

Country Strategy Paper



**Action
for Social
Justice**

**Revised Strategy
2021**

Action for Social Justice: Strategy 2023

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Action for Social Justice

Revised Strategy 2021

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Acronyms

AAI	ActionAid International
AAN	ActionAid Nepal
CCA	Climate Change Adaptation
CMR	Country Model Review
EMIS	Education Management Information System
FY	Fiscal Year
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GRPS	Gender Responsive Public Service
HRBA	Human Rights-Based Approach
MEL	Monitoring Evaluation and Learning
MoE	Ministry of Education
MoHA	Ministry of Home Affairs
MPI	Multidimensional Poverty Index
NGO	Non-governmental Organisation
NRs	Nepalese Rupees
PLiP	People Living in Poverty and Exclusion
SHEA	Sexual Harassment Exploitation and Abuse
SRHR	Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights
USD	United States Dollar

Glossary

Chhaupadi: A conservative social practice for women in certain districts of Western Nepal, which prohibits a woman from participating in normal family and community activities during menstruation, as she is considered impure.

HRBA: Our Human Rights-Based Approach supports people living in poverty and exclusion (PLiP) to become conscious of their rights, to organise themselves to claim their rights, and to hold stakeholders to account. ActionAid Nepal builds on international human rights law, but goes beyond a legal or technical approach, supporting people to analyse and confront power imbalances and take sides with the PLiP.

PLiP: We avoid talking about ‘poor people’ which has an element of condescension. ‘PLiP’ emphasises common humanity and poverty being a state that people are living in, ActionAid is trying to end this.

Resilience building: As disasters and conflicts increase humanitarian emergencies all over the world, people living in poverty and exclusion must have the resilience to withstand, recover from and transform systems that increase their vulnerability. Thus, resilience building is to support them for tackling underlying drivers of vulnerability, including gender inequalities.

Active agency: Active agency is capacity of group of individuals to act independently/collectively and to make their own free choices, claim their rights and make their own decision to fight for social justice and equality.

Broad-based citizen: Broad-based citizen constitutes people who are within or out of the country but have mutual understanding and solidarity towards struggle of people living in poverty and exclusion. This group of people can play the active citizen’s role to fight for social justice and equality.

Feminist leadership: Feminist leadership is not merely capacitating more women to play leadership roles, but to lead differently with feminist values and ideology, and to advance the agenda of feminist social transformation in a way that other forms of leadership do not and cannot. This also can enable to build feminist leadership capacity in non-feminist women and men.

Young people: Young people are a diverse group, and at ActionAid Nepal we refer to “the many faces of youth”. Our definition of young people focuses on the multifaceted identity who are seeking the rights and independence that adulthood should bring. ActionAid Nepal

uses 15 – 40 as a guide only. We will be working with the most vulnerable young people and prioritise young women and girls across all interventions.

Alternative building: Alternative building is the way of developing real solution for sustainable change and development that is different from the mainstream traditional and neo-liberal approach in the development diaspora. Alternative building provides an innovative idea and approach with credible evidence for the socio-economic transformation and policy advocacy at all levels.

Tenure governance: Tenure governance refers to national system of distribution and use of land, fisheries and forest, which are the key to food security. Tenure governance is a crucial element in determining if and how people, communities and others are able to acquire rights, and associated duties, to use and control land, fisheries and forests (FAO, 2012).

Gender-Responsive Budgeting: Gender-responsive budgeting is not about creating separate budgets for women, or solely increasing spending on women’s programmes. Rather gender-responsive budgeting seeks to ensure that the collection and allocation of public resources is carried out in ways that are effective and contribute to advancing gender equality and women’s empowerment. It should be based on in-depth analysis that identifies effective interventions for implementing policies and laws that advance women’s rights. It provides tools to assess the different needs and contributions of men and women, and boys and girls within the existing revenues, expenditures and allocations and calls for adjusting budget policies to benefit all groups. Gender-responsive budget analysis, along with legislation, and other practical policy measures can address gender bias and discrimination. It is a step not only towards accountability to women’s rights, but also towards greater public transparency and can shift economic policies leading to gains across societies.

Citizen Education Reports (CER): The reports produced at school, district and national level based on communities analysing school performance against the 10 rights (enshrined in Promoting Rights in School Framework) is the CER. These reports may focus on particular priorities, for example collating evidence around discrimination against girls, violation of specific rights or the right to quality teachers.

Message from the Board Chair and Executive Director

Nepal is experiencing frequent political upheaval even after the promulgation of new constitution and establishment of federal structure. The society is passing through a significant change in its political structures, socio-economic scenarios, and development processes, more intensive and impactful than ever before.

COVID-19 outbreak on the other hand, has brought with it unprecedented challenge in the entire world and Nepal had no exception. It has affected almost every sector and has severely impacted developing countries like Nepal. The pandemic has hit the poor and marginalized communities the hardest, especially daily wage workers with their livelihoods partially or completely shut down.

Keeping in mind the changed context, ActionAid Nepal has revised its Strategy 2023 to explore opportunities and consciously tackle the unfavorable situations. Building on the foundation of AAN's preceding interventions on Human Rights-based Approach, it will expand its work to curb the repercussions caused by the pandemic on issues of women and girl's rights, quality public education, sustainable economic alternatives for resilient livelihood, and resilience against disaster.

The revised Country Strategy Paper guides AAN from 2022-2023. It reflects our understanding of the causes of poverty, marginalization and exclusion, and underlines fighting injustice as the crux to eradicate poverty. It further enhances capacity of the poor and excluded people for claiming and exercising their rights to live a dignified life.

The strategy revision process respected opinions of community members, AAN staff and its partner organizations, AA International, board of governance, and concerned stakeholders. They were reached out, consulted, and participated in the overall strategy revision process. We would like to heartily thank them for their constant support and enriching contributions to reflect the contextual revisions on this strategy.



Nirmala
Dr. Nirmala KC
Board Chair



Sujeeta
Sujeeta Mathema
Executive Director

1. Introduction

Action for Social Justice (2018-2023) is ActionAid Nepal's (AAN) expression of its commitment, ambition and priorities as well as invitation for collaboration. The strategy described in this paper is based on internal as well as external independent reviews, recommendations and feedbacks, and actionable learning generated thereof from those reviews and reflections.

We will continue to remain innovative in its programme impact framework, strategic programme priorities in fighting poverty, injustice and inequality, keeping women, children, young people and people living in poverty and exclusion as its primary stakeholders while also engaging with broad-based citizens and communities at all levels for sustainable change. ActionAid Nepal's strategy also commits collective actions with agencies of women, young people, feminist leaders, social justice movements within the broader framework of Human Rights Based Approach (HRBA) to development.

The strategy and priorities articulated in this paper recognise and reflect the following significant contextual changes:

1. **External:** Operationalization of federal governance of Nepal through elected local, provincial and federal political structures;
2. **Internal:** Establishment of ActionAid Nepal as a locally governed, transparent, and accountable organisation

ActionAid Nepal's strategies and priorities also reflect its commitment to remain a part of regional and global social justice movement, and thus are informed by the strategies and priorities of ActionAid International.

This strategy describes our core organisational fundamentals or foundations and sets out overarching directions and priorities to guide strategic implementation plan, as well as annual operational plans.

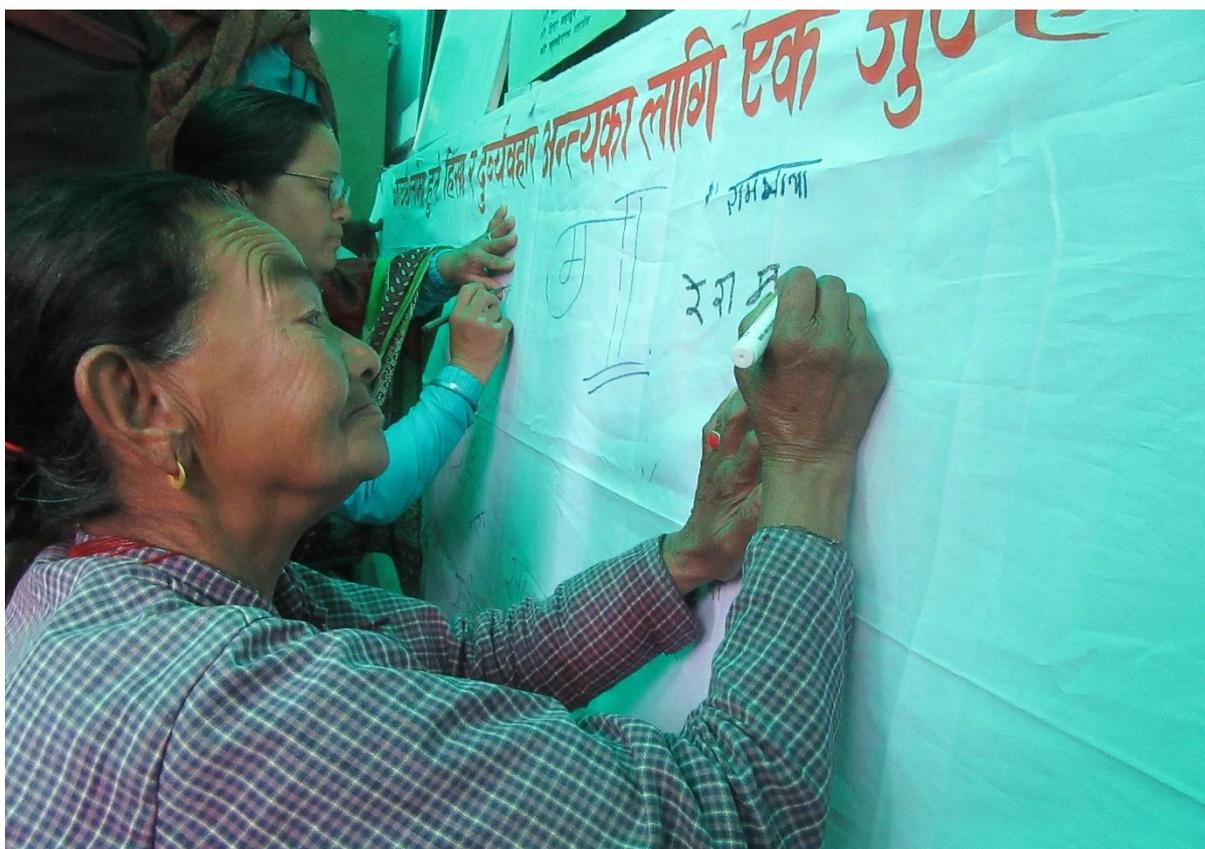
ActionAid Nepal considers this strategy as a living document whereby the strategies and priorities articulated will be responsive, innovative and adaptive to changes in the external contexts based on continual generation of learning and capacity in the organisation, keeping the core values, vision, mission and politics of the organisation intact and strong. In that spirit, this strategy will be referred to at the time of annual operational plan preparation.

2. Our core

ActionAid is a global federation working to achieve social justice, gender equality and poverty eradication. ActionAid Nepal is a member of the global federation of ActionAid, working for human rights, poverty eradication and gender equality. It is a non-governmental national social justice organisation established in 1982 and working locally in different provinces of Nepal. It is also a part of both national and global social justice movement and other civil society networks, alliances and coalitions.

Shaped and driven by our values, vision and mission, we work for transformative and structural social changes through people's active agencies. We believe in human rights and embrace HRBA to fight against not only the symptoms but also the structural causes of poverty, injustice and inequality.

Discriminated, excluded and exploited people – particularly women and girls – living in poverty and injustice, whose rights are denied or violated, are our primary stakeholders. We take sides with them and stand by them; it is their stories, energy and activism that inspire us and our work.



Elderly women signing petition to end gender-based violence

As a part of a larger civil society and social justice movement, we engage and actively collaborate with other civil society organisations committed to equality, social justice and poverty eradication. In view of the dominant context of patriarchal system in the society, we embrace feminist principles and approaches to all our works.

Our Vision:

Our vision is a just and equitable society in Nepal and beyond, where every person enjoys the right to a life of dignity and freedom from poverty and inequality.

Our Mission:

Our mission is to achieve social justice, gender equality and poverty eradication by working with people living in poverty and exclusion and their communities, organisations and movements.

Our values

We live by our values:

- **Mutual Respect**, requiring us to recognise the innate worth of all people and the value of diversity
- **Equity and Justice**, requiring us to ensure the realisation of our vision for everyone, irrespective of gender, sexual orientation and gender identity, race, ethnicity, caste, class, age, HIV status, disability, location and religion
- **Integrity**, requiring us to be honest, transparent and accountable at all levels for the effectiveness of our actions and our use of resources and open in our judgements and communications with others
- **Solidarity with people living in poverty and exclusion** will be the only bias in our commitment to the fight against poverty, injustice and gender inequality
- **Courage of Conviction**, requiring us to be creative and radical, bold and innovative – without fear of failure – in pursuit of making the greatest possible impact on the causes of poverty, injustice and gender inequality
- **Independence** from any religious or party-political affiliation
- **Humility**, recognising that we are part of a wider alliance against poverty and injustice

3. Our understanding of poverty

ActionAid Nepal's understanding of poverty goes beyond explaining the basis of subjective well-being or the availability of means to good life or inadequate income. It rather defines poverty in terms of deprivation in the capability of people due to lack of freedom or denial or violation of rights to live a good life of dignity that they have reasons to value.

We also consider poverty as injustice, caused by systemic and structural discrimination, marginalisation, exclusion, exploitation and oppression of people and communities on the basis of gender, age, class, caste, ethnicity, faith and geopolitical locations of the people. These structural and systemic processes also cause perpetual inequality and unequal (social, political or economic) power relationship between people, communities and regions within a country or even between countries.

The human rights framework holds state, including all its organs and structures, as the primary duty bearer in protecting, promoting and fulfilling human rights of its people. Undemocratic governance, unjust public policy or oppressive/exploitative practices cause people to live in perpetual poverty and injustice when larger base of citizens and civil society remain complacent without contesting, protesting or demanding rights and justice.

Natural disasters cause disproportionately huge suffering and depletion in capability of people living in poverty and exclusion– not because nature treats these people differently but because unjust system pushes them to the edge of vulnerability: economically, politically or geo-physically.

Our strategy and priorities particularly focus on fighting the **patriarchal system** that oppresses women, **neo-liberal economic system** that privatises and expropriates public goods, public commons and public services away from people living in poverty and exclusion and communities and **caste system** that oppresses Dalits.

4. We work with

We commit to working with women and girls, children, daily wage workers, landless and smallholder farmers, Dalits, and their active agencies. While we work with these groups, we keep women and girls at the centre of our commitments. We value the collective agencies of these groups and strategically engage and collaborate with feminist leaders, social justice movements, networks and alliances, organic intellectuals and civil society organisations.

The young people are the driving force and energy to bring the changes in our community. Therefore, we will work with young people while keeping women and girls at the centre among the people living in poverty and exclusion.

We will constructively engage with government at all levels – local, provincial and federal – to bring the transformative changes and establish a just society.



Young volunteers- the driving force to bring positive changes in the communities

5. Our programme impact framework

To achieve our overall mission of social justice, equality and eradication of poverty, our work must result in real and sustainable change in favour of the people living in poverty and exclusion in the following four systemic aspects:

Rights

Our work must ensure that state, corporation and society respect, protect and fulfil the rights of people living in poverty, and vulnerable, discriminated and excluded people and communities. They will realise and enjoy their rights with dignity.

In another fold, the civic sense should be high where citizens fulfil their responsibilities as active citizens.

Representation

In line with the dictum of “nothing about us without us”, people living in poverty and exclusion must have their meaningful and systematic representation and participation in the institutions, structures and processes at all levels - from local to national - to influence decisions about policies and practices affecting their rights, lives and livelihoods in any way.

Redistribution

Our work must result in people living in poverty and exclusion having better and more access to and ownership of new resources – opportunities of all kinds from connectivity, information, knowledge, productive assets, public services as well as protection of existing resources, including public commons such as water, forest, parks and public land from exploitation. In addition to access to public commons, assets and resources, redistribution also comprises sharing of care work and financial resource that contribute more towards increasing equality.

Resilience

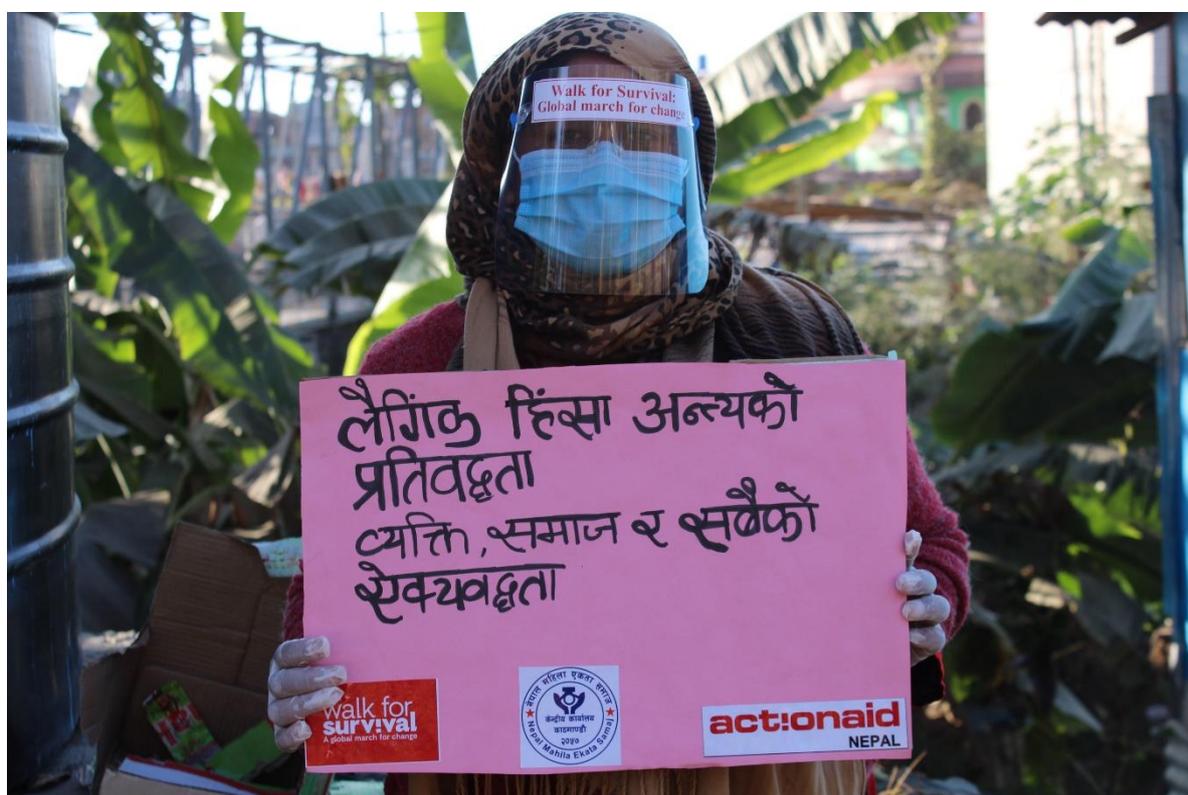
Our work must ensure that people living in poverty and exclusion must have the capacity and resources of all kinds necessary to withstand, recover and transform systems – whether natural or political or economic – that increase their vulnerability to crisis and disasters which always disproportionately affect people living in poverty and exclusion.

6. Our Theory of Change

We believe that social justice can be achieved by strengthening active agencies of people living in poverty and exclusion who can challenge unjust power rooted in the society. The realisation of their rights, enhanced resilience, redistribution of power & resources and representation in the decision-making process can only be achieved by addressing causes of discrimination and exclusion through continuous advocacy, mobilisation and campaigning, generating evidence-based alternatives, engagement and coordinated actions with the government and solidarity from likeminded individuals and CSOs.

Guided by our values and vision, we articulate our overarching theory of change and method of bringing about transformational changes towards achieving our mission as following:

Active agency, empowerment and movement building



Walk for Survival: Global March for Change

We can achieve transformative and sustainable change in the society only through an active political and economic agency, and empowerment and movement of people **who are discriminated, excluded and exploited**. Only when they are organised and united to demand, claim and enjoy their rights, they are able to own and run their own productive enterprise.

Given the dominant and pervasive patriarchal system we have, transformative change for

eradication of poverty and achievement of social justice and equality is not possible without gender equality. Therefore, addressing the structural causes of gender inequality, and gender-based violence through strengthening women's agencies and feminist leaders/ leadership will be the key to our theory of change.

Engagement, solidarity and support



Street drama to organised to raise awareness about women's rights

While ensuring primacy of the voice, actions, demands and claims of the people living in poverty and exclusion, the process of leveraging transformative change requires engagement and mobilisation of support and solidarity of broader bases of citizens in their varied capacities as voters, consumers, investors, government, civil society organisations, rights activists, labourers or educators at all levels – from local to global. This engagement strengthens accountability towards women and people living in poverty and exclusion to ensure gender responsive quality public services.

Advocacy and campaign

ActionAid Nepal focuses and strengthens people-centered advocacy building on its long-term programming and rootedness. Resisting adverse policies and practices and ensuring supportive policies and practices, not only of the state but also of private sectors through critical and constructive engagement with clear progressive alternatives where possible, together with the larger civil society, on a continuous basis, will be integral to ActionAid Nepal's theory of change.

Alternative building

Developing and popularising community-led pro-poor and gender-responsive development initiatives are important for our work. The feminist research approach will help to generate evidence and facts and to build knowledge. Sharing of community-generated knowledge and evidence-based alternatives to government at all levels, policy makers and purposeful individuals and organisations can transform public policy and development priority.



Street drama to sensitize community on socio-cultural issues

7. Contextual understanding

This strategy and priorities are analysed based on the key current context as well as emerging trends and situation and response to the challenges and opportunities presented by them:

The political paradigm

Followed by the promulgation of new constitution in 2015, Nepal has gone through huge controversies around federalism, governance, and political stability. However, the country was successful to hold the local, provincial and national level elections in 2017 introducing the three tiers of governance structure since it was declared as a republic. The parliament, provincial assemblies and local governments are endorsing a number of different acts and policies in line with Constitution 2015.

COVID-19 and its implication



Many households were provided with relief materials during the lockdown

In Nepal, as in rest of the world, people and communities had to face a double emergency from hunger and COVID-19 as the pandemic had hit millions without enough to eat or drink, whose livelihoods were completely shut down. Further, the rise of coronavirus positive cases in the country added challenges to already limited health care services and frontline workers.

Although in February 2021, the United Nations Committee for Development Policy (CDP) has recommended for Nepal's graduation from the Least Developed Country category with a preparatory period of five years, it seems the COVID-19 pandemic will push back the national targets as it has created a slowdown in the economy with an increase in joblessness, food insecurity, disruption in education, health, and wellbeing of the people. In the current COVID-19 context, existing economic systems are failing to face the contemporary challenges due to the historically weakening of public service systems through privatization, especially on health and education.



Volunteers conducting service mapping in a health centre in Bardiya

Gender-based inequality and violence

The Constitution of Nepal 2015 makes a big leap towards gender equality. Article 38 deals with the rights of women that includes right to lineage, right to safe maternity and reproduction, right against all forms of exploitation, and equal rights in family matters and property. The constitution also ensures women's political representation at all levels of government structure i.e. 40 percent at local levels and 33 percent at provincial and federal levels.

Gender-based violence occurs as a result of the normative role expectations associated with each gender, along with the unequal power relationships between genders, within the context of specific societies. Domestic violence, marital rape, dowry-related violence, child marriage, polygamy, female infanticide, witchcraft accusations, *Chhaupadi*, and trafficking of women and girls for sexual exploitation are common gender-based violence issues in Nepal. According to 'Our time sing and play – child marriage Nepal' (2016) report, Nepal has the third highest rate of child marriage in Asia – 37 percent of girls are married before 18, and 10 percent by 15.

As every crisis brings unequal impact in societies, especially to women, COVID-19 crisis has also brought complexities in women's care work burden which is still not acknowledged by the societies. The government needs to strengthen Gender-responsive public services to address and reduce the care work burden.

Rapid unplanned urbanisation has contributed for unsafe urban environment for women and girls. Violence against women and girls, especially in public space is one of the major hindrances for women's empowerment, which bars them from enjoying their right to freedom, mobility and security.

Women largely are still not receiving fair and equal wage as men and lack safety and social protection in the workplace. Protecting women and girls from violence, exploitation, and insecure working environment, especially in the informal sector has remained the critical issue on women's rights.



Women and girls are engaged in door-to-door campaign against child marriage

Effect of COVID-19 in livelihood, agriculture and employment

The secondary impact of the pandemic is also quite higher. Youth joblessness, collapses of small businesses, obstacles in productions and enterprises are common phenomena created by the pandemic that need to be supported as economic recovery actions. Rural agriculture and rural economy are also affected by the pandemic. The small holder farmers are facing multiple challenges to sell their products and buy seeds, fertilizers, and technical equipment. At times, they were either compelled to sell their produces at lower price or dump them in the field. For the survival, most of the farmers were also compelled to take loans in higher interest during the lockdown, making their lives tougher and pushing them back under the poverty line.

Agricultural programmes and policies are biased towards large holder farmers, favouring businesses and markets. It has led to exclusion of smallholder farmers from their access to supports and services, resulting in increased land abandonment and food insecurity. Local and improved seeds are being replaced by hybrid seeds that are deteriorating sustainable farming practices, agro-ecological systems and resilience of farmers.

Large-scale youth migration is not a sign of strength, but a symptom of deep, chronic problem. Remittances are providing a safety net, so people do not fall into poverty trap, but they are not being used to leverage rapid growth and greater opportunity. It is not just about economic growth; it is also about social implications which are very high. The migrants face severe modern-day slavery and sexual exploitation whilst their counterparts back home face increased burden of work. Therefore, the issues of youth need to be addressed building their agencies and to provide them opportunity to engage them in various development and income generation programmes.

Quality of education a major concern

Nepal has made some progress in improving access to education in recent years but there are still several barriers that we need to overcome. Poor retention, poor quality of education and lack of political will to implement educational policies have resulted in deterioration of the education sector.

The education sector is also badly affected by COVID-19 pandemic resulting to the nationwide shutdown of schools. Introduction to online classes divided gap between different classes of families. Children of poor and marginalized who could not afford digital gadgets lagged behind, enhancing their increased risk of school dropouts. The context demands to touch upon the few new areas of teaching-learning process, capacities, infrastructures, and supports.



Children enjoying school

A disaster-prone country and climate change

Nepal's geo-physical condition and high degrees of exposure and vulnerability have made Nepal very prone to natural disasters. The country stands 4th in climate change risks, 11th in earthquake and 30th in terms of flood risk. Nepal is exposed to about 500 events of disasters annually (Ministry of Home Affairs, 2016). Between 1971 and 2018, over 41,000 people lost their lives to disasters in Nepal followed by around 10,000 deaths caused by COVID-19 till the end of July 2021. The earthquakes in 2015 resulted in loss of over 8,800 lives and destruction of over half a million houses, with economic loss estimated at USD 7 billion. The analysis of the economic values of damage and losses during 1971-2010 showed that around 2 percent of GDP is lost every year to disasters (MoHA, 2011). In addition, thousands of people have been displaced by various such disasters.

Beside earthquake, other major hazards in Nepal are floods, landslides, droughts, heat waves, hailstorm, windstorm and cold waves. Rapid population growth, shrinking farm size due to urbanisation and continued unplanned agriculture in hazard-prone areas are further likely to increase hazard exposure and losses. These hazards are expected to increase in frequency or severity because of climate change. Climate change is causing the greatest threat to

agriculture and food security because of unreliability of stream flow and its adverse impacts is on the productivity of winter and spring crops. Therefore, Nepal's agriculture sector is also highly exposed and vulnerable to extreme climate events and the impacts of climate change which has adverse effect in the lives of poor and marginalised people.

Disasters invariably hit marginalised groups, women, children and people living in poverty and exclusion the hardest, precisely because they lack the power to negotiate access to and control over information, infrastructure, basic services and financial resources to be able to mitigate the risk they face. The ability of those living in poverty and exclusion to recover and rebuild their lives following disasters is compromised. By building the resilience of communities in a comprehensive manner, the cycle of poverty which sustains their vulnerability can be broken.



Volunteers participating in campaign to raise awareness about climate justice

8. Our strategic programme priorities

We have set the following strategic programme priorities based on our understanding of the contexts and the imperatives and opportunities they provide. We intend to amplify the successes that are relevant and crucial for HRBA programming, our strategy and work will also be consistent with and in support to the SDG 2030. These priorities are clear enough to provide us the direction and keep on track towards shaping organizational identity through specified targets and interventions, but broad enough to allow agility and flexibility to respond swiftly with changing context. Together with the implementation and operational plan, we will also develop indicators and metrics – both, qualitative and quantitative- to assess, report and learn from.

Priority One: Advance women and girls' rights



Women and girls participating in a national campaign

Deep rooted patriarchal mindset, cultures, belief systems and traditions perpetuate gender-based inequality and violence against women and girls. These practices do not acknowledge the sexual and reproductive health rights of women thereby restricting autonomy and self-determination over own bodies. Women are still being discriminated and exploited in informal labour spheres and their occupational health issues are neglected. The protection

mechanism for women and girls is also quite weak and insufficient at local level. The COVID-19 pandemic has added further complexity around women's care work burden, a consequence of the further denial of women's rights in private spheres. Women are kept afar in the decision-making processes and their care works at home are never recognised; their representation is a mere token, and the extent of policy gain is undermined by weak implementation.

Developing alternatives to reducing care work of women and advocating for women friendly development and Gender Responsive Public Services (GRPS):

- Focus on enhancing capacity of the women and adolescence girls and political representatives on recognizing, reducing, and redistributing the care work of women
- Generate evidence of feminist alternative models to advocate for the reduction of women's care work burden through increasing in the gender responsive public finance
- Engage with government bodies on gender responsive budgeting and development programmes and services

Strengthening safety, security, and dignity of women and girls:

- Intensify women and adolescent girls led actions to stop violence against women and girls and facilitate access to the justice
- Engage men and boys in fostering feminist leadership, defeating Violence Against Women and girls (VAWG) and transforming behaviors and challenging patriarchal values and harmful traditional practices
- Engage with government bodies for system strengthening on SRHR, prevention and response mechanism to ensure the quality referral pathway services and justice
- Engage with various civic alliances, active agencies, feminist leaders and stakeholders to advance the culture of safety, security and dignity of women and girls

Strengthening actions on decent work and rights of women labourers:

- Focus on organizing women labourers and linking them in wider networks of rights-based alliances
- Enable women labourer and their groups to demand and negotiate their rights
- Engage with government bodies for system strengthening on fair and equal wage, decent work, and occupational health safety
- Networking, collaboration, and joint action (including evidencing and research works) on decent work agendas.

Priority Two: Advance quality public education as basic rights for children

Constitution of Nepal 2015 acknowledges education as a fundamental right, however education sector has received inadequate focus and resources from the government. The public education system as a basic public service has undergone crisis due to the lack of quality education. Additionally, the COVID-19 pandemic has created more difficulties for equal access to education for all children. The pandemic has brought another type of exclusion and inequality in the form of a 'digital divide' among the students from well-off families and from poor and marginalized ones. Though the average school enrollment is satisfactory, achieving equity in access and identifying the most marginalised groups of students remain the challenge. Due to the pandemic, there is also a risk of heavy dropouts and learning failures of public schools' students from poor and marginalized families. We will focus our work in such a way that we are able to eliminate crisis/hurdles in providing quality education, attain child rights in school and make sure that the government investment in education is increased and prioritised.

Strengthening school governance to promote rights and quality learning outcomes in public school:

- Generate evidence through participatory research and Citizen Education Report (CER) process to set the agenda around school governance, education quality, and child participation.
- Engage with and support schools to enable them to improve in learning environment, teaching, and learning.
- Focus on advocacy and support to bridge digital divide and explore alternative teaching learning, and to promote Gender Responsive Public Service (GRPS) in school and at home

Increase active child participation in schools' endeavours through active Child Clubs and Youth agency:

- Focus on enhancing capacity of children on child rights through trainings, exposures and support on their plan of action etc.
- Strengthen the Child Clubs, young people's groups, networks and create conducive environment for cocreation and co-learning.
- Promote the dialogue and discussion led by the Child Clubs and young people especially on child rights and intergenerational rights etc.



Students enjoying their school

Advance the agenda of education financing for public education:

- Focus on generating evidence and evidence-based mobilization, advocacy actions of Civil Society Organization (CSO) and alliances to increase financing for quality public education
- Enhance awareness on tax justice and tax based public financing in education and advocate for adequate investment in education as basic public service.
- Engage with local, provincial, and federal government in policy works for improved education plans, education financing and Education Management Information System (EMIS)

Priority Three: Promote sustainable economic alternatives for resilient livelihood

Agriculture is one of the major sectors of Nepalese economy and despite being a major contributor to the nation's economy, it is still behind to achieve the anticipated growth, as it still heavily depends on the rainfed farming and is subsistence in nature. This sector suffers from circular effect of migration and agricultural programmes and policies continuing to be biased towards large holder businesses resulting in exclusion of small holder farmer. There is a need to defend the subsequent landlessness and food insecurity. Besides, COVID-19 pandemic caused lockdowns and mobility restrictions which have affected mostly the small producers and enterprises and the economic recovery has become a crucial thing for livelihood programmes. Our focus is to advance people's propositions for land rights, responsible tenure governance, agrarian and policy reforms. Our work will be focused on economic empowerment of people living in poverty and exclusion by promoting sustainable agriculture practices and, facilitating off-farm economic alternatives that also breaks the gender stereotype in work division. The sustainable agriculture practice respects and maintains the ecological integrity, thereby upholding the ecological justice for people dependent on natural resources.



Many women and girls are now able to contribute in the family income.

Advance the agenda of green solution through agriculture and off-farm livelihoods initiatives:

- Focus on enhancing capacity of small holder farmers to promote agroecology, organic farming, and good agriculture practices
- Strengthen active agency of landless and small holder farmers to protect their land rights, food sovereignty, and enhance productivity
- Engage with government across the levels to influence the public policies for green solution and practice in agriculture, off farm livelihoods and job creation
- Strengthen capacity of communities to protect, claim and own public commons from expropriation or pollution in both rural and urban areas.

Promote women friendly market system:

- Focus on women and youths in enterprise development, market linkage and value chain to upgrade them to run enterprise
- Promote rural agro-enterprises for landless people through imparting marketable knowledge and skills, increasing their participation in decision making process and improving their access to finance and market.
- Promote off-farm enterprises by integrating smallholder farmers, youths, and women into competitive value chains for boosting resilient livelihood.
- Connect and strengthen the small entrepreneurs to their groups and networks
- Focus on advocacy and support to establish models of women farmers and entrepreneur friendly markets

Advance the actions for climate justice:

- Focus on enhancing capacity of young people to act on environment protection and climate justice
- Engage with climate justice networks and initiatives to advocate for climate financing
- Engage with local government for pro poor climate change adaptation (CCA) policies and programmes

Priority Four: Strengthen resilience against disasters

The country faces huge risks from climate change and natural disasters. The brunt is faced invariably by women, children and people living in poverty and exclusion. The reconstruction of damage caused by the 2015 earthquake has not still completed, floods and landslides have been taking hundreds of lives and destroying assets and people's livelihood capital every year. Recently, the COVID-19 pandemic has been impacting people's lives and livelihoods in terms of both primary and secondary impacts. There is a need to build the resilience of the communities in a comprehensive manner by breaking the cycle of poverty which could sustain their vulnerability. Various research and studies have shown that women are the first respondents during humanitarian crisis, but their capacities and contributions have always been overlooked. Similarly, the recent pandemic has escalated the needs of local capacities to respond to the crisis in the situation of mobility restriction and also brought out the issues of transparency and accountability in humanitarian responses.

Disasters have repeatedly affected schools and children making access to education difficult. Specifically, disasters reduce overall educational achievement of students by damaging school infrastructure, disrupting academic calendars, forcing children to drop out, and undermining the resilience of communities. Therefore, schools need appropriate disaster preparedness to reduce vulnerability to ensure children' access to safer education environment.



Small-scale mitigation support at the community

Strengthening local capacity to reduce the risk of disaster and the impact of climate change:

- Focus on enhancing absorptive, adaptive, and transformative capacity of disaster and climate vulnerable community-against multiple hazards
- Promote environment friendly disaster prevention and mitigation measures to minimise loss and damage from shocks and hazards
- Engage with government to mainstream Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate Change Adaptation into the development plan, urbanization and land use plan, and programme of the government.

Enhance effective humanitarian response led by women and youths promoting humanitarian signatures:

- Focus on enhancing capacity of women and youth leadership in emergencies and promote women led humanitarian responses
- Promote community led and inclusiveness in recovery, rehabilitation, and reconstruction.
- Focus on building local capacities of partners and stakeholders to promote shifting power to local actors to enhance higher level of accountability towards disasters affected community
- Engage with local government to strengthen humanitarian policies and system



Volunteers participating in campaign to raise awareness about climate justice

Promote safe school standards through disaster prevention and mitigation measures:

- Promote and mainstream the school safety measures into school development plans and connect to community-based disaster risk management initiatives
- Build capacity of stakeholders especially students and teachers on evacuation, first aid and crisis management caused by shocks and hazards
- Focus on the children's actions on environment protection and awareness raising on DRR and climate change



9. Internal organisation development priorities

Our internal organisation development is informed by learning from the reviews and reflections of the last strategy period. We will advance internal processes and mechanisms to make them relevant in the changed external context and fulfil the mission related ambitions as articulated by the strategy.

A. Strengthening organisational governance and culture

Governance leadership from National Board and increased connectedness from local to global

Having acquired legal status as a Nepali national Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO), ActionAid Nepal will embrace dual citizenship to remain an integral part of the larger federal organisation. As a full affiliate member of ActionAid International, we will continue to connect with and contribute to ActionAid federation at governance level and international coordination level thereby maintaining bilateral and multilateral direct relationship with other ActionAid country members.

We will strengthen our governance structure – both board and general membership body – for effective governance through clear role on national board, sub-committee, and GA member for strategic direction on AAN’s mission and objective as guided by governance manual. AAN has completed affiliation process and is moving towards nationalization process. One of the key drivers of the revised CSP is to leverage on the opportunities provided by the affiliation status – local fundraising, national programming, strengthening governance and accountability. Since we are at the transition stage to become fully national entity and as part of the revised CSP, governance leadership will lead nationalization process and complete the transition plan.

Promote culture of diversity and harness skilled human resources

We will invest in strengthening capacities of human resources to enrich and deepen knowledge on HRBA, feminist leadership perspective and participatory approaches, and diversify funding base and digital platforms while promoting innovations in execution. Our human resources will receive adequate support to comprehend innovation and digital platforms that we aspire to attain. We will promote the culture of performance by supporting and nurturing our staff to ensure their accountability and achieving the desired results. We

believe in inclusion and strive to attain and maintain a fine balance of staff diversity and harmony based on gender, culture, ethnicity, and geography. We will invest in our staff and partner organisations with a focus on women's leadership and be guided by Learning and Development strategy.

We will build Center of Excellence on governance leadership and organisational function by continuous investment and improvement in people, process and, infrastructure and contribute to AA federation and wider network.

Embrace a culture of innovation and digital transformation

We embrace the culture of innovation and climate friendly digital transformation to strengthen internal systems and processes for efficient and effective operation of the organisation. Thus, we will focus on digitalising our internal systems and mechanisms to establish strong learning and monitoring processes. We will effectively use digital platforms in our programming to organise, showcase and promote programmes, campaigns and social movements. We will embrace technology and adopt new techniques to brand our visibility and communicate impact and advance our social media engagement to strengthen our wider solidarity with people living in poverty, communicate to our donor/supporters and influence policy change.

B. Enhancing knowledge management

We will extensively promote knowledge generation and dissemination for enriching shared learning practices as an organisational culture. Theme-based and issue-based documents will be developed and published as per our work experience that will update the knowledge base of the stakeholders, ourselves and partners. The organisational information will be managed in a systematic and scientific way for easy accessibility and dissemination. Different discussion platforms will be created for staff to have critical reflections over the learning generated and practiced.

A context appropriate robust Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) framework as per the identified programme and organisational priorities will be in place to help assess the priorities regularly for program quality assurance. We will strengthen our online database system for efficient and effective information management verified through the system of MEL. Holistic Audit will be prioritised within the organisation to provide us with the space to

analyse our overall programme and partnership efficiency and effectiveness and to identify the areas of improvement. The strengthened MEL system will bring accuracy on the data feed and internal control system, leading to efficiency in progress monitoring and impact evaluation.

C. Diversifying funding base

We will diversify the funding base to raise funds which are in line with our strategic priorities. We will focus on long-term programmatic funding with a broad range of institutional donors to achieve our development vision. We will maintain and strengthen Child Sponsorship funding, by continually adapting our approach to the transformative change. Private sector investment in development agenda is increasing, hence we will continue to explore funding with such organisations that match our values.

International Child Sponsorship / Unrestricted funding

Child Sponsorship funding will be the primary funding source to achieve the targets set in the programme priorities of this strategy. We will strengthen the Child Sponsorship funding base by promoting and applying innovative approaches in coordination with ActionAid International and Funding Affiliates to make Child Sponsorship a cost-effective and sustainable resource generation product. We will strive for the best possible innovative services to our supporters across the countries in the federation to maintain and strengthen Child Sponsorship. This includes technological innovation building on current products and communications which will create new platforms for supporter engagement and create deeper links among supporters, children and communities.

Institutional funding / Restricted funding

We will prioritise high value and institutional funding besides the unrestricted regular income. We will reinvigorate relationship with existing donors and create relationship with diverse new donors and explore possibility of new partnership to promote our culture, values and principles to develop healthy and sustainable donor relationship. We will collaborate with like-minded international non-government organisations (in-country and inter-country) for expanding the funding base.

We will strengthen our Resource Generation systems to enable us to connect and collaborate with institutions of similar values and objectives. This strengthened system will have a team that displays resourcefulness to understand programme priorities and collaborate with the programme teams to generate propositions to advance, maintain and strengthen partnership with high value and institutional donors and develop skills to explore new markets including private institutions.

Engagement with private and corporate sector

We will engage with progressive private and corporate sectors to reach consensus on development agenda. Therefore, we will focus on increasing visibility of our work within the country and emphasise on local funding opportunities. We will develop private/corporate sector engagement strategy/framework which will guide us on creating and maintaining relationship and connection with private/corporate donors. During this strategy period we will invest to test and promote in-country individual giving for our social justice work. We believe in-country individual giving is important not only for fundraising, but also for building activists and supporter base for legitimacy and social change.

We will also seek government funding for our priority work within our strategic priorities, but in doing so, we will carefully maintain our independence and influencing ability and avoid competition with local NGOs.

D. Promoting Safeguarding against Sexual Harassment, Exploitation and Abuse (SHEA)

As an organisation, we are committed to creating a culture and environment based on the principles of impartiality, equality, respect, and non-discrimination. A contextualized SHEA and Safeguarding strategy will be in place in ActionAid Nepal which will drive SHEA and safeguarding related concerns. Internal mechanism will be standardized as per ActionAid global policy and national law and SHEA and Safeguarding related established mechanism will be placed in partner organisations too. We will build on process and policies to protect anyone who comes into contact with ActionAid, and by ensuring that the interests of survivors are at the heart of a review of our practices and culture. We will ensure safer programming approach while implementing program in the communities.

E. Organisational profile building

Communication plays a vital role in increased visibility for improved organisational profile and resource generation. We will continue prioritising it – both internally and externally. A separate communication strategy will be developed which will guide various means of communication in print, audio, audio/visual, social media, and other forms of online resources.

Communication to the communities will be assured through wider use of audio and audio/visual means. Apart from mass conscientisation, the materials produced will also be used for further advocacy and resource generation. Since, such materials largely support in extending the identity and profile building of the organisation, they will be prioritised in each of our programme implementation. Internalising an essence of different stakeholders' participation in our planning, programming and evaluation phases, public engagement mentioned in our communication strategy will be ensured.

F. Partnership management

AAN recognizes partnership as a relationship based on equality where each partner brings different contributions (funds, experience, knowledge, human resources, legitimacy) and thus partners are valued equally. AAN recognizes the real power associated with funding and will remain sensitive to its impact on relationship with the partners.

We believe in effective partnership with organizations that hold similar values and genuinely represent or are strongly connected with people living in poverty and exclusion. We will prioritize our partnership with organizations, institutions, networks and alliances having strong commitment to implementing high quality programmes to well targeted communities ensuring positive transformative changes in their lives. A rigorous and standard partnership selection process will be applied to ensure their high commitment to serve the people living in poverty and exclusion and to select competent partner through fair process following government policy and guidelines. We strongly believe in being accountable to the people living in poverty and exclusion and will ensure that partners as well are accountable as well. Thus, we will focus to establish systems and policies of the partner organizations. Besides, AAN will also capacitate partner organisations for robust financial and programme management.

We will partner with social organizations, networks and civic alliances, educational institutions, governments, people's organizations and progressive private sector at all levels to achieve quality programme outcome and to strengthen and empower civil society organizations and engage with social movements.

10. Risk management

To deliver this strategy, we will develop and institutionalise risk management by assessing internal and external risk at regular intervals. We will develop a comprehensive risk register bi-annually. Our national board of governance will be the custodian of the overall risk register, while the Senior Management Team will be collectively responsible for its management.

11. Conclusion

Action for Social Justice has evolved over 39 years to adapt to the changing country, regional and global context. This evolution provided us with new and robust programme impact framework and theory of change that guided this strategy in developing four strategic programme priorities to fight poverty, injustice and inequality. Together, with our partners and allies, we will overcome challenges and deliver promises to realise social justice of the people living in poverty and exclusion, and we are confident that this strategy will provide a clear and concise path of guidance on attaining it.



ABOUT US

ActionAid Nepal is an anti-poverty, human rights-based organization established in 1982. ActionAid Nepal is a non-governmental national social justice organisation rooted and working locally in different parts and regions of Nepal. It is a member of ActionAid International federation. ActionAid Nepal is also part of both national and global social justice movement and, other civil society networks, alliances and coalitions.

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