



**COUNTRY STRATEGY
PAPER VI**

2024-2028

TRANSFORMING SYSTEMS FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE



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 working 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 but not limited to gender, sexual orientation and gender identity, race, ethnicity, class, age, HIV status, disability, location, and religion.
- **Integrity:** Requiring us to be honest, transparent, and accountable at all levels for the effectiveness of our actions and our use of resources and open in our judgements and communications with others.
- **Solidarity with People Living in Poverty and Exclusion:** The only bias is 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 the greatest possible impact on the causes of poverty, injustice, and gender inequality.
- **Independence:** Free from any religious or political party affiliation.
- **Humility:** Humble in our presentation and behaviour, recognising that we are part of a wider alliance against poverty and injustice.

OUR LEADERSHIP APPROACH

ActionAid's transformative vision of a just world free from poverty, oppression and patriarchy requires transformative feminist leaders: leaders who enable others to lead, building power with them instead of over them. ActionAid Malawi is guided by a leadership approach that uses feminist leadership principles which bind the staff, partners, Board of Directors and General Assembly. AAM's feminist transformative leadership principles are:

1. Self-awareness

- We will be aware of our influence, strengths, and weaknesses so that we can lead with empathy and open minds.
- To do this, we will work towards accepting our vulnerabilities, as well as recognising and valuing our strengths and those of others.

2. Self-care and caring for others

- We will actively be aware of our own mental, emotional, and physical well-being.
- We will reflect on how our actions and or words affect us and those around us.
- We encourage and support others to do the same, actively working towards a more flexible and supportive environment.

3. Dismantling bias

- We constantly reflect on our own privilege and power, based on advantages we hold, and will do so by:
- recognising that society gives us (and others) certain advantages that are not asked for or earned (for example, gender, class, race, ability, sexual orientation, education, or other factors).
- Being aware of how our own privileges can make others feel disempowered or inferior.
- Ensure to challenge any forms of discrimination in our day-to-day practices and be conscious on how we react to others' privilege in order to treat everyone as equals.

4. Inclusion

- We will hear, respect, listen and treat everyone equally despite their status or power.
- We will challenge ourselves to build diverse and inclusive teams by responding and recognising different barriers towards participation.

5. Sharing power

- We will be conscious of the power we hold, and ensure we open space for others to be meaningfully involved within all discussions.
- We ensure to work together to establish shared goals that will empower colleagues to share leadership and lead.
- We will support and hold to account those in positions of authority to us in the best interest of our mission.

OUR LEADERSHIP APPROACHContinues

6. Responsible and Transparent use of power

- We will be clear, timely and transparent in making decisions.
- We will hold open and appropriate consultation about decisions being taken forward, where everyone's thoughts and perspectives are taken into account and valued in the final decision.

7. Accountable Collaboration

- We will ensure that our goals are clearly defined and mutually owned.
- We will hold ourselves to account for our individual and collective efforts to achieve the goals and expect the same from others.
- We will recognise and value successful collaboration, while addressing conflict or failures fairly but decisively.

8. Respectful feedback

- We will seek, give, and value constructive feedback as an opportunity for two-way learning.
- We will provide feedback for successes as well as for constructive feedback.
- We will work to resolve conflict through active listening, respectful communication and focus on empathetic and positive outcomes.

9. Courage

- We will be proactive, take on new initiatives and new challenges that may arise.
- We will take any failure as a learning opportunity, understand our mistakes, and empower those around us to do the same.

10. Zero tolerance

- We will call out any form of discrimination and abuse of power that we witness or experience.
- We will ensure our own conduct is free from any form of harassment, exploitation, and abuse.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abbreviations and Acronyms.....	i
Acknowledgements.....	ii
Foreword by the Board Chairperson.....	iii
Statement from the Executive Director.....	iv
Executive Summary.....	1.
Background Information.....	3
Journey to CSP VI.....	3
Process of Developing CSP VI.....	3
Chapter One.....	4
Introduction.....	4
Chapter Two.....	5
External Context.....	5
Chapter Three.....	9
Looking back to CSP V.....	9
Chapter Four.....	13
Who we work with.....	18
Where we will work.....	19
Chapter Five.....	20
Programme priority areas.....	20
Chapter Six.....	27
Organizational Enablers.....	27
Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning Systems.....	31
Risk Management.....	34
Financial Projection of CSP VI.....	35
Governance Structure.....	36

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

AAM	ActionAid Malawi
AU	African Union
CBCC	Community Based Childcare Centre
CEDAW	Convention for the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CONGOMA	Council for Non-Governmental Organisations in Malawi
COVID-19	Corona Virus Disease 2019
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
CSEC	Civil Society Education Coalition
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
CSP	Country Strategy Paper
DPs	Development Partners
ECD	Early Childhood Development
EWS	Early Warning Systems
GBV	Gender Based Violence
GDP	Growth Domestic Product
HIV	Human Immuno-Deficiency Virus
HRBA	Human Rights Based Approach
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
LRPs	Local Rights Program
MDAs	Ministries, Departments and Agencies
MEAL	Monitoring Evaluation Accountability and Learning
MNC	Multinational Corporations
NPC	National Planning Commission
NGORA	Non-Governmental Organisation Regulatory Authority
PESTEL	Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Environmental and Legal
PRRP	Participatory Reflection and Review Processes
PSA	Partnership for Social Accountability
SADC	Southern Africa Development Community
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SHEA	Sexual Harassment, Exploitation and Abuse
SRHR	Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights
SWOT	Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats
UDHR	Universal Declaration of Human Rights
UNC	United Nations Charter
VAWG	Violence against women and girls

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

ActionAid Malawi (AAM) is grateful for the cooperation it received from various stakeholders including our local partners in the development of the ActionAid Malawi Country Strategy Paper VI – Transforming Systems for Social Justice (2024- 2028). AAM recognises the pivotal role of the National Planning Commission (NPC) which guided the alignment of CSP VI to Malawi 2063, Malawi’s long-term development blueprint, and its first Ten Year Implementation Plan (MIP-1). AAM would like to extend its gratitude to Government Ministries, Departments, Agencies, development partners, issue-based civil society organisations, strategic allies, implementing partners, women, and youth movements for inputting in the design of CSP VI and looks forward to collaboration in its implementation.

AAM also appreciates the support it received from the ActionAid Global Secretariat which provided guidance and technical support.

Finally, AAM would like to acknowledge with gratitude, Nova Business Consulting led by Professor Maureen Chirwa with assistance from Messrs. Desmond Kaunda and Joseph Makuwira for the technical support rendered in the development of the CSP VI.



Some of the beneficiaries of ActionAid Malawi empowerment programs in Nthalire, Chitipa.

FOREWORD BY THE BOARD CHAIRPERSON

It is with great pleasure that I introduce ActionAid Malawi's Country Strategy Paper VI, "Transforming Systems for Social Justice," which will guide our initiatives from 2024 to 2028. This comprehensive strategy embraces a Human Rights-Based Approach infused with a feminist intersectionality perspective. It represents our dedicated contribution to Malawi's ambitious goal of becoming a prosperous and self-reliant "upper middle-income country" by 2063. Through CSP VI, we will work hand in hand with marginalized and excluded groups, particularly in remote areas, to champion and safeguard their rights.

Our commitment to transforming systems for social justice focuses on redistributing power and resources, bolstering community resilience, and ensuring the fulfilment of rights for those living in poverty and exclusion, especially women, young women, and girls.

I am particularly proud to emphasize the inclusive and participatory process behind the development of CSP VI, which engaged a broad spectrum of stakeholders. This collaborative effort has yielded innovative initiatives that I am confident will drive the effective implementation of our strategy.

With great enthusiasm and optimism, I look forward to the success of CSP VI. I sincerely hope that the spirit of collaboration among stakeholders, evident throughout the development of this strategy, will continue during its implementation. I urge our current funding partners to maintain their invaluable support and invite new partners to join us in advancing social justice, particularly by upholding the rights of women and girls.



Our efforts at ActionAid Malawi, through the implementation of CSP VI, will significantly contribute to the ActionAid Federation's Action for Global Justice, Malawi 2063, Regional Protocols, and the Sustainable Development Goals.

I extend my heartfelt gratitude to the General Assembly and Board for their guidance in formulating CSP VI. Special thanks go to the Senior Management Team and Staff of the AAM Secretariat for their facilitation in developing this paper. My deepest appreciation to the CSP VI Development Team, led by Mr. Wongani Mugaba, Programmes and Policy Lead, for their relentless efforts. The team included Willard Freedom Kaula, Rodney Nyirongo, Chrissy Msampha Banda, Wales Chigwenembe, Tusayiwe Sikwese, Jean Mvula Chirwa, Masozi Mkandawire, and Cosmas Longwe.

Best wishes to all stakeholders for active and successful participation in CSP VI.

A handwritten signature in brown ink, appearing to read "Grace Mkupu". The signature is fluid and cursive, written in a professional style.

Mrs Grace Mkupu
AAM Board Chairperson

STATEMENT FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The "Transforming Systems for Social Justice" Country Strategy Paper VI (2024-2028) sets the course for ActionAid Malawi's interventions over the next five years. Our overarching goal with CSP VI is to advance social justice, gender equality, and the eradication of poverty.

After thorough consultations and a rigorous development process, ActionAid Malawi has identified three priority areas to anchor our strategy and address the complex challenges facing our society. These priorities are:

- Attaining the rights of women, young women, and girls
- Securing systems change for economic justice
- Ensuring climate justice, resilient livelihoods, and effective humanitarian work

To realize these priorities effectively, ActionAid Malawi is committed to enhancing our capacity, streamlining our structures, systems, and procedures, and empowering our staff with the necessary skills and competencies. We are prepared to tackle challenges head-on and seize opportunities in our ever-evolving landscape.

The success of our previous Strategic Plan (CSP V) demonstrated the power of collaboration and coordination. We aim to continue fostering this spirit of cooperation in CSP VI, recognizing that every stakeholder plays a crucial role in our collective journey towards progress. We pledge to engage stakeholders consistently, maintaining flexibility while steadfastly committing to a Human Rights-Based Approach informed by a feminist intersectionality lens. As an organization, we remain unwavering in our pursuit of maximizing the value of our resources and ensuring the efficient implementation of our programs. To this end, we are dedicated to strengthening our monitoring, evaluation, accountability, and learning systems, upholding the highest standards of productivity, efficiency, and cost-effectiveness.



Each year, we will review the progress of CSP VI to ensure its success. A key component of this process will be the mid-term review, which will serve as a vital performance metric. During this review, we will assess our progress, identify any gaps, and address emerging issues to redirect our efforts effectively.

I call upon Government Ministries, Departments, Agencies, development partners, civil society organizations, strategic allies, implementing partners, and women and youth movements to join hands in supporting our endeavours outlined in CSP VI. Together, we can pave the way for a more just, equitable, and prosperous future for all.

With your unwavering support, I am confident that CSP VI will serve as a beacon, guiding ActionAid Malawi's transformative journey and inspiring positive change in our communities as we strive to achieve the aspirations of Malawians enshrined in Malawi 2063 and the global development goals outlined in the Sustainable Development Goals.

Limodzi Tingathe! (Together we can!)

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Yandura Chipeta". The signature is stylized and written in a cursive-like font.

Yandura Chipeta

AAM Executive Director

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



Learners at Bolero Secondary School in Rumphi campaigning for increased investment in education

ActionAid Malawi (AAM) has developed the Country Strategy Paper VI (CSP VI) for 2024-2028, building upon the achievements of the previous Country Strategy Paper V (CSP V), "Action for Social Justice," from 2018 to 2023. Entitled "Transforming Systems for Social Justice," CSP VI will serve as our guiding framework for the next five years. Embracing a Human Rights-Based Approach with a feminist intersectionality lens, this strategy aligns with Malawi's vision of becoming a prosperous "upper middle-income country" by the year 2063.

Through CSP VI, AAM aims to collaborate with marginalised and excluded groups, particularly in hard-to-reach areas, to promote and protect their rights. Just as in CSP V, this new strategy remains committed to Malawi's overarching vision, regional protocols, Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and ActionAid Federation Strategic Goals.

AAM has considered emerging political, economic, social, technological, environmental, legal, and ethical perspectives in designing the programs for the next five years. Building upon the satisfactory results achieved in CSP V, CSP VI deliberately interfaces with its predecessor to consolidate and deepen the gains.

This strategy identifies three programme priority areas along with the organisational enablers. These priorities, coupled with organisational strategic anchors, aim to realise a clear and measurable theory of change.

Programme Priority I: Attain Women, Young Women and Girls' Rights

This priority area centres on ending violence against women and girls, fostering their participation in decision-making platforms, enhancing wealth creation among women and young people, and promoting sexual and reproductive health and rights.

Programme Priority II: Secure Systems Change for Economic Justice

Focused on influencing a feminist well-being economy, this priority area aims to promote paid and unpaid care economies, advocate for tax justice, strengthen gender-responsive public services, and enhance civic participation and state accountability.

Programme Priority III: Secure Climate Justice, Resilient Livelihoods and Humanitarian Work

This priority area emphasises promoting agro-ecology, supporting communities' transition to sustainable resilient livelihoods, advocating for climate financing, enhancing environmental protection, and empowering women and youth-led preparedness, response, and recovery efforts.

Organisational Enablers

AAM has identified enablers that shall be leveraged internally to achieve the goal of CSP VI. These are addressing institutional sustainability, people and culture, SHEA and safeguarding, financial management, procurement, MEAL, information technology, communication, and internal governance.

Through the implementation of CSP VI, ActionAid Malawi is poised to continue its journey towards social justice and sustainable development, guided by unwavering commitment to transformative change.



BACKGROUND INFORMATION – CSP VI DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

JOURNEY TO CSP VI

To achieve the overall goal, AAM has been developing strategic documents, named Country Strategic Papers (CSPs) that outline the strategic direction of the Organisation within a specified period. ActionAid development approaches and strategies have significantly evolved since the 1990's when ActionAid started working in Malawi. From 1991 to 1997, ActionAid Malawi used the 'basic needs' or 'service provision' approach focusing on meeting the basic needs of communities under CSP I which was called 'Long Term Perspectives (LTPs)'.

From 1998 to 2004, CSP II, 'Working Together to Eradicate Poverty (Umodzi Pothetsa Umphawi)' provided a basis for ActionAid's work to support the empowerment of communities through Community Based Management (CBM). This was a continuation of the delivery of services to people in ActionAid's impact areas.

CSP III, 'Rights & Responsibilities to End Poverty (Ufulu ndi Udindo Pothetsa Umphawi)'- 2005 to 2011, deepened Human Rights Based Approach (HRBA) programming, with a focus on furthering rights of people living in poverty, exclusion and marginality and it also strengthened accountability and responsiveness of duty bearers.

CSP IV, 'People's Action to a Poverty Free Malawi ', implemented from 2012 to 2017, focused on empowering the poor and excluded people, as primary agents in bringing about desired change, whereas civil society remained allies, and not primary agents. The changes sought remained the realisation of rights through holding governments and powerful institutions accountable.

CSP V, 'Action for Social Justice,' implemented from 2018 to 2023, focused on addressing poverty, inequality, and social injustice through grassroots mobilisation and advocacy to achieve lasting impact. The Paper emphasised collaboration with local partners and government agencies to promote women's rights, climate-resilient sustainable agriculture, rights of women and children in emergencies, and enhancing access to quality education and healthcare services.

CSP VI, 'Transforming Systems for Social Justice,' will be implemented from 2024 to 2028, focusing on changing systems to achieve women's and girls' rights, economic justice, climate justice and humanitarian support. The paper enhances the human rights-based approach and feminist intersectional leadership, deepening rootedness and partnerships with social movements, frontline activists, grassroots Organisations, and active agency of people living in poverty.

The Process of Developing CSP VI

The process of developing this Country Strategy Paper VI (CSP VI) entailed undertaking several consultations with key stakeholders, carrying out a context and situation analysis which included a review of AAM's 2018-2023 Country Strategy Paper V (CSP V) as well as undertaking an environmental scan to come up with a firm basis for the development of the 2024-2028 Country Strategy Paper VI. A SWOT Analysis was also conducted to inwardly evaluate past performance and plan for the future. The process was participatory and consultative in nature to ensure ownership of strategic priorities as well as to benefit from a diversity of inputs and insights into what AAM can do to provide an adequate response to the issues.

The following were consulted in the process of developing CSP VI: Government Ministries, Departments and Agencies, development partners, issue-based civil society organisations, strategic allies, implementing partners, women and youth movements, ActionAid Federation Global Secretariat, AAM Board of Directors, and AAM General Assembly.

CHAPTER 1

1.0 INTRODUCTION

ActionAid is a global justice federation working to achieve social justice, gender equality and poverty eradication. It was founded as a UK charity in 1972. In 2003, ActionAid established the International Federation comprising members in every region of the world, and headquartered in Johannesburg, South Africa. ActionAid is working in forty-seven (47) countries in Africa, Asia, Europe, and the Americas. Its outreach through partners and partnerships spans over 72 countries around the world with a vision of “a world without poverty and injustice in which every person enjoys their right to a life of dignity.” Its mission is to achieve social justice, gender equality and poverty eradication.

ActionAid Malawi (AAM) is an affiliate member of the ActionAid Federation. AAM was established in 1990 and started its operations in 1991 with a secretariat located in Lilongwe. It was legally registered (Reg. No. 8289) in April 2007 under the Companies Act (Cap 46:03) of the laws of Malawi as a Company Limited by Guarantee. It is also registered with the Non-Governmental Organisation Regulatory Authority (NGORA) (Reg. No. NGO/1/04/015), and with Council for Non-Governmental Organisation (CONGOMA) (Reg. No. C007/1991). ActionAid Malawi has therefore a “dual of citizenship” being a local Organisation as well as a member of an international Organisation. AAM has a two-tier governance structure, comprised of a General Assembly as a supreme decision-making body and a Board of Directors that provides regular oversight and strategic direction. The General Assembly has 30 members while the Board of Directors has 11 members. AAM programmes are managed by a Secretariat, comprising Senior Management and Staff.

Guided by a **Human Rights Based Approach** (HRBA) and **feminist** intersectionality lens, AAM seeks to shift and transform power through **empowerment, solidarity, campaigning**, and the generation of **alternatives** to ensure that every person enjoys a life of dignity and freedom from all forms of oppression. AAM prioritises the leadership of women and young people, especially those living in poverty and exclusion, in its efforts to achieve social justice, gender equality and poverty eradication. AAM creates platforms for collective action and solidarity by enabling people to unite and contribute to social justice in numerous ways – as social movements, supporters, staff and volunteers.

The corporate overall goal of AAM is to achieve social justice, gender equality and poverty eradication by fulfilling the rights of people living in poverty and exclusion, strengthening the resilience of communities, and shifting and redistributing power and resources. Hence, the programming thrust for AAM is on 3Rs (**Rights, Resilience, and Redistribution**).

CHAPTER 2

2.0 EXTERNAL CONTEXT

PESTEL and SWOT analyses were conducted to inform the development of CSP VI and anticipate the factors likely to affect the strategy implementation. The process examined the political, economic, social, technological, environmental, and legal (PESTEL) factors. It also analysed the strengths and weaknesses of the AAM as well as the opportunities and threats (SWOT).

2.1 PESTEL Analysis for Existing External Factors

2.1.1 Political factors

There is a rise in populist nationalism, leading to protectionist policies and a retreat from international cooperation. This trend is affecting global trade, immigration, and foreign aid resulting in reduced commitments to supporting developing countries, diminishing funding towards mandates of multilateral development organisations, and promoting neo-colonialism. Lately, there has been an increase in global conflicts and geo-political tensions, which has further disrupted the flow of resources and diverted attention from vulnerable communities towards defence and security in wealthier nations and countries in conflict. These conflicts are also contributing to environmental degradation, exacerbating the climate crisis. There is large-scale migration and a refugee crisis as a result, which has heightened global instability.

Locally, while peace largely characterises the nation, significant challenges persist within its political landscape, hindering the effective implementation of the development agenda. Malawi's reliance on a neoliberal agenda which prioritises free market principles, privatisation, and deregulation, leads to insufficient investment in essential social services such as healthcare, education, and agriculture. Corruption remains high in Malawi and further compounds insufficient investment in social services, acting as a significant barrier to effective governance and development through weakening of the rule of law, discouraging investment, misallocation, wastage and loss of resources, and poor-quality delivery of services. Additionally, the lack of implementation of accountability measures and oversight recommendations from audits and investigations has perpetuated a culture of impunity, eroded public trust, and shrunk civic and political spaces, negatively impacting the quest for state accountability and transparency.

However, within these challenges lie opportunities for collaboration, innovation, and grassroots organising, which can help address the underlying issues and pave the way for sustainable development and progress.

2.1.2 Economic Factors

Though the global economy is projected to grow by 3.1% in 2024, it is the lowest in decades, implying subdued and fragile recovery from unprecedented shocks such as the COVID-19 pandemic, Russia-Ukraine war, the cost-of-living crisis, as well as structural vulnerabilities in development sectors. Additionally, global public debt rose to \$226 trillion in 2023, representing over 240% of global GDP. This raises questions about fiscal sustainability and the potential for challenges in debt servicing for least developed countries. A recent review of the progress on the sustainable development goals indicated that the world is off-track and may not meet the goals by 2030 unless there are intensified investments and efforts. Inequalities are still increasing, with the rich becoming richer and pushing more people into abject poverty. Geopolitical tensions, trade complexities, and the climate crisis further twist the global economic landscape, underscoring the need for coordinated and adaptive policymaking.

Malawi has one of the lowest GDPs in the world, estimated at US\$13 billion. However, public debt is in distress and unsustainable, estimated to reach 80.3% of GDP in 2023. The high debt affects the delivery of social services as a bigger portion of the national budget goes into debt servicing. Malawi's economy continues to be significantly weakened by frequent exogenous shocks coupled with macro-fiscal imbalances.

The economy is expected to grow at 2.8% in 2024, supported by further anticipated macroeconomic reforms. However, such growth remains insufficient to mitigate the prevailing high levels of poverty, with more women and young people having limited access to employment, economic, and livelihood opportunities. Inflation remained high at 30.1% in 2023, with food prices increasing rapidly, reaching 39.3% year-on-year in July 2023 driven by supply constraints. Exports as a share of GDP have been declining over decades, resulting in low foreign exchange reserves and shortages of essential commodities such as fuel and medical supplies. To contain inflationary pressures, the policy rate was revised to 24% from 14% in 2023, increasing the fiscal burden of debt service and affecting microeconomic activities upon which most people living in poverty rely.

<https://www.transparency.org/en/countries/malawi>

World Bank Malawi Review, Nov 2023

The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2023

2.1.3 Social Factors

Malawi's population is youthful. The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) estimates that 70% of Malawi's population is under the age of 30. The high number of reproductive age suggests a high need for reproductive and social services.

Culture plays a dual role in health, education, and human rights outcomes. Some cultures harness positive behaviours while other cultures present social risks. Some of the topical social risks include harmful practices such as forced and early marriages among girls, cultural and religious resistance to health, education, and participation in economic activities. Due to the prevailing patriarchy in Malawi societies, the effects of these risks suppress women, young women and girls and prevent them from living a life of dignity, participating in political spaces and accessing productive and reproductive resources. Gender-based violence is high despite more interventions being implemented to address the behaviour, which contributes to prevailing gaps in access to justice and protection. In 2022, the Human Rights Commission (HRC) reported a rise in child abuse cases, ranging from child labour to physical and sexual abuse and negligence.

2.1.4 Technological Factors

Advancements in technology has given birth to improvements in financial, health, nutrition, information, education, and communication services. Nonetheless, technology is not accessible to majority of population in Malawi due to low levels of education, challenges posed by old age, lack of financial capacity and limited infrastructure. Malawi Communications Regulatory Authority (MACRA) found that access for information and communication technology ICT was higher for men {computers (26.2%), mobile phones (62.8%) and internet (18.8%)} compared to women {computers (5.1%), mobile phones (53.6%) and internet (16.1%)}. Furthermore, there are negative effects that have come with technology, including cyberbullying and cyber-crimes, and poor social relationships. Through technology, there is increased exposure to illicit behaviours which has had extensive impact on young people.

Trading Economics, April 2024

IMF Country Report No. 23/299, July 2023

National ICT Survey, 2023 (Malawi Communications Regulatory Authority)

2.1.5 Environmental Factors

Global warming is accelerating climate change, resulting in increased cases of floods, droughts, heat waves, and other extreme weather conditions. The 2023 Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) synthesis report recommended that countries cut emissions of carbon dioxide to maintain the global temperature below 1.5°. Despite these recommendations, most global investments by developed nations continue to damage the environment, exacerbating global warming and climate change.

Malawi faces climate-related hazards such as cyclones, floods, droughts, and extreme heat. These environmental shocks have intensified in recent years, posing grave threats to the well-being of children and women and undermining efforts towards sustainable development. Malawi contributes very little to carbon emissions yet suffers huge losses and damages caused by climate-induced disasters.

Since 2015, Malawi has experienced four major cyclones, including Idai, Ana, Gombe, and Freddy, resulting in significant loss of life, livelihoods, displacements, and infrastructure damage. Droughts have become more frequent, leading to food insecurity, water scarcity, and economic hardships. Erratic rainfall patterns and rising temperatures are contributing to crop failures, livestock deaths, and water shortages, disproportionately affecting rural communities that depend on agriculture for their livelihoods.

Climate-related hazards pose grave threats to the safety and well-being of children and women in Malawi. Moreover, displacements due to environmental shocks disrupt families and communities, exposing women and children to heightened risks of exploitation, abuse, and health complications. They also disrupt the provision of social services and previous efforts for disaster risk management, inflicting extensive damage on critical infrastructure and essential services, including roads, health facilities, schools, and power supplies. This hampers access to education, healthcare, and basic amenities, further worsening vulnerabilities among communities.

Malawi requires resources to strengthen public service infrastructure and capacity to respond effectively to outbreaks of infectious diseases and other health emergencies exacerbated by climate change. It also needs capacities for enhancing disease surveillance and early warning systems to detect and mitigate the impacts of climate-related health hazards. Efforts are still employed to promote community-based resilience-building initiatives that empower women and children to cope with environmental shocks and health challenges effectively. However, it is observed that funding mechanisms that restore damaged assets and compensate those suffering from climate-induced loss and damage are not available or limited, which calls for climate financing for resilience building, adaptation, and loss and damage.

2.1.6 Legal Factors

The United Nations Charter (UNC), Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) remain key pieces that legally establish the rule of law, equality, and the protection of vulnerable groups such as women and girls. Regional instruments at the African Union (AU) and Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) level also promote the rule of law, protection of vulnerable groups and regional integration. Though progressive on paper, implementation continues to be minimal, affected by challenges in international relations, and economic and political ideologies.

Malawi has a progressive legal environment with a constitution that obligates duty bearers to advance of lives of people living in rural areas and marginalised groups particularly women, elderly, children, and persons living with disabilities. The Constitution categorically provides for a sensible balance between the creation and distribution of wealth through the nurturing of a market economy and long-term investment in health, education, economic and social development.

There are other laws that cement protection of women and children such as Prevention of Domestic Violence Act (Ch. 7.05), Marriage, Divorce and Family Relations Act (Ch. 25.01), and Childcare, Protection and Justice Act (26.01) and Gender Equality Act (Ch. 25.06). These laws are part of domesticating regional and international conventions.

Despite existence of such adequate legal framework, implementation is minimal, leading to various social-economic development challenges. A key issue to address is the Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) which remains a serious development challenge in Malawi due to dominant patriarchal and power imbalances.

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Malawi Disaster Risk Management Act (No. 27 of 2023)

CHAPTER 3

3.0 LOOKING BACK TO CSP V



A smallholder farmer who benefitted from the ActionAid Malawi KULIMA-BETTER project in Nkhatabay

3.1 Key Achievements under CSP V

CSP V successfully achieved its objectives. It managed to score above targets in 14 of its 15 focus areas. AAM made strides in these areas:

➤➤➤ PRIORITY AREA 1:

Promote and secure the realisation of women, young women, and girls' rights.

- AAM empowered over **80,000** women, young women, and girls to challenge patriarchy that predisposes them to violence and exploitation and **634** women collectives (groups/institutions) took joint action with allies to challenge all forms of patriarchy and violence. This led to the modification of harmful practices. Women and girls were able to bring out cases of VAWG and offenders were put to book. There was increased policy attention to gender. There has been a dissolving of child marriages with **429** girls brought back to school.
- Over **130,000** women and girls were empowered to demand economic justice. This led to the women having control over productive resources such as land and businesses. It also enhanced policy dialogue for macroeconomic policies that work for women and other marginalised groups.

- a. AAM continued to work with adolescent girls and young women, ensuring that new HIV infections were reduced among them. **419,384** AGYWs were reached with HIV prevention defined package of service. This included HIV self-risk and vulnerability assessment, HIV screening and risk reduction counselling and linkage and referral for onward services. This has resulted in social behaviour change evidenced by high demand for SRH/HIV services, and active engagement of community structures in addressing various structural and social issues affecting AGYW. It also led to **335,000** women, young women and girls accessing SRHR services and **47,862** adolescent girls and young women were tested for HIV and received their results.

➤➤➤ PRIORITY AREA 2:

Build resilience of people living in poverty while strengthening women-led secure livelihoods, preparedness, and emergency response.

- There was improved uptake of agroecology by **58,784** Women and young people due to increase in prices of agricultural inputs and climate change impacts. This led to attainment of household food security.
- AAM and its partners trained the vulnerable communities in emergencies and humanitarian preparedness and response. **344,604** women acquired knowledge in emergency and humanitarian preparedness and response. As a result, there were improved responses to disasters through vibrant women-led structures that understood the plight of women, young women and children which resulted in better targeting of the affected, timely response and enhancement of the localisation of response.

➤➤➤ PRIORITY AREA 3:

Enhance civic participation and state accountability for the redistribution of resources and delivery of quality, gender-responsive public services.

- Government departments and district councils acted in response to advocacy by AAM through PSA Alliance-supported civil society organisations and smallholder farmers' associations to improve service delivery in health and agriculture. District councils responded to PSA Alliance advocacy by increasing the size and sensitivity of their budgets to health and agriculture.
- Government of Malawi improved consultation, monitoring, implementation and reporting of selected SADC regional commitments, following engagement by AAM through PSA Alliance. These include revision of Public Finance Management Act, following the SADC Parliamentary Forum (PF)'s adoption of the Model Law on Public Financial Management (PFM) in July 2022. Furthermore, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs updated the member list of the SADC National Committee to be more inclusive.

- AAM has continued to ensure that children in the remote areas have quality access to ECD services through provision of ECD services such as training caregivers and ECD committees in management of ECD centres and ensuring that children transitioning to primary school are ready for school. During CSP V **246,733** children had access to quality ECD services and **57,325** transitioned to primary school ready for school.
- There was increased accountability in terms of service delivery especially at district and community levels through collective actions.

3.2 Challenges encountered under CSP V

Although AAM performed very well in the previous CSP period, it encountered challenges that included:

- COVID -19 was declared a global pandemic in 2019 and disrupted business until early 2022 when vaccinations were introduced. The pandemic led to loss of lives for over 2,686 people and affected implementation of activities due to frequent closure of AAM, partner or government offices due to government restriction and whenever cases were reported within their institutions. It increased costs for implementation as there was restrictions to number of participants and requirements for PPEs. It also disrupted health services and other social development services, as funds were redirected to the pandemic for mitigation and response. Globally, donors also shifted funds which affected other priorities of AAM. AAM however reprogrammed its work to advance the need for investment in public services, and how the pandemic disproportionately affected women.
- Some aspects of cultural and religious resistance to fully embracing human rights were faced particularly on equality and access to sexual and reproductive health rights for women and youth, women in decision making and financial inclusion. This limited achievement of results. AAM intensified engagement of religious leaders, cultural leaders, and gate keepers to create democratic culture that embraces human rights.
- Adherence to neoliberal policies by the government hindered progress of efforts to advocate for systemic changes such as tax justice, curbing illicit financial activities, and promoting investments in diverse sectors like tourism, manufacturing, and agriculture to boost revenue and foreign exchange for improving gender-responsive public services. These policies, championed by multilateral financial institutions and developed countries, are deeply ingrained among policymakers and the public alike. This entrenched belief has posed significant challenges for ActionAid in achieving its objectives. To address this, ActionAid has intensified its efforts through awareness campaigns, gathering evidence, and engaging with policymakers, women, and young people to highlight the drawbacks of neoliberalism. Moreover, the Organisation advocates for locally driven resource management strategies to enhance self-reliance and foster the creation of more export opportunities for the nation.

3.2 Challenges encountered under CSP VContinues

- Global economic recession and geopolitical conflicts (i.e Russia – Ukraine war, Sudan war) reduced institutional and regular income that was available for development and emergency work due to a focus on the humanitarian crisis and the cost-of-living crisis. There were fewer opportunities with lesser amount from top development partners, whilst also unsolicited engagement attracted lesser support. AAM intensified engagement of donors and cost effectiveness to enhance value for money.
- The impact of tropical cyclones Idai, Ana, Gombe and Freddy eroded the gains that were made during implementation. People lost livelihoods and property, while others were displaced. Infrastructure that AAM constructed, including irrigation schemes, dykes, school blocks and ECD centres were destroyed in Phalombe, Nsanje, Chiradzulu and Neno.

3.3 3.0 Lessons learnt under CSP V

The review of the implementation of CSP V provided an opportunity for reflection and learning which fed into the development of CSP VI. Some of the major lessons were as follows:

- Economic and emergency crises should be used as opportunities for civic engagement, amplification of policy advocacy, and redirection of finance flows to key social sectors. AAM used COVID-19, economic challenges, and disasters to enhance policy engagement and reprogramming.
- Programmes that AAM implements require working with various partners and collaborators who have the necessary competences and on-the-ground experience at different levels. Having partners that are responsible for activities at the appropriate scale is a useful cost-effective approach to implementation and sustainable results.
- Engaging local communities in the design and implementation of programmes is critical as it fosters community ownership and sustainability.
- The localisation and contextualisation of campaigns, coupled with capacity building and awareness raising, empower local communities to effectively participate and hold decision makers and duty-bearers to account.
- AAM interaction at the district councils is critical for programme implementation and success.

As we look back, and vision the future, we see the strengths and opportunities that drove our achievements, and enabled us to navigate the challenges and generate lessons. These include: a unique women’s rights niche underpinned by its feminist approach to tackling social justice issues; global connectivity; capable staff, evidence-based programming; agility; community rootedness that deepens participation and empowerment as well as enhancing our understanding of the local context, culture, and challenges in Malawi.

As we reflect and look ahead, we see weaknesses and threats to our programming that we need to address to succeed in the quest to transform systems for social justice. These include balancing the software programming with human rights-based service delivery; over-spreading the programmes; addressing perceptions on over-concentration on women and girls at the expense of men and boys; and being agile in unstable environmental and economic situations.

By harnessing our strengths and seizing opportunities, while tackling challenges head-on, we will propel our mission to achieve social justice forward with unwavering momentum.

CHAPTER 4

4.0 PROGRAMMATIC APPROACH AND THEORY OF CHANGE



ActionAid Malawi believes in shifting power to communities through, among others, conducting a Participatory Review and Reflection Process to address social injustices affecting them

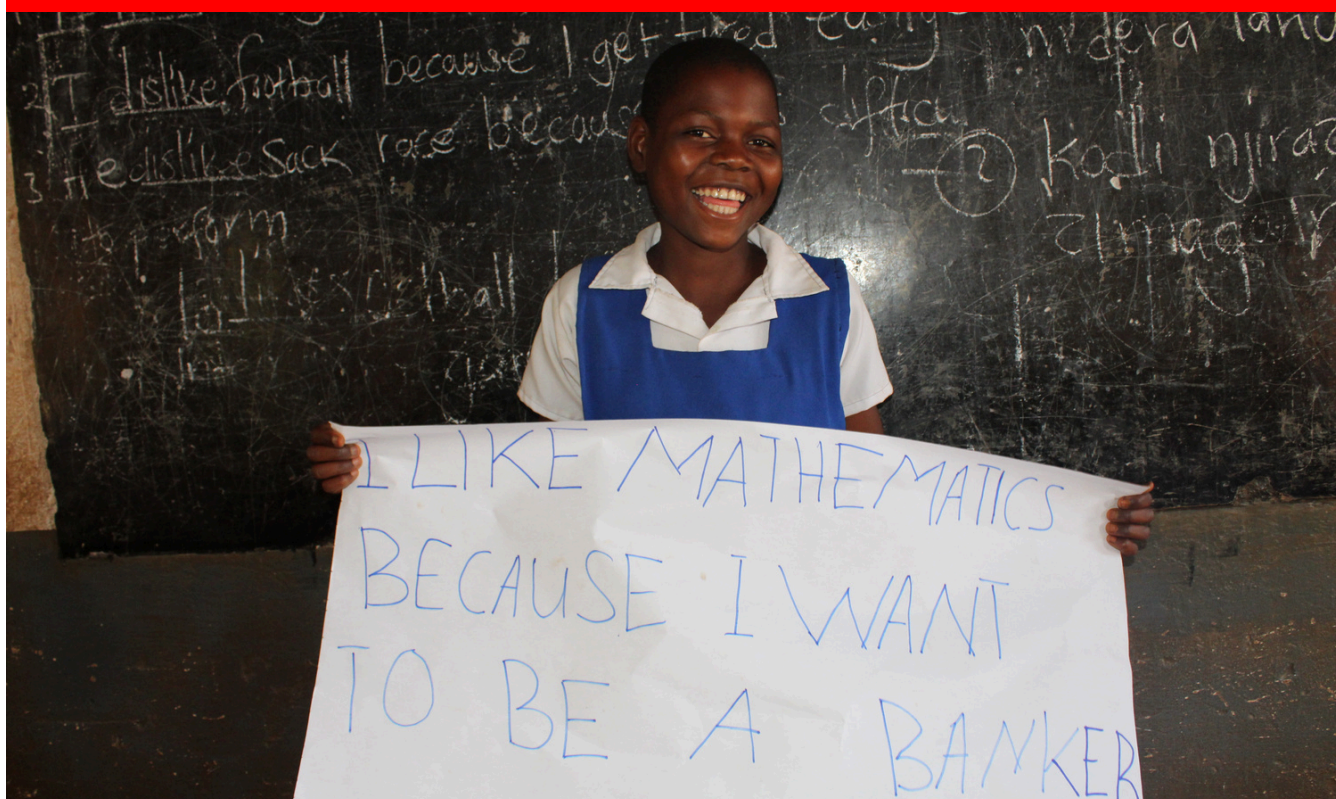
4.1 Our Theory of Change

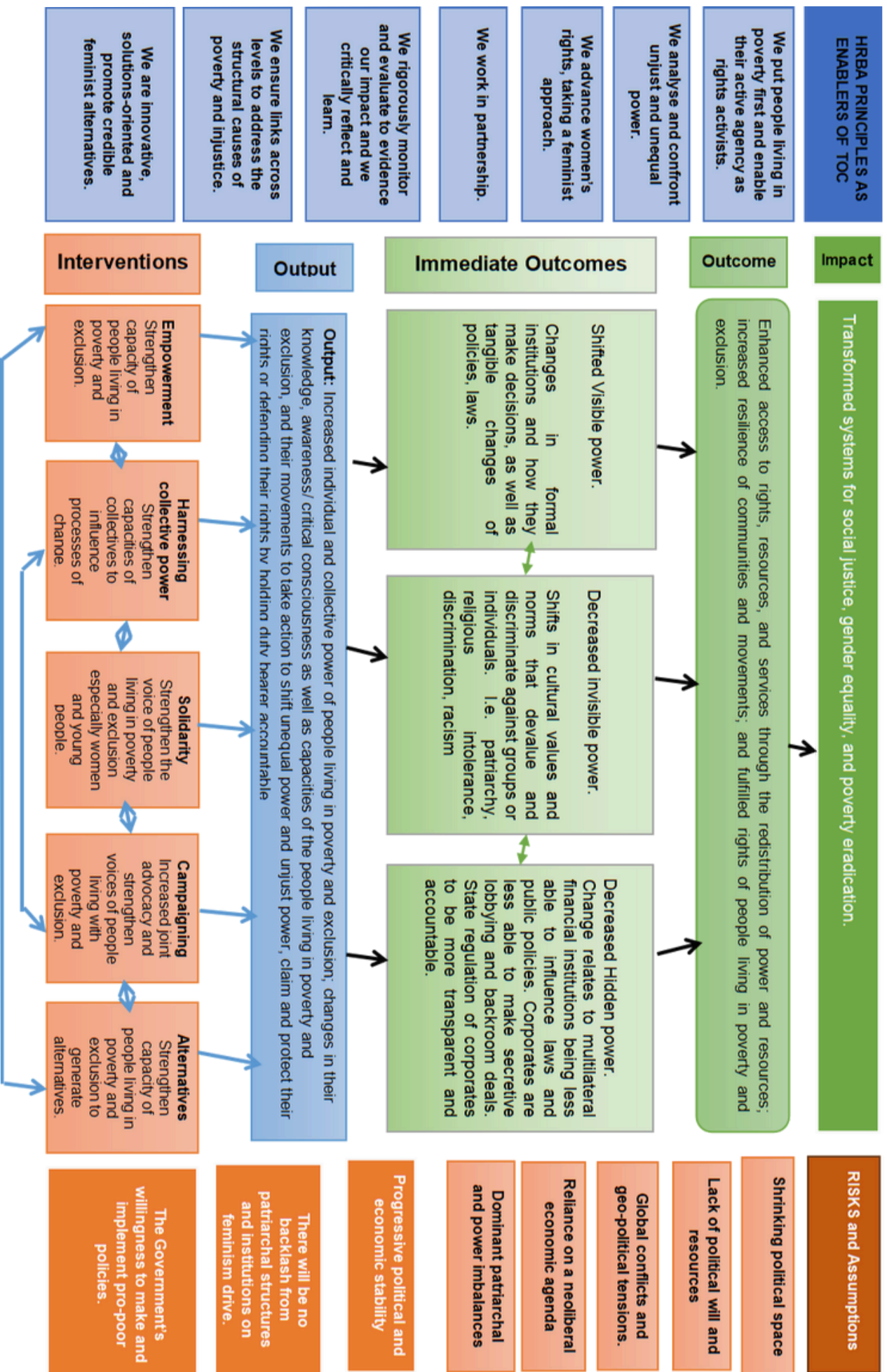
Social justice, gender equality, and poverty eradication will be achieved by nurturing the agency of the people living in poverty and their movements to build their purposeful individual and collective power. The empowered people will then take action to shift unequal and unjust power, whether it is hidden, visible, or invisible. The actions taken will then create an enabling environment for people living in poverty and exclusion to enjoy their rights, have access to and control over resources and services, and be resilient.

Our belief is that collective efforts and struggles are more impactful when linked through empowerment, solidarity, campaigning, learning, and generating rights-based alternatives, and a common cause between communities, grassroots organisations, social movements, citizen's groups, and other allies. This strengthens the power of people to drive structural change. It includes advocacy, campaigning, and policy influencing to engage with power structures from the local to the global levels.

Our model is to work both as a catalyst and a contributor to social change processes. We will be prepared to seize key moments for social transformation when they arise and to resist backlash, guided by our long-term rootedness in communities and by working closely with grassroots organisations, social movements, and other allies. AAM will also enable platforms for citizen actions to hold duty bearers to account.

Our assumption is that change is not linear, and opportunities to drive social change, advance alternatives, and resist injustice open at different moments. Different contexts will require different strategies.





4.2 Our Approach (HRBA)

AAM programming and implementation employs Human Rights-Based Approach (HRBA) which ensures that individuals and communities understand and claim their rights, participate in decision-making processes, and hold duty-bearers accountable for upholding human rights standards. There are eight core HRBA principles, listed below, that guide its practice in ActionAid programming and distinguishes it from other forms of this approach.

Figure 1: Principles of AAM's Human Rights Based Approach



ActionAid's HRBA aims at mobilising and organising people living in poverty and exclusion to build movements and engage with the State and other powerful institutions and individuals at local, national, and global levels for social justice. AAM works with social movements (grassroots, sub-national and national levels), frontline activists, collectives particularly of women and youth constituencies and community-based Organisations. Through service modelling, AAM demonstrates responsive and inclusive services that promote equality and dignity for all individuals, particularly the marginalised and excluded people. To ensure that this is fulfilled, AAM will use the following lenses to analyse gender-responsiveness and attainment of rights-centred services:

4.2.1 Feminist Intersectionality Lens

Women living in poverty and exclusion are at the core of AAM work. AAM employs a feminist intersectionality lens to conduct a comprehensive analysis of power and its various forms. This lens allows AAM to effectively strive for a more equitable redistribution of power and resources. Additionally, AAM aims to empower women to assert their rights, and to unite to confront and challenge exploitation, discrimination, and exclusion.

The Feminist Intersectionality Lens enables AAM to ensure that programmes are women-led, community-based, transformative, holistic, non-linear, and intersectional. This puts women, girls, and marginalised communities at the centre of all AAM programming, with the understanding that women, girls, and marginalised communities are key drivers of change in any society. Feminist Intersectionality Lens is a crucial tool as it looks beyond gender and takes into consideration the various aspects that cause structural inequality to diverse groups of women, in various contexts.

In CSP VI, AAM will work with women, marginalised communities and their Organisations and movements across the four strategic objectives to empower them. This empowerment will enable them to confront discrimination and challenge the low social status ascribed to them thus creating safe spaces for engagement and expanding their leadership and influence in private and public spheres. In this regard, feminist transformative leadership principles and ActionAid's Feminist Research Guidelines shall be brought into play.

4.2.2 Youth Programming Lens

ActionAid considers young people not just as participants but as partners and allies in development work. It ensures that their engagement is not tokenistic or decorative, but rather meaningful and impactful to drive social change. AAM believes in its energy, enthusiasm, demographic majority, and creativity to drive transformative change as social capital for sustainable development. Using the Youth Programming Lens, AAM ensures that the involvement of young people in development work, governance structures, wealth creation and empowerment initiatives does not limit their rights to be considered as equals and key stakeholders.

ActionAid ensures that its programming reaches out to existing youth groups and creates new spaces for youth-led activism, referred to as Activistas. Activista, ActionAid's network for youth-led activism, shall be used as a connector to reach out to strategic alliances with progressive youth social movements, and as a trendspotter to broadcast innovations and alternative thinking.

Global Platform Malawi, a capacity-building hub for Activista, shall be used to mobilise and organise Activistas to take action on social issues in communities. It shall also be used as a space to enable them to address their critical issues as well as support them to engage in wider community and national development processes. This shall promote them to take up leadership roles at different levels of governance.

4.2.3 Collaborations and Partnerships

One of the core principles of HRBA is working in partnerships. AAM works with and through partners with objectives to achieve social justice, gender equality, and poverty eradication focusing on the marginalised and excluded women and girls. AAM will continue to expand from the current community-level partners to sub-national and national levels, including social movements and activists, and local and international Organisations that can effectively promote the empowerment of people living in poverty and their collectives. A purposive process of partner selection and capacity building will be undertaken. AAM shall further identify and partner with social movements and agile activists based on emerging issues and injustices. Strong ties will also be made with Government institutions, especially the National Planning Commission, to ensure contribution to the national agenda of Malawi 2063.

4.2.4 Participatory Engagement

AAM use participatory Reflection – Action process to support communities to become more aware and more critical of existing power relations and to empower them to act to challenge injustice and bring about social and political change. In CSP VI, AAM shall continue to involve the agency of people living in poverty and exclusion in all processes of its work. It shall promote the Reflection Action Circle (RAC) methodology to create space for citizen participation and engagement to harmonise various participatory methodologies that include Social Accountability Monitoring (SAM), community scorecards and Participatory Review and Reflection Process (PRRP). Participatory engagement shall be used with the other lenses to ensure that individual women and girls, and their collectives participate in the development cycle.

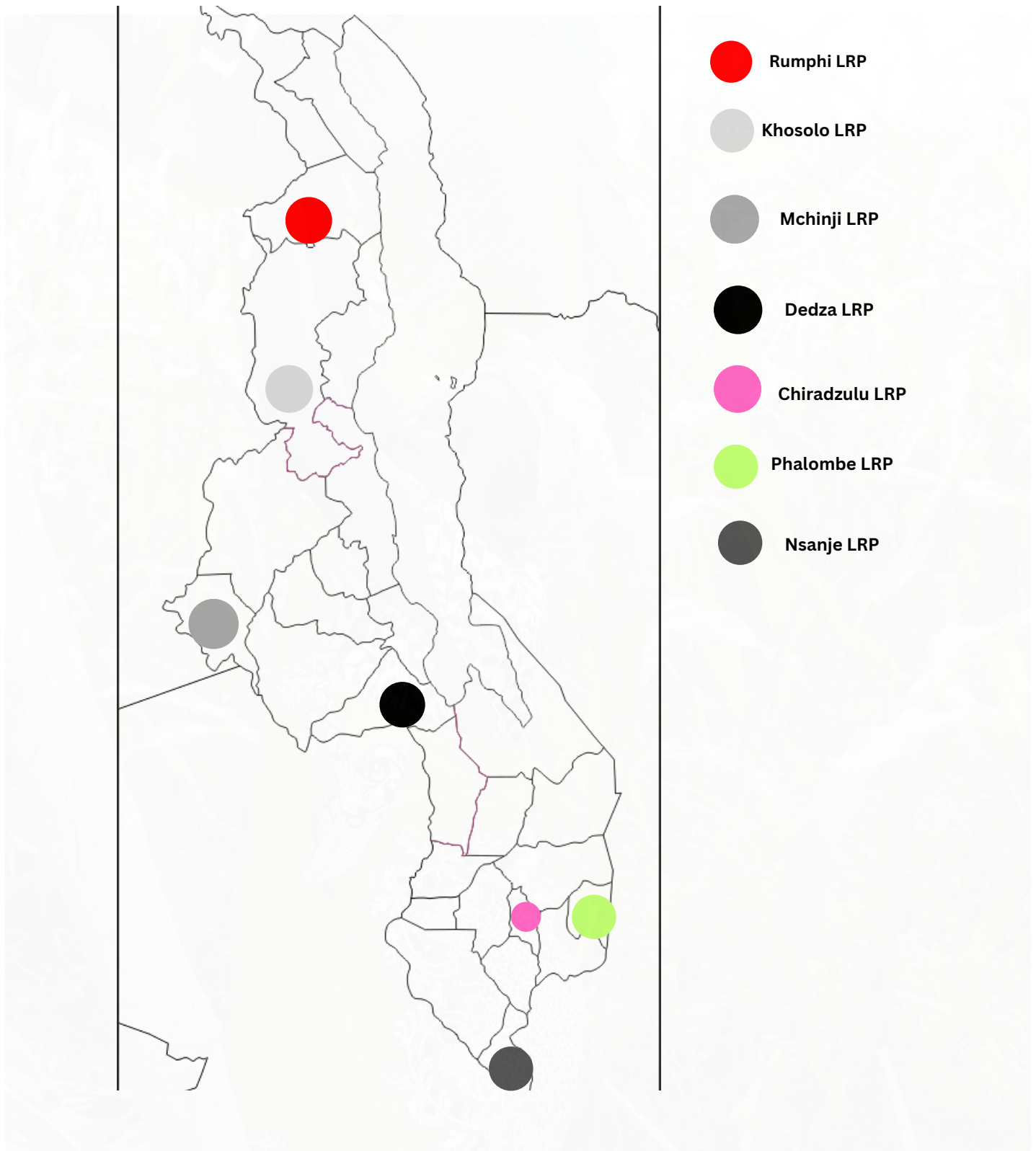
4.3 Who We Work With

AAM will continue to work with individual groups, community-based organisations, social movements, collectives of women, young women, girls, children, young people, people living with disabilities, and minority groups in rural and peri-urban communities in Malawi. Additionally, AAM will collaborate with multilateral and bilateral development partners, the private sector, human rights defenders, and Pan-African civil society Organisations as strategic partners and allies at sub-national, national, and regional levels. AAM will maintain partnerships with all three branches of government, namely the Executive, Legislature, and Judiciary. Furthermore, AAM will strengthen ties with government ministries, departments, and agencies including district councils, both as service providers and duty bearers.

AAM will also continue to collaborate with academia, research institutions, and media to promote evidence-based advocacy, policy dialogue, and knowledge sharing. Moreover, AAM will leverage social media and other communication platforms to amplify voices and advocate for the rights and well-being of marginalised communities.

4.4 Where We Will Work

ActionAid will continue to work at local, national, regional, and global levels. At the local level, it will continue working in local rights programmes in Nsanje, Nkhulambe (Phalombe district), Chiradzulu, Dedza, Mchinji, Khosolo (Mzimba district) and Rumphu. It will also work in all districts in Malawi with and through projects in networks, partnerships, and alliances. At regional and global levels, AAM shall participate in joint advocacy spaces, policy engagements and networking. AAM shall work with ActionAid Federation members to deepen work on systems change for climate justice and economic justice



CHAPTER 5

5.0 CSP VI PROGRAMME PRIORITIES

The overall goal over the period 2024 to 2028 is contributing towards achievement of social justice, gender equality and poverty eradication by shifting power and redistribution of services, strengthening the resilience of communities and movements, and fulfilling of rights of people living in poverty and exclusion, especially women, young women, and girls.

This overarching goal is supported by three strategic priorities with subsequent outcomes interventions, and organisational enablers as follows:



Doreen Fatch, showing one of the ActionAid Malawi's agroecology interventions in Nsanje

5.1 Strategic Priority 1: Attain Women, Young Women and Girls' Rights



Some members of young urban women campaigning for feminist policies in Malawi

The State, as an important guarantor of human rights, must be democratic and held accountable for its primary duty to protect the rights for women and girls and deliver justice. This will only happen if the space to influence the State is created and expanded through sustained people's struggles, bolstered by global solidarity. To realise universally accepted rights and achieve dignity, the individual and collective agency of people living in poverty and exclusion must be mobilised to claim rights and resist all forms of discrimination and oppression.

Although women make 52% of the total population in Malawi, women continue to face several barriers to participate in various local and national development processes. Key barriers to women's civic participation include high illiteracy levels, lack of a gender responsive legal framework, a political culture embedded with patriarchal values and norms that are unsupportive to female candidates, and a lack of personal wealth or access to resources to fund political campaigns.

Discrimination against women and girls is exacerbated by major problems such as patriarchy, limited participation in decision making structures, non-responsive structures, systems, practices, and laws that protect rights of women and girls, limited access to productive resources, limited availability, and access to sexual and reproductive health services. SRHR focus brings in issues of unsafe abortion, access to and informed choice about contraception, sexuality education, gender-based violence, sexual harassment, and abuse.

Strategic Objective 1.1: End violence against women, young women, and girls.

- By 2028, agencies of **108,700** women, young women and girls are empowered to challenge patriarchy that predisposes them to violence and exploitation.
- By 2028, **108,700** women, young women and girls are empowered to demand for responsive structures, systems, practices, and laws that ensure access to comprehensive VAWG Services.

Strategic Objective 1.2: Promote participation of women and young people in decision making platforms and positions.

- By 2028, **219** agencies of women and young people are empowered to enable their involvement in decision making processes.
- By 2028, **12,129** women and young people will hold decision making position in governance structures at national, district and community levels.

Strategic Objective 1.3: Enhance wealth creation among women and young people.

- By 2028, **55,934** women and young people have access to and control over productive resources.

Strategic Objective 1.4: Promote Universal Health Coverage among Women and Young People

- By 2028, **116,751** women and young people have access to comprehensive, quality, non-judgmental and inclusive public health services.
- By 2028, **70,401** women and young people will be empowered to demand fulfilment of their sexual and reproductive health and rights and live a dignified life.

5.2 Strategic Priority 2: Secure Systems Change for Economic Justice



Some of the youth advancing economic justice campaign in Malawi

The current global economic system including in Malawi is the neoliberal macroeconomic system, championed by the International Financial Institutions (IFIs). The system entails the implementation of austerity measures, deregulating markets, privatisation of public services and contractionary fiscal policies. The IFIs continuously state that macroeconomic policies are the solution to having a stable economy. However, this is not the case as these policies and advice accompanying them promote cutting expenditure for social services. Reducing long-term investment in key social sectors of education, health, agriculture, and gender puts more pressure on women and young women who are burdened with care work.

The Malawi Constitution provides for the right to safe and fair labour practices for all persons. However, unlike the case with paid workers, no legislation has translated these rights into specific practical legal obligations in favour of unpaid care work. It has become natural that care work is believed to be the responsibility of women and girls. So far, limited action has been taken by collectives to influence national governments and international bodies to take significant steps to reform laws, policies and practices for more recognition and redistribution of unpaid care and decent work and raise more resources for improved gender-responsive service delivery.

For the government to deliver public services that uphold the rights of women and girls, there is a need for progressive taxation. Tax regime requires to enhance progressive tax collection, allocation and spending so that service delivery is improved. Agency of people living in poverty should be supported with credible rights alternatives to engage the state for size, share, scrutiny, and sensitivity of resource envelop.

Strategic Objective 2.1: Influence a feminist well-being economy

- By 2028, **200** collectives of young women and girls are empowered to challenge harmful macroeconomic policies to ensure economic justice.

Strategic Objective 2.2: Promote Paid and Unpaid Care Economy

- a. By 2028, decent work is promoted among **3,511** women and young women in the informal sector by supporting equal opportunities for all.
- By 2028, unpaid care work for **108,700** women and girls is recognised, reduced, and redistributed, enabling stereotypical community and reproductive roles to be challenged along with heteronormative notions of the family and gender roles.

Strategic Objective 2.3: Influence Tax Justice

- By 2028, tax justice will be enhanced in tax collection, allocation, and spending for gender responsive public services.

Strategic Objective 2.4: Strengthen Delivery of Gender Responsive Public Services

- By 2028, quality public services will be available, inclusive, and responsive to the needs and rights of **42,666** women, young women, and girls.
- By 2028, **171,943** children, particularly girls have increased access to affordable, quality, and inclusive public education.

5.3 Strategic Priority 3: Secure Climate Justice, Resilient Livelihoods and Humanitarian Work



Loveness Chiponda, leader of Chigwirizano Women Movement in Phalombe, recounting Cyclone Freddy horror

As the world grapples with the devastating effects of climate change, the grim reality of the impact of the climate catastrophe is fast unfolding, especially in the Global South. Malawi is facing significant challenges due to climate change, despite efforts by the government and partners to address its effects. The country is experiencing erratic rainfall, droughts, tropical cyclones, and floods, which are causing havoc and devastating lives, livelihoods, and ecosystems. Vulnerable communities are being hit the hardest, leading to loss of life, crop failures, displacement, and disease outbreaks. Limited resources are channelled towards institutions responsible for disaster management to implement interventions for preparedness, response, and recovery at national and district levels.

However, amidst the harrowing cost, there is an intensification of climate-harming activities, mainly by those in the Global North towards the Global South, such as use of fossil fuels and intensification of industrial agriculture. Global south countries demand the Global North to stop emissions and financing interventions that escalate the crisis. ActionAid demands a just transition to reach 100% renewable energy, without harm to communities. ActionAid wants to ensure that the shift to greener pathways avoids harming communities and is guided by key principles of just transitions: They must address – and not exacerbate – inequality; they must transform systems to work for people, nature and the climate; they must ensure inclusiveness and participation; and they must develop comprehensive frameworks to support communities to make those shifts. More investment should also go into cleaning up the damages that have already occurred through sustainable and greener pathways, and such investment should not be exploitative, with global south nations benefiting from the same.

Global South nations require support to cover losses and damages caused by the activities of the developed nations, and to finance alternatives to these vices. Such alternatives include use of renewable energy, biodegradable materials, and agroecology. ActionAid believes that agroecology is a powerful and innovative solution to stop the climate crisis and strengthen the resilience of food systems to climate change impacts.

In CSP VI, AAM shall scale up work to support addressing the climate injustices. AAM will continue to advocate for capitalised climate financing that matches the gap in vulnerable communities, with less obstacles in accessing such finances by the global south. AAM will enhance advocacy for environmental protection to enhance resilience of communities. It will also focus on humanitarian and resilience work for disaster risk management, prioritising accountability, localisation, women's and young people's leadership, and resilience in its programmes. People in disaster risk communities will be strengthened to become resilient to effects of climate change while holding duty bearers accountable for their actions in addressing these effects.

Strategic Objective 3.1: Promote agroecology and support transition of communities to sustainable resilient livelihoods.

- By 2028, **8** adaptation policies will be reformed to address the impacts of climate change.
- By 2028, **39,667** people living in poverty, especially women and young people, have increased access to resilient and sustainable food systems.
- By 2028, **85,001** households will have adopted green and self-innovative, climate-friendly alternative livelihood approaches.

Strategic Objective 3.2: Promote Climate Financing

- By 2028, the Global North has increased financing for climate change adaptation in Malawi.

Strategic Objective 3.3: Enhance Environmental Protection

- By 2028, systems will be developed to break the cycle of environmental degradation and increase resilience.
- By 2028, **12** green investments and innovations will have increased in support and implementation of a national transformative agenda towards a safe, clean, secure and sustainable environment.

Strategic Objective 3.4: Enhance Women and Youth-led Preparedness, Response, and Recovery Work.



Young Women in Nsanje leading humanitarian preparedness

- By 2028, the capacity of **44,680** women and young people affected by disasters to adapt, and cope is strengthened to effectively respond to and recover from disasters.
- By 2028, the protection of **44,680** women and young people living in emergencies from violence, exploitation, and abuse cases is improved for their safety and well-being.

CHAPTER 6

6.0 ORGANISATIONAL ENABLERS

To deliver the CSP VI, AAM has identified eight enablers to attain the mission and programme priorities. Among them, institutional sustainability has been singled out as a priority for Organisational development. These enablers are:

6.1 Institutional Sustainability

To deliver AAM's mandate effectively and efficiently, AAM places greater emphasis on strengthening institutional capacity as one of the key priorities for the delivery of this strategy. AAM recognises that to sustain its growth and impact, there is a need for sufficient financial resources that are derived from robust resource mobilisation processes, internal cost recovery and sound management of risks. Cognisant of this, AAM is placing innovative resource mobilisation initiatives aimed at increasing institutional funding to assist AAM in our quest for performance excellence and delivery of programme priorities outlined in CSP VI.

Enabler Objective 6.1.1: Grow and Sustain Institutional Financial Resources

By 2028, there will be increased institutional income.

Under this, AAM will:

- Strengthen partnerships and collaboration through local and regional consortium financial resourcing, including with other AA country programmes.
- Build capacity of staff in fundraising, grant writing and proposal development.
- c. Strengthen donor cultivation and stewardship (institutional, philanthropies and corporate world).

Enabler Objective 6.1.2: Enhanced Cost Recovery from Institutional, Philanthropic, and Corporate Funding

By 2028, there is full cost recovery.

AAM will:

- Re-calculating the country cost recovery rate (CCRR) annually for existing and upcoming projects.
- Tracking cost recovery monthly.
- Strengthen donor negotiation skills on full cost recovery.
- Build capacity of staff in cost recovery.

Enabler Objective 6.1.3: Enhanced Risk Management

By 2028, AAM improves in identifying, assessing, and mitigating potential risks.

Key Interventions will include:

- Conduct audits and investigations.
- Conduct period compliance audits for programme and projects.
- Conduct inception functional review and subsequent annual reviews to appraise Organisation system and functions.
- Develop risk registry and monthly updating it through the online smart-sheet.
- Raise awareness on whistle blowing, fraud and tip-offs anonymous.
- Strengthen implementation of recommendations from audit findings and financial reviews.

6.2 People and Culture

AAM is committed to fostering high levels of employee engagement. By providing opportunities for professional growth, recognising, and celebrating achievements, and promoting a positive work environment, the Organisation ensures that its employees feel motivated, valued, and connected to the mission and goals of AAM.

AAM is dedicated to creating an environment that attracts top talent, fosters strong employee relations, promotes continuous growth and development, enhances performance management, cultivates a positive Organisational culture, provides competitive compensation and benefits, drives employee engagement, and ensures compliance with ethical and legal standards. Employee engagement is central to AAM's success. The Organisation fosters engagement and empowerment through meaningful work, professional growth opportunities, and a supportive work environment.

AAM shall promote 50 – 50 proportion of gender across all cadres of staff and particularly support the development of women's leadership. A vibrant and active AAM women's forum shall be enhanced as space for grooming and mentoring of intersectional female staff into leadership.

Key Interventions under this include:

- Periodic review of the HROD Policy.
- Conduct internal organisational capacity assessment.
- Support professional growth through training and development programs.
- Implementation of performance planning and reviews.
- Strengthening AAM women's forum.
- Organise team-building events, recognition ceremonies and staff-get-together initiatives.

6.3 Sexual Harassment, Abuse and Exploitation (SHEA) and Safeguarding



ActionAid Malawi's SHEA and Safeguarding policy covers staff, volunteers, beneficiaries and stakeholders

AAM will continue to tackle issues of sexual harassment, exploitation and abuse, and safeguarding, including child protection, with the guidance of policies that are in place to ensure that our work does not harm staff, volunteers, beneficiaries, and other stakeholders.

Key interventions shall include:

- Strengthen capacity of staff, volunteers, partners.
- Strengthen systems of reporting and addressing (using digital and toll-free modes).
- Strengthen capacity of SHEA focal points.
- Comprehensive awareness-raising campaigns and educational programs about children's rights, child protection laws, and available support services.
- Raising awareness with people that AAM encounters (beneficiaries, stakeholders).

6.4 Financial Management

To achieve this strategy, AAM is implementing the Global Financial System (GFS) as part of the Finance Transformation project. This project aims to improve the reliability and timeliness of financial information for decision makers in the General Secretariat, as well as enhance overall compliance, transparency, and accountability.

Our objective is to deliver efficiencies in business processes, system access and support, and ways of doing business. This includes eliminating duplication and downtime, and creating an integrated operating environment that ensures uniformity of data across the federation.

In the period of CSP VI, AAM will:

- Implement integrated and streamlined end-to-end standard and simplified financial processes, leveraging automation for predictability and repeatability.
- Provide relevant, accurate, and timely financial information to support informed management decision making. This will enable Finance to play a strategic advisory role to operational leads, with a focus on resource optimisation and value for money.
- Safeguard financial information as a vital asset of the Organisation, ensuring compliance with contractual and regulatory requirements.
- Strengthen internal controls and compliance through effective use of system controls, such as data validation and central administration of master data. This includes improved analysis, asset stewardship, and appropriate access restrictions based on users' roles and responsibilities.
- Enhance assessment and management of financial risk and develop mitigating strategies.
- Increase efficiency and effectiveness in resource utilisation and management, guided by value for money (VFM) principles. VFM will be integrated throughout the financial management process, from budgeting and planning to implementation, monitoring, and control. Additionally, we will adopt a full cost recovery (FCR) approach for all existing and new projects.
- g. Improve system connectivity, as the cloud-based system will be supported in a streamlined manner.

6.5 Child Sponsorship

Child sponsorship will continue to provide regular income for the Organisation. AAM will continue to improve child sponsorship management through timely provision of quality communications to supporters and progress reports. AAM will enhance sensitisation of communities on the importance of child sponsorship and document stories of change. AAM will use digital tools in managing sponsorship to ensure timeliness and quality of photos and reports.

6.6 Procurement

Improving the procurement function within AAM is paramount to enhancing operational efficiency, ensuring transparency, and maximising the impact of our programs. By optimising our procurement processes, we aim to streamline the acquisition of goods and services while upholding the highest standards of accountability and integrity.

To achieve this, AAM is committed to:

- Enhance our procurement policies and procedures to align with best practices and regulatory requirements for vendor selection, bidding processes, and contract management.
- Investing in capacity building for staff involved in procurement.
- Leverage technology to modernise procurement function by automating manual tasks, improving data accuracy, and enhancing collaboration between stakeholders involved in the procurement process.
- Promote local procurement and support small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in Malawi.

6.7 Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning

The objective is to promote quality Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability, and Learning (MEAL) to generate knowledge, evidence-based alternatives, and communicates impact.

AAM will strengthen the existing MEAL system to enhance planning, monitoring, review, evaluation, and accountability for learning. Our MEAL system will integrate sponsorship programming and institutional donor-funded programs.

We will consistently review progress towards achieving CSP VI following our Theory of Change. We will strengthen the quality of our programmes for greater impact as crucial elements for driving continuous improvements in program design and implementation, to better fulfil our commitments towards investing in Programme Quality.

As an integral part of the learning process, AAM will institutionalise a culture of learning to enhance adaptive management and generate evidence to inform decisions and adjustments to programme designs, planning and implementation.

We acknowledge that the MEAL system will also play a pivotal role in decision-making, accountability, planning, policy influence, resource mobilisation, and allocation. Through deliberate learning, we will consistently pursue evidence-based advocacy in our work.

To invest in technical capacities and systems, we will ensure the delivery of quality MEAL at all levels.

Key Commitments in CSP VI include:

- Oversee capacity development of diverse partners and staff members in MEAL to ensure the collection of quality data, utilisation of MEAL for resource mobilisation, and effective data management that informs learning for effective programming.
- Modernise the MEAL system through a web-based electronic MEAL framework.
- Ensure that staff and partners understand, internalise, and apply the concept of Value for Money throughout every stage, from program design to planning, budgeting, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation.
- Develop a shared learning strategy that fosters a strong culture of learning at personal, group, and Organisational levels.
- Document best practices, stories of change and case studies that align with ActionAid's Theory of Change.
- Integrate and implement Programme Quality Standards in programmes, projects, and proposals.
- Conduct programme quality audits.

6.8 Information and Communications Technology

As AAM delivers CSP VI, it will be dedicated to improving ICT for Organisational efficiency, enhancing functional delivery, and ensuring robust data management practices.

AAM commits to:

- Significantly enhance its ICT infrastructure by acquiring state-of-the-art equipment and software tailored for cybersecurity measures and adherence to best practices.
- Digitalise its core functions, including finance, human resources, and program management to streamline processes, improve accuracy, and facilitate better decision-making through access to real-time data and analytics.
- Centralise data storage for easy access and pulling to facilitate seamless information retrieval, enhance collaboration across departments, and promote data-driven decision-making.

6.9 Communication and Visibility

The objective is to improve communication and visibility regarding the role and impact of AAM work. In this strategy, AAM will use communication for advocacy, mobilisation of supporters, people living in poverty and allies, fundraising, sharing, learning and enhancing programme work.

Key commitments in CSP VI include:

- Utilise mainstream media and digital platforms internally and externally.
- Update our internal communications, systems, connectivity, programs, and fundraising to ensure they are current with technology and benefit from digital advancements.
- Make strategic investments in the use of technologies in all aspects of AAM work to drive greater Organisational efficiencies and effectiveness in systems and processes.
- Continuously expand social media presence and utilise digital platforms to strengthen national solidarity with people living in poverty and exclusion through campaigning and online actions.
- Increase the capacity of the media to understand relevant development issues, resulting in improved quality of reportage and media engagement on these issues and amplifying our perspectives.
- Ensure that AAM is recognised for its commitment to supporting people living in poverty and their Organisations in achieving positive change.
- Monitor and learn from communications work, measure the effectiveness of how AAM reaches its audiences, and assess the impact of its brand on the targets.

6.10 Internal Governance

ActionAid Malawi embraces a two-tier model of governance comprising the General Assembly and the Board of Directors that is key for shaping the organisation's direction, ensuring accountability, and promoting effective governance. The General Assembly is the highest decision-making body for the Organisation, responsible for providing oversight to ensure the organisation is fulfilling its mission and operating following its values and objectives.

In the implementation of CSP VI, AAM commits to:

- Recruit appropriately skilled new Board members with a wide range of skills to resolve issues that emerge in the organisation.
- Ensure continuous induction of the new board and general assembly members.
- Ensure gender balance in the General Assembly and Board of Directors with a particular focus to promote women leadership.
- Ensure that AAM has robust systems on risk management, financial management, programme design, people management, programme quality and effectiveness, and monitoring organisational performance.
- Encourage active involvement from General Assembly and Board members in the global governance sphere by fostering opportunities for them to seek international positions in AA Global Federation and supporting their engagement in proposing and endorsing motions.
- Ensure that the General Assembly and Board members are involved and participate in the AAM events to ensure they are familiarised with the work of AAM to build a strong solidarity network.
- Continue to ensure clear separation of governance roles, adhering to the Governance Manual and Memorandum and Articles of Association.
- Ensure improvement of internal administrative structures that would reinforce effective and efficient execution of this Strategy.

7.0 Monitoring, evaluation, accountability and learning system



Part of the Monitoring and Evaluation exercise conducted by ActionAid Malawi

AAM will enhance Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning (MEAL) to support the attainment of CSP VI goals. AAM has developed a comprehensive Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning system with mechanisms for data collection, analysis, and storage, as well as evidence for learning to ensure a cohesive system of communication, data, and knowledge management. AAM will also prioritise reflective learning with partner Organisations and stakeholders, analyse the quantitative and qualitative impacts of our work, and contribute to transforming power dynamics. The system will monitor all Organisational functions. AAM will conduct participatory impact assessments with all partners and individuals living in poverty and exclusion to establish a shared understanding and agreement on desired changes, and to ensure accountability for our work. The assessments will analyse power dynamics in all forms: visible, invisible, and hidden.

AAM has developed the Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability, and Learning Framework to guide programs throughout the implementation process and inform the CSP VI evaluation. This will ensure the quality of our programs, value for money, and maximise our impact.

The framework will help AAM to understand what changes and social transformations are and how they impact the existing unequal and unjust power relations. It will able AAM to track and report on power relations and power shifts. It is expected that findings and lessons learnt from programmes and projects will assist the Organisation to improve programme and project design, planning and implementation of future programmes and projects. The evidence gathered t will also support the evidence base for our advocacy and campaigns. Within the 5years implementation period of the CSP VI, operational plans will be developed to ensure clear inter-linkages and contributions to changes identified in the strategy or MEAL Framework.

AAM will conduct reflective learning through PRRPs and annual learning reviews periodically to test and validate assumptions in our Theory of Change and generate knowledge to support evidence-based decisions and impacts. AAM will build internal capacity to improve documentation, knowledge management, dissemination, and storage of information to enhance knowledge sharing and learning. AAM will also continue to conduct periodic program audits to ensure compliance with procedures outlined in the Accountability Learning and Planning Systems (ALPS).

8.0 Risk management

CSP VI will encounter several risks during implementation that may affect the achievement of the objectives. AAM has learnt that risk management is key to the achievement of its objectives and institutional management. Therefore, AAM elevated it to be among the 3 priorities of the organisational enablers.

The Board of Directors through the Audit and Risk Management Committee (ARMC) of the Board will regularly review and address risks that are reported by Management through the Internal Audit Unit. The Internal Audit and Compliance Units shall work with the Board, ARMC, Senior Management and Staff to identify, develop mitigating plans and address risks to an acceptable level. This shall be done at LRP, Project and Units levels. The risks and mitigating plans shall be populated in the Risk Register. However, the mitigation plans shall be monitored within the SMARTSHEET.

AAM has significantly diversified its funding. It is now heavily reliant on institutional funding. This comes with compliance risks. AAM will ensure that it follows the terms of grant agreements and Memorandum of Understanding (MOUs) to reduce the risk. This will maintain donor confidence and increase funding opportunities.

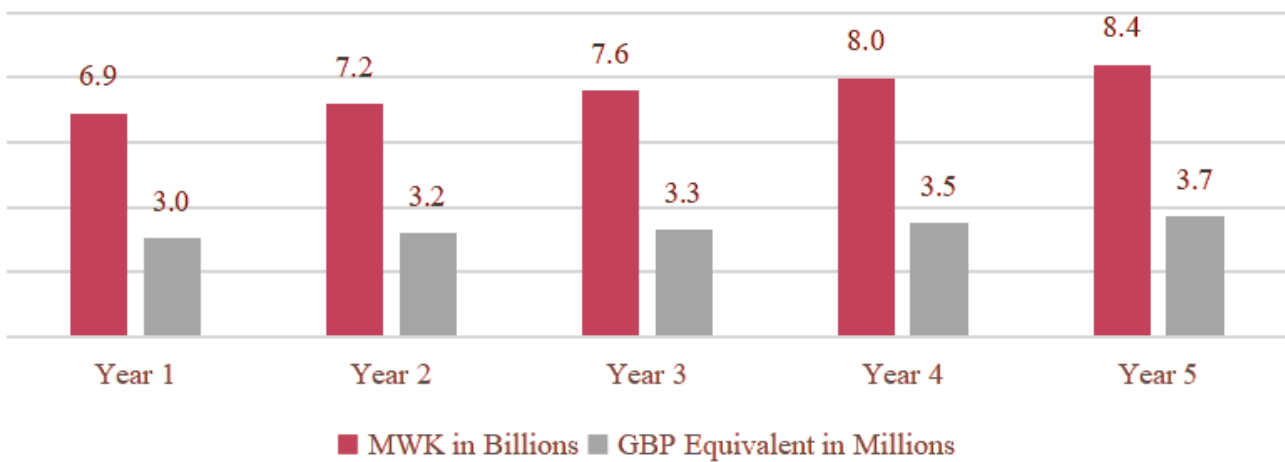
AAM shall further use the digital facilities to strengthen its risk management. Enterprise Risk Management (ERM) and SMARTSHEET shall enhance oversight role of both Board and Senior Management while Tips-Off Handling Committee (THC) via toll free line, free post and other forms of digital whistleblowing shall assist the committee identify potential fraud, SHEA, and reputational risks.

This strategy anticipates the following risks: political, social and economic; fundraising; financial management; partnerships; programmes; human resources; change management; organisational culture; compliance; reputational; governance; and procurement. Mitigation measures have been identified to address these risks.

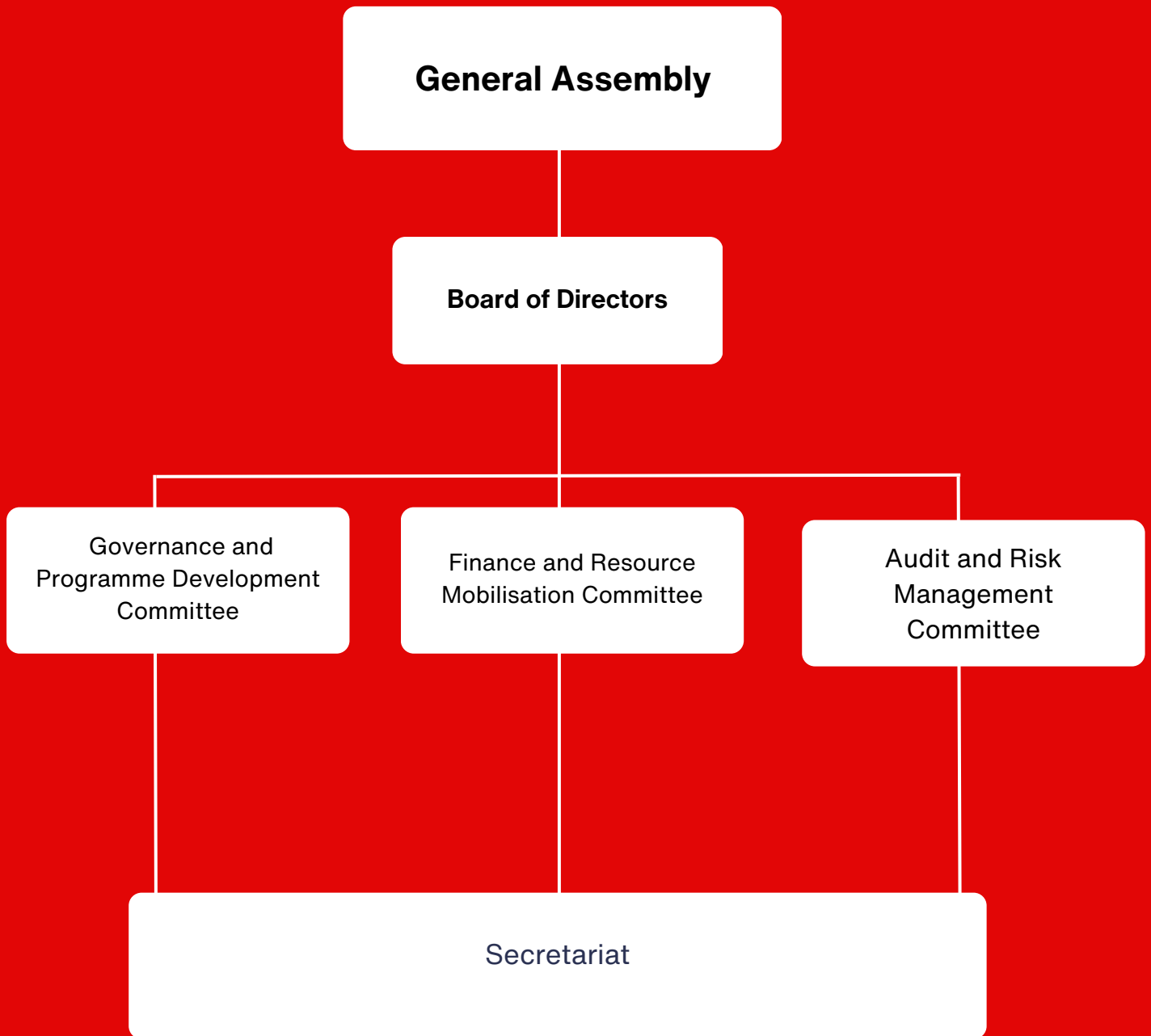
9.0 Financial projections of CSP VI

AAM projects that CSP VI will be achieved with MWK 38,092,598,921.50 (Equivalent to GBP 16,688,633.00) within a period of 5 years.

CSP VI Budget Projections



AAM Organizational Structure



Glossary

Accountability: Officials entrusted with public resources are answerable for fiscal and social responsibility to the citizens and take responsibility for their actions and decisions.

ActionAid Federation: The international network of individual country organisations that make up ActionAid, with Global Secretariat identified as ActionAid International.

Activista: ActionAid's global organising medium for young people to build solidarity, inspire each other, participate in and influence decision making in governance and development.

Campaigns: creating and harnessing people's power around a simple and powerful demand, to achieve a measurable political or social change to the structural causes of poverty

Climate resilience: Ability of small-holder farmers and communities to withstand and recover from the shocks of climate change through adaptation, enabling them to live with minimal disturbances to their normal lives and sources of livelihoods.

Climate Resilience Sustainable Agriculture Model (CRSA): A model developed by ActionAid and partners that prioritises the right to food, environmental conservation, and long-term community resilience to reduce food insecurity at the local level, and which contributes to effective national and international climate change policies that support self-sufficiency and sustainability in agricultural systems worldwide.

Collectives: Groups of individuals who come together to collectively address shared issues and challenges within their communities. These are formed by people from marginalised or disadvantaged backgrounds who unite to amplify their voices, enhance their bargaining power, and work towards common goals.

Domestic Resource Mobilisation (DRM): A government creating revenue from domestic resources - different to just taxation because DRM can come from both the public and private sectors, and the public sector does this through tax and other forms of public revenue generation.

Empowerment: the process through which we enable people living in poverty to become rights activists. We do this by making them more aware and more critical of power relations and by strengthening their own power.

Extreme poverty: A condition of dire and perpetual need, vulnerability, and powerlessness. People living in extreme poverty often lack the support system to exit from poverty and are often left out of mainstream poverty eradication programmes.

Feminism: A social and political struggle against all forms of male domination (patriarchy) - an ideology that advocates for the transformation of all social relations of power that oppress, exploit, or marginalise women.

Feminist analysis: The application of a set of analytical frameworks aimed at eliminating all forms of discrimination against women.

Feminist Wellbeing Economy: An economic model that puts people before profit and ensures equity, dignity, and food security, leading to improved standards for all, allowing them to live longer, healthier, happier lives. It focuses on women's wellbeing and redresses the multiple forms of discrimination they face based on gender and other intersecting forms of injustice, empowering women to participate fully in all economic spheres.

Gender equality: The absence of discrimination in opportunities, allocation of resources or benefits, or in access to services based on a person's sex.

Gender equity: Fairness and justice in the distribution of benefits and responsibilities to women and men.

Gender responsive: Consideration that all provided social services should meet the needs of women and men, boys, and girls without discrimination.

Hidden Power: these are certain powerful people and institutions maintain their influence by controlling who gets to the decision-making table and what gets on the agenda.

Invisible Power: It involves the power that shapes the psychological and ideological boundaries of participation. It keeps important issues away from the decision-making table, and out of the consciousness of the different people involved, even those directly affected by the problem.

Glossary

Patriarchy: The systemic and institutionalised male domination embedded in and perpetuated by cultural, political, economic, and social structures and ideologies. Patriarchy makes women inferior and subordinate and confers control and decision-making to men.

Progressive taxes: Taxes that charge more to those who can afford it most. That is, when your income or wealth is bigger you pay more. This protects the poorest who can afford it least. It has a redistributive effect in the economy, reducing inequality between richest and poorest.

Poverty: Direct consequence of the denial or violation of human rights and the result of unequal power dynamics in the process of claiming and/or realising one's rights.

Power: The ability of citizens to use their humanity and constitutional mandate to influence how development responds to the rights, needs and aspirations of the most vulnerable persons in the community. ActionAid seeks to harness people's power to influence those in power.

Regressive taxes: Taxes which are applied indiscriminately without regard to individual wealth, for instance at flat rate no matter how much income or wealth you have, or which do not discriminate enough between rich and poor people. This means the poorer you are, the more difficult you find to pay the tax. This can have the effect of increasing inequality.

Social justice: The view that everyone deserves equal economic, political, social rights and opportunities. This requires that we open the doors of access and opportunity for everyone, particularly those in greatest need. Social justice entails fair and just relations between the individual, society, and State.

Social movements: Groups of people and their organisations (mostly informal) committed to social justice, working beyond one geographical area to achieve changes in laws, policies, practices, and the way institutions operate.

Solidarity: involves people and organisations sympathetic to the struggles of people living in poverty supporting and sustaining a movement for change, with people living in poverty taking the lead.

Tax allocation: How a government allocates percentages of its annual spending budget to different sectors, such as health, education, defence, etc. ActionAid want government budgets to be progressively allocated and spent on gender-responsive public services.

Tax raising: How government raises taxes revenue to have money to spend on public services and goods. ActionAid want a progressive tax raising system, and our Tax Power campaign is focused on ways governments can raise more corporate tax revenue.

Tax spending: How government budget is actually spent. Involves participatory, gender-responsive budgeting, budget tracking, and ensuring transparency and no corruption.

Tax allocation: How a government allocates percentages of its annual spending budget to different sectors, such as health, education, defence, etc. ActionAid want government budgets to be progressively allocated and spent on gender-responsive public services.

Tax spending: How government budget is actually spent. Involves participatory, gender-responsive budgeting, budget tracking, and ensuring transparency and no corruption.

Visible Power: This includes the formal rules, structures, authorities, institutions, and procedures of decision-making. Examples include elections, political parties, laws, legislatures, budgets, corporate policy, by-laws, etc.

Young people: Young females and males aged between 12 and 30 years.



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