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2023 ANNUAL REPORT

Active Citizenship for Social Justice in Motion

April 2024

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Group picture of ActionAid Ghana staff at the National Launch of Country Strategic Paper VII.



Our Vision

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



Our Mission

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

Our Values



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



Equity and Justice, requiring us to ensure the realisation of our vision for everyone, irrespective of gender, sexual orientation and gender identity, race, ethnicity, caste, class, age, HIV status, disability, location, and religion.



Integrity, requiring us to be honest, transparent, and accountable at all levels for the effectiveness of our actions and our use of resources and open in our judgments and communications with others.



Solidarity with People Living in Poverty and Exclusion will be the only bias in our commitment to the fight against poverty, injustice, and gender inequality.



Courage of Conviction, requiring us to be creative and radical, bold, and innovative – without fear of failure - in pursuit of making the greatest possible impact on the causes of poverty, injustice, and gender inequality.

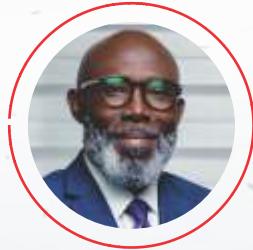


Independence from any religious or party-political affiliation.



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

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Director/Board Chairperson



Salatu Abubakar
Vice Board Chair



Bennie Aniagyei



Daniel Inkoom



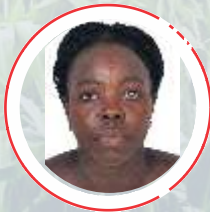
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Christiana Ago Badoo



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Country Director



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Child Sponsorship &
High Value Manager



Fina Agbenyegah
Human Resource and
Organisational Effectiveness



Abdallah Abdul-Rahaman
Head, Finance

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ACRONYMS

AAG	–	ActionAid Ghana
AAI	–	ActionAid International
AAUK	–	ActionAid UK
AEA	–	Agriculture Extension Agents
ALPs	–	Accountability Learning and Planning System
BECE	–	Basic Education Certificate Examination
CMS	–	Contract Management System
CMSP	–	Combatting Modern Slavery Project
CRSA	–	Climate Resilient Sustainable Agriculture
CS	–	Child Sponsorship
CSP	–	Country Strategy Paper
EU	–	European Union
FAO	–	Food and Agriculture Organisation
FEV	–	Female Extension Volunteer
GEAP	–	Girls Empowerment and Advocacy Platform
GES	–	Ghana Education Service
GLSS	–	Ghana Living Standards Survey
GS	–	Global Secretariat
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
JH	–	Junior High School
MoFA	–	Ministry of Food and Agriculture
MOU	–	Memorandum of Understanding
NACCAS	–	National Climate Change Adaptation Strategy
NCAP	–	National Climate Adaptation Plan
NDPC	–	National Development Planning Commission
NGIDP	–	Northern Ghana Integrated Development Project
Norad	–	Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation
PEOY Ghana	–	Providing Employment Opportunities for Young People in Ghana
PPL	–	People's Postcode Lottery
PRRP	–	Participatory Review and Reflection Process
PFJ	–	Planting for Food and Jobs

PLWD	–	People Living with Disability
PTA	–	Parent-Teacher Association
RG	–	Regular Giving
SDGs	–	Sustainable Development Goals
SHEA	–	Sexual Harassment, Exploitation and Abuse
SIF	–	Strategy Implementation Framework
SMC	–	School Management Committee
VSLA	–	Village Savings and Loans Association
WHO	–	World Health Organisation
YUWM	–	Young Urban Women Movement

LIST OF AAG's CORE PROGRAMME AND PROJECT PARTNERS

ASUDEV	–	Action for Sustainable Development
JIFAN	–	Jirapa Farmers Network
BEWDA	–	Belim - Wusa Development Agency
WOM	–	Widows and Orphans Movement
CMCE	–	Coalition for Maternal Health and Community Empowerment
SODIA	–	Social Development and Improvement Agency
NOCID	–	Network of Communities in Development
URBANET	–	Urban Agriculture Network
GAWU	–	General Agriculture Workers Union
FIDA	-	International Federation of Women Lawyers
GSPCA	–	Ghana Society for the Protection and Care of Animals
GRATIS FOUNDATION		
Tree Aid		
SOGNTABA		
NORSAAC		

DONORS AND INSTITUTIONAL PARTNERSHIPS

The European Union (EU)

Norwegian Agency for Development and Cooperation (Norad)

Hewlett Foundation

ActionAid UK

The Donkey Sanctuary (TDS)

Medicor Foundation

People's Postcode Lottery (PPL), UK

Australian High Commission

Italian High Value Donor

CHILD SPONSORSHIP FUNDING SOURCES

United Kingdom (UK)

Greece

Italy

FOREWORD



I bring you warm greetings from ActionAid Ghana. Once again, it is my pleasure to share our Annual Report with our stakeholders including rightsholders, supporters, collaborators, partners and all those who have supported us in our fight against social injustice in Ghana.

The 2023 Annual Report comes under the theme “Active Citizenship for Social Justice in Motion” inspired by the goal of our new Country Strategy Paper VII (CSP VII), which was launched in October 2023, that seeks to see “a just, feminist, and resilient Ghana, offering equitable

opportunities for all citizens”. The new CSP VII enjoins us to intensify our work with social movements and activists to push for our vision of achieving social justice, gender equality and poverty reduction.

For the next six years till 2028, we will be working towards achieving the Strategic Priorities in the new CSP by offering equitable opportunities to citizens to actively and resiliently resist the causes of social injustice and gender inequality with the support of our partners in solidarity. We would promote national and regional

level campaigns with our social movements and activists as well as deepen our collaborations with other groups to sustain our gains over the years. This 2023 report is the first account of our work under the new CSP " Active Citizenship for Social Justice."

The report is a summary of AAG's key achievements, challenges and lessons learnt under the various Strategic Priorities and Focus Areas. We also present our impact stories from our prior and present interventions in our programme areas, campaigns and advocacy work with our social movements and activists. As promoters of Human Rights, especially of women's Rights, we were guided by our feminist principles and Human Rights based Approach (HRBA) to deliver the most enduring impacts on our constituents. This afforded us the opportunity to reach the most marginalised citizens in extended communities and to effectively contribute towards meeting the sustainable development goals (SDGs). The year 2023, was a particularly successful but challenging one in the history of our country and in most parts of the world. The impact of Climatic and Humanitarian threats, Violence Against Women and the related issues of Indecent Work, Political and Governance instability,

worsening Global Economic status and Global Financial Crises posed many challenges to our world. These developments increased the growing inequalities and widened the gap between the rich and deprived, thereby creating power imbalances among citizens of the world. These have deepened poverty levels, leading to harsher living conditions, and continues to test our resolve to extend the frontiers of human rights and restore dignity to citizens living in poverty. We wish to therefore take this opportunity to emphasise our ardent resolve to defend Human Rights.

We also wish to express our profound gratitude to our Board, General Assembly, donors, partner institutions, traditional authorities and our hardworking staff, for their continued support and contribution to our work in 2023. We are in alliance to create a better world devoid of injustice, inequality and we believe that a just, equitable and sustainable world is possible if we collaborate to promote social justice and gender equality for all citizens.

Thank you very much.



John Nkaw
Country Director



1.0

Executive Summary

The aggregated data on AAG programme and project beneficiaries for 2023 shows that 162,554 people were directly impacted. The gender disaggregation comprised 105,713 females representing 65% and 56,841 males representing 35% of the overall beneficiaries, clearly manifesting AAG as a women-rights focused development organisation. The organisation is promoting women's rights by working with allies such as women's rights organisations, networks, research institutions, government agencies and other key stakeholders to mobilise women to demand their rights and live dignified lives. . By age disaggregation,

the beneficiaries of AAG's interventions consist of 79,598 Adults (36+ years) representing 49%, 51,957 Youth (18 – 35 years) representing 32% and 30,999 Children (<18 years) representing 19%.Benedicta Boyuo displays sample of the agro-processed products she sells.

Within the rising threats of climate change vulnerabilities, AAG and its allies have been undertaking advocacy and campaigns for the adoption of gender responsive adaptation actions at both local and national level to promote sustainable development. By so doing, Agroecology is being vigorously



Benedicta Boyuo displays sample of the agro-processed products she sells.

promoted, and characterised by upgrading the skills of communities, the youth and women groups in compost production, indigenous seed production and improved agronomic practices for crop production. AAG's policy influence has demanded that government should disinvest in chemical based harmful industrial agriculture to invest in the agroecology which holds the key for the enhancement of Ghana's food security, improved employment of smallholder farmers, especially women and contribute towards the adaptive capacity of Ghanaians. The EU funded Northern Ghana Integrated Development Project (NGIDP) provided greater impetus for AAG to upscale its agroecology and other Climate Resilient Sustainable Agriculture (CRSA) practices. The NGIDP endline evaluation provided clear evidence about the impact of adopting the CRSA practices by farmers. An overwhelming 93.1% obtained increased yields, whereby 49.3% had increased yield of between 10% and 50% while 43.8% had a higher yield of between 60% and 100%, with only 5.3% reporting no increase in yield and 2% recording reduced yield. Madam Benedicta Boyuo from Billaw community in the Lambussie District of the Upper West Region is an outstanding testimony to this, which eventually contributed to her recognition of being the 2023 District Best Farmer.

AAG has consolidated its strategic alliances with the University of Energy and Natural Resources (Sunyani), University of Environment and Sustainable Development (Somanya), and University for Development Studies (Tamale). The partnership is being leveraged upon to connect well researched perspectives from academia to influence national policies and promote the adoption of adaptation strategies at the grassroots.

Opportunities are being pursued for the alliance to jointly implement their impactful ideas.

In terms of resilient livelihoods, the Norad funded Combatting Modern Slavery (CMS) Project provided alternative livelihood opportunities to 398 female-headed households which contributed to reducing their vulnerability and engaging them in indecent jobs. The beneficiaries are now productively engaged under 16 different livelihood clusters namely Small Ruminants Rearing (Goat, Rabbits), Catering (Bread, Pastries, Cakes), Ice Cream and Soft Drinks, Bee Keeping (Honey Production), Bead Work (Sandals, Bags), Tilling, Detergents (Soap Making), Make-Up, Pomade Making, Vegetable Farming, Gari Processing and 'Dawadawa' Processing. The Young Urban Women (YUW) Project funded by Hewlett Foundation has also continued to extend livelihoods skills to young women on various areas.

On tackling gender-based violence, AAG successfully built community-based structures in collaboration with government agencies to combat the menace. For example, AAG has collaborated with law enforcement institutions to established grassroot volunteer allies known as Community-Based Anti-violence Teams (COMBATs), who monitor, identify, mediate and link cases to the DOVSSU and related agencies. The EU funded Transformative Action for Gender Equality (TAGE) Project has also contributed towards strengthening the COMBATs in 64 communities and Para-Legal Teams in eight (8) Districts across Greater-Accra, Oti, Northern and Upper East Regions. Moreover, 720 men and boys from the 64 communities are actively working as Change Agents and Peer Educators by

contributing to influencing behaviour change and nurturing positive attitudes regarding women's rights and the need to eschew gender-based violence. The CMS project made enormous contributions towards reducing the phenomenon of modern slavery over the 2021 to 2023 lifespan period. The project directly contributed to the rescue and reintegration of 79 survivors of labour trafficking, sex trafficking, child labour, cyber-exploitation, and other unfair contract practices.

The molestations of older, poor and vulnerable women, under the guise of being alleged witches, gained national outrage upon the cruel murder of Akua Denteh from Kafaba community in Savannah Region in 2020. The perpetrators were arrested, prosecuted, and eventually sentenced to 12 years imprisonment in July 2023. Nevertheless, the barbaric torture and abuse of the rights of alleged witches continues, especially within the northern and north-east regions. AAG as the co-convenor for the Ghana Anti-Witchcraft Accusation Coalition championed the advocacy and specifically spearheaded the facilitation of the promulgation of the anti-witchcraft accusation draft bill by the Parliamentary Select Committee. Eventually, the Criminal Offences (Amendment) Act 2023 Criminalizing Witchcraft Accusations was passed in July 2023 in parliament. However, its assent into law was declined by the President citing cost implications

on the consolidated fund. The civil society coalition are continuing to exert pressure for the legislation to come into force through which ever means deemed fit.

Adolescent reproductive health rights, particularly relating to the predicament of providing sanitary pads for managing menstrual hygiene, has also become a critical subject matter of conversations. AAG has been one of the voices pushing for policy level attention to this. The decision by government to remove taxes on locally produced sanitary pads is commendable but must culminate in the eventual accessibility and affordability of the pads to girls from poor homes in rural, peri-urban and urban communities.

ActionAid also worked through a multistakeholder process to demand gender responsive public services from government of Ghana. This was through education financing research and campaigns, tax justice campaigns through the tax justice coalition, budget tracking of public funds. This helped in pushing back on austerity in relation to cutbacks in education budget allocations. It also helps in making the government keep track on its education sector funding allocation of targets of 4%-6% of its gross domestic production and 20% of expenditure. The milestones achieved in 2023 as the inception year for AAG's CSP VII is commendable as its flagship and impactful interventions are being consolidated from the CSP VI.

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**INVOLVE WOMEN IN
LEADERSHIP AND
DECISION MAKING**
#EmbraceEquity



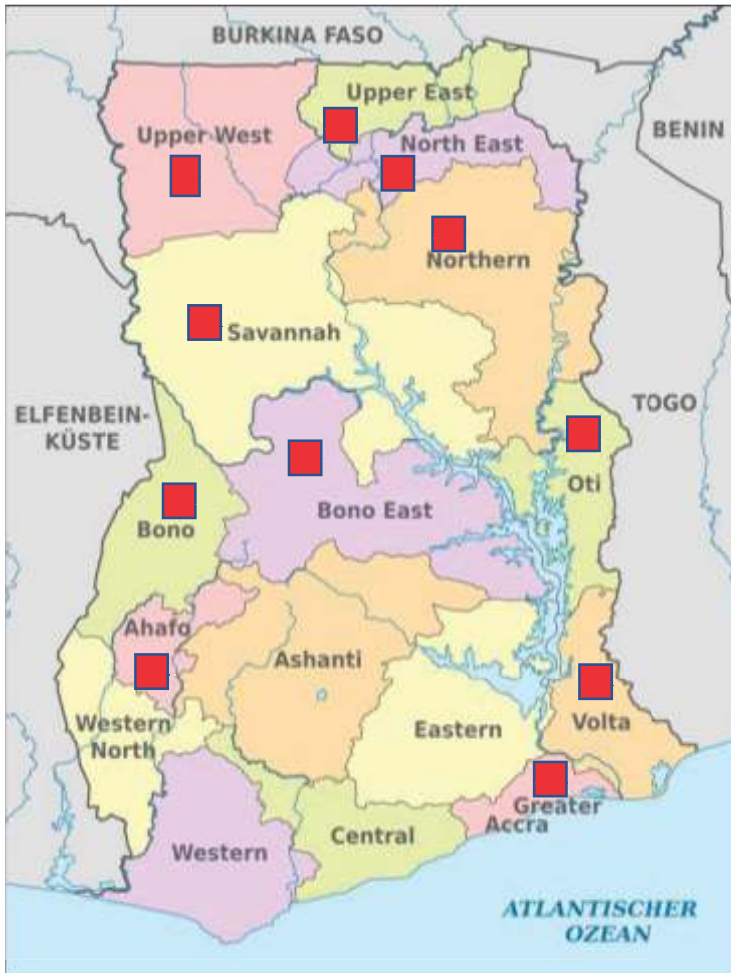
2.0

Profile Of Actionaid Ghana (AAG)

ActionAid Ghana (AAG) is an affiliate member of the ActionAid Federation working to see a just, fair, and sustainable world in which everybody enjoys the right to life of dignity, and freedom from poverty and oppression. AAG has been working in Ghana since 1990 and is a national legal entity with a functional Board of Trustees and a General Assembly which provide the needed oversight governance role.

AAG works in the most deprived communities in eleven (11) out of the sixteen (16) administrative regions of Ghana namely, Upper East, Upper West, Northern, North-East, Savannah, Bono, Bono East, Ahafo, Oti, Volta and Greater Accra. Impactful interventions have been implemented in forty-six (46) Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies.

The development philosophy of AAG is centered around the Human Rights-Based Approach (HRBA). This approach enables AAG to organise, empower and facilitate right-holder advocacy and campaigns with the aim of demanding proactive action and commitment from global and national authorities towards climate justice, equitable resource redistribution, delivery of gender-responsive public services, formulation and implementation of policies and legislations that guarantee and protect fundamental human rights, inclusivity, transparency, and accountable governance. Based on this, AAG works with community members, social



movements, grassroots organisations, vulnerable populations and collaborators including CSO coalitions, networks, and the media on protecting human rights of vulnerable people. AAG seeks to address gender-based violence and inequalities, challenging the barriers to decent work, building resilience against climate change vulnerabilities, ensuring equitable, fair, and just redistribution of public resources and connecting across spatial boundaries.

AAG's rooted programming is expressed through five (5) Regional Programme outfits. These are Greater Accra, Volta and Oti Regional Programme (GAVORP) which operates from the head office in Accra, Bono and Ahafo Regional Programme (BARP) from Sunyani,

Northern Regional Programme (NRP) from Tamale, Upper East Regional Programme (UERP) from Zebilla and Upper West Regional Programme (UWRP) from Wa. This makes it possible for us to deliver impactful, inclusive, and sustainable development programmes at the grassroots. AAG also actively contributes to national and global campaigns that challenge patriarchal, political, and economic systems that perpetuate injustices and gender inequality by tackling structural drivers and triggers of poverty and exclusion.

The Global Platform (GP) has been the outfit upon which AAG's youth mobilisation, capacity building and activism is anchored.



3.0

AAG'S INTERNAL CONTEXT

Amidst the Covid-19 pandemic and the global disruption of the Russia-Ukraine war, ActionAid (AAG) completed the terminal evaluation of its Country Strategy Paper (CSP) VI, titled 'People's Power for Social Justice'(2018 to 2022). The evaluation of CSP VII generated much useful lessons and led to the development of our Seventh CSP (VII) christened 'Active Citizenship for Social Justice (2023-2028), with the commencement of implementation this year Our CSP VII is hinged on the fact that social change does not occur in a vacuum but through deliberate participatory engagements and accountable processes. Hence, the

CSP VII is a call to action for social movements, activists, communities, people's organisations, youth groups, partners, women's groups, staff, and all stakeholders to promote women-led interventions that embed and support the advancement of feminist, just and transformational leadership in Ghana. The Ultimate goal is geared towards achieving social justice, gender equality and poverty eradication. The diagram below presents an overview of the CSP VII Strategic Priorities (SPs) and Focused Areas (FAs), thus defining the programme priorities around which interventions will revolve over the next five years.

GOAL: A just, feminist, and resilient Ghana, offering equitable opportunities for all citizens



SP1 Green Economy and Resilient Livelihoods

- **FA1.1:** Promote Agroecology and Food Sovereignty
- **FA1.2:** Expand Access to Green Livelihoods, Renewable Energy and Economic Empowerment Opportunities
- **FA1.3:** Enhance Women's Secured Access to and Control Over Land and Other Productive Resources
- **FA1.4:** Promote Disaster Risk Reduction and Humanitarian Response
- **FA1.5:** Promote Climate Justice that Addresses Loss and Damage



SP2 Women's Rights and Decent Work

- **FA2.1:** Advocate for Zero Tolerance for Violence Against Women and Girls
- **FA2.2:** Campaign for the Recognition, Redistribution and Reduction of the Burden of Care Work (UCW)
- **FA2.3:** Promote Decent Work in both Formal and Informal Workspaces
- **FA2.4:** Promote Access to Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights
- **FA2.5:** Promote Access to Existing Social Protection Services



SP3 Active Citizenship, Accountability and Gender Responsive Public Services

- **FA3.1:** Enhance Progressive Mobilisation and Redistribution of Public Resources.
- **FA3.2:** Promote Access to Quality and Gender Responsive Public Basic Education
- **FA3.3:** Promote Access to Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) Services
- **FA3.4:** Promote Active Citizenship and Gender Inclusive Political Participation
- **FA3.5:** Combat Violent Extremism and Conflicts



The CSP VII consciously incorporates the strategic priorities of the Global Strategy- 'Action for Social Justice' and specifically aligns with the Strategy Implementation Framework (SIF) 2 priorities of advancing system change for feminist leadership and women's rights, climate and economic, and humanitarian justice, while also making provision for the implementation of disaster preparedness and response actions.

ActionAid looks forward to maintaining our decades of community-rooted advocacy and campaigns by working with

people's organisations, social movements, youth groups and other marginalised groups. The social movements will also connect with international level coalitions and actors to call for responsive actions towards overcoming the drivers of poverty and injustices, as well as seeking accountability from global actors on their commitments to effecting systems change to the neo-colonial and pro-industrialisation world order that perpetuates economic turmoil, debt crises and climate change induced emergencies.

Various social, political, economic, and climatic factors had a bearing on the programme and project interventions as well as the general operations of AAG during the period of 2023.

4.1. The Climatic and Humanitarian Threats

AAG is very much inclined to contribute towards addressing global and local conditions that influence climate change. The agreement reached at the Egypt COP27 in November 2022 to establish a “Loss and Damage Fund” provides great impetus to climate justice organisations like ActionAid to continue to press further our strategic advocacy agenda. AAG and its allies have been undertaking advocacy and campaigns for the adoption of responsive climate adaptation actions at both local and national level. Strategic alliances have been built with the University of Energy and Natural Resources (Sunyani), University of Environment and Sustainable Development (Somanya) and the University for Development Studies (Tamale) upon which we leverage and connect cutting-edge researched from academia to influence national policies and the adoption of adaptation strategies at the grassroots. AAG and its partners, including social movements joined the international level campaigns to demand for polluter nations and big corporations to honour their fair-share of contributions to the “Loss and Damage Fund.” This fund among other things seeks to support the financing of climate adaptation, building the resilience of

frontline communities, and providing emergency response interventions in low-income countries and vulnerable communities.

The rising incidence of floods and climate induced disasters are becoming humanitarian threat in Ghana like other countries. The situation is worry as threatening settlements and livelihoods of people living in poverty in frontline communities. The annual ritual of the spillage of the Bagre Dam in Burkina Faso and the Weija Dam in Greater Accra wreaked major havoc on the lives and properties of the populace around the catchment areas. . For example, Nine (9) school pupils lost their lives when their boat capsized during their routine journey to school at Faana-Bortianor a nearby inland community in the Greater Accra region. AAG responded swiftly by donating 50 life jackets to the island communities through the Weija-Gbawe Municipal Assembly. The biggest flood disaster was the Akosombo Hydroelectric Dam spillage which displaced an estimated 35,857 people according to the United Nations Ghana Report. The floods also destroyed their means of livelihoods including crops, livestock, and most importantly, their locally built homes, affecting several communities in more than seven districts across three regions. The hardest hit areas were South Tongu, Central Tongu, North Tongu and Anlo in Volta Region; Shai Osudoku and Ada East in the Greater Accra; and Asuogyaman in the Eastern Region.

¹Action Aid Presents 50 Life Jackets To Weija–Gbawe Municipal Assembly | News Ghana



4.2. Addressing Violence and Promoting Decent Work

Ghana's commitment to human rights protection is evident in its participation, formulation and ratification of international conventions. The government has ratified key protocols and domesticated through the promulgation of various national legal frameworks. The 1992 constitution serves as the supreme law and guarantees a range of fundamental human rights and freedoms, including the right to life, dignity, freedom of association, religion, and equality before the law. Within this context, AAG has built strong collaborations and partnerships to support the vulnerable people demand their rights and live a life of dignity. AAG is effectively engaging national level actors and their decentralised agencies including the Domestic Violence and Victims Support Unit (DOVVSU), Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice (CHRAJ), Social Welfare and Community Development and Department of Labour

as well as grassroot volunteer allies such as the Community-Based Anti-violence Teams (COMBATs). to increase awareness on the various laws and policies that exist to guarantee protection of rights.

Similarly, AAG also sustained its strategic collaborations with other national and local level actors on the anti-modern slavery campaigns aimed at tackling forced labour, child labour (including worst forms of child labour), human trafficking, debt bondage, unfair contract practices, domestic servitude, forced marriage and commercial sex exploitation. These collaborations include the Domestic Violence and Anti-Human Trafficking Secretariates of the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection; Anti-Human Trafficking Unit (AHTU) of Ghana Police Service; Anti-Smuggling and Trafficking in Persons Unit (ASTIP) of Ghana Immigration Service; Ghana Enterprise Agency (GEA) and its Business Advisory Centers (BACs).



BDA/HR/T8/001

During the year, AAG reinforced its advocacy and campaigns against witchcraft accusations and molestations. Given the scarcity of social services in alleged witches camps, AAG has been providing critical social services to camps, including the provision of clean portable water through mechanized systems, construction of basic schools. Although AAG believes in the disband of alleged witches' camps, we have been contributing towards mitigating the harsh conditions of alleged witches camps to serve as safe havens for rescued and threatened individuals as a short-term measure. So far, AAG, partners and government has successfully closed or disband about 2 camps through a reintegration programme.

Another notable issue is the consideration being given by Ghana's Parliament for the passage of a proper human sexual rights and family values law that will place broad prohibitions on all actions promoting Lesbians, Gays, Bi-Sexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex (LGBTQI+) activities.

4.3. Political and Governance Dynamics

The Russia-Ukraine war and other geopolitical confrontations between super-power nations is creating a more polarised world. This has the propensity of cutting down investments in sustainable livelihoods for poor and vulnerable societies and hence contribute towards food insecurity in many countries, especially for countries that are largely dependent on agriculture inputs and direct food supplies from eastern Europe.

Ghana has experienced three decades of relative stability and democratic governance in Africa. This is under threat

with the re-emergence of autocratic military regimes caused by despondency arising out of deteriorating socio-economic living conditions. This may have fueled the worrisome trend of military take-overs within the West African sub-region. Mali witnessed three coup d'états in 2020 followed by Chad, Guinea, and Sudan in 2021, a double dose of coups in Burkina Faso in 2022, an attempted coup in Guinea-Bissau in 2022 and Niger followed suit in 2023. The ECOWAS, AU and global community have been struggling to devise strategies to address these threats and minimise escalation to other countries.

These developments have further created fertile grounds for an upsurge in terrorist and violent extremists' activities in countries such as Niger, Burkina Faso, Mali and Nigeria. According to a UN Office for West Africa and the Sahel (UNOWAS) report, extremist attacks have increased five-fold in Burkina Faso, Mali, and Niger since 2016 with more than 4,000 deaths reported in 2019 compared with an estimated 770 deaths in the preceding three years. The attacks in Burkina Faso has particularly led to inflow of refugees to communities located in Bawku, China-Paga, Sissala East, Sissala West and Lambussie Districts in Ghana. Ghana has since been put on high alert. National security and safety awareness activities such as the "See Something, Say Something Campaign" have been rolled-out. AAG is seeking to combat violent extremism under our new CSP VII.

On the democratic governance front, Ghana is scheduled to go to the polls in 2024 for its 9th successive Presidential and Parliamentary Elections under the 4th Republic. From all indications, it promises to be a huge contest between the

²Ghana to slash debt-to-GDP as interest payments use up all its revenue (zawya.com)

incumbent party and the major opposition party, with the potential of igniting tensions, in the wake of the high stakes involved. The aftermath of the Ayawaso-West Wuogon incident led to the promulgation of the Vigilantism and Related Offences Act 2019 (Act 999) in 2019 which has contributed to reducing the menace.

4.3. Ghana's Economic Situation

The World Bank Report (2022) observed that the global pandemic exacerbated the debt burden in many countries, with “the average total debt burden of low and middle-income countries increasing in 2020 by roughly 9 percentage points of the gross domestic product, compared with an average annual increase of 1.9 percentage points over the previous decade. Fifty-one countries (including 44 emerging economies) experienced a downgrade in their sovereign debt credit rating and Ghana found itself squarely under this crisis. Ghana's public debt stood at 81.8% of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in 2021 and shot above 100% of GDP by December 2022, thereby placing Ghana at a significant risk of debt distress.

Equally, Ghana's inflation rate increased from 13.9% in January 2022 to 54.1% by December 2022 giving the yearly average

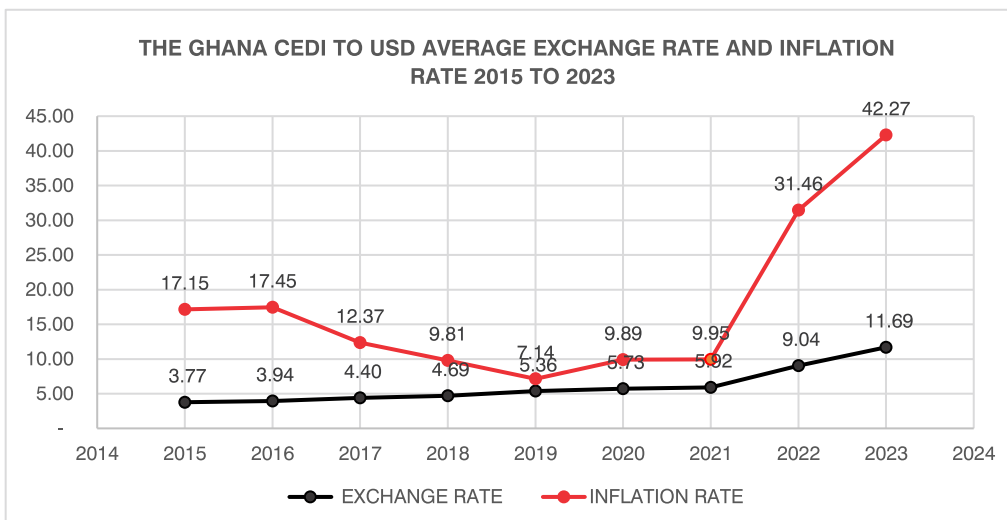
of 31.3%. The Ghana Cedi also experienced a historic depreciation and became part of the classification of the worst performing currencies in the world in 2022. The exchange rate of the Ghana Cedi to United States Dollar (USD) galloped from around GH¢6.00 in January 2022 to GH¢14.00 by October and November but sharply reversed to end the year at GH¢8.00. However, the larger part of 2023 saw improved stability in the Ghana Cedi depreciation with a reduced exchange rate volatility and the inflationary pressures also eased dropping to 23.2% for December 2023, but still registered a higher yearly average of 42.19%. Table 1 below presents the historical performance of Ghana's Cedi outlook vis-à-vis the USD as well as the inflation rates over the period of 2015 to 2023. Livelihoods were negatively impacted, and the youth unemployment rate increased from 8.3% in 2019 to 19.9% in 2022. Eventually, a World Bank assessment revealed that 850,000 vulnerable people were further pushed into poverty due to these economic pressures⁶.

³USD to GHS Exchange Rate History for 2022 (exchange-rates.org)

⁴USD to GHS Exchange Rate History for 2023 (exchange-rates.org)

⁵Ghana ended 2023 with highest average inflation rate in 2 decades - MyJoyOnline

⁶Some 850,000 Ghanaians pushed into poverty in 2022 – World Bank | Ghana News Agency (gna.org.gh)



To salvage the Ghana's economic situation from total collapse, government was compelled to seek an IMF economic recovery programme. In the wake of this, a debilitating Debt Exchange Programme (DEP) had to be unveiled for the sustainable management of both the domestic and foreign debts amidst continues agitation and resistance especially by local investors. For social justice organisations like AAG, the

concern has been about the conditionalities that usually come along with the implementation of IMF economic recovery programmes which tend to de-prioritise the state's obligation and role in the delivery of public services, but rather advance austerity and private sector led service delivery. The advocacy for debt cancellation or restructuring is being pushed strongly through a civil society coalition with AAG being a key voice.



5.0

PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION APPROACHES AND BENEFICIARIES REACHED

5.1 Programme Implementation Approaches

The human rights-based approach (HRBA) has been the over-arching framework guiding AAG's programme delivery. This is interwoven around four pillars:

- *Empowerment*: increasing knowledge, imparting skills and inspiring consciousness and confidence towards seeking redress over injustices, discrimination, and rights violations.
- *Solidarity*: Empathy and alliance building to create stronger voice for challenging visible, invisible, and hidden power.
- *Campaigning*: Mobilising peoples' organisations, social movements, and critical masses to make powerful demands and seek changes to policies and practices.
- *Promoting rights-based alternatives*: Undertaking participatory review, reflections and action planning with rights-holders and duty-bearers around shared visions, piloting and scaling-up sustainable change models that challenge flawed narratives and development paradigms.

ActionAid has remained steadfast and committed in advancing women rights and feminist leadership principles aimed at primarily tackling patriarchal socio-cultural norms, rights violations, discriminatory practices and increasing access to resources, livelihoods, and economic empowerment opportunities within the context of the disproportionate vulnerabilities and marginalisation women

and girls face. AAG has also been enthusiastic about working with social movements, peoples' organisations, and allies that are vigorously being nurtured and supported to network and pursue joint advocacy and campaigns. The organisation also prioritises working with the youth in its advocacy and campaign actions while also offering and linking them to climate resilient and green livelihood opportunities. The Global Platform of AAG has been pivotal in anchoring and amplifying our campaigns by enhancing skills on the use of digitilisation and artistic activism tools (drama, role play, jingles, songs, murals, etc.) in the traditional and social media space.

4.2. Programme Beneficiaries

The aggregated data on AAG programme and project beneficiaries for 2023 shows that 162,554 people were directly impacted. The gender disaggregation comprised 105,713 females representing 65% and 56,841 males representing 35% of the overall beneficiaries, clearly manifesting AAG's unapologetic inclination and identity as a women's rights focused organisation. By age disaggregation, the beneficiaries consisted of 79,598 Adults (36+ years) representing 49%, 51,957 Youth (18 – 35 years) representing 32% and 30,999 Children (<18 years) representing 19%.

The charts below provide a diagrammatic view of the people reached while the table underneath also presents a more detailed analytical data per the Strategic Priorities (SPs) and Focused Areas (FAs) defined in AAG's CSP VII.

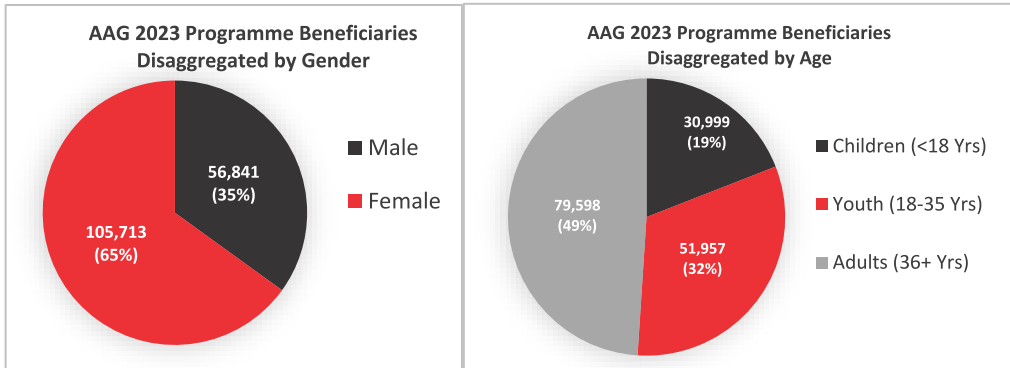


Table 1: Number of People Directly Reached in 2023

SP	FA	NUMBER OF PEOPLE REACHED									
		Children		Youth		Adults		MP & FA Aggregates			
		Boys	Girls	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Sub-Total	Total
SP 1	FA 1.1	32	60	2,842	7,586	7,057	13,891	9,931	21,537	31,468	68,537
	FA 1.2	170	200	1,936	5,319	2,176	11,542	4,282	17,061	21,343	
	FA 1.3	16	30	231	256	199	209	446	495	941	
	FA 1.4	-	-	57	66	23	300	80	366	446	
	FA 1.5	1,387	1,893	1,821	1,987	3,242	4,009	6,450	7,889	14,339	
SP2	FA 2.1	4,094	5,784	4,287	6,380	6,562	7,019	14,943	19,183	34,126	63,566
	FA 2.2	215	264	617	1,154	978	1,928	1,810	3,346	5,156	
	FA 2.3	241	378	1,165	2,072	5,348	6,667	6,754	9,117	15,871	
	FA 2.4	441	1,152	956	2,471	1,739	1,311	3,136	4,934	8,070	
	FA 2.5	-	-	98	108	66	71	164	179	343	
SP3	FA 3.1	600	2,648	56	53	252	55	908	2,756	3,664	30,451
	FA 3.2	3,542	4,809	307	814	1,339	2,138	5,188	7,761	12,949	
	FA 3.3	465	2,328	1,480	7,488	531	705	2,476	10,521	12,997	
	FA 3.4	-	250	49	112	91	97	140	459	599	
	FA 3.5	-	-	100	89	33	20	133	109	242	
SUB - TOTAL		11,203	19,796	16,002	35,955	29,636	49,962				
TOTAL		30,999		51,957		79,598		56,841	105,713	162,554	

The information above is the direct-reached beneficiary data through face-to-face encounters (community sensitisation and awareness raising durbars, stakeholder meetings, trainings, etc.).

Regarding media engagement, traditional media (radio, television) and social media (Facebook, WhatsApp, Twitter) were used to amplify the advocacy issues and campaigns, thereby reaching larger audience of an estimate of 15 million people. The Combatting Modern Slavery (CMS) and Transformative Action for Gender Equality (TAGE) Projects embarked on vigorous media campaigns at project districts and national levels. Social movements such as Young Urban Women Movement (YUWM) and Activista

also proactively undertook social media campaigns in the form of Twitter Rallies and Facebook Live engagements. Livestreaming tools were utilised to reach-out to wider audiences on occasions of national events such as Climate Change Seminars and the Accra Inter-Sessional Forum to build an African position on the textual review of the Legally Binding Instrument (LBI) to regulate the Business and Human Rights (BHR) of transnational cooperations (TNCs) and other business enterprises.

6.0

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS AND IMPACTS: PERSONAL STORIES OF CHANGE.

The interventions implemented by AAG during the previous years and over the 2023 year contributed significantly towards impacting the lives of vulnerable women, youth, children, and other actors in the following ways.

6.1.Strategic Priority One (1): Green Economy and Resilient Livelihoods

6.1.1. Influencing National Policies and Stakeholder Concerted Actions for Climate Justice

As part of AAG's climate justice advocacy, AAG organised a national climate change conference. The forum was also used to launch the federations 2023 climate change campaign in Ghana dubbed "Fund Our Future: Promoting Investment in Climate Change Adaptation for Resilient Communities". The "Fund our Future" campaign was also hinged on the ActionAid's research report titled "How the Finance Flows: The Banks Fueling the Climate Change Crisis", which was globally launched in Nairobi, Kenya, on September 4, 2023. The report launch in Nairobi was timed to coincide with the maiden African Climate Change Summit and the Global Campaign on Climate Change Week. Invariably, AAG climate change conference was a climax to a month-long regional climate change advocacy campaign was organised at the regional and national levels and mobilised more than 2000 state and nonstate stakeholders to address climate change. The campaign called for increased investment in financing adaptation methodologies and enhanced government regulation, reinvestment into

the harmful hydrocarbon and other harmful climate practices. Equally, the report demanded increased investment in climate resilient sustainable agriculture, especially agroecology, which will trigger increased food security and a just economic development.

To strengthen the relationship with academia, AAG collaborated with its partner academic institutions namely University for Development Studies (UDS) University for Environment and Sustainable Development (UESD) and the University for Energy and Natural Resources (UENR) to hold scholarly conversations on action-researched papers connected to grassroots climate adaptation initiatives. The forum offered recommendations for policy reforms and adaptation strategies that can contribute to reducing the impact of climate change on smallholder farmers. Subsequently, AAG took the relationship further with these academic institutions by pursuing joint proposal development for implementation of the initiatives being proposed for policy considerations.

6.1.2. Access to Irrigation Services and the Adoption of Agroecology Practices Guarantees Sustainable and Profitable Food Production

ActionAid Ghana's campaign for food sovereignty and agroecology over the years has achieved a great measure of success. Following the many challenges faced by communities due to the poor management of the climate, there has been a need to intensify the adoption of

agroecology to safeguard the environment and to sustainably guarantee the food needs of current and future generations.

Priscilla Senyedo is a 38-year-old member

of the Menuso Smallholder Women Farmer Group in the Oti region of Ghana. Through her participation in AAG's agroecology education and training, she has been able to improve her harvest by simply applying the knowledge gained from thereof.



Priscilla tending to her tomato plants in her irrigated farm

“ I feel very fulfilled as a young farmer, all thanks to the hands-on training and education given to myself and my colleague female farmers by ActionAid Ghana on agroecology. I cultivate all kinds of food crops on my farm, specifically cassava, maize, rice, and vegetables. Before the training, I used to grow my vegetables in the rainy season because the crops would not survive the dry weather. There was always an abundance of vegetables in the market during the rainy season. As such, besides feeding my family, most of my harvest went to waste because it got rotten and was thrown away. This situation resulted in me always losing my capital at the end of the season. ”

“ During one of our interaction meetings with NOCID, the officers educated us on irrigation farming and its benefits because the rain patterns and volumes had changed drastically in our area. In 2022, I cultivated garden eggs and okra at the usual time as I did before the training, but the rain stopped in October that year,

and the crops died. This hurt me as I lost all the capital, and it became a wasted effort. I then decided to try the irrigation farming method that we were educated on in 2022 after I had saved some money to buy PVC pipes that I connected to draw water from the Menu River and hired a water pumping machine from a logistic dealer in Kadjebi for GH¢300.00 for the entire season. The moment I detected that the volume of rainfall had started reducing, I began to put my irrigation procedure into practice. The okra and the garden egg you see (in picture above) have only experienced two rainfalls in 2023. I watered it every three days to make sure it survived. I do not apply chemical fertilizer on my farm but rather use organic options including the use of animal urine and neem extracts to control insects and pest attacks. These are remarkably effective, just like the chemicals sold in the agro-shops. As a result, my post-harvested losses have drastically reduced. For instance, the tomatoes and other vegetables harvested this year lasted longer unlike previously when they perished within a short time span after harvest. I have made more than double the amount of money I previously got. I am grateful to ActionAid and NOCID for opening our eyes to these sustainable agriculture practices. ”

6.1.3. Changing Lives through Women Economic Empowerment: The Story of Benedicta, First Ever Female District Best Farmer for Lambussie District

Union (EU) enhanced access to green livelihood opportunities for women, young people, and people with disabilities (PWDs). A total of 1,505 people comprising 1,075 females (72%) and 430 males (28%), including 120 PWDs benefited. The livelihood clusters were 300 beneficiaries for Shea Butter Processing, 506 for Farming as a Business, 202 for Bee Keeping and Honey

ActionAid Ghana (AAG) under the Northern Ghana Integrated Development Project (NGIDP) funded by the European



Benedicta and her group members undergo community level training on climate resilient sustainable agriculture (agroecology)

Extraction and 497 for Nursery / Nutritional Gardening. Benedicta and her group members undergo community level training on climate resilient sustainable agriculture (agroecology) The beneficiaries received rigorous training including a 3-months fellowship programme with master craftsmen. They were then provided with start-ups equipment and subsequently trained again on business plans development, financial management, product packaging, networking, and marketing skills.

Madam Benedicta Boyuo, a mother of 6 from Billaw community in the Lambussie District of the Upper West Region of Ghana is a beneficiary of the livelihood intervention offered by ActionAid Ghana under the Northern Ghana Integrated Development Project (NGIDP) funded by the European Union (EU). She narrates her economic journey and the eventual stardom of becoming the 2023 Lambussie District Best Farmer.

“There are great uncertainties of life and women in particular previously faced numerous challenges in our community and the region at large. Hitherto, most women faced social exclusion and had little access to economic empowerment opportunities, hence lived in abject poverty, making it difficult to provide the basic needs of their households.”

“In 2020, ActionAid Ghana brought relief to us. I was privileged to be selected and trained with other members of my group on agro-processing skills and the group as a whole benefited from a Shea Butter processing facility. Different set of Shea Butter processing machines were installed and electricity connected. Before even the electricity connection, we started processing the shea butter in small quantities to market. The group was also supported to establish the Village Savings and Loans Association (VSLA) scheme, which gives members the opportunity to make regular savings and to have access to low interest working capital.”

“Benedict acknowledges how the exposure and market linkages created by ActionAid Ghana has boosted the groups livelihood activities and provided exposure and social networking for her.

“I never thought I would have the opportunity to enter an Aeroplane in my life. But ActionAid took me by flight to Accra and I proceeded to Koforidua to attend the 2022 national farmers day celebration on behalf of my group to exhibit our products. It gave me a chance to network with other people, who subsequently placed orders for our products such as Shea Butter, Groundnut Paste and 'Dawadawa' (a local food flavour). We made a total amount of GH¢22,800.00, which was the highest sales and revenue earned by my group. We used GH¢8,000.00 to buy more shea nuts and groundnuts to expand our production. The remaining amount was shared amongst us to put into our individual investments. I was again taken to Accra in October 2023 to exhibit our products during the national launch of ActionAid's Country Strategy Paper, and it also created market opportunities for us.”



Benedicta Boyuo exhibits and markets her livelihood products during ActionAid Ghana CSP VII launch in October 2023 in Accra

“ ActionAid also connected us to the Department of Agriculture, and they have invited us to several trainings. A demonstration farm was also established, and I took particular interest in implementing most of the best agronomic practices learnt such as planting in rows and also adopting agro-forestry. I used to get three 100kg bags of soya beans from one acre, but the planting in rows has increased the yield to seven bags. I have actively been transferring the knowledge to other farmers. I have created casual employment for 5 women who are paid GH¢200.00 monthly allowance for supporting me in processing the Shea Butter and other products. I have been able to finance the education of my third child and she is now a nurse while the last born also attends Senior High School. At some point in 2023, I needed to undergo surgery in Kumasi and the amount requested was GH¢9,000.00. I was able to raise the money to save my life, including the personal expenses incurred. But for the income I make from the livelihood activities, it would have been difficult since my husband is a retiree. ”

The climax is Benedicta's recognition as 2023 District Best Farmer in her district and a champion for women empowerment; “The most delightful of all is the 2023 Best District Farmer Award I received. It is the first time a woman has been given such an award. The award comprises of a certificate, motorbike, and other farm implements. Some people thought I didn't merit the award because I am a woman in the midst of other men who

do a lot of farming. My award as the Lambussie District Best Farmer has thrown a bigger challenge to me and has motivated me to work harder in the years to come. My future plan is to even win a regional or national award. I have been encouraging my colleague women to take their farming as a business by adopting the new technologies being roll-out but conscious about sustainable farming practices”.

“Benedicta Boyuo and husband joyfully showcase the motorbike and certificate received upon becoming the 2023 Lambussie District Best Farmer “ActionAid has not only taught me sustainable farming, but they have also built my confidence. I could not speak in public because my English is not good. But now, I confidently speak during community engagements and have also made presentations during District Assembly deliberations.”

Benedicta's concludes that

“Myself and many other women have experienced a life changing encounter with ActionAid Ghana. My family income and social status has completely changed, and I am detached from poverty. I am grateful to ActionAid, and I also thank the EU for supporting the project.”



Benedicta Boyuo and husband joyfully showcase the motorbike and certificate received upon becoming the 2023 Lambussie District Best Farmer

6.1.4. Granting Women Secured Access to Land is Mutually Beneficial to the Family and Society

The Sissala East Municipal has benefited greatly from AAG development interventions. Bujan is one of the beneficiary communities which over the years have benefited from the grain bank initiative, corn mill project, donkey traction for reducing women drudgery, establishment of COMBAT, set-up of Female Extension Volunteer (FEVs), trainings on compost making, sensitization on the need to grant women

secured access to land and other empowerment interventions.

Fulera Tuuko is 41 years old married woman from Bujan community in the Sissala East Municipal with four children (two males and two females). She is the Vice Chairperson of the Langaamuna Women Farmers Group who has shared her personal experience in relation to AAG's contribution to increased women secured access to land and its transformative impact.

“The problem that existed a decade ago is that it was impossible for a woman to have access to more than an acre of land and to securely use the land for more than two years. Because women predominantly cultivated groundnuts and other legumes, the land fertility is regenerated and will be retaken by the man for maize cultivation while the woman is shifted to another depleted land. It was very rare for a woman to be given virgin land. Because of the depleted nature of the lands, women who cultivated maize usually got low yields since it was difficult getting chemical fertilizer and with little knowledge in the use of organic manure.”

Bujan acknowledged ActionAid as a change agent that strongly turned attention to this social injustice leading to a significantly improved situation now;

“Upon community sustained sensitisations and engagements undertaken by AAG with opinion leaders and landlords, the situation has witnessed progressive changes and women are now greatly liberated in terms of having secured access to fertile lands. For the past three years my husband granted me access to virgin lands without any interference from anyone. In 2022, I cultivated two acres of maize, one and half acre of groundnuts, and half an acre of beans. I subsequently harvested 30 bags of corn, 20 bags of groundnuts and 2 bags of beans and made an amount of GH¢20,000.00 from the sale of my farm produce. I then used GH¢3,700.00 to pay the admission fee of my daughter to Tumu College of Education and spent GH¢8,500.00 to buy inputs and labour costs for my farming in 2023 cropping season. Another GH¢3,000 was invested into my goats and fowls rearing venture and the rest used to support the upkeep of the family. For the 2023 crop season, I cultivated 3 acres of maize, 2 acres of ground nuts, 1 acre of beans, half acre of soya and a half acre of vegetables. My husband made sure my farm was ploughed and planted even before his own farm which amazed me because previously, he would always insist that I support him to plant on his farm before I could attend to my own farm. At the end, I got 48 bags of corn, 30 bags of groundnuts, 4 bags of beans, and 2 bags of soya. I am happy that my husband has released a large track of land which he helped to clear and plough for me. I am not seen as competitor to him to make money but as a partners in wealth creation for



the collective betterment of our family. My story shows clearly that if women are given secured access to land and other resources, they are more than capable of being profitable in farming and they can contribute meaningfully to their families' livelihood and welfare”

To corroborate Fulera's testimony, Abu Jallu, husband of Fulera says:

ActionAid's education to us on the need for us to release land to our wives on secured terms and helping them in the farming process is an eye opener since the benefits are immense . I therefore allocated 10 acres of land to my wife for farming, and I don't intend ever to take it back. The biggest relief I got from my wife was in 2022 when she helped to pay the school fees of our daughter. She also readily offered me support when I needed money to attend funerals and take care of other family issues. I have become an advocate in encouraging other men to grant women secured access to land. I spoke to my friend who had the fear that wife will not respect him if she is allowed to cultivate and make her own money. In 2023, he cleared one acre of land for his wife to plant groundnuts. He later confessed to me about how the wife helped the household with the proceeds she got. God bless ActionAid for this intervention, and I urge that they spread it to more communities. ”

6.1.5. Females Should not be Scared to Venture into Male Dominated Artisanal Work: The Story of Diana Konadu

The Combatting Modern Slavery (CMS) Project has provided alternative livelihood opportunities to 398 female-headed households which has contributed to reducing their vulnerability to being engaged in indecent jobs. The beneficiaries are productively engaged under 16 different livelihood clusters namely Small Ruminants Rearing (Goat, Rabbits), Catering (Bread, Pastries, Cakes), Ice Cream and Soft Drinks, Bee Keeping (Honey Production), Bead Work (Sandals, Bags), Tilling, Detergents

(Soap Making), Make-Up, Pomade Making, Vegetable Farming, Gari Processing and 'Dawadawa' Processing.

Diana Konadu, one of the beneficiaries, was trained and equipped with working tools for tilling, under the Combating Modern Slavery Project (CMSP). She is a mother of four and a farmer from **Seketia community in Jaman North of Bono Region**. Modern slavery is widespread in their community due to their dependence on cash crop farming. Being the eldest of four siblings, Diana is burdened with a lot of responsibilities which farming alone could not solve.

“Before I was selected for the livelihood training, things were very difficult. Farming was the major occupation of my family and I occasionally engaged myself in tedious labourer jobs that paid very little wages. I joined the CMS Project training opportunity because I saw the need to do something aside the farming to have an extra source of income to support my family. The tiling skill had been a job I admired although it had been dominated by males. But now that I have ventured into it, other females are motivated and have expressed interest in joining me for apprenticeship. Previously, fending for my children and siblings was a challenge. But now, my family has benefited from the tiling business that I do. I can now provide most of children's needs in school and the family's living condition is now better. The extended family recently tapped into my skill when I was called upon to assist in constructing a tomb for a relative at a very low cost. Our standard of living has improved, and everyone is comfortable and happy.”



Diana Konadu display her tilling tools received (L) and undertakes tilling assignment (R)

6.2. Strategic Priority Two (2): Women Rights and Decent Work

6.2.1. Promoting Zero Tolerance for Violence against Women and Girls

ActionAid-rooted campaigns and advocacy for zero tolerance for violence against women and girls was intensified at

the regional level in the Oti region, through a series of community sensitizations on Gender-Based Violence (GBV). Students from some Senior high schools were engaged on the essence of zero gender-based violence; one is Miss Jantil

“My name is Jantil, I hail from Todome, and I am a survivor of sexual violence. I benefitted from ActionAid's sensitization and capacity-building training which prevented me from falling victim to sexual violence for the second time. I am currently a first-year student at Dodi-Papase Senior-High Technical School, in the Oti region. Due to what I went through in the past, I delayed in writing my Basic Education Certificate Examination. I got pregnant when I was in my third year in JHS and could not write the BECE with my colleagues.”

“I was very worried about how my parents were going to provide for me to enable me to have my secondary education since the burden of taking care of my daughter was solely on them and my elderly siblings. The man responsible was not ready to take up any cost for me or the child. I shared my story at one of NOCID's community sensitizations and my situation took a beautiful turn. NOCID tasked the COMBAT team in Todome to take up the issue since it was within their jurisdiction.”

“COMBAT followed up and ensured that he took responsibility for the child. My parents adequately provide for my education now that the burden on them has eased. My child will be in the custody of my mother as I pursue my course at senior high school. I am grateful to ActionAid and NOCID for intervening to bring relief to my parents who can now adequately provide for my educational needs.”

6.2.2. Criminalising Witchcraft Accusations is the Surest Way to Curb the Persistent Socio-Cultural Molestations and Rights Abuses

In July 2023, Ghana's Parliament unanimously passed the Criminal Offences (Amendment) Bill, 2022, which seeks to proscribe witchcraft accusations. The object of the Bill the Criminal Offences Act, 1960 (Acts 29) is to prohibit the practice by any person as a witch doctor or a witchfinder; to proscribe the declaration, accusation, naming or labelling of another person as a witch; and for related matters. This comes after

concerted efforts by AAG through its support to the Coalition Against Witchcraft Accusations and the committee on constitutional, Legal Parliamentary affairs to combat the ongoing social menace of witchcraft accusations, which primarily target poor, older, and widowed women.

The Private Member's Bill was sponsored by Mr. Francis --Xavier Kojo Sosu, the National Democratic Congress (NDC) member of Parliament (MP) for Madina, with several co-sponsors. Mr. Sosu, following the passage of the bill, said,

“Ghana is a democracy that is striving, and I sincerely commend colleagues who worked with me on the anti-witchcraft allegations Bill. As we move forward, I am confident that the criminalization of witchcraft accusations will have a lasting positive impact on our society. I am overjoyed. It is my hope that this decision will serve as a catalyst for further reforms aimed at creating a fair and equitable criminal justice system that focuses on prevention, rehabilitation, and restorative justice”

The President has, however declined to assent to the bill passed by Parliament, outlining some constitutional and procedural issues. The Attorney General has advised the President that the bill has financial implications on the Consolidated Fund and other public funds and should have been introduced in Parliament by or on behalf of the President. As such, the President will seek to have the bill reintroduced in Parliament on his behalf “in due course”. Sadly, three other women faced horrendous physical abuse on account of witchcraft accusations in their communities subsequently. AAG will therefore continue its advocacy for the passage of the bill and also seek avenues for supporting the re-integration of alleged witches.

6.2.3. Multi-Stakeholder Partnership is Crucial to Tackle Human Trafficking and Other Forms of Modern Slavery in Ghana

Human Trafficking in Ghana takes various forms, affecting adults and children alike both within the country and across borders. The trafficked victims are exploited in a range of sectors including fishing, domestic service, gold mining, quarrying, commercial sex, cyberfraud and agriculture labour. Ghana's human trafficking status improved from Tier 2 watchlist in 2016 to Tier 2 in

2018 and has remained so. There is a general acknowledgement on the need to do better by pursuing accelerated and multi-stakeholder coordinated actions towards curtailing the impunity with which human traffickers operate.

The Combatting Modern Slavery (CMS) Project contributed its quota to this endeavour over the 2021 to 2023 period the project was implemented. The project directly contributed to the rescue and reintegration of 79 survivors of labour trafficking, sex trafficking, child labour, cyber-exploitation and other unfair contract practices.

Chief Supt. Mike Baah, Director in Charge of the **Ghana Anti-Human Trafficking Unit (AHTU) of Ghana Police Service** points to the crucial role of multi-stakeholders and acknowledged the CMS Project contribution.



“Trafficking cannot be tackled by a single institution. So, we work with Ghana Immigration Service, social welfare, the gender ministry, partners such as GAWU, ActionAid and other domestic and external actors, because it's also a cross-border crime. But we don't have anti-human trafficking units in all the regions. Gratefully, the CMS Project supported the establishment of a regional anti-human trafficking office in Dambai, the Oti Regional capital. The personnel have also been trained. We hope to get more support to replicate this in the three (3) regions outstanding.

Another area for attention is shelters. There are only two government-run shelters in Ghana for Human Trafficking related cases, both located in Accra, one for adult female victims with capacity to receive 26 people, and that of children, capable housing 60 children. There are no dedicated shelters for men, hence we rely on the private shelters such as Great Mission International Shelter at Dodowa in Greater Accra Region and PACODEP shelter at Kete Krachi in Oti Region, which do usually also need support. Gratefully, we received support from ActionAid on several occasions to cater for the rescued victims, until they were properly re-integrated. We have seen increased prosecution and convictions over the years. We are also turning our attention to seizure of properties of convicts to serve as deterrent against the financial gain motivational factor in human trafficking.”
Handing Over ceremony of the Oti Anti-Human Trafficking Unit Center renovated by the project.

Data from the 2023 Ghana's Trafficking in Persons Report published by the United States (US) Department of State indicates appreciable progress being made. Ghana government identified and referred 574 trafficking victims to services in 2022, compared with 727 victims in 2021 and 391 in 2020. By way of prosecution, 10 convictions were secured in 2019, 13 in 2020, 14 in 2021 and 10 convictions in

2022. This trajectory aligns with social behaviour and practice change expectations whereby case reporting usually peaks upon raising awareness and should ultimately take a decline in the medium to long-term. AAG looks forward to exploring further partnership opportunities to sustain the gains while also calling for a more deterrent punishment regime for perpetrators.



Handing Over ceremony of the Oti Anti-Human Trafficking Unit Center renovated by the project

6.2.4. The Horrible Experience and Lessons from a Survivor, Now Turned Anti-Human Trafficking Campaigner

Francis Yoli is a 27-year-old human trafficking survivor from Kedjebi community in Nkwanta South Municipality of the Oti Region who has joined the anti-human trafficking campaigns.



“Three (3) years ago, I was trafficked to Nigeria under the pretext of working in a firm that could earn me a lot of income. But I was rather engaged as a farm labourer and resided at the farm. I worked under severe weather conditions without good feeding and proper accommodation. I was to work for two years, after which my master would buy a motorbike for me. At the due time, the motorbike was bought for me. I was excited and set out to travel to Ghana. Sadly, I was accosted by armed men, who I suspect were sent after me by my Master. They beat me up and took the motorbike away. I walked for days without food till I got to Benin. I was so confused as to which road leads to Ghana, and I had no money. I eventually gave myself up to Immigration Officials who repatriated me to Togo and finally to Ghana.

This is why I volunteered to join the COMBAT in sensitising communities, especially the youth, by telling my survival story. Many other youth who travelled to Nigeria made no proper gains. If this project had come earlier, I would not have embarked on that journey. I am very grateful to ActionAid for the enlightenment and the opportunity to me and others to share our story discourage our people from embarking on such unprofitable travels.

6.2.5. Strong Alliance Built with Media Who Actively Joined the Campaign to End Modern Slavery

The Combatting Modern Slavery (CMS) Project trained 140 media personnel (72 females and 68 males) and equipped with an increased understanding on the forms of modern slavery, the protective legal and policy frameworks, referral mechanisms, ethical reporting and the SHEA and Safeguarding compliance requirements when dealing with survivors' stories, particularly on cases relating to children, traumatized survivors and stigma-prone cases. The project also undertook

community sensitisations and procured media airtime for local authorities to undertake mass awareness campaigns on the existing laws and protective measures across the 12 project districts and at national level.

Inspired by these noble agenda, some of the media houses voluntarily dedicated airtime to sustain the awareness-raising interventions. The Manager of Asase Radio in Kpandai District, Asase Nathan provides the motivation and inspiration behind his media house joining the campaign.



“ Myself and another reporter from Asase Radio attended the combating modern slavery trainings in 2022 and 2023. Before that, I had very little understanding of issues that constitute modern slavery and the protective measures that exist to safeguard vulnerable persons. After the radio sensitisations undertaken by CHRAJ, Social Welfare and Ghana Police Service, we realised that the issues could not be fully discussed due to the limited airtime allotted. Meanwhile, community members showed great interest and made strong appeals for the programme to be sustained. The management of Asase Radio therefore allocated one hour airtime every week to sustain the awareness-

raising programme. It has run for more than one year and very much patronized, considering the call-ins usually received. The Combating Modern Slavery Project is a unique one, and opportunities should be explored to sustain it and even expand to other districts. ”

Roseline Agyei, a broadcast journalist, and a radio presenter for BUEM FM in the Oti Region also speak about the how cautious media houses are in now scrutinising recruitment adverts so as not to fall into the trap of becoming partners in the crime for localised and international human trafficking.



“ Before the training, our radio station was contributing to exposing young people in the Oti Region to modern slavery. We aired advertisements which lured the young people to travel to Nigeria and Cote d'Ivoire. Our attention was only on the money we received. Most of the youth travelled and had terrible experiences but could not stand up to expose the deceit upon return, due to fear of suffering attacks from the recruiters.

Now, we have adopted a more critical position, scrutinising and rejecting most of the adverts. We have rather offered airtime for survivors to come and share the ill-treatment and exploitation they suffered when they embarked on the journey. I am grateful for the knowledge and reawakening. Modern Slavery is real, but we can individually and collectively assist in reducing the menace in our country. ”



6.2.6. Availability of Changing Rooms in Schools and Provision of Sanitary Pads are Key to Tackling Adolescent Reproductive Health Barriers to Girls Education

Over time, ActionAid Ghana's Girls Empowerment and Advocacy Platforms (GEAPs) also known as Girls Clubs, have proven very beneficial in empowering girls to pursue their educational careers. Period poverty is one of the major problems affecting girls and women in Ghana. Ensuring girls have access to safe menstrual hygiene products is key to protecting girls and saving them from teenage pregnancies emanating from their exploitation by unscrupulous men under the disguise of helping provide them with the needed resources. ActionAid and its social movements was among the active voices that advocated for the abolishing of import levies on sanitary pads. Eventually, the Minister for Finance and Economic Planning in presenting the 2024 Budget to Parliament announced the removal of taxes on locally

produced sanitary towels.

The Young Urban Women Movement (YUWM) members were trained on the making of reusable sanitary pads and have taken upon themselves to also transfer the skill to girls in junior high and senior high schools. Through activities like drama, question and answer sessions, the girls have been able to interact with community folks, guidance and counselling officers and health authorities on sexual health and reproductive rights to ensure total protection and development of the girl child. The Bono Regional Programme during the year facilitated such engagements with 25 GEAPs and provided two packs of reusable sanitary pads to 144 adolescent girls.

Fati Asomah, a 15-year-old member of the Namasa Junoir High School Girls Club benefited from sanitary pads distributed during International Girl Child Day and shares her joy of now regularly attending school.

“ I am happy to be part of the many good things ActionAid has done for my region. First, they constructed six-unit classrooms with girls' changing rooms and a library for my community. Before this help from ActionAid, most of the girls in my school had to run to their homes to change their pads even during lessons to avoid soiling their uniforms and its associated embarrassment from boys. Now, the girls feel safe at school with the provision of this facility in the school. Secondly, the girls club meetings and the experience sharing have enabled me to learn more about

sexual and reproductive health. This is because, at the meetings, participants were taught demonstrations on how to wear the pad nicely to avoid leaking, how to dispose of the pad effectively after use, and basic personal hygiene tips.



We were also provided with some free sanitary pads which has been a burden for most of the girls in my school due to the high selling prices. Sharing 8 boxes of sanitary pads in this season of expensive sanitary pads is a very commendable gesture. I received two packs of sanitary pads, and this was a total relief because I used to worry so much over how to purchase pads during my menstrual cycle. The gesture by ActionAid has made me very comfortable at school, as my access to sanitary pads has improved as I feel safe in school during my menstrual period. On behalf of the girls and my classmates, I want to say thank you to ActionAid, please remember to bring us more packs. ”

6.3 Strategic Priority three (3): Active Citizenship, Accountability and Gender Responsive Public Services

6.3.1. Self-Discipline Is the Key to Achieving Academic Success and Building a Worthy Future Career

Rafia Susolo is 15 years of age and a native of Bugubelle. She is the Health Prefect and President of the Bugubelle Basic School Girls Club, also known as Girls Empowerment and Advocacy Platforms (GEAPs). In July 2023 AAG and ASUDEV organized a career guidance and mentorship seminar for 11 Girls Clubs at the school level. The girls had the opportunity to interact with role models selected from their own community. These were people who had gone

through the same community, experienced similar challenges as the girls and had now succeeded in different careers. The Bugubelle Girls Club also benefited from a successive similar event organized by ActionAid and partner in October 2023, when eight other girls' clubs were hosted in a sister school for mentorship and career guidance. The girls' clubs' activities and their participation in these programmes have made a lot of impact on the girls. The girls have become more aware of their rights, responsibilities, risks around them including their sexuality, reproductive rights, and risks. They have become more assertive and are taking their studies more seriously to enable them to achieve their chosen careers.

“Expatriating on this, Rafia states that “Sitting and listening to the role models in Bugubelle and Tarsor was a great experience as I learnt so many lessons. The 7-Point Girls Club Members' Personal Pledge which I signed and pasted besides my bed keeps reminding me on what to do to achieve my dream career of becoming a nurse. The point 4 and 7 motivates me a lot and reads: To study hard, succeed with education and become the best in my chosen career of nursing, resist and report all forms of sexual advances made at me by any individual both at school and at home. ”



“ She adds that “Before participating in the mentorship programmes, I had a boyfriend and used to spend much time with him especially at night. I would visit him, and we spend time watching movies. Because of this, I hardly had time to complete my home assignments from school and to study my books after school. Consequently, I had inadequate sleep at night and due to the lack of adequate sleep at night, I hardly concentrated in class the next day, I was always sleeping in class. However, at the mentorship programme our role models and the health worker warned us to not to indulge in any sexual relationship since it could lead to pregnancy or early marriage which may lead to a halt in our education. We were encouraged to abstain from sex until we become adults to choose a partner. I have thus ended my relationship with my boyfriend who incidentally dropped out from school at JHS level. I told him I was too young to be in a relationship with him as it could affect my education. He was not happy about my decision, but I never visited him and not welcomed him to my house too.

I was also able to convince two of my friends; Farida and Barikisu to also quit similar relationships they were also engaged in. We have now formed a study group and meet at my house three times in a week to learn together. I am doing very well in class now and most of the teachers like me for changing my attitude towards my education. I am sure I will be able to achieve my dream of becoming a nurse in the future as my books are now my 'boyfriends'. I am very grateful to ASUDEV and ActionAid for motivating me and my friends with this programme. We look forward to having many more sessions.”

The challenges of the girl child, with regards to education are numerous and require multifaceted strategies to surmount. Many girls are now in school but are not able to complete basic school and second cycle institutions due to a myriad of challenges. Sexual abuse of girls constitutes the most significant distraction to girls' education in many communities. Apart from its addictive effect on the girls who get introduced to sex too early and can't concentrate on learning, a lot of girls get pregnant and fall out of school as a result. In many cases, their education is truncated at a very young age, and they are never able to reclaim their right to education. In Northern

Ghana, most girls that are impregnated are eventually forced to get married to the men since it is culturally unacceptable for a girl to live with her parents with a pregnancy out of wedlock. Africa Education Watch reported that, in the year 2022, there were a total of 192,500 school dropouts with 102,000 of them being girls and 30% of them being attributed to teenage pregnancy. The best strategy to reducing the menace of teenage pregnancy is to empower the girls to be able to identify sexual risks and be assertive enough to resist unwarranted advances at both school and community level.

6.3.2. Positive Discipline Approach is the Most Appropriate Correctional Measure

Indisciplined behavior among students is a major challenge in Ghana's educational system. Student indiscipline has far reaching impacts on students' academic performance and their social standing in the long term. Corporal punishment including the use of canes has been used in many schools since time immemorial as a means of instilling discipline in schools. But it has not achieved the desired results. The Positive Discipline Approach (PDA) concept has been proven to be the ideal tool to correct students. It teaches children and guides their behavior, while respecting their rights

to healthy development, protection from violence and participation in their learning. It focuses on long-term solutions that develop children's own self-discipline and their life-long skills. The concept of Positive Discipline is to promote thinking skills, problem solving skills and mutual respect between children and their teachers or guardians. In 2023 AAG and partners organised training for headteachers of all Basic Schools on the Positive Discipline Approach in schools.

Forty-eight (48) year old Abu Musah is the headteacher of Falahia Basic School in Tumu who participated in the PDA training and shares his views and experiences with the adoption of this approach:

“Falasia Basic School is tagged by many people in the Tumu community as a school with many truant students with a high level of indiscipline. This label is somewhat true as we have several truant students times past and thus, we had to resort to caning and other corporal punishment measures though discouraged by the Ghana Education Service. We took that decision since we believed that was the only way to ensure discipline in the school. But we have been wrong because this has not worked for us. The Positive Discipline Approach training I participated in has changed my mind set about the use of the cane in school. When I got back to school after the training, I gave a briefing of the training to all my teachers and

shared copies of the training materials with them to read for themselves. The next day I announced at the morning assembly that we are introducing a zero-cane policy in the classroom so no teacher will come into the class with a cane. The students were happy and loudly clapped in cheers. Instead of using a cane or stick as a board-pointer



during teaching, teachers are now required to use other material such as rolled-cardboard. It is to ensure that teachers are not tempted to use the cane on the children. Teachers used other means discipline deviant pupils such as letter writing, denial of break, counselling etc. Since then, students have become more confident and own up when they go wrong. They no longer hide around or refuse to come to school when they commit an offence out of fear of the canes. However, there are exceptions for which we use the cane as a last resort for offences such as perpetual absenteeism even upon parental efforts and also theft cases. In such cases the Ghana Education Service (GES) policy allows us to use the cane, but such should be recorded, and the reasons also recorded. After about 5 months of implementing this, I can say that our students are more disciplined, and they love to be in school. Absenteeism is now a thing of the past. Teachers are so approachable to students who can now come to us to share their challenges in school and at home. Positive Discipline Approach is the most appropriate method for correcting students. I recommend the training for all teachers in the municipality.



Hawa is Basic 9 students of Falahia Basic School and have this to say about PDA.

“Since the announcement by our headteacher that teachers will no longer come into the class with cane, a lot has changed in our school. When a student does something wrong the Teachers will explain to you the implications of the misbehavior on your learning and future and you will be asked not to repeat it. In some instances, the Teacher will ask the student to see him/her after class and then the teacher will find out why the student misbehaved and give the necessary advice. With the cane we were sometimes afraid to ask questions on areas not understood and will also volunteer to answer questions being asked, for fear that you would be canded if you got it wrong. The change started from the headteacher himself who used to cane us a lot. Some pupils were even slapped for putting up some misbehavior. All that has changed, and we are happy. Students are well behaved now, and we are beginning to hear good things about our school. We are happy about this new approach.”

The government of Ghana through the Ghana Education Service abolished corporal punishment as a correctional measure in all public and private schools many years ago. Despite this ban the use of these corporal measures in schools is still very rife. Many teachers are of the conviction that the use of the cane is the only potent approach to correcting

indiscipline among pupils. Teachers even associate indiscipline to fallen academic performance by laying faults on the ban on the use of corporal punishment and the continued advocacy against same by CSOs like ActionAid Ghana. Notably, training on positive discipline approach as was provided to headteachers in Sissala East should rather be promoted picking on the testimonies shared above.

6.3.3. Increasing female teachers in schools for a safe school environment for girls.

Guidance, counselling and mentorship are essential for the growth of the girl child in education. Under the AAG intervention to promote safer school spaces for girls, school-level GEAPs aimed at empowering girls through coaching and mentoring by introducing them to role models were introduced in the Bono region. Ghana's re-entry policy for adolescent mothers and pregnant students has made the advocacy for female tutors in this region a necessity. Often these role models are sometimes local women or older adolescent girls or female teachers who have achieved beyond what was expected of them and who usually served as strong advocates of women's empowerment and gender equity. However, most of the Junior High

Schools in the Tain district do not have female teachers to serve as mentors for the girls.

Two (2) female teachers (one to each school) have been re-posted to the Namasa and Njau Junior High Schools in the Tain districts to serve as mentors to the schoolgirls in the communities respectively. This has been possible through the engagement meetings between the Parent Associations (PA) and School Management Committees (SMC) from the two communities and the Ghana Education Service in the Tain district. Now, school children especially girls in these communities have mentors to look out for and support their discussions during their GEAP meetings. Alhussain Halimatu is a 14-year student of Namasa and in JHS 2. She is extremely happy that Girls in her class and school have a female mentor and shares her reflections on the initiative.

“ Like many other girls in my school, looking for a female role model in my school was an issue. All the teachers at the Junior High School level were all male teachers. When we formed school-level GEAP, we had no option but to make male teachers our mentors and counsellors. In most cases, these teachers could not participate in the discussions of our meetings, especially when the issues had to be on sexual and reproductive health rights so we are usually left to discuss the issues by ourselves.

Through the support of ActionAid, we engaged the Parent Association on the issue, and they held meetings with the Tain Education Service on the need to post female teachers to schools in my district to serve as mentors and counsellors for



the girls. As a result AAG supported and facilitated the convening of a meeting between the PTA and the District Directorate of Education. A female teacher was subsequently posted to the school to serve as a mentor and provide support for the management of our school GEAP. Now, we can discuss any issue relating to girls and women and I am not shy in discussing personal issues with my mentor. This is a sigh of relief at last for my classmates and me. ”

6.3.4. Promoting Safe Spaces For Girl's Education Through Girl-Model Schools

Girls Model Schools are aimed at promoting quality girl-child education by providing girl-friendly educational infrastructure for effective teaching and learning that inculcate in their knowledge, creativity, innovation, and confidence, harnessing the potential of girls to play active roles in the development of their communities. ActionAid constructed a six-unit classroom block for the Pusiga Girls Model Primary School in the Upper East Region through the Improving Access to Quality Education project. The classroom

block comes with ancillary facilities such as a library stocked with books, a staff common room, a mechanised borehole, a urinal, and a six-seater toilet with a changing room.

The provision of a new classroom block for the Pusiga Girls Model Primary School was intended to serve as a feeder to the Pusiga Girls Model Junior High School which was also provided a similar facility in 2019. These have created safe spaces and girl-friendly school environments which will promote the rights of girls to access good quality child-friendly public education of which the young Amdiya has benefitted.

“ *My name is Amdiya. I am 7 years old and a primary school pupil in class two. I am happy that ActionAid Ghana has given us a new school. I used to study with my friends under a tree but now we sit in the classroom. We also now have books, playing things, water to drink and water for washing our hands.* ”



In this new school constructed by ActionAid, she says, everything is available. We have nice large classrooms with ceiling fans, furniture, books, playing items, water, toilet and all the necessary things we need. Many children in my community want to be in my school because it is very beautiful and safe. I don't miss school anymore and I enjoy being in school all the time. We thank ActionAid for giving us this nice school. ”

6.4. Global Platform (GP) Role in Youth Activism and Movement Building for Social Change

Global Platform Ghana (GPG) is a member of the Global Platforms (GP) networks set-up for the purpose of spearheading youth mobilisation and activism and also positioned to offer capacity building around especially participatory advocacy and campaigns. The year 2023 became a significant milestone as GPG embarked on implementation of various strategic actions aimed at consolidating and scaling up the gains achieved in the youth-led grassroots mobilization, enhanced creativity, and inclusion into AAG program work. Reflections from the year highlights an increase in alliance building especially with minority groups

and climate change activists and youth empowerment centers.

In solidarity with the GP networks action on the 'Fund Our Future' climate campaign, over 3200 community youth from YUWM, Activista, and Ebaprenuer Solutions and the University of Environment and Sustainable Development (UESD) engaged with duty bearers, and local authorities to make pledges during the climate challenge activity organized in partnership with University of Environment and Sustainable Development (UESD). The Member of Parliament for the area pledged to take forward some of the climate change concerns to Parliament to demand for action from relevant authorities.





Besides, courtesy ActionAid Denmark, the digital safety and security project has sought to deepen engagements among like-minded youth movements and minority groups. State officials especially from the security services and legal practitioners co-facilitated digital security trainings for minority and vulnerable groups to

Again, ActionAid Denmark has been a great pillar behind the operations of the Global Platforms network. During the year, ActionAid Denmark supported Esther Appah, the Student Representative Council (SRC) President of UESD and a GPG Senior Associate was given the opportunity to take part in a face-to-face training in Arusha, Tanzania in June 2023 to strengthen her skills on training facilitation and advocacy approaches. This has contributed to strengthening the strategic partnership between AAG and UESD.

increase their knowledge on the forms of cyber-bullying and being conscious to identify and deal with the treats of physical attacks. The often-overlooked issue of sexual abuse against males also came to the fore where the experiences shared by a survivor motivated six (6) others to also come out to share and seek psycho-social counselling and rehabilitation over the impacts they have suffered on their mental health, emotional well-being, and relationships building. This points to the need for the legal system to re-orient itself to lending attention to the obscure situation of abused male survivors.

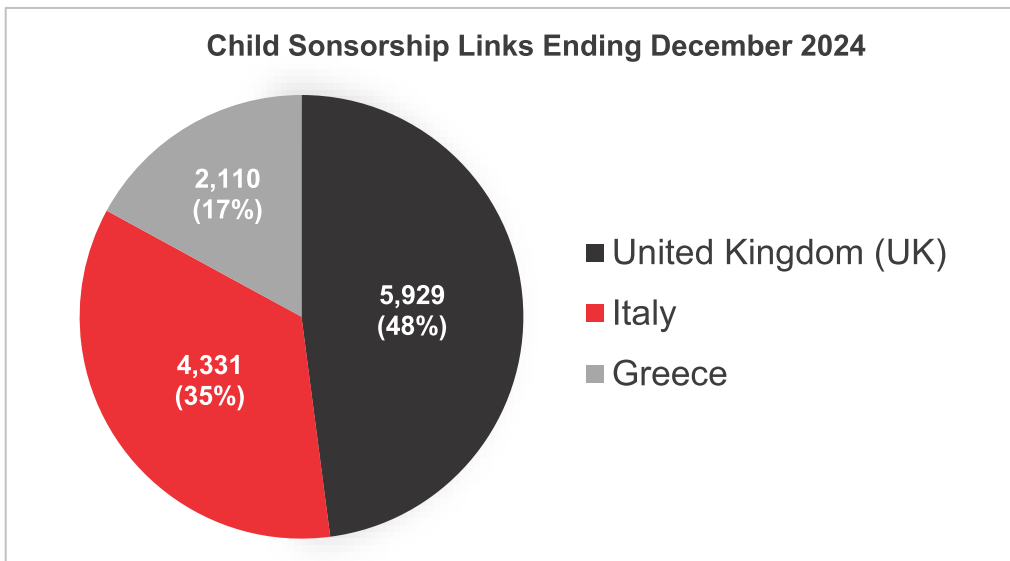


AAG fundraising can be classified under three streams namely Child Sponsorship (CS) also referred to Regular Giving, Institutional Partnership Income raised through project proposals and High-Value Donations raised from individual philanthropic donors.

7.1. Child Sponsorship

Child sponsorship (CS) remains an important funding stream for the operations of ActionAid Ghana (AAG). Though, there have been a gradual decline in the total number of links over past couple of years, and consequently

the income realized, due to several factors. A major factor for the decline in recent times has been the impact of Covid 19 on the lives and income situation of supporters, which led to their attrition from the scheme. Despite the above, Ghana continues to remain a high performer in child sponsorship, contributing to international best practice in speed and accuracy of supporter servicing, quality report production and timely delivery of profiles. This led to Ghana being offered early adopter links of over 4,000 towards the end of 2022 to boost number of links.



At the end of December 2023, the total sponsorship links, including child and non-child sponsorship links, stood at 12,370. Out of the current total number of child sponsors, 4,331 of them constituting 35% are from Italy; 5,929 representing 48% are based in the UK and the remaining 2,110 supporters representing 17% are in Greece.

AAG is striving to improve its local level monitoring of sponsored children and ensuring that programme interventions respond to the needs of the children and their communities to prevent or reduce any potential apathy from community members during Media and Profile Collections. Resources have been invested in the continuous training of staff

and partners on CS business processes, systems, and safeguarding issues. Regular education is also being mainstreamed into community outreaches to explain the rationale and modus operandi of the CS scheme. AAG has shown commitment to the roll-out of the Sahakom (SK) Child Sponsorship Management System since

its inception in September 2021. The CS&HV Manager conducted series of trainings for AAG and partner staff across all regional programmes. Mobile devices were purchased for all the regional programmes and the central unit in readiness for the full roll out of the SK Mobile App in 2024.

7.2. Institutional Partnerships and High Value Funding

During the year 2023, the implementation of the Young Urban Women Project was renewed for another three year phase covering April 2023 to March 2026. AAG has also been exploring other high-value partnership schemes including efforts being made to connect with the corporate social responsibility outfits of financial institutions and other corporate organisations. Fidelity Bank and Standard Chartered Bank are among the financial institutions showing interest to mutually to co-finance existing projects or co-create micro-projects revolving around women economic empowerment or education. AAG looks forward to concretizing these positive interactions to culminate into the signing of memorandum of understanding (MoU) and projects funding in 2024.

However, the implementation of two major institutional donor funded projects came to an end. These are the EU funded Northern Ghana Integrated Development Project (NGIDP) which had been implemented over the period of 2019 to

2023 and the Norad funded Combatting Modern Slavery (CMS) Project also implemented over the period of 2021 to 2023.

AAG has turned attention to pursuing an aggressive fundraising drive. As part of donor cultivation, AAG had interactions with a number of donor organisations such as FCDO, Global Affairs Canada (GAC), United States Agency for International Development (USAID). Both unsolicited and solicited concept notes and proposals were submitted to various institutional donors including joint submissions at the federation level. One such proposal is the €2.105 million natural resource management and governance project submitted to the European Union (EU) and has been put on reserve for possible consideration. Towards the end of 2023, AAG received £45,000 from the ActionAid Opportunity Fund to consolidate gains made on the engagements with Attorney General and Ministry of Justice on the Legal Binding Instrument on Business and Human Rights and to also hold a donor conference as part of donor cultivation and prospecting.

8.0

FINANCE AND EXPENDITURE
PERFORMANCE

8.1 Income

Total income received for the reporting year was £2,493k, which was £362K less than planned income for the year representing a percentage (21%) negative variance in actual income as compared to planned income. In comparing the actual income to that of income for last year, this year recorded a decrease in income of 20%. The change in income can be attributed to decrease in partnership, philanthropy, and institutional income because two major projects ended during the year.

From Table 1 income analysis below, Individual Giving income showed a negative variance of 21% compared to planned for the year but 14% increase compared to 2022. The planned income could not be achieved due to challenges faced by Global Secretariate in linking all

the new profiles to sponsors. However, the increase in individual giving income compared to that of 2022, was as a result of the new profiles that were transferred to Ghana from early adopter countries. The early adopter countries are countries that stopped implementing child sponsorship programmes.

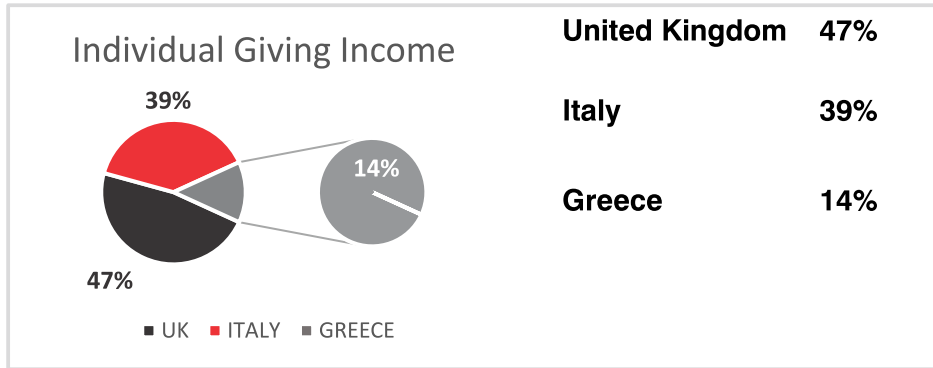
Partnership Income received from affiliates recorded a positive variance of 4%. This is mostly due to deferred income bought from 2022. Partnership affiliates income received during the year was higher than planned by £38K (4%) but lower than the previous year's income by 35%. Local Partnership income earned was, lower than planned by 43% due to the fact that some of the income was deferred to 2024. The main source of the local income for 2023 was the Transformative Action in Gender Equality (TAGE) funded by the European Union.

Table 1 below shows the summary of the income received for the year 2023.

Table 1: Income Analysis

Income Source	Actual £'000	Plan £'000	Forecast £'000	Var £'000	%	2022	% Change
Individual Giving	1,324	1,686	1,334	(362)	-21%	1,163	14%
Other Products	2	70	2	(68)	-97%	7	-71%
Net transfers	(44)	(44)	(35)	-	-	(42)	5%
Partnership-Affiliates	1,062	1,024	911	38	4%	1,623	-35%
Partnership-Local	104	181	182	(77)	-43%	334	-69%
Other Income	45	20	24	25	125%	40	13%
Total	2,493	2,937	2,418	(444)	15%	3,125	-20%

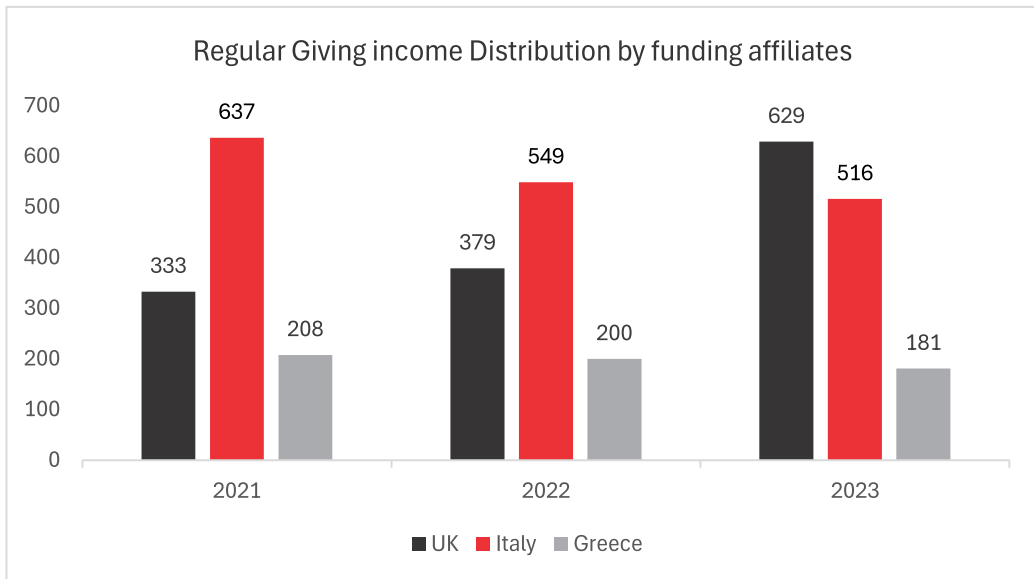
Individual Giving



Individual giving income accounts for 52% of the country's income mix for the year. This year's total income is 44% higher than that of year last year. Again, from the review of the performance of individual giving streams, income from UK and Italy contributed to 47% and 39% respectively accounting for 86% of the total income. Income from Greece accounted for 14% of the total individual

giving income. Some sponsorship links allocated to Ghana from Early adopter countries such as Somaliland, Burundi, DRC, etc. in 2022 attracted more of this sponsorship income during the year. However, there were some challenges transferring all the new links and income during the year leading to lower income as compared to the annual plan.

8.2. Individual Giving income by Funding Affiliates



Partnership income

About 46% of our total income by end of the year came from partnership income (contracts, donations, and grants) mainly from partnership, philanthropy and institutional sources. The partnership income of £1,166k decreased by £791k compared to 2022. The decrease in partnership income was mainly due to the closure of some projects during the year. The Northern Ghana Integrated Development project, the Combatting Modern Slavery project and Barrowman School project were all closed in 2023.

Management is, however, making frantic efforts to raise more partnership income during the year.

Table 2: Partnership Income Sources

The income shown in the table below is the actual amount of funding utilized at the end of the year excluding the deferred income under each of the projects. Income deferred at the end of the year shall be recognized as income for subsequent years when utilized.

PROJECT NAME	DONOR	LOCATION	AAI	LOCAL	TOTAL
			(£'000)	(£'000)	(£'000)
NORTHERN GHANA INTEGRATED DEVELOPMENT CO-FINANCING	EU /MEDICOR	NR, UER, UWR	273		273
PROMOTING EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE	MEDICOR FOUNDATION	UE, UW, NR	22		22
COMBATING MODERN SLAVERY PROJECT	NORAD	NR, UE, UW, BA, GAVR	412		412
YOUNG URBAN WOMENS PROJECT	HEULETT PACKARD	NR, UE, BA, GAVR	151		151
THE DONKEY WELFARE PROJECT	THE DONKEY SANCTUARY	UW	58		58
IMPROVING ACCESS TO QUALITY EDUCATION	AA UK	BAR	62		62
TRANSFORMATIVE ACTION FOR GENDER EQUALITY	EU	NR, UW, BAR, GAVR	-	104	104
GLOBAL PLATFORM DENMARK	AA DENMARK	H/O	-	13	13
INFLUENCING EDUCATION POLICY- HILLS	HILLS & COOK	GAR	36		36
NASSAMBA SCHOOL PROJECT	AA UK	NR	35		35
TOTAL			1,049	117	1,166

Expenditure Summary

Total expenditure for the year was £2,597K. This was an 83% utilization of the annual budget but was however, £354K lower compared to the previous year's expenditure of £2,591K.

Grants and community inputs constituted 63% of the total expenditure whereas staff

cost accounted for 18% of the total expenditure. Based on the statutory cost analysis, programme cost accounted for 85% of the total expenditure for the year.

Table 3 below analyses expenditure utilization and associated variances by natural cost in the year under review.

Table 3: Natural cost Analysis (GBP'000)

Natural Costs	Actual (£'000)	Plan (£'000)	Forecast (£'000)	Var (£'000)	Util %	Prop	2022 (£'000)	% Chge
Grants and Comm'ty Inputs	1,644	2,248	1,669	604	73%	63%	2,151	-24%
Staff Cost	465	569	430	104	82%	18%	471	-1%
Travel and Transport	125	80	90	-45	156%	5%	102	22%
Office and Service	318	182	116	-136	175%	12%	226	40%
Capital/Others	45	52	64	7	87%	2%	-	0%
Total	2,597	3,131	2,369	534	83%	100%	2,951	-12%

Grants and Community inputs expenditure of £1,644K was 63% of total expenditure. This represents a 24% decrease in expenditure compared to last year as indicated in the table above. From the table above, total expenditure was £534k lower than planned. The lower utilization was as a result of the close down of some projects such as the Combatting Modern Slavery project and the Northern Ghana Integrated Development project. There was a marginal decrease in planned regular-giving income leading to reduction in LRP expenditure. LRPs were informed to be guided by the forecast reduction in regular-giving income in order not to spend into their reserves.

Staff cost expenditure was £465k for the reporting year. This represents 18% of total expenditure for the year, but 1% below prior year expenditure of £471K. Staff cost was lower by £104K compared to planned expenditure and £6K lower than expenditure for last year. This is

because even though some project staff left close to the end of the year, staff salaries were increased by an average of 15% at the beginning of the year.

Travel and transportation expenditure was £125K resulting in over expenditure of the budget by 56% and an increase of 22% in travel expenditure compared to that of 2022. Like most other costs, the increase in expenditure was high rates of inflation especially relating to fuel cost within the year.

Office and Service Cost for the reporting year was £318k. This was £136K higher than planned and £92K higher than that of expenditure of year in 2022. As mentioned before, the variance between planned and forecast expenditure resulted from increases in prices of goods and services during the year due to inflation. Also some office and service costs which hitherto were charged to partnership income under programme were charged to office and service costs under the regular-giving income.

All expenditures were within the expected utilization limits during the year-Community Grants (60), Staff costs (25%) etc

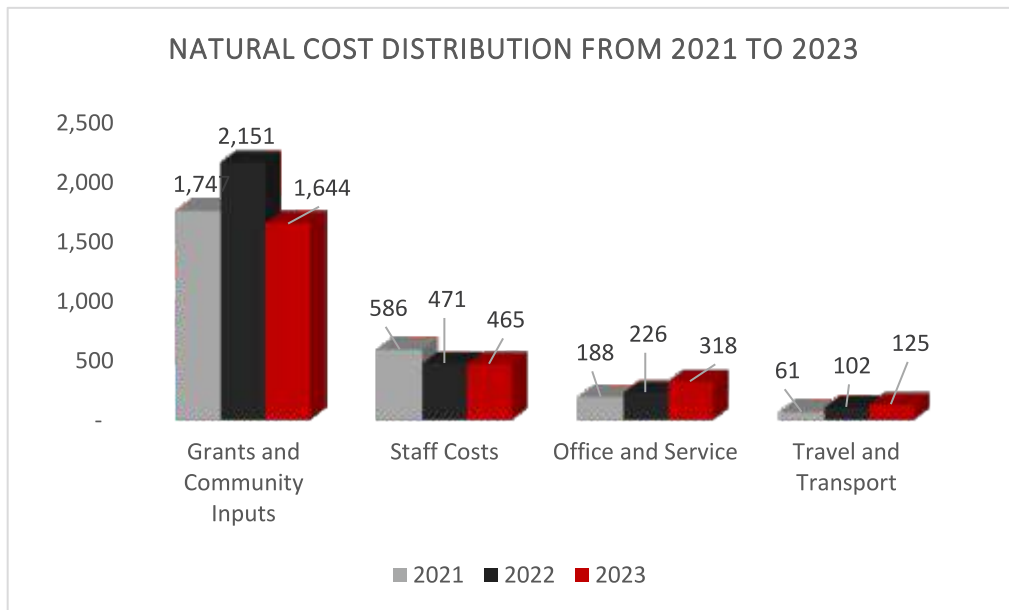


Table 4: Statutory cost Analysis (GBP'000)

Statutory Costs	Actual	Plan	Forecast	Var	Util %	Prop	2022	% Change
Programme>65	2,220	2,878	2,083	658	77%	85%	2,607	-15%
Fundraising<10	120	70	50	-50	171%	5%	41	193%
Governance	37	40	40	3	93%	1%	32	16%
Support<15	220	143	196	-77	154%	8%	271	-19%
Total	2,597	3,131	2,369	574	83%	100%	2,951	-12%

From the table above, programme cost was 86% of total expenditure which is twenty-one percentage points above the Global Secretariate's Key Promise Indicator (KPI) of 65%, while support and governance cost ratio was 14% compared to the GS benchmark maximum rate of 15%. This is a demonstration to our donors and supporters that a greater portion of their investment/funds are invested in the lives of people living in poverty.

Fundraising cost, on the other hand, accounted for 5% of total expenditure. Compared to 2022 expenditure, fundraising cost increased by 193%. Governance cost increased by 16% compared to 2022. The increase in governance costs can be attributed to the increase in prices of goods and services during the year. Cost of holding meetings during the year were costly than before.



Exchange rate movements

Planned exchange rate for the reporting year was £1.00 to GH¢8.5287 Average exchange rate for the year was £1.00 to GHS9.9875. The year exchange rate deviation from the plan was 18% and the

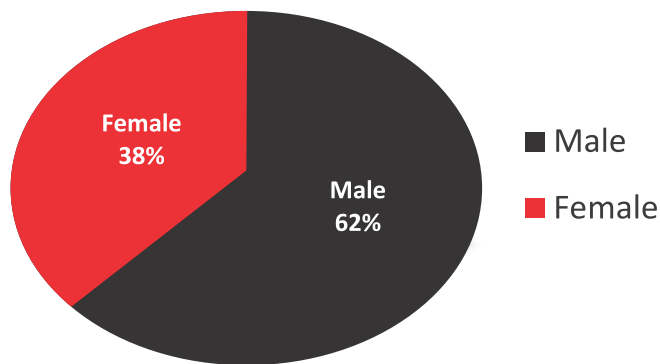
variance the between opening and year closing rate was about 38%. This indicates the level of depreciation of the local currency to the British Pound.

Year	£	GH¢
Rate at 1st January 2023	1	12.5946
Planned rate for 2023	1	11.8437
Average rate for January to December 2023	1	14.4315
Rate as at 31st December 2023	1	14.6500
Planned rate versus Average rate variance	22%	
Variance between opening and closing rates	16%	

This segment of the report presents the staffing information and other major activities implemented under the Human Resources and Organisational Effectiveness (HROE) unit.

9.1 Total Staff Head Count by Gender

Head Count By Gender



The total staff strength of ActionAid Ghana as at December 2023 stood at forty eight (48) comprising of 38%female and 62%male.

AAG is relentlessly pursuing our affirmative action on gender balance; determined efforts to achieve the gender parity target by providing opportunities for women during recruitment.

9.2. Building Team Cohesion through Biennial Staff Durbar

In line with the strategic objective of AAG to improve team cohesion and provide a congenial atmosphere for staff to socialize the biennial staff durbar was successfully held at the Royal Cosy Hotel at Jirapa from 27 -30 Sept 2023 under the theme 'Nurturing A Stronger Team to Achieve Shared Results'

The objective was to promote team bonding, de-stress and to reenergize the workforce for enhanced productivity as well to discuss staff welfare issues.

ActionAid Ghana HROE/Admin remains committed to recruiting the right people, empowering and motivating them to deliver on the mandate of the CSP VII and the overall vision of AAG. The recruitment and empowerment of women is being vigorously pursued to bridge the gender gap in the organization.

The Participatory Review and Reflection Process (PRRP) is a core component of ActionAid's approach to regular and ongoing monitoring and review mechanisms on the progress and outcomes of programme interventions while also offering an opportunity to appraise multi-stakeholder collaborations. It involves in-depth review and reflections with key stakeholders on the progress and lessons emanating from ActionAid's work. The PRRPs also enhance the relationships with primary stakeholders through the accountability usually rendered on the resources mobilized during the preceding year and how it has been spent. The PRRPs particularly focus on eliciting feedback on the efficacy of the implementation approaches and to obtain suggestions on the actions that should be prioritised and implemented the following year.

While different mechanisms such as Senior Management Meetings (SMM), Partners and Collaborators Review Meetings also feed into the PRRPs, the regional programmes of AAG usually undertake a comprehensive engagement process with sampled communities to feed into every annual planning and budgeting cycle. The engagements do also include the partners, key collaborators, and right-holder organisations and movements. These processes strengthen rights-based programming, solidarity building, and nurtures ownership of the campaign priorities.

Plenary presentations and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) are usually used to facilitate constructive discussions around

the following reflection points.

- The emerging social changes related to AAG's intervention priorities over the last year or couple of years and the extent to which AAG contributed to those changes. By doing this, change stories are identified and documented.
- Solicit feedback on the interventions and implementation approaches that are working well and cherished, those not working well and need to be discontinued or modified. These feed into learning.
- The stakeholders also identify the prevailing challenges or social problems and suggest key actions that should be implemented to help address them in line with AAG's priorities.

In line with the usual practice, the regional programmes were mandated to undertake their PRRPs between July and August 2023 while the functional outfits equally reflect on and document key learnings from the execution of their mandates. The key learnings and feedback fed into the development of AAG's 2024 annual Action Plan and Budgets in November 2023 and the development of the AAG 2023 annual report.

The key reflections and learnings documented from the PRRPs that fed into and informed AAG and its partners on the interventions that must be designed and implemented in 2024 and beyond. Among these include:

- Lack of a national policy for CRSA and Agroecology: This has impeded progress made so far. The poor appreciation of the value of organically produced food crops and vegetables do not allow producers obtain good value for their products.
- Strong community desire to obtain economic empowerment opportunities: This is to enable community members to meet their basic needs. The income generation ventures provided by AAG to women and young people is very much appreciated and greatly changing lives, hence more people are seeking to also receive such economic empowerment. But there is the need to strengthen the linkage of entrepreneurs to the Ghana Enterprises Agency (GEA) to support them in developing business plans, registering their businesses, undergoing product certification, improving market linkages.
- Lack of commitment of the successive governments to pass the Affirmative Action Bill: This has impeded women political participation. Ghana's 8th Parliament currently has 37 females out of the 275 Members of Parliament (MPs) representing 14% and the District Assemblies have never been able to attain even 5% female representation. Meanwhile, the AU and ECOWAS target is to achieve respectively 40% and 30% female participation in governance. Gratefully, the advocacy is being given a boost and receiving great momentum with the Speaker of Parliament showing interest and advocating for its passage during this Parliamentary session.
- Lack of political will for the operationalisation of the Domestic Violence Fund: There have not been any financial releases to the funds for over 10 years. Meanwhile, survivors of violence and abuse are burdened to pay for medical examinations and reports to aid prosecution. AAG has been involved in a sustained advocacy and engagement with relevant authorities to lend attention to the fulfilment of this obligation.
- Failure to deal with the matter of alleged witches: It is still a daunting task winning the fight towards guaranteeing safety and dignity of vulnerable people including stopping human rights violations against alleged witches. There is therefore the need to sustain the grassroots advocacy and engagement actions to get local communities to undo superstitious beliefs while the push for protective legislation is of great necessity. Appreciably, the efforts AAG and coalition members invested led to the passage of the Criminal Offences (Amendment) Bill 2023 to criminalise witchcraft accusations. Regrettably, the President failed to give assent to fully make it an enforceable law making the legal argument that its passage came through a private member's bill but imposes cost on the consolidated account which should not be the case. AAG and other coalition members are still resolute in advocating for the presidential assent.
- Low reportage of cases of violence against women: There is still a great measure of apprehension about reporting incidence of violence and abuse for legal action, particularly involving closely related persons such

as husbands. This is because of the social backlash and stigma usually suffered by the victims which makes many continue to endure and condone the violence and abuse. But some appreciable level of change is emerging on the social norms and need continuous engagement to consolidate the gains.

- Increasing attention to violence and harassment in the informal and formal sector workplaces: The implementation of the PPL-UK funded Zero Violence Project and other campaign actions being heralded by the Young Urban Women (YUW) is contributing to this. Governmental action is underway to get the relevant ILO conventions ratified which AAG will follow through in 2024 as well as the promulgation of the new labour law.
- Inadequate appreciation of the policy of re-entry for teenage mothers: The rationale for the implementation of the policy for the prevention of teenage pregnancies and guaranteeing re-entry for teenage mothers introduced in 2016 is not recognised. This is to

the extent that headteachers are unwilling to allow pregnant girls to stay in school and there is a high stigma against teenage mothers' re-entry into school. Stakeholder conscientisation therefore needs to be increased on the policy. Teenage girls must be provided with reproductive health rights knowledge. Support mechanisms must also be established to safeguard pregnant girls from dropping out of schools as well as encourage their return soon after delivery.

- Inadequate childcare centres and the non-prioritisation of nursery education: This is a hindrance to the realisation of the School Re-entry Policy for Pregnant girls. Limited resource allocation to the Department of Social Welfare has not made it possible for them to fulfil their mandate of providing early childhood development services to children between 0-3 years in Ghana thereby leaving the space largely to private providers without requisite supervision.

AAG has a deep and wide commitment to working in partnerships and strengthening rights-holder led actions through social movement building. It is therefore crucial to regularly assess the types and quality of partnerships being maintained and their contribution to achieving our set objectives and results. SIF2 emphasis the nurturing and strengthening of right-holder struggles through people's organisations and social movements campaigns.

To this, AAG has been nurturing and working with the following social movements and coalitions.

- Smallholder Women Farmers Movement (SHWFM)
- Female Extension Volunteers (FEVs)
- Young Female Platforms (YFPs)
- Young Urban Women Movement (YUWM)
- Girls Empowerment and Advocacy Platforms (GEAPs)
- Activista Movement
- Community-Based Anti-Violence Teams (COMBATs)
- Parent Associations (PA) Networks.
- Children's Parliament
- Tax Justice Coalition (TJC)
- Climate Justice Network
- Ghana Agroecology Movement
- Labour Unions (Teacher Unions), GAWU (Ghana Agricultural Workers Union)),
- Ghana National Education Campaign Coalition (GNECC)
- Northern Network on Education Development (NNED)
- Domestic Violence Coalition
- ABANTU for Development
- A new one in 2024 will be Ecovista Movement (Climate Change Clubs in schools)



12.0

CAPACITY BUILDING PLANS

The following capacity building needs have been identified for action.

- Continue to increase the understanding of staff, partners, and leaders of various social movements on the new CSP VII.
- Train staff, partners and social movements on Climate Justice, Economic Justice, Gender Responsive Public Service and Feminist Green Just Transitions concepts.
- Strengthen staff capacity for fundraising.
- Build social movements capacity on advocacy and campaigns.
- Increase staff and partners knowledge on governments policies relating to agroecology, climate Justice and other thematic areas.
- Increase staff, partners, and associates understanding on SHEA and Safeguarding and monitor compliance.
- Capacities will also be enhanced on effective communication, use of M&E tools and frameworks, documentation skills and use of social media advocacy.
- Train staff on Active Citizenship and Violent Extremism









PICTURE GALLERY





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