

AAI

Taking Stock 2

Organisation Development Component

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For Suppliers Management Consultancy

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ActionAid International Taking Stock 2

Organization Development Component – Executive Summary

In reviewing the HR/OD component of the AAI global review, a distinction is made between HR issues as those that specifically relate to the human resources management aspects of the organisation and those issues that have to do with the design, operationalisation and functioning of the Action Aid organizational set-up. The latter is focusing on the basis of the organisation (here under referred to as the soul of AAI, the strategic framework of AAI, the people factor (personnel and work /life issues), structures and systems in place and the modus operandi of AAI - in particular, working in the partnership mode; internationalization is also reviewed as part of the overall organisation development thrust of AAI and its implications on the way AAI operates.

A. The Spirit/Soul of Action Aid International

Rights Based Approach

A clear focus on basic rights is evident in all activities - water, shelter, food security, education, health, livelihoods and the right to life. The approach has been attempted in all countries visited with varying degrees of intensity. The shift from service delivery to RBA is still work in progress. It is generally agreed that a 100% shift may neither be possible nor desirable. Community mobilization, building community organizations and campaigns are emerging as key elements of the approach to implementation of the Rights Based agenda. The values of AAI and its commitment to social justice and peace provide the driving force in prioritizing programme issues and strategies. The internalization of the values of the organization is evident in the commitment that the staff have to work with the poor, engage communities in participatory processes and the tendency to promote broad participation by staff in the programming and organizational processes throughout the organization.

The major risks evident with RBA as the basis of AAI Programming & OD include the following: lifting the rights agenda beyond the community to higher national and sub-regional levels may take time to achieve; sustainability of institutions of the poor is at risk as their economic and financial sustenance is a major challenge and innovative ways of sustaining them are not yet evident in their design and strategies; the requisite shift in capacities especially to lift voices beyond the community level and to effectively build community organisations is lagging behind.

Gender

Recognition of Gender an integral part of the soul of AAI programming and OD is evident through the following major elements: gender is a major dimension of community organisation in fighting poverty and substantial space has been created or opened up largely in terms of women's participation in activities and structures set up to run such activities; gender is recognized as one of the global cross cutting themes and to be mainstreamed across all programmes and in all structures; women's empowerment is an explicit agenda in the staffing strategy for AAI.

In spite of the foregoing, gender appears to have been treated with lower priority in terms of human resources allocation, capacity development, gender mainstreaming and challenging power relations and patriarchy in particular at household and community levels.

B. Strategic Framework for AAI Programming & OD

FPT provides the strategic framework for AAI work on RBA while Ingendo was developed as the Africa Regional version to contextualize FPT to the Africa environment. Country Strategy Papers (CSPs) have been developed. Emerging planning challenges for the future include the recognition that rights violations and the achievement of rights cut across national boundaries and may span multiple communities in several countries for which there is no clear cut country-cluster based planning framework yet and conflict situations were not adequately anticipated from a programming perspective.

C. Internationalization of AA

Process clearly driven from above the CPs and not yet updated to other staff in the CPs below senior management level. The most commonly understood elements are the setting up of national advisory boards and membership by CPs to AAI though no clear statement of the criteria for membership is generally understood by all. It is not yet clear how internationalization will shorten the AAI hierarchy, how the relationships among CPs may change especially those that raise funds for other CPs e.g. AAUK, Greece and whether or not and how internationalization will accommodate sub-regional initiatives such as the Mano River Union, large CPs such as India and how country level governance will relate to international governance.

The major perceived risks of Internationalization include failure to accommodate sub-regional initiatives already set in motion, localization leading to loss of international identity which is an insulation against national political risk for some CPs; loss of senior staff due to uncertainty and the rush to diversify funding structures of CPs leading to dilution of focus on RBA and AAI values and principles.

D. The People Factor in AAI

The HR strategy and policy framework: The major HR strategy changes in line with RBA are still evolving and include restructuring of functions at International and CP level; re-definition of roles and functions and job titling as work in progress; re-allocation of responsibilities and definition of relationships vis-a-vis internationalization is also evolving. HR policies (General Terms and Conditions of Service) are in place. The HR policies are largely generic and not reflecting uniqueness of AAI. Changes to reflect the shift to non-hierarchical, self managing approaches and collective and collaborative working styles still pending. A comprehensive strategy would be a useful tool for guidance across countries for greater organizational equity.

The HR establishment/numbers and workload: The HR establishment has been reduced in line with shift to rights based work through partnerships but a heavy workload with service delivery work still persists. This has necessitated a 24hr x 7days a week approach to manage the overload with potentially disastrous impact on

staff work / life balance. While gender balance is improving it is still far from being achieved.

Key Competencies required to drive RBA: Key competencies required and in which programme staff are found to be low in skill or lacking include gender analysis, project development and management focusing on sustainability of practical service delivery projects in response to specific practical needs of poor, marginalized communities; partnership development and management and rights based advocacy – as a core competence for advancing the AA rights based advocacy programme.

The evident practice regarding organizational learning and competence building reveals a culture of learning across the organization illustrated by PRRPs and Peer reviews, IDs meetings, REFLECT, external reviews staff development programmes and horizontal working groups as the major processes. The challenges facing organisational learning and competence building are the identification of the key competences in which HRD should take place, lack of time for analysis and organizing learning experiences by staff and CPs; lack of leadership capacity and time to coach and nurture talent at CP level.

E. AAI Organisation Structures & Systems

AAI is engaged in a process of internationalization necessitated by the need to devolve roles and responsibilities to CPs and thus increase the capability of the organisation to fight poverty closer to the communities. Evidence reveals certain strengths and challenges in the current structures in the CPs.

Strengths of AAI structures: Devolvement has taken place and there is a high sense of responsibility among the various CP Directors and the DA level managers. The hierarchy has been shortened between the decision making levels and the frontier for fighting poverty at CP level although hierarchy still persists as a formal reporting and approval mechanism. Structures are filled in with national staff and no significant expatriate staff thereby enhancing the legitimacy of the CPs in addressing and challenging the state and other players on sensitive rights issues. Horizontal working groups on thematic issues give the structure the potential to be flexible by involving people across the organisation hence pooling expertise and backstopping. The AAI has an open structure at operational level allowing partnerships to grow thereby mobilizing capacities of other stakeholders into fighting poverty together. Regionalization in Africa was done to ease the pressure from the large size of the portfolio.

Challenges apparent in the organisation structure: The challenges apparent in the structures developed so far arise from the fact that the structures are still evolving as internationalization unfolds. The major ones include weaknesses in the functioning of the horizontal working groups, limited depth of competencies to engage partners and other stakeholders in advancing the RBA; the persistence of hierarchy for determining the locus of power and male domination within the structures with power and leadership responsibility being centered in the CD and not always collaborative and nurturing the rest of the team; the disconnect between regionalization as a concept and the organization structure thereby limiting the scope for sub-regional approaches and programmes to address rights issues which cut across boundaries;

Systems: systems in all areas of organization and management have largely been developed for the mobilization of resources and accountability to stakeholders. Some systems in particular the HR, M & E and Learning systems may need some adjustments to be consistent with changes brought about by RBA and internationalization while internal reporting systems require deepening the level of analysis.

F. AAI Partnerships as a strategy for implementing RBA

Working with and through partnerships is already a mindset of all staff in some of the CPs with new positions allocated to manage the partnership programme in some CPs such as Kenya. Across the CPs, partnerships have been established on the basis of activities or have been institutionalised with government and community based organizations. A non-empowering donor mode is apparent in some of the relationships with communities and project groups. The partnership selection process is variable from CP to CP and no organization wide approach to partnership has been developed.

G. Major Recommendations

1. It is recommended that AAI retains its global programme brand of FPT but it maybe presented as FPT 2. RBA, partnership and empowerment will be the main ingredients in this brand. Power, gender and patriarchy should be at the core of the analysis and development of programme strategies to fight the causes of poverty at all levels. AAI should recognize that RBA, partnership, social movements and fighting poverty have been tried before by other players. It is recommended that AA acquires the knowledge that is available on these issues and defines the frontier at which it wishes to break new ground or to make its distinctive contribution in fighting poverty.
 2. It is recommended that the next AA planning frameworks the focal rights issues to be addressed at community, national and sub-regional levels to allow a sustained focus on the rights agendas at these levels and allow optimum synergies.
 3. It is recommended that AAI moves away from the concept of Advisory Boards to an action oriented structure with an explicit role to ensure programme relevance and effectiveness at national level. The structure may be called a Country Program Action Committee or AA National Action Committee
 4. An HR taking stock is recommended to identify key areas of re-tooling, new skill development and appropriate methods for HRD resulting in a strategic framework for HR management at AA and partner level
 5. Deeper reflection is recommended on the need for and form of a sub-regionalization structure to meet the needs for devolvement as well as fostering organizational learning and working across boundaries to effectively address the key rights issues on the agenda.
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Actionaid International Taking Stock 2 – Final Report

Organization Development Component

1. Introduction

1.1 Scope of the HR/OD Review Component

Components of the review - the original scope

The Human Resources/Organization Development component of AAI Taking Stock 2 sought to review and explore the effectiveness and appropriateness of AAI's structures, systems and processes in pursuit of its mission in fighting poverty together. Organizational effectiveness was also to be reviewed in the light of the changes that had been precipitated by on-going organizational changes as well as by the process of internationalization. Internationalization of the AAI governance has been one of the most dominant processes during the past two to three years of the current strategy period. The terms of reference for this component required a focus on the review of AAI's performance in relation to the following issues:

- Strengthening the identity of AA International through the various organizational processes that have been taking place
- Achievement of gender equity in the AA structures, systems and processes
- The devolvement of decisionmaking from the international to the regional and national level; further to this, exploring the extent to which such devolvement had gone beyond national to sub-national and to the various constituencies working with AAI including community and partners levels
- Reviewing the processes, structures and systems which enhance innovation and learning within the organisation
- Exploring effectiveness in relation to securing appropriate income and ensuring cost effectiveness
- Reviewing the extent and impact of internationalization of AAI governance at the regional and CP levels.

Thematic issues - TS 2 planning meeting - London, April 2004

A planning meeting was held by the review team in London, April 2004. The purpose of the meeting was to review and harmonize the scope of the review based on the original TORs for the various components which included gender, finance, ALPS and advocacy. The TS 2 Team identified and agreed on the following seven themes to be the issues that brought all the various components of the review together without derogating on any of the specific TORs in the original briefs for the various components:

- Advocacy
- Gender
- Partnerships
- Internationalization
- Resource mobilization and allocation (finance)
- Accountability and learning
- Internal organization (relationships)

The planning process included meeting with the AA International Directors during the process and at the end. This gave the IDs the opportunity to make further input into and review the final scoping overview of the review process. The outcome was to be the basis for the field work and reporting on the various components.

1.2 Field Methodology Used

The review process was designed to include desk study and field work components. AAI has been high on documentation of the processes in the organization, has carried out previous reviews - both external and internal, produced annual reports at CP level and at global level and there is also extensive documentation at CP level. Thus the TS 2 Team was expected to review a substantive amount of literature followed by field visits to CPs. These involved engaging the CP teams - management and frontline staff alike, communities working with AA CPs and a range of other stakeholders engaging with AA or the participating communities at various levels. These stakeholders included government and non-governmental players, local and international, formal/registered and non-registered community based organizations and nascent social movements at local level. The wide range of stakeholders engaged allowed the Team to appreciate the work that AA is doing from as many perspectives as well as to see as many faces of AAI that were seen/perceived by the various stakeholders. The process focused on listening as much as possible to the voices of the CP management and staff as well as the communities working with AA and the other stakeholders. Semi structured and open ended questions were only raised to probe around the seven thematic issues agreed during the planning session.

Emphasis had to be made early in the process that the TS 2 Team was not reviewing the CP as such. The CP visit was meant to inform the Team of the practical experiences and challenges of implementing FPT so that the Team could reflect on the global programme structure and focus and advise on the future strategic direction.

In each CP visited, the process ended with a de-briefing session with the CP (they invited those they wanted to) but in most cases as many of the senior management team as available and in some cases, some non managerial staff attended the de-briefing. The de-briefing had to reflect the team's understanding of the CP's activities on the ground and its learning from such experiences around the seven thematic issues drawing together the various evaluation components. This approach allowed the team to debrief the CP with almost seamless cohesion from the start to the end of the visits. Each component was seen as part of a whole.

1.3 AAI Participation in the Review Process

While the team chose which sample they wished to cover during the visits and added or subtracted the stakeholders to be met as well as changing the programme to manage the very limited time available more effectively, the review process was carried out in a highly participatory manner. Both managerial and non-managerial staff participated in discussions and field visits - leaving the review team members alone with stakeholders in the field where this was required to allow independent discussions with stakeholders. The conclusions and recommendations emerging from the process have therefore been discussed or emerged from discussions with the CPs and various stakeholders during the fieldwork. However, the Team takes full

responsibility for the contents and views expressed in any words, expressions or nuances, whether explicit or implied, that are in this report.

1.4 Structure of this report

This component of the review has been titled "HR/OD" as if to suggest that HR issues are the same as OD issues and the two labels can be used inter-changeably. The two are not equivalents of each other. The review has taken the approach that HR issues are human resources management issues and OD issues are organisation development issues. However, the two are not equal to each other. OD subsumes HR and HR is a sub-set of OD issues. The scope of OD issues to be addressed is wider than HR issues. The review took the perspective that OD encompasses the management of change in AAI at the level of people, processes and structures. It is important to make this distinction because there can be differences in emphases when dealing with OD. The review report is structured on the basis of major OD issues one of which includes HR issues. The six major OD issues covered by the review and making up this report are the following:

- Rights based approach as the core, driven by the values of the organization and gender as a cross-cutting programming and organizational imperative in AAI
- The strategic framework/s for AAI programming and organisation development as an internal organizational issue / strategic planning
- Internationalization of AA as a process and an end or means to an end
- The people factor - going beyond human resources management but exploring the role of people and their positioning in the AAI programming and organisation development including organizational learning and innovation, systems and procedures and work life issues, among others
- AAI organisation structures and systems as they facilitate FPT and realization of the advocacy agendas at CP and global level; as they facilitate the implementation of internationalization of the governance of AAI and realization of the expected benefits of increased organisational effectiveness
- AAI partnerships as a strategy for implementing RBA and its implications with regard to relationships and structures, modus operandi and resource mobilization and allocation- reflecting critically on the whole ethos of empowerment as the object of advocacy and engaging with organisations of the poor.

The report shares insights into the evolution of these OD issues over the period of FPT, the challenges that have been encountered and prospects for the future.

2. AAI Identity - The Spirit/Soul of Action Aid International

AAI has been involved in efforts to clarify strengthen its identity as part of the process of change that has been unfolding over the past four years or so. The identity of AAI has many forms and faces depending on the country programme in which one is and the information one has about the organization. It is clear that in the countries visited there are some common characteristics and some variations on the identity of AAI. This section of the report reflects on these factors including the value base of AAI - what drives or informs its strategic choices in terms of its purpose, how to implement it and with whom. This value base and the basic choices that AAI has made, depict the "spirit¹" of AAI-the organization, as it has developed organically over the years. This is the starting point for the OD review of AAI. In reality, it is the starting point of defining what organization one wants to set up and what inspires it and the identity that it then develops as it sets out to fulfill its mission. AAI has developed a multi-dimensional identity over the years. The following have emerged as the major characteristics of this multi-dimensional identity of AA:

- A rights based organisation driven by a clear set of values focusing on fighting for social justice to achieve the vision of "a world without poverty."
- A large international organisation working with poor and marginalized communities and groups of people in many parts of the world staffed by nationals at the country programme level
- A donor agency working with local partners in fighting poverty and striving to build mutually beneficial partnerships
- A global advocacy player on rights issues engaged in joint campaigns with other organisations in networks/alliances with a multiplicity of stakeholders but having a distinct choice of who to engage with and not to globally
- A service delivery NGO engaging in participatory ways of delivery
- Visibility as a development player through presence at four key levels - grassroots (indirectly and directly), national, sub-regional and global

Each of these major characteristics will be discussed in detail below.

2.1 Rights Based Approach

Clarity of RBA as the Foundation and Driver of AAI Programming & OD

The approach has been chosen as it yields high responsiveness to the needs of the poor. It is focused on addressing the basic rights of people in marginalized communities. A clear focus on basic rights is evident in all activities - water, shelter, food security, education, health, livelihoods and the right to life. The right to life being expressed as the right to social justice and peace especially in CPs operating in situations of conflict - Sierra Leone, Liberia, Gujarat region in India and others. The approach has been attempted in all programme countries visited with varying degrees of intensity. The shift from service delivery to RBA is still work in progress. It is

¹ The internal drive/invisible power/belief/conviction that gives meaning to what the organisation is doing and drives/motivates all organs of the organization and its staff to be committed to accomplishing the mission of AAI.

generally agreed that a 100% shift may neither be possible nor desirable. Not possible because there will be some practical needs of the participating communities which can not be ignored in the name of addressing RBA instead of service delivery; not desirable since some of the service delivery activities are considered important to demonstrate the application or claiming of rights by communities e.g. investing in water projects in response to a life giving practical need and organizing the water project in a manner that engages the community in capacity building through their own organisation and their own leadership – thereby achieving ownership and control of the project such as the Tharaka Women’s Water project in Kenya (among others) is a case in point.

Community mobilization, building community organizations and campaigns are emerging as key elements of the approach to implementation of the Rights Based agenda. This allows engagement of communities and building their capacity for ownership and control of initiatives to secure their rights. The overall goal being to contribute to the building of strong social movements to fight for the rights of the poor as a way of fighting poverty.

The values of AAI and its commitment to social justice and peace provide the driving force in prioritizing programme issues and strategies. These values stated in much of the programme and organizational documentation, have been clarified, shared and are understood across the organization. The internalization of the values of the organization is evident in the commitment that the staff have to working with the poor, engaging communities in participatory processes and the tendency to promote broad participation by staff in the programming and organizational processes throughout the organization. AA is in practice an open organisation in theory and in practice.

Inspite of the clarity of RBA as the major feature of AAI identity, the following risks are evident as AA tries to manage the process of building up its presentation as an organisation focusing on rights based approach to fighting poverty:

Risks evident with RBA as the core of its identity and basis of OD

- G. Lifting the rights agenda beyond the community to higher national and sub-regional levels may take time to achieve. The focus is still on achieving basic rights for the poor to meet immediate practical needs. Inspite of this focus at CP level, there are some rights based advocacy agendas that have been lifted to the international stage which consume AAI energies and resources. These include food rights work, trade issues and HIV/AIDS. There is a risk that international rights based advocacy campaigns may pre-occupy AAI at the expense of national and sub-regional level efforts to secure the rights of the poor to fight poverty at the levels which are closer to the communities. Conscious effort to balance national and sub-regional and international advocacy would need to be sustained.
- H. Sustainability of institutions of the poor is at risk as their economic and financial sustenance is a major challenge. Innovative ways of sustaining them not yet evident in their design and strategies. Tharaka Women's Association (Kenya) can not sell enough volumes of water to sustain their basic overhead

of water kiosk attendants²; the assumption that the EU funded Koysha Irrigation scheme (Ethiopia) will be sustained by local government is doubtful since local government itself needs to be sustained by donations unless AA challenges the structural level of national and regional budget support to the project; the Animated Area Development Committees(AADCs) (Sierra Leone) can not be sustained beyond AA funding and the few income generation activities that exist are being run as individual or group ventures and not to sustain the AADCs; the Amna Sumuday, Sneh Sumuday, Amna Servac and the Village Peace Volunteers in India's Gujarat social justice and peace campaigns are being given a facilitation of US\$45 per month which is a challenge to sustain as the ranks of the "volunteers" swell and AA phases out this direct support. If the above is not sustained beyond the direct input of AAI, then these institutions will collapse and AAI will be identified with failed attempts at building the capacity of poor communities.

- I. The requisite shift in capacities at the level of the CP especially to lift voices beyond the community level and to effectively build community organisations is lagging behind. The result is that the advocacy agenda driven by communities in partnership with AA is still emerging.

The above factors relate to the core of the RBA as adopted by AAI. They threaten the sustainability of AAI's intervention thrust through the RBA and consequently its identity as a major player in fighting poverty globally. The risk requires to be managed through further development of models or approaches to implementing RBA and investing in community mobilization and organization so that strong community organizations emerge as partners of AAI and taking charge of the development of their own communities - this will strengthen the image / identity of AAI as a true advocate for community empowerment in fighting poverty together.

2.2 Global branding of FPT and alliance opportunities and risks on RBA

While AAI has worked in campaigns as part of networks of organisations around specific issues such as food rights and trade issues, it does not have a significant identity as an alliance player at the global level around RBA. AA has branded its own strategy to fighting poverty as "FPT" but the "Together" seems to exclude alliance building with those other global players who have preceded it in rights based advocacy work. There was no evidence of AA actively trying to learn from, engage and build synergies with other global players on poverty such as the Oxfam Alliance, Save the Children Alliance, International Labour Organisation's global brand of "Working out of poverty"³ and other global Northern NGOs such as Novib, Hivos and

² A record of daily sales in some water kiosks shows average sales from which an amount far less than 1US\$ as an allowance per day can be afforded, way below the poverty wage; innovation regarding recognizing volunteers' contributions in the project remains a major challenge if their participation is to be sustained.

³ The ILO launched its global brand of a programme to fight poverty called "Working Out of Poverty". This emerged from the 91st Session of the ILO (2003) and shares key issues and approaches to poverty eradication anchored on decent work, community action for decent work and social inclusion and sustainable pro-poor growth, among other issues. It uses illustrations from India's brassware industry where very poor community of 25 000 people produce 80% of India's brassware supplies in Moradabad, creating jobs for 200 000 people but literally "killing the poor" through hazardous working conditions in the process. (see also <http://www.ilo.org/public/English/standards/relm/ilc/ilc91...>)

others who have been trying different approaches to fighting poverty for many years before FPT was developed. Thus the strategic positioning of AAI in the poverty sector is neither one of leadership nor follower or collaborator at the global stage. This limits the contribution that AAI can make to the fight against poverty from its wide range of experiences in the CPs spread throughout the world. This represents missed opportunities.

The identity of AAI in relation to other global players such as multilaterals including IMF and WB is very clear in Asia and Latin America while it is not in Africa. In Asia, a position has been taken not to have funding or other relationships with the IFIs including IMF and WB whose work is seen as creating and / or perpetuating poverty which AAI is fighting to eradicate. As such, no funding will be accessed from these institutions while in Africa, there appears to be no position that has been pronounced on this. As such, CPs will access multilateral and bi-lateral funds without consideration to the global role the source of funding plays in relation to the fight against poverty. This is obviously an incoherent dimension of the AAI Identity⁴. The drive for more RBA and diversification of the funding base of CPs accentuates the challenge of having CPs corrupted or blunted in their approach to and challenge to the causes of poverty and fighting it head on at the local and global arena. This is an additional risk to the shift to RBA which needs to be managed.

2.3 Gender as an integral part of RBA

AAI has projected itself as an organisation whose development work strives to achieve gender equity, empower women to play a more central role in fighting poverty as well as occupy more visible and meaningful roles in the management of processes inside AA and in partner and community organizations. This is driven by the value base of the organisation. Gender has been recognised in FPT as a major dimension of community organisation in fighting poverty. Substantial spaces have been created or opened up largely in terms of women's participation in activities and structures set up to run community based activities. In some cases such space gained has been lost as the women or the AA staff has been unable to defend the gains made.

Wellington Urban DA-Patriarchy Retarding Community Leadership Capacity

In Wellington, Sierra Leone, the Area Development Committee of one of the localities started off with enthusiasm. It set itself to address the basic needs of the community including water, shelter and income generating activities to help communities meet their basic needs. At the beginning the leadership of the AADC, the community organization, was made up of 6 women and 5 men. They worked well. Women's groups in water and traditional birth attendants worked well and were making some income for the members. Men's activity groups were not working well and the members were not making any income. Annual leadership training was offered by AASL. The Urban DA has another five years to go as a programme before phasing out. The development of the Animated Area Development Committee is

⁴ The AAI International Directors meeting in London, 26th April 2004, noted that the shift to RBA is a shift bringing about a sharper focus on power factors in AA work and therefore relationships with global players such as World bank and IMF need to be more clearly defined - whether or not to engage them and to work with them or not.

lagging behind. The UDA leadership changed by end of 2003. It had 7 men and 4 women. The Chair and Vice Chair are both men. The women said they were intimidated. The AA PM thought it is better not to interfere so that the community will learn from the change in leadership. The committee failed to report back to the community groups. The men's groups have collapsed. Coordination collapsed and the Area Committees demanded dissolution of the AADC. Youth have now taken over as the majority in the committee set up to restructure the AADC.

Gender is recognized as one of the global cross cutting themes to be mainstreamed across all programmes and in all structures. An analysis of how far the organization's programming and management practices have been true to this spirit is done latter in this report. Suffice it at this stage to state the overall conclusion that AA has not been true to the spirit of gender equity and integration to a large extent within its organization and management structures and processes. A closer examination of efforts at gender mainstreaming at this level reveals the following:

Extent to which Gender drives AAI Programming and OD

1. Women's empowerment is an explicit agenda in the staffing strategy for AAI. HR strategies for CPs and AAI HO deliberately seek to balance women and men's employment; various forms of affirmative action have been put in place to encourage and assist women employees to cope with demands of their jobs and balance these with the multiple roles that they are expected to play in their families as imposed by patriarchy unlike their male counterparts. In this regard, enabling policies have been inserted in the HR policies but there are unexplained variations across CPs e.g. the enabling three working days allowance for AA Sierra Leone for female staff to work in Freetown closer to family on per diem and facilitated by the organization to travel is not known in Ethiopia, India or Kenya where there are also women working away from family while the additional 15% differential on basic salary offered to women employees in Kenya is also unique. There could be merit in leaving some room for variation at CP level in response to market conditions. This means not burdening CPs with costs that they may not need to carry. However, given the commonality of the challenges faced by women employees across CPs, a certain minimum standard defining the organizational culture vis-à-vis this issue would provide a useful benchmark against which to assess the operationalisation of this value by the various CPs.
2. Gender appears to have been treated with lower priority in terms of human resources allocation and capacity development. Programme Support Officers with gender responsibility are either non-existent in the CP staffing structures or too few or they double up functions with gender receiving much less attention⁵. It is incomplete to attempt to address rights without mainstreaming gender as poverty manifests itself largely through deprivation and marginalization of women and girls.

⁵ There are 2 Programme Support Officers for Gender in Sierra Leone. However, one is on study leave. The one remaining doubles up as support officer for HIV/AIDS and Fundraising. Pressure to diversify funding base has increased, allegedly in view of the drive for internationalization where each CP will be assessed in terms of its ability to raise other money. She now spends most of her time doing fundraising work and very little gender work.

3. Gender mainstreaming and challenging power relations and patriarchy in particular at household and community levels has been limited where it has been attempted. This remains a constraint in fighting poverty.

Certainly AAI is not perceived as one of the agencies leading the way in relation to gender. The structure put in place to facilitate gender mainstreaming at international secretariat level has not worked. The Gender Coordinator is junior to other international Directors or component coordinators such as Policy or Finance. The horizontal working group (HWG) on gender has not been effective like many other horizontal working groups. Thus, it is clear that gender as part of the spirit or soul of AAI is still very weak. The weakness is attributable to both process and structural issues as will be elaborated in the discussion of horizontal working groups further on⁶.

2.4 A large International NGO working with poor communities and staffed by nationals

This comes out as a distinctive feature of AA's identity in all CPs. Thus while it is seen as a local player, with local staff, AA is still perceived to be a foreign NGO - a northern donor agency working in partnership with local NGOs and government as well as Northern NGO doing service delivery work directly to communities. The latter is especially the case in post conflict situations where delivery of basic necessities involves AA working directly with communities - the Gujarat case where AA delivers shelter directly to the communities in need or the water programmes in Koysha , Ethiopia where AA works directly with local government and the community in setting up the Koysha irrigation scheme. This direct involvement in service delivery or relief should not necessarily be seen in contradiction of the shift to RBA. The challenge is for the CP to project its involvement and the method of engagement as focusing on rights issues that are very specific and having a strategy to sustain such rights beyond the immediate operational delivery phase. There is evidence of this element in the design of projects in all CPs visited. However, whether the strategies to sustain the enjoyment of such rights is feasible or not remains to be seen - evidence of how weak community organisations still are in all sites visited suggests that a lot more work still needs to be done.

2.5 A donor agency working with local partners

This image is evident particularly in the work that AA does with communities and community organisations such as the irrigation committee in Koysha (Ethiopia), the Housing Committee in Ahmdebad (Gujarat), the AADCs (Sierra Leone). Where AA is working with or through established NGOs as partner organizations, there is a more visible attempt at "partnership" with Kenya having a structural set up to deal with partnership issues - a partnership Programme Officer dealing with contractual as well as methodological issues. There is less of the perception of AA as a donor although some partners still see AA as such. The challenge with regard to this perception is

⁶ Process aspect is the discretionary nature of following through on gender mainstreaming even in West Africa where a sub-regional audit of gender mainstreaming was conducted in 2002 and recommendations on how to strengthen this were made. Structural as the configuration of HWGs is such that they are dispersed rather than concentrated at CP level and across CPs allowing momentum and commitment at CP level where line authority to implement things resides.

articulation of the reason for engagement and the method of engagement. If these are not articulated and shared and understood by the other stakeholders, it is most likely that AA will continue to be seen as a donor. The money factor is a major aspect of the relationship with most organisations and communities. However, there are examples of non-funding based partnerships that have started to emerge and AA can utilize these to strengthen the identity of being a partner around specific rights issues and processes and not funding.

2.6 Visibility at national, sub-regional and global level

Visibility of AAI is evident at all levels though variable from one CP to another. At the national level, AA is visible as one of the major players in fighting poverty and in some CPs, it has led campaigns that have pitched AA as the leading organisation on certain issues. Examples in this regard include the anti violence and exclusion campaign by AA India after the Gujarat genocide; the water campaign and the sugar cane campaign in Kenya, among others. Generally AA is well profiled at national level. The grassroots level is one where AA may or may not be visible depending on the nature of activities it is implementing. Direct delivery increases AA visibility to the maximum especially where there is no local partner while the level of visibility reduces as AA works through partners. The level of visibility consistent with the shift to RBA, would be very low or none at grassroots if AAI is seeking to strengthen and empower institutions of the poor who will manage the local processes in the fight against poverty.

Another dimension of visibility of AA is at sub-regional level. Only one sub-region was formally created in the AAI structure, the Africa Regional Office (ARO). This means the ARO has had the challenge to make AA visible in those pan-African and sub-regional fora where gains in the fight against poverty could be obtained. There is evidence that while efforts have been made to make the ARO visible, most of the ARO's effort has been absorbed at interventions and direct support to national offices with so many of them that there was hardly any time left to position AA at the pan African stage and make it a visible player at AU, ECOWAS, SADC etc.

3. Strategic Frameworks for AAI Programming & OD

The planning process was reviewed in terms of its ability to fulfill the primary purposes of a) identifying priorities to be addressed in sharpening the AA national and international effort in fighting poverty and defining how to measure progress with regard to achievement of the priorities set; b) identifying the major stakeholders to be engaged in plan implementation through to phase out for those areas where phasing out would fall within the plan period; c) identifying the quantum and mix of resources required to implement the planned activities-both human, material and financial resources and d) creating the opportunity/ies to harmonize the AA efforts from national to sub-regional and international level.

3.1 Existing planning frameworks

- FPT provides the strategic framework for AAI work on RBA while Ingendo was developed as the Africa Regional version to contextualize FPT to the Africa environment. Country Strategy Papers (CSPs) have been developed as the frameworks for the individual CPs.
- The CSPs reviewed revealed a high level of planning capacity in the programme countries. The notable features of the planning processes common in the CPs are the following:
 - The bottom-up approach to planning which has seen the CSPs engaging the grassroots level and the AA field offices in making inputs into the formulation of plans; this makes the frameworks responsive to local felt needs. The downside of this strength is that where budget constraints have not been relayed to CPs prior to the planning process, the CPs have been forced to cut back drastically (in some cases by up to 50-60% of planned activities) due to budget constraints. This creates the risk of diminished credibility of the CP due to failure to meet expectations of its constituencies which would have been raised high during the initial planning phase.
 - Consolidation of various CSPs into sub-regional perspectives (if not full fledged planning frameworks); this has been the case in the Asia sub-region. There is no formal sub-region as in the case of Africa but the countries in the region have had a regional consultation to identify common issues and approaches with a view to enhancing learning and collaboration. This is an opportunity that could be capitalized on more especially where some rights issues can be approached from a sub-regional perspective. The Mano River Union made up of Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone has also generated a sub-regional planning framework in direct response to the need for collaborative responses to common issues cutting across borders. Ingendo, as mentioned earlier, was the African framework of the FPT.
 - Although there is no sub-regional consolidation for an East and Central Africa plan, the AA Kenya CSP 2002 - 2005 clearly anticipates and

includes engagement at sub-regional level. It distinguishes core agenda for policy research and advocacy at national and international level.(AA Kenya CSP 2002 - 2005, page i)

3.2 Emerging spatial and contextual dimensions of planning

- Rights violations and the achievement of rights cut across national boundaries and may span multiple communities in several countries (Sierra Leone-Liberia-Guinea; India-Nepal-Pakistan; Kenya-Uganda-Tanzania etc). As stated above, the existing planning frameworks only anticipated an Africa Regional cluster and no other. This is a challenge to more effective programming and OD. The evidence in Asia and West Africa points to the need for some level of sub-regional planning framework to tackle rights issues which are sub-regional in character.
- Furthermore, the existing planning frameworks did not anticipate or take into account conflict situations. The impact has been a delay in the shift from service delivery in some countries/areas (Sierra Leone and Gujarat State in India, for example) as AA responded to the conflict situations there. Yet as observed earlier, the shift to RBA does not have to imply total abandonment of service delivery activities. It is the articulation of the rights issues and the imperative to develop strategies to sustain them beyond AA phase out that will introduce the RBA dimension in some of these necessary service delivery activities. Thus it is not inevitable, that some CPs have to lag behind in the shift to RBA. The planning frameworks need to be reoriented to RBA and integrate RBA into whatever the CP plans to do.

3.3 Effectiveness of the planning outputs in fulfilling the primary purposes

- Focus on empowerment - conscientisation as a process of empowerment not standing out except in the AA India CSP - whose choice is it what response to give to the denial of rights and to fight injustices? AA can not be prescriptive as this runs against the grain of its approach. The debate on what RBA means and whether or not it is mutually exclusive with doing service delivery activities is about articulation of the empowerment thrust of whatever AA seeks to do. In meeting the practical needs of the poor through provision of water, shelter, food and other basic needs AA is not excluding the need to address rights issues. Rather, the challenge is in how far the CSPs show that these activities seeking to meet the basic needs of the poor can and are being used to address rights issues and advocate for policy change to secure these rights.

The AA India CSP (Taking Sides) clearly articulates this linkage. Strategic objective #1 states that AA India will address the immediate poverty needs of the poor and marginalised people but in doing so, it will also seek to build the capacities of such communities to "... run these services as demonstrable models" and at the same time seek the establishment of " linkages with the state delivery mechanisms...by the poor and marginalized groups themselves." This indeed illustrates how addressing basic needs can be used to reach a higher level of empowerment through community organization and engagement at policy level. This approach is appreciated in the other CSPs and it is being articulated on the ground in Kenya and elsewhere but it is not clearly stated as a key performance area in the CSPs other than the AA India CSP. (refer to AA India CSP(2000 - 2003) - Taking Sides - Tracking Change, page #24 - 30)

The articulation of empowerment as a means and as an outcome of RBA work is lacking in the CSPs reviewed except the AA India CSP. Indicators have been defined in terms of empowerment for example, **access** to basic needs; **participation** by the poor in processes addressing their needs including policy forums to influence policies, **ownership** of resources(by women and the poor in general), **control** of own organisations

- Who leads the way/who makes the choices? - empowerment requires AA letting go of its own choice of preferred methods of addressing causes of poverty but focusing on making the poor aware and conscientized enough to make their own choices about the most effective way to resist denial of their rights and claim space for their rights⁷. This consciousness is not generally evident in the planning frameworks available as CSPs.
- Definition of performance indicators to track change - while expected outcomes are defined in the various CSPs, indicators of such outcomes which should enable the CP to track the desired changes are not articulated in some. This militates against one of the primary purposes of the CSP i.e. setting the foundation for accountability at the CP level. The exception reviewed is in the AA India CSP where outcomes and indicators are clearly defined. Performance indicators are defined as or implied in expected outcomes, in the AA Kenya CSP - at people level and at institutional level e.g. increased / improved access to resources to meet basic needs, increased number of CBOs addressing needs of the poor, increased / improved participation... etc. The gap needs closing and in this regard, learning across CPs will help in defining these indicators and how to track changes in relation to fighting poverty.

⁷ By stating that "... we will support only non-violent democratic modes of struggle and assertion..." AA is in-fact circumscribing the choices of the poor in terms of what they may do and may not do! If the choice eventually depends on the circumstances of the denial of people's rights and the level of conscientisation achieved by the poor to resist and claim back their space, why should AA proscribe in this manner?

4. Internationalization of AA

Internationalization has been misconstrued at various CP levels as being the same as adoption of Rights based Approach or Decentralization. The background to internationalization reveals that the concept has been work in progress for a number of years. However, it took more definitive dimensions and received firmer corporate commitment during the FPT period. As such, more concretization of what the concept means and how to operationalise it has emerged in the past three - four years. A scan of the general understanding of internationalization at CP level reveals that there is not yet a uniform understanding of what this means conceptually and how it is going to be operationalised and the consequences for CPs.

Below we share the findings from the field survey of the TS 2 review process. These findings are anchored on the characterization of internationalization by various informants during the TS 2 field visits. The TS2 team shared these perceptions with the IDs during the debriefing in Delhi and was given access to additional information which sought to clarify the issues or misconceptions arising from the discussions with key informants. Thus we present the feedback followed by an explanation of the context in which such feedback arose and try to clarify what the correct position is according to documentation on decisions and processes that have taken place already in AAI.

4.1 What Internationalization is generally understood to mean

- Setting up of national advisory boards for CPs. It emerged that this has process has predated internationalization though the two have recently become more organically linked. Setting up of advisory boards has been an optional process for CPs to engage other stakeholders in their governance with some of them having such boards while others did not set them up. For example, AA Brasil is the only CP that has a full fledged registered Governance Board while the AA India Advisory Board is reported to have evolved more and more into a Governance Board. Pakistan and Uganda are also reported to have Advisory Boards. The Uganda Advisory Board has been entirely committed to advising the CD and not the CP as a whole-more like a sounding board for issues and ideas by the CD without any spelt out governance role for the CP.

With Internationalization, the formation of advisory boards has become intrinsically linked to the progression of a CP to becoming an Affiliate of AAI. It has become more of a managed process. However a review of the Action Aid International MoU⁸ reveals that there is no reference to an Advisory Board. This is because it is not set as a precondition for Affiliation to AAI. What is set as a pre-condition is having a registered Governance Board and an Advisory Board is simply a known organ that could facilitate this progression.

⁸ See page 8 of AAI Memorandum of Understanding section 2.2.1-iv.

The clarification of this linkage and the terms of appointment of Advisory Boards remains an area of urgent clarification to avoid misunderstandings on the terms of reference for advisory boards and the progression towards full fledged Governance Boards.

Further exploration of the link between the Advisory Board and Governance Board processes reveals the following risks which need to be managed:

- The role of Advisory Boards (ABs) in relation to the CD need to be elaborated since they are not part of what is outlined in the MoU; such role should be carefully related to the CP management and not the person of the CD because then it may become a tool of the CD and not an institutionalised process leading to the formation of a governance board for Affiliation;
- Appointments to the AB could be riddled with patronage and vested interests and loose the dynamism that should be injected into the CP
- ABs could become over-enthusiastic and usurp the authority of the CD and senior management and destroy the cohesiveness of the CP;
- Under-representation of key stakeholders is also an attendant risk especially when ABs are regarded as transitory and perhaps the real-thing will follow afterwards; if the projection is to have an AB mature into a Governance Board, then it would be prudent to structure and operationalise it more or less as if it were a governance Board from the start but bearing in mind that there will be need to allow time for the members to get onto the learning curve of a full fledged board. Advice from the AB is advisory and not "mandatory". While goodwill is expected on both sides, the CD& Senior management on one hand and the AB members on the other, if such a board is not to be a rubber stamp organ, there could be differences whose resolution may be very difficult if the authority of the AB is only advisory and is of no consequence in the governance of the CP;

It has been understood that a governance manual has been developed and a Governance Unit is being formed to operate under the CEO on governance issues. While this is focused on the evolution of the governance structures in line with internationalization and is looking at matters related to people, processes and structures in governance, it is not clear if this unit will also involve itself with the formation and development of Advisory Boards. It would be desirable that they do. In doing so, the balance between people, processes and structures will be addressed from the start in order to set as firm foundation for the governance of the CPs. The following have been put in place as safety

valves to monitor and quality control the evolution of the governance process at CP level:

- The management team at CP level will appoint the Advisory Board; this implies 100% consensus before anyone is appointed hence there is less likelihood of incestuous appointments;
- The national Governance Board is approved by the CEO hence there is a chance of taking remedial measures should the process reveal certain problems by then;

It is not possible to conclude that these safety precautions are sufficient to ensure the emergence of a governance organ of very high integrity. Perhaps the emergence of the Governance Unit will be the most reliable measure to ensure that the evolution of the governance board is monitored and timely interventions are made when required. The exclusion of the HR/OD Director from the Governance Unit is probably a missed opportunity to tap into available capacity to address the HR dimension of building up the governance boards. Board members require developing starting with basic orientation and including hands-on training on critical governance processes that will ensure an effective role play on their part. The HR/OD functional structure would be well placed to perform this development function. On the other hand, it may not be the HR/OD International Director alone to be the source of capacity building for the national Boards, the entire HR/OD structure of AAI can be mobilized around this process while Horizontal Working Groups can also be built to tap into the experiences of Brasil, Pakistan, India and even Uganda, notwithstanding that its experience was limited to a CD focused support role.

- Relocation to Africa in Johannesburg for the International Secretariat- this is perhaps one of the most visible signs of the implementation of internationalization. It has been viewed as a significant move to show that Africa is at the centre of the fight against poverty in terms of the intensity of the poverty and the concentration of the AAI programmes.
- More decision-making at local level (CP and DA/DI level) - this is another process that has been mistakenly perceived as part of the internationalization process. It was pointed out in post fieldwork discussions that decentralization or devolvement of decisionmaking to the frontline of fighting against poverty has been on-going. The process started with decentralisation from AA HO in UK to the regions in Asia and in Africa. Henceforth devolvement of decisionmaking has been made to the CPs and within the CPs further down to the DA or DIs. The field discussions revealed an understanding that the process is intended to go further from the DA/DIs to the AA partners and Communities working with AA. This is consistent with the thrust of

empowerment that AA has committed itself to as discussed earlier on under the RBA concept and practice (section 1). Thus decentralization has been on-going as a management process while internationalization is unfolding as a fundamental change in the governance of the organization - the political ownership, control and direction (*power relations and strategic direction*) of Action Aid and not the technical and systems side of running Action Aid.

However, the two processes can not be divorced from each other. They have an impact on each other which must be analysed and managed continuously. If not, the following risks arise which could derail both the managerial and governance aspects of the process:

- Decentralization has no blueprint on what it means at CP level and how it can be operationalized; unlike internationalization for which a governance manual has been developed to provide guidance; for this reason, there is a gap and wide differentiation in the conceptualization and implementation of partnerships and community empowerment from one CP to the other - ranging from a near donor/recipient relationship to one where substantive decisionmaking responsibility lies with the community or partner organisation. It is not possible to have a blue-print for decentralization but a broad guideline would be a useful tool for CPs to implement the concept in response to their specific environment.
- Decentralization is also hailed as a process shortening the hierarchy in AA and giving the organization at regional and CP level a more flat structure with an assumption that this will lead to more rapid and relevant decisionmaking in fighting poverty together.

The ... immediate impression that strikes the outsider is the openness and friendliness of the staff. Doors are open within the building, people are easily accessible and approachable, discussions are evident everywhere. There is far less hierarchy and formality within the office, and staff reflect that in their interactions with each other and with visitors.⁹

While these are obviously positive lessons from Uganda, what might not be evident to the outsider is the risk of re-centralization of power in the CD and/or senior management whose "... doors are open...". Having an open-doors management style is not equivalent to the breaking down of hierarchy. Hierarchy in fact may thrive better where

⁹ The Taking of the Horizon (Lessons from ActionAid Uganda's experience of changes in development practice); Working paper #4, August 2003 - Tina Wallace and Allan Kaplan.

it tends to be de-emphasised by those who have power as they appear not to be wielding it - but at the same time they will not be giving it away either. The monopoly on power by men in the Ethiopian senior management 'MANCOM' (*as if the name of the committee was meant to highlight the gender imbalance in this organ*) illustrates how a different power dynamic can characterise decentralization and devolvement of power. There maybe less hierarchy but this does not necessarily mean a dismantling of various entrenched levels of power in the processes and structures that the people relate to in designing and implementing the various AA programmes. Indeed in India the feedback was that *to the outsider*, "... AA is a CDcentric organization...". There is concentration of identity and character of the organization in one individual, the CD, and this makes the organization change dramatically with the change in CDs. The experience of AA Kenya is also illustrative in this instance. An outsider is struck by the extremely high level of knowledge and articulation of the fundamentals of the change processes in the organization by the CD. The CD is the centre of knowledge and is seen in the video imparting this knowledge to viewers of the multimedia. This does not reflect in the same or reasonable levels of knowledge and articulation of the change processes in the lower layers of the CP.

- Working more and more in partnerships rather than AA staff actually running programmes as is the case currently. This has been articulated as part of the process of decentralization and devolvement of decisionmaking of AA. The partnership approach has been embraced virtually in all CPs visited and beyond. However, what is not clear is how internationalization will impact on this. Partnership implies institutional relationships. Institutional relationships involve operational level staff, management and governance structures. The elaboration of the role of the advisory and latter governance boards in relation to partnership development needs to be sensitive to the need for relationships based on mutual respect and trust¹⁰.
- Establishment of membership status based on affiliation of CPs to AAI. Affiliation being based on a process that takes into account an unclear set of criteria - the most important of which has been generally viewed as the ability to diversify the CPs funding base. While this is a factor to be taken into consideration for affiliation, it is clear in the relevant documentation that the idea is not to exclude CPs that are not financially independent of other CPs as funders. The issue is one of financial stability and levels of dependence on one single donor for the CP to retain its independence and the ability to engage in programming that is consistent with the mission and values AAI.

¹⁰ Empirical experiences in Southern Africa have shown that where a CEO of a donor agency wishes to engage with a so-called partner at the Board level of that partner to get institutional commitment to a joint project or funding relationship, the Board Chair of the prospective partner has queried why they have to engage with a lesser level than their counterpart in the donor/giving organization. This case illustrates the difficult power dynamics that may come into play because they are not managed early enough to separate the governance and management roles of the Boards of the prospective partner organizations.

- The Internationalization process is clearly driven from above the CP and the Africa and Asia Regional Offices and not updated to other staff in the CPs below senior management level. This is because the process is still evolving and with the relocation of the International secretariate, there has been insufficient time for the HO to mount a sustained road show to sensitize all CPs on internationalization. This is despite all the important information about this being posted on the AA website. However, some staff in the CPs acknowledge that they have not tried enough to find the time to access information on the internet but are aware that it is available.
- Some CPs are already understood to have met or almost met the affiliation criteria and have been put on the fast track to affiliation while others have not yet. While this may not have generated a sense of grading of CPs in terms of the good and the bad or the strong and the weak without the criteria for doing so being made clear, it could raise levels of anxiety and uncertainty among the CPs who believe they are still weak and have to face up to a set of new challenges, especially relating to resource mobilization, as discussed below.

4.2 What is not yet understood

- How the reporting lines/hierarchy as it currently exists will be shortened through internationalization. As clarified through post field visits discussions, this is not necessarily an objective of internationalization only but part of the on-going decentralization and devolvement process seeking to enable AA to operate more efficiently and have decisions taken as close as possible to the frontline. The processes might have started separately but are now intrinsically linked.
- Relationship with other CPs especially those that raise funds for other CPs e.g. AAUK, Greece etc and whether there will be direct funding or indirect funding will continue via AAUK; further exploration of this aspect reveals that there is no intention to cut off the relationships with the Northern CPs who have been playing a fundraising function in relation to other CPs. The intention is that there will not be individualized funding relationships between northern CPs and southern CPs. Rather all fundraising will be directed at AAI common fund to be distributed among the CPs as per need and availability. This new relationship and the dynamics of the resource allocation process from the central "pot" is not clear to the CPs.
- The criterion which has to be met by CPs beyond raising own funds for maturing into a full member of AA International. A full statement of the criteria to be met in the process of affiliation is laid out in the documentation regarding internationalization as well as in the constitution of AAI. This has not yet been accessed by most CPs' staff.
- Whether or not and how internationalization will accommodate sub-regional initiatives such as the Mano River Union of Liberia, Guinea and Sierra Leone, Africa, large CPs such as India and other various sub-regional configurations. Available documentation on internationalization does not elaborate on sub-regionalization. This is a

major gap in the organisation design of the future AAI. However, sub-regionalisation is not incompatible with the provisions of the constitution of AAI. Rather it is a way of configuring working relationships to do with implementation of a common agenda and not about the internal management and organizational hierarchy except to a limited extent where the implementation structures would need to get representation in the corporate decisionmaking organs of AAI. In this regard, internationalization is about "working together" and not about "being managed together."¹¹

- While sub-regionalization is not tied in as a concept emanating from internationalization but decentralization, the fact remains that the devolvement of governance to the CPs as a result of internationalization brings to the fore, the need to re-examine the feasibility of sub-regionalization. A review of the effectiveness of the Africa regional Office, the nascent Mano River Union and the Asia Regional Office reveals the following as serious design issues which need to be revisited:
 - The size of the region is a critical factor; if sub-regionalization is meant to ease up operational coordination, then the size must be optimal for operational efficiency; the case of the ARO illustrates a situation where having one RO with a regional Director with a span of between nineteen and twenty one people reporting to her is obviously not going to be effective, in spite of the huge effort the incumbent might have put into making the structure function; the Africa region is too big for coordination from one point;
 - This spatial model to sub-regionalization has been applied in creating the Asia Regional Office in Bangkok. It appears this might not be experiencing similar challenges of size as in the case of Africa Regional Office due to a number of factors such as - having fairly advanced CPs in terms of their own development hence lower demand on sub-regional coordination; fewer CPs in the region compared to Africa and a more regionally developed and coordinated transport and communications network with the routing of flights much more direct than when one has to fly to Europe in order to get to West Africa from Southern Africa;
 - Sub-regionalization as demonstrated in the emerging Mano river union points out to another level of coordination based on the commonality of issues arising from the geo-political landscape of a region; this model reveals a dimension not catered for in the design of the Africa Regional design;
 - The third model which appears relevant to the AAI situation emerges from the recognition that rights issues

¹¹ Perspectives from discussions with the AAI CEO, Ramesh Singh, June 2004.

have been addressed by other organisations predating AAI in the various regions; AAI is but one other player on the scene; therefore, an approach to RBA which recognises the existence of other players and the need for coordination in fighting poverty together, calls for a design that considers sub-regionalization based on other geopolitical formations that are addressing the same or similar issues to what AAI wishes to address - poverty and the causes of poverty - this refers to sub-regional entities like SADC, EAC, ECOWAS and others in other continents.

- How country level governance will relate to international governance structures. All this is outlined in the international governance documentation and it is again lack of access to the information that has given rise to this as an issue not yet understood.

4.3 Perceived risks of Internationalization

- Failure to accommodate sub-regional initiatives already set in motion by such initiatives as the Sierra Leone initiated Mano River Union and involving governmental and NGO stakeholders. This is a challenge that is more immediate as AAI proceeds with its organisation design. However, while it may be argued that subregionalisation may fragment the continent of Africa, a long term view needs to be taken given the negative impact of growth on a lean and centralized structure as evidenced in the stressed functioning of the ARO. At the same time, it must be emphasised that subregionalisation per se is not an Internationalization issue. Rather, the process of internationalization simply presents an opportunity at a point in time when other wide ranging changes are taking place and this issue could best be addressed at the same time.
- Localization leading to loss of international identity which had distinct advantages in addressing some of the politically sensitive rights issues at national level; this has been described as the loss of political insulation. An appraisal of this risk reveals that the international identity of AA was both an advantage and a disadvantage. An advantage as it allowed the CPs to address some of the sensitive issues at national level without as much risk of being closed down or having their funds blocked as local NGOs could be more vulnerable to. On the other hand, it is also confirmed that being identified as "foreign" hampered the CPs in addressing some of the critical issues at national level as they have been perceived as having no mandate to address national issues(even though they may have 100% national staff).
- Inadequate internal discussion reduces momentum for change. The criteria for international affiliation not generally understood and may cause uncertainty and in some cases possibly senior staff might feel too exposed and find themselves under pressure to leave. Sharing information on internationalization at all levels in all the CPs will reduce this uncertainty.

- The challenge to raise own funds has triggered a rush or accelerated the pace to diversify the funding bases of the CPs. This is dangerous as it can lead to dissipation of effort from core issues (in AASL, the officer responsible clearly prioritises fundraising instead of gender or HIV/AIDS). Furthermore, this rush can also push the CPs to access tied funds which dilute AA focus on RBA and this may change implementation methodologies. The position of Asian CPs that they will not access money from the WB and IMF is not common across the global programme. Thus it is possible for some CPs to find themselves reduced to contractors implementing programmes as NGO consortia that will barely challenge the causes of poverty but rather take a relief and non - incisive approach to addressing poverty. Both AA Kenya and AA Sierra Leone have entered into these contractor relationships with mainstream donors who are not necessarily keen to address the root causes of poverty but want to spend money on poverty alleviation and relieving the impact of poverty on marginalised communities.
- At the same time, it is recognised that currently, much northern funding has shifted to the South via bi-lateral and multi-lateral funding agencies. Such funds can be accessed at national level and AA is considered to have sufficient leverage to access these resources.
- It must be noted that Internationalization documents do not prescribe or give a directive on how much funding CPs have to mobilize on their own to become affiliates. However, a general indicator is for CPs to diversify their funding base to at least 20% non AAI funding preceding their consideration for affiliation. What is emphasised in considering affiliation is financial stability and non dependence on one single donor who may in turn wish to exert undue influence on the CP's programming thrust and methods.

Then overall conclusion is that Internationalization of AA has gone a long way in terms of international governance but still has much distance to cover in relation to the transformation of the CPs. The governance unit being set up at the International Secretariat will provide the additional impetus that is required to roll out the process throughout the CPs.

5. The People Factor in AAI

5.1 The HR strategy and policy framework

Major processes taking place: The overall HR strategy for change in line with RBA is evolving. The current major processes taking place include the following - restructuring of functions at International level and CP level; re-definition of roles and functions and job titling (Ethiopia) work in progress; re-allocation of responsibilities and definition of relationships in the context of internationalization also evolving. A change management unit (Governance Unit) is being set up at the international secretariat to backstop the CEO in the process of implementing the necessary changes required by Internationalization. However, the unit currently excludes the HR/OD International Director on the basis that this is specifically an Internationalization "project" issue and not a functional HR/OD issue.

Generic HR policies and procedures: HR (General Terms and Conditions of Service) policies are in place. A review of the policies from the case study countries for the review reveals that the policies are variable across countries. Common aspects include affirmative policies for women even though these still vary across countries and most of the generic personnel management policies that allow a transparent and consistent manner in which to handle appointments, and administration of salaries and benefits. The content is largely generic.

Integration of organizational changes in existing policies and procedures: Inclusion of changes to reflect the shift to non-hierarchical, self managing approaches and collective and collaborative working styles is still pending. The HR function is still anchored on the traditional concepts and practices that are rooted in hierarchy such as job titling - e.g. CD is a major hierarchical statement and in reality a concentration of power; indeed (as mentioned earlier on) in some countries the perception is held that AA is "*CD centric...*" and its character and direction may depend largely on the sitting or incoming CD's perspectives. Job grades exist in a hierarchical format; performance management is somewhat changing as it reflects effort at breaking the hierarchy and has seen the introduction of individual plus peer reviews though there is yet to emerge a system measuring collective performance and therefore holding the collective accountable for the performance of the CP rather than individuals. The same applies to the horizontal working groups which work as a collective but the performance review system does not cater for collective performance review. In fact performance in the HWG fall outside the line and functional teams of members and therefore it does not count in the performance review process.

Gender mainstreaming capacity and field practice: Subscription to principles of gender equality is explicit in all CPs but variable provisions exist across countries. Gender has been addressed largely in terms of numbers and not in terms of sharing power within the AAI hierarchy. Men dominate at all senior levels at CP senior management and international director levels. The tenor of HRD and transforming roles and mindsets in the organization in view of the shift to RBA is largely not sensitive to gender. The example below illustrates this gap:

The AA Kenya CSP rightly recognises that *"the delivery of the strategy requires dedicated staff and an internal culture that is empowering..."*. In response, AA Kenya will seek to deepen and strengthen four key roles in its HR base. These roles are to be mainstreamed among staff so that everyone becomes a *"capacity builder, policy advocate, defender of rights and continuous learner."* - becoming a *"gender mainstreamer"* is not one of the fundamentals. (AA Kenya CSP, 2002 - 2005; page 15).

If the gender mainstreaming policy of AA is to become a reality, then the HR capacity to do so is a priority. If the key roles defined for the CSP exclude the capacity to be a gender mainstreaming organisation, then the first strategic oversight is committed at that point. Further analysis reveals that even for the *"...capacity builder..."* referred to in the CSP, a narrow view is taken i.e. focus on financial resource mobilization. The Capacity Building Accountants is a good concept as it unleashes more HR towards achieving sound capacity at community organization level. However, this is lopsided. Such capacity is also required in gender mainstreaming and in partnership development beyond building the financial capacity of partners.

Sexual harassment: Sexual harassment is the latest addition to the evolving HR policy in response to a felt need by women employees. A mandatory international policy on sexual harassment is now in place and promulgated but not yet evident in some country programmes while it is evidently known and applied in others. If this was promulgated as a minimum policy standard, then it would be expected to be adopted and applied more or less at the same time across the global span of AA CPs.

Re-skilling/HRD in AA: A notable gap in the AA RH Strategy at present is the absence of an HRD strategy for reskilling staff and management at CP level to cope with the organizational changes taking place at all levels. Such changes as the shift to RBA, internationalization, partnership development and gender mainstreaming, among others, would require significant reskilling among even the senior staff of AA.

5.2 The HR establishment/numbers and work/life balance

The HR establishment has been reduced in line with the shift from service delivery to the rights based approach. The shift in approach has meant working indirectly through partners thereby necessitating reduced staff requirements. Staff reductions have been dramatic in some cases e.g. Kenya and Ethiopia; Nepal also reduced its staff complement while in India staff increases have actually been recorded.

Gender mix of staffing improving but still far off from achieving the desired 50/50 or close to 50/50 balance especially at senior level. Some CPs have put in place very affirmative policies to ensure that gender balance is achieved in the staff establishment. As noted elsewhere, such policies are variable from one CP to the other. In some it involves a salary differential for women employees, additional benefits to assist women employees to cope with the demands of families and differential consideration of qualifications for a position during recruitment. There

is merit in all these as they are based on the kind of response that is deemed most appropriate to the causes of gender imbalance in the staff establishment. What would be a worrisome gap is the extent of differentiation where some CPs might actually have nothing to close this gender imbalance yet it exists. Secondly where there is monetary gain in some cases, it could easily be attacked as gender discrimination for the same job by men while during recruitment, some national laws could cause problems as there is explicit prohibition of discriminating based on sex (policies meant originally to open up space for women in male dominated employment sectors). Thus, a general policy guideline would be all that can be developed otherwise it is prudent to leave room for individual CP responses to the reality in their specific environment.

Shedding off service delivery activities and working with and through partners is lagging behind the reduction of the staff establishment where staff have been off loaded. This has resulted in work overload for staff across the CPs. A 24x7 approach is being applied with potentially disastrous impact on staff work and life balance. There are silent processes taking place in people's social lives which the HR/OD managers may not detect because they feel such issues are outside their responsibility or they believe that staff is coping well. Case examples were identified in AA Kenya and in India.

A case in AA Kenya revealed that one staff member was suffering silently under the stress of working over weekends and not being able to go up-country to be with family. An intense discussion with HR/OD and some staff members on work/life balance revealed the divergence of views between management and line staff where line staff confirmed the existence of difficulties to manage work/life balance while management denied that this was an issue. The conclusion is that there is even no space for discussing this level of issues in some cases and this is a major gap in the HR/OD function.

It is true that no one is forcing staff to work extra hours and it is also true that AA work or working with communities and in activist work as AA does can not always be done on an 8 to 5 work routine. However, noting the environment in which staff work characterised by poverty and sometimes violent rights violations, staff can be expected to be working under relatively high levels of stress. It becomes necessary in such circumstances for the HR/OD function to institute measures that keep such stress under check. AA work, like all activist work, creates the tendency to work with missionary zeal once the spirit of the organisation catches on. This is where a deliberate interventionist approach by HR to create space and time for staff to manage their work/life balance becomes critical. There was no evidence of such built-in mechanisms in the HR/OD functions of the CPs visited.

5.3 Key Competencies required to drive RBA

AA requires certain key competencies as reflected in its structures and staffing to drive its RBA agenda at the programming and the OD frontiers. An identification and mobilization of such competencies is an ongoing process. Generally staff at CP level has not been prepared for the change to RBA and internationalization.

Some of the key competencies required and in which programme staff are found to be low in skill or lacking are outlined in the sections below.

Gender competence - this is available at gender awareness and sensitization level and not at gender analysis level - going beyond practical needs of women and addressing empowerment at higher levels as a programming pitch. Without this level of intervention, spaces gained by women can not be defended; the AA Sierra Leone Wellington DA case is an example.

Project development and management competence - this competence is available at the level of setting up practical service delivery projects / activities in response to specific practical needs of poor, marginalized communities. However there are challenges of feasibility and viability assessments and just appreciating the whole project management cycle by staff who facilitate this type of activity in communities. There is inadequate skill level at this level.

Partnership development and management – all CPs have adopted partnerships as a key strategy for programme implementation. Capacity challenges are apparent in the development and management of partnerships in terms of a) partnership capacity assessment-the F1, F2, S1 and D1 process in Kenya and Ethiopia is not evident in Sierra Leone and India (RO level-Gujarat); b) partnership OD support to facilitate organisation design, growth management, power relationships, project design and management, systems development at HR capacity building etc; c) resource mobilization/fundraising capacity development for sustaining themselves(addressed to a limited extent in some CPs with AA Kenya being most advanced through the appointment of Capacity Building Accountants). If partnerships are to be viable and lead to effective implementation of programmes fighting poverty, then these capacity areas need to be addressed.

Rights based advocacy – this is a critical skill area as a core competence for advancing the AA rights based advocacy programme; the general understanding of RBA presently ranges between doing those activities that seek to meet the practical needs for the basic rights of marginalized people-women, men and children without addressing the causes of such deprivation and facilitating communities to self-organize into social movements to address those rights issues being violated or denied thereby causing their deprivation and marginalization. However, there is more to advocacy than responding to the basic rights needs of the poor. As pointed out earlier (section 2), RBA includes seeking to influence policy at national, regional and international level. Thus the skill to engage stakeholders and facilitate the development of social movements that are mobilised around specific advocacy issues is critical in this phase. There was limited evidence of the availability of this skill in the CPs visited.

5.4 Organizational learning and competence building to drive RBA

The key competencies required by AA can be available in staff as they are recruited or they can be developed on the job. A mix of various approaches to competence building is usually desirable. Internal learning processes can provide a major opportunity for building up organizational coherence and competence to

focus on its core business. AA is generally a learning organisation. There is evidence that much effort has gone into promoting organisational learning and this is recognized as a key area of HR/OD.

The evident practice

- Culture of learning across the organization is confirmed by the staff, at least in intention. Processes of learning are taking place. PRRPs and Peer reviews are major processes. REFLECT was evident in one community in AA Kenya and was reported to be practised in Sierra Leone but beyond these limited examples, appears not generally used.
- Learning processes also embedded in the ID/DA meetings, retreats and planning meetings at CP level.
- External reviews and internal reviews such as Gender mainstreaming Review of 2002 at West Africa sub-regional level , among many other reviews, have also been used as learning opportunities.
- Numerous staff development processes taking place primarily through attendance of workshops and specific training events or programmes in gender, accounting and other areas. However, it was observed that with regard to workshop, their limited value in terms of competence building beyond initial awareness and sensitization in a specific skill area might not be appreciated. Workshops generally are not adequate to build up a solid foundation of skills to tackle the challenges faced in the competence areas identified above.
- Horizontal working groups have been set up as a mechanism to promote learning across the organization. These have worked if somewhat to varying degrees. The critical variables to their working effectively have been identified as
 - Clear focus on an issue drawing the team together
 - Clear target/s set for achievement through the working group
 - Very clear explicit leadership on the issue for the group
 - Allocation of resources and time for the group to function
 - A definite time frame for the group to achieve a defined target

Where these conditions have been met, as in the HIV/AIDS Horizontal working group cited as one of the most effective, results can be achieved.

- Competence building processes taking place at partner level especially in accountability and resource mobilization as part of capacity building for self management of community organizations.
- An Intranet has been set up for access across the organisation to share experiences and innovations among CPs. This is a key tool to facilitate organization wide learning but unfortunately, there is limited time created by staff to access the site access the knowledge available. Even though staff claimed to be not informed about Internationalization, they still acknowledge their own failure to create time to learn about it on the intranet.

5.5 The challenges facing organisational learning and competence building

- The identification of the key competence areas where HRD should take place appears not to be an on-going process or it lags behind the other organisational changes - especially the shift to RBA and internationalization. There has been no comprehensive taking stock of the competence base of the CPs and what is required.
- Opportunities for learning are being lost due to the lack of time to organize learning experiences by staff and CPs. There is lack of analysis of issues beyond reporting or beyond the planning sessions and retreats which are spread far apart. The opportunities for regional learning are also not taken up as programming and staffing issues are not regionalized except for Africa Regional Office. It is clear that for the Africa Region, where this is the case, some effort – time and money – have been invested in regional learning initiatives in strategy development, gender and organisation development to equip staff with the necessary skills to implement Ingendo.
- Internal on the job, hands-on learning opportunities not developed due to lack of professional/technical leadership capacity and time to coach and nurture young talent at CP level.
- Innovation has taken place in various CPs. While such innovations have been shared vertically, they are not shared horizontally among CPs to allow further experimentation and application e.g. the water project organization in Kenya (Tharaka) and Ethiopia (Koysha)-while these two are both community water projects, they have been organized somewhat differently and there are obvious strengths of the Tahraka Women's Water Users Association which the Koysha community irrigation project could benefit from - especially regarding women's empowerment; the Koysha project has had to deal with an extremely difficult social phenomenon of witchcraft being used as the basis for social marginalization of some communities and exclusion of their children from accessing education; the project has successfully built role models from among such marginalised communities and they have made significant progress in getting "... *the people who eat dead meat...*" accepted by the so called upper class (just as the Dalits are also marginalised and excluded in India); but there is no evidence of exchange of these experiences between AA Ethiopia and AA India; policy campaigns are a major component of work in Kenya, Sierra Leone and India yet there is no evidence of learning across these CPs in this area. .

6. AAI Organisation Structures & Systems

The process of internationalization was necessitated by the need to devolve roles and responsibilities to CPs and thus increase the capability of the organisation to fight poverty closer to the communities. Closeness to the target group enables a better interpretation of the causes of poverty and strengthening the target communities to fight poverty together with AA and other stakeholders. Evidence reveals certain strengths and challenges in the current structures in the CPs as outlined below.

6.1 Strengths of AAI structures

- a. Devolvement has taken place and there is a sense of responsibility among the various CP Directors and the DA level managers;
- b. The hierarchy has been shortened between the decision making level and the frontier for fighting poverty at CP level. However, hierarchy still persists as a formal reporting and approval mechanism. Also, the shortening of hierarchy does not necessarily mean a de-concentration of power, a sharing of power. There is actually not evidence that this has been one of the consequences of the structural shift.
- c. Structures are filled in with national staff and no significant expatriate staff; this enhances the legitimacy of the CP in addressing and challenging the state and other players on sensitive rights issues being addressed;
- d. The horizontal working groups on thematic issues give the structure the potential to be flexible by involving people across the organisation hence pooling expertise and backstopping;
- e. There is an "open structure" at operational level through partnerships – which allows the structure at CP level to draw on the energies/capacities of other stakeholders as direct participants in programme implementation; this allows the organisation to work with and through communities or CBOs which enhances ownership of the initiatives by those that are meant to benefit from and sustain them- a core value of AA;
- f. Regionalization in Africa was done in recognition of the size of the portfolio. The ARO is intended to shorten the hierarchy and to develop an approach consistent with the reality on the continent, hence Ingendo.

6.2 Challenges apparent in the organisation structure

The following challenges are apparent in the structures developed so far

- a. Resource allocation responsibility is felt to be still based at AA International Headquarters and not devolved to CPs-it is perhaps the non participation of some of the CDs in the IDs forum which creates this impression;
- b. The horizontal working groups are weak as staff has to prioritize their own line functions before finding time for the horizontal functions; the gender working groups are the worst affected. Even if issues are discussed and agreed for follow up, working groups have no authority to define a mandate for individual staff members who revert to their normal line structures once they are back in their respective CPs. Also some of the conditions necessary for effective working groups, as outlined under section 5 above, are not fulfilled.

- c. Limited depth of competencies to engage partners and other stakeholders in advancing the RBA agenda thereby not exploiting the full potential of the flexibility of the implementation structure at this level.
- d. Hierarchy and male domination evident as elaborated earlier. This limits the effectiveness of the structure due to limited mobilization and contribution of the marginalised segments of affected communities e.g. the marginalised women in the Wellington DA could not intervene when the men pushed them out of power and started stealing till the structure became dysfunctional.
- e. Regionalization disconnect with size and trans-national nature of rights based agendas. The process of regionalization has not recognized that the Africa RO still has the widest span of control and reporting than any other in the organization; it still has the greatest distances, physically, to be covered to have direct contact and Africa's infrastructure is still under-developed. Regarding the West Africa region, emerging sub-regional structures such as the Mano River Union (Sierra Leone, Liberia and Guinea) have not been anticipated and not catered for in the organisation design. By the same analogy, certain rights issues transcend boundaries in Asia and there maybe ideal conditions for sub-regionalisation around certain initiatives but such a structural response has not been provided for so far.
- f. Power and/or leadership responsibility centered in the CD and not always collaborative and nurturing to the rest of the team. This limits succession planning especially where membership of the senior management team is ordinarily expected to provide the pool for the next generation of CP leadership. In cases of Kenya and India, succession planning, implicit in the organization structure, appears to have failed as CD posts were filled from outside the senior management teams. An exploration as to why this is the case and what it means about HRD and appropriateness of recruitment to the posts which make up the senior management team members has not been done. This should provide some interesting insights.

6.3 Systems

- a. These have largely been developed for the mobilization of resources and accountability to stakeholders. There is sufficient documentation of policies and procedures in the ALPS and HR capacity has been deployed to implement.
- b. Though functional, as discussed earlier in this report, some systems in particular the HR, M & E and learning systems may need some adjustments to be consistent with changes brought about by RBA and internationalization.
- c. Internal reporting system is hierarchical and not encouraging analysis of issues but emphasizing reporting of activities and outputs to a large extent. The analysis of issues and capturing and sharing of lessons is not a significant feature and process of the system.

7. AAI Partnerships as a Strategy for Implementing RBA

7.1 Partnership mode and process

Partnership is already a mindset of all staff in some of the CPs with new positions allocated to manage the partnership programme in Kenya. There is recognition of the need to work with partners but no indication that this is to be the priority way of operating across the CPs. Certain key observations were made during TS 2 in relation to partnership development from an OD perspective. These are outlined below:

- a. The donor mode is apparent in relationships with communities and project groups. Even where a consciousness exists to avoid entering into a relationship that espouses donor/recipient overtones as is the case in AA Kenya, the tools used in the process for capacity assessment, review of the partner and level of engagement with Board for the Partner and Officer level for AA Kenya have led to some donor / recipient overtones being apparent. The partnerships being seen in the AA mind's eye are partnerships on an equal footing. But this is ideal and in the beginning at least, there is need to recognize the unequal relationship which can only become more balanced as AA tries to share its values and working methods and aspirations as part of developing the partnership. Evidence on the ground reveals a nearly mechanistic approach to partnership development which is bordering on donor/recipient mode of engagement.
- b. Selection process is variable and no organization wide approach to partnership has been developed. In some CPs the process tends to be ad-hoc and driven by what presents itself on the ground-in the view of the CPs, this is more responsive to needs but does not augur well for the building up of competence in this area.
- c. Partnerships identified fall into four distinct categories across the CPs
 - i. first is a category of short term, activity based, non MoU based relationships for which a letter of donation or assistance is written by AA; these partnerships are with communities or project groups that maybe formal or informal; these tend to be the partnerships where AA itself is in the position of power in relation to the community or CBO. This partnership mode carries the risk of engendering donor/recipient relationships with communities and CBOs and generates dependence if not checked.
 - ii. institutionalised project based partnerships of varying durations involving a contractor relationship between a CP and large international bi-multi lateral donors; sometimes the contractor relationship is in a consortium of AA CP and other NGOs(local and international - Kenya and Sierra Leone); the partnerships in this category are essentially seen as a strategy for financial resource mobilization; these partnerships carry the risk of dilution of AA focus depending on the conditions attached to the contractor relationship. They are also high-volume funding arrangements and therefore give funders major influence on

AA in terms of what they will be doing, where and with whom. This mode increases the level of dependence of AA on one single source of funding.

- iii. third is the category of partnerships with government departments or specialist agencies; these are usually non-funding but they may involve some funding arrangement in some cases. The partnerships can be at various levels i.e. project level with operational collaboration to implement a specific project or policy level with joint effort and exchange of information and perhaps collaborating in international for and other variations. The risk associated with this partnership is that being associated with government may be seen to be collaborating with abusers or violators of rights in situations where this is perceived to be the case (rightly or wrongly); thus some CPs have raised the question whether AA can still be able to question government when the need arises if it is in partnership with the government. The general position of the CPs visited is that there is no contradiction in this relationship. The critical condition for this partnership to work is that AA CP has to be very clear on its focus agenda and the terms of partnership have to be very explicit as well from the start. This will allow the CP to exercise its options freely should an issue come up on which it may have diametrically opposed views to those of government.
- iv. fourth category is made up of institutional relationships with CBOs created for sustaining DAs through participation of the communities. AA has made a commitment to facilitating the strengthening of such organisations. These are institutions that have been created by or through the work of AA CPs with communities. It is clear that this can never start off as a partnership of equal status. This is a mother/child relationship which necessarily transforms with time as the child grows and gains more capacity to manage its own affairs. This is a sensitive partnership as it may make or break the core of what AA wishes to achieve in fighting poverty together with the poor and marginalised. The major risk with this form of partnership is that it is founded on the strength of the resources that AA is providing to these communities either initially as service delivery or as support to formation of community structures. From an OD perspective, the programming considerations for building this relationship must be steeped in OD practice and not outside because it is the viability of the resulting structures that matters most and not the activities that are carried out in a given planning cycle and the outputs achieved etc. This means a high risk investment because mobilizing communities and engaging them into a process to build their own organisations can not be defined in a strict planning framework of one or two or so years. This is a challenge. The other risk, evident in Tharaka in AAKenya is that of over-institutionalising communities through the creation of a multiplicity of

institutions which are responding to various issues and availability of resources and yet communities do not necessarily handle or approach these multiple issues in such a fragmented manner but rather holistically. For example, there is a CBO for Human Rights, for Water, for Girl Child Education, for Economic Empowerment etc. This is not viable and it will result in de-motivation of the communities as these CBOs start to crumble without external financial support.

7.2 AA approach to partnership

As in the case with RBA, partnership has been an important concept in development practice for some years now. AA is not necessarily breaking into new ground. However, it is the extent to which AA may go with devolvement of responsibility and leadership of fighting poverty together that will define AAI's contribution to development practice in relation to partnership. It is worth noting that there is a wide variation of forms of partnerships. Power and the giving up of power and empowerment of the weaker partner are at the core of building sustainable partnerships. The various approaches and tools used in developing partnerships are still variable across CPs and this remains a major challenge to future programming and OD of AAI.

8. Recommendations

The following are the recommendations on the way forward in addressing some of the key Organisation Development issues emerging from the review:

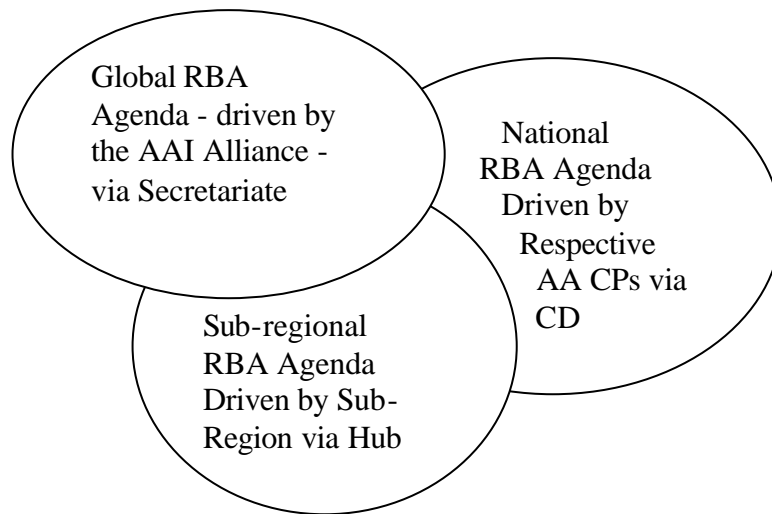
a. RBA, Gender and AAI Identity

1. It is recommended that AAI retains its global programme brand of FPT but it maybe presented as FPT 2 with RBA, partnership and empowerment as the main ingredients in this brand. These main elements will form the core of AAI programming and all OD initiatives should be in response to the need for a more effective global organization to implement an international programme that achieves results in fighting poverty together. This must be the primary source of inspiration for any organisational changes henceforth.
2. Power, gender and patriarchy should be at the core of the analysis and development of programme strategies to fight the causes of poverty at all levels and AAI should develop distinctive leadership in articulating and focusing on this three dimensional approach to fighting poverty and the choice of social movements as an organisational model to mobilize communities in the fight against poverty.
3. The identity of AAI should be managed carefully to reflect the new direction in which it is moving especially by cultivating the following major identity features:
 - That it has some unique experiences based on its global brand of FPT and that its global programming strength can contribute to other initiatives in fighting poverty around the world;
 - That it is inspired in the first instance by the belief that poor and disadvantaged people can be empowered to participate in and eventually lead the fight against poverty and that the three dimensional perspective that power, gender and patriarchy are the pillars of marginalization which must be confronted if progress is to be achieved in fighting poverty.
 - The spirit of activism cuts across boundaries and across continents and that fighting poverty is a global agenda and not just localized at country level.
 - That it is not a donor for smaller, local NGOs, CBOs and Community projects;
 - That it is not a big brother or sister but seeks genuine partnerships in fighting poverty together with other players

b. AAI Strategic Frameworks - Planning and Review

4. Given the three levels at which the rights agendas exist and are being addressed i.e. community/national, sub-regional and global, and the transnational/cross-border nature of rights issues, it is recommended that the next AA planning frameworks be distinguished at these three levels; the issues to be addressed by the CPs should distinguish national, sub-regional and international agendas and strategies with optimum overlaps as illustrated below:

Issues where the three agenda sub-sets intersect forms the Advocacy Core for AAI around which the entire global programme can be mobilized.



The above three dimensional perspective to RBA issues is likely to provide a stronger basis for developing more effective campaigns and horizontal working groups as well as ensuring that CPs see value in whatever they end up getting involved in. In turn, this will enable the organization to give a more effective HR and Financial resource mobilization and allocation response.

5. The AA thrust in relation to empowerment needs to be articulated as attempted in the AA India and AA Kenya CSPs in planning frameworks at CP level in order to anchor all program activities in the communities and partners that AA works with. The Women's Empowerment Framework developed by the Zambian activist Sarah Longwe would be a resource to develop a common understanding of the levels of empowerment AA seeks to achieve in the different circumstances.
6. Planning frameworks must define and underline the key performance / result areas of the CPs and Horizontal Working Groups and key performance indicators which will provide the basis for tracking achievement of CP objectives. There are good examples in the AA India CSP and these can be shared with other CSPs whose planning frameworks fall short of the same degree of clarity.
7. Continuous participatory reflection and review processes at CP, sub-regional and global level should become a more prominent organizational quality assurance process. Through such processes, AA will strengthen the coherence, coordination and cooperation of the Alliance on common issues and promote organizational learning.

c. Internationalization

8. The office of the AAI CEO, assisted by the newly formed Governance Unit should go on a road show to discuss the concept and process of implementing Internationalization as well as explain the programming and organizational implications it has on the CPs. CDs should be tasked to continue the dialogue at national level and promote the use of the intranet as additional source of information on the process and updating on implementation.
9. Following this road show, it will be appropriate to then deploy the governance unit to facilitate or midwife the formation of national governance structures. These will be developed in all CPs as a starting point of the affiliation process. This means following the route that other CPs took to set up Advisory boards for their own purposes without it being a requirement by the international level.
10. It is recommended that AAI does away with the concept of Advisory Boards for the reasons and risks elaborated in this report. In their place, it is suggested that an action oriented structure be put in place with an explicit role to ensure programme relevance and effectiveness at national level. The structure may be called a Country Program or National Action Committee. It will bring into the CP experiences and insights on current action at grassroots and policy levels with regard to the national RBA agenda provide a strategic review function on the relevance and effectiveness of AA programming. By making at an Action Oriented entity, AA will avoid tokenizing stakeholder representation in governance as Advisory Boards when they have hardly been prepared for it and yet what they know and the value they can bring to the CP is their deep knowledge and understanding of the issues and action around RBA in the national context. Because of their knowledge and activism at local and national level, the Action Committee should be given the mandate to endorse or reject a CSP and programme plans or campaign designs that they assess as not relevant and appropriate to the country context. The Action Committee will not assume governance responsibilities beyond the programme planning and review processes in its first year while it is grounded in AA policies and values as well as other relevant knowledge and skills. This should be a period of preparation for assumption of more governance responsibilities as the affiliation process evolves. It is left to the International Secretariat's Governance Unit, in consultation with the CP, to determine the timeframes necessary for this evolution.

d. Knowledge management and learning

11. AA is urged to recognize and acknowledge that it is essentially not yet working at the frontier of development practice. Its key elements of RBA, partnership, social movements and fighting poverty have been tried before by other players. It is recommended that AA acquires the knowledge that is available on these issues globally and reflects on the frontier at which it wishes to break new ground or to make its distinctive contribution in fighting poverty. This will determine who its partners will be and what to do and not to do as it avoids repeating failed models e.g. approaches to income generating

activities, partnership development and institutional capacity building at community level, among others.

12. It is recommended that AA considers the integration of more analysis in its reporting formats. More analysis of results achieved, lessons learnt on FPT, partnerships, gender and sustainability should be captured continuously and shared among CPs. Some form of recognition for innovation and outstanding performance in fighting poverty could be instituted to stimulate excellence in the CPs and horizontal working groups.

e. Partnership development

13. Because partnership development has been tried and tested in various circumstances by other development actors, there is available some kind of conventional wisdom which AA is advised to acquire. This can then be used as the basis to harmonize the approach to partnerships across all CPs. A partnership manual is NOT recommended due to wide variation of circumstances in relation to the institutional landscapes that various CPs can draw from for partners, the different stages of organisation development at which the potential partners maybe and the different needs for which partnerships maybe sought. Thus it is suggested that simple set of guidelines which impart generic knowledge base on partnerships and provides more of a step by step process of developing a partnership be put in place. Guidelines are not prescriptive and leave room for the CP to exercise its own judgment.
14. As partnerships become an important component of AA programming and OD, it is necessary to define key performance / result areas in relation to partnership development as well as indicators on which basis to assess the CP performance in this regard.
15. Risk assessment, arbitration and damage control mechanisms should be developed in order to avoid destroying the image of other CPs and/or the AAI image through having one bad experience at CP or global level.

f. HR / People Factor Issues (PFI)

16. Given the wide ranging and fundamental changes in programming focus and approaches, there is need to re-align the skill base of the organization to new demands. An HR taking stock is recommended. Its scope would include identifying the key areas where re-tooling is essential, new skills needed in the organization and appropriate methods for HRD resulting in a strategic framework for HRD at AA and partner level whose focus will be to make substantial investments in young talent to produce a corps of empowerment and OD cadres who will carry forward the fight against poverty. The HR Taking Stock will also draw from the findings of Taking Stock 2 as a starting point.
17. Besides investing in the development of young talent, substantial investment is required in the core competencies required in the short term to achieve a successful shift to RBA, partnerships and effectively fight poverty. Some of

the core competencies have been prioritised by some of the CPs already and include gender mainstreamer, rights based advocate, institution builder/partnership developer, projects developer and manager.

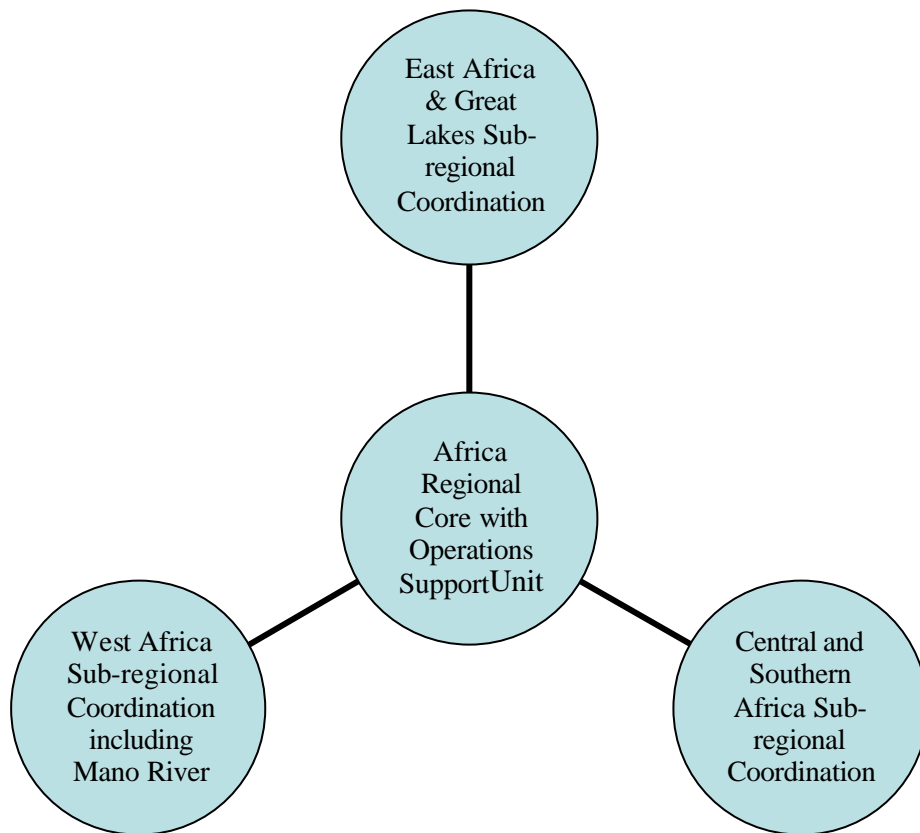
18. Reviews to the existing HR policy frameworks are necessary in order to harmonize those aspects which need to be harmonized across CPs and to integrate changes necessary as a result of internationalization and devolvement e.g. new job descriptions, job titling to reflect flatter hierarchies, new functions, etc..
19. AA is urged to revisit all HWGs to remodel them in a way that ensures they meet the conditions for them to be effective as identified earlier in this report (see section 5 - Organizational learning and Competence Building...).
20. Competence building at partnership level is better contracted out to third parties in order to manage the risk of AA being unable to assess its own effectiveness and blaming the partners when it is the one who has delivered an ineffective service. Another illustration of the need to separate part of the capacity building role from AA is in relation to empowerment. Training that empowers the partner is difficult if the partnership is in the first place, built on unequal power relationships. To what extent is it possible that AA staff will train AA partners to have sufficient countervailing power and confidence to be able to monitor and question AA's own performance vis-à-vis delivery to the same partner, especially when one-way (AA CP → Partner) resource support is involved? The AA partnership capacity development role may continue in the area of financial accountability.
21. CDs and other senior management team members need to assume the role of developing junior staff hands-on on very practical programming and organizational issues and to a large extent they should be measured in terms of the extent to which they have developed their CP Team's capacity periodically.

g. AA Organisation structure and devolvement

22. Internationalization and decentralization have become part of the same process of devolving more authority and governance throughout the organization. It is recommended that a more definitive process of devolvement be clarified so that power does not end up being re-concentrated at lower levels such as at CD level and not devolved shared among CP senior management and further on to communities, CBOs and other partners. Giving up power and creating or leaving space for partners needs to be made a very conscious process.
23. It is recommended that AA strengthens the in-built management succession plan at CP level as a way of managing the CD centric perceptions about CP power structures. Besides, it makes better organizational change that in the first instance, succession to CDs will be sought from among the next level of managers even though room should still be left for outside recruitment in the event that no suitable candidate is available.

24. AA structures must be gendered with power being shared among men and women and youth as a mandatory organizational requirement. The extent to which the CP structures and programmes are gendered should be made one of the key performance indicators in the evaluation of a CD's performance. The CD should become a gender mainstreamer and ultimately responsible for ensuring adherence to gender policy requirements of AA at CP level. He/she can draw upon the expertise of other staff or outsiders to ensure that what needs to happen happens as much as they do with regard to ensuring sound financial management or any other key performance area.
25. To ensure strategic support to CDs and CPs in gender mainstreaming and oversight of compliance with this fundamental programming and OD value, as is the case with Policy, HR/OD and Finance, it is further recommended that the International Gender Coordinator be a full member of the International Directors forum.
26. Proposed organization design for an Internationalized AAI - the following recommendations are being made in response to the expected demands from an evolving RBA programme engaging dispersed CPs and pitched at local/national, sub-regional and global level as well as the shortcomings observed in relation to the current AA organization structure:
 - i. It is recommended that the sub-regionalization model started with the Africa region and the Asia region be further developed to cater for the emerging cross border/geopolitical nature of an RBA programme. In this regard, it is suggested that AA sub-regionalizes further in Africa to cater for the geopolitical nature of the issues on the continent while the Africa Regional Office is restructured in response to the priority of achieving operational efficiency for effective operational support to the region.
 - ii. Sub-regionalization can be considered in three clusters with East Africa and the Great Lakes being one region, West Africa as another and Central and Southern Africa being the third. The rationale is that these are regions with similar geopolitical set ups, issues and sub-regional structures that could be strategic in addressing the sub-regional agendas in fighting poverty in Africa. Considerations for the organisational set up for such a structure could be given to the following:

Proposed Sub-Regionalization Model (AAI Africa Region)



Notes:

- a. The Africa Regional Core would coordinate the entire program in Africa and bring out the Pan African issues (as fed from the sub-regional hubs) at relevant fora while giving technical and professional backup to sub-regional hubs on the feed-in issues from their respective regions.
- b. The three sub-regions are not necessarily to be set up at the same time and as full fledged sub-regions. It is recommended that AA adopts a flexible incremental approach to sub-regionalization i.e. in response to the demands of emerging programme issues and learning from current achievements and setbacks e.g. as the emergence of Mano River Union indicates. This could evolve into the West Africa Sub-Region with more countries being involved

once the feasibility of the sub-regional model and its benefits are proved. It is further recommended that the East Africa and Great Lakes sub-region could also evolve first around issues that have been identified already as involving some of the East Africa Community Countries and Great Lakes countries (AA Kenya has been involved in some initial sub-regional engagement). The Central and Southern Africa Sub-region may not even be activated now as there may not be sufficient programming in the region to justify that. However the organization design can be considered and activated when the need arises.

- c. Each sub-region can be coordinated (only for working together on sub-regional programme issues more or less as horizontal working groups do) by a designated Sub-regional Hub or Coordinate. Such a Coordinate can not be a full time position at least in the beginning - this could be one of the CDs in the sub-region and this should cut back on bureaucracy and on costs. Minimal programming costs to facilitate the coordination and a responsibility allowance will be the additional cost. These are all programme rather than overhead expenses. For the Central and Southern Africa sub-region, the AA Southern Partnership Programme (SPP) could be a sub-regional a proxy Coordinate for the region.
- d. The model could be tried out in Africa and if it proves feasible, then it can be replicated in Asia and Latin America. A pilot phase of at least one year and at most two years is recommended. In the meantime the Asia Regional Office continues to operate as it has been doing. Should lessons emerge which makes it prudent to introduce similar changes before the pilot is over, then AA should be open to such options.
- e. To address the operational challenges which a single Africa Regional Office faced, it is recommended that the ARO is retained but restructured to include an Operations Support Director (OSD) whose portfolio will be to manage and coordinate delivery of effective operational support services (administrative/logistical/financial/accountability etc) to the CPs and the Sub-regional hubs. For a smooth linkage between this operations support unit with the CPs and Sub-regional coordinates in view of the physical barriers which also posed immense operational challenges, it is proposed that each Sub-regional Coordinate be given a Professional Assistant (separate from the existing Secretary or PA to the CD who handles CP issues) to interface with the Operations Support Director at ARO and to then handle onward interaction with CPs on programming issues for Sub-regional agendas and operations support issues from the operations issues.

- f. The configuration recommended in note 6 above reduces bureaucracy as it enables the OSD to reach the CPs with speed and not have to go through the Sub-Regional Coordinators who are strictly there for working together on programming issues and not administrative coordination. The Professional Assistants appointed to provide support to the Sub-Regional Coordinators are shared between programming and operational overhead costs as they handle both. In addition, it should be noted that these are not at the level of CG but good professionals with both a programming and administrative capability (somewhat a Senior Programme Assistant type of person).

 - iii. To bring about coordination between the sub-regional hubs and the ARO and the rest of the AA Alliance, it is recommended that the Sub-Regional Coordinators be made full members of the International Directors Forum as they will bring to the forum intimate knowledge about the programming issues in their sub-regions, much more than the Africa Region Director will be able to. In addition, they are interfacing with sub-regional bodies (ECOWAS, EAC and SADC) and international bodies present in their sub-regions at high level hence the need to include them in the highest programming organ in AAI for coherence.
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