2012 Annual Report for HAP

ORGANISATION: ActionAid International
Introductory comments:
ActionAid International (AAI) became a member of HAP at the end of 2011. As this is the first year of reporting to HAP, the key goals for 2012 shared in this document have been drawn from pre-existing commitments AAI made in its current accountability framework – ALPS (Accountability, Learning, and Planning System) and also within its latest strategy which covers the period 2012-2017. AAI has taken a number of steps to strengthen its accountability work since joining HAP. Specifically, ActionAid is in the process of updating its accountability framework to ensure it is in-line with its new strategy and commitments to HAP and other external stakeholders. Accountability is central to ActionAid's approach and within ALPS ActionAid had already set out its key accountability requirements, guidelines, and processes - covering organisational processes for planning, monitoring, strategy formulation, learning, reviews and audit as well as personal attitudes and behaviours. AAI has agreed that this framework could be improved upon, particularly in regards to further developing anti-sexual harassment policies to protect communities and stakeholders it works with, and also building on its complaints mechanisms. Over the course of 2013 AAI will work on finalising and embedding this new framework across the 45 countries where it works. Attached is a case study to accompany this report which looks at the work ActionAid piloted in 2012 on communicating with disaster affected communities. The project, which was carried out in partnership with the consortium Infoasaid, demonstrates the use of new technology to strengthen accountability in humanitarian work, with a particular focus on HAP Benchmarks 3 and 4 on participation and sharing information.

1. Establishing and delivering on commitments

Key goal for 2012	Achievements/challenges/lessons learned	2013 objectives
AAI's current commitments and deliverables are outlined through strategic objectives and key change promises in ActionAid's Strategy for 2012-2017 (approved in 2011). In 2012, AAI's Human Rights Based Approach (HRBA) Manual expanded on these commitments and all of ActionAid's country office strategies have been developed. Currently ALPS is regarded as AAI's accountability framework.	ActionAid's new strategy and the HRBA Manual have been engrained in the organisation and specific country office plans have been developed. The HRBA Manual outlines eight core principles applicable to all parts of AAI's work. The development of ActionAid's updated accountability framework started in October 2012. AAI submitted its annual report to the INGO Accountability Charter receiving very positive feedback from the panel of experts. In addition, ActionAid has reported on the Accountability Framework of the Disasters	ActionAid's new accountability framework will be informed by AAI's new strategy, the HRBA Manual, organisational reviews, as well as external accountability requirements and benchmarking with other organizations. The framework will be developed by June 2013 when the AAI Assembly will review it and pass it for approval. Furthers steps will be taken to ensure increased accountability in practice and integration in the organization's operating systems.

	Emergency Committee (in UK) of which it is a member.	

2. Staff competency

Key goal for 2012	Achievements/challenges/lessons learned	2013 objectives
In its new strategy ActionAid committed to increase its people power, valuing its diverse staff, building their capacity with a specific investment in women's leadership. To support this AAI committed to: • Developing a Competency Framework – to provide clear guidance on mutual accountability and the expected results/levels of performance. • Investing in capacity building, identifying core capabilities needed to deliver successfully and sustainably, particularly building staff and partner understanding on HRBA, power analysis, integrating participatory methodologies, effective programme design and monitoring and evaluation.	AAI partnered with the company SHL to develop a robust Competency Framework. A Competency Approach and Indicator Level Descriptors across job grades were defined, and ActionAid completed a Competency Based Interviewing (CBI) Tool Kit, with seven staff members as certified interviewers. Competencies were informed by approaches across the sector including the Consortium of British Humanitarian Agencies' Humanitarian Competencies Framework which AAI led. A key challenge with this piece of work has been converging core and functional competencies.	Defining and operationalising the AAI Competency Framework – key processes for 2013 will include: • Consulting a range of stakeholders on the framework • Undertaking an internal and external review ensuring the framework is user-friendly and easy to understand. • Piloting the framework, conducting assessments for baseline data for performance management, and monitoring systems. • Development of tools and documents to support the framework

3. Sharing information

Key goal for 2012	Achievements/challenges/lessons learned	2013 objectives
AAI's Open Information Policy guides the sharing of information, and the Assurance Policy monitors its implementation. ALPS further promotes the use of transparency boards and social audits as a means of increasing access to information.	The Open Information Policy and guidelines for ActionAid International have been in place for more than ten years and are applicable to all parts of AAI. This policy is included within ActionAid's Global HR Standards and within its Value Compliance statement which all new staff members must agree to and sign. At present all AAI members report on sharing information annually, but more could be done to capture learning from these reports and also to	The updated accountability framework will include aspects of transparency and make further commitment to sharing information with stakeholders, including work on communication with disaster affected communities. In 2013, AAI will also be providing reports in line with the International Aid Transparency Initiative. A section on communicating with disaster affected communities will also be included in ActionAid's new Emergencies Manual which

	monitor its application ActionAid also piloted a project in 2012 which used new technology to improve communication with disaster affected communities (CDAC). Lessons from the CDAC project are included in the attached case study.	will be launched across the AAI federation.

4. Participation		
Key goal for 2012	Achievements/challenges/lessons learned	2013 objectives
AAI has continued to implement and review its programmes based on the values of participation. This approach was further established in the HRBA Manual developed in 2012. This commits us both to listening to people living in poverty and acting in such a manner that their active agency is enhanced.	The participatory processes identified in ALPS, such as the Participatory Reflection and Review Process, continued as an organisational standard. 2012 also saw a number of peer reviews and the development of country strategies employing participatory methods and consultation with partners and communities. The governance structure of AAI ensures equal participation of all AAI members in decision making, and membership was expanded in 2012 (one new associate and two new affiliates joined).	The accountability framework will make a deepened commitment to participation as a key principle in AAI. The internationalisation project will continue and include more AAI countries as AAI members. The development of strategies in AAI's Local Rights Programmes (areas where we work with communities on long term development projects) will include the participation of communities and partners.

5. Handling complaints		
Key goal for 2012	Achievements/challenges/lessons learned	2013 objectives
AAI continued to use its Complaints and Response Mechanism Framework to ensure accountability by allowing any stakeholder with a complaint to formally raise the issue for investigation and action in an impartial manner. This framework applies across the AAI federation.	AAI has recognised the need for guidance documents on roles and responsibilities with regards to complaints. Greater clarity is needed particularly at a Country Programme and partner level on complaints processes for external stakeholders, as well as internal grievance and whistleblowing systems. An internal reporting mechanism is in place, this asks ActionAid units to report on the number of complaints received.	AAI commits to work on the following: • The HR Audit Tool Kit will incorporate a specific section on Complaints & Response Mechanism indices • Build on the existing complaints register to create a centralised database of complaints for easy access and reference • Revision of specific sections of the Child Protection Policy in 2013 • "Own Your Teams" – a module for all

		People Managers in AAI is planned for 2013, which will include specifics on handling complaints. • All ActionAid units to include improvements regarding mechanism and handling of complaints in their annual plans

6. Learning and continual improvement

Key goal for 2012	Achievements/challenges/lessons learned	2013 objectives
AAI's HRBA Manual developed in 2012 includes an M&E framework that outlines the areas to be monitored and evaluated and provides a framework for learning in the federation on an annual basis.	The restructuring of the AAI secretariat (after the finalisation of the new strategy) put organisational learning as a central pillar of organisational effectiveness. The strategic implementation plan commits AAI to specific deliverables and KPIs were developed for all critical areas of AAI's work. A federation wide reporting format for the Key Change Promises was developed and will be used for aggregated reporting on 2012 results. The results of the external evaluations (39 countries in 2011-2012) and the peer reviews carried out fed into the development of new country strategy papers (22 developed in 2012) for the coming five years. An International Learning and Development Coordinator was also recruited in 2012 to look at organisational learning including issues of M&E and accountability.	AAI's accountability framework to be finalised in 2013 will include a deepened commitment to learning and will make the connections between accountability, evaluation, learning and performance. The global planning and reporting system will be further refined. M&E capacity in the federation will be enhanced through capacity building and an active network of practitioners.

Progress on implementation and monitoring of Staff Code of Conduct (CoC) and other Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse measures

ActionAid is in the process of updating the CoC document (release version 2013), with the intention of making it comprehensive on behaviours that model its values, besides outlining explicitly the roles and responsibilities of staff members. In this process AAI will ensure that HAP requirements are met by the revised policy. A review of all existing AAI policies was carried out by the AAI Internal Audit Function in 2012 and a comprehensive revision of all existing policies will be carried out in 2013. All AAI staff, volunteers, interns and consultants are required to read and sign the CoC document – this is now embedded as a part of the on-line Global Induction module checklist. For existing members of staff

refreshers on the policies will be organised, and will be included in future management trainings. Additional work is also needed over the next year to ensure that policies are in appropriate languages to ensure all staff members can access them.

The Internal Audit Unit tracks and monitors formal complaints by means of a complaints register for AAI (including both internal and external complaints). These are collated through an audit mechanism, besides grievance / complaints reported by individual countries through monthly HR reports.

Country-level gender sensitisation modules are conducted periodically for both AA staff / partner staff and community based organisations, which also address issues related to sexual harassment at both workplace and home. Additionally, sexual harassment awareness and sensitisation is addressed through the staff induction process.

Case study/example: Good practice in accountability and quality management

See attachment.

Plans with regard to HAP services: baseline analysis or certification?

Throughout the course of 2013 ActionAid will focus on the implementation of its new accountability framework and Code of Conduct as part of its commitment to communities and also as part of AAI's membership to HAP. By the end of 2013, ActionAid will complete a review to make a decision on whether it is ready to apply for certification from HAP.

Progress/highlights from programme sites (if not covered elsewhere in report):

n/a

Summary and any other comments: ActionAid's Updated Accountability Framework

The development of the new accountability framework started in October 2012 with a series of interviews and focus group discussions with internal and external stakeholders to gather information about what aspects of AAI's accountability need to be strengthened and how that could be done. The results of this consultation were discussed by the International Board in early December 2012 and following their steer and input, some key propositions for a revised accountability framework were sent to all AAI members and country programmes in January 2013 for consultation within country staff, trustees and partners. Following this feedback a draft framework will be presented to the Senior Leadership Team and the International Board in April 2013 and then shared with the AAI Assembly for review and approval in June 2013. Once approved, AAI will revise the organisational processes that need to be aligned to the values and principles of the accountability framework.