

NOTICE OF MOTION APPROVAL OF THE STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION FRAMEWORK 3

Mover of Motion: ActionAid International Board
Motion Type: Ordinary
Date: 15 OCTOBER 2024
To: AAI Assembly

The ActionAid International Board presents the following motion for decision by the ActionAid International Assembly in October 2024.

A. Brief background of Ordinary Motion

ActionAid's global strategy, [Action for Global Justice](#), runs from 2018-2028, and within these ten years we have three 'strategy implementation frameworks', the second of which (SIF2) is now coming to an end in December 2024, requiring us to develop and approve a third Strategy Implementation Framework (**SIF 3**) which will run from January 2025 to December 2028. The final version of SIF3 is now being presented for approval by the ActionAid General Assembly meeting in Jordan in October 2024.

This document is designed for and will be agreed upon by the whole federation and should inform and inspire future Country Strategy Papers (CSPs) and the operationalization of existing CSPs - as well as more immediately inform planning for 2025 across the federation.

B. The Process of Developing SIF 3

The process for producing this SIF3 has been highly participatory. Earlier this year, **anchors** representing every theme and function consulted peers across the federation and produced draft 2-page summaries of learnings from SIF2 as well as proposing directions of travel for SIF3. These anchors were: Wangari Kinoti- women's rights; Teresa Anderson - climate justice; Roos Saalbrink - economic justice and public services; Sara Almer - humanitarian system change; Kate Carroll - PQMEL; Fabiana Alves/Serena Maher - campaigns & comms; Ressiline - finance; Ed Watkiss - fundraising; Javad Amoozegar - Accountability (risk, compliance, SHEA); Patricia Mugeke - CMR / governance; Noel Cresswell - technology, Janaina Tavares - people and culture.

A **Face-to-Face meeting** took place in Arusha from 23rd-28th June 2024 with 83 ActionAid colleagues from 35 countries to develop the program agenda for SIF3 and explore the implications of this for all ActionAid functions. Most representatives were Heads of Programmes or Heads of Fundraising, but the meeting also included staff from some key functions, as well as the Global Leadership Team. The meeting drew on all the preparatory material and maximized the value of being face-to-face.

A first **draft of SIF3** was produced in July, which combined the inputs submitted and outcomes from discussions and analysis during the Arusha meeting. This was circulated widely across the federation and was revised based on [155 pieces of feedback from across the federation](#) (with a note provided in response to each feedback, outlining how it was addressed). A second draft was produced in early August and shared widely, including with some external allies /movements. This was discussed by all country directors in a dedicated Directors' Forum session on 6th August and by the **Programme Committee of the International Board on 13th August**. Feedback and comments from the Programme Committee were addressed along with the other [141 pieces of feedback](#) from across the federation to produce a third draft. The current SIF3 was endorsed in the International Board meeting on 9th September for sharing with the General Assembly for approval in October at its convening in Jordan.

C. Overview of SIF3

SIF3 starts with an analysis of the **external context**, noting that we live in very volatile times, and these require ActionAid to adapt to remain a relevant and legitimate actor. The document then unpacks how we understand **system change** - calling out the neoliberal, colonial, extractive, and patriarchal systems- and articulating the system we want to see and how we will achieve this (recognizing that the process is as important as the outcomes).

The **first objective** of SIF 3 seeks to transform partnerships and approaches to maximize ActionAid's ability to deliver on system change. This will be achieved through deepening our work with social movements; adopting feminist, decolonial and anti-racist approaches; reviving our HRBA and participatory methods, building rooted campaigning and public engagement; transforming our communications; centering our work with women and young people; and scaling up our work on social enterprises.

Objective 2 says: We will deepen our work with movements on system change across all our thematic priorities and maximise connections. It outlines outcomes of our work on system change for climate justice; system change for economic justice and public services; system change for women's rights and feminist alternatives; humanitarian system change - and crucially how ActionAid will connect system change work on different issues at different levels:

Objective 3 focuses on resource mobilisation and allocation, and commits to increasing institutional funding, making strategic collective investments in regular giving for long-term sustainability and independence, and updating our system for allocating resources across the federation fairly and transparently. It lays out how we will increase institutional funding, philanthropy, and partnerships; invest in individual giving; and deliver a new, fairer, and transparent system for resource allocation across the federation, that is collectively owned and respected (the new FAIR to replace RAF will be presented as a separate paper to the General Assembly).

Finally, **objective 4** commits us to harmonize every federation function to support the move to decolonize & work on system change with movements. This lays out initiatives committed to by each function, including Federation Development; Programme Quality, Monitoring, and Evaluation; Risk, Accountability, Compliance, Security, SHEA and safeguarding; Technology; Finance, Audit; People and Culture.

D. Recommendation and expression supporting Motion:

The International Board believes that SIF3 will provide a powerful framework for the federation over the coming three years. The Board recommends SIF3 for approval by the Assembly.

E. The requested motion is as follows:

The International Board moves that the Assembly approves the Strategy Implementation Framework 3 for 2025-2028 as proposed in the attachment as per Article 13.2(d) of the AAI Constitution.



Hellen Grace Akwii- Wangusa
ON BEHALF OF THE AAI BOARD

ACTION FOR GLOBAL JUSTICE IN A VOLATILE WORLD

ACTIONAID'S 3RD STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION FRAMEWORK (2025-2028)

A. INTRODUCTION

The world is changing rapidly and alarmingly, and ActionAid needs to courageously adapt to remain a relevant and legitimate actor. Our global strategy, [Action for Global Justice](#), runs from 2018-2028 and provides the overall strategic direction. This third Strategy Implementation Framework (SIF 3) will run from January 2025 to December 2028. **This document is designed for, and will be agreed upon by, the whole federation** and should inform and inspire future Country Strategy Papers (CSPs) and the operationalisation of existing CSPs - as well as more immediately inform planning for 2025 across the federation. Essentially this is a framework outlining what we will do collectively as a federation - **across all countries, themes, and functions**.

The process for producing this SIF3 has been highly participatory. **Anchors** representing every theme and function consulted peers across the federation and produced 2-page summaries of learnings from SIF2 as well as proposing directions of travel for SIF3. A Face-to-Face meeting took place in Arusha from 23rd -28th June 2024 with 83 ActionAiders from 35 countries. A first draft in July, which combined the inputs submitted and outcomes from discussions and analysis during the meeting, was revised based on [155 pieces of feedback from across the federation](#), and a second draft in early August was revised based on [141 pieces of feedback](#) to produce a third draft that was shared with anchors, country directors and governance bodies across the federation. Written responses were shared on this [Feedback form on SIF3 draft 3](#), leading to this final version that was reviewed and endorsed by the International Board in their meeting on 9th September.

B. A RAPIDLY CHANGING EXTERNAL CONTEXT

The world is facing [multiple, intersecting crises](#) that each disproportionately impact people who have the least power and the greatest existing vulnerabilities. This is not new, but the intensity of impacts and the pace of change is accelerating. [Women bear the brunt](#) of climate crises, economic crises, political crises, natural hazards, climate-induced and human-induced conflicts and disasters, becoming the shock absorbers of failed systems. Young women and men, are often the first to react, becoming driving agents of change against accelerating system failure.

The climate crisis is triggering [ever more widespread](#) floods, droughts, heatwaves, cyclones, landslides, wildfires and other hazards, many of which become full-blown disasters for the most excluded communities on the frontline, [displacing millions of people](#), destroying livelihoods, multiplying unpaid care work, increasing violence against women and causing or exacerbating conflict. Climate and ecological [tipping points](#) are terrifyingly close, whether regarding melting ice shelves, continuing deforestation, shifting ocean currents, collapses in ecosystems and biodiversity, or lasting chemical and plastic pollution in our soils and seas. Yet the wealthiest, polluting countries, corporations and banks are continuing to [fuel the fire](#), giving huge subsidies to fossil fuel industries and industrial agriculture, seeking to extract every last dollar of profit from a failing system. Even the investments in so called '[green minerals](#)' are premised on the same old extractive, colonial mindset, with no regard to the impact on local people, ecosystems and future generations.

Billions of people are experiencing **mounting economic crises**, most directly in the rising cost of living, being unable to afford basic goods and services as prices increase but their household income falls. Fifty-four countries are now in [debt crisis](#) and far too many are spending more on servicing their debts than on providing essential services like education. External debt both [accelerates the climate crisis](#) and forces countries to accept ideologically-driven advice from the colonial institutions of the IMF and World Bank – leading to a world in which [85% of people](#) are now living under austerity. The alternative of ambitious and progressive tax reform targeting the richest is ignored, and the majority of people are forced to pay for a crisis they did nothing to cause, through regressive taxes and cuts to public spending. As public services fail, they are privatised to create new profit opportunities, triply disadvantaging women who are the first to lose decent work in the public sector, the first to lose access to declining

services and the first to pick up the pieces through increased unpaid care and domestic work, and precarious paid work. At the current pace, [gender equality will take nearly 300 years](#).

Democracy is also in deep crisis, with big money and corporate interests [buying elections](#) and driving legislation, outweighing citizen interests and voice; and with the global rise of [far-right](#), authoritarian and populist regimes. Conflict has spread to [over 50 states](#), triggering forced migration, racist forms of nationalism and the securitisation and militarisation of borders. Such developments drive a [global backlash](#) against gender justice and hard-fought victories for women's rights, ranging from bans and restrictions on reproductive rights, education, jobs and free movement, to tighter social controls, criminalisation of protest, censorship of gender expansive language, increases in violence against women, and widespread anti-feminist rhetoric. The [undermining of multilateralism, international law and human rights frameworks](#) exacerbates this – as manifested in the inability of the world to act on the [evidence of genocide in Gaza](#) or the evidence of imminent [famine in Sudan](#). In a world of fake news, misinformation, ideological media and polarisation reinforced by digital platforms, where politicians blatantly lie and are not held to account, it is hard to win through, even with powerful research and evidence. Regressive governments are learning from each other how to [shrink the space](#) for social justice organisations and progressive movements.

Counter-balancing, mutually-supportive and interconnected **people's movements** will be key to resist this new repressive era and there are many signs of hope from [Bangladesh](#) to [Kenya](#), from [Zambia](#) to [Nigeria \(though the final outcomes of these struggles remains unclear\)](#), in the emergence of powerful feminist and youth movements, in climate justice protests, in new ways of digital organising and mobilising, in the growing anti-racist and decolonial movements, in land rights movements - and in the scale of people's [protests for Gaza](#), despite censorship and suppression by governments and the media.

But the NGO development sector as a whole has been [losing legitimacy](#) and credibility and faces an ever-tougher fundraising and operating environment. **ActionAid** faces similar challenges to many peer federations/ organisations, with a decreasing engagement from individual donors, resulting in a decline in regular giving, leading to a funding squeeze in the Global Secretariat and many parts of the federation. Thankfully, the political visions that drove [internationalisation](#) two decades ago are being re-energised through a new, inclusive Global Leadership Team (GLT). This leadership team is supporting decolonization and anti-racism, developing a renewed vision of ActionAid becoming a rooted campaigning organization, and advancing or completing key processes from Action for Global Justice such as reviewing the federation's resource allocation, geographical footprint and country models. In the coming four years, ActionAid needs to be courageous and creative to remain relevant, deepening our connections with progressive movements committed to challenging authoritarianism and injustice, no longer tinkering or patching up, but seeking deeper system change. This means aligning our systems and functions everywhere so that we can be a better partner to those at the frontline of fighting for social justice. We need to expand beyond the comfort zone of traditional NGO work - and use the next four years to deliver on the movement politics that were laid out in ActionAid's internationalization process many years ago.

C. OUR OVERALL VISION OF SYSTEM CHANGE

The Dominant System at present

ActionAid is committed to playing its role to bring about system change. By this we mean challenging the present dominant system that is **neoliberal, colonial, extractive and patriarchal**. This system did not emerge by mistake or through some random processes. It was designed this way. It is the perpetuation of a world order from the colonial era, with power and resources concentrated in ever fewer individual, country and corporate hands. The IMF and World Bank (and the [big three](#) global credit rating agencies) were set up before most colonised countries achieved independence and they often have as much influence today in shaping economic and social policies as former colonial powers. None of the institutions that make up the global financial architecture have fundamentally changed their mindset or decision-making/voting structures over the years. They preside over and shape an extractive model that continues to invest in fossil fuels and industrial agriculture, and which facilitates plunder of resources from lower income countries, seen only as resource deposits, prioritising global private sector interests over national public sector needs and people's rights. The narrow focus on GDP-growth intensifies climate breakdown and is deeply patriarchal, actively turning a blind eye to the unpaid labour of billions of women and the

underpaid labour of migrants, who prop up national economies and societies. This is a system that wastefully accumulates self-perpetuating wealth, with mountains of capital lying idle and unused, hidden away in tax havens. It is a militarist system that leaves global peace and security in the hands of the biggest arms exporters and holders of nuclear weapon capabilities. This is a system of [racial capitalism](#), with intersecting systems of oppression and control over power and resources. The international aid system sits within this system and serves to perpetuate colonial and unequal power relations.

The Systems we want to see:

Put simply, we need alternative systems **that are fair and just for all, centred around care and wellbeing, with a strong foundation of human rights and an acknowledgment of the profound inter-dependency between people and the planet.** Alternatives to the dominant system have been devised for a long time by indigenous communities and those living on the margins, based on [renewable energy resources](#) and [sustainable agriculture and food systems](#).

Alternatives need to be based on a decolonial world, one where colonial institutions and mind-sets are definitively dismantled, with new inclusive and representative institutions that listen to the voices of all countries and all peoples. We want to see alternative systems driven by clear feminist values and principles, and a genuine commitment to sustainability, with a laser-like focus on redistribution of both resources and power, using an intersectional lens. Reparations to make up for historic injustices would have to form a part of such systems but the burden cannot be passed on to people living in poverty and injustice in rich countries. We need systems that builds resilience and people's power at all levels so that people are prepared to adapt and respond to crises and disasters.

Understanding a Just Transition – one that is feminist and decolonial:

How we transition from the present unjust system to a just one is fundamental. The International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) developed the concept of “Just Transition” to ensure that climate action does not threaten the livelihoods of workers and marginalised communities. If we close down all coal mines without finding alternatives for miners, this would not be just. Bearing in mind that system change should advance joined-up solutions for climate justice, economic justice, women's rights and humanitarian response, ActionAid has laid out four key principles for a just transition to climate change that must consider both processes and outcomes (including implications for mining and minerals):

- Address and don't exacerbate inequality.
- Focus on holistic solutions that address people and planet.
- Ensure participatory and inclusive processes, led, planned and informed by impacted people.
- Develop frameworks that support the shift – training / reskilling / social protections – to protect people.

It is important to underline ActionAid's commitment to an intersectional **feminist, inter-generational, anti-racist & decolonial** approach to a just transition which means we also emphasise:

- The need for women, in all their diversity, to be at the centre, addressing patriarchy and disproportionate effects on different women.
- The need to avoid exacerbating gender inequalities; and have feminist impact analysis of any policy with a clear perspective on intersecting discrimination and marginalisation.
- The importance of rebuilding the social organisation of care by recognising, reducing, rewarding, redistributing and reclaiming it- and the critical need to invest in gender responsive public services.
- The importance of looking at the impact of policies on future generations and of including all generations, especially young people, as active participants in the process.
- The need to challenge the neoliberal model and move beyond a focus on GDP growth - making care, wellbeing, rights and planetary boundaries visible.
- The need to support, and make visible, alternatives to the current economic system and the need to contextualise conversations about just transitions.
- The colonial nature of the present global architecture and the need to challenge racist mindsets.
- The case for reparations – for climate change, colonialism and slavery.

Given the times we are living in and this bold vision of change, ActionAid needs to be ready to change, ready to review its present ways of working across every country, unit and function, to ensure we are prepared to

contribute to achieve system change at every level. We will need to strengthen horizontal and vertical linkages across the federation if we are to deliver on this vision. In the remainder of this document, we spell out four core objectives for delivering the change we need to see and key outcomes we seek in different areas, relating to:

- a) **Our ways of working for system change:** *We will transform our partnerships and approaches to maximise our ability to deliver on system change.*
- b) **How our thematic priorities contribute to system change work:** *We will deepen our work with movements on system change across all our thematic priorities and will maximise connections.*
- c) **Ensuring a sustainable federation through resourcing and fair distribution:** *We will increase institutional funding, make strategic collective investments in regular giving for sustainability and independence and will update our system for allocating resources across the federation in a fair and transparent manner.*
- d) **Organising ourselves to deliver our vision across all functions:** *We will harmonise every function across the federation to decolonise and support the move to work on system change with social movements.*

1. OUR WAYS OF WORKING FOR SYSTEM CHANGE

OBJECTIVE 1:

We will transform our partnerships and approaches to maximize our ability to deliver on system change.

1.1 Deepening our work with social movements

OUTCOME 1.1: A social movement mindset has been built across the federation so that ActionAid has become a better and trusted partner to progressive social movements.

The Founding MOU of ActionAid International in 2003 observes: *'NGO development projects, while delivering positive outcomes at local levels, are certainly not sufficient to eradicate poverty and often are not sustainable. The solution lies in a **global movement**, led by poor and marginalised people ... that cuts across national and south-north boundaries. The founding of ActionAid International is our participation in and contribution to such a movement'*.

Over the past twenty years ActionAid has developed links with a wide range of social movements and people's struggles – whether they are based on people's identity or critical shared issues. We have helped to organise or partnered with small, local movements, and also large, national or global movements. Some connections have been with spontaneous, unregistered movements, short term protests, diverse people's struggles or leaderless mobilisations; and other connections have been with enduring, more formalised movements. Almost every ActionAid country now has some experience under a broad definition of 'working with social movements', whether working with women's rights collectives and organisations, youth-led organisations, organic people's struggles, grassroots movements from excluded constituencies or national feminist movements, farmer networks, organisations of migrants, trade unions, issue-based coalitions or campaigns. We have systematised some of our experiences in a [Social Movements Engagement Guidance](#) and we now have the remarkable resources of [MOVE](#) – the Global Social Movement Centre- with its hubs in Denmark, India, Tanzania, Nigeria and El Salvador and the many associated training resources, for example about [Building a Movement Mindset](#).

There is an increased recognition from UN agencies, donors, and indeed some governments, that social movements are essential in creating structural change. But movements need rooted intermediate organisations, that can provide strategic support, capacity, rapid response and sometimes flexible funding, without forcing them to comprise their organic or informal set-up. ActionAid is in a unique position to become such a locally rooted intermediate ally to social movements, drawing on our long history of grassroots engagement and empowerment work, for example by supporting emerging movements with strategic organising and leadership capacity, generating learning with movements and helping to convene and connect movements across locations and issues.

But, to date ActionAid's work with movements is not as systematic as it could be and needs to be across the federation if we are to contribute meaningfully to system change. In too many cases we end up still working through intermediary NGOs who have been shaped by the aid industry (as we have been) to build up their bureaucracy and systems to satisfy the demands on donors (including ourselves). Too often, ActionAid is a 'big brother' that provides grants to smaller organisations and asks for accountability. In some cases, even

organisations that were originally truly rooted movements, become mini-ActionAids, grappling with complex finance systems and demands and often projectized in their outlook – whilst ActionAid itself ends up detached from the direct engagement with activism and social movements that we aspire to.

If we want to be become a rooted campaigning organisation, we will need to **critically review the nature of our partnerships in every country** in the SIF 3 period. There is clearly a need to reduce the over-formalised, projectized and bureaucratised work – that has, in *some cases*, come to define the era of professionalised and depoliticised NGOs – to ensure we are working with NGO partners and movements that share our commitment to system change. This may include being more present alongside activism on the frontline where we can add value to a struggle. This will mean, moving to limit or evolve our relations with some of the more conventional, or co-opted local / national NGO partners that are serving instrumentalised roles in the failed neoliberal system. We too have sometimes focused on patching things over, rather than challenging the system, and we should work with partner NGOs to critically review our roles from a decolonial and system change perspective. But some of our NGO partners are already far ahead, committed to system change and proving themselves as powerful allies to social movements- and we will want to deepen and extend our partnerships with such NGOs. Indeed, some movements also register as NGOs to access funding- and still retain their credibility and rootedness. Clearly, we will often continue to work with such NGOs- but at the same time we need to recognise the dangers of overly NGO-ising or bureaucratising movements.

Our work in LRP might support the emergence of new movements / people's organisations or support existing movements to strengthen their base and their connections. We may seek out new partnerships with more rooted, sometimes less formal organisations, including representative or organised grassroots groups, women's collectives, youth movements, migrants' organisations, frontline social justice and environmental activists and broader social movements. We will want to retain or develop strong connections with national, regional and global coalitions, platforms, campaigns or unions that truly share our commitment to system change. Our geographic spread puts us in a good position to add value, for example by convening and connecting different constituencies / movements / struggles across geographies and across issues.

It is important not to be too binary or absolute, as every context is different. Sometimes local or national NGOs, especially women's organisations and youth-led organisations can be the most effective means to build work on system change with social movements and such partnerships will need to be valued and sustained. We want to be part of a vibrant and effective civil society working for system change in every country and we do not want to set ourselves up as competitors to national NGOs who have already built trust and credibility with movements. Nor do we want to abruptly end partnerships with more conventional NGOs, without going through participatory, reflective, responsible and accountable processes. The key is that we, and our NGO and other partners, build a movement mindset and a clear orientation towards movement-strengthening. Our approaches will always depend on context – on the political space and the state of civil society and movements. In some countries there may be no social movements, but working from the grassroots, we can still develop a social movement mindset in our work. It is for each country to find the right path – but to be intentional and courageous!

This has **implications for ActionAid's systems, policies and procedures** – everything from our finance and audit systems, fundraising strategies, procurement policies, safety and security frameworks, risk assessments, Sexual Harassment, Exploitation and Abuse (SHEA), and safeguarding policies etc. and these are each addressed through this document. We will need to review our partnership policies and requirements. We will need to protect the identity and character of movements, as well as the ActionAid brand and identity, be courageous in absorbing more conscious risks, lightening some of our internal systems / compliance requirements. It means recruiting and developing staff in new ways in line with our values and mission. We must prioritise building organisational resilience and establishing rapid response systems to support social justice activists and frontline human rights defenders as well as supporting our staff, volunteers and governance members when they take bold stands.

There are **potential win-wins**, probably reducing our costs in some areas (less duplicating bureaucracy); positioning us to attract more funding from those who share our vision and who want to do more than simply channel funds through intermediaries; increasing our legitimacy as a rooted and connected actor working for system change and as a conduit for supporting movements. Many donors are interested in this work, as became evident in the [Building](#)

[People Power](#) conference in Copenhagen last year (where funders included OSF, Humanity United, Ford Foundation, Collective Action Fund, Oak, Carnegie, DT Institute and USAID) and we are well positioned with these. But we will need to be proactive, with progressive allies, to bring more donors on board and to show how wider donor requirements in the sector can undermine the potential for truly transformative work. None of this can be done alone. We will depend on deepening our alliances, convening and connecting millions for system change!

1.2 Feminist, decolonial and anti-racist approaches

OUTCOME 1.2: ActionAid delivers on a Decolonisation, Anti-racist and Feminist Framework across the federation, shifting power in practice both internally and externally.

ActionAid is developing a Decolonisation, Anti-racist and Feminist Framework alongside the development of this SIF3. This is emerging from the work of the Global Leadership Team Taskforce which is drawing on a substantial report completed in early 2024. This framework will have significant implications, addressing existing and future power dynamics as we seek to deliver on our ambition of working more closely with social movements as outlined above.

Internally, there is a need to challenge the funding conditionalities and requirements that are normalised within the aid architecture and which perpetuate colonial structures of power, ensuring we do not replicate these internally. We need to be bolder in calling for system change across the humanitarian and development sectors, making the case for reparations not charity. Our personality, behaviour and character needs to match with people's struggles and movements. We need a more decentralised, transparent and inclusive processes of resource allocation (an issue picked up in section 3.3). Child sponsorship needs to be overhauled to redress patronising and extractive practices and we need to transform our communications through anti-racist storytelling. The monolingualism of ActionAid needs to be addressed. Our feminist leadership principles will be expanded upon to build a broader intersectional feminist framework with a clear decolonial and anti-racist approach. More broadly our human resource development processes need to ensure we confront white privilege and white supremacy, and that there are clear consequences for racism and discrimination.

Externally, rebuilding our use of truly participatory approaches for conscientisation work at community level can help to ensure that we are shifting power, listening to and being driven by the voices and analyses of the most excluded groups, rather than imposing our own solutions. This is part of re-politicising our engagements and re-centring work with social movements, supporting autonomous organising and campaigning from the roots upwards and ensuring we have the flexibility in our finance and other systems to deliver this in practice. It will be important to increase our critical advocacy and campaigning work with regional entities (EU, Africa Union, ASEAN, CELAC) that perpetuate a colonial, neoliberal system but that could also, in some cases, push against this.

1.3 Reviving our Human Rights Based Approach and participatory methods.

OUTCOME 1.3: ActionAid has regained its capacity and reputation for using participatory and transformative approaches to support conscientisation and organising work with movements and allies from local to national and international levels.

Through the years, based on learning from our work with excluded communities, feminist organisations and social movements, ActionAid has systematised its Human Rights Based Approach and feminist research practices, using participatory methodologies to shift and transform power, in the process influencing many others in the sector. This remains the bread and butter of how we engage with communities, creating space and time for people to analyse their own condition and position with an intersectional analysis of power, sharing insights from feminist research, using reflection-action processes, and then supporting people to organise and act on their own terms. Often this becomes a powerful means to support the emergence of new movements – and to strengthen the rooted base of existing movements. These core approaches ensure we are rooted in the perspectives of communities themselves about what is wrong with the present system, what system change they want to see and what strategies of resistance and action they choose to pursue.

In the past few years, we have become complacent, failing to invest in capacity development for our own staff and partners around these core participatory approaches. In SIF 3 we will re-energise spaces for learning and sharing

about the core politics and practical tools involved in these approaches, encouraging countries and the GS to reinvest and revalue these foundations that form part of the DNA of ActionAid. This will include re-activating the *Reflection-Action* website and updating / popularising our induction and training resources on HRBA so that we increase our institutional capacities for participatory approaches to political analysis and action in every country. We will also seek to deepen our learning from feminist, women-led and youth-led organisations and movements, taking their guidance on changes we need to continue to make internally to be the system change that we want to see.

1.4 Rooted campaigning and public engagement

OUTCOME 1.4: ActionAid is recognised as a rooted campaigning organisation with a strong social base in every country.

To build people's power effectively, ActionAid needs to prioritise building our advocacy and campaigning capacity in every country and in the Global Secretariat, developing both a campaigning mind-set and practical skills. We need to transform our ability to actively engage key public constituencies in our campaigns, whether in our global 'Fund Our Future' campaign or in other campaigning work that arises from supporting excluded communities and social movements (sometimes including engaging people in locations where we do not have our own existing programmes). Building ongoing relationships with people, whether through their engagement in popular mobilisations and street actions, through digital campaigning or through the journey we take them on as supporters, is crucial. Engaging existing donors to mobilise them and build their solidarity, so they are not just seen as donors, can deepen their support and commitment. All federation members, even those with a limited ActionAid presence and without their existing campaigning capacity, need to support key campaign moments so that collectively we become a campaigning organisation, adopting a bottom-up approach, respecting and enhancing the resistance and struggles of communities and movements with whom we work.

ActionAid campaigns will stand out from the traditional Northern-centric and often extractive or simplistic campaigns of other INGOs. They will be informed by decolonial, anti-racist and feminist analysis and will be rooted in the work we do to support the priorities and strategies of rights-holders and social movements. We will learn from people's struggles, proposals and needs to develop the knowledge and tools within ActionAid to ensure people's voices are heard in policies affecting their lives. Our approach will be collaborative both externally, working with key movements and partners, and internally, connecting with staff involved in all themes and functions so that we maximise our communications and public fundraising opportunities, and we are effectively harnessing the immense potential of Global Platforms and the *Activista* network. We will generate quality data and evidence for our Global Campaign and other campaigning opportunities from our long-term rooted work with local rights programmes and movements. Our evidence and research will show the links between local issues and global structures to raise awareness and engagement of people everywhere. People's livelihoods everywhere have been impacted by the climate crisis and the extraction driving it. Where possible we will seek new partnerships, open new programmes or strengthen existing ones in specific climate hotspots and sites of long-term climate struggle so that we have a presence or partnerships on the ground in some of the most profoundly affected communities (such as the Niger Delta). Being committed to rooted campaigning means listening to people and their movements on the ground, in rural and urban communities, building our strategy with them, working side by side, sometimes offering training and support if required (e.g. so people can develop and own their narrative), ensuring a continuous exchange of knowledge and developing an intersectional analysis of power.

ActionAid will strengthen its campaigning coordination mechanisms across the federation so there are clear, dynamic plans and consistent leadership that shares power and decision making. We will integrate the systems and platforms we use (for fundraising, campaigns, social media, communications) and ensure that we develop common appeals, strategies, resources and products that can be adapted where necessary for different contexts. Crucially we will develop larger scale pooled budgets for digital advertising, audience testing and content collection – and ensure that those who are interested in our work (e.g. those that sign our petitions) can be taken forward on a journey - which may include becoming regular givers. We will consistently seek to break down silos so that campaigning serves as an entry point for both expanding institutional fundraising and our public supporter base. We will harness red and orange alerts and our engagement in forgotten crises to build solidarity and campaigning – drawing learning from our humanitarian work across crises and disasters over recent years. Improving the data and

the statistics we collect and how we share them will be important. Making sure there is a continuous flow of learning across the federation around how we work with social movements in campaigning will be a particular priority.

1.5 Transformed communications

OUTCOME 1.5: ActionAid's communications strategy has transformed our visibility and positioning, enabling us to engage deeper with audiences and making us a leading actor in anti-racist storytelling.

ActionAid is developing a new communications strategy alongside the development of SIF3, and this will align with the final version of SIF3. We want to see our brand being increasingly linked to working for system change with movements and building a rooted campaigning organisation with a social base. Our communications work will prioritise increasing the visibility of popular struggles and community-led solutions and proposals— as communicated by women and youth from the frontlines. We will seek to increase youth engagement across the federation and strengthen solidarity with people in emergencies, whilst also aiming to help increase income. It will be particularly important to increase our visibility if we are to achieve our campaigning and fundraising goals, but this must always be balanced with shifting power to allies. The work on decolonisation and anti-racism will be a key influence, with a commitment to move the federation as a whole towards powerful and contextualised anti-racist storytelling.

We acknowledge that the dominant media nationally and internationally are often very much part of the system that we want to change – so we must both find critical spaces within that dominant system whilst also building alternative spaces. We will build networks of digital influencers in every country who are willing to amplify our key messages on their platforms, extending our reach far beyond the traditional NGO sphere. We will better coordinate all our national and international social media accounts and invest in stronger regional media capacity, in Africa. And we will look at expanding our use of short-form videos and podcasts. In a rapidly changing and increasingly commercial media environment, we will need sustained investment in our communications to enhance our visibility.

How we communicate internally must also be overhauled, with stronger networks and deeper collaboration across the federation, enabling people to work in multiple languages in more spaces, with key resources translated. We need to better capture the remarkable stories and testimonies that come from our community engagements, from Global Platforms and our wider work with feminist and youth-led organisations and movements, communicating them in compelling multimedia ways and sharing them across the federation more effectively through tools like a stories map, generating examples that can also be used for fundraising. Better harnessing locally rooted (including sponsorship) communications could be transformative, with all programmes encouraged and supported in one year to tell, for example, local stories on the impact of the climate crisis that can reinforce our campaign messages or in another year send coordinated messaging on the cost of living, the state of public services, resilient livelihoods or other critical issues impacting women's rights. Improving the quality of sponsorship communications specifically depends on ensuring that more financial resources reach local programmes. But overall, the more we can align all our internal and external communications to weave a common narrative around the system change we need to see, the more effective we will be in developing a stronger identity as a federation and a supporter base that is truly aligned to our work.

1.6 Centring our work with women and youth

OUTCOME 1.6: ActionAid is known everywhere for its strong rootedness with both women and youth.

In SIF2 there was some unintentional blurring around the centrality of women's rights work in ActionAid. Following a key meeting in Marafa, Kenya in 2023 there as an unequivocal commitment made to both centring women's rights across the federation, both internally and externally, and having a strong standalone thread of work on women's rights. Women are a priority constituency for ActionAid to work with in every LRP, in every country and on every theme, always working to address intersecting inequalities based on race, income, class, age, disability, indigeneity, location, sexual orientation and gender identity. We will support feminist, intersectional analysis across all our work and seek to deliver decolonial, anti-racist and feminist leadership principles across all contexts. There is a commitment across all functions to ensure that organisational culture reflects our women's rights commitments,

with better resourcing, a strengthened internal women's rights community and empowered women's forums in every country.

Youth are the other core priority constituency across the federation and in SIF 3 we will prioritise work with youth-led organisations and movements. We have incredible resources to support this from the network of over 70 Global Platforms which provide participatory capacity development for young people, supporting popular organising, creative campaigning and communications, and movement building. Connecting these resources better to our engagement with marginalised and excluded youth in LRPs, including through the use of participatory and empowering tools, and partner movements can be a game changer. There are also strong Activista youth networks in many countries which are supported to have autonomous spaces for organising.

Integrating an inter-sectional feminist approach to our work with youth will be prioritised under SIF3. There are particular opportunities that arise where we work across these two priority constituencies, with a specific focus on young women – as has been powerfully shown for example, through the emergence of the Young Urban Women's movement in many countries.

1.7 A Note on Social Enterprises

OUTCOME 1.7: *ActionAid will support and systematise its experiences of working with social enterprises.*

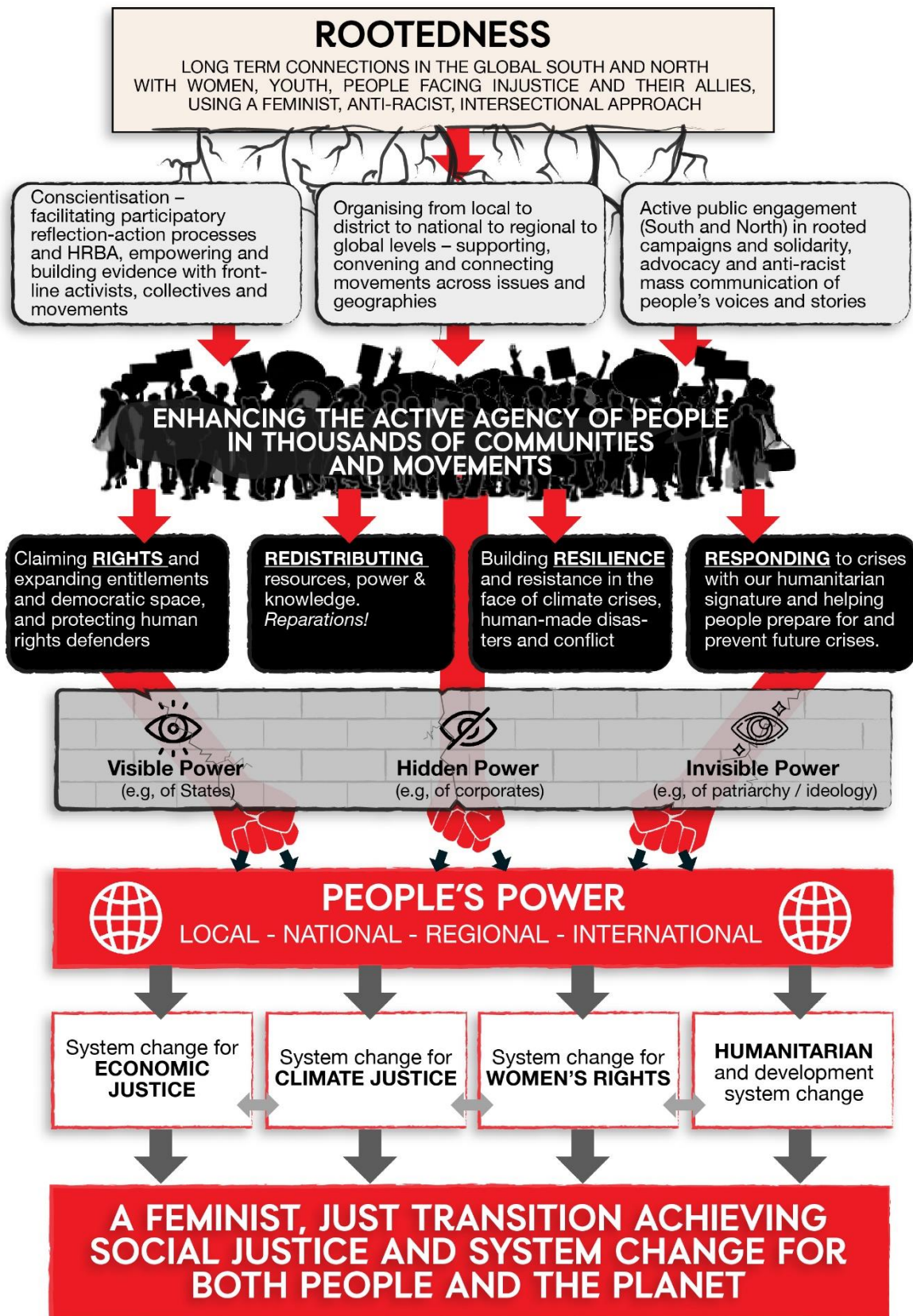
An emerging issue that we note is that ActionAid is increasing its work with social enterprises in many countries and projects. We see considerable potential for this to be developed further in the SIF3 period as it is very much consistent with moving beyond a colonial mindset or charity mentality. Many youths and women are finding creative ways to balance both their economic needs and social agendas / aspirations through setting up social enterprises. We encourage more experience sharing, documentation and research on social enterprises across the federation with a view to consolidating learning and strategic options into the next ActionAid strategy. There is potential for work with social enterprises to contribute to our future fundraising ambitions, so sharing diverse experiences and learning with the fundraising community will be important.

1.8 ActionAid's Programme Signature

The visualisation below shows how different parts of our programme work are interconnected and contribute to system change. Rootedness, so often placed at the bottom, is consciously placed at the top, emphasising its critical role in how we define ourselves: being rooted with people and their movements and allies in the Global South and North. Conscientisation (the term coined by Brazilian educator Paulo Freire), means linking critical reflection and action, and is at the base of how we operationalise a human rights-based approach. Organising and supporting movements, and mobilising people in rooted campaigns, is also essential to enhancing the active agency of people that is at the core of our theory of change.

Our ten-year strategy, Action for Global Justice identifies three interconnected and mutually reinforcing pillars for integrating our programme work: rights, redistribution and resilience. This visualisation adds a further 'R' on 'responding to crises' so as to fully integrate our humanitarian work. It is through enhancing rights, redistributing resources and power, building resilience and responding to crises that we can challenge and break through the walls of power – the visible power of States, the hidden power of corporates and the invisible power of ideology. People's power, in all countries and at all levels, is essential in the fight for system change – for climate justice, economic justice, women's rights and humanitarian system change. All of these are inter-connected, contributing to the pursuit of a feminist just transition that can deliver system change for both people and planet.

act:onaid's PROGRAMME SIGNATURE



2. OUR THEMATIC PRIORITIES FOR SYSTEM CHANGE WORK

OBJECTIVE 2:

We will deepen our work with movements on system change across all our thematic priorities and will focus on maximising connections between these threads.

ActionAid's priority themes will continue to be climate justice, economic justice and public services, women's rights and feminist alternatives, and humanitarian system change. In each case we will advance system change through supporting people to claim their **rights**, promoting **redistribution** of power and resources, and helping to build people's **resilience**.

2.1 System change for climate justice,

OUTCOME 2.1: ActionAid's climate justice programme and advocacy work strengthens rights, resilience and redistribution for climate-impacted communities, supported by a rooted and powerful Fund Our Future campaign and engagement with wider movements.

Our climate justice programme work at local level will continue to work with frontline communities, especially women, youth and marginalised people and will draw on empowering and participatory methodologies so that they can assert their rights and advance their solutions for adaptation, resilience, agroecology, protecting the commons, defending land and territories, and disaster risk reduction. We will build momentum of our work on agroecology, especially with women smallholder farmers, building and systematising evidence to challenge myths and show that this is a viable path to food sovereignty. Equally, we will support more evidence building work on locally led renewable energy solutions that democratise energy access and directly benefit women through reducing their burden of unpaid care work.

Communities' needs and perspectives will continue to provide the basis of our policy work at local, national and international levels on climate finance, adaptation, mitigation, addressing loss and damage, and the links to agriculture, energy, displacement and migration – and this rootedness will be further strengthened. We particularly call for finance to be directed away from the causes of the climate crisis, and towards system transformation for people-centred climate solutions.

Our Fund Our Future campaign will continue through the SIF3 period as a unifying campaign for the whole federation. We will sharpen its objectives around stopping the harm caused by private and public finance flows in fossil fuels and industrial agriculture and scaling up public finance for agroecology and renewable energies. Our annual flagship report will gather momentum as a critical reference point for national and international policy dialogue, whilst generating powerful messages and data for campaigning.

Our campaigning will be backed up by an ever-richer range of multimedia stories and testimonies, told by women and young people on the frontlines of the climate crisis, hopefully including those working in some of the world's climate hotspots where we hope to open new programmes when resources allow. We will produce practical participatory toolkits to build local analysis, evidence and action on the climate crisis, systematising and updating our existing resources and aligning them to our campaign and advocacy work.

We will strengthen the linkages and opportunities between climate justice and our humanitarian work, recognising the need for inter-connected work in the face of multiple crises (climate related, long-term conflicts and man-made disasters), generating evidence to shift the policies and practices of governments and donors around sustainable resilience. We will also strengthen the connections between climate justice and economic justice and women's rights objectives - showing how the current climate crisis is fuelled by the extractive nature of the economic system, how debt cancellation and tax justice can be key solutions to unlock finance for climate action, and how gender responsive public services and social protection are central to a just transition. We will support more youth engagement on climate justice, encouraging sustained inter-generational dialogue that is premised on achieving intergenerational justice. More investment will be made in resisting the false solutions such as biofuels and carbon off-set land-grabs - and we will stay ahead of the curve in challenging the colonial and extractive mindsets driving

the race for critical minerals for the energy transition. Our global advocacy with our allies in UNFCCC COP processes will be sustained, especially calling for reparative finance for those on the front lines of the crisis.

2.2 System change for economic justice and public services

OUTCOME 2.2:

ActionAid will have played a key role in connecting economic justice and public service movements, nationally and internationally, to challenge the failed systems of debt and austerity and propose alternatives based on progressive, gender-responsive tax for gender responsive public services.

Whilst ActionAid has a strong foundation and rich experience on economic justice and public services, we need to strengthen and deepen our own internal capacity (and that of key partners) for feminist research and policy analysis of IMF documents, national budgets and development plans, and macroeconomic policies. Regular political education and capacity development webinars, bringing in movement allies and engaging youth, will enable us to scale up our capacity, beyond the small core community of economic justice experts, so everyone has a core understanding. A key starting point will be to collate more participatory research, evidence and testimonies on the impacts of economic policies on people's lives and public services in our local programmes, and the resistance strategies being developed, using these to mobilize local communities, youth, women and public sector workers, connecting them to national movements and campaigns.

ActionAid is uniquely well placed to convene and connect different movements and constituencies (including unions, feminist movements, youth and student movements, tax and fiscal and debt justice platforms, public service and anti-privatisation movements, human rights advocates, migrant-led organisations etc.) to help track annually the impact of IMF / Ministry of Finance policies and practices at national and local level – looking at public spending, wage bills, tax policies and related issues, with a strong gender equity and climate lens. Collectively we can propose feminist economic alternatives that can advance equity and justice, e.g. making the case for ambitious, progressive and feminist tax reforms, action on debt justice, centring care and well-being in new social contracts and a feminist, just transition.

Popularising the evidence that we generate through local research and national tracking, and the alternatives we propose, can shift the dial – working with national media (print, radio, TV), social media, online knowledge platforms, creative and popular education tools to build wider public pressure. Such pressure can make persistent advocacy with MPs, political parties and diverse Ministries more impactful. In particular we will organise high profile national dialogues on the state of public services and on present economic policies and alternatives, convening diverse actors, movements, political parties, MPs, youth and student movements, media, academia, etc. to support democratic oversight by parliament of economic policies.

ActionAid will share learning across countries and regions through webinars and producing global publications, identifying regional and international opportunities to advance the agenda, connecting movements, and bringing local and national voices into key global spaces, particularly to transform the persistent colonial nature of the global financial architecture, seeking to move debt negotiations from the IMF to a new representative UN debt body to match a new UN Framework Convention on Tax and to push everyone beyond a narrow focus on GDP growth.

There continue to be powerful opportunities for ActionAid at every level relating to education where we have a high global and national profile including on the financing of education, following our leading role in the UN Heads of State Transforming Education Summit in 2022 and on anti-racist and gender-responsive public education. Our capacity to shift global and national policies and practices on education has never been stronger and this momentum needs to be sustained, giving us the credibility and entry points to engage in work on the financing and responsiveness of all public services, most notably on health, agricultural extension, water and sanitation, urban services and those addressing gender-based violence.

2.3 System change for women's rights and feminist alternatives

OUTCOME 2.3: Feminist movements will be stronger and more successful nationally and internationally in their demands for feminist economic alternatives, decent and dignified work and system change to end violence against women.

ActionAid's women's rights work will focus on three core areas of intervention. First will be a focus on feminist alternatives to neoliberalism, linking closely with those working on economic justice across the federation, to build progressive alternatives that centre care and lead to feminist well-being economies. There is a rich base to build from, including through the Young Urban Women movements. We will support knowledge hubs (including with youth), political education and feminist economic alliances, developing frameworks and policies that can support a deeper understanding and practice of feminist economics in different contexts.

Second, we will expand our engagement on decent and dignified work for women – challenging modern slavery practices, trafficking, forced migration and exploitative work; and defending the rights to organise, to have dignified work and to work without violence or harassment. This will include significant corporate accountability work and pushing for fundamental system change through work on a UN Binding Treaty on Business and Human Rights and related regional-level instruments. Our long engagement with women workers' movements in both formal and informal sectors and specifically with Feminists for a Binding Treaty will be sustained. Whilst quick wins are not easy, we need to be at the table shaping a vision for a fairer world in future where corporates can be held to account.

Third, we will deepen our work on system change around gender-based violence and its structural causes, defending bodily autonomy, including sexual and reproductive rights. Gender-based violence ought to be recognised as a national and global pandemic – as a man-made crisis that warrants a massive, coordinated response, led by women. There is a constant struggle to keep GBV on national and international policy agenda and to convert warm words into meaningful policies and practices.

Central to all our work on women's rights is a commitment to building feminist movements, with a special focus on people facing intersecting discrimination and exclusion, including on the basis of race, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, indigeneity, refugee or migrant status, disability, marital or employment status. This involves a range of interventions from popular education to leadership development and expanding space for women in key decision-making structures, from strategic feminist research to being ready to protect women human rights defenders. As we deepen our work with movements, our capacity to react quickly when movement leaders or our own colleagues are at risk will be a key measure of our success. Mobilising young women, as we have with the Young Urban Women's movement in many countries, should be a priority in all countries. Across the ActionAid federation we will ensure that there is a dedicated women's rights expertise in every country, including by developing shared capacities.

2.4 Humanitarian system change.

OUTCOME 2.4: ActionAid, working with communities, youth-led and women-led organisations and movements, is effectively contributing to sustained humanitarian system change, resilience building for crisis-affected people and efficiently supporting humanitarian, recovery and peace-building efforts.

Disasters, conflicts, shocks and stresses are not natural. We all have a role in reducing peoples' vulnerability and increasing the capacities of people to challenge the power relations that dictate their vulnerabilities. ActionAid will continue to ensure that, wherever it has a presence, colleagues and partners will have the necessary political understanding, tools and capacities to do humanitarian and resilience work in line with our humanitarian signature and principles, both proactively and reactively. This will be done through three initiatives: community-based protection and protection networks; gender transformative conflict-sensitivity programming; and preparedness and anticipatory action, through community-based risk reduction and management. Our focus on the leadership of women and youth will remain central to all our humanitarian work.

We will learn from, facilitate and support our local partnerships to be closer to grassroots representative organisations and movements, especially those led by women and youth. Externally, this means adopting multiple context-driven types of partnerships and allyships and following the commitments agreed with other humanitarian

actors (Grand Bargain, Charter for Change, Compact for Young People in Humanitarian Action, etc.). Internally, this will require streamlining compliance, lightening due diligence (with some form of due diligence passporting), considering donors' requirements, rethinking duty of care as an INGO and how to be fair in sharing risks, cost recovery, capacity and knowledge. ActionAid will build its capacity and improve risk analysis to ensure better understanding of the threats related to humanitarian programming. Ensuring that safety and security are crosscutting and systematically integrated into programme design and early emergency responses, ActionAid will improve its ability to respond with a more dynamic approach to risk avoidance and mitigation.

We will engage actively with institutional donors funding humanitarian and resilience work. ActionAid's humanitarian signature will be presented as a buttressing part of the overarching ActionAid programme signature in a climate-humanitarian-development-peace nexus. The aim will be to strike a balance- to obtain funding for ActionAid and its partners while influencing funders to shift their requirements towards our humanitarian signature. Collective action with our allies through informed and evidence-based advocacy, campaigning and policy influencing at all levels will be crucial to achieving wider system change. We will therefore sustain our engagement in inter-agency spaces and consortiums. Understanding that such initiatives are effective when they happen through alliances and networks, we commit to support key allies like the Feminist Humanitarian Network, the Global Network for CSOs for Disaster Reduction and others that align with our humanitarian signature. We will seek creative solutions that enable us to provide support to and protect the rights of the most vulnerable communities and populations, as well as supporting their movements, activism and grassroots organisations. This requires realistic funding mixes for each partnership model, more investment in resilience building, as well as ensuring ActionAid is not competing for funds or voice with national and local actors.

The red and orange alerts mechanism and ways of working (EFAST roster, DPRF funds, alert system and protocols) will need to be adjusted and expanded to include support to social movements and protect activists in emergencies, in addition to our work with NGOs, always ensuring that the most vulnerable are protected and assisted. *In responding to climate induced and other crises and disasters* ActionAid will seek to open the door to system change at community level by creating conversations and programming on climate justice, women's rights, youth participation and economic justice, as a way to prepare and respond to crises and disasters and build recovery.

Finally, staff and funds will have to be positioned and articulated nationally and increasingly regionally to link the local rights-based emergency work with the overall vision of a just transition that is feminist and decolonial. This could mean in practice identifying thematic operational streams in emergencies that connect with our joint campaigns, such as food insecurity in crisis with transitions towards food sovereignty and peace and civic space.

2.5 Connecting our system change work at different levels

OUTCOME 2.5: Our thematic priorities will be more closely connected, and each will have made a substantial contribution to the overall understanding of a just transition that is feminist and decolonial.

Our system change work needs to start from our roots, working with communities and movements, using our participatory approaches, and building upwards. In the early months of SIF3 we will develop a practical toolkit (drawing on much that we already have) collaboratively across our 4 system change priorities - to help build critical analysis, evidence and organising from local level upwards – offering guidance on building rooted campaigning with key constituencies and movements. People do not live sectoral lives. Everything is connected and we can help people understand the connections and build their own analysis.

At national level different countries will find different entry points to the wider struggle for system change – depending on size or capacity. Some may focus on women's rights or climate justice - but connections can always be made, and each thematic area can easily open the door to conversations and action in the other thematic areas. Often there are separate national networks and alliances on different issues – but we can encourage integrated analysis and help to convene and connect movements – it is a value we can add.

Internationally we are committed to do more work on connecting analysis across our different thematic priorities – as we have started to do –with linking climate and tax and debt, with feminist economics, with women's rights and

leadership in emergencies, with focusing on the humanitarian to development nexus. We will seek to deepen the articulation of an overall system change agenda - around a just transition that is feminist and decolonial. To facilitate these inter-connected processes and analyses we will set up Popular Education Webinars, ideally every month, open across the federation, where we work across issues and together with key movement allies to enrich our collective vision of system change.

3. ENSURING A SUSTAINABLE FEDERATION THROUGH RESOURCING AND FAIR DISTRIBUTION

OBJECTIVE 3: *We will increase institutional funding, make strategic collective investments in regular giving for long term sustainability and independence, and update our system for allocating resources across the federation in a fair and transparent manner.*

3.1 institutional fundraising, philanthropy and partnerships

OUTCOME 3.1: *Institutional funding has been increased year on year by 8% and cost recovery on proposals has increased to an average of 12%.*

A new institutional fundraising strategy is being finalised and rolled out alongside the development of SIF3, and associated regional plans are being produced. This strategy lays out ambitious but credible targets to both increase revenue year on year (by 8%) and increase the level of cost recovery from all proposals (to 12% by 2028). Priority and potential institutional donors and philanthropy partners have been identified, with plans for focused federation teams to cultivate and engage with each of these, improving our data management and knowledge sharing. Decolonising our past framing of 'donor owners', there will be 'donor stewards' of various types who can facilitate collaboration across the federation forms and encourage more decentralised engagement with donors. New guidance and policies will be developed to ensure we are systematic across the federation in supporting co-financing requirements for big donor projects.

Over the SIF2 period the EU and other donors have reacted well to ActionAid's framing of its work under 'economic justice' and 'climate justice' which provides a foundation for our bolder commitment to system change and working more systematically with movements. But there will be challenges with some donor funding, including the EU, in directly supporting movement partners who cannot live up to their compliance standards (e.g. on anti-terrorism and anti-slavery). We will need to navigate this carefully, in some cases assuming greater risks ourselves and in others channelling funds to partners who can meet the standards whilst we advocate for a greater understanding of the added value of working with movements, some of whom will struggle with the standards owing to a lack of formal systems. It will be important to work with others in this advocacy to deepen donor understanding about the importance of a decolonial approach and to change donor requirements – and this will take time. Promoting adaptive project design and management amongst donors is one way to ensure projects can adjust to changing realities.

Key to breakthroughs in institutional funding, philanthropy and partnerships is a change in mindset – an understanding that everyone needs to be a fundraiser, even if their specific role is different. Increasing the visibility of our work through our programme and policy engagement is fundamental, as is building relations with key donors, inviting them to our events and programmes (and even on LRP immersions as used to be a widespread practice). In many cases we are too late to the table if we are just responding to a call for proposal without having had prior engagement and connections on the substance of our work. We need to strengthen our donor intelligence and engagement / cultivation work at all levels across the federation. Being confident in articulating our unique history, niche and experience in each country and on each issue is crucial (too often we are not even aware of our own historic contributions to different national struggles, coalitions and movements). Telling our own story in a compelling (and decolonial) way and generating evidence in all contexts is crucial.

3.2 Individual giving

OUTCOME 3.2: *Collective investments across the federation, including in new regular giving products have laid the foundation for the long-term sustainability and independence of the federation.*

ActionAid's funding was built based on regular giving from child sponsors, and this continues to provide a backbone of unrestricted funding for the federation, despite some challenges and complexities in the funding model. This revenue is in gradual, long-term decline (but individual giving, in all its forms, still constitutes about 60% of our unrestricted income) and addressing this is crucial for ensuring that ActionAid can retain a strong independent voice, enabling us to become a rooted campaigning organisation that works on system change with constituencies and social movements. Structural changes and skill building will be needed to enable all fundraisers to shift towards more political fundraising. We need to re-invest in our individual and regular giving now, with a particular focus on expanding our unrestricted funding and its fair distribution, as this will be the engine of our transformation in the longer term.

There has been a period of fragmentation in our approaches to regular giving and this needs to be replaced with collaboration across the federation, harmonising approaches, pooling resources, working together to strengthen acquisition and donor retention, growing digital fundraising and making collective decisions on new products and where to test them. There are opportunities to collectively invest in new (especially digital) products linked to both our campaigning and emergency work / humanitarian appeals that can generate new one-off giving, particularly from younger audiences. Whilst this is valuable in itself, where possible we should develop systematic approaches to cultivate and transition these contacts towards becoming regular donors.

A coordinated brand refresh will help to make ActionAid stand out in crowded markets and reach the right audiences who will resonate with our work. Special attention will need to be paid to how politicizing our fundraising narrative will impact on audience profiles and our accountability to supporters. We will need stronger brand awareness, linked to our more political agenda, and more collectively produced, simple fundraising content that can be adapted for different channels / audiences and countries. This is particularly true for digital fundraising that will be an important part of the future.

There will be a need to adjust some of our own internal policies and processes to ensure that we can use regular giving effectively to support the system change, decolonisation and movement building agenda laid out for the next four years. How we raise and how we share regular giving funds must be driven by decolonial and anti-racist approaches across the federation. This will mean a new level of transformation in how we use and manage child sponsorship and active investment in other forms of individual giving, regular giving and partnership.

A crucial part of this will be improving how we communicate effectively and consistently with our existing supporters – and how we can use these supporters to reach new supporters. Anti-racist storytelling can help to shift narratives and substantial collaborative work is already underway in this regard. We can also ensure that our critical policy agendas on climate justice, economic justice and women's rights can shape regular sponsorship communication – having policy colleagues helping to shape local content into relevant messages to sponsors that can enhance our system change agenda, so that we are bringing everyone on a coherent journey, not just as donors but as solidarity partners.

3.3 Resource Allocation Framework

OUTCOME 3.3: A new, fairer and transparent system for resource allocation across the federation is collectively owned and respected.

ActionAid's current Resources Allocation Framework is no longer serving the federation and a new framework, named FAIR (Fundraising and Allocation of Inter-national Resources) has been developed alongside this SIF3. FAIR will outline three key elements: firstly, the strategies to grow ActionAid's Unrestricted and Restricted funding; secondly the redistribution and allocation of the Federation's funding covering International Contributions, Child Sponsorship and Pooled Funding; and thirdly the decision-making mechanisms over Federation resources, reporting and accountability. One of the critical reasons for creating a new, transparent and fairer allocation framework is so that we can collectively invest resources in new regular giving – which often requires a long lead-time (over 7 years) to yield returns. It is nearly impossible for any entity in the federation to do this alone.

Core principles for a new framework have been agreed: seeking a pathway to equity across the federation; balancing rules and flexibility (setting minimum standards and pathways to achieve them); balancing investments

for immediate survival and long-term sustainability; agreeing effective / accountable delegations; adopting shared services and staffing approaches; and ensuring transparency across all parts of the federation.

The key policy provisions covered in FAIR include the levels of international contributions; child sponsorship cost recovery, compliance and reporting; the allocation of pooled flexible funds; service sharing across countries; restricted funding targets, cost recovery / levy sharing and donor stewardship; unrestricted fundraising and joint investments; financial transparency, decision making, reporting and accountability.

4. ORGANISING OURSELVES TO DELIVER OUR VISION ACROSS ALL FUNCTIONS

OBJECTIVE 4: *We will harmonise every function across the federation to support the move to decolonise and work on system change with social movements.*

It is important to read this section as having **implications for functions both in the Global Secretariat and in every country**. Whilst some bullet points relate to federation-wide work by the Global Secretariat, most are equally relevant and applicable to different functions at the country level. It is important for the initiatives listed under each section to be internalised and to drive action by country-level teams. In many cases the effective delivery of the transformative agenda in Action for Global Justice and SIF3 will depend on peers who work on different functions connecting across the federation, working together in communities of practice and sharing learning.

The Global Leadership team has defined principles to enable shared responsibility for success across the federation. Two critical ones relevant for SIF3 implementation are: a) **Effective and Accountable Delegations** - GLT will develop and oversee a new set of delegations for agreed federation priorities that the GS cannot lead on. These delegations will not be impaired by bureaucratic delays but at the same time are accountable for clear targets and results; b) **Adopting Shared Services and Global Staffing Approaches** - where appropriate countries will offer their staff to work for the Global Secretariat or federation projects for agreed periods. There are existing practices and examples to be built on.

4.1 Federation Development (ensuring fit-for-purpose members and country programmes)

OUTCOME 4.1: *ActionAid has become a high-performing, cohesive and well networked federation*

Key Initiatives:

- Continue to review and strengthen our governance and operating models to increase legitimacy in diverse contexts and facilitate dual citizenship across the federation.
- Build a truly networked federation by strengthening our Shared Services model to enhance federation capacity, improving accountable delegations to members, and holding regular federation forums/working groups/spaces for every theme and function.
- Ensure a financially sustainable and appropriately sized presence in every country, ranging from an active ActionAid footprint to rooted remote partnerships and allyships, in over 70 countries.
- Transform governance and management oversight roles by aligning the Accountability and Performance Framework to SIF3 and rolling out to all members, country programmes and across the Global Secretariat to help drive a high-performance culture in the federation and advance implementation of SIF3.
- Revise the current organizational development/reviews and policies to link to the ongoing changes in the federation and to better align our new operating models, to build strong members that are financially viable and delivering impact.
- Build on the federation's growth by admitting new members to the Federation and recognising the existing presences where we already have a footprint.
- Adjust recommended board selection criteria to attract and retain people with expertise in movement related work and relevant resource mobilisation / fundraising.
- Leverage greater use of technology to enable quicker, less costly means of decision making and reduced carbon footprint.
- Apply a decolonial lens to streamlining our policies, procedures and demands on countries and ensure all key policies are available in multiple languages.

4.2 Programme Quality, Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (PQMEL)

OUTCOME 4.2: Our programme quality, monitoring, evaluation and learning approaches are adaptive to working better on system change and with diverse social movements.

Key Initiatives:

- Change and simplify our partnership policy for work with social movements of different types.
- Adapt PQMEL guidelines and processes to be decolonial and feminist and to be of value for movement work, including addressing non-linear change (e.g. how we might see ‘backlash’ as an indicator that we are truly challenging power), and deepening our downward accountability to movements.
- Support learning processes across the federation on working with movements and on system change.
- Minimise unnecessary extraction of data across the federation, streamline our data collection and analysis through dashboards and simplify planning (to allow greater flexibility to respond to events) and reporting systems; better integrate the Accountability and Performance Framework and other relevant systems with PQMEL.
- Collate powerful stories of change / popular struggles / movements work etc on a stories map.
- Rebuild our website / resources on participatory methods for conscientizing, organising and mobilising and link this with other relevant resources such as the new Global Platforms website.

4.3 Risk, Accountability, Compliance, Security, SHEA (Sexual Harassment, Exploitation and Abuse) and Safeguarding,

OUTCOME 4.3: Our risk tolerance and risk capacity will have been strengthened, with clear mitigating actions, so that we can pursue the system change and movement building agenda in informed ways.

Key Initiatives:

- Strengthen our risk tolerance and risk capacity, with a proactive culture of risk management / risk mitigation for more political / movement-oriented work and offer guidance to countries to assess and monitor global risks, valorising enterprise risk management (ERM).
- Continue to prepare, engage and build capabilities of the federation’s security focal people, with clear policies and processes for addressing new and emerging risks and the ever-changing threat landscape that staff and our partners / human rights defenders may face.
- Simplify our procurement processes, whilst ensuring we are donor compliant as needed.
- Be fully transparent with partners about grant requirements with new projects and what we can take on to reduce burdens on them e.g. running procurement processes when movements are not able to.
- Recognise that for some donor proposals we will continue to need to work in consortia with more formal registered NGOs (and the need to be proactive in identifying key ones in different priority areas), but still seek to build movement-oriented work within these projects.
- Foster a culture of participation, transparency and internal / external accountability (including enhanced downward accountability to movements / communities).
- Position ActionAid as a sector leader in knowledge and operational capacity.
- Ensure a safe working environment for all who encounter ActionAid and build on our SHEA and safeguarding work with diverse partners to ensure we build safe partnerships with social movements and other partners.
- Support social enterprise risk management in line with our values.

4.4 Technology

OUTCOME 4.4: ActionAid will have levelled-up digital access and skills across the federation, ensuring systems are connected and all staff are cyber-secure.

Key Initiatives:

- Ensure a safe and secure cyber working environment for us and movements – including improved cyber security and standards across the federation to protect sensitive data and prevent surveillance.
- Reduce transaction costs and ensure the systems underpinning our reporting and related processes are connected to allow for joint analysis and decision making.
- Build a well-networked workforce with digital expertise that can support all countries and staff through centres of support to even up capacities and skills across the federation.
- Improve the use of technology including in humanitarian contexts for improved privacy / security.
- Offer improved guidance on running collaborative online events securely and with multilingual capacity so that we can reduce our carbon footprint, meeting virtually with good, secure access for all.

- Continually track digital access and inclusion across the federation to even up access and skills.
- Be ready to challenge ‘technology colonialism’ with a few huge corporations controlling data, technology and communications with massive carbon footprints and often increasing digital divides.

4.5 Finance and Audit

OUTCOME 4.5: ActionAid’s finance and audit systems are designed to support our system change and social movement work.

Key Initiatives:

- Review finance policies from a feminist, decolonial and anti-racist standpoint.
- Adapt our finance and audit systems so we are able to transfer funds to movements - even where they are not registered and lack finance systems – offering guidance on how we can still meet minimum requirements.
- Ensure comprehensive processes of capacity development for all finance and internal audit staff about SIF3 and its implications for finance and audit.
- Plan careful pre-emptive sharing of the implications for SIF3 with external auditors so that they understand the informed choices we are making and explore with them how to appropriately address associated risks.
- Simplify and streamline our budget systems, finance requirements and accounting formats so that we do not collect what we do not need and that there is greater flexibility where possible for colleagues on the frontline to make informed reactive allocations to emerging priorities.
- Develop simpler and more flexible procurement policies so that we can act quickly to support movements / activism when needed.
- Continue the practice of joint finance & programme audits to build mutual understanding and appreciation.
- Strengthen and build the capacity / understanding of national Boards in finance, audit and assurance (in line with SIF3) so that they support management appropriately and represent countries as needed.

4.6 People and Culture

OUTCOME 4.6: ActionAid’s working culture embeds decolonial, anti-racist and feminist principles.

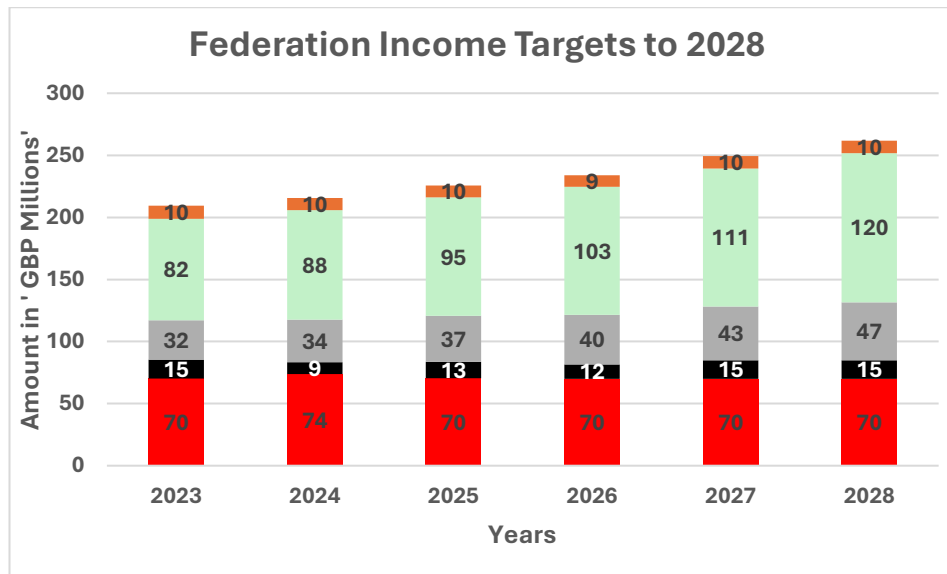
Key Initiatives

- Valorise and retain our people! ActionAiders are our most valuable resource for delivering on all this work!
- Create an inclusive and supportive working environment for feminist, decolonial, intersectional work with movements, including through a deeper commitment to multilingualism.
- Update our feminist leadership principles in line with decolonisation and anti-racism approaches across the federation and support training on this.
- Work on systems (and improved links to other expert organisations) for protecting frontline human rights defenders and staff involved in more political / challenging work and in conflict settings.
- Design human resource systems that empower and support staff and facilitate improved work-life balance in practice, conducting regular equity audits and staff wellbeing surveys.
- Ensure we can recruit a more diverse Global Secretariat staff by resolving the issues around staff being able to be based in any country where we have a presence.
- Adjust recruitment criteria so we attract and retain more diverse staff with greater valuing of experience (e.g. with movements) and politics / values rather than academic and professional qualifications.
- Enrich our induction and staff development processes across federation so they include system change / movement work / decolonisation and HRBA everywhere.
- Ensure we have strong accountability structures to address incidents of racism and discrimination.
- Support the creation of women’s forums in every country and track their progress

D. CONCLUSION

The agenda outlined in this document is transformative, in line with ActionAid’s vision of internationalization and our Action for Global Justice Strategy. We lay out in a single document how the whole federation can align, every country, theme and function playing its role – so that we become a united and coherent federation, greater than the sum of our parts. Key to its success will be collective ownership and individual initiative. Don’t wait for others. Be the change we want to see. Seize the space and be courageous in taking forward this agenda so that together we can play our role in delivering the scale of system change that our people and our planet so urgently need!

Annex 1: Income Projections and Targets – An Additional Note on Funding



Income for 6year period (2023-2028)

- 2023 Actual - GBP 209 million
- 2024 Forecast- GBP 216 million
- 2025 Forecast -GBP 226 million
- 2026 Forecast GBP 234 million
- 2027 Forecast-GBP 249 million
- 2028 Forecast -GBP 262 million

Assumptions:

- Individual Giving - Updated with AA UK and AA Italy projections (around 85% of IG is received from the 2 countries). For other IG raising countries, the 2026 income forecast levels have been extended to 2028
- Institutional and P&P Income - A growth target of 8% year on year starting from 2024 has been applied, in accordance with the Federation Institutional Fundraising Strategy.

Red- Individual giving (regular) **Black** - Individual giving (Other)
Grey- Philanthropy & Partnerships **Light green**- Institutional **Orange**- other

The projected increase in funding from institutional, philanthropy and partnership sources will be progressively aligned with our work on system change and with social movements, over the four years of SIF3. We will both embed the SIF3 agenda in our proposals with existing donors and seek new donors interested and aligned to this work

In our fundraising strategy, current top donors (Danish Government, UN, EU, DEC and other governments) and significant new donors (SDC/USAID) will contribute most of the increased institutional funding and will target calls that align directly and/or indirectly with SIF3. Funding will often be “indirect” for social movement or system change work – that is, it will not be the avowed focus of proposals but will be advanced through work to create an enabling environment, for example through deepening connections with and advancing the rights of the most excluded groups or expanding civil society space. Two key trends supporting this are;

- donors moving to larger-scale “NGO/Civil Society support” grants - AFD, SIDA, Norad, EU. These granting mechanisms can be upwards of € 5 million over several years where AA can in partnership determine the criteria, mechanisms, and outcomes of the funding. In the last 12 months, these potential proposals have totalled more than €18m from different donors in countries as diverse as Sierra Leone and Cambodia.
- donors moving to longer-term large-scale commercial contracts with great flexibility in delivering results within a specific results/outcome framework. Whilst we may have reservations about the framing of many commercial contracts, we will find some cases that do offer us the space to do transformative work e.g. SDC offers occasional €20m contracts over 10 years and USAID has declared that it wants to disburse 25% of its funds to southern-organizations by end of 2024 through its locally led development plans.

From ActionAid’s point of view, this means that there is considerable SIF 3-aligned funding available if we are positioned as an effective and trusted southern-based and southern-led intermediary with a distinctive rooted niche.

More **direct** funding of social movement and system change work is also available as indicated in section 1.1 by the range of donors who participated in the [Building People Power](#) conference in Copenhagen last year. These are predominantly foundations but do include some bilateral donors (including even a dedicated program in USAID). Increasingly foundations are looking to make larger grants with higher levels of cost recovery available (as we have found with Kellogg’s US\$10 million grant for anti-racist public education work, which has an 18% cost recovery split between ActionAid and partners).

We will coordinate and track progress with priority foundations, using a live “pipeline” of projected opportunities that ActionAid will be targeting, and are confident that the projected increases in institutional funding outlined above and embedded in SIF3 are achievable through a combination of indirect and direct efforts.