is part of and is committed to stand with and work in solidarity with civil society organisations and social movements in Myanmar. We will engage with different civil society stakeholders including communities, networks or platforms on relevant issues, and occupational groups such as labour unions, paralegals, farmers, fishermen and teachers on issues of common concern. AAM will engage with media and academia to support and amplify the issues, experience, evidence and voice of Myanmar people.

AAM will remain engaged with the INGO community in Myanmar and will form strategic partnerships with complementary and specialist INGOs for joint programming, not only contract bidding.

AAM will engage directly or indirectly (via the ActionAid Federation) with regional and global civil society organisations and social movements working on issues and institutions that affect Myanmar.

AAM will engage with and mobilise people's voluntary contributions in terms of voice, solidarity actions and funds. AAM believes that overcoming poverty and sustainable development will require support and solidarity of all people, poor or not, as supporters, volunteers, activists, voters or shareholders. There are many people already engaged and contributing while others would like to engage and contribute more or better to the sustainable development of people and the country but do not know how.

National Government

AAM will engage with the Government from local, state, regional and national levels in various ways, depending upon the purpose:

- Advocacy and campaigns to influence policy and practices.
- As collaborator for shared learning and collaborative programmes.
- As recipient of government funds to deliver the programme or projects, when legally feasible and aligned with the strategic direction set by AAM and its approaches.

Companies

AAM is aware of both the negative and positive contributions national and transnational companies make in society. AAM will raise our voice against companies that exploit people, extract and expropriate natural commons or violate people's rights. AAM will continue to seek positive engagement with companies when our mission and approaches align in reaching out to poor and excluded people, developing solutions to poverty and injustice, or to fund relevant interventions and programming.

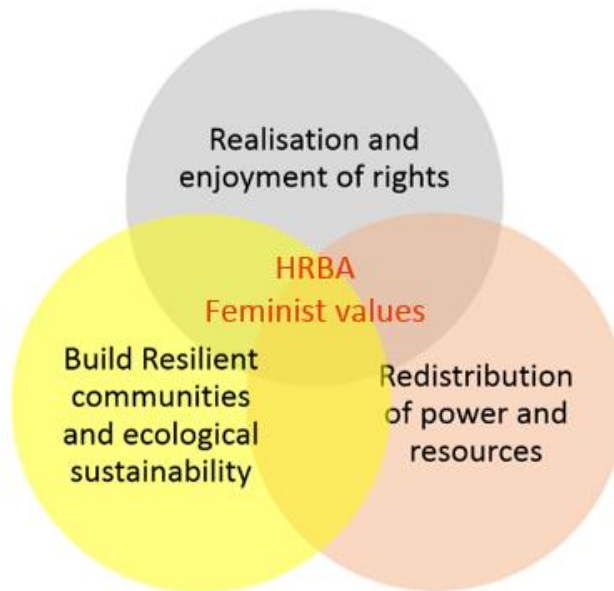
International, Bi-lateral and Multi-lateral agencies

AAM will continue to seek strategic engagement with selected international agencies like the United Nations, European Union and other development agencies for shared learning, project and programme funding as well as for solidarity and advocacy purposes.

Academic Institutions, Think Tanks and Research Organisations

AAM aims to work closely with think tanks, academic institutions and research organisations to embed research in our programme design and strive for high quality impact. By doing so, we aim to ensure a closer connection between policy and practice, where research contributes to evidence-based programming, greater learning, and informed action for change. With these multiple partnerships, AAM seeks to constantly review and refine its influencing approach and work towards greater adaptive programming to respond to the changes in the context.

2018-2020 Programme Priorities



The human rights based approach, with feminist analysis, values and perspective is our fundamental repositioning framework. The primary focus of our human rights based approach is to work together with, and support the active agency and capability of individuals, groups, communities, organisations and social movements in claiming, realising and enjoying their rights and in holding violators and duty-bearers to account. Our approach also requires us to mobilise public opinion and action as well as lobby, advocate and campaign in solidarity with the rights holders. We analyse the needs of poor and excluded and together with them identify their rights and entitlements.

The preceding sections of this CSP outline the priority goals and programme areas responding to the context, conditions and constraints within Myanmar. As mentioned above, this long term strategic framework will remain live,

flexible and agile and thus does not set specific project level interventions.

AAM has prioritised three goals to achieve our mission. These three priority goals are interdependent and indivisible. Project and programme innovations, initiatives and interventions will be developed and implemented within the strategic framework of these three broad goals, and anchored at the local level. In other words, while the priority goals and programme areas mentioned in the strategic framework are determined for the 10-year strategy period, the programme areas as stated under each of the three priority goals will remain under review and will be more iterative and indicative. This will allow AAM to improve and adapt, and bring in new programme areas as necessary.

Priority Goal 1: Realisation of Rights

Women's right to participation:

Our focus is to ensure that women in the communities have access to equal and meaningful participation within decision-making processes across all levels. AAM aims to increase women's confidence and capacity to take on leadership roles in both informal and formal settings and seeks to increase women's participation in the election process from voting to campaigning to running. We will also engage with all political parties to raise awareness about the benefits of inclusion of women and Gender Responsive Public Services (GRPS) in party manifestoes.

Women's freedom from gender based violence:

AAM will continue to contribute to and monitor the government's commitment to the Myanmar National Strategic Plan for the Advancement of Women (NSPAW 2013–2022) in terms of the development and strengthening of legislation, law enforcement systems, and practices to eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls. This includes the provision of services (i.e. medical, psychological and legal) for women and girls who experience violence. We will deepen and scale up our work with the transformational programming model that AAM – together with the partners – has developed, for access to justice for survivors of sexual and gender based violence. This model proposes a

streamlined multi-sector approach so that women and girls in target communities know their rights and can live free from violence. It prioritises: (1) addressing deep-rooted social and cultural practices (e.g. compensation and traditional justice mechanisms) at the community level through participatory approaches that engage male-role models, paralegals, Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) mechanisms and community level education tools; (2) building trust between communities and institutional mechanisms at the township level; (3) developing a team of legal aid service providers who utilise client-centred legal skills and deliver quality services, simultaneously creating a culture of pro bono practice; (4) nurturing a network of legal service providers to engage in multi-sector dialogue and learning; and (5) documenting gaps, challenges and changes in behavior through concurrent trends analysis of cases reported by communities to paralegals, and those referred to various governmental and non-governmental legal and related service providers, as well as harnessing this knowledge / learning for future programme development.

Economic empowerment for women:

AAMs focus will be to ensure that the women we work with have access to and ownership of assets/capital as well as skills and capacity to own or engage with economic enterprises. AAM will also work to ensure that women's unpaid care work is recognised, reduced, redistributed and remunerated, which will require policy advocacy work.

Priority Goal 2: Redistribution of Power and

Strengthening civil society participation and action:

As a part of the emerging civil society sector in the country, AAM will work to build civil society institutions capacity, collaboration and influence at all levels, from local to national to regional and international. AAM will focus our work and support on women's and young people's organisations and social movements. We expect that the team of community based 'fellows' / facilitators that AAM continues to maintain and develop will evolve to become independent, autonomous and self-sustained. AAM will continue to support their national network as necessary and where relevant.

A just and democratic governance:

AAM will support the democratic transition in Myanmar, focusing particularly at the demand side, i.e. people's side, but also by working closely with local authorities, both state actors and non-state actors (NSA), at township and village tract level. In the localities where we work, AAM will strengthen people's platforms and capacity for participation, participatory planning, monitoring and analysis, particularly in favour of poor and excluded women and young people. This will create demand for a decentralised governance

process that responds to the needs of people. AAM will actively join civil society collectives, alliances and coalitions in monitoring and demanding democratic space for social, economic and ecological justice, including the space for advocacy, campaigning and solidarity..

Basic services and social protection:

Advocating for the transfer of resources (public expenditure) from the central government for gender responsive and affordable public services (particularly education and health) and social protection entitlements will be our priority with regard to our redistribution agenda. This will also require AAM to advocate and campaign at all levels, from local to international, against international policy and practice (including corporate tax evasion) that will constrain government's revenue or capacity to allocate budget for basic services and social protection.

Every day peace programming:

AAM recognises that inclusivity and knowledge remain central to the peacebuilding process. The objective of every day peacebuilding programming is to enhance local ownership. Local ownership implies that peace processes are designed, managed and implemented by local actors rather than by external actors. AAM works closely with its 'Fellows' network, CSOs and CBOs to ensure that local voices are included in national processes. AAM believes that peace building at grassroots level in addition to implementing top-down interventions could propagate a more inclusive and sustainable approach to building peace.

Priority Goal 3: Resilience of People and Communities

Sustainable and resilient agriculture:

Many of Myanmar's people live in rural areas and rely on farming, thus AAM prioritise making agricultural livelihood sustainable and resilient from climate induced disasters, including flood, drought and loss of biodiversity. This will require us to focus on promoting and ensuring climate resilience, sustainable and agro-ecological farming approaches. We will also explore the feasibility of urban farming to promote greening of the city and organic consumption as a part of our urban programme.

Natural commons:



AAM will work on natural commons (particularly natural resources such as communal land, water bodies, and forest biodiversity) in terms of protection,

development, community ownership, use and access. Campaigning and advocacy will be carried out against the privatisation, wrongful appropriation and pollution of natural commons. Myanmar has an unstable governance context where the ownership of natural commons is often at the heart of ethnic claims and fuel conflicts with the military.

Disaster and conflict vulnerability reduction and resilience:

Our focus will be on earthquake, climate induced natural disasters (flood and drought) risk reduction and building community resilience both in the urban and rural areas where we work. We will ensure that all our other work is disaster risk sensitive and responsive. We will advocate for inclusive, decentralised and adequately resourced disaster risk reduction policies that build community resilience. We will seek to understand the complexity of conflict in the areas where we work, and to strengthen our capacity and methods to expand and deepen our engagement to reduce the vulnerability of women and children in disasters caused by conflict where, poor, marginalised and excluded communities are most affected.

2018-2020 Organisational Priorities

AAM's organisational development and priorities will be driven by the following fundamental transformative repositionings that we seek to establish in this strategy period:

- AAM will seek to become a “networked” organisation working for social justice within the larger justice and human rights framework contributing to build and strengthen civil society institutions, specifically community institutions and non-profit organisations. This will bring sharper and more relevant focus beyond donor-led agenda setting in our development work. We will strengthen AAM as a rights-based, campaigning, and social movement supporting organisation, with a focus on the most discriminated and excluded groups and communities. AAM will work with the larger ActionAid International Federation in contributing to and benefiting from its regional and global programmes, international platforms, resources, relationships, solidarity and learning.
- AAM will seek to become an organisation more deeply rooted, accountable, transparent and legitimate with our diverse constituencies and networks in the country. AAM will engage and contribute to the federation-wide country model review and self-assessment process as well as to geographical footprint related discussion. Moving towards local governance and becoming an ActionAid affiliate.
- AAM will seek to be an organisation that engages with the larger society and communities – beyond poor and excluded communities – to mobilise their solidarity and support whether in terms of voice, vote, solidarity actions or funds. We believe that overcoming poverty and sustainable development also requires support and solidarity of all people, poor or not. We also believe that there are many people who are already contributing or would like to contribute to social change, that we will engage with – particularly with young people and the growing middle class population – in assisting them to contribute more or better for the poverty eradication and to the sustainable development of people and the country.
- Innovation has a major role to play in driving the ambitious agenda outlined for 2018-2027. A culture of experimentation and innovation, which identifies, tests and scales up new ideas, including new social enterprise business models, will make AAM more efficient, effective, and agile at all levels. Technology will strengthen AAM's engagement with local partners, people's organisations and movements, as well as the millions of current and potential supporters and activists and the broader public. Capitalising on the demographic dividend of Myanmar and its high internet use, technology-led innovation can bring rapid and far-reaching impact across programmes, including campaigning and solidarity actions. This entails both

advancements in digital platforms and growth in social media presence. A culture of digital innovation will transform AAM. Key changes will encompass systems, connectivity, programmes and fundraising.

- Organisational focus towards evidence-planning and learning: Our approach to tracking and measuring change builds on learnings from our past and current country strategy. AAM will continue to focus on ensuring programme quality and research continue to privilege the voices, perspectives and analysis of people living in poverty and exclusion by improving the ActionAid's Accountability, Learning and Planning System. At the same time, the new Monitoring Evaluation and Learning (MEL) strategy puts greater emphasis on linking processes of evidence generation with decision making through:
 - The development of a research unit to look at medium and long-term impact, as well as having a longitudinal vision of change that can support reflective learning and contribute to the design/development of programmes.
 - Evidence based-decisions: AAM integrates knowledge produced through reports, evaluations and research into the management chain of the organisation, as well as with partners, to have evidence-based decision making.
 - Digitally enabled knowledge exchange: AAM is looking into the "thoughtful use of technology", to curate and share knowledge

produced by right's holders, partners and our organisation. We are looking into the best digital technologies available in Myanmar that can help us with knowledge exchange and to build the capacity of others.

In line with the fundamental shifts and repositioning mentioned above, AAM sets the following agenda of organisational transformation and development:

Organisational Design

- To become more rooted, legitimate, accountable and transparent in Myanmar, AAM will prepare to become a nationally governed and registered organisation during this CSP period. AAM will aim to join the ActionAid International federation as a member (either associate or affiliate). This dual identity as a national organization as well as a member of the international federation will lead to necessary cultural changes in the organisation.
- In the drive for financial sustainability and effectiveness, we will conduct the necessary analysis and feasibility studies to strengthen our understanding of social business and develop an action plan regarding social enterprises.
- Generally, AAM will seek to operate in a decentralised and devolved organizational design with a flatter hierarchical structure and a core team that remains small, solid and efficient.
- In our new Country Strategy, we have set out how we intend to develop

ActionAid Myanmar's existing strengths into a coherent set of programmes that will make a substantial difference to the most vulnerable in Myanmar. In the next phase, we will expand our coverage in ethnic areas and design programmes that are conflict sensitive and focused on everyday peace building. We will engage with multiple governance actors while working at the grassroots, regional and national levels.

Culture

- As a multi-faith, multi ethnic organisation that promotes diversity, AAM lives by our values and ethics, which are part of our justice framework and programmes, both in our organisational and personal behaviours.
- AAM will ensure our HRBA approach is deeply embodied by our whole staff, and that work with the poorest, most vulnerable and excluded people drives our work at all levels.
- We will deepen feminist culture and values in the organisation through further development of feminist understanding, and adoption of feminist analysis, policies and practices.
- We will make AAM demonstrably a more open and transparent organisation.
- We will redouble our efforts to make AAM an organisation where people feel:

- Safe to work,
- Safe to be open and critical,
- Safe to experiment, innovate, be creative and learn from experience.
- We recognise the need to improve and redesign our internal systems, policies and procedures to make us an agile and flexible organisation that can make sense of and respond to fast changing complex contexts and enable an effective and efficient working environment.
- We will become a digitally savvy organisation. This will mean transformation not only in terms of internal systems, automation or connectivity but also modernising our external outputs.
- In line with the ActionAid International Strategy we want to “build a culture of learning and accountability, which generates knowledge, evidence-based alternatives and communicates impact”.
- We will inculcate a highly collaborative organizational culture, both internally and externally.
- We will drastically reduce our carbon foot print and make AAM a carbon neutral organisation.
- We will inculcate a more frugal culture of seeking best ‘value for money’.

People

- AAM will maintain its high standards of positive gender balance as well as employment of young staff. AAM will reflect this gender diversity and youthful composition in its governance.
- AAM will achieve greater ethnic diversity at all levels of the organisational structure.
- We recognise the need to invest in re-orienting and re-building the knowledge, skills and attitude of our staff (and volunteers) for the transformation and repositioning outlined in this CSP: e.g., human rights based approach, feminist values and practices; rootedness; accountability, transparency and legitimacy; contributing to long lasting peace; justice framework; in-country resource mobilisation; engaging with the larger society; digital savviness; etc.
- AAI will develop a code of conduct and redesign and strengthen its internal participation, decision-making, integrity, accountability, performance management, complaints and grievance handling, and dispute settlement systems, processes and practices.
- We will invest in the leadership of young people especially young women. We will systematically invest in second line management and succession plans, particularly for all senior management positions. This will also rationalise and minimise (not necessarily eliminate) the need for expatriate staff.

Communication, Learning and Accountability

Communication

- We will innovate and invest with a diversity of media channels to transmit our messages as well as to strengthen our identity and profile.
- We will significantly improve our web and social media presence and profile in terms of content, interaction and learning in order to engage with and influence different audiences.

Learning & Accountability

- We will learn from our own and others' – inside AA and beyond globally – experiences to formulate and improve our engagement strategies, methods and capacities for diverse constituencies and stakeholders for various purposes: mobilising, campaigning, and fundraising to partnership/ alliance/ coalition building.
- To measure our impact, we will further invest in establishing knowledge management systems to ensure programme quality and accountability and to learn from our experience.
- Adopting results and evidence based and participatory monitoring and evaluation systems and practices, we will continue to use mixed qualitative and quantitative methodologies, in adherence with international standards used within AAI and across the sector.
- We will also develop an integrated learning system that will cut across

training, innovation, monitoring, evaluation and knowledge management functions.

Resource Mobilisation: Income and Expenditure

To ensure adequate and effective financial resourcing, AAM will continue to diversify its funding sources that are aligned with our vision and values. AAM sees donors as supporters and partners in solidarity for a cause, beyond just financial resources.

- AAM will promote programme-led funding, where partner communities and organisations will be the co-creators of the development agenda.
- We will continue to pursue project, programme or strategic funding partnerships with international institutional donors and ensure robust contract management systems and compliances.
- While continuing to receive regular giving and other restricted and unrestricted funds from the ActionAid Federation, AAM will start to pilot and grow our own local regular-giving fundraising from private individuals, groups and supporters in Myanmar.
- We will expand our fundraising mechanisms with innovative approaches such as local social enterprise, philanthropic networks, companies, and crowdsourcing.

- While we expect our funding to stabilise over time after years of steady increase, we are committed to strengthening our positive impact on people's lives through enhanced collaboration with stakeholders. In particular, AAM will provide technical support to corporations aligning with our values to guide their Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) work to ensure the sustainability of our projects and increase our reach and impact while limiting our financial commitment.