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**Building back stronger
through Covid -19**

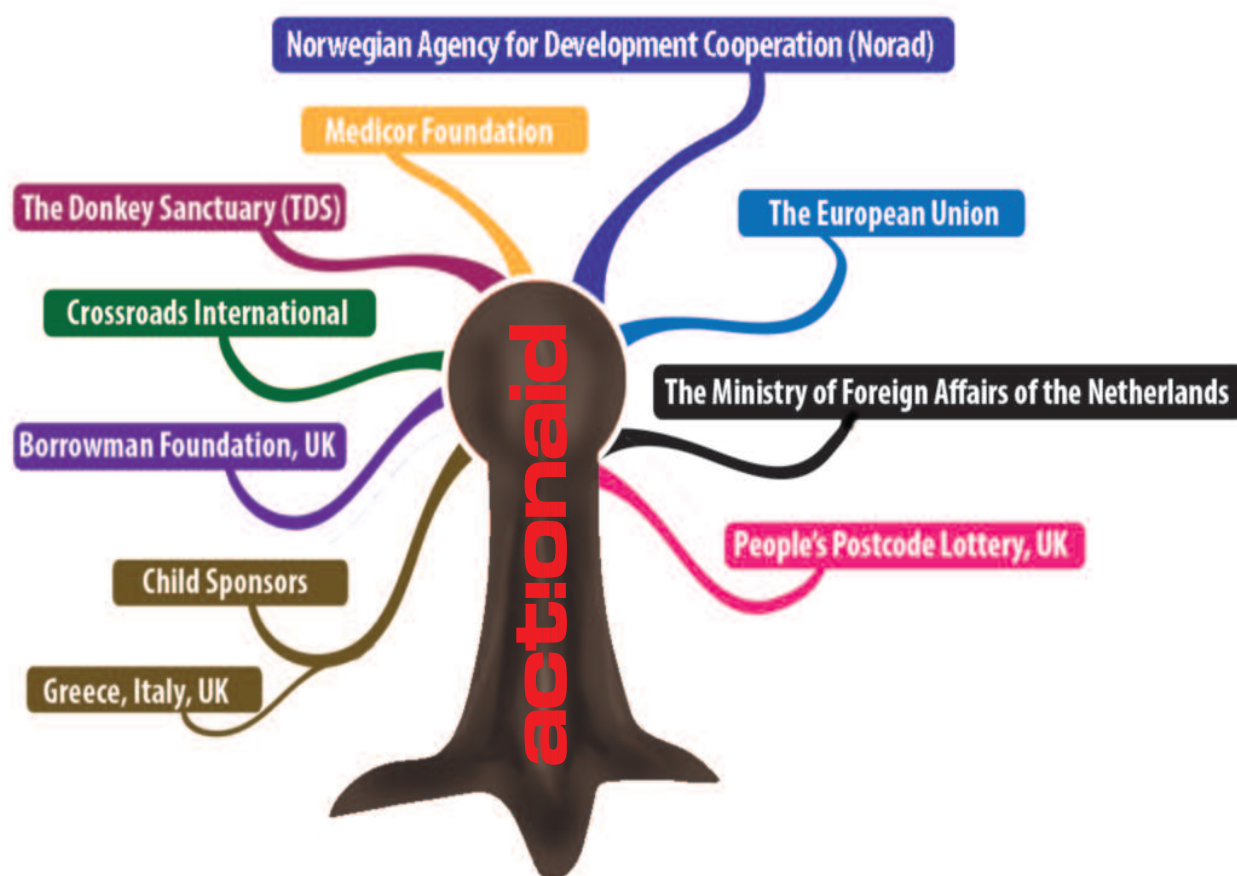


People's Power for Social Justice

2020

Annual Report

**Appreciation to our Donors, Child Sponsors, Supporters,
Individuals and Organisations who supported our work in
2020, especially during the Covid-19 crisis**



act!onaid

ActionAid is a global justice federation working to achieve social justice, gender equality and poverty eradication



**CIMG Not-for-Profit Organisation of the
Year 2013, 2014, 2015, 2017**





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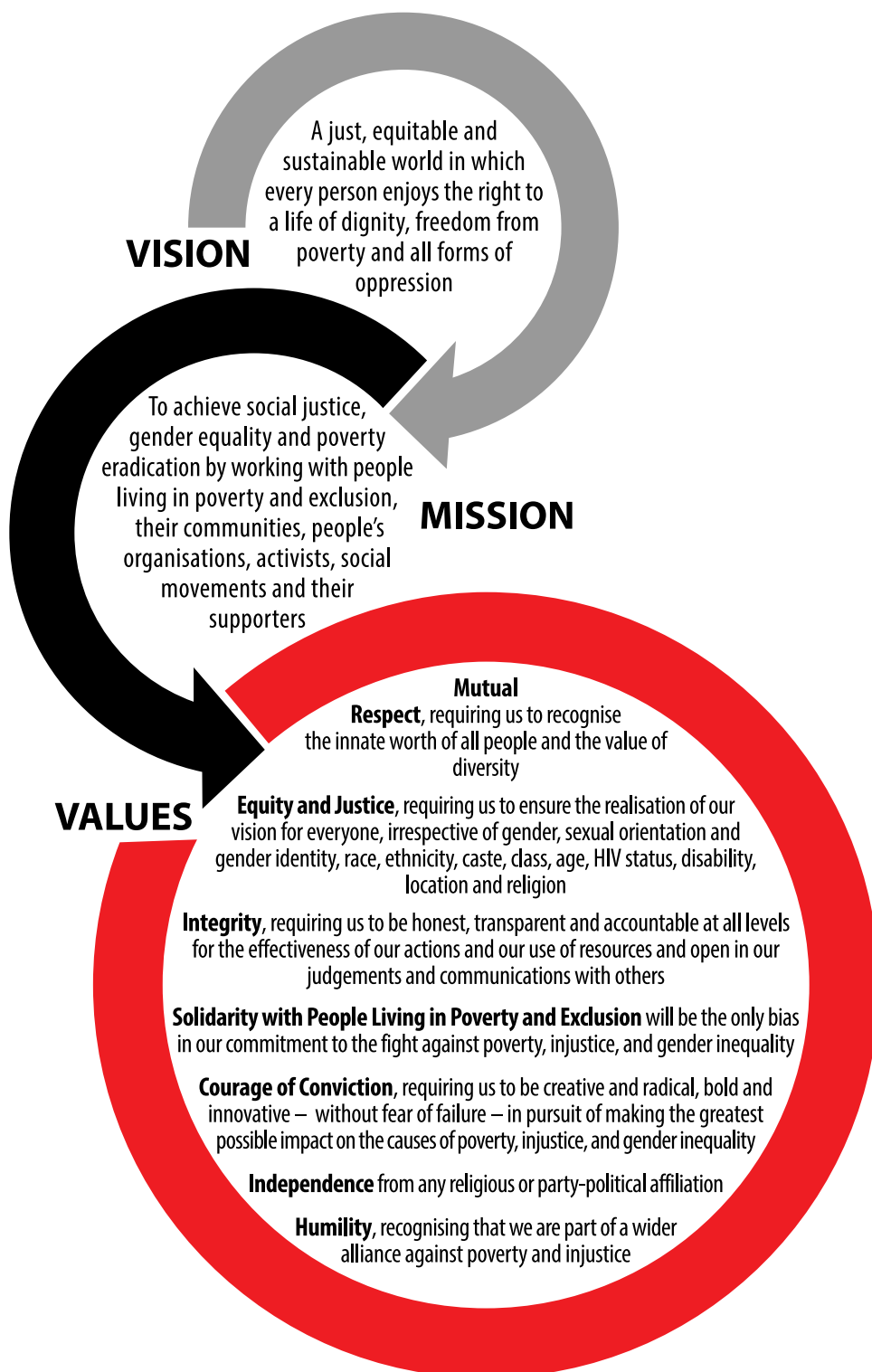
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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AAG	– ActionAid Ghana
AAI	– ActionAid International
AAUK	– ActionAid UK
AEA	– Agricultural Extension Agents
ALPS	– Accountability Learning and Planning System
ACDEG	– African Charter of Democracy, Elections and Governance
AGREE	– Agriculture Governance, Resilience and Economic Empowerment (formerly NGGA)
ALPs	– Accountability Learning and Planning System
BECE	– Basic Education Certificate Examination
CBOs	– Community-Based Organisations
CMS	– Contract Management System
CRSA	– Climate Resilient Sustainable Agriculture
CS	– Child Sponsorship
CSO	– Civil Society Organisation
CSP	– Country Strategy Paper
DAP	– Direct Aid Programme
EU	– European Union
FA	– Focus Area
FEV	– Female Extension Volunteer
GEAP	– Girl Empowerment and Advocacy Platform
GES	– Ghana Education Service
GLSS	– Ghana Living Standards Survey
GRPS	– Gender-Responsive Public Services
GS	– Global Secretariat
GSPCA	– Ghana Society for the Protection and Care of Animals
HRBA	– Human Rights-Based Approach
HRMIS	– Human Resource Management Information System
HROE	– Human Resource and Organisational Effectiveness
ILO	– International Labour Organisation
IMF	– International Monetary Fund
JHS	– Junior High School
KPI	– Key Performance Indicators



LI	– Legislative Instrument
MMDAs	– Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies
MoFA	– Ministry of Food and Agriculture
MGCSF	– Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection
MOU	– Memorandum of Understanding
MPs	– Mission Priorities
NACCAS	– National Climate Change Adaptation Strategy
NAP	– National Adaptation Plan
NBSSI	– National Board for Small Scale Industries
NDPC	– National Development Planning Commission
NGIDP	– Northern Ghana Integrated Development Project
NORAD	– Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation
PEOY	– Providing Employment Opportunities for Young People in Ghana
PERD	– Planting for Export and Rural Development
POWER	– Promoting Opportunities for Women Empowerment and Rights
PPL	– People's Postcode Lottery
PRRP	– Participatory Review and Reflection Process
PRS	– Promoting Rights in School
PFJ	– Planting for Food and Jobs
PLWD	– People Living With Disability
PTA	– Parent-Teacher Association
RFJ	– Rearing for Food and Jobs
RG	– Regular Giving
SHEA	– Sexual Harassment, Exploitation and Abuse
SIF	– Strategic Implementation Framework
SLATLA	– Sustainable Livelihoods and Transparent Local Authorities
SMC	– School Management Committee
SME	– Small and Medium Enterprises
UK	– United Kingdom
VSLA	– Village Savings and Loans Association
WASSCE	– West African Senior School Certificate Examination
WAP	– Women in Agriculture Platform
WHO	– World Health Organisation
YFP	– Young Female Platform
YUWM	– Young Urban Women Movement



LOCAL PARTNERS

Action for Sustainable Development – **ASUDEV**

Belim -Wusa Development Agency – **BEWDA**

Botetaaba Nahirataaba Development Union – **BONATADU**

Centre for Maternal Health and Community Empowerment – **CMCE**

Global Action for Women Empowerment – **GLOWA**

Jirapa Farmers Network – **JIFAN**

Network of Community Development – **NOCID**

NORSAAC

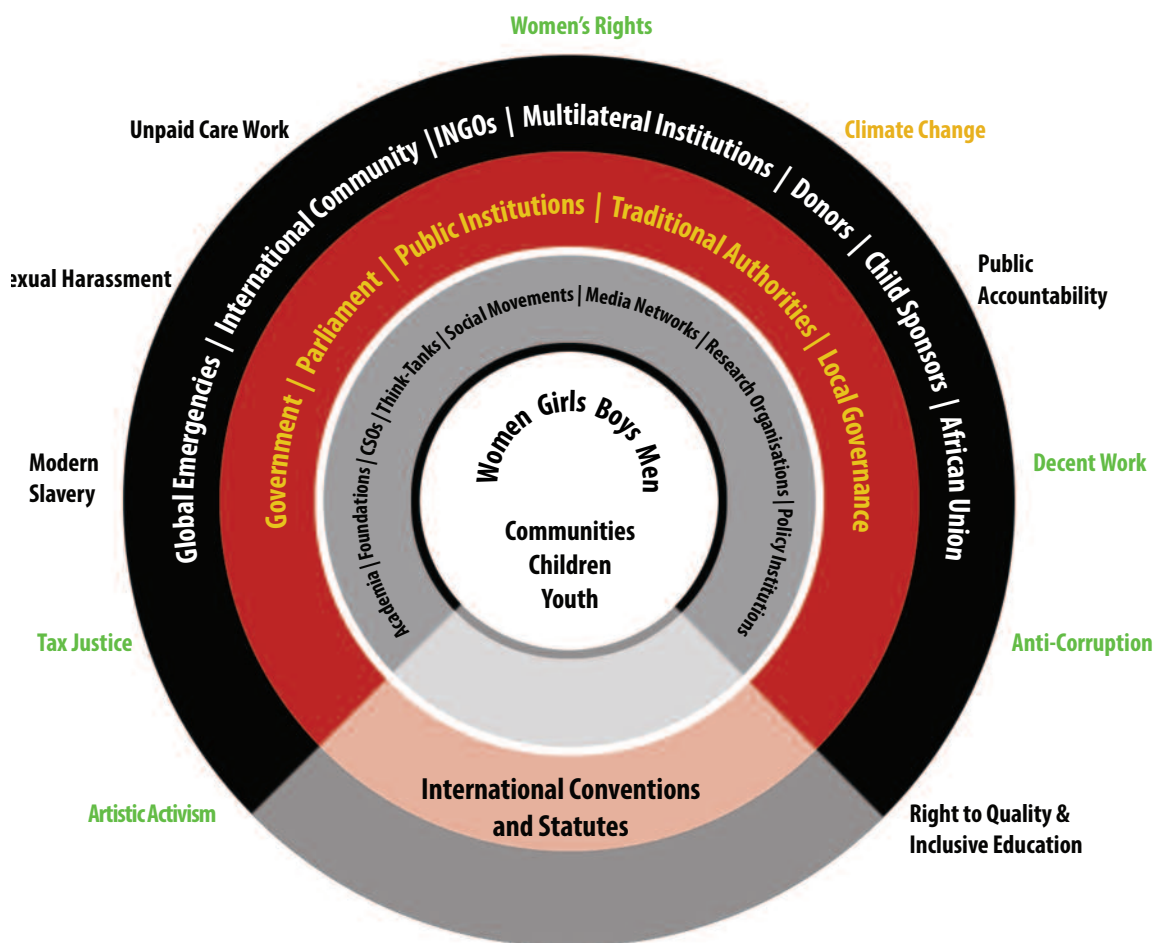
Social Development and Improvement Agency – **SODIA**

SONGTABA

Women and Orphans Movement – **WOM**



NETWORKS, ALLIANCES AND CAMPAIGNS



APPROACHES (How We Work)

- Human Rights-Based Approach (HRBA)
- Advancing women's rights and feminist leadership
- Promoting rights, resilience, redistribution and alternatives
- Working with social movements and people's organisations
 - Investing in Innovation and digital transformation
 - Working with young people
- Linking local, national, sub-regional, regional and international interventions



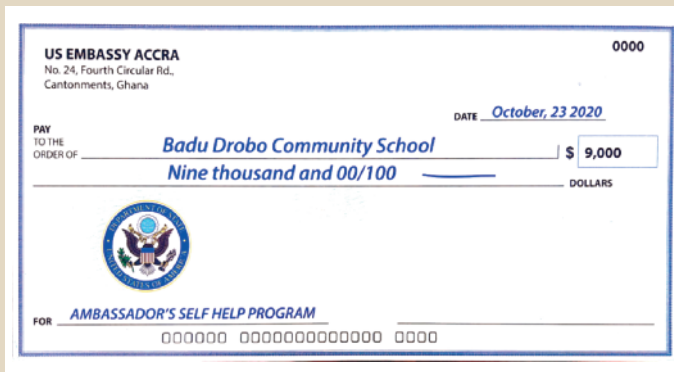
COMMUNITY IMPACT STORY OF THE YEAR

ActionAid Women's Group Win American Embassy Grant to Build a school for their community

The Ebeyeyie Women's Group in Drobo, Bono Region, used advocacy and lobbying skills they had acquired from AAG training sessions, to lead a development agenda that led to the establishment of the first school in their community. The community, which had never enjoyed a formal school system,

Due to their impressive development work, the District Assembly assisted the women to develop a proposal to the US Embassy's community assisted projects under the Ambassador's self-help initiative. They were awarded a grant of USD9,000 from the Ambassador, which enabled the community to commence the construction of an ongoing three-unit classroom block.

Seida Bawa of the Ebeyeyie women's group, shares their joy:



Cheque from the American Ambassador to the community

"With the construction of a school with support from the US Embassy, we can spend more time on our farms and increase production to get more income. Thankfully, our children will no longer walk long distances to school. We don't have to leave our farms to

was encouraged to fight for their own school after AAG's Complementary Basic Education intervention ended in 2018. The women mobilised the men in the community through communal labour to establish an open shed structure to serve as a temporary classroom. The district education office posted a teacher to the school to ensure quality formal education.

come home and pick them from their school in the nearby communities. We have been able to achieve this milestone because of the trainings we have received from AAG and SODIA. Now, the District Assembly knows the leadership of the group and recognises us as a local community development partner. It's a good feeling for all of us."

Read full story on page 37

BOARD OF DIRECTORS



Nana Yaw Okyere-Aduachie
Board Chair



Zeinabu Ayariga
Vice Chair



Bennie Aniagyei



Martin Addison



Chris Dadzie



Daniel Inkoom
(Joined, 23 June 2020)



Emmanuel Asamoah



Issahaku Al-Hassan



Samuel Arku-Kelly



Rosaline Gbeho



Samuel Sedegah
(Retired, 23 June 2020)



Elsie Bunyan
(Retired, 23 June 2020)



Afia Darkwa-Amanor
(Retired, 23 June 2020)



Perez Kassim



Ennie Chipembere

COUNTRY LEADERSHIP TEAM



Sumaila Abdul-Rahman
Country Director



John Nkaw
Head, Programmes, Campaigns and Innovation



Prince Osei-Agyekum
Head, Fundraising



Cindy Amponsah-Yeboah
Head, Human Resource and Organisational Effectiveness



Francis Atta-Doku
Head, Finance



FOREWORD



Sumaila Abdul-Rahman
Country Director

Warm greetings,

The year 2020 was both challenging and full of new ideas. We, just as many organisations, lived through one of the world's worst pandemics and survived. The global system evolved, and people and organisations developed new ways of working and interaction across the globe, referred to, as the new normal.

The pandemic has had devastating consequences on human life, the global supply chain system and the economies of many countries, resulting in hardships on citizens of

nations, especially the poor and the excluded. Ghana, as part of the global system, has not been spared this ordeal. On the other hand, it equally created opportunity for reflection and reimagining the modus operandi of the global system – working from home, virtual business engagements, delivery systems etc. leading to reduction in cost of operations. Arguably, this has had its own downsides, on mental health and gender relations, according to rapid studies conducted by organisations including ActionAid Ghana.



On programme implementation, we worked together with our partners and key stakeholders to make meaningful progress in achieving “People’s Power for Social Justice” and I am happy to share below a few strides we made in delivering on our mandate as per our Mission Priorities (MPs) in the year under review.

First, in 2020, we demonstrated our agility as an organisation and responded appropriately to the Covid-19 pandemic through the implementation of our Covid-19 Response Project. Our response focused on providing relief to more than 12,000 households directly and an additional 15 million people with our Covid-19 awareness campaign.

Second, we provided livelihood skills training to 2,500 young people across our programme areas - eleven (11) out of Ghana’s sixteen (16) regions - aimed at building their resilience and empowering them economically. Many would have thought that the Covid-19 pandemic distracted us from building on the solid foundation of the gains made in 2019. Irrespective of the challenges faced in 2020, our interventions reached a total of 80,365 people who live in some of Ghana’s hard-to-reach areas.

Third, while strengthening the resilience of constituents at the community level, our national level campaigns in addition to the Covid-19 awareness, remained relentless in our efforts to ratify ILO C190 to stop violence and sexual harassment in the

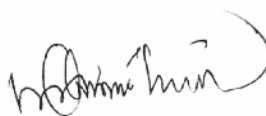
world of work. The passage of the Domestic Workers’ Regulation was also a huge milestone in ensuring decent work for informal economy workers. We hope that the passage of this regulation would be a game changer in protecting the rights of domestic workers in Ghana.

In conclusion, 2020 was challenging but allowed us, as an organisation, to explore more digital campaigns and demonstrated our agility. Most importantly, we remained unfazed and poised to achieve people’s power for social justice.

Let me use this opportunity to show my sincerest appreciation, on behalf of the Board, to our staff who worked on the frontline of this pandemic, delivering relief to our constituents and to our partners for remaining committed to our vision of 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.

I am equally excited about the prospects of next year and I am looking forward to sharing how our constituents are rebuilding their lives and livelihoods, and how our work is contributing significantly to achieving social justice, gender equality, and poverty eradication.

Warm Regards,



Sumaila Abdul-Rahman

1.0 INTRODUCTION

ActionAid Ghana (AAG) has been working in Ghana since 1990 as a registered national Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO) and an affiliate member of ActionAid, a global justice federation working to achieve social justice, gender equality and poverty eradication. ActionAid has presence in over forty-five (45) countries in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. AAG is currently implementing interventions under its sixth Country Strategy Paper (CSP VI) titled, *“People’s Power for Social Justice”* spanning the period 2018-2022. The CSP is aligned with ActionAid’s 2018-2028 global strategy, entitled *“Action for Global Justice.”*

In Ghana, ActionAid works in the most deprived communities in eleven (11) out of the sixteen (16) regions of the country, including Upper East, Upper West, North East, Savannah, Northern, Bono East, Bono, Ahafo, Oti, Volta and Greater Accra regions. Working primarily under the Human Rights-Based Approach (HRBA) and from a feminist perspective, our interventions are aimed at tackling the structural causes and manifestations of poverty and injustice while addressing immediate needs in a manner that builds solidarity and empowerment. Accordingly, grassroots, national and

international actions are vigorously pursued towards accomplishing the priority areas in our CSP.

We have made some appreciable progress in promoting Climate Resilient Sustainable Agriculture (CRSA) and creating access to economic empowerment opportunities, especially for women and youth. We also worked towards securing gender responsive public services for many of our communities, including access to quality and girl-friendly public education while reducing women’s unpaid care work. Our interventions have also focused on ensuring decent work and fighting gender-based violence against women and girls.

In fulfillment of our ‘dual citizenship’ obligation, we are working assiduously to consolidate the gains made in improving the lives of vulnerable people and communities as well as contribute to influencing system changes for climate and economic justice across the globe.

In line with our cherished principle of providing internal and external accountability and creating visibility, our 2020 annual report gives an account of the marked outcomes, impact and the life-changing testimonies from our communities.



1.1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The year 2020 was challenging for many organisations due to the global socio-economic impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. According to UNICEF's situation report, Ghana's Covid-19 confirmed cases stood at 54,771 as at December 2020, which placed it as the second highest in West and Central Africa, and the 10th highest on the African continent. However, the proactive and assurance measures pursued by government and other stakeholders, resulted in 53,301 recoveries, leaving 869 active cases and 333 deaths.¹

To effectively manage Covid-19 and curb its spread, coordinated teams of leadership, technocrats and professionals regularly undertook situational analysis and recommended the adoption of various guidelines. As a result, there were a series of partial and total lockdowns of major cities in Ghana which also placed tight restrictions on social and public gatherings. Aggressive steps were also taken to sensitise the populace and ensure public compliance for the Covid-19 protective protocols.

There were efforts to promote universal and equitable access to basic humanitarian social services around the world, which included the deployment of social outreach and

community engagement interventions. However, due to the impact of Covid-19, many organisations were forced to adopt creative public engagement measures in place of mass mobilisation and other traditional approaches. For AAG, the implementation of its programmes and projects was beginning to take shape by March 2020. However, the restrictions that came with the Covid-19 pandemic compelled us to suspend all our field and community operations. Key management and strategic functions were delivered virtually.

At the same time, the plight of vulnerable communities and people living in poverty had been worsened because they were deprived of the basic means to cope with the effects of Covid-19 and other long-standing humanitarian problems. Consequently, the AAG Covid-19 Response Project was implemented to support the efforts of government and other stakeholders. This relief intervention provided essential food items and personal protective equipment (nose masks and sanitizers) to 12,923 direct beneficiaries and their households across twenty (20) districts within our regional programme areas while awareness creation, including the use of media, reached an estimated 15 million people.²

¹ UNICEF Ghana Covid-19 Situation Report No. 13: December 2020. GhanaCOVID-1 SitRepNo.13reporting-period1-31Dec2020.pdf (unicef.org)

² The AAG Covid-19 Emergency Response Project was implemented through pooled resources from its Child Sponsorship portfolio, the EU funded NGIDP and People's Postcode Lottery-UK funded PPL3 Project and the POWER project funded by FLOW.



By the second half of the year, social gathering restrictions had been relaxed, paving the way for the implementation of our 2020 planned programmes and projects, which produced very great results. The organisation continued to mobilise, empower and solidarise with rightsholder groups, people's organisations and social movements, to advocate and campaign for the elimination of all forms of social injustices that violate fundamental human rights.

An evaluative report by AAG showed significant recognition, redistribution and reduction of the burden of unpaid care work on women and girls. As a result, time spent on domestic work had reduced by 39%. The report revealed that in 2020, women spent 43 minutes on the average on domestic work as against 70 minutes in 2017. Conversely, the average time spent by men on domestic work increased from seven minutes in 2017 to 25 minutes in 2020.³ With strategic collaborative support from the National Development Planning Commission (NDPC), this remarkable programming experience and learning culminated in the development of a toolkit on integrating unpaid care work into development planning.

AAG's contribution to the building of resilient communities in the face of climate change, natural disasters and other social disorders was recognised with a membership invitation to join

the Gender Working Group for the National Adaptation Plan Review. A significant number of women and youth have also been given sustained livelihood support through various skills training interventions, entrepreneurship, agri-business and resource mobilisation programmes.

A notable drawback of Covid-19 was the closure of schools for almost a year, which affected academic work in the country. While schools in big cities and some urban communities deployed information and communication technologies to adopt virtual learning, children in rural areas were left behind due to their inability to acquire basic communication equipment. We continued our advocacy for the delivery of gender-responsive public services in the areas of water, sanitation, education and primary health care, which became relevant to the fight against Covid-19, particularly when the need to maintain good hygiene standards was highlighted as the minimum safety protocol.

Generally, while the effects of Covid-19 made 2020 a difficult year globally, we made good progress in many of our programme and campaign work towards our pursuit of shifting visible, invisible and hidden power in favour of women, youth and other vulnerable groups in society.

³ Report on Unpaid Care Work and Women Empowerment in Ghana: Trends in Women's Worktime Allocation – 2017 – 2020, compiled in October 2020.

2.0 EXTERNAL CONTEXT OF OUR WORK

News about a pneumonia-like illness in China started spreading in late 2019, raising fear and panic about a global catastrophe. Soon, the disease, which was later identified as Covid-19, threatened to take over the whole world, causing the World Health Organisation (WHO) to declare it a global pandemic in March 2020.

Countries such as the United States of America (USA), India, Brazil, Russia, Britain, Italy, Germany, Iran and South Africa were badly hit, resulting in many fatalities. While these countries struggled to manage the pandemic, new variants of the disease emerged, posing greater risk of infection. To effectively combat the disease and build immunity against more infections, the WHO approved vaccines for Covid-19, with some countries recording relative success in vaccination.

Covid-19 impacted the current global climate and adversely affected many economies. The year 2020 marked the end of the initial five-year milestone set for countries to reduce their emissions and keep temperatures low in order to meet the less than 2° C (3.6° F) target. The world's scientists had suggested that coordinated and comprehensive climate action needs

to be taken in the year to undo the most extreme scenarios of climate change.⁴

Unfortunately, global efforts to achieve these targets were undermined when the USA, which contributed 14.3% of 2015 global carbon dioxide emissions, withdrew from the 2015 Paris Agreement, which had come into effect in November 2020. The USA is second to China's 29.5% of emissions. However, the new administration of Joe Biden rescinded the earlier position and returned the USA unto the accord, in fulfilment of an election pledge.⁵ For climate change advocates such as AAG, these developments are positive indications that global concerted efforts could be galvanised towards the climate change mitigation agenda.

Political governance at the continental and sub-regional levels saw some positive action, as more than ten countries conducted largely peaceful presidential and parliamentary elections, which contributed towards the consolidation of our democratic resilience. However, some leaders from Togo, Guinea, Côte d'Ivoire and other countries, took steps to evade term limits. In August 2020, Mali experienced a coup d'état which was a major destabilising occurrence in the subregion.

Countries such as Burkina Faso,

⁴ World Wildlife Fund (WWF), 2020: A critical year for our future and for the climate | Stories | WWF (worldwildlife.org)

⁵ A Wikipedia publication on the 2015 global carbon dioxide emissions by country shows; 29.5% by China, 14.3% by USA, 9.6% by EU, 6.8% by India, 4.9% by Russia, 3.5% by Japan and 31.4% by the other nations combined. United States withdrawal from the Paris Agreement - Wikipedia



Burundi, the Central African Republic, Ethiopia, Niger and Somalia, who had either experienced some insecurity or emerged from conflicts, provided good learning experiences for Ghana, which has a relatively stable democracy. Ghana held its seventh democratic elections under the fourth republic, the outcome of which was contested at the Supreme Court by the opposition candidate.

In the year, the much publicised and complex Brexit deal was finally struck in December 2019, permitting the UK to officially exit the European Union in January 2020. However, a transition period up to 31st December 2020 was allowed to firm-up other terms of a new trade deal. As an Affiliate member with fundraising and sponsorship interests in the UK and EU, AAG followed and analysed the implications of these developments on our partnership funding and the effects on our programme work and campaigns.

3.0 NATIONAL/LOCAL CONTEXT

Guided by our MPs and approaches, the development context at the national and local level is examined below in relation to AAG's operations and campaigns.

3.1 Climate Change and Food Systems

Like many countries in the Global South, Ghana has been at the receiving end of the impact of climate change. This is characterised by

frequent and adverse climate events, including erratic rainfall, floods, windstorms, inundation of coastal communities, droughts, disease, and pest outbreaks. There is also a worrying phenomenon of rapid biodiversity loss and accelerating environmental degradation resulting from high chemical-based conventional agriculture and other destructive human activities. The challenge has been the non-enforcement of regulations on natural resource exploitation, as successive governments have struggled to fight illegal mining ('galamsey') and rosewood, often with minimal success.

Reports across the country indicate that poor crop yields were recorded during the 2020 cropping season due to low rainfall and the inefficacy of some chemical fertilisers. Even during the early post-harvest period, prices of staple foods such as maize increased by almost a double of the previous season's market value. Analysts have, therefore, been pointing to a looming danger of food insecurity, especially for the most vulnerable people that AAG works with if proactive measures are not taken. Unfortunately, many communities do not have robust social protection systems to cope with the effects of climate change. This is because the full commitment of government is yet to be seen on the effective implementation of climate adaptation and resilience policies and programmes.



As part of our programme and campaign work, AAG commissioned a study on Climate Change and Women Empowerment in Ghana (ActionAid, 2020). The study analysed national climate change policies and revealed that there is a variance between the National Climate Change Adaptation Strategy (NCCAS) and the implementation of government programmes in the agricultural sector. The report further indicated that the national climate change policy and the NCCAS were due for revision, as their life span ended in 2020 while the Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) and National Adaptation Plan (NAP) were undergoing reviews.⁶

In evaluating Ghana's agricultural growth, the government's flagship initiatives such as the Planting for Food and Jobs (PFJ) have often been credited for creating employment for a significant number of people along the value chain and guaranteeing commendable food supplies. However, the expansive land cultivation with acidic chemical fertilizers as opposed to adopting safer and sustainable agro-ecological methods continue to leave devastating medium to long-term climate change footprints.

3.2 The World of Work and Covid-19

To safeguard the global economy and protect vulnerable people from the dire economic impact of Covid-19, countries all over the world have been easing lockdown restrictions to enable their populace return to work while urging compliance with the "new normal" protocols. Nonetheless, the International Labour Organisation (ILO) projects that the severe job losses occasioned by Covid-19 is likely to continue in 2021. It further observed that the decline in employment is greater for women than men in all countries and that workers in developing and emerging countries, especially those in informal employment, have been affected to a much greater extent (ILO Monitor, 2020)⁷.

In Ghana, an overall unemployment rate of 8.4% still persists, with the youth (15-35 years) accounting for 12.6% unemployment rate. As much as two-thirds (66.2%) of the currently employed persons are engaged in vulnerable employment, and for unemployed people fifteen (15) years and older, 57.4% are females while 42.6% are males (GLSS7, 2019). As pertained globally, Covid-19 had considerable impact on the Ghanaian economy. For instance, a press release in August 2020 on a World Bank research notes how businesses were forced to reduce wages for over

⁶ AAG, Report on Climate Change and Women Empowerment in Ghana, September 2020. REPORT ON GHANA CCAPsFINALE.cdr (actionaid.org)

⁷ ILO Monitor: Covid-19 and the World of Work, Seventh Edition, 25th January, 2021. ILO Monitor: Covid-19 and the world of work. Seventh edition [EN/AR/DE/ID/IT/JP/NL/PT/RU/TR/VI/ZH] - World | ReliefWeb



770,000 workers and caused about 42,000 layoffs.⁸

As part of our campaign to improve equity and security in informal employment, AAG collaborated with the Ministry of Employment and Labour Relations, Domestic Services Workers Union and other advocates towards the passage of the Labour (Domestic Workers) Regulations, 2020 (L.I. 2408) by Ghana's Parliament. This gave proper direction to the implementation of the ILO Convention on the Protection of Domestic Workers (C. 189).

The government implemented measures to sustain livelihoods and promote sustainable growth in the informal and semi-formal sectors by launching a national Covid-19 Alleviation Programme (CAP) to restore the economy and bring relief to the people. Beneficiaries of the intervention included small and medium enterprises (SMEs), agri-businesses, hospitality and the creative arts industries.

Through various institutional arrangements, different Covid-19 stimulus and relief interventions were rolled-out. For instance, the business support scheme by the National Board for Small Scale Industries (NBSSI) enabled SMEs to access low interest loans at 3% to be repaid within two years after deferred payment terms of one year moratorium. Other

significant relief interventions included free electricity by the government to life-line consumers and 50% subsidy to high consumers from May to December 2020. The Ghana Water Company Limited (GWCL) supplied free water to most parts of the country.

In spite of these interventions, many vulnerable people did not enjoy some of these government stimulus packages. In the absence of unemployment relief benefits, such groups had to survive by their own ingenuities and with the support of NGOs such as AAG.

3.2.1 Covid-19 and Gender-Based Violence

The fight against patriarchy and other harmful socio-cultural beliefs and practices continues in societies where violence against women and girls persists. Out of ignorance or flippant disregard of the laws safeguarding vulnerable people from rights violations, women and girls continue to suffer domestic violence. The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) has warned about possible increase in gender-based violence, intimate partner violence, sexual exploitation, assaults, rape, and incest during and after the pandemic restrictions.⁹

⁸ World Bank Press Release on the Effect of Covid-19 on Businesses. Covid-19 forced businesses in Ghana to reduce wages for over 770,000 workers, and caused about 42,000 layoffs - research reveals (worldbank.org)

⁹ UNFPA, Covid-19 Impact on Gender-Based Violence, Briefing Notes No. 2, April 2020. Covid-19_UN Ghana Briefing Notes_No.2_2020_04_14.pdf



In 2020, the country was re-awakened to the menace of witchcraft accusations and displacements usually suffered by aged women in the Northern Region of Ghana. As one of our important national campaigns, AAG has been advocating against witchcraft accusations and working towards the disbandment of Witch camps in the country. The lynching of Akua Denteh in July 2020, a 90-year-old alleged witch in the Kafaba community in East Gonja District, attracted national condemnation, with human rights activists demanding justice for the victim and the prosecution of the perpetrators.

AAG became central to the wider public discussion on the matter, deploying electronic, print, and social media to raise public awareness on the need to respect the fundamental human rights of all persons. As a result, the Australian High Commission in Ghana funded a six-month project by AAG to campaign for the end of witchcraft accusations and promote the rights of women and other vulnerable groups.

3.2.2 Covid-19, Public Health and Education

The Covid-19 pandemic has exposed the investment gaps in the provision of gender-responsive public services and the need for governments to increase investment in these areas. Universal access to primary health care and the value of water to guarantee hygiene have become necessary for

the fight against Covid-19. In many communities in Ghana, women and girls are mostly responsible for making water available for household use. They are, therefore, over-burdened in supporting their households to maintain good personal hygiene, as part of the Covid-19 protocols.

Like many other countries, Ghana was compelled to close schools from March to December 2020, as part of the measures to combat the spread of Covid-19. However, the government allowed final year Junior and Senior High School pupils to write their terminal examinations (BECE and WASSCE) following the approval of limited school reopening guidelines. Virtual teaching and learning were largely unsuccessful due to the difficulty in deploying technology for instruction at all levels of Ghana's educational system. The closure of schools inevitably burdened women with unpaid care responsibilities, thereby affecting time available to engage in productive work and enjoyment of leisure.

It was also observed that the privatisation of critical sectors of the economy continues to affect the availability, accessibility, and affordability of essential public services by citizens, in fulfilment of their basic rights. The Ghana Living Standards Survey Round Seven report (GLSS7, 2019) reveals that a higher proportion of people are currently attending private primary schools, which are either established by

religious authorities (49.2%) or non-religious authorities (50.7%) compared with those in public schools (47.5%). The report further highlights that across all educational levels, the Gross Attendance Rate (GAR) for females is lower than males. On health services, it reported that there was more public confidence in the private health sector than in public healthcare. Most consultations for persons who reported ill or injured occurred in facilities at the private health sector (51.7%) than the public health sector (45.7%).¹⁰

4.0 SCOPE AND REACH OF INTERVENTIONS IMPLEMENTED

4.1 Interventions Funded through Regular Giving

Using our community rootedness and people-centred approaches, AAG implements development interventions to promote women's rights, people's right to food and education rights while integrating youth-focused interventions and tax justice campaigns in our programme and campaign mix. The programme activities are mainly financed by our Child Sponsorship (CS) scheme, also known as Regular Giving, routinely sourced with the support of our Affiliates in the United Kingdom (UK), Greece and Italy. However, this fundraising window continues to dwindle due to various economic

challenges and other factors, which lead to sponsor attrition.

While maintaining the CS portfolio, AAG has intensified partnership fundraising for the implementation of various projects aimed at expanding and consolidating the gains from our programme work.

4.2 Number of People Reached

Due to Covid-19, we halted the implementation of our programmes and campaign work over the period. Work resumed in June 2020 but with restrictions on mass social outreach activities. We repurposed a significant proportion of our programmes and project activities under CS, the Northern Ghana Integrated Development Project (NGIDP) and the People's Postcode Lottery (PPL3) funding, to implement the Covid-19 relief intervention.

The people reached comprise the direct beneficiaries of the Covid-19 relief intervention, including community members who were covered in our sensitisation programmes and people reached through other activities that were implemented between July and December.

Thus, a total of 80,365 people (49,312 females and 31,053 males) were direct beneficiaries of AAG's interventions in 2020. The sub-categories are

¹⁰ Ghana Statistical Service (GSS), Ghana Living Standards Survey (GLSS): Main Report, June 2019. GLSS7 MAIN REPORT_FINAL.pdf (statsghana.gov.gh)



composed of 23,281 children (12,278 girls and 11,003 boys), 16,889 youth (10,040 females and 6,849 males) and 40,195 adults (26,994 females and 13,201 males). Compared to 2019 where we reached 783,398 people directly, it is clear Covid-19 adversely impacted our work in terms of the number of people we worked with.

However, we increased the use of media and digital channels in our advocacy programmes and public sensitisation engagements. The focus of the engagements was on unpaid care work, the ratification and

implementation of actions in fulfilment of ILO conventions 189 and 190 to protect domestic workers and eliminate violence and harassment at work places and in communities.

Another area of focus was the implementation of the Disability Act. An estimated audience of over 400,000 people were reached through our regional level media outreach activities while national level media engagements is estimated to have reached over 15 million people.



John Nkaw, Head of Programmes, Campaigns and Innovation delivering an address during AAG Covid-19 Relief Response



act:onaid

**Domestic
Workers
deserve better
treatment**



Campaign for the passage of the Domestic Workers Regulations

5.0 SHOWCASING OUR CONTRIBUTION TO SOCIAL CHANGE

While Covid-19 had negative impact on many economies around the world and eroded the capacity of some countries to support and sustain the livelihoods of their populations, there was some progress in retooling livelihoods and strengthening social protection systems. AAG made substantial contribution to the lives of people living in poverty and created many opportunities for livelihood empowerment. The change stories below illustrate the impact of AAG's work in fulfilment of our mission priorities.

5.1 Mission Priority One (MP1): Strengthen Resilient Livelihoods and Contribute to Secure Climate Justice

Under this mission priority, programmes and campaigns were implemented towards food sovereignty, agro-ecology, and resilient livelihoods while promoting women's secured access and control over land and other productive resources. Another focus area was to strengthen alliance building and advocacy for climate justice. Some of the key outcomes, impacts and change stories are shared below:

5.1.1 Livelihood Support Revives Young Peoples' Interest and Offer Gainful Employment in Agribusiness

Many young people, especially in rural and peri-urban communities, face a myriad of challenges in their efforts to enhance their livelihoods. Due to limited support services for production, market linkage and business start-ups, young people are often handicapped and not motivated to go into agricultural investment and artisanal jobs. As part of our youth empowerment programmes, AAG continued the implementation of the "Sustainable Livelihoods and Transparent Local Authorities" (SLATLA) project, a three-year intervention funded by the European Union. The project, which started in 2017 in selected districts, was aimed at reviving the interest of young people in agri-business and other artisanal employment avenues.



Alfred Balama preparing poultry feed for his chicken

The agribusiness areas included poultry farming, poultry feed preparation, mushroom farming, grasscutter rearing and vegetable farming while the artisanal skills include tilling, plumbing, embroidery, and ICT. At the end of the project in July 2020, a total of 1,845 young women and men as well as People Living with Disability (PLWD) in Sunyani West Municipal, were trained on various agribusinesses and artisanal skills.

A total of 312 young people benefitted from training in poultry farming and poultry feed preparation, citing ready access to market as their reason for signing up for the training programme. After successfully completing the training, 125 beneficiaries, representing 40% of the poultry business trainees, were constituted into smaller groups of seven members each. Thus, seventeen (17) groups were provided with start-up kits that enabled them to establish their ventures. The start-up packages included day-old chicks, maize, wheat bran, feeding and water troughs, vaccines, disinfectants, housing structures, micronutrients, personal protective clothing, weighing scales and other kits. They also received training on branding, record keeping, mentorship, social media marketing and financial management to enable them penetrate the market and sustainably manage their businesses.

Alfred Balama, 30, from Ayakomaso in the Bono Region, explains how SLATLA

revived his interest and rekindled the enthusiasm of many other young people in agribusiness and provided them with a sustainable livelihood:

"Before 2018, I was only engaged in maize farming on my two-acre farm. I usually got very poor yield, sometimes only two bags (200kg), due to the erratic rainfall. There was even no valuable market for the little produce harvested. So, I decided to give up on farming to try poultry production, which a friend of mine was engaged in. I approached him to learn from his experience and started my own small poultry rearing but it was not successful. I failed because I lacked the required skills and financial resources to provide standard housing and procure quality feed and veterinary services."



Alfred in his poultry farm

Mr. Balama indicates that the agribusiness support under SLATLA came at the opportune time: *"It was a great relief when AAG and the Sunyani West Municipal Assembly came to my community in 2018 and introduced SLATLA as an intervention which will*

engage young people to undertake livelihood activities. Many young people developed interest and registered to be trained and supported in poultry farming. The project trained us on feed formulation and production and provided start up packages with 50 chicks to each of the smaller groups formed. We were also linked to the Agricultural Extension Agents (AEAs) who regularly visited our businesses and further guided us on issues of hygiene, housing, feeding, vaccination, egg production, storage and other aspects."

Mr. Balama narrates how he mobilised resources to establish his own poultry farm and the benefits he reaped: *"After raising the group's birds for a year, we sold them out and I got GH¢200 as my share of the proceeds. I used the money to rent a poultry pen and started my own poultry business. Then I went back to maize farming in 2019, applied poultry droppings on my farm and produced a good harvest. I invested the returns into the poultry business. In 2020, I invested GH¢10,800 and was able to raise and sell over 750 birds within three cycles, which earned me GH¢25,500. Thus, we made a profit of GH¢14,700. I used part of the profit to buy one acre of land to build my poultry farm. I also bought a tricycle to support the transportation of my goods to the market centers. I have also returned to farming where I now get good yield from the application of the poultry droppings. My family's upkeep, including the payment of my children's school fees, also come from the poultry business."*

5.1.2 Women Groups Break Agro-Produce Business Monopoly and Increase Profits for their Members

Under the 'Promoting Opportunities for Women Empowerment and Rights (POWER) Project, women groups in the Tain and Asutifi South Districts have ventured into the aggregation business, going beyond smallholder farming. This step was taken to enable them grow the money mobilised from the groups' Village Savings and Loans Association (VSLA) activities. In achieving this, farm produce such as maize are bought during the bumper harvest season when prices are low and sold out during the lean season when prices appreciate.

The second objective was to strategically influence and address the unfavorable market prices at which their communities sell agricultural produce to external business agents. This was also achieved through a monopoly breaking mechanism where the women groups offer prices above the prevailing community level price, thereby influencing the external agents to also buy at the new price.

The POWER intervention trained fifty (50) women groups in the Tain and Asutifi South Districts on gender-sensitive market access methodologies. The women groups were supported to set-up the VSLAs as a self-sustaining financial mobilisation intervention to boost their production and other economic activities.

The four women groups that were actively engaged in the aggregation business were the Odo and Kroye women groups from Akore community, Ebeyeyie women's group from Drobo community in Tain District and Yesu Mo Women group from Yawkrakrom in the Asutifi South District. The incomes of 128 women improved through the direct produce aggregation activities of these women groups.



Catherine Serwaa, member of Kroye Women Group

Mrs. Catherine Serwaa, a 32-year-old married woman with two children and the facilitator of the Kroye women group, narrates their success story: *"Just like many rural areas in the Tain District, smallholder farmers, particularly women in the Akore community, usually face challenges in accessing favourable market for their agricultural produce. Food crops, including maize, is cultivated in large quantities. After the huge farm investments, the communities rely on external buying agents to sell their produce. Because these agents had no*

competitors, they dictated and controlled the market prices without any bargaining by the farmers for favourable prices. The poor returns from farming was becoming a disincentive and retarding our progress to move out of poverty".

The change facilitator continues: *"As we struggled through this predicament, AAG and its partner SODIA trained our women groups on how to access and influence the markets of agricultural produce. To boost our financial mobilisation, the project supported us to set-up our VSLAs. Since 2018, we have been contributing to our VSLA schemes from which group members are able to access loans. In one of our reflection action meetings, we discussed and agreed that some of the funds from the VSLA should be used to buy farm produce to store and resell when prices increase. In 2020, we bought thirty-five (35) bags of maize from our group and community members at the cost of GH¢2,800. The maize was sold at the latter part of 2020, yielding GH¢4,200 and giving us profit of GH¢1,400. Beside the direct profit, we succeeded in influencing the price of maize in the community by offering a starting price of GH¢80, which later increased to GH¢90. The business agents who wanted to buy at GH¢70 were compelled to buy at the price set by the group."*

A tricycle provided by AAG is helping the group to undertake effective marketing:

"Our work in transporting the produce to markets outside the community has



Sample of the maize bought for stocking by Kroye women group



Esther Momala feeding her child in front of her house

been made easy by the tricycle provided by AAG to the group. More money from our VSLA is being added to continue the maize aggregation business in 2021. The group members and the community at large are happy about the opportunities being accessed and remain thankful to AAG and SODIA."

In Drobo, more women reported that they were working hard towards financial independence through their involvement in the VSLA.

Esther Momala, a 35 year old farmer with four children, has been able to expand her pepper farm from one acre to three acres. She shares her story:

"I am a member of the Ebeyeyie women's group in the Drobo community. Each farming season, my husband and I take loans at exorbitant interest terms from market women. At the end of the season, the loan is repaid with the produce. After the outbreak of Covid-19 in 2020, the market women were refusing to give loans to farmers because they were struggling to cope with their businesses. I discussed with my group and was supported with a loan of GH¢500 on

favourable repayment terms. The money was used to buy pepper seeds and hire labour, which made it possible to expand our farm from one acre to two acres.

At the end of the season, I harvested twenty (20) bags of pepper and a bag sold at GH¢300, each earning me GH¢6,000. The VSLA loan has been repaid and many of our household needs fulfilled. Part of the money was used to buy two sewing machines for my two daughters who are learning dressmaking. My stable financial situation has enabled me to take care of the child of one of my daughters, which has freed her to concentrate on her apprenticeship. I also bought two bicycles for my two sons, which has relieved them from the suffering of walking a long distance to our nearby community to access education.

"As we are gradually becoming financially independent, I don't think we will look for loans again unless it is for a bigger project. Unlike before, my husband now appreciates and values my participation in the women group's activities and always supports with household chores. I express appreciation



Esther's two boys ready to ride to school on their new bicycles

to AAG and all your sponsors for contributing to the relief of my family and other women."

5.1.3 POWER Women Fight the effects of Climate Change and Improve their Livelihoods through Agroecological practices

While climate change continues to affect agricultural production and threaten livelihoods in marginalised and deprived communities, women in AAG communities are following agroecological practices to sustain their livelihoods.

In the year, the POWER intervention mobilised fifty (50) women groups with total membership of over 1,600 smallholder farmers across twenty-eight (28) communities from the Asutifi South in Ahafo Region and Tain District in Bono Region, for various training programmes on livelihood support activities, agroecology practices and campaigns against gender-based violence. This was in addition to the policy advocacy and grassroots engagement with the smallholder women farmers

movement. Agroecology demonstration farms were established to serve as farmer field schools.

Many of these smallholder women farmers were provided follow-up support by trained FEVs to adopt the agroecology practices. Data collated



Fati Anka-Wiaseh (left) being supported by her group member to display some of her goats

on the FEVs activities for 2020 showed that a total of 278 women reported increased yields through practicing agroecology. Through the peer-to-peer learning opportunities by these practitioners, more than 150 women have also acquired increased knowledge and skills on the agroecology practices.

Under the intervention, women groups in the Upper West Region were given small ruminants, as part of activities to promote the adoption of agroecology. Between 2018 and 2019, 140 livestock were distributed to 70 women from the Jirapa and Lambussie Districts. Madam Anka-Wiiseh Fati, a 50-year-old widow with five children, is a member of Kanguol community's Perdownome Women's group and shares the story of how the two goats she received in 2018 multiplied to twenty-three (23) in less than three years:

"I am now a happy woman capable of fulfilling most of my basic needs. I lost my husband fifteen (15) years ago and had been struggling to take care of my five children. I relied solely on farming to provide food and other needs of my family. I went through difficulties getting money to engage tractor services to plough my one-acre farm. I always got poor yield because I could not buy weedicides and chemical fertilisers to apply on my farm. I remarried in 2015 to enable me find some support but the new marriage brought no relief.

When the POWER project came to my community, we were encouraged to form women groups. I joined the Perdownome Women's group in my community. The project local partner, Jirapa Farmers Network (JIFAN), continued to strengthen us. After a needs assessment in 2018, my group opted for goat rearing as a livelihood support. Being a widow, I was part of the first set of five people that received two goats each, with the commitment to transfer two offspring in two years to

another set of members. When I received the animals, I gave serious attention to their care and treatment by following the guidelines given to us by the veterinary officer. The two goats had multiplied to twenty-three (23) by November 2020, with only two mortalities recorded. The impressive increase occurred because both goats were already pregnant when I received them. One gave birth to triplets and the other produced twins in two delivery cycles each year. Soon, the first female offspring also started giving birth."

Money from the sale of some of the goats is helping Fati meet her children's education and other family needs: *"In September 2019, my son was promoted to the final year of Junior High School and I sold one goat at GH¢100 and bought books, shoes and school bag for him. He successfully passed his Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE) in 2020. When he gained admission to Senior High School, I again sold another goat at GH¢150 and bought some of his school needs. I also sold two goats in 2020 and supported my sister to pay her medical bills when she was sick and sent to Korle-Bu hospital in Accra. I kept faith with the arrangement to transfer two offspring to my next line beneficiary and gave out the two goats to Ammate Yaa in September 2019. Now, I have fifteen goats left for me to continue to rear."*

Fati made good use of her goat droppings to improve her farm's soil fertility: *"From the education received from AAG, I prepared compost from the droppings of my goats and applied it on my two-acre maize farm in 2020; I didn't*

use any weedicides. My farm did better than most of my neighbours who used

weedicides and applied chemical fertilizer. I harvested fifteen (15) bags of maize and two bags of guinea corn. I feel secure, as my family has great joy. This same feeling is shared by many members of my group. We are hopeful that AAG would continue providing such life changing opportunities, to put smiles on the faces of vulnerable people in society."

Increasingly, women groups in our communities have adopted agroecology and working hard with regional and local stakeholders in agriculture.



Kate Mensah in her maize farm

Kate Mensah, a 42-year-old farmer in the Bono Region, who has four children, shares her agroecology success:

"The impact of climate change is having a heavy toll on farmers and some of us nearly gave up on farming. However, the timely provision of training for Female Extension Volunteers (FEVs) on agroecology made us reassess our

conventional farming practices and changed to applying agroecology methods. On my one acre maize farm, I spent GH¢400 on weedicides, pesticides, labour and fertiliser in 2019. At the end, I got eight bags (800kg) of maize, which I sold for GH¢900 and made a profit of GH¢500.

Things changed in 2020 when I decided to adopt agroecology based on the evidence of increased yields shared by other women during our group meetings. I practiced slash & plant, used locally produced open pollinated seeds, applied organic compost, and controlled pest and diseases using neem tree extracts. Adding labour, I incurred GH¢600 as the production cost, which was relatively higher because the initial stages of adopting organic farming practices require some investment, which will be less in subsequent years when the soil is regenerated.

From that same piece of land, I obtained an increased yield of thirteen bags (1,300kg) of maize which earned me GH¢1,500. So, I made a profit of GH¢900. I have been able to provide for my children's educational needs and currently expanding my farm for 2021. Agroecology is the way to go."

These women farmers have been recognised by agricultural stakeholders for their contribution to climate resilient sustainable agriculture. Two women groups namely Arise and Shine and Akuapa Women groups from Oseikrom, received a combined award at the 2020 Asutifi South District celebration of the National Farmers' Day.

5.1.4 President of Women Farmers Movement Wins Best Soya Bean Farmer Award in Tamale Metropolitan

Bintu Abubakari is 54 years and married with six children (four girls and two boys). She is the President of the Smallholder Women Farmers Movement in the Northern Region. In that region alone, the movement has more than 2,000 members, some of whom have been trained and working as FEVs. Bintu has provided effective leadership by being at the forefront of many campaigns, demanding the rights of women and advocating for gender-responsive opportunities in agriculture. As a result, over 500 women had the opportunity to go into seed cultivation of vegetables such as tomatoes, pepper and okro. They also specialised in rice and soya bean farming, which earned them more income compared to cultivating for consumption.

Bintu is delighted that she was recognised during the Tamale Metro 2020 National Farmers' Day celebrations: *"I was very pleased to receive the best soya bean farmer award for Tamale Metro in 2020. As a show of solidarity and to demonstrate that women are ready to seek equal opportunities, my colleague women joined me to receive the award and many are motivated to actively take up agriculture as a vocation. In 2019, I cultivated four acres and harvested 6.5 bags (650kg). The same number of acres were cultivated in 2020 and I harvested eight bags (800kg) even though poor rainfall*



Bintu Abubakar (extreme right) shares her award with other smallholder women farmers

greatly affected the yield. My soya farm, where I had used some of the best agronomic farming practices, was regularly monitored by the Department of Agriculture (DoA) officials. I believe the award was to motivate me to continue my efforts on pulling along more women to take advantage of these opportunities. I am now very committed to my advocacy work."

5.1.5 More Women Empowered to Provide for their Households after Gaining Secured Access to their own Lands

Due to patriarchy and other discriminatory customs, women in rural communities face numerous challenges in their farming activities, especially getting secured access to fertile lands. Most women work on family lands with their husbands but the farms are deemed to belong to their husbands. As a result, women have little control over how the produce is used and often have no access to land. They become subservient to men and rely on their husbands for the provision of their

basic needs. Due to continuous advocacy and lobbying with landowners and other authorities, women are gradually claiming their right to lands and other productive resources.

The development has contributed to a change in attitude and benefitted many community members, especially men. Sezero Lanuzie, a farmer from Goziiri Community in Nandom District of Upper West Region, shares a testimony of how things changed for him and his household when he gave land to his wife to farm:

“Around 2017, my wife was frequently going to Nandom and Wa for meetings and trainings, which I learnt was to build her capacity to have a stronger voice. I was wondering if she will not turn against me as the head of the household. So, one day out of my curiosity, I read some documents she brought home from a training programme and found out that they were taught useful advocacy and lobbying skills. They were also guided on how to engage the District Assembly, chiefs and landlords, to lobby for support. From there, I began to show keen interest in her activities. In 2018, she requested for an acre of land to cultivate groundnuts. I gladly released part of my plot of land to her, though it was not common for women to own lands or have their own farms. My colleague men wondered why I was giving my wife so much liberty but she became the savior that boosted the family’s food security.”

Sezero’s wife is the treasurer of an advocacy and development initiative by the Agriculture Governance, Resilience and Economic Empowerment (AGREE), formerly NGGA, a consortium comprising Care International, AAG, SEND Ghana and WANEP Ghana towards affective agricultural governance. Sezero continues: *“The government asked farmers to make full cost payment for*



Mr and Mrs Lanuzie from Goziiri in the Nandom District

the subsidised Planting for Food and Jobs (PFJ) fertiliser in 2018. I was worried about my family’s food production because we had no money to buy the quantity of fertiliser needed. However, the WAP lobbied the Assembly and Agricultural Department and succeeded in getting women special concession to make half payment and the balance settled after harvest. That is how we acquired the fertilizer which enabled us to make very good yield. The improved food security and cordial family life in my household are strong indications

that women are partners for the progress of households and communities. This has encouraged many more men in the community to break the cultural barrier of denying women access to land. We are now riding on the back of our wives to improve our lives since nowadays many interventions are targeted at women. We are thankful to AAG and the AGREE project for this life changing encounter."

In Damol-Tindongo in the Upper East Region, women groups set up by AAG and local partner BONATADU, used their advocacy skills to lobby local government authorities for logistics support to boost their agro-processing and livelihood activities.

Ernestina Boya, 44 years old and chairperson of the Songtaba women group, gives the following insight:

"We have been struggling to provide the basic needs of our families because we rely mostly on farming, which gives us very little income. We were glad when AAG and BONATADU trained us on soap making. Subsequently, we were guided to write a request for machinery support from the District Assembly, attaching certificates of registration from the Department of Cooperatives. After some lobbying and follow-ups, the group's request for a soap making machine was granted by the Assembly. The Medium and Small Loans Center (MASLOC) programme also gave GH¢10,000 to the group to buy the needed materials for the business. This enabled the group produce soap in large quantities for sale beyond the community and the district,

which became very useful in the Covid-19 period when hand washing became part of peoples' lives. We are grateful to the District Assembly and BAC/NBSSI for coming to boost our soap making business, and remain thankful to AAG and BONATADU for showing us the way."

Trained in pastry and soap making, and shea butter processing, the women in the fourteen (14) groups numbered 448 drawn from seven communities, namely Damol-Tindongo, Sakote, Kotintaabiga, Damolgo, Duusi, Pelungu, and Gundorg in the Nabdam District of the Upper East Region.



Ernestina Boya points to their soap making machine received from BAC/ NBSSI

5.1.6 Smallholder Woman farmer Upgrades to Commercial Farming and Builds a Modern house for her family

As part of our programme and campaign work, AAG collaborates with public institutional stakeholders and private sector actors including input

dealers, financial institutions, mechanisation service providers and aggregators, to promote the work of our smallholder women farmers.

Since 2018, women in the Upper West Region have benefitted from the production input credit scheme operated by Antika Ltd, a remarkable private sector-led support that offers women favourable repayment terms. As a result, many of the women in marginalised communities have been able to build enough production capacity and no longer rely on credit schemes. While some of the women saved money to buy the inputs, they were worried about getting quality inputs, as some brands of fertilizer usually fail farmers. Due to their advocacy, Antika reserved consignments for our smallholder women farmers and transported them to their communities at no cost to the women.

The Assistant Secretary of Sissala West District WAP, Amina Iliwanu Gbana from Pulima community, is one of the beneficiaries of this noble private sector collaboration and shares her story below.

"I am a 35-year-old married woman with four children (three males and one female). I have transitioned from smallholder farming to commercial production. This came about when I came into contact with the Antika Company Ltd's production input credit scheme under the AGREE Project. Around 2016, I used to cultivate only one acre of groundnuts. Then AGREE

facilitated the establishment of the WAP and trained us on lobbying and advocacy, which enabled many women to have secured access to land. In 2018, the Antika scheme was introduced to my group through the Sissala East WAP Chairperson. In 2019, I directly approached the company and my group was provided input credit support for fifty (50) acres and I was able to cultivate seven acres with my husband's support, instead of two acres in the previous year. I harvested 105 bags (10,500kg) of maize and used thirty-five 35 bags to defray my debt with the Antika credit scheme."

Amina continues: *"Part of the profit was used to assist my husband to put up a three-bedroom house, which is around 70% complete. I also supported the payment of my sibling's school fees and purchased a residential plot of land at the cost of 3,500 for myself. Motivated by my progress, I went to my hometown (Chingchang), lobbied my kinsmen and was allocated 15 acres of land at no cost for commercial farming. I did not rely on the Antika input credit scheme again in*



Amina Iliwanu

2020. My production cost was paid using part of my 2019 profit. I received an amount of GH¢800 as my share of my group's loan from the WAP revolving fund. I was amazed when I harvested 225 bags (22,500kg) of maize. As the price of maize is already at GH¢150 per bag, I earned a total of GH¢33,750 in 2020. When I became an independent producer, women who needed to access the Antika input credit facility were routed through me."

Amina is still expanding her production capacity and is full of praise for AAG and the AGREE Project: *"My kinsmen have again added ten acres to my parcels of land, making it 25-acres for the 2021 farming season. I was a very timid and unassertive person prior to my involvement with AAG and the AGREE project. But now, most of the WAP members have built our self-esteem and are going beyond all limits to explore our potentials. I am always grateful."*



Amina standing in front of her three-bedroom house

5.2 Mission Priority Two (MP2): Address the Root Causes of Violence Against Women and Girls, Reduce Unpaid Care Work and Promote Decent Work

Under this Mission Priority, our interventions focus on enhancing the redistribution of Unpaid Care Work and promote access to decent work. We also work towards eliminating violence against women and girls.

To address women's unpaid care work, we undertook community sensitisation through durbars, cooking competitions among men and boys, collection and analysis of time diaries. We sponsored the installation of water harvesting facilities and childcare centers in the communities.

We also worked to enhance the livelihood of the people we worked with, especially women, by encouraging young women to put their time to productive use to earn income after being freed time from their unpaid care work burden. In the year, we intensified the campaign on decent work and conducted trainings with the Young Urban Women Movement (YUWM), which motivated many young women to identify and report abuses, exploitation, and harassment at the workplace.



Fig. 1 Typical Scenario of the Unpaid Care Work Burden on Women

5.2.1 Woman farmer achieves financial freedom after family shares unpaid care work burden

AAG's campaign on unpaid care work has led to the recognition, reduction and redistribution of the enormous care burden on women, which has enabled many smallholder women farmers and housewives to pursue productive and profitable activities. Under POWER, AAG embarked on series of community engagement programmes to sensitise men, traditional and opinion leaders to recognise the effect of unpaid care work on women and take steps to address it. With the reduced workload,

women are now undertaking productive activities to support their nuclear and extended families. Faustina Achim, 46, from Ul-Kpong, shares her experience:

"I'm married with six children. I have been so happy because my workload has reduced, and I am now a businesswoman. Hitherto, the men will not support women to do any household chores. They did not even consider unpaid care work to be work. I would go to farm, carry firewood home and cook the household meals whilst performing all the other household chores, no matter how tired I was. But thanks to ActionAid, the POWER project has opened our eyes, so many things have changed now.

With my reduced workload, I started a business in 2018 with GH50. Now, I trade in rice, pepper, salt, onions, sorghum and dry okro in my village. I package them into small quantities, carry them around the community to sell, especially at social gatherings, antenatal clinics and worship centers.

The business is now worth more than GH¢500 and I put GH¢20 every week into my group's saving scheme (VSLA). Through this business I am able to support my husband to pay for tractor ploughing services for our three-acre farm. My son gained admission to Ullo Senior High School in 2019 and this business helped me to provide some of his school needs. I pay for the renewal of our health insurance when they expire. I am now enjoying my marriage and



Faustina Achim displays her petty business products that added to her family's income sources

family life, because I am a key contributor to the family's upkeep. I am forever grateful to ActionAid and the donors for this empowerment."

5.2.2 Local Chiefs and Opinion Leaders become Ambassadors of Unpaid Care Work in their communities

In many of our communities, socio-cultural norms and practices have defined disproportionate care roles for women, often disadvantaging the female gender while paid work is mostly the preserve of men.

Traditional authorities are entrusted with the responsibility of preserving these socio-cultural norms and beliefs. To change these norms, the role of these community leaders is crucial and their actions and inactions have a lot of implications for any campaign.

As a campaign strategy, AAG's engagement and sensitisation often target chiefs and opinion leaders. In 2019, many chiefs and leaders across our operational areas in the Bono Region, participated in unpaid care work campaigns and provided the much needed example by demonstrating it in their households. The chiefs are from Hiamankyene,



Nana Obour Kwame, chief linguist of Tainso

Akore and Degedege in the Tain District and Mehame Nkwanta in the Asutifi South District. In 2020, five more chiefs and their linguists joined the campaign. They were from Yawkrakrom, Oseikrom and Apotoyewa in the Asutifi South District, and Tainso and Bepoase in the Tain District.

During a monitoring visit to the communities, Nana Obour Kwame, chief linguist of Tainso, was seen engaging in household chores. A father of eight children (two males and six females), Nana shares his story:

"In our tradition, household chores are the preserve of women. It is only when your wife is sick that you require the services of a house-help to support. Men are supposed to work to earn a living for the family's upkeep while women are to remain at home and take care of the children and carry out all other house chores. Farms and animals are owned by men. When I participated in a sensitisation meeting organised by the women's group and ActionAid in my community, I realised that helping your wife empowers her to support the family.

After the sensitisation meetings, I was selected among a few other men to participate in the periodic filling and analysis of the time diaries. These activities really changed my perception of care work and I have since decided to support my wife in the house by bathing the children and even supplying water for household use while she prepares food for the household and labourers on

our farm. I have also supported her to establish a farm in her own name. She has been able to cultivate seven acres of cashew and sometimes she has time to sell charcoal in the market to get income to support the family.

In my community, three people have so far openly testified to me that because they have seen me support my wife to do household chores, they are also motivated to help their wives at home. Things have really changed, and I think it's for the good of us all."

5.2.3 Religious Leaders join Unpaid Care Work Campaign and Advocate for Abolition of Discriminatory Traditional Practices

The success of the unpaid care work campaign continues to attract people from all walks of life, many of whom have become loyal supporters of the initiative. Some of the supporters are religious leaders who are actively advocating for men and boys to reduce the care burden on women and girls by supporting them at home in the performance of housework, including cooking, cleaning, caring for children and the elderly.

In Attakofi, a community in the Kedjebe District of the Oti Region, a religious leader has joined the campaign, urging his followers and members of his community to support it. Mustapha Seidu, 34, shares his advocacy success:

"I am one of the beneficiaries of AAG and NOCID empowerment workshops and trainings on unpaid care work and

decent work. My wife is a food vendor and usually comes home late after work. Previously, whenever I returned from farm, I will go out socialising with my friends, expecting to see food on the table upon my return to the house. She will bring the food late and that became our frequent source of quarrel.

Through persistent and continuous sensitisation on unpaid care work, things are changing. I reconsidered my position and gradually learnt how to cook. Initially, I was mocked when I started helping my wife in the kitchen, but I did not relent as I realised that our relationship was becoming stronger. Now, I don't wait for her; I cook all the time. Most of the time when I start, she comes to help complete the cooking. My family is now enjoying absolute peace and I am grateful to AAG and NOCID for this great impartation in my life."



Mustapha shares food he has prepared with his family

5.2.4 Campaign against Gender-Based Violence Restores Dignity and Peace to Broken Marriages

The campaign against gender-based violence, discrimination and

traditional forms of violence is central to our work. These interventions usually target women and girls in deprived communities who are victims of discriminatory and abusive cultural norms and practices. In Gbare in the Jirapa District of the Upper West Region, Agnes Bowosoro, 35, the first of three wives, shares her story of neglect, discrimination and non-maintenance, which changed when her family encountered AAG:

"I live with my three daughters and husband in Gbare. I used to suffer a lot at the hands of my husband because I gave birth to only females, whom he claims are not profitable to him. He abandoned me and my children. I was even denied a piece of land to farm and left alone to struggle and take care of my children.

But thanks to AAG's series of community engagements on women rights, things have changed positively. In 2019, my husband attended one of the meetings on unpaid care work and the laws prohibiting violence against women.

From the meeting, he understood that when a man denies the wife and children food and other basic needs, and



Agnes Bowosoro looks forward to happier times with her family

assaults her, it is a violation of her rights, which is punishable by law. Since then, he started performing his role as a husband."

As things began to look up and economic wellbeing restored, Agnes praises her husband: *"He gave me a plot of land and I planted groundnuts in 2020, which produced ten bags. Now he gives us food on regular basis and also ensures that our health insurance is renewed immediately they expire. Every year, he engages tractor services to plough my farm for me. This has brought back the love between my husband and I. Thank you to ActionAid and their supporters."*

5.2.5 Women with Disability benefit from AAG Humanitarian Response to Covid-19 Crises

Covid-19 brought many economic activities to a halt, pushing vulnerable people in marginalised communities to the brink of despair and extreme poverty. To address the needs of people living in poverty, especially women during the early days of the pandemic, AAG joined other stakeholders to extend humanitarian support to them, which included food items, nose masks and sanitizers. We also carried out extensive education to promote the awareness of safety protocols and personal hygiene in these communities.

This intervention was made possible through repurposed income from from some of our donor funds, which included the distribution of sanitary

pads and other hygiene kits to 1,629 Young Female Platform (YFP) members from twelve (12) communities and thirty (30) Senior High Schools across the country while hand washing equipment and detergents were also donated to schools.

With the objective of building sustainable income generating ventures for the YFP members, the PPL3 funded project 'Building the Agency of Adolescent Girls and Young Women for Inclusive Leadership' also rolled out various livelihood skill trainings for ninety-two (92) young women with disabilities. The various livelihood skills training included soap making, beading, tailoring, hair dressing, local cloth weaving, pastries and batik-tie-n-dye design.

A beneficiary of the intervention, Memunatu Ibrahim, 25 years old from Choggu in Northern Region, shares her experience:

"I am a married woman with three children (one girl and two boys). As a person living with disability, every day I

wake up I say a big thank you to AAG for giving me the opportunity to be part of this very useful project, which seeks to build the agency of adolescent girls and young women for inclusive leadership. Before this intervention, I had been living a lonely life most of the time at home because of the way other community members perceive and comment on persons with disability. But now, I have the opportunity of socialising with friends. I am always eager to go for meetings on weekends so I can meet and interact with my colleagues. The support I get from colleagues is so encouraging. They speak nicely to me and make sure I am always happy".

After benefiting from skills training for the YFPs in soap making, which yielded good outcomes, Memuna continues: *"My life became complete when AAG gave me the opportunity to learn a livelihood skill in soap making. I successfully completed the training which enabled me to acquire a lifetime skill to make me financially independent.*

When I started, I bought materials at the cost of GH¢120 and produced twelve (12) gallons of liquid soap. I sold a gallon for GH¢20, which earned me GH¢240. Besides the liquid soap, I also invested GH¢80 in the production of shower gel and earned GH¢180. Impressed with the returns from my first production, I again invested GH200 to produce the liquid soap and shower gel and earned a total of GH¢420, which meant I made a profit of GH¢220, discounting labour and



Memunatu and her son are happy to have a dignified income-generating activity

other production factors. I can't imagine any other business I could do to earn this amount of money, especially considering my limitations as a PLWD. I sell within the community and at social gatherings. I use social media platforms such as WhatsApp to advertise my products and I keep records of every production cost and the sales to see the amount of profit I make. I learnt all these at the training."

"The name I chose for my Enterprise is 'Nye-yam' which literally means 'I have acquired a skill indeed.' I now have soap for my domestic use and make profit from what I sell to support my family. I support my other colleagues in producing their soap so that we can maintain high quality standards to increase market access."

Memuna's financial independence has also given her a fresh lease of life: *"The soap I produce has started attracting more community members to me. They now believe that I can also be productive like any other so called 'able person'. Many of them are surprised that I can produce quality soap with my physically challenged status which testifies to the fact that disability is not inability. It is my hope that in future I will be contracted by individuals and organisations to train other people in soap making. I wish to sincerely thank ActionAid for this support. My life is already turning around and will surely get better."*



Rebecca Dery from Tizza in the Upper West Region is another PLWD who was trained in soap making

5.3 Mission Priority Three: Promote the Rights of All Citizens to Equitable Access to Good-Quality, Child-Friendly Public Education that Builds their Confidence and Self-Esteem to Demand Transparency and Accountability from Duty Bearers

Our work under this mission priority seeks to promote gender-responsive public education and increase public education financing. Below, we share notable outcomes and change stories in the year.

5.3.1 Local Women Raise Money to Build a School structure and fight to end Teenage Pregnancy in their community

Teenage pregnancy and adolescent motherhood are among the major societal problems confronting rural communities. Many girls found to be pregnant usually drop out of school due to social stigma even though the policies of the GES permit such girls to continue with their education. In Akore in the Tain District, nine teenage pregnancy cases were recorded during the 2019 Basic Education Certificate

Examination (BECE). The community attributes this to their lack of a Junior High School, which compels pupils to relocate to Badu, a nearby community, to access junior high education.

The Odo and Kroye women groups were also worried about their daughters' plight and worked with other stakeholders for a solution. Using their mobilisation, advocacy and lobbying skills acquired through AAG training programmes, the women groups were able to engage the community leaders, the assemblyman and the District Assembly, to build a pavilion to start a JHS in the community.

Serwaa Catherine, a 32 year old facilitator for Kroye Women's group, shares her story below:

"After class 6, school children in our community are compelled to relocate to Badu to continue their education.

As women groups, we observed our daughters were getting pregnant and even the boys did not make any meaningful progress in their education. We discussed it during our group meetings and an action plan was agreed

for us to form a five-member committee to have meetings with the assemblyman, community members and the District Assembly.

"This was carried out and a consensus was reached to build a pavilion. We organised a fundraising programme in the community where each household paid GH¢10, resulting in GH¢2,000 as the total amount raised. The District Assembly also supported with three packets of roofing sheets.

With the establishment of a JHS in the community, no student will travel to Badu for JHS education. Parents are now able to exercise the required parental control over their wards and provide the necessary care, since they live with their children in the community. This has brought great relief to many parents as no teenage pregnancy was recorded in the community in 2020. We have also started constructing a two-unit teacher's bungalow to enable the teachers enjoy decent accommodation when they are posted to the community."

5.3.2 Teenage Mother and School Dropout Beats Stigma and Returns to Senior Secondary School

When Bernice Atuam, 15, completed Nayoko No. 2 JHS in 2020, she was looking forward to continuing her education at the Senior High level to realise her dream of becoming a nurse. Despite her mother's continued support, her plans almost fell through when she became pregnant, adding to the stark statistics of girls whose



JHS Shed constructed at Akore through Kroye women group's effort

education comes to an end due to unplanned pregnancy.

Her mum, a single mother, was familiar with the challenges involved in raising a child as a single parent without the support of a spouse. Children brought up in these circumstances often face many difficulties, sometimes sacrificing their education and career dreams for less ambitious pursuits. Many of these cases end with regrets, leading to the sad end of otherwise promising young women.

AAG and local partner Belim Wusa Development Agency (BEWDA) worked with the Ghana Education Service (GES) and the school's Parent Teacher Association (PTA) to assist Bernice. The interventions included counselling sessions for Bernice and her mother and meetings with the family of the boy who impregnated her, to mutually agree to support her to continue her education and to provide the best possible care for her. Bernice successfully delivered her baby, returned to school and registered for the BECE.

However, life became difficult for Bernice, the child and her single mother when Covid-19 struck. AAG's Covid-19 relief support enabled Bernice to access food and non-food items, including bags of rice, vegetable oil, soap, beverages, sugar, sanitary pads, nose mask and hand sanitiser. The intervention significantly contributed to the upkeep and welfare of Bernice and her family.

Below, Bernice shows appreciation to AAG and other stakeholders who turned her story around:

"I thought my future had crumbled when I became pregnant, as it is the case for many girls in my community. But AAG and other partners worked with the GES and the PTA of my school to restore my hope. It was not easy facing the stigma in both school and the community. Fortunately, I gave birth and started committing myself to learn hard to pass my BECE. Then Covid-19 came and worsened my plight where feeding became a challenge for my family. Thanks to AAG, I received a lot of relief items, which brought me great relief and peace of mind to concentrate on my studies. I wrote the exam, obtained aggregate 26 and was admitted to Bolgatanga Girls Senior High School. My dream to become a nurse is still alive and I will never forget all those who helped me in this journey."

5.3.3 Girls Empowerment and Advocacy Platform (GEAP) Campaigns Against Parental Neglect in Communities

While many factors account for girls dropping out of school, parental



Bernice Atuam with her child

neglect is one critical reason which affects the total development of children. In many communities in the Asutifi North and South Districts, parental neglect has contributed to the high incidence of teenage pregnancies.

To deal with the structural causes of this problem, AAG and local partner Centre for Maternal Health and Community Empowerment (CMCE) collaborated with the GES to establish the Girls Empowerment and Advocacy Platform (GEAP) in basic schools. The objective was to empower girls to campaign against all forms of violence and their developmental challenges, to enable them pursue their career goals. In one of their reflection meetings, the GEAP identified teenage pregnancy and menstrual hygiene management as some of the challenges facing girls in their schools.

The GEAP members were able to lobby for free airtime on Anapua FM in Kenyasi to sensitise and encourage parents to provide the basic needs of their children, to promote their education. As a result of the meetings and the radio discussions, many parents reported that they had begun paying more attention to the basic needs of their girls, which include sanitary pads, books, pens, and other learning materials. One of the parents shares her impressions below:

"My name is Mrs. Cynthia Agyei, a 47-year-old food vendor. I used to have problems with my daughter, Sarah, whenever she asked for money to buy



Cynthia Agyei with her daughter doing house chores

sanitary pads, books, and other learning materials; I always told her to go to the father for these items. I did not bother much when the father did not provide the items. Due to this, my daughter didn't stay in the house to help in household chores, and became truant as a result. I was initially skeptical when she told me she was going for group meetings until one day I followed her to her school to verify. I was told by her teacher that she belonged to an association called Girls Empowerment and Advocacy Platforms (GEAP). She mentioned the radio programme being conducted and encouraged me to listen. I listened and found the discussion very



Sarah is poised to achieve her educational goals after benefiting from the GEAP

useful. I learnt about bad parenting behaviours and how they affect the child's life, including poor performance in school. I was touched by testimonies from parents who called in during the discussions to share how their change in attitude has resulted in many of their girls turning away from bad habits. A very crucial issue discussed was the need for parents to monitor their girls' menstrual cycle and provide what is needed for good hygiene. It was emphasised that getting closer to your daughter will let her build trust and confide in you, otherwise she would look for confidants outside.

Cynthia continues: *"I felt guilty for not paying attention to my daughter's needs. Now I provide sanitary pads and other basic needs for her. As a result, my daughter has been staying home and helping in every household chore. We are now a cheerful and happy family. She now takes her studies seriously and I believe her performance will improve. Thank you ActionAid for this enlightenment."*

5.4 Mission Priority Four: Improve Citizen's Participation, Public Accountability, Effective Mobilisation and Fair Redistribution of Public Resources towards Gender-Responsive Public Service

The implementation of interventions in this priority area sought to promote civic awareness, engagement and public accountability and increase

public resource mobilisation and redistribution. The campaigns also focus on progressive taxation, tax expenditure and allocation.

5.4.1 ActionAid Women's Groups lead Development in their Communities and Win American Embassy Ambassador's Grant

In Ghana, many rural communities lack essential social services such as schools, health centers, water supply, good sanitation etc. Often, these communities do not know how to go about lobbying or advocating for such services from duty bearers. During community meetings where these problems are discussed, women are usually unable or excluded from participating, partly because the customs and traditions of their communities do not permit them, or due to their care work burden at home. However, due to our empowerment programmes, women groups in our communities are taking bold steps in championing leadership processes that are bringing the much-needed essential social services into their communities. In the year, women groups in two communities in Bono and Ahafo Regions led interventions that have yielded positive results.

In Oseikrom in the Asutifi South District, the health centre at Apenimedi lacked basic comforts such as mattresses in its maternity ward. This often caused a lot of inconvenience to pregnant women when they were admitted. Another



problem in Oseikrom was the lack of accommodation for teachers. This meant that all the teachers lived outside the community and often reported late to school or sometimes didn't come to school at all during the rainy season. A teachers' bungalow under construction had stalled for many years. Empowered to claim their rights and demand accountability from duty bearers, the Akuapa women group designed an action plan to address the challenges. Abena Serwaa, leader of the Akuapa Women's group, explains their lobbying and advocacy strategies:

"I am the facilitator of the Akuapa Women's group at Oseikrom, which has 32 members. During our meetings in 2020, we discussed the challenges we were facing at the Apenemadi health centre, which is the only health facility in the area. The meeting also discussed the completion of the teacher's quarters in the community, which started in 2016 but not completed.

A committee was constituted to address the matter regarding the inadequate mattresses at the health centre and also put in place measures to complete the teacher's quarters. We engaged duty bearers such as the Asutifi South District Assembly, Ghana Health Service, chiefs and elders to address the problem but we did not see much progress. We proceeded to talk to our Member of Parliament (MP), Hon. Alhaji Collins Dauda, to support us. We held a community fundraising and raised GH¢3,000. We purchased one mattress and the MP added two more to resolve

the challenge at the health centre. Three additional rooms of the teacher's quarters were also completed and now, six teachers have decent accommodation."

In Drobo, a community in the Tain District of the Bono Region, the Ebeyeyie women group achieved a similar remarkable feat when they played a leading role in the establishment of a formal school in the community. The community was encouraged to have their own school after AAG's Complementary Basic Education intervention ended in 2018. The group sent delegations to the District Assembly and the District Education Office to make a formal request for a school. The authorities appreciated the zeal of the women and gave approval for formal education to start in the community in 2019. The women mobilised the men in the community through communal labour to establish an open shed structure to serve as a temporary classroom. The district education office posted a teacher to the school to ensure quality education.

Due to their impressive development work, the District Assembly assisted the women to develop a proposal to the US Embassy's community assisted projects under the Ambassador's self-help initiative, and were awarded USD9,000. The grant enabled the community to commence the construction of an ongoing three-unit classroom block.



Akuapa women group lead fundraising event to solve their health center and teachers' accommodation challenges



The teacher's quarters at Oseikrom completed and serving teachers

Seida Bawa of the Ebeyeyie women's group shares their joy:

"This is a dream come true for the women and the community at large. We are happy our collective efforts have yielded results. The absence of the basic school in our community was a worry to us. Anytime our children left for school at the nearby communities, which is about six kilometres away, we were uncomfortable until they returned. Sometimes, we took them to the nearby school before going to the farm. It brought untold hardship for many of the women in the community. This affected the time we spent on our farms, as we were always tired by the time we got to the farm. We were afraid of reptiles attacking our children or being knocked down by vehicles or even kidnapped."

"With the construction of a school with support from the US Embassy, we can spend more time on our farms and increase production to get more income. Thankfully, our children will no longer

walk long distances to school. We know that it is their right to attend school and contribute to the nation's development. Now, we don't have to leave our farms to come home and pick them from school. We have been able to achieve this milestone because of the trainings we have received from AAG and SODIA. Sometimes I marvel at the speed at which we have learnt these skills and how we are putting them into practice. Now the District Assembly knows the leadership of the group and recognises us as a local community development partner. It's a good feeling for all of us."

5.4.2 Leveraging Social Media and Youth Power For Campaigns on Democratic Governance

Our work with youth and social movements intensified over the year, with greater use of digital communication and technology-driven campaign innovations to reach millions of target audiences across the country. Today, digital platforms and



Ebeyeie Women's Group at an empowerment and strategy meeting



A three-unit classroom block under construction at Drobo in the Tain District

social media networks such as Facebook, WhatsApp, YouTube, and Twitter have become catalysts for social change. According www.digitalinformation.com, 34% of total number of Facebook users in Ghana are between the ages of 25-35, with 41% between 18-24 years of age. The youth is, therefore, critical to our campaigns and advocacy work.

To promote our campaign work on the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance (ACDEG),

we organised training programmes for members of our youth and social movements across our eleven (11) regional operational areas. In the Upper East Region, fifty (50) young people (24 females and 26 males) from the Activista and Young Urban Women Movement (YUWM) were trained on how to effectively use social media for advocacy and create a social

media blast on ACDEG. They were also equipped with other useful digital communication tools. The ACDEG is an essential instrument that has the potential to promote democracy across the African continent. It is imperative for African governments to take steps to implement the charter to deepen democratic culture and accountability on the continent.

The participants came out with action plans on various advocacy issues on



decent work, gender-based violence and climate justice. After the training some participants shared their experiences and lessons.

"My name is Nicholas Azebire, a member of the Upper East Regional chapter of Activista Ghana and a member of the regional executive. I am very passionate about ADCEG because we can use it to hold the government to account, a principle enshrined in the Charter. In fact, we as young people need to rise and put some pressure on our leaders to implement the Charter. Through the support of AAG, we are making efforts to popularise the Charter and push for its implementation. We have undertaken community sensitisation and education, which have increased awareness about the Charter among over 5,000 people across the region.



Nicholas Azebire, member of Activista Ghana

We have also drawn social media advocacy plans and embarked on social campaign on the implementation of the Charter with a hashtag #ImplementACDEGNow, which has had

greater impact. I am happy that at least people are now aware of the Charter; we are working on implementing our action plans, which include whipping support among government actors towards critical action and full implementation."

5.4.3 Young People Acquire Skills on Entrepreneurship, Leadership and Personal Development

Our work with young people focusses on developing their innate potential and equipping them with skills for the world of work, entrepreneurial development and leadership in every area of life. Unemployment and lack of development opportunities have denied many young people their right to decent livelihood and a life of dignity. Many ambitious young people also lack business and entrepreneurial skills to enable them set up and run successful businesses. Soft skills such as leadership, networking and effective communication are very necessary for establishing, managing, and sustaining businesses.



Akosua Kwafo Ogyiri (Comms & PR Manager, AAG) training participants



Victoria Yiran hopeful for a great future after completing training in soap making

As part of our commitment to the youth, AAG organised training workshops for young people in our communities. In the Talensi district of the Upper East Region, we organised training sessions for eighty-two (82) young people (60 females and 22 males) from three communities in the region. Under the Medicor Funded 'Providing Employment Opportunities for Young People in Ghana' (PEOY), the training covered leadership, networking, communication, and business management. We also supported them to improve their financial literacy and build their capacities to take advantage of business opportunities.

The four-day training session was facilitated by trainers from Global Platform Ghana, which involved using participatory methods such as group discussions, role plays and visuals.

After the training, excited participants shared experiences to demonstrate their understanding of business management skills and entrepreneurship. *"My name is Victoria Yiran, 22, from Gbeogo in the Upper East*

Region. I completed Senior High school in 2017 but due to financial constraints I was unable to further my education. My six siblings and I have been depending on my mother for everything, including my personal needs like sanitary pad, panties and soap. I was sad to witness how my mother struggled daily to provide food, healthcare and other family needs. I decided to learn a skill to enable me earn some income and at least take care of my personal needs. I started dressmaking apprenticeship six months ago. However, I realised I needed to learn a skill that would not take as long as the three-year dressmaking apprenticeship period, to start earning income. When I heard about the PEOY project by ActionAid, I was curious to know what opportunities will be provided. I became interested in the sensitisation meetings that were organised in my community, where I got to know the many skills areas that were being offered. My mother advised me to go into soap making because it is very lucrative and can also serve as a supplementary business when I open my own dressmaking shop in future. I have learnt so many things that have changed my life, including leadership, networking, good customer relations, record keeping, marketing and financial management. I am happy to say that I have made progress. I am putting the lessons from these trainings into practice at my dressmaking shop.

Again, I didn't know how important it was to keep records of financial transactions and critical events. Now, I keep financial records like income and



Participants of the training in a group picture

expenditures, customer requests, etc. I hope to start my soap making business soon.

I want to say a big thank you to ActionAid and the Medicor Foundation for the initiative. This project is really helping the youth and changing the lives of young people and their families. I wish all unemployed young people in the country benefit from this wonderful intervention."

6.0 NATIONAL CAMPAIGNS AND ADVOCACY

In the year, we promoted local and international campaigns, and advocacy initiatives on women's rights, decent work, Gender-Responsive Public Services (GRPS), discrimination and gender-based violence. The focus of the campaigns was to work with public institutional stakeholders to urge governments, businesses and our communities take action to prevent rights violations and promote sustainable development. Through

our national campaign work across the country, we achieved the following key outcomes.

6.1.1 Promoting our Campaign Against Sexual Harassment in Informal Sector

We worked with the Ministry of Employment and Labour Relations and the Domestic Services Workers Union towards the approval of the Labour (Domestic Workers) Regulations, 2020 (L.I. 2408) by Parliament, which gives direction for the implementation of ILO Convention 189. AAG formed an Access Working Group on labour with the objective of getting ILO Conventions 189 and 190 ratified and adopted in Ghana. The group comprised labour activists, gender advocates and legal experts.

The group embarked on media campaigns and provided technical support to the Domestic Services Workers Union to campaign and submit protest letters to the Ministry, which contributed to the approval and

passage of the regulations. Additionally, we trained fifty-five (55) professionals from the Domestic Workers Services Union and employment agencies on the content of the new labour regulations (L.I. 2408).

We campaigned against sexual harassment in informal work spaces and developed a draft sexual harassment charter for consultation with women workers and employers in the informal sector for finalisation and adoption. We also developed and distributed policy statements on sexual harassment and economic exploitation of young women in the informal sector.

As part of our collaborative work with the Ghana Trades Union Congress, we trained women commissioners of the TUC on the content of key ILO Conventions including C183, C189 and C190 and how to campaign for the ratification and implementation of conventions and instruments.

From a feminist viewpoint, we reviewed specific sections of the Labour Act in accordance with the ILO conventions and submitted the findings to the Ministry of Employment and Labour Relations.

We highlighted the challenges and associated costs in accessing cases involving domestic violence. This led to the submission of a memorandum to the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection (MGCSP) on the need to replenish the Fund.

6.1.2 Addressing Infrastructural Gaps in Provision of Gender-Responsive Public Services

As part of our campaign to challenge neoliberal economic models and patriarchy, we worked with our social movements to advocate for GRPS in Ghana, especially in marginalised communities. We held virtual training for fifty (50) Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) to build critical support for our campaigns.

We launched two reports on the provision of GRPS, macroeconomic policies and the role of IMF and other international financial institutions, to draw attention of academia, CSOs, Think-Tanks and donors to the importance of GRPS during Covid-19. The reports underscored the need for resources to address gaps in infrastructure and financing in Ghana for GRPS, which are critical for our campaign on gender equality. The reports were entitled “Who Cares for the Future—Finance Gender Responsive Public Services” and “Gender Responsive Public Services and Macro-economic Policy in Ghana.”

In the year, we trained selected members from the YUWM to lead surveys and conduct rapid assessment of the impact of Covid-19 on the movement. Findings of the research on young women were published and disseminated. We also joined the technical committee of the MGCSP to review the Early Childhood Care and Development Policy and worked towards the achievement of some of its objectives. In the review, AAG

highlighted child-care centres and unpaid care work as critical considerations for the successful implementation of the policy.

We also worked with the National Planning and Development Commission to develop toolkits and mainstream unpaid care work in the planning framework of Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies (MMDAs). The toolkits were finalised and disseminated. The follow-up action for 2021 is to monitor the usage and implementation of the provisions in the toolkits.

On women's rights, we activated our national campaign against witchcraft allegations, broadening the discussions to cover spirituality in Ghana. Series of media campaigns and engagements were held on popular radio and TV stations, social media and other digital platforms, to campaign against the menace.

Our Activista and YUWM joined the campaign by using the International Youth Day to launch a social media blast and twitter rally to increase public awareness about the effects of witchcraft accusations on women's rights.

6.2 Changing the Face of Campaigns with our Global Platform

Global Platform is ActionAid's institutional network for youth-led activism. We provide training support for movements, youth networks,

organisations and individuals to promote progressive social, political, and economic change around the world. We work mostly with young people, building their capacity to lead various youth-led initiatives that seek to promote young people as drivers of change towards a more just, sustainable and democratic world.

In 2020, we worked with our youth groups and social movements to campaign for the resourcing of the Domestic Violence Fund, which was set up to help victims of domestic violence pay bills associated with the judicial process, including paying for hospital examination and cost of transport.

We trained and supported young climate justice advocates to educate citizens along the coastal regions of Ghana. As part of the campaigning, they undertook road trips where they conducted interviews in local languages and interacted with market women, taxi drivers and other members of the public. The interview questions focused on sanitation, plastic disposal, land degradation, 'galamsey' (illegal mining) and imbalances in the ecosystem.

In July 2020, we trained young artists and activists on artistic activism, where artists evaluate their artistic actions in relation to their set objectives. As a tested tool for capacity building, artistic activism, which has been adopted by some universities and leading artists, has proven to be more engaging, participatory and creativity-driven.

The young people deployed artistic activism to showcase the plight of older women being branded as witches in



participatory reflections and actions towards creating a just, equitable and sustainable society. The solidarity of these groups and other like-minded advocates were strengthened by connecting them to fight for common causes. Their campaigns and other interventions were based on key local, national and international priority issues, including global signature campaigns pursued by the ActionAid Federation.

7.1.2 Advancing Women's Rights and Feminist Leadership

The incidences of inequality and injustices are largely rooted in patriarchal social systems where males are favoured for leadership and decision-making positions while female voices are discriminated against and relegated to the background. Consequently, a lot of women have remained marginalised and prevented from enjoying their right to and control over needed resources.

AAG prioritises and mainstreams women rights into every part of our work. In the year, gender analysis tools were used to assess how men, women, children and other categories of social groups were affected by policies, political and economic decisions. Strategic actions were implemented to shift visible, invisible, and hidden power, to address the structural causes of poverty, discrimination and injustice.

7.1.3 Working with Social Movements and People's Organisations

Our social movements and people's organisations were very important for our campaign and advocacy work. Some of the movements and organisations that supported the implementation of our interventions include the YUWM, YFPs, Activista, Smallholder Women Farmers Movement, WAPs, Farmer Networks and Coalitions, PTA/SMCs Networks and GEAPs. Through our work with these movements, our campaigns reached millions of people across the country.

7.1.4 Working with Young People

We worked with a broad-based youth network through our Activista Movement which is active at the district, regional and national levels. Other rightsholder organisations such as the YUWM and YFPs were key allies that supported our activism. The activities of these groups were strategically connected to national youth agencies and institutions such as the National Youth Authority (NYA) to influence youth policy formulation and implementation while empowering them to access emerging opportunities.

7.1.5 Innovation and Digital Transformation

The creative use of technology and innovative digital resources became necessary when Covid-19 placed limits on our normal way of life, affecting people's social and economic lives. In the year, we supported community women groups to produce liquid soaps and other detergents, which made it possible for many people in deprived communities to follow the hygiene protocols. The livelihood skills also enabled many women to earn income to provide for their families.

We also trained our staff on the use of virtual communication and other innovative digital platforms, especially Microsoft Teams, which became the main virtual application tool. Our social movements were also trained to use these virtual platforms to remain relevant during the pandemic.

8.0 FUNDRAISING, CHILD SPONSORSHIP AND DONOR MANAGEMENT

Like other development organisations, the impact of Covid-19 affected our fundraising initiatives, delaying planned releases of requests for proposals from many institutional donors, trusts and foundations. In the early stages of the pandemic, some donor agencies sponsored relief interventions and later opened up to proposals aimed at repurposing some activities under ongoing projects, to enable us assist affected people and communities recover and 'build back

better.' The EU and the PPL approved €157,965 and £43,000 respectively to be used to mitigate the effect of Covid-19 in the communities in our operational areas.

Community-based activities such as Child Sponsorship (CS) were temporarily halted due to restrictions and measures announced by the Government, to control the spread of the virus. Despite these challenges, fundraising initiatives and efforts continued in the year.

8.1.1 Child Sponsorship

At the beginning of the year, child and non-child sponsorship links stood at 11,299. It reduced by 2.7% to a total country link level of 10,996 by the end of the year. Out of this, Italian links were 5,069, constituting 46% of the total. We also had 3,235 links from UK, which represented 29%, followed by 2,691 links from Greece (25%). While links from the UK and Greece decreased, those from Italy remained stable. There was a decrease of 4% in UK links while sponsorship links from Greece also declined by 5.8%.

The decline was due to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on livelihoods and disposable incomes of households and individuals. This notwithstanding, most of our supporters showed loyalty and solidarity with their sponsored communities—in keeping with their commitment to bring about manifest changes in the lives of people living in poverty and deprivation. In the next few years, it is anticipated that CS will record slower growth, as the world



strives to recover from the unexpected impact of the pandemic. We will continue to use our resources judiciously, to improve the lives of children and communities while servicing all existing supporters, donors and child sponsors with speed and efficiency.

8.1.2 Institutional Partnerships and High Value Funding

In the year, several projects funded by institutional or high value donors ended as planned. These projects include POWER, funded by the Dutch Government; Sustainable Livelihoods and Transparent Local Authorities (SLATLA), funded by the EU; Building the Agency of Girls and Young Women for Inclusive Leadership (funded by People's Postcode Lottery). The Fundraising unit coordinated donor and evaluation reports on time, including sustainability plans, to ensure that no expenditures were disallowed by any donor.

We also intensified efforts to establish new funding partnerships, to mobilise resources to implement our activities. In 2020, we secured £2,043,191 to implement various interventions over the next thirty- six (36) months, as detailed below.

8.1.3 Improving Access to Quality Education

We secured a new project with the Barrowman Foundation based in the UK, to improve access to quality education for children in Sagnarigu (Northern Region), Pusiga (UE Region) and Namasa (Bono Region) in Ghana. The total budget for the project is £368,457, which will be used to construct three classroom blocks (two 6-unit classroom blocks and one 2-unit KG block, all with offices, toilets and library), one in each community.

The project, which commenced in November 2020, will empower girls to claim their rights, report violence in school and participate in school management decisions that affect them. We will also encourage the participation of parents in school management for improved school enrolment and high completion rates for children, especially girls.

8.1.4 Action to Promote Women's Rights and stop Witchcraft Accusations

We applied for funding from the Australian High Commission through the Direct Aid Programme (DAP). Valued at AUD 62,825, the project builds on AAG's previous experience and contributes to our interventions aimed at closing the witches' camps in Ghana after the successful reintegration of all willing accused women into communities of their choice, without further attacks. The



project will create awareness and engage community members to end witchcraft accusations. As an interim measure, we will provide water and toilet facilities to improve the sanitation and living conditions of women in the Gnani camp. We will also support national level policy and legal reforms to completely end witchcraft accusations in the country. The proposal has been approved for funding in 2021.

8.1.5 Donkey Welfare for Women's Livelihoods

We entered into a funding agreement with 'The Donkey Sanctuary' (TDS) to manage the implementation of a project aimed at improving the welfare and sustainability of donkeys supporting women's livelihoods in the Upper West Region. Implementation partners for the project are Action for Sustainable Development (ASUDEV), GRATIS and the Ghana Society for the Protection and Care of Animals (GSPCA). This is a 24-month project ending in 2022, with a total budget of £83,142.

8.1.6 Combating Modern Slavery

We joined a multi-country application to submit a three-year proposal to the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (Norad) on a project aimed at combatting modern slavery practices, particularly within the agricultural sector. We will partner with relevant CSOs, groups, networks

and coalitions, to strengthen our response to modern slavery, improve knowledge of rights and capacities and build greater demand for anti-slavery legislation and practices. The proposal has been selected by Norad for a funding budget of NOK 16,616,159 (£1,412,600).

8.1.7 Zero Violence Project

In August 2020, we collaborated with AAUK to apply for funding from the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office of the UK Government to implement a short-term zero-violence project within the informal sector. Following the approval of the application, AAG has received £144,000 to implement various activities up to March 2021. The purpose of this project is to work with law and policy makers, and civil society/community-based organisations (CSOs/CBOs) to strengthen enforcement mechanisms. This will enable them support women and girls to address, report and seek justice against violence in their households, communities and workplaces.

8.1.8 Championing Gender Equality Together

We partnered with Crossroads International (Crossroads) in February 2019, to submit a project proposal titled '*Championing Gender Equality Together*' in response to a call for proposals from the Volunteer



Cooperation Program (VCP) of Global Affairs Canada (GAC). The objective of the project was to improve the economic and social wellbeing of the poorest, most marginalised and most vulnerable people, especially women and girls, through international volunteering. Our proposal was approved in March 2020, to begin a seven-year volunteer programme aimed at strengthening institutions, identifying and designing community projects for implementation.

platform to ensure the full utilisation of the system. We will improve on the use of the system in the coming years, to ensure the effective documentation of our projects and programme work.

8.2 Contract Management System

We continued the use of the new Contract Management System (CMS) towards the efficient management and monitoring of all contracts with donor organisations and major individual donors. All project and programme managers and officers have been trained on the use of the system. We have uploaded many of our project documents on the

PHOTO REPORT

AAG COVID-19 RELIEF RESPONSE



9.0 PUBLIC RELATIONS, YOUTH ACTIVISM AND DIGITAL MEDIA

In the year, our communication, media and outreach programmes were guided by the unusual demands of the Covid-19 pandemic. Generally, 2020 saw a tremendous increase in online mobilisation, which invariably increased people's appetite for communication and information. In line with our communication strategy which seeks to make AAG relevant and topical when development issues relating to our MPs get media attention, we employed the efficient use of traditional and social media tools in our communication activities. We contributed to local and national discussions which generally centered on the awareness of Covid-19 and its impact on young people and women.

As part of our strategy for enhanced digital activity during the pandemic, communication became a major component of AAG's Covid-19 Relief Response, which focused on creating public awareness to demystify myths and misconceptions about the virus. It also ensured that our constituents and the general public were armed with the needed information to keep themselves and their families safe. We used a creative mix of community and regional radio stations as well as social media platforms, to disseminate critical information about the pandemic in local languages and English.

9.1.1 Digital Rally and Youth Activism

To intensify the use of our media channels, we collaborated with the Global Platform Ghana, Activista and the YUWM, to organise two major digital activism activities on Twitter. Highlighting women's rights and the impact of Covid-19 on young people, we embarked on aggressive digital mobilisation drive with a #TwitterRally, which attracted many young people to share their concerns and offer recommendations on how to mitigate the impact of Covid-19 on the youth. They also campaigned against the ill-treatment of alleged witches in Ghana with the hashtag #CondemnedWithoutaTrial.

As a result of the mass following behind the youth-led campaigns, the two hashtags, #CondemnedWithoutaTrial and #TwitterRally showed in Ghana's trends of most talked about topics. These successful digital activism activities have changed the course of our engagement, leading to an increased reach and high interactions on Twitter and other digital platforms.

9.1.2 Tax Justice for Effective Educational Financing

Due to our creative brand activation and strategic media work, AAG remained relevant to our internal and external publics, making us very attractive to our donors and key stakeholders. We continued our



collaboration with other members of the Federation to produce documentaries which had a local focus but maintained a global appeal. We intensified our work with our national and international partners to add our voice to global campaigns on women's rights, debt cancellation and social justice. Our most significant collaboration in the year was the Global Walk for Survival campaign, which enabled us to mobilise rural and urban women to contribute their energies towards change.

Our Tax Justice Campaign gained attention nationwide with the launch of a report titled, "What Tax Incentives Can Do for Basic Education in Ghana." The findings from this report heightened the interest of our media partners and the public on Ghana's tax incentive regime. The media reports that followed the event resulted in a sustained coverage on TV, radio and print for more than two weeks.

9.1.3 Social Media Strategy

With the increased focus on digital activism in the year, our social media pages remained most vibrant, engaging and relevant. Our digital communication strategy for 2019, which aimed to increase our engagements and double our impact, paved the way for the surge in our engagement levels and other successes in 2020. We increased our Facebook following from 12,000 at the end of 2019 to more than 13,000

in 2020. On Twitter, our numbers increased from 3,000 in 2019 to 3,805 in 2020. The organic growth in numbers was necessary for our work with social movements and other publics.

10.0 FINANCE AND EXPENDITURE PERFORMANCE

Here, we present our financial management, income and expenditure performance in the year.

Ghana, like many countries around the world, experienced the impact of the Covid-19 global pandemic. At AAG, the pandemic affected the delivery of interventions, impacting our plans and budgets for the year. Management, therefore, took swift actions to amend our plans and budgets in line with the Red Alert issued by the Secretary-General and adopted by the Board, to address and analyse the effects of the pandemic on people living in poverty.

In 2020, the income of AAG decreased by 19% from £3,554 to £2,903. This was driven by a decline in Next Step income and the completion of some major projects. Management is working hard to raise additional income from diverse sources to close the gap in Regular Giving (RG) and ensure that our work is sustained across the country, especially in the regions where we work.



10.1.1 Income

The income trend analysis for the past three years indicates that we operated with an average income of £3,347k. With this level of income coupled with management's continued efforts to raise more partnership income, there is a strong indication that AAG is financially sustainable.

In the last quarter of 2020, management worked on several projects and received promising results from donors. In December 2020, we received feedback from the Global Secretariat (GS) that we have secured a new project worth \$1,400k for three years. The new project, together with others in the pipeline, will support our cost recovery drive and increase the national reserves, which decreased in 2020. Even though

the national reserves are still within the acceptable reserve cover of three months, we will work hard to increase the national reserves, to enable us take strategic decisions such as increasing staff remunerations to make us competitive among our peers.

In 2021, we expect partnership income to increase further, as we strengthen our fundraising collaboration with the GS and Affiliate countries to raise more income. The success rate in the last quarter of the year gives a clear indication that AAG is on the right path to increasing partnership income after securing three new projects (Zero Violence, Improving Access to Quality Education for Children in Ghana and Combatting Modern Slavery).

Total income (including transfers) realised within the period was £2,903k, which is £185k less than the planned

Table 1: Income Analysis for the Year 2020

	Actual £'000	Plan £'000	Forecast £'000	Var £'000	%	£'000	%Change
Child Sponsorship	663	652	663	11	102	693	-4%
Big Step	395	376	395	19	105	369	7%
Next Step	88	88	88	0	100	151	-42%
Amico Paese	5	5	5	0	100	5	0%
Gift and General Funds	2	2	2	0	100	2	0%
Net Transfers	(42)	(40)	(42)	(2)	105	(49)	14%
Partnership - Affiliates	1,203	918	1,228	285	131	1694	29%
Partnership Local	500	1047	1,047	(47)	48	660	24%
Other Income	47	0	47	47	0	29	62%
Total	2,861	3,048	3,433	(187)	94	3,554	19%



10.1.1 Individual Giving



United Kingdom	30%
Italy	51%
Greece	19%

income of (£3,084k) representing a 6% decrease. In comparison with actual income for the same period last year, this period's income decreased by 19%. The huge variance between the actual and forecast income was because of the deferred income. A total income of £546k was deferred to 2021.

Individual Giving accounts for 40% of the country's income mix. This year's income is six percentage points higher than 34% for last year. Individual Giving is also 4% lower than planned income for the year. It, however, shows a year-on-year decrease of 5%. The

decrease in RG income is mainly attributed to derestriction of the Next Step income, which reduced by 42% compared to the year before.

Again, from the review of Individual Giving streams, income from the UK and Italy contributed 30% and 51% respectively, accounting for 81% of total income. They were followed by Greece, which contributed 19%. From Fig 2 below, RG from all Funding Affiliates decreased marginally.

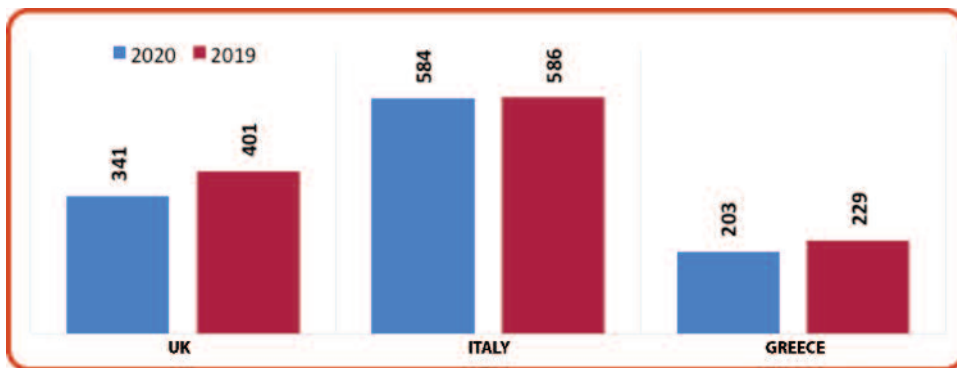


Fig. 2 : Comparative Analysis of 2020 and 2019 Individual Giving Distribution

10.1.2 Partnership Income



About 60% of our total income in 2020 was in the form of Partnership Income made up of contracts, donations and grants. The partnership income decreased by £651k, compared to 2019 (£2,354k). As indicated earlier, the decrease in partnership income was because of the completion of some projects. However, we are positive about the outlook of this income stream, as we continue to secure new projects and receive positive feedback from major donors.

We still hold the positive view that we can achieve the CSP VI target of raising partnership income to account for 80% of the income mix.

10.1.3 Emergency Income

We secured an amount of £20k from the GS to support our Covid-19 relief response initiated by the country leadership. The amount was added to RG activities that were repurposed to support communities to reduce the burden and hardship occasioned by the pandemic.

10.2 Expenditure

The total expenditure of £2,912k was 13% and 16% lower compared to the planned expenditure of £3,355k and £3,475 respectively in the year before. The decrease in expenditure compared to the plan was because of delays in programme implementation due to the pandemic. Programme implementation stalled for almost three months because of government restrictions to control the spread of the pandemic. Management's response to reducing the possible huge underspend was to seek donor's approval to repurpose some planned activities, as indicated above.

Grants and Community inputs expenditure of £1,878k was 64% of total expenditure. This represents a 16% decrease in expenditure compared to last year. From the table, expenditure decreased by £275k compared to the plan, which was due to the delay in programme implementation.

Staff cost expenditure was £676k for the reporting period. This represents 23% of total expenditure for the period, but 10% below the previous year's expenditure of £751. The decrease in staff cost was mainly due to completion of some major projects.

Travel and transportation expenditure was £85k, resulting in utilisation of 52%. Like other costs, the decline in expenditure was due to savings made over the lockdown period, as the

Table 2: Analysis Expenditure Utilisation and Associated Variances by Natural Cost

	Actual	Forecast	Plan	Var	Util %	Prop	2019	% Change
Grants and Comm'ty Inputs	1,878	1,853	2,153	275	87%	64%	2,243	-16%
Staff Cost	676	705	780	104	87%	23%	751	-10%
Travel and Transport	85	120	165	80	52%	3%	176	-52%
Office and Service	263	257	296	33	89%	9%	260	1%
Capital	10	45	45	35	22%	0%	45	-78%
Total	2,912	2,980	3,439	527	85%	100%	3,475	-16%

movement of staff and programme implementation were halted.

Office and Service Cost for the reporting period was £263k. This is £33k less than planned. The variance between planned and actual expenditure resulted from the savings made during the lockdown. It is, however, worth mentioning that the lockdown and arrangements to work from home came with some unplanned expenditure. We provided internet bundles to facilitate the work of staff. Transportation allowances were also given to staff who occasionally came to the office to hire taxis and avoid public transport.

In terms of statutory cost classification, we complied with the GS Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). Programme cost was 83% of total expenditure, 18 percentage points above GS KPI of 65%. This is a demonstration to our donors and supporters that a greater portion of their funds are invested in the lives of people living in poverty.

For two consecutive years, we managed to operate below the support cost KPI of 15%. The support cost ratio for 2020 was 12% of total expenditure. This achievement was possible because of the country leadership's commitment to adhere strictly to the cost-effective measures instituted in 2017.

Fundraising cost, which decreased substantially by 41% compared to the year before, accounted for 3% of total expenditure. We could not implement most of the fundraising activities because of the pandemic. However, the fundraising team strategised to effectively carry out their sponsorship activities without risking the lives of staff and community members.

Governance cost decreased by 15% compared to the previous year, which can be attributed to the new ways of organising and conducting meetings. Most of our meetings were held online, which attracted less cost besides internet bundle packages provided to Board members.



10.3 Reserve Analysis

Reserves held as at the beginning of the year was £1,828k. At the end of the reporting period, total net assets decreased to £1,477k. Out of this, £91k relates to unspent funds held for donor projects. The remaining amount of £1,386k is RG reserve, which is equivalent to 5.0 months' expenditure. The total reserve held at AAI increased from £731k to £934k.

10.4 Balance Sheet Analysis

Property Plants and Equipment value is £332k. There were no additions or disposals during the year. Debtors balances at the end of the reporting period was £1,028, out of which £3k relates to staff debtors, mainly working floats that were not retired at the end of the reporting period. Also included in the debtors' amount is AAI debt of £934k. The remaining amounts are prepayment of £12k and other debt of

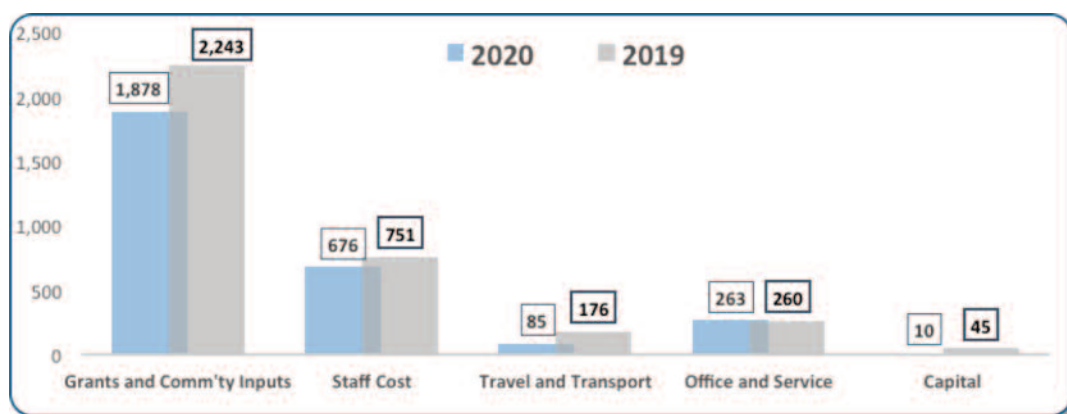


Fig. 3: Natural Cost Distribution of 2020 Expenditure Compared with 2019

Table 3: Statutory Cost Analysis (2020) (GBP'000)

	Actual	Forecast	Plan	Var	Util %	Prop	2019	% Change
Programme	2,424	2,443	2,726	302	89%	83%	2,748	-12%
Fundraising	86	96	170	84	51%	3%	145	-41%
Governance	53	51	58	5	91%	2%	62	-15%
Support	349	390	485	136	72%	12%	520	-33%
Total	2,912	2,980	3,439	527	85%	100%	3,475	-16%

£50k (mainly partners grant yet to be retired). At the end of the period, recharges not yet credited to AAG was £29k.

10.5 Exchange Rate Movements

Planned exchange rate for the reporting period was £1.00 to GH¢6.7000. The average exchange rate for the year was £1.00 to GH¢7.3766. The period exchange rate deviation from the plan was 10%.

Period	£	GH¢
Rate at 1st January 2020	1	7.5053
Planned rate for 2020	1	6.7000
Average rate for 2020	1	7.3766
Rate at 31st December 2020	1	7.7612
Planned rate versus Average rate variance	10%	
Variance between opening and closing rates	3%	

10.6 Risk Impact

Covid-19 continues to spread and impact on individuals and organisations across the world. The impact has direct or indirect effects on our work, portending some dire consequences on operations and financial sustainability. We also stand the high risk of returning funds to donors if we are unable to implement activities or negotiate to repurpose planned activities. We have, therefore, began a comprehensive review to assess the impact of the pandemic on our income streams.

10.7 Systems and Process Improvement

In line with the enabling objectives of our CSP which seeks to improve financial management, planning and reporting through the development of effective systems and processes, we successfully rolled-out the Global Finance System (GFS). The second phase, which is the 'Procure to Pay' (P2P), was completed and rolled-out in December 2020.

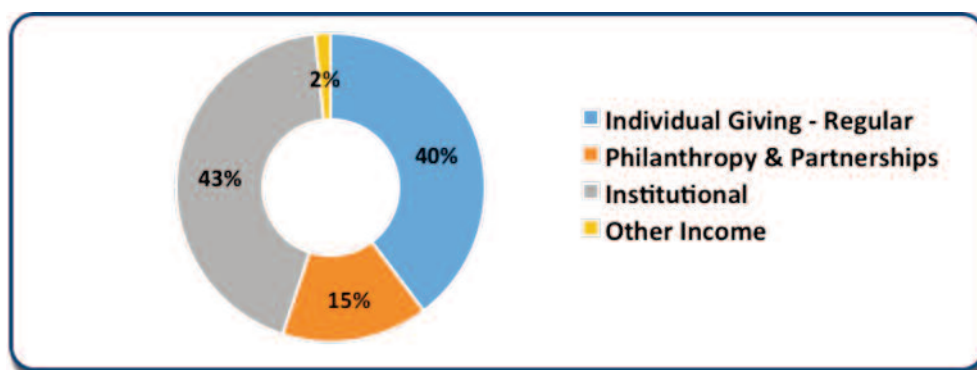
Several reporting templates linked to the system have also been developed to facilitate reporting and enhance the work of the finance team. An interactive management account dashboard has been designed to produce periodic management accounts. The dashboard is user-friendly and provides insightful information to non-finance staff. Monthly and quarterly management accounts have been produced for senior management within the period. The dashboard has significantly reduced the time spent by the finance team in generating management accounts.

We are hopeful that the introduction of these systems will improve the efficiency and effectiveness of our financial system and the quality of our financial reports.

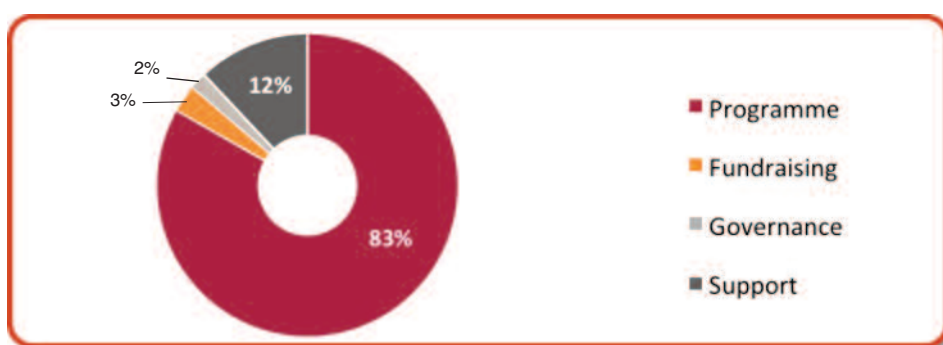


Figures 4, 5 & 6: Summary of Income and Expenditure Streams

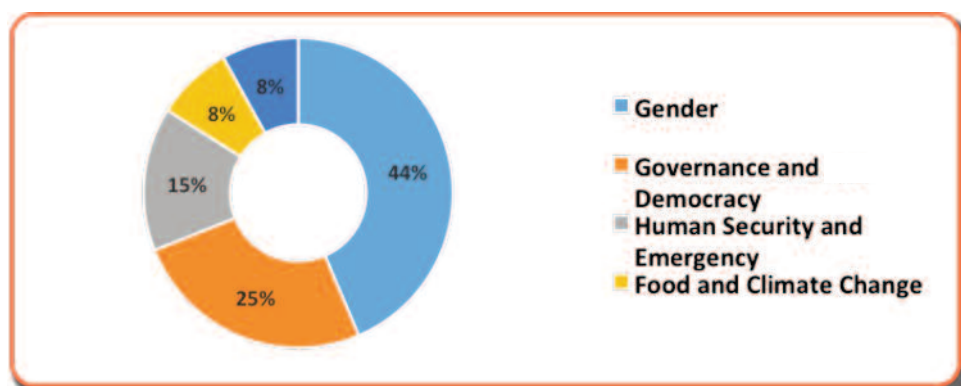
HOW OUR WORK IS FUNDED



WHERE YOUR FUNDS GO



HOW THE FUNDS WERE SPENT



11.0 HUMAN RESOURCE AND ORGANISATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS (HROE)

To achieve the objectives of our human resource management under the strategic enablers in our CSP, we designed and implemented strategies to motivate staff towards the achievement of our vision. In the year, we embarked on staff recruitment to fill critical vacancies, deepened the awareness of staff on our feminist leadership principles, and developed a Human Resource Management Information System (HRMIS) to enable us track and manage employee performance and competence. The HRMIS would also promote human functions such as storing employee data, recruitment, benefits administration, time and attendance, and training.

11.1.1 Staff Strength, Appointments and Exits

In the year, we worked with fifty-nine (59) staff, comprising twenty-two (22) females representing 37% and thirty-seven (37) males representing 63%. To meet the gender parity ratio of 50:50, we will continue to prioritise and increase our work with women and recruit more females in the ensuing years.

As part of our human development strategy to resource young professionals with practical skills, we engaged national service personnel and interns for our regional

programme and national offices, to enable them acquire useful experience for the world of work. The service personnel and interns numbered thirteen (13), comprising ten females and three males.

Table 4: Quarterly Composition of Staff in the Year 2020

Quarter	Female	Male	Total
1	24	39	63
2	24	39	63
3	22	36	58
4	20	34	54

Within the year, eleven (11) staff comprising six females and five males, exited the organisation. Five were involuntary exits while six left voluntarily. Compared to 2019 where eight staff exited the organisation, 2020 saw a marginal increase in staff exits. We appointed four staff to fill the positions of Programme Support Officer, Regional Accountant, Programme Officer and Quality and Knowledge Management Manager. This was to ensure the sustainability of our work and enable us deliver on the MPs of CSP VI.



11.2 AAG Contingency Plan for Covid-19

Following the confirmation of coronavirus cases in Ghana in March 2020, we developed a contingency plan to spell out key scenarios and actions required to assist AAG to reduce the risk of infection to staff. This was in line with our duty of care and commitment to safeguard staff health, safety and security at all times. Staff were continuously updated on Covid-19 cases in the country through emails and the staff WhatsApp platform, with recommendations on how to prevent infections and seek medical attention in cases of infection.

We temporarily closed our offices for three months and encouraged staff to work from home. However, we permitted office visits for very essential work. Staff followed a monitored work schedule where some worked from home with minimal office presence where necessary while others had only occasional office visits. In compliance with AAI office opening framework, we reopened our offices in June 2020 when the Government announced a gradual easing of the Covid-19 restrictions and lifted the countrywide lockdown. With Accra being the epicenter of infections in Ghana, we instituted a rotational work schedule to avoid overcrowding and reduce personal contact. In August 2020, we resumed full operation at the Accra office, with strict Covid-19 protocols in place.

We distributed reusable nose masks for all staff and interns and provided hand sanitisers in all our offices. Veronica

buckets and soaps were made available at vantage points in our offices, to encourage staff and visitors to wash their hands frequently.

11.2.1 Confirmed Staff Cases

We recorded two cases of Covid-19 in AAG. One was recorded in the Upper East Region while the second case occurred at our Head Office in Accra. The employees who contracted the virus underwent treatment and returned to their posts to perform their duties.

11.2.2 Staff Travels and Virtual Meetings

Due to the pandemic, we suspended all international travels, with only essential local travels approved by the Country Director. This decision was taken to protect staff from contracting the virus. With the suspension of international travels and Government restrictions on movement in 2020, we encouraged virtual meetings where workshops, Board, Management, and other team meetings were held online.

11.2.3 Zero Sexual Harassment

We remained committed to preventing and responding to any form of sexual harassment, exploitation and abuse (SHEA), including child abuse and abuse of adults at-risk, whether carried out by staff or representatives, or resulting from our work. In the year, AAG did not record any SHEA cases. We will continue to strengthen the awareness of the policies and encourage staff and partners to report cases.



11.3 Staff Durbar and Social Security

In January 2020, we held a durbar for AAG staff at the Elmina Beach Resort, which brought together employees from our eleven (11) regional offices and the Head Office, for learning and sharing through recreational and other team building exercises. Participants reviewed AAG's human resource policy and reflected on our ways of work, to enable us work towards our organisational goals. As part of our commitment to the security of our staff, we invited representatives from SSNIT, United Pensions Trustees, and AAG Tier Two Fund Management operators, to take staff through Ghana's new pension reforms.

An excursion was organised for staff to the Kakum National Park and the Elmina Castle. The staff durbar renewed the energy of staff and deepened interpersonal relationships, with the aim of enhancing performance.

12.0 CORPORATE GOVERNANCE AND RISK MANAGEMENT

To improve the effectiveness of our governance, risk management and internal controls, we adopted a risk-based assessment in our annual audit planning process. This was in response to our commitment in our CSP *"to improve financial management, planning and reporting through the development of effective systems and processes to promote accountability and transparency across the organisation."*

Despite the uncertain times created by the Covid-19 pandemic, we continued to make risk-based decisions to determine which areas should be included in our audit plan, depending on available resources. Using the risk-based audit approach, we identified our inherent risks, assessed and ranked them in terms of high, medium, and low risks. The risks profile was used in drawing the annual audit plan, which was communicated to management to enable them manage risks.

The primary role of the Internal Audit function is to assist the Board of Directors and Senior Management to protect the assets and reputation, and promote the sustainability of the organisation. This is determined by assessing whether all significant risks are identified, appropriately reported and effectively managed and controlled by the Board and Senior Management.

The audit function also assessed the new ways of work in the year due to Covid-19. The new ways included desk reviews, virtual meetings and fewer travels. These limitations notwithstanding, there was a modest improvement in the execution of the risk-based audit plan for the year.

12.1.1 Audit Support for Africa and International

The approved audit plan was revised during the mid-year. At the end of the year, ten audits were conducted even though nine were planned. This was in addition to two peer support investigations for Africa and the Global



PHOTO REPORT of AAG STAFF DURBAR

ELMINA BEACH RESORT



Staff fraternise during role play



Country Director, S. Abdul-Rahman (left) and Internal Auditor, Sylvanus Kpare(right) walk in the lawns at Kakum



Staff on canopy walk at Kakum National Park



Group photo of AAG Staff



Secretariat, bringing the total audit and investigations to twelve (12), representing 133% of our overall achievement. The investigations are still on-going.

12.1.2 Audit Support for Local Partners

In the year, we reviewed a total of sixteen (16) Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) on behalf of our partners. To ensure strict compliance with local and international regulations, all MOUs with our partners conformed to strict compliance policies. Provisions on policies such as Child Safeguarding, Anti-Bribery/Corruption, Anti-Terrorist Funding, and SHEA were enshrined in the MOUs and copies of these policies were made available to partners.

13.0 CHALLENGES AND LIMITATIONS

Covid-19 was the worst pandemic to hit the world in recent history, negatively impacting social and economic lives around the globe. This was due to reduced productivity, loss of life, business closures, trade disruption, and the decimation of the tourism and hospitality industry. It caused the largest global recession with more than a third of the world's population placed on lockdown at various times.

Towards the end of 2020, Ghana's Covid-19 active cases had reduced significantly, hitting below 800. However, infections increased shortly thereafter. While schools had been closed to prevent large scale infections, the government reopened educational

institutions while urging strict compliance with the safety protocols. If infection rates go up again, lockdowns may be imposed, which will affect national life and AAG's programme delivery.

The closure of schools compelled children to stay at home, with many adolescent girls becoming victims of sexual harassment and abuse, leading to teenage pregnancies and other forms of gender-based violence.

Ghana's education policies and regulations do not prevent such girls from enjoying their right to education, continuing to attend or resuming school after childbirth. However, stigmatisation discourages such girls from going back to school after delivery. This right violation needs to be addressed while also building the confidence of all girls to envisage the risk, resist and report sexual harassment and abuse.

While supporting rightsholders, partners and movements to cope with the challenges of Covid-19, some of the communities in the Upper East Region were hit by floods on an annual basis, perpetually deepening the woes of vulnerable communities. The 2020 floods had devastating effects on the livelihoods of people, as farms and houses were submerged under water and destroyed. Official reports from the National Disaster Management Organisation (NADMO) recorded no deaths though there were a few fatalities in the adjoining communities.

Our campaign to promote CRSA was



hampered by the proliferation of external chemical inputs (fertilisers, weedicides and insecticides), as many farmers acquired these chemicals for their commercial production, as against organic inputs. The indiscriminate use of these inorganic agro-chemicals has grave implications for human health, the safety of the environment and biodiversity.

14.0 REFLECTIONS AND LESSONS LEARNT

ActionAid Ghana regularly conducts reviews and reflections on our work through various interactions with our staff, country leadership, Board of Directors, partners, collaborators, and our communities. The Participatory Review and Reflection Process (PRRP) is one of the major institutionalised mechanisms for stock taking and priority setting, as provided for in ActionAid's Accountability, Learning and Planning Systems (ALPS). In the year, we used the PRRPs to assess the effectiveness and impact of our programmes, projects and other interventions.

The year 2020 marked the end of Strategic Implementation Framework (SIF I), which is the first phase of the delivery of ActionAid Global Strategy 2028 while a successor, SIF II, was considered for 2021–2023. The key reflections and lessons learnt in relation to our work in year are discussed below.

Our mobilisation, networking and facilitation of joint actions among

smallholder women farmer movements and other rightsholder organisations and coalitions, contributed to securing gender responsive opportunities for women. This was in relation to the Government's Planting for Food and Jobs (PFJs), Rearing for Food and Jobs (RFJ), Planting for Export and Rural Development (PERD) and other agricultural value chain programmes. Under various project funding, we have also supported skills training, entrepreneurship and livelihood development opportunities, especially for women and the youth.

There has been a remarkable shift from subsistence to commercial agriculture, where farming and rearing have become major livelihood options for farmers and various agri-businesses emerging along the value chain. The availability of mechanisation services and access to agro-chemicals is boosting this expansion. However, the long-term repercussions to CRSA and biodiversity have not been fully considered.

Climate change and its manifestations in the forms of erratic rainfall, floods, droughts, disease, and pest outbreaks such as fall army worm, have now become the reality of life in our communities. A high degree of commitment is required by national level duty-bearers and local authorities, by supporting the review, development and implementation of climate adaptation and resilience policies.

The striking lessons of Covid-19 included the need to re-think and



strengthen online and virtual teaching and learning, to complement the face-to-face model of education delivery. The experiences and lessons of the new ways of learning have made it necessary for the adoption of virtual means across all levels of programme implementation and stakeholder engagement. In our challenging fundraising environment, effective virtual engagement approaches will bring cost-effective benefits and drastically reduce operational costs.

Where possible, many of our stakeholder meetings and engagements will be virtual. The capacities of staff are being strengthened to enable them efficiently utilise these methods. Radio and other mass communication media will also remain viable choices for public sensitisations. At the national level, the delivery and access to the right to education require universal accessibility to virtual technology. This would be pursued as a key priority campaign in our work.

Our policies on SHEA, safeguarding and decent work campaigns, have been commended by our stakeholders. This goodwill will enable us influence national level policies, including pushing our advocacy for decent work and violence-free work spaces.

15.0 CONCLUSION

The year 2020 will remain a major flashpoint in global socio-economic reviews and reflections. The emergence of Covid-19 threatened and affected humanity in unimaginable ways. AAG's focus is the plight of people living in poverty and other marginalised groups.

In order not to roll-back the gains made over the previous years, we made strenuous efforts to continue the implementation of strategic interventions aimed at addressing the root causes of poverty and exclusion. We supported people in deprived communities to meet their basic needs through our Covid-19 relief intervention.

We remain committed to working with both state and non-state actors, philanthropic partners, activists, social movements, and local communities, to bring about the desired social progress at the local, national, and global level.

The powerful change stories and successful development interventions covered in this report are testaments to the impact we continue to make in the lives of people living in poverty, especially women. This is our motivation to work assiduously towards our vision of achieving social justice, gender equality and poverty eradication.





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