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# **Rights Based Approach: Understanding and Practice within NGOs: An Analysis of ActionAid's project in Pakistan**

*By*

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## **Declaration Form**

The work I have submitted is my own effort. I certify that all material in the dissertation which is not my own work has been identified and acknowledged. No materials are included for which a degree has been previously conferred upon me.

Signed: Yusra Qadir

Date: 30<sup>th</sup> May, 2012

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## **Abstract**

This study aims to assess if the understanding of Rights Based Approach (RBA) is consistent within ActionAid or not. It also seeks to determine if an ActionAid project adheres to RBA's essentials or not. The study goes beyond seeking a yes or no answer to these questions. It digs deeper to identify causes of inconsistencies in RBA understanding across ActionAid staff and factors affecting the project's adherence to RBA essentials. A project being implemented by ActionAid Pakistan has been selected to limit the scope of the study.

The research is qualitative and is based on primary data collected from ActionAid, implementing partner, project staff and final beneficiaries. The study also draws learning from previous literature on the subject.

Interview guides, focus group discussions, general discussions and review of literature were used for data collection. Information was also obtained from respondents through telephone contact and casual discussions. A checklist derived from the UN's Statement of Common Understanding on RBA (2003) was used to assess the selected project's adherence to RBA.

The study found inconsistencies in staff understanding of RBA across ActionAid. Existing literature showed ActionAid is not the only large Non Governmental Organization (NGO) with this problem. The project studied was found to be strong in adhering to some essentials of RBA e.g. relationship with the community and using empowering strategies. However, it exhibited weaknesses in adhering to other essentials e.g. monitoring processes along with outcomes and assessing capacity of duty bearers for fulfilling duties.

The study concludes by advancing recommendations for ActionAid or other NGOs for improving staff understanding about RBA and for better adhering to RBA essentials in their ongoing and/or upcoming work including; institutionalization of donor funded project work, implementation of initiatives for capacity building and maintenance of a balance between advocacy and service delivery in RBA projects.

## Acronyms

AAI	ActionAid International
AAPk	ActionAid Pakistan
AO	Area Office
CP	Country Programme
DFID	Department for International Development
HIV	Human Immuno Deficiency Virus
IASL	Impact Assessment and Shared Learning
IP	Implementing Partner
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
RBA	Rights Based Approach
UN	United Nations
UNAIDS	Joint United Nations Programme on HIV and AIDS
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNOHCHR	United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights

# Contents

1. Introduction .....	1
1.1. Background and History.....	1
1.2. Rights Based Approach (RBA).....	1
1.3. ActionAid; structure and RBA.....	3
1.4. Rationale of the research .....	4
1.5. The Research: the problem, objectives and approaches.....	5
1.6. Utility of the research.....	6
1.7. Chapter Overview .....	6
2. Review of Literature .....	7
2.1. Human Rights and Development; the converging point .....	7
2.2. The Rights Based Approach.....	8
2.2.1. RBA – The UN perspective .....	8
2.2.2. Definitions and interpretations by other actors.....	10
2.2.3. Service Delivery VS Advocacy in RBA.....	12
2.3. Adoption of RBA by organizations.....	13
2.3.1. Added Value: .....	15
2.3.2. Funding: .....	15
2.3.3. Sustainability: .....	15
2.3.4. Insulating previous failure of development programmes .....	16
2.4. Implications and Challenges for organizations adopting RBA.....	16
2.4.1. Internal and External Resistance.....	17
2.4.2. Resource Allocation for internalizing RBA.....	17
2.4.3. Integrating RBA in organizational processes .....	19
2.4.4. Language.....	19
2.4.5. Gaps between understanding and implementing RBA within organizations .....	19
2.5. Challenges in implementing RBA at grassroots .....	20
2.5.1. Awareness at Grassroots .....	20

2.5.2.	Cultural Contexts .....	21
2.5.3.	Government commitments.....	21
2.5.4.	RBA in short term projects .....	21
3.	Research Methodology .....	22
3.1.	Research Design.....	22
3.1.1.	Selection of the project .....	22
3.1.2.	Identification of hierarchal units involved in design and implementation of the selected project (from AA hierarchy to community).....	23
3.1.3.	Selecting respondents for data collection .....	23
3.2.	Data Collection.....	24
3.2.1.	Review of literature: .....	24
3.2.2.	Data collection Tools: .....	24
3.2.3.	Pre-testing .....	28
3.3.	Ethical Issues.....	28
3.4.	Limitations of the study.....	28
3.5.	Data Analysis .....	29
4.	Results and Discussion .....	31
5.	Conclusion and Recommendations .....	55
5.1.	Summary of findings.....	55
5.2.	Recommendations:.....	57
	Bibliography .....	59
	Appendices.....	64
	Appendix 1 – Interview Guide for AA Italy and AA International Secretariat .....	65
	Appendix 2 - Interview Guide for AAPk .....	66
	Appendix 3 - Interview Guide for Implementing Partner .....	67
	Appendix 4 - Interview Guide for Project Staff.....	68
	Appendix 5 - Focus Group Discussion Points for Discussion with Peer Educators and Beneficiaries.....	69
	Appendix 6 – List derived from UN Statement of Common Understanding for assessing adherence to RBA .....	70
	Appendix 7 – UN Statement of Common Understanding (2003).....	71



# 1.Introduction

## 1.1. Background and History:

Human development and human rights have been of concern to national and international bodies for long. The former encompassed enhancing human capabilities and choices for a respectful life while the latter focused at protecting human rights and fundamental freedoms. While the effort to promote human rights traveled down a political and legal path, human development took the economic and social road. During the past decade or so however, these two have converged, making way for new opportunities to strengthen approaches to development for more effective intervention in human development. Human rights have added value, drawn attention to respect, protection and fulfillment of rights, introduced legal tools and institutions (for securing freedoms and protecting rights), lent moral legitimacy, introduced social justice (as a principle) and brought vulnerable and excluded groups in the limelight of the human development agenda<sup>1</sup>. Recognition of the right to development played a critical role in the bridging the gap between human rights and development.

According to United Nations (UN) Human Development Report 2000<sup>2</sup>: “Human development and human rights are close enough in motivation and concern to be compatible and congruous, and they are different enough in strategy and design to supplement each other fruitfully ... In short, human development is essential for realizing human rights, and human rights are essential for full human development”.

## 1.2. Rights Based Approach (RBA):

The Rights Based Approach (RBA) endorsed and adopted in many development initiatives is a result of this convergence between human rights and human development. It considers civil and political, and economic, social and cultural rights as integral parts of the development process.

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<sup>1</sup> United Nations Development Programme, Human Development Report 2000 (p20-22) accessed at <http://hdr.undp.org/en/reports/global/hdr2000/> on 24<sup>th</sup> March 2012

<sup>2</sup> Ibid (p 19)

Previous approaches used in development e.g. needs based approach were based on the pre-assessed needs of communities by organizations, did not feature the community in an active role and mostly addressed needs pertaining to economic, social and cultural rights. RBA in contrast provides a conceptual framework for human development processes responding to international human rights laws and standards, challenging the structural causes of unequal distribution of power and discrimination which are at the core of development policies<sup>3</sup>.

RBA has been defined as: "...a conceptual framework for the process of human development that is normatively based on international human rights standards and operationally directed to promoting and protecting human rights". (UNOHCHR 2006:15)

RBA has been a concern to donors, aid agencies, international organizations, civil society organizations, media, governments, corporations etc. Despite the non-existence of a universally agreed definition of RBA, the UN has agreed on some key elements as reflected in UN's Statement of Common Understanding<sup>4</sup> which identifies RBA's principles and enlists good programming practices and essential features of RBA programmes. According to the UN Human Development Report 2000<sup>5</sup> strengthening RBA in development cooperation, without conditionality is the first amongst the five priority areas identified for international action. It was realized that development cooperation has the potential to directly address realization of human rights in the Third World countries e.g by supporting capacity building for democracy, promoting of civil and political rights, while supporting eradication of poverty (both income and human) and implementing RBA in programming. Since RBA was prioritized at international levels and it has comparative advantages by comparison to the previous approaches to development (i.e. community ownership, sustainability, strong and direct link to human rights thus re-enforcing moral legitimacy of interventions etc) it became a 'vogue' in the development sector. Organization after organization adopted it as their approach to development and larger

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<sup>3</sup> Office of the United Nations Commissioner for Human Rights, Frequently asked questions about human rights based approach to development cooperation (New York and Geneva 2006) accessed at [www.ohchr.org/Documents/Publications/FAQen.pdf](http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Publications/FAQen.pdf) on 25th March 2012

<sup>4</sup> UN's Statement of Common Understanding accessed at <http://www.unicef.org/sowc04/files/AnnexB.pdf> on 25th March 2012

<sup>5</sup> See footnote 1

organizations restructured themselves by redefining their strategies and modus operandi to fulfill both outcome and process related essentials of RBA<sup>6</sup>.

### **1.3. ActionAid; structure and RBA**

ActionAid International (AAI) was founded in 1972 in the UK as a child sponsorship charity. Since then it has evolved and grown significantly and presently claims to be working with over 25 million people in 43 countries. It aims to promote a world free from poverty and injustice.

AAI is committed to the strategy of working together as a global partnership because this way it can create an impact. The organization has a two tier governance structure; while structurally adopting a federal model of governance and organization. It comprises of self governing affiliates and associates; members united by a central or international (“federal”) structure with shared values, vision and mission. The **associates** are self governed organizations (that join or are admitted into) AAI with the intention of becoming Affiliate members, and **affiliates** are those who progress through a defined and supported path expected to strengthen their governance processes, accountability structures and mechanisms and organizational performance. After a satisfactory mutual evaluation and review associates are admitted into affiliate status of AAI.

ActionAid Pakistan (AAPk) is an associate of AAI (one of the many AAI’s country programmes (CPs)). This CP has its own Area Offices (AO) in different provinces of Pakistan. It partners with local organizations (usually referred to as Implementing Partners (IP)) which implement interventions in the field and have direct outreach to the communities. AAPk subscribes to RBA and claims that its projects and programmes are guided by it.

In a complex organization (like AAI) introducing a new concept like RBA and internalizing it is difficult. Ensuring consistent understanding and implementation of RBA can be specifically challenging; Theis (2004:14) notes that “agencies use different rights-based approaches; even within an organisation, different country programmes may use different strategies”.

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<sup>6</sup> Such large organizations include OXFAM, CARE, ActionAid, Save the Children etc

## **1.4. Rationale of the research**

This study questions whether AAI in all its complexity has succeeded in ensuring a consistent understanding of RBA internally. The study is important because inconsistency in understanding RBA across an organization and/or failure to adhere to RBA can translate into unsustainable interventions with no significant impact – depleting time, energy, resources and community trust. Therefore, to ensure that interventions have maximum impact and that they deliver the added value by RBA at grassroots, it is important to undertake studies questioning an organization's understanding and adherence to RBA.

In AAI various units/functions (fundraising, communications, programme, finance etc) work together at various levels (local, national and international) throughout the project cycle. A consistent understanding of RBA will mean thorough and unfailing implementation of RBA in projects no matter how much staff or units are engaged in the project. On the other hand, difference in understanding RBA within the organization may result in an altered approach e.g where at different levels a unique approach is adopted (as perceived by the staff). This has been referred to as the 'local option' approach (Chapman 2009:168-169). This may result in changing the essentials of RBA incorporated in a project (for example at development of project idea stage) by the time it reaches the grassroots. Furthermore, difference in adopting approaches other than RBA can lead to subtraction of key features of RBA (according to the understanding of specific people at specific levels within the organization) during the project cycle. This would ultimately result in reduced impact and sustainability of interventions. Thus disregard for RBA's essentials or different interpretations of it at each stage of project development or failure to adhere to RBA throughout the project cycle can lead to the loss of the value added to interventions by RBA.

This study will research an AAI project funded by the Corti Foundation (an Italian donor) hereafter referred to as the Corti project. The project aims to raise awareness about Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) among street youth; and advocate and lobby the government for enacting the Child Protection policy. Various staff and units belonging to different levels within AAI are involved in this project's design and implementation and the project is claimed to adhere to RBA.

## **1.5. The Research: the problem, objectives and approaches**

It is important to examine and assess the understanding of RBA in AAI and its adherence to RBA in its interventions. AAI is a complex organization with specific themes and units which implements hundreds of development initiatives around the globe. Previous literature existing on RBA is either heavily tilted towards the theoretical dimension (Lindenberg and Bryant 2001, Jochnick and Garzon 2002 and Nelson and Dorsey 2003) of RBA and focuses on its placement along the bridge built between human rights and development or pertains to opinions about why and how will RBA work or not work in comparison to previous approaches to development (for example Donnelly 1998, Sen Gupta 2004, Uvin 2004 etc). Another category of studies involving RBA and development organizations is evaluations and reports of organizations<sup>7</sup> (for example Theis 2004, Cohen 2004, Brown et al 2010 etc). There are rarely any studies based on empirical evidence assessing how organizations are adopting RBA practically, what challenges are they facing and to what extent organizations are adhering to RBA. This makes this study unique as it will collect and test primary data and evidence from the field against a theoretical framework of RBA to assess how AAI adheres to RBA in its interventions and whether or not the organization has been successful in ensuring consistent staff knowledge about RBA. Studying AAI as a whole is beyond the scope of this study for obvious reasons. So the study confines itself to a certain project and restricts itself to the following questions within the space of the selected project:

1. Does understanding of RBA vary within AAI? If yes, what are the factors which account for this variation?
2. Does the selected ActionAid project (Corti project) adhere to RBA? What factors account for any non-adherence observed in the research?

To respond to research question two an RBA project being implemented by AAPk has been selected while AAI staff working at different levels within the organization for this project (i.e. local, regional, international) has been identified to collect data from for research question one<sup>8</sup>. The goal of the research is not to pronounce judgments by labeling any approach or understanding right or wrong but to expose factors which contribute to the different approaches and understandings.

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<sup>7</sup> Developed by consultants commissioned by the organizations themselves for self assessment and evaluation

<sup>8</sup> The methods use to identify these staff members have been explained in detail in Chapter 3

## **1.6. Utility of the research**

The research seeks to highlight areas pertaining to staff capacity building and adherence to RBA in AAI's project. The findings of the research will highlight strengths and weaknesses in AAI's implementation of RBA. The study will also recommend measures for greater adherence to RBA and ultimately improved impact at grassroots. AAI, Corti foundation and partner staff will be able to use findings from this research and improve their approaches at grassroots for stronger RBA internalization. AAI will be able to undertake research and evaluations much broader in scope based on the major findings of this study to assess its work across the globe. The research can encourage organizations (specifically AAI, Corti Foundation and implementing local partner in Pakistan – Sahil) to clarify what RBA means to them and how it affects their work; and develop their RBA frameworks in order to evaluate their work.

## **1.7. Chapter Overview**

Chapter two will offer a review of relevant literature and findings of other researchers on related topics while the detailed methodology will be explained in chapter three. Chapter four will discuss and analyze the findings of this study. The conclusion and recommendations will form part of chapter five.

## **2. Review of Literature**

The debate on Rights Based Approach (RBA) to development initiated in the late 1980s. It intensified and grew in scale throughout the 1990s and various Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) adopted RBA as their approach to development work. However, this debate has remained theoretical over its double decade discourse (Lindenberg and Bryant 2001). As of present, many organizations have subscribed to RBA (O'Brien 2005:204) however, the growing literature around RBA has not moved beyond theoretical and conceptual frameworks and towards the practical dimension of RBA implementation (Jochnick and Garzon 2002; and Nelson and Dorsey 2003). There are rarely any studies about how organizations have adopted RBA, how and to what extent has it been internalized within organizations, how have organizational approaches varied within the day to day processes and at grassroots to adhere to RBA principles and ensure processes and outcomes are consistent with RBA. The few studies that exist have mostly been carried out by independent consultants/researchers commissioned by NGOs themselves for self-evaluation and learning.

This chapter aims to contextualize, clarify and unpack RBA and its implementation within and by NGOs through reviewing existing literature. The review has been divided into four parts; convergence between human rights and development, the RBA, adoption of RBA by NGOs, and implications and challenges for NGOs adopting RBA.

### **2.1. Human Rights and Development; the converging point**

The end of the Cold War concluded the divide of rights into the two discrete categories; the capitalist championed civil and political rights and the communist propagated economic, social and cultural rights (Donnelly, 1998). The failure of development was highlighted. Focus shifted to the long neglected southern voiced economic, social and cultural rights (Hamm 2001) which the “sterile” debates during the Cold War period challenged as right claims (Cornwall and Nyamu-Musembi, 2004). The (widely criticized) neo-liberal economic policies in a rapidly globalizing world aggravated the situation of the poor especially down South and for reaffirming commitment to realization of human rights and alleviating poverty, alternate approaches were needed. (Hamm 2001)

NGO activism spiralled up post Cold War era as development indicators were also developed (along with economic ones) and progress in development was analyzed. The Vienna conference<sup>9</sup> preceded collaboration between organizations working on human rights and those working for development. During the Copenhagen Summit<sup>10</sup> Southern NGOs lead advocacy for RBA and alternative approaches and spelled out the failure of need based approaches. (Hamm 2001; and Cornwall and Nyamu-Musembi, 2004)

Broadly phrasing, it was acknowledged that the realization of human rights and achievement of development goals seek similar outcomes (through different modes) and that both aim to improve the quality of life human beings lead.

## **2.2. The Rights Based Approach**

It has been established that RBA has been devised through the combination of human rights and development. Despite having been introduced in the 1990s there still exists mysticism around RBAs (Dóchas 2003:7). There are numerous interpretations of RBA; by the UN, by various NGOs, by individuals within the same organization, States, multilateral and bi-lateral institutions, donors and media etc. The confusion around RBA is the product of the confusion resulting from different understandings of the relationship between human rights and development. (Jonsson 2005:52). Although a universal definition of RBA does not exist various actors using RBA, have defined and interpreted it for their purposes.

### **2.2.1. RBA – The UN perspective**

The website for the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights states that there is no single, universally agreed definition but there is “emerging consensus” on the basic elements of RBA<sup>11</sup>. RBA is defined as “...a conceptual framework for the process of human development that is normatively based on international human rights standards and operationally directed to promoting and protecting human rights (UNOHCHR 2006<sup>12</sup>). The UN worked both on human rights and development since its inception. The series of conferences

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<sup>9</sup> The Vienna Conference on Human Rights 1993 was the first conference after the Cold War had ended and it recognized all rights were equal and prioritization within rights is void as all rights are equally supreme.

<sup>10</sup> World Social Development Summit organized at Copenhagen in 1995

<sup>11</sup> See The UN Statement of Common Understanding

<sup>12</sup> United Nations Office of High Commissioner for Human Rights (UNOHCHR) (2006), ‘Frequently Asked Questions on a Human Rights-Based Approach to Development Cooperation’ available online at:<http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Publications/FAQen.pdf> - accessed at May 5, 2012



organized by the UN reaffirmed commitment to economic, social and cultural rights along with facilitating convergence between human rights and development. The UN was called upon for addressing human rights as a cross cutting priority in all UN departments within their mandates through the UN Secretary-General's *Programme for Reform* (1997). Within UN agencies UNICEF was the first to adopt RBA. As more UN departments moved towards mainstreaming RBA, the need for clarity around RBA was felt and a Statement of Common Understanding was developed<sup>13</sup>. This Common Understanding identifies three principles:

- All programmes of development cooperation, policies and technical assistance should further the realization of human rights as laid down in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other international human rights instruments.
- Human rights standards contained in, and principles<sup>14</sup> derived from, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other international human rights instruments guide all development cooperation and programming in all sectors and in all phases of the programming process.
- Programmes of development cooperation contribute to the development of the capacities of duty-bearers to meet their obligations and of rights-holders to claim their rights.

Furthermore, guided by these principles, the Common Understanding defines unique characteristics for programmes adopting RBA:

- Assessment and analysis identify the human rights claims of rights-holders and the corresponding human rights obligations of duty-bearers, as well as the immediate, underlying, and structural causes when rights are not realized.
- Programmes assess the capacity of rights holders to claim their rights and of duty bearers to fulfill their obligations. They then develop strategies to build these capacities.
- Programmes monitor and evaluate both outcomes and processes guided by human rights standards and principles.
- Programming is informed by the recommendations of international human rights bodies and mechanisms.

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<sup>13</sup> This was developed at an Inter-Agency Workshop on a human rights-based approach in the context of UN reform, 3 to 5 May 2003.

<sup>14</sup> Among these human rights principles are: universality and inalienability; indivisibility; interdependence and interrelatedness; nondiscrimination and equality; participation and inclusion; accountability and the rule of law.

The Common Understanding also outlines additional good programming essentials; participation, empowerment, monitoring and evaluation of both process and outcome, stakeholder analysis, local ownership, focus on vulnerable and marginalized groups, reduction of disparity, synergy between top-down and bottom up approaches, situational analysis, measurable goals, strategic partnerships and accountability. (UN Statement of Common Understanding, 2003:1-3)

RBA has been referred to use “dynamic construction of notions of vulnerability”. (Akerkar 2005:154) Along with achieving outcomes, following an adequate process in RBA has been emphasized in the Common Understanding. Equal attention should therefore be given to both outcomes and processes for effective human development (Sen Gupta 2004:3, 6; and Jonsson 2005:59-60)

### **2.2.2. Definitions and interpretations by other actors**

RBA has multiple definitions as it is understood differently by different individuals/organizations. “Agencies use different rights-based approaches. Even within an organisation, different country programmes may use different strategies. One size of RBA does not fit all” (Theis 2004:14). According to Dochas (2003:1) RBA serves as a framework in which people’s claims and aspirations are supported. As different organizations and individuals have different claims and aspirations, the fit RBA according to their claim.

Some definitions refer to RBA as being a framework and being guided by the international human rights principles: Boesen and Martin (2007:9) define RBA as “a framework that integrates the norms, principles, standards and goals of the international human rights system into the plans and processes of development. It is characterized by methods and activities that link the human rights system and its inherent notion of power and struggle with development”. Definition of RBA by UNOHCHR (2006) also refers to RBA as a framework for human development.

The following definitions revolve around re-politicization of development, participation, empowerment and focussing on the vulnerable and marginalized – which is in line with the good programming essentials in the UN Statement of Common Understanding:

“Rights based approaches” integrate the political side of development and change efforts with organizing, capacity building, and creative dimension. The political aspect focuses on ensuring that legal frameworks support and advance rights of the poor and excluded. The organizing dimension builds people’s organizations, leadership, and synergy for collective struggle. The practical and creative side supports education and innovations that give meaning to rights and lay the basis for challenging oppressive practices and paradigms. (Chapman 2009:165) and “... the grounding of such an approach in human rights legislation makes it distinctively different to others, lending it the promise of re-politicising areas of development work – particularly, perhaps, efforts to enhance participation in development – that have become domesticated as they have been mainstreamed by powerful institutions like the World Bank”. (Nyamu-Musembi and Cornwall, 2004:1)

Definitions of RBA by NGOs have been noticed to reflect their claims/arenas of work within development. Adoption of RBA by international organizations exhibits some “family resemblances”, which implies adoption of multiple RBAs with different implications for development (Cornwall and Nyamu-Musembi 2004:1415).

AAI defined RBA as: “...seeking solutions to poverty through the establishment and enforcement of rights that entitle poor and marginalised people to a fair share of society’s resources” (ActionAid, 1999:3). CARE defines RBA as: “...achieving minimum conditions for living with dignity (i.e., attaining...human rights—as validated by national and international law). A ‘rights-based approach’... empowers poor communities to claim and exercise their rights and enables those responsible to fulfil their duties<sup>15</sup>”.

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<sup>15</sup> Obtained from “A discussion paper for CARE program staff” at <http://pqdl.care.org/CuttingEdge/Incorporating%20RBA%20in%20CARE%27s%20Program%20Cycle.pdf>

The Boesen and Martin (2007:35) contribute RBA's "air of offering a revolution and its conceptual top-heaviness" its weakness, and classify RBA as a tool with potential to combat poverty and to evaluate responses to poverty.

Some definitions of RBA focus explicitly on exposing power relationships. E.g. "...a rights perspective provides a robust framework for examining some key aspects of the vertical power relations and institutions that shape peoples livelihood capabilities". (Moser and Norton, 2001:16)

In short, in the multiple ways, RBAs have been interpreted; some elements are constant: siding with individuals/communities whose rights are being violated, capacity building of both right holders and duty bearers for enabling them to demand their rights and fulfill their duties respectively, participation, empowerment by means of capacity building and advocacy and furthering the process of development.

### **2.2.3. Service Delivery VS Advocacy in RBA**

Within RBA, the idea of decreased service delivery and scaled up advocacy work is widely supported (Uvin 2004, Chapman, 2009). However, service delivery plays an important role in strengthening the empowerment processes (Chapman 2009). According to Windfuhr (2000) advocacy is a complementary activity in supporting victims of human rights violation and for holding States responsible. The RBA emphasizes empowerment which differentiates it from previous approaches used in development; the key activities under previous approaches revolved around service delivery. Organizations adopting RBA tend to limit service delivery activities by considering them 'inappropriate or outmoded' (Chapman 2009:180) or attempting to integrate their ongoing service delivery activities with advocacy work. Such adjustments within organizations post RBA adoption have attracted criticism that due to some ambiguity around RBA it is convenient for organizations to repackage their existing work in the rights language and thus become "a new bottle for old wine" (Dochas 2003:31).

There are successful examples of organizations effectively combining service delivery to RBA i.e. AAI using service delivery for building a trust relationship with a community and with community ownership scaling up advocacy work. (Chapman 2009:180)

### **2.3. Adoption of RBA by organizations**

During 1990s numerous organizations adopted RBA. These organizations included intergovernmental, governmental and non-governmental organizations. (O'Brien 2005:204 and Ball 2005:290). NGO's approaches were subject of discussion during this period due to their ineffectiveness for improving social indicators – this raised questions about NGO integrity and transparency. At such a junction in time, RBA seemed to be the ideal solution for NGOs as it offered high moral standards and “universally accepted political principles” (O'Brien, 2005:204). By mid 2000s, NGOs working for development had started using the rights language in their commitments and publications (Hickey and Mitlin, 2009: 3)

Major NGOs having adopted RBA includes AAI, OXFAM, CARE, Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative, NOVIB, Save the Children Alliance, Water Aid and INTERACTION (US) etc. The way in which these organizations understand RBA is supportive to each other's understandings. (Cohen 2004: 6) Although these organizations have different perspectives on how RBA has been “adopted” within their organizations. Harris Curtis, Marleyn and Bakewell (2005:18) surveyed 17 NGOs having adopted RBA and found that some staff experienced no change as they considered their work promoted human rights to start off with, some viewed adopting RBA as a shift which would bring new values to the organization while others suggested that RBA is merely a new language for their ongoing work which they will make use of as per donors demand but without expecting it to affect their work in any way. Ball (2005:290) notes that there are time when RBA is superficially added to the institutional language without any other changes but “there is nothing to prevent an organisation from adopting the trimmings without any substance”.

Many a times NGOs consider RBA as a set of packaged measures, thus its adoption is merely adopting the “package” Hickey and Mitlin (2009:8) argue that due to such packaging processes, a variety of elements are lost and thus exist various interpretations “which should be included

within the rights based approach”. Various interpretation and multiple packages of RBA create difficulties for advocates of human rights and development practitioners to be on the same page. (Archer, 2009:23).

What RBA means to some major NGOs is as follows:

RBA means siding with the marginalized for AAI. AA believes that poverty is a violation of human rights as it is not natural and cannot be blamed on the poor. It symbolizes the denial of the rights to food, shelter, education, work, a democratic voice. AAI believes that putting an end to poverty and injustice is only possible through realization of fundamental human rights and empowerment at the grassroots. AAI’s work specifically supports the rights to: education, food, just, democratic systems of governance, safety in conflict and emergencies, life and dignity in the face of HIV and AIDS. The degree to which RBA has been internalized within the organization varies across AAI’s country offices. (Dochas 2003: 54) CARE adopted RBA in 1999 and focuses on awareness raising. It promotes a “shared understanding of RBA within its work” through; capacity building of staff for application of RBA across all operations, aligning policies and systems with RBA and strategic partnerships with other organizations for increased learning. (Dochas 2003:49)

OXFAM stresses that partnering with numerous local organizations, it works with people “living in poverty striving to exercise their human rights” for their empowerment and dignified life. (Brouwer et al, 2005:63) note that OXFAM generated its own list of rights in line with the work it was doing which was criticized as “repackaging”. OXFAM however, claimed to have used an innovative way for applying RBA in its work by building on staff’s existing knowledge.

The UNAIDS Issue Paper (2004) states that NGOs adopt RBA to advance their mandates. RBA should compliment participation and people centred interventions and provide opportunities for politicization of development work (Hickey and Mitlin 2009:17). RBA made development explicitly political by calling for a fairer division of existing resources and stresses incapacitating the vulnerable to assert claims to their rights. (Cornwall and Nyamu-Musembi 2004:2-3)

There are many reasons for NGOs adopting RBA. Some most notable ones are:

### **2.3.1. Added Value:**

Piron and Watkins (2004:79-81) identified three areas within which RBA adds value in development initiatives namely; normative value (provision of a framework, explicit linkages to international standards, and empowering citizens to shape their own future), analytical value (supports setting development objectives, transforming power relations and places participation at the core) and operational value (reinforces good practices, emphasized need to work with both right holders and duty bearers).

NGOs appreciate RBA for bringing the culture of accountability to development where accountability is not only limited to NGOs but also to donors, States and multi lateral and bi-lateral institutions (Frankovits and Earle 2000:7). Solidarity with the vulnerable is also an important value within RBA (Hausermann 1999<sup>16</sup>). Lastly, Van Tuijl (2000:1-2) argues that NGOs should adopt RBA as it offers a shared perspective for entering “the global dealing room”.

### **2.3.2. Funding:**

Mixed arguments exist on the topic of funding as a reason for NGOs to adopt RBA. Harris-Curtis (2003:560) argues that since major donors like Department for International Development (DFID) have adopted RBA and lookout to fund RBA interventions, it is natural for NGOs to adopt RBA, even if only for generating resources. This is why RBA forming the superficial rhetoric within NGOs has also been attributed to funding. However donors like USAID who do not agree with RBA and other donors getting “cold feet” from RBA may actually encourage organizations to not adopt RBA.(Ball, 2005:295 and Jochnick and Garzon 2002:5)

### **2.3.3. Sustainability:**

RBA offers sustainable and effective development. Frankovits and Earle (1998) are major proponents of the notion that proper implementation of RBA can lead to “stabler” societies. There exist good practices and model projects within organizations where development initiatives have been sustained. However, there is no empirical evidence that application of RBA principles and programming practices guarantees or increases chances of sustained development.

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<sup>16</sup> Taken from the Report of Public Event in London, 31 March 1999; Can we do anything sensible with a RBA to development? Accessed at <http://www.odi.org.uk/events/details.asp?id=2297&title=can-anything-sensible-rights-based-approach-development>

Mander notes “It is impossible to address basic needs sustainably without enforcing basic rights”. Sustainability has been referred to be the eventual result if that State plays an altered (support) role and communities assess their own needs and are capacitated to fulfil their potential (Mander 2005:251)

#### **2.3.4. Insulating previous failure of development programmes**

Another reason for NGOs adopting RBA is also among the reasons which paved the way for a convergence between human rights and development i.e. the failure of development programs in mitigating poverty. The service delivery approach could not assist people in leading a better life or influence any public policy to catalyze change. (Mander 2005:251)

Uvin’s (2002:2) “moral high ground” can also contribute to NGOs adopting RBA. In criticizing RBA for development Uvin (Ibid: 2-9) identified three levels of incorporating human rights in development; rhetoric type (work automatically contributes to human rights), good governance type (typically the way of the World Bank which allows the argument that structural adjustment programs do not cause failure of development but developing countries’ failures to implement structural adjustment programs does) and development and freedom type (which is short of implications or obligations but offers an intellectual framework). Uvin argues that since poverty could not be addressed through half a century’s development aid, the development sector has sought out a “moral high ground” in the form of RBA.

## **2.4. Implications and Challenges for organizations adopting RBA**

The implications of NGOs adopting RBA are massive (Chapman, 2009). NGOs have a concentration of their programs in developing countries where poverty levels are high and public policy is less supportive, rather oppressive for the poor. These conditions make implementation of RBA most difficult. (Gledhill, 2009:33)

Theis (2004:6) highlighted that RBA depends upon the objectives and mandates of organizations, the geographical area of its operations and its focus areas for intervention. Thus, it is important for an organization to precisely define what it means by the term. Harris Curtis,



Marleyn and Bakewell (2005:11) note that defining RBA the very first challenge faced by NGOs post RBA adoption and organizations admit that their perception of RBA is different than others. Some organizations have transformed their policies and practices for following RBA where else agencies like bilateral agencies have changed very less even after adopting RBA. (Uvin, 2004 and Hickey and Mitlin, 2009:7-8). NGO representatives admitted that developing mechanisms to introduce and internalize RBA was the major challenge being faced by them at the Dochas Seminar (2003:16).

Most common implications and challenges faced by NGOs as cited by literature are stated below:

#### **2.4.1. Internal and External Resistance**

Adopting RBA is a major decision for any organization, which not only impacts the organization but also individuals which work for it. It is difficult to suddenly change the culture or the modus operandi of any organization and the bigger an organization is, the tougher it gets to introduce and internalize any new approach. An organization can have staff pushing forth RBA and learning from implementing it or staff entangled in the institutional rhetoric unable to step out of the previous approaches used. Two approaches have been identified that can exist in an organization which has adopted RBA; “‘assistentialist’ (or charitable) as well as ‘structuralist’ (or transformative) approaches” to poverty within the same organisation, with all the potential confusion and tension that can bring. (Harris Curtis, Marleyn and Bakewell 2005:34). External resistance can come from donors (like USAID), private supporters who want to see instant results from their contributions and partner organizations etc.

#### **2.4.2. Resource Allocation for internalizing RBA**

In order to internalize RBA, certain measures need to be taken. These measures have budgetary and financial implications which are usually not covered by donors. Some such measures are explained below:

##### **Research and Policy Analysis:**

Policy analysis is necessary for identifying avenues for advocacy and lobbying. It is also necessary to understand the root or structural causes behind various social problems. Research

can be a requirement for gathering data for designing a good project. The cost for such policy analysis and research requires funds which are usually not covered by donors and therefore require the organizations to invest in. CARE for example decided to carry out policy analysis and advocacy for which it relied on donations from private donors which most small organizations do not have. “Rights based approaches not only require investment; they may also require a willingness to put existing investments at risk” (Gready and Ensor 2005:224).

### **Capacity Building and New Recruitments**

Adopting RBA requires capacity building of staff for introducing and implementing RBA effectively and new recruitments as RBA can significantly increase the workload in an organization. Staff with prior grounding on RBA is also hired by organizations to promote in-house learning. According to O’Brien (2005:224) NGOs engaged in policy advocacy in Afghanistan piled up the advocacy work on staff which was already burdened with work. Staff was overburdened and could not handle the excessive work thus limiting sustained advocacy.

Recruitment of specialized staff for implementation of RBA is recommended by various authors in their evaluations of organizations. (Ball 2005:281, and Theis 2004:57). Similarly the need for capacity building and strengthening of staff is a popular idea for effective RBA implementation in the literature reviewed (Theis 2004:57, Offenheiser and Holcombe 2003:297-298, Rand and Watson 2007:38, Ball 2005:282 and Brown et al 2010:31). The capacity building is stressed as strong staff helps organizations run effectively and training staff will enable them to implement policy analysis, capacity building, technical assistance and partnership etc more effectively.

AAI has been recommended to invest in effective organization development and capacity building for partners and alliances in its latest evaluation. (Brown et al 2010:31). AAI has been using RBA for over a decade but it still needs “sustained” investment in staff and partner capacity building as RBA is understood differently within the organization. (Archer, 2011:353)

AAPk recognizes capacity building of staff around implementing RBA on ground and internalizing it as a key area for improvement in its annuals reports for 2008, 2009 and 2010<sup>17</sup>. (AAPk Annual Reports 2008, 2009 and 2010)

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<sup>17</sup> Interviews with staff have informed the researcher that it is an area for improvement in 2011’s annual report too.

### **2.4.3. Integrating RBA in organizational processes**

Jonsson (2005:49) note that organizations have monitored human development outcome substantively over the past decade but meagre progress has been made in monitoring the quality of process. This has been attributed to the fact that indicators for monitoring processes have not been introduced. AAI and CARE both have monitoring mechanisms which do not include such indicators. AAI's monitoring system; ALPS attempts to implant RBA in its work, however, due to staff being engaged in difficult and unique situations monitoring which is beyond the "methodological innovations" of ALPS. (Harris-Curtis, Marleyn and Bakewell 2005:31-33).

Monitoring how and to what extent has RBA principles been incorporated in organizational processes can call for external and internal evaluations which also have budgetary requirements.

### **2.4.4. Language**

Language is a key tool for promoting and internalizing RBA within an organization. It is also a controversial area where organizations have been accused of lip servicing by superficial RBA rhetoric for their gains – achieving moral high ground (Uvin 2004:2) or seeking funds from donors (Harris-Curtis, Marleyn and Bakewell, 2005:18).

### **2.4.5. Gaps between understanding and implementing RBA within organizations**

One of the most commented upon challenge in implementing RBAs effectively on ground is the gap between the understanding and implementation of RBA within an organization. This can be between staff working at the same level or staff working at different hierarchal levels within an organization. Almost all agencies face this challenge and it has been highlighted in many reports and evaluations. Jonsson (2005:60) observe the significant gap between UN agency headquarters and the practical situation at country level. Harris-Curtis, Marleyn and Bakewell (2005:6) identify that differences regarding RBA do not only exist between different organizations, they also exist within the same organization as various staff understand the organization's policy differently. In reviewing Save the Children Sweden, Theis (2004:19) observes that different country programmes used different strategies. OXFAM was also noted to struggle in ensuring a consistent understanding of RBA in-house (Ball 2005:282)

Another barrier in implementing RBA at grassroots can be the capacity and understanding of partners. Cohen (2004:15) suggests “There is significant work remaining in supporting partners and staff to link meeting basic needs with empowerment and advocacy for rights realization”.

AAI has been examined with more detail with regard to lack of consistent understanding of RBA (due to it being the subject of this research).

Dochas (2003) notes that AAI failed to exhibit a general understanding of RBA within the organization and it is interpreted in various ways by various staff members. Certain country programmes have limited knowledge about RBAs and others are not confident enough to implement them.

AAI’s own evaluations namely Taking Stock 2 (2004) and Taking Stock 3 (2010:26-27) both recommend the organization to ensure all staff understand RBA in a similar manner and the need to build capacity.

Brown et al (2010:27) state “Without shared theories of change, staff members tend to adopt their own preferences and ideas about how to achieve desired outcomes. Such “local option” approaches can produce an increasingly incoherent patchwork of approaches across countries and regions”. Chapman (2009:168-169) also observes that implementation on RBAs in AAI have been dictated by the understanding of the senior managements in countries it operates in. She also emphasizes that despite AAI’s attempts to reach a common understanding of RBA within the organization, ensuring such common understanding remains difficult.

## **2.5. Challenges in implementing RBA at grassroots**

### **2.5.1. Awareness at Grassroots**

The pace of development and progress is directly proportional to awareness levels about rights at grassroots. Some NGOs like OXFAM faced challenges in implementing RBA as many people at grassroots were not aware of their rights, so any intervention in the community had to take off from awareness raising – which consumed time. (Brouwer et al 2005:74)

### **2.5.2. Cultural Contexts**

RBA has to be rolled out in a culturally sensitive manner as it is implemented at various culturally diverse geographical locations. Contextualization of RBA is important for its effective implementation. However, this does not mean any country just gets a ‘pass’ (Cohen, 2004:18)

### **2.5.3. Government commitments**

Since governments are mostly the duty bearers in RBA programmes, RBA calls for working with them and supporting them where needed. This means that for organizations to implement RBA successfully maintaining working relationships with the governments of the countries they work in is critical. Therefore government commitment and capacity are key factors for RBA to be successful. Even if the government support realization of rights, it may not have the required resources to fulfil its duties. Organizations sometimes are very cautious in dealing with governments to ensure that they are permitted to carry out operations and to ensure the safety and security of staff. (Brouwer et al, 2005:74-76). Chapman (2009:168) highlights the difficulties of issue based lobbying by bringing to attention that lobbying assumes an open and democratic political system – which may or may not be the case everywhere where RBA is implemented.

### **2.5.4. RBA in short term projects**

Effective implementation of RBA and sustainability are time consuming. Short term projects raise questions about the effectivity of RBA. Jones (2005:94-97) notes that NGOs are mostly funded through projects which are implemented by different organizations in different circumstances. This makes piecing together their impact rather difficult. Donors demand results thus pressurizing organizations. “To place development programs in a longer term, rights framework requires transcending short term timelines, “output” (as opposed to impact) thinking and project boxes” (Ibid). Ball (2005:294) endorses Jones in arguing that organizations should move away from short term project funding to address the structural problems RBA aims to dent – as structural issues cannot be addressed while being stuck in frequent and brief planning, budgeting and reporting cycles. This change (moving away from short term projects) is the “hardest lesson and greatest challenge” for following RBAs (Jones 2005:94-97).

## **3. Research Methodology**

### **3.1. Research Design**

This is a qualitative research based on primary data. It relied on selection and development of data collection tools, pre-testing, data collection and data analysis. The paragraphs below explain the methodology and strategies used in the research and what the limitations of the study are.

As stated in chapter one this study focuses on (a) one specific project implemented by AAI using RBA and assessing how it adheres to RBA and (b) selected staff working at different hierarchal units and assessing whether their understanding of RBA is consistent or not.

The study uses purposive sampling as it helps to select units with direct reference to the research question (Bryman, 2008). Therefore, determining the universe of the study was a step by step process as explained below:

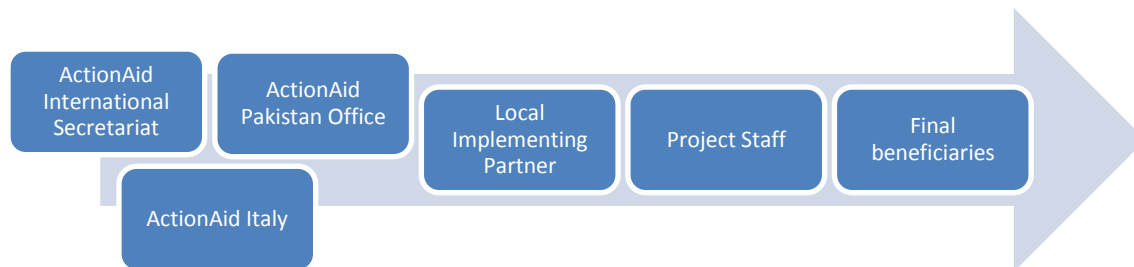
#### **3.1.1. Selection of the project**

The following factors were considered in selecting this project:

- a. AAI and donor permit for the research
- b. AAI claims that design and implementation of the project use RBA
- c. The existing role of actors from the top to bottom hierarchal structure of AAI
- d. Feasibility in terms of time and resources required to visit the community, AAPk area office and project office for data collection.
- e. Networking within the organization to use key documents relating to the project and research

### 3.1.2. Identification of hierarchal units involved in design and implementation of the selected project (from AAI hierarchy to community)

The chain of hierarchal units involved in the design and implementation of the project was selected after the project selection as illustrated below:



Each unit within the hierarchy has a specific role in designing and implementation of the project:

- a. AA international secretariat: Coordination, technical assistance and monitoring
- b. ActionAid Italy: Fundraising, donor relations and reporting to donor
- c. ActionAid Pakistan (AAPk): Designing the project, implementation, monitoring, and reporting to ActionAid Italy and ActionAid International secretariat
- d. Local implementing partner (Sahil): Ensuring quality implementation and timelines as agreed upon with AAPk and monitoring
- e. Project staff: Carry out day to day work at community level as per project design
- f. Beneficiaries: Actual community and final evaluators of the project implementation, quality, effectiveness and sustainability.

### 3.1.3. Selecting respondents for data collection

The selection of respondents was based on identifying key staff responsible for the implementation of the project within each hierarchal unit. The challenge in selecting the respondents was accessing them during their busy schedules. Following were the respondents selected:

- a. AA international secretariat: Manager High Value (HV) funding<sup>18</sup>
- b. AA Italy: Head of Value Donors Team

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<sup>18</sup> High Value funding is funding by high value donors i.e. Individual major donors, charitable trusts and foundations and companies and funding more than £5k per annum

- c. AAPk: Manager area office, Program officer HIV and AIDS<sup>19</sup>
- d. Sahil: Key staff involved in implementing Corti project
- e. Project staff: Project coordinator, psychologist, peer educators
- f. Final beneficiaries: Based on convenient sampling

## 3.2. Data Collection

Data was collected by the following methods:

### 3.2.1. Review of literature:

Important strategic and operational documents of AAI and AAPk were examined. Strategies and some core documents of the local implementing partner - Sahil were also reviewed. Valuable information was gained by reviewing literature of the organizations. This information also helped greatly in developing the questionnaires and guiding points for focus group discussion (FGD).

### 3.2.2. Data collection Tools<sup>20</sup>:

The following table describes the tools and methodology used for collecting primary data:

<i>Hierarchal Unit</i>	<i>Respondents</i>	<i>Data collection tools and methodology</i>
AA International Secretariat	Manager High Value (HV) funding	Questionnaire – Data collected through correspondence by email.
AA Italy	Head of Value Donors Team	Questionnaire – Data collected through correspondence by email
AAPk area office	Manager area office, Program officer	Interview guide - Data was collected through in depth interviews by visiting the area office.
Sahil	Focal person within Sahil staff	Questionnaire – Data collected through correspondence by email Interview guide – In depth interview over telephone.

<sup>19</sup> The project is being implemented under the HIV and AIDS theme of ActionAid

<sup>20</sup> All data collection tools are appended



Project staff	Project coordinator, psychologist, peer educators	Interview guide and guide for FDG- Data collected through in depth interviews and FDG by visiting project office. In depth interviews were used for project staff excluding the peer educators. FDG was used to obtain information from peer educators.
Final beneficiaries	Members of community	Discussion with community members during project office visit

### **Development and selection of data collection tools**

The tools were developed based on reviewed AAI/AAPk documents, literature on RBA and Corti project's context. These tools involve in depth interviews and discussions. Interviews were selected as they indicate how the interviewee understands issues and events (Bryman, 2008) and provide flexibility to pick up on things said by interviewees. (Ibid: 438). The interview guide was preferred as it offered opportunities to compose critical questions on the spot to fit the natural rhythm of the dialogue and to promote maximum, unbiased disclosure of information by the interviewee (Dooley, 2004). One could argue that surveys or questionnaires could be a better approach for making the study time and resource efficient. However, one of the major reasons for using interviews was to enable the researcher to get an in depth opinion of the interviewees. This is important as the research questions aim to look beyond 'what is and what is not', but rather to understand the 'how and why' issues within 'what is and what is not'. A survey would be good for getting answers to the pre identified questions and to determine associations but it would not have enabled the researcher to frame deeper critical questions for determining causality. Considering the research questions, establishing causality of all respondents responses' was a key function of the study. However, where there were unavoidable constraints<sup>21</sup> in conducting in depth interviews questionnaires were opted for.

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<sup>21</sup> Non availability of staff due to their work schedule, official travel or holidays

FGD was selected for data collection as it offers chances to probe deeper into the views expressed by participants as it ‘allows participants to bring forth issues relating to the core topic which they deem to be important’ (Bryman 2008: 475).

The data collection tools are explained in more detail below:

### **Interview guides:**

The interview guides were developed for data collection from AAI, AA Italy, AAPk, Sahil and project staff.

- **Interview guide for AAI, AA Italy and AAPk**

Interview guides for AAI and AAPk were more or less the same. The questions related to the role and functions of staff to be interviewed in relation to Corti project. It also featured questions related to RBA, its essential elements and its relative advantages to other approaches used by organizations. Questions focusing on designing, implementing and monitoring Corti project for adherence to RBA standards and challenges in implementation were also part of the guide.

The questions focused on assessing what RBA meant to staff and how they implemented it during various stages of the project cycle (i.e. design, implementation and monitoring etc)

- **Interview guide for Sahil staff**

The interview guide for Sahil comprised questions related to RBA and its application within Sahil and how the respondent (focal person for Corti project) understands RBA. Questions relating to Corti project, adherence to RBA, implementation challenges specifically due to adopting RBA, monitoring mechanisms and sustainability of the project were also included.

Questions were framed considering that any differences between the way AAI/AAPk and Sahil perceive RBA, can alter its implementation in the project, and ultimately alter the outcomes on ground.

- **Interview guide for project staff**

The project staff comprised of project coordinator, psychologist and peer educators. The project coordinator’s role was overall administration and coordination and the psychologist (being the

oldest employee of the project) assisted the project coordinator. The peer educators were the outreach agents (they visited the field daily and interacted with the community). Considering the roles of the project staff, interview guide was designed for interviews with project coordinator and psychologist however FGD was opted for gathering data from the peer educators.

The interview guide included questions regarding different components and activities of the project, ensuring adherence to RBA in day to day project activities, challenges in project's implementation and room for improvement.

- **Focus Group Discussion (FGD)**

The FDG was chosen as a data collection tool for peer educators. This was based on the assumption that since peer educators work directly with the project's beneficiaries and daily interact with them, they have a wealth of information which may not be fully harnessed through an interview.

Twelve participants took part in the discussion and pre-prepared points for the FGD included participation and involvement of community, addressing beneficiaries' needs (how is this ensured within a RBA framework), implementation of activities at community level, community ownership, challenges at ground level and potential changes to approach and project for improvement.

### **Discussion with final beneficiaries**

The discussion aimed at getting the community's perspective on the project, its benefits, its approach and its implementation. Important points which were brought up in the discussion were the community's involvement at various levels of the project cycle, project's benefit to the beneficiaries, community ownership and project's sustainability.

Discussion with the community was given importance as it was assumed that the community's perspective matters the most, as if the community does not feel involved, does not own and does not participate, the project/intervention would miss key elements of RBA. Feedback from the community also helped identify the strengths and weaknesses in the intervention's design and implementation – which will reflect in recommendations. Since the beneficiaries belonged to a vulnerable and marginalized group of society, special care was taken in the use of language (to

avoid labelling and stigma), ensuring privacy and confidentiality. Discussion was carried out in the local language.

### **3.2.3. Pre-testing**

Once the research tools were developed, feedback was sought from AAPk to ensure that the materials and methods are appropriate. All the research tools could not be pre-tested due to time and resource constraints. An interview however, was conducted at the AO wherein it was realized that some questions required rewording for better complying with AAI language and that some questions should be taken off the interview guide as responses to them seem to repeat information given in response to other questions in the guide. Accordingly changes were made to the interview guide for improved data collection.

## **3.3. Ethical Issues**

In researches directly involving gathering data from individuals (human subjects) an ongoing ethical scrutiny of the research process is necessary (Hardwick & Worsley, 2011). The purpose of the research and materials and methods used were shared by the donor of the project and AAI for ethical reasons. Consent was taken from staff and communities for using information provided by them. The respondents were made aware that information being collected is strictly for academic purposes.

Special care was taken to ensure anonymity and confidentiality of respondents. No names or other private information has been made public.

## **3.4. Limitations of the study**

The research could have been a lot broader in terms of its scope but due to time and resource constraints, focusing the research was required. Efforts were made to personally gather all data through interviews, however due to time and resource constraints, some data (from AA international secretariat and AA Italy) had to be collected electronically. Analyzing RBA's implementation in an organization requires in depth research spread over longer time limits, however given the time available, utmost effort has been made to explore answers to the research questions. Not a lot of time could be spent at community level interacting with direct

beneficiaries due to limited time but effort was made to conduct an intensive discussion with the beneficiaries. Due to stigma and discrimination, all groups of direct beneficiaries could not be accessed (i.e. drug users and street youth was accessed but daughters of female sex workers could not be accessed).

Despite declaring that the research does not aim to judge or label any approach or understanding right or wrong; the researcher felt a defense mechanism operational while framing questions about adhering to RBA and consistency in the understanding of RBA across the organization. This exhibited potential to distort data therefore increasing chances of error in the research findings. As with all research, especially qualitative research there can be human error and chances of personal bias in analyzing the findings of the research.

Another limitation can be the difficulty of determining the reliability and validity of qualitative research. The research can be somewhat gauged in terms of credibility though. There are limitations in duplicating the research as it has been conducted in specific social situations; which are naturally subject to change. Thus despite following the same methodology, data collection tools and approach, replication of the study may not necessarily confirm the findings. Last but not least, AAI launched its Human Rights Based Approach Resource book in April, 2012. The resource provides a framework and minimum requirements for any intervention to be a RBA intervention. However, by the time this resource was launched, the findings from the study had already been analyzed and this report was more than halfway done. Ideas regarding re-approaching respondents for new information were dismissed due to obvious time constraints and also because the project had been designed and implemented in the absence of such a framework so the applicability of the framework to the project seemed illogical. Although the study could have been much more relevant and stronger if an RBA framework devised by AAI itself was used to assess adherence of fieldwork to it.

### **3.5. Data Analysis**

No software has been used for data analysis. However, for assessing the project's adherence to RBA, some framework or checklist was needed as adherence analysis could not be based on

general observation and thoughts. AAI did not have any framework<sup>22</sup> of its own outlining minimum requirements/standards for any intervention using RBA. Therefore, a list outlining key characteristics and good programming practices was devised from the UN Statement of Common Understanding (UN Statement of Common Understanding, 2003). This list<sup>23</sup> is fairly generic and elements contained within it have also been highlighted by other academic literature reviewed during the research. Gready and Ensor (2005:1-52) for example explain RBA through generous referring to the UN Statement of Common Understanding.

The study is qualitative so the approach taken for analysis was; recording the responses from interviews in detail and taking notes from FGDs and discussions, and reviewing them with the information gained from literature review in context to the research questions. Key features in respondents' answers were grouped for analysis. The analysis attempts to understand the findings from the study by correlating and comparing them with other pre-existing relevant literature.

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<sup>22</sup> ActionAid has launched its RBA Resource book in April 2012 which outlines minimum standards for an RBA intervention. However this study could not use it as was not developed while the research was conducted and complied.

<sup>23</sup> Appended

## 4. Results and Discussion

This chapter will explain the results of the study and elaborate on them in light of existing literature and the information obtained from this research.

The research aimed to answer two questions:

1. *Does understanding of RBA vary within AAI? If yes, what factors account for this variation?*

This question aims to determine if understanding of RBA is consistent amongst AAI staff (working at different levels within AAI's hierarchy) and identify factors which contribute to inconsistencies, if found. It is important for the staff of an organization to understand RBA consistently for ensuring RBA's consistent application in day to day work and organizational processes. Jonsson (2005:60) and Harris-Curtis, Marleyn and Bakewell (2005:6) have observed incidences where staff understanding of RBA varied within organizations. To answer this question, the key staff<sup>24</sup> was questioned about what RBA means to them. The staff was also specifically asked if they thought understanding of RBA amongst AAI staff was consistent.

Understanding of RBA amongst staff members at different levels of AAI is briefly<sup>25</sup> explained below:

Sr #	AAI staff location	Understanding of RBA
1	ActionAid Italy	Responses about RBA emphasized increased focus on advocacy and right bearers being at the centre of any intervention. Capacity building of both right holders and duty bearers was specified recognizing that duties cannot be fulfilled without adequate capacities. References were made to the new RBA framework developed by ActionAid. The staff had attended multiple trainings on RBA.
2	ActionAid	RBA at this level means siding with the poor and intervening to address

<sup>24</sup> The key staff chosen and the methodology used to choose it is detailed in Chapter 3.

<sup>25</sup> The study did not go into much depth about what individual staff members perceive RBA to be and to what extent do their understandings match or mismatch as that would be a study in itself. This study restricted itself to finding out whether or not understanding of RBA was consistent and discussing with ActionAid staff possible reasons for the inconsistency.

	International Secretariat	structural and underlying causes of development problems. The goal of interventions should be to empower beneficiaries through capacity building, holding governments accountable while strategically supporting them. Work should encompass solidarity with right holders, empowering strategies for right holders and advocacy and campaigning for holding duty bearers accountable. At this level equal attention to both process and outcome is mentioned.
3	ActionAid Pakistan	RBA was translated as minimal service delivery – just enough to serve as an entry point. Empowerment was referred to repeatedly with few references to participation and local ownership. Description of what RBA actually is; was very vague and ambiguous. Empowering target groups through mobilization and capacity building and campaigning for their rights was stressed.

It is important to know that all staff interviewed thought that understanding of RBA is highly inconsistent throughout AAI.

The causes for inconsistent understanding<sup>26</sup> identified by this study are outlined below:

a) Complex structure of the organization

AAI is a complex and hierarchal organization (Cohen 2004 and Brown et al 2010). Different staff is attached to various departments/units. There is no ‘one way’ of taking all on board regarding a certain meaning of RBA. The staff also works in different contexts which shape their understanding of RBA according to the conditions they live and work in. Capacity building initiatives implemented have major costs and are time taking considering AAI works in forty three countries and country programmes have a sub-hierarchy and complexity of their own. Staff turnover further complicates ensuring a consistent understanding and limiting the outcomes of capacity building initiatives.

AAI is very decentralized which means that country programmes have a lot of liberty and freedom to make decisions. This creates room for country programmes to follow approaches as they perceive them locally with little influence from AAI (Chapman

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<sup>26</sup> Based on staff interviews



2009:168-169). This also makes it difficult for a central body like AAI headquarters in South Africa or the International secretariat in United Kingdom to strongly lead an initiative like rolling out a common understanding of RBA across board. It was noted that the understanding of RBA at AO level was perceived in association with sets of activities i.e. more service delivery meant less RBA focus and increased advocacy meant more RBA. Such perceptions have been noted by Chapman (2009:180) as a misunderstanding about RBA.

b) Lack of organizational RBA framework

AAI did not have an RBA framework despite having adopted RBA a decade back. An RBA resource book has now been developed streamlining what it means for AAI. This resource book was launched in April 2012<sup>27</sup>. In the absence of a guiding framework, staff members adopt “local option” approaches according to their perception of RBA (Ibid) which results in radically different approaches being implemented – all known as RBA locally- this was specifically pointed out by various staff during interviews.

c) Lack of capacity building initiatives around RBA

There has been a lack of capacity building initiatives in AAPk. AAPk Annual Report (2009) mentions the organization being relatively stagnant on organizational development especially with regard to RBA. Capacity building for RBA is repeatedly recognized as an area needing attention (AAPk Annual Reports 2008, 2009 and 2010) with no mention of any capacity building initiative over the three years these reports cover. Staff did not even remember the last time there was a training/refresher or capacity building initiative regarding RBA. The need for capacity building initiatives specifically on RBA has been highlighted by many authors i.e. (Offenheiser and Holcombe 2003:297-298, Theis 2004:57, O’Brien 2005:224, Ball 2005:282, Rand and Watson 2007:38, Brown et al 2010:31 and Archer, 2011:353)

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<sup>27</sup> By the time this resource book was launched the research report had almost been finalized.

d) Organizational turnover

Another major factor of different understanding of RBA is organizational turnover. The organization invests to build staff capacity and they jump boats for better opportunities and new staff hired needs capacity building all over again. Building new recruits capacities' involves constant implementation of trainings and capacity building initiatives which have programme costs – which AAI aims to keep at a minimum so as to be able to spend maximum funds at grassroots.

e) The 'structuralist' and 'assistentialist' approach within AAI

Even within AAI there exist internal and external resistance as explained by Harris Curtis, Marleyn and Bakewell (2005:34). Some staff thinks that what AAI did previously was just as good in promoting rights and they use rights rhetoric for wider acceptance within RBA circles and resource mobilization. In contrast there is staff who believes in RBA and thinks its adoption can take development miles ahead than any other approach to development. So work delivered by 'structuralists' and 'assistentialists' causes inconsistencies between both understanding and implementation of RBA.

Taking measures to address the causes stated above can improve consistency of RBA understanding across various tiers of AAI. Reviewed literature places heavy emphasis on the need to ensure consistency in how the organization understands and implements RBA (Dochas 2003, Cohen 2004, Chapman 2009, Brown et al 2010 and Archer 2011).

The second research question for this study is:

2. *Does the selected AAI project (Corti project) adhere to RBA? What factors account for any non-adherence observed in the research?*

The purpose of this question was to study how AAI has applied RBA in the selected project. Information related to the project was analyzed in detail and key focal persons/actors involved in its design, implementation and monitoring were interviewed; and questioned about how RBA is being applied to the project. It was assumed that if RBA has been applied/is being applied to the project throughout its cycle the beneficiaries' responses and outcomes at grassroots will authenticate it. Therefore, for understanding how and to what extent RBA was applied to the

project; results have been discussed according to stages in the project cycle (which were referred to by majority of the staff interviewed as key stages for implementing RBA) i.e. background and design, resource mobilization and project implementation. Since AAI did not have a specific framework of its own for determining if a project actually adopts RBA or not<sup>28</sup>, the study used a checklist derived from the UN's Statement of Common Understanding<sup>29</sup> (UN Statement of Common Understanding, 2003) for determining how the project adhered to RBA.

a. Background and Project Design

During 2004-2005 AAPk initiated a small project under its HIV and AIDS theme. This project focused on awareness raising about HIV and AIDS among young people and aimed to ultimately reduce HIV incidence by promoting safer behavior and increasing knowledge levels. This mini-intervention was funded by AAPk's sponsorship income<sup>30</sup>. AAPk therefore had no reporting liability, restriction on experimenting different approaches or restricting itself to a certain target group. It was soon realized that if more resources can be mobilized there is potential for a strong intervention. This small scale project proved to be a baseline for the Corti project – which was developed on the learning and experiences gained from this small project. AAPk was fortunate to have the 'luxury' of having its own funding to intervene at grassroots and identify areas for potential intervention. In a way AAPk risked its investment for exploring the potential and feasibility for a strong project. (Gready and Ensor 2005:224)

Based on its experience in the small project AAI developed a project proposal. It is important to monitor how the project proposal was developed, when monitoring processes, as the normative and analytical value added to projects by RBA (Piron and Watkins, 2004:79-81)<sup>31</sup> is injected in the project when it is designed. The normative value involves provision of a framework, which forms the blueprints of a project; explicit linkages to international

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<sup>28</sup> ActionAid's RBA resourcebook had not been launched when this study was compiled

<sup>29</sup> From the essential and unique characteristics and good programming practices specifically

<sup>30</sup> ActionAid's major and core funding comes from private donors (sponsors) who mostly are residents of developed countries and donate to ActionAid for sponsoring a child in developing countries where ActionAid works. ActionAid is the link between the sponsor and the sponsored child. Sponsors receive child messages from the children they sponsor. However, funds donated by the sponsor are not spent on that one child who has been sponsored, but rather the sponsorship money is pooled together and is used for community developed under pre-identified themes (contributing to specific rights) strategized by ActionAid.

<sup>31</sup> See chapter 2 – review of literature

standards, which are referred to as rationale of the project; and empowering citizens to shape their own future, which justifies strategizing for empowerment. The analytical value in Corti project's context would support in setting development objectives; transforming power relations, through analysis of power dynamics and devising relevant activities for transformation; and placing participation at the core, starting from target group's active participation at design level.

The process of designing Corti project has been evaluated against the UN's RBA essentials and good programming practices as follows. This evaluation was based on review of the project proposal submitted to Corti Foundation. It is also supported and guided by interviews with AAI and AAPk staff:

Sr#	Unique Characteristics	Project Design – Proposed intervention
1	Assess, identify human rights claims of right holders	The project proposal document identifies human rights violations against the target group comprehensively. An objective of the proposal states 'empowerment will enable them to raise their voice, access and exercise their rights to an education, health services, protection from violence, body protection etc'. General deprivations of the target group and how they affect them are thoroughly elaborated. The right holders were identified to be street children/youth and daughters of female sex workers <sup>32</sup> .
2	Identify corresponding duties of duty bearers	The proposal does not identify the corresponding duties of duty bearers explicitly. It does state that the project will advocate and lobby with the State and its line departments. The Child Welfare Bureau is also specified but specific duties expected from the State are not explicitly mentioned. AAPk's response to this is that expected duties from duty bearers are evident as they are all duties corresponding to the

<sup>32</sup> The daughters of female sex workers were identified as they usually end up in the sex trade as they grow up and are at high risk for incidence of HIV and AIDS and STIs/STDs. The project seeks to increase their awareness so that they can adopt safer practices and thus be at reduced risk of HIV and AIDS and other STIs and STDs.

		needs of the target group identified. However, the needs are spread across a broad spectrum including education, health, general quality of life, nutrition, skills development and bodily protection. Thus corresponding duties cannot be restricted to the Child Welfare Bureau. No other specific government departments are identified. This is particularly due to the scope of the project. The project focuses itself on providing some services for broad needs but tries to aim policy advocacy for child protection (for which the child welfare bureau) is the central duty bearer.
3	Identify structural causes of rights violation	The project proposal identifies structural causes of rights violation which is in line with ActionAid's global analysis – identification of poverty as the structural cause behind the rights ActionAid specifically works on. (Dochas 2003: 54). The project also recognizes rejection by families and quest for improved living conditions as reasons for children/young people to run away from homes – which puts them at high risk due to living on the street and resultantly various rights are violated.
4	Assess capacities of rights holders (to claim rights) and duty bearers (to fulfill duties)	This is a weak area of the project proposal. This assessment is not part of the proposal document which can be due to two factors; (a) the knowledge and capacity of staff involved in proposal development: in this case the staff developing the project proposal may not have thought this assessment an integral part of RBA or may not have understood that project development too, as a process, has to adhere to RBA characteristics. Staff capacity has been emphasized consistently by literature reviewed (Ball 2005:281, and Theis 2004:57, Offenheiser and Holcombe 2003:297-298, Rand and Watson 2007:38, Ball 2005:282 and Brown et al 2010:31) for effective implementation of RBA. In this case,

		<p>the results reinforce the recommendations from existing literature for capacity building initiatives within organizations for adhering to RBA processes and outcomes.</p> <p>(b) Very limited capacity and awareness at grassroots: this highlights a challenge voiced by various respondents in this study – the limited awareness at grassroots about rights which results in inadequate capacity to voice needs and demand rights. Since the capacity of a group with which intervention has just begun can be negligible (as in this case), staff did not deem it worth mentioning in the proposal. (Brouwer et al 2005:74) has highlighted how unawareness about rights at grassroots can take development interventions a long time to progress as they have to first increase awareness, secure ownership of community and then move towards capacity building. This does not provide justification for missing capacity assessment of duty bearers.</p>
5	Develop strategies to build these identified capacities	<p>The proposal includes activities focused on capacity building of the target group such as awareness raising sessions, capacity building trainings (for increased awareness about HIV and sexual and reproductive health (SRH), leadership skills, communication skills, advocacy skills and resource mobilization. The proposal also aims to form community support groups for guiding target group and for maximizing outreach. The activities for the project are well designed and exhibit a strong adherence to RBA as they aim to actively involve the target group and seek to empower them.</p> <p>Although capacity of the duty bearers were not identified, specific activities involving the duty bearers as outlined in project proposal are consultations on child protection policy, advocacy and lobbying. The focus of the project activities is holding the State accountable. The fact that the state might</p>

		not have the capacity to fulfill its obligations has not been considered. Brouwer et al (2005:74-76) have emphasized that without adequate capacity the duty bearers cannot fulfill duties which implies that interventions lacking capacity assessment may not have the desired results and impact.
6	Programs monitor and evaluate processes and outcomes	Monitoring and evaluation at the proposal (paper) level focuses more on the project's progress in terms of timely implementation and delivering the outcomes stated in the proposal. The proposal proposes an impact assessment which would be carried out once the project has run its course and that assessment seeks to evaluate the processes along with the outcomes. The respondents explained how the project is well monitored and the progress is frequently checked. The approach to project implementation is informed by learning from the project and previous experience. However, this leaves a gap in terms of monitoring the process and evaluating it for an improved approach and subsequent processes. This confirms the findings of previous literature that organizations are struggling to implement RBA in their processes (Brouwer et al 2005:74-76), and AAI's monitoring and evaluation mechanism (ALPS) does not incorporate indicators for monitoring processes (Harris-Curtis, Marleyn and Bakewell 2005:31-33).
7	People identified as key active actors (not passive recipients of aid)	As per the design of the project, it identifies people as key active actors who if provided with opportunities can lead themselves out of their problems.
8	Participation; both as a means and goal	Participation has been identified as both a means as an end. AAI and AAPk place vital importance on participation and it has been referred to multiple times in the project proposal

9	Empowering strategies	As stated in ‘Develop strategies to build these identified capacities’ above; the design of the project seeks to empower the target group through capacity building and advocacy.
10	All stakeholders analyzed	Many of the activities proposed involve stakeholders. “all/key stakeholders” are terms generously used in the proposal document. However, no specific stakeholders have been identified apart from the government and its line departments. This can be due to ambiguity about stakeholders (who they are, what they do, why are they important, why should they be analyzed) and understanding of why stakeholder analysis is important for RBA.
11	Vulnerable/marginalized/Disadvantaged focused	The project has a strong focus on marginalized groups as the project is solely designed for street children/youth that are heavily discriminated against and are extremely vulnerable.
12	Local Ownership	Although the project proposal does not explicitly talk about local ownership, the project activities seem to build it in strongly in the practical aspect of the intervention. The project has proposed outreach through peer educators who will be based in the field, will build rapport and trust relationship with the target group. Other activities such as formation of community support groups can also contribute to local ownership.
13	Aimed at disparity reduction	The project design seeks to reduce disparity by elevating the status of the vulnerable and marginalized target group.
14	Uses both top-down and bottom up approaches in synergy	According to an interview with AAPk staff members ‘...its ActionAid’s classic approach to use the bottom up strategy by mobilizing communities and incapacitating them to demand their own rights which leads to social change’. The proposal document highlights using both top down and bottom up approaches. Top down when advocacy and



		lobbying takes place with policy makers to enact child protection legislation and bottom up when target group's capacity is built to demand their rights.
15	Situation analysis identifying immediate, underlying and basic causes of development problems	As stated in 'Identify structural causes of rights violation' – the causes of development problems have been identified and elaborated by AAI.
16	Measurable goals set	Most goals set by the project are measurable. However, goals such as reduced risk and incidence of HIV and sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) in target group or increased capacity of partners etc do not identify any specific indicators through which they can be measured.
17	Strategic partnerships; developed and sustained	According to the project proposal, the partnerships mentioned are with implementing partner and key stakeholders (which are not defined apart from government). The project leaves room for engagement with the government though any specific partnership arrangement is not outlined.
18	Accountability to all	There is no explicit mention about accountability in the proposal but 'accountability is an integral value of AAI and is observed in all its interventions including Corti project. The culture of open information also facilitates accountability' <sup>33</sup> . The monitoring and evaluation and reporting mechanisms imply accountability to the donor and are part of the proposal.

<sup>33</sup> Quote from ActionAid staff member

## **Resource Mobilization for Corti Project**

The project proposal was developed in Pakistan and shared with High Value fundraising department at ActionAid international secretariat. The project was then uploaded on AAI intranet; HIVE from which ActionAid Italy picked it out (as it matched a potential donor's area of interest) and mobilized funds from Corti Foundation for the project proposed. The process of mobilizing of resources was more administrative and thus applying the UN's RBA essentials and good programming practices to it would not yield any substantive conclusion. However, where mobilizing resources from donors is concerned, it is useful to see if the donor follows and/or promotes RBA. The donor – Corti Foundation does not explicitly use RBA language but it prefers funding interventions which look beyond immediate problems and their solutions and address structural issues with sustainable solutions. Since too much service delivery is not sustainable, the donor promotes advocacy and bottom up approaches to development<sup>34</sup>. Adoption of RBA by NGOs or merely subscribing to the RBA rhetoric has been identified by Jochnick and Garzon (2002:5) and Ball (2005:295) as a response to promotion of RBA and preferential funding of RBA interventions by donors. The project being researched seems to reflect all the preferences of the donor which would have formed grounds for its funding. Therefore, it is quite valid that the demand for RBA from donors' ends can influence organizations in adopting it.

## **Project implementation**

The project implementation involves various sub-processes including; partner selection, project staff hiring, initiation of project activities and monitoring and evaluation. The project implementation is the practical shape taken by a project on ground. Therefore, adherence to RBA is fundamental at this level to ensure that the added value of RBA to an intervention reaches the grassroots.

The project implementation is evaluated against the UN's RBAs essentials and good programming practices below. This evaluation does not reflect on partner selection and project staff hiring as these sub-processes were found to be key causes of non-adherence to RBA. This section has been informed by observations of the researcher during the interviews, data collected

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<sup>34</sup> Specific information about the donor and the way it identifies with RBA was obtained by communication with ActionAid Italy staff.

through the interviews and focus group discussion and review of AAI and AAPk strategic and operational documents.

Sr#	Unique Characteristics	Project Implementation – Practical Realities
1	Assess, identify human rights claims of right holders	At ground level ActionAid has identified rights claims of right holders. The claims identified though do not differ from what was identified at the project design stage. The specific rights identified are: right to education, right to health services and the right to protection.
2	Identify corresponding duties of duty bearers	The project identified the Child Welfare Bureau and Ministry of Social Welfare as key duty bearers when fulfilling the rights of street children/youth are considered. The linkages and networking that AAPk had with the duty bearers helped it in carrying forth a working relationship with these duty bearers for purposes of this project. Other organizations have also had positive experiences with government in implementing RBA (Jones, 2005:94-96).The primary duty of these duty bearers according to ActionAid is to enact the child protection policy which will enable organizations and activists to hold government line departments accountable for unaddressed needs and violated rights of the target group; as in the absence of a policy/legislation the political space for advocating for addressing rights violations does not exist. “Rights exist if there is legislation” said a staff member at AAPk emphasizing that the reason for not identifying other/corresponding duties of duty bearers (according to the needs of target group) is the absence of legislation. AAPk aims to lobby the State into enacting legislation for child protection policy and then advocating with duty bearers for fulfilling other corresponding duties.

3	Identify structural causes of rights violation	In practice, ActionAid staff identified non-existence of child protection policy as the structural cause of target group's rights violations. This is different than what the proposal identified as the structural cause – poverty. This difference can clearly be attributed to difference and variance in knowledge of AAI staff <sup>35</sup> – the staff drafting the proposal may have attributed the rights violations to poverty but in practice the project is focusing on non-existence of policy as the root cause of the problem. In implementing the intervention, this does not cause any major difference as the intervention has pre-determined activities and expected outcomes and that is what reporting covers – so no attention has been given to this 'difference'.
4	Assess capacities of rights holders (to claim rights) and duty bearers (to fulfill duties)	The target group did not have adequate capacity or potential to be mobilized for claiming rights. The project activities now being implemented are building the capacity of the target group. Capacity of duty bearers is not identified at any stage (proposal or implementation)
5	Develop strategies to build these identified capacities	Capacity building of rights holders: Target group is accessed through peer outreach. Peer educators were hired and trained. They built rapport with the street youth/children in the field and initiated discussions about health and primary health care in general <sup>36</sup> . Once

<sup>35</sup> The staff developing the proposal based on information from the field belongs to the partnership development unit of ActionAid which is housed in ActionAid Pakistan's head office in the federal capital, Islamabad and the staff implementing the project is programme staff based close to the field in provincial office. Therefore, it is not unusual for the partnership staff identifying poverty as the key issue as it is the key issue in all strategies and reports of ActionAid.

<sup>36</sup> The target group of street children/youth is a sensitive group. They often indulge in drug use and abuse, frequently participate in gang violence and street crimes, become victims of harassment and sexual violence, indulge in unsafe sexual practices, cut or wound themselves intentionally due to psychological issues and driving the police away (according to the meeting with target group they explained that if a policeman tries to arrest them, they would themselves to press fake charges against the police for violence and exploitation and that usually drives them off

		<p>communication starts, peer educators encourage them to visit the referral point (where services of a doctor and psychologist are available). The project staff informed that members of target group are usually under the influence of drugs and thus it is difficult to communicate with them. Peer educators conduct awareness raising and capacity building sessions in the field after pre-arranging them to ensure maximum number of street children/youth can attend them. If a member of the target group seems interested in learning and capacity building, he is given special attention by peer educators and project staff for feeding the sparking activism. The project has successful case studies<sup>37</sup> where members of target group have built their capacities and advocated for their rights.</p> <p>The group of right holders identified in the project are daughters of female sex workers. Working with them is exceedingly difficult and the project had initiated activities with them in March 2012. Building their capacity was said to be a far off goal at the moment but awareness raising sessions and meetings were being held when interviews were taken for this research.</p>
6	<p>Programs monitor and evaluate processes and outcomes</p>	<p>The process is seldom monitored due to the lack of tools, indicators or a monitoring mechanism. ALPS too does not offer specific support to monitor the process. (Harris-Curtis, Marleyn and Bakewell 2005:31-33).</p> <p>However, AAPk has been effective in monitoring the outcomes due to which approaches and even some</p>

earning them freedom for imprisonment). They usually have nutritional deficiencies and almost always have cuts, superficial wounds, abrasions and sexually transmitted infections (information obtained by the doctor at the referral centre for street children – which is part of the service delivery component of the project)

<sup>37</sup> A member of the target group got involved with the project; built his capacity, started a job through the linkages established by the project at a tea stall or hotel, was trained by ActionAid and was hired as a peer educator. (He was also an interviewee)

		<p>processes have been altered for better outcomes. There were three examples<sup>38</sup> of improved approaches through monitoring outcomes are: (a) Reduced service delivery and increased advocacy activities in the project: In the first phase of funding, Corti project had a drop in centre where target group could drop by, have a shower, watch television, participate in infotainment activities, attend capacity building sessions and relax. The drop in centre was open until evening as no overnight shelters are legal as per Government of Pakistan’s policies. The project staff noticed that the target group members sometimes used the drop in centre just for a place to sleep in and spend the day while they were drugged. The drop in centre was located at some distance from the hubs where street children/youth are concentrated at all times of the day. The target group thus had to either walk for a long time to get to the centre or spend money on transport. This centre was abolished in the second round of funding. A project office is still maintained where the doctor and psychologist can be consulted by the target group but the sessions are now conducted in the field by peer educators. This centre/project office is now called ‘referral point’. Reducing service delivery for making an intervention more advocacy-focused is what many organizations think RBA is about (Uvin 2004, Chapman 2009). Also changing the terminology of the centre as being a ‘referral point’ can point towards the organization losing itself in the rhetoric and fitting the “new bottle for old wine” metaphor used by Dochas (2003)</p> <p>(b) AAPk recognized that only capacity building will not</p>
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<sup>38</sup> Gathered during interviews and discussions with ActionAid and project staff

		<p>sustain beneficiaries but they will also need livelihood support for sustenance. Therefore, vocational training elements were introduced in the project</p> <p>(c) Initially AAPk had three partner organizations implementing the project together. As the project became more advocacy-focused it ended partnerships with two partners and continued on with just one. The reason for this given by an ActionAid staff member was that “...this partner was stronger and had better capacity to implement an advocacy project’. This highlights field level challenges in implementing RBA – unavailability of strong capacitated partners. It can also raise questions about ActionAid as under RBA, the capacity of the weaker partners should have been built instead of winding their MoUs off. Brown et al (2010:31) recommended and this study endorses that AAI should invest in capacity building of partners.</p>
7	People identified as key active actors (not passive recipients of aid)	The target group members are recognized as key actors ‘who have the keys to their own future’. Without their mobilization, the project is not possible. <sup>39</sup>
8	Participation; both as a means and goal	<p>The participation of target group in all activities related to project is ensured. However, during the interviews, it was observed that members of the target group should be involved in monitoring and evaluation to promote participation and build local ownership.</p> <p>During the interviews with project staff, policy forums for consultations regarding child protection policy were mentioned and it was highlighted that members of the target group are not participants of these events. This was categorized as critical information as despite all the rights</p>

<sup>39</sup> Statement by a staff member at the project office.

		talk – at the end of the day – a room full of project professionals, government officers and civil society representatives gather and discuss the child protection policy in the absence of any member of the target group. There is definitely room for advocacy for a place for the target group, increased participation and inclusion in this scenario. The cause behind such incidents is the deep rooted stigma and discrimination against the target group and non-internalization of RBA.
9	Empowering strategies <sup>40</sup>	The project has strategized for seeking empowerment.
10	All stakeholders analyzed	Although specific stakeholders were not identified in the project proposal. The project staff and peer educators mentioned various stakeholders, their stakes involved and ways to keep them on board. This clearly points towards a communication gap between the project office and AAPk offices, gaps in feeding field information into project proposals and/or communication gaps within AAI hierarchy.
11	Vulnerable/marginalized/ Disadvantaged focused	The strongest part of the intervention – the project is fully focused on the most vulnerable and marginalized.
12	Local Ownership <sup>41</sup>	The community owned the intervention but asked for more service delivery. The centre offered in the project in its first phase of funding was said to be ‘missed’ by peer educators and community members. Community members felt strong association with the project and expressed their worry over its short term project funding.
13	Aimed at disparity reduction	Specific activities in areas where street children/youth are concentrated, local actors such as tea stall owners, hotel owners etc have been sensitized and the force of

<sup>40</sup> See ‘Develop strategies to build these identified capacities’ in rows above for more detail.

<sup>41</sup> Also see ‘participation as means and goals’ in rows above.



		discrimination from these people has been considerably weakened if not altogether ended.
14	Uses both top-down and bottom up approaches in synergy	Both top down and bottom up approaches are being used. Top down through advocacy and lobbying government and bottom up by capacity building and increasing awareness.
15	Situation analysis identifying immediate, underlying and basic causes of development problems	These needs were identified at proposal development level. However, if any other needs arise, they are documented in progress reports of the project. 'Identification of these needs involves asking target group about their needs and problems. In response, they get their hopes up and want to know what services can we provide them to address their needs – such situations are difficult to deal with and depressing as most of the time the funding or organizational mandate restricts addressing needs through service delivery' <sup>42</sup> .
16	Measurable goals set	See point 16 'Measurable goals set' in previous table
17	Strategic partnerships; developed and sustained	Partnerships with government have been formed and sustained since project implementation started. An indicator could be that the provincial child protection bureau's office space is used by ActionAid for meetings etc.
18	Accountability to all	ActionAid is accountable to the donors and to the community for which the project is being implemented. Due to the culture of open information (reports and events) pertaining to the project are available for a wider audience to access and ask questions if they so please. <sup>43</sup>

<sup>42</sup> Quote from interview with project staff

<sup>43</sup> Excerpt from the response from ActionAid staff member regarding accountability

## Outcome Analysis

The outcomes of a project can be a cross check for the project's adherence to RBA. However, absence of RBA's essentials (such as participation, ownership, mobilization of communities for empowerment) is not evidence enough to prove that the intervention did not adhere to RBA. This is because working with RBA takes time to change things on ground. The pace of this change is determined by 'challenges in implementing RBA at grassroots' (refer to chapter 2) including awareness at grassroots, cultural context, government commitment and duration of intervention informed by findings and observations of Cohen (2004), Brouwer et al (2005:74-76), Jones (2005:94-96) and Chapman (2009:168).

To understand the outcomes of the project, the site of project implementation was visited and interviews were held with project staff and focus group discussion with peer educators and beneficiaries raising questions about the outcomes of the project. Majority of the interview responses identified increased capacity of peer educators and increased awareness of the target group as key outcomes of the project. It was noted that as interviews and discussions moved towards the grassroots, mention of advocacy and policy advocacy decreased considerably<sup>44</sup>. This can be because the policy forums do not have any representation from the target group itself which results in lack of community ownership.

The peer educators focussed on discussing meeting outreach targets, carrying out awareness raising sessions and provision of primary health care facilities at the 'referral point' as the key outcomes. Members of the target group focussed on provision of health services and stated that drop in centre (previously functional in the first phase of funding) was more appreciated by them as spending time there made them feel more like a part of the project. As per the implementing partner organization and AAPk staff interviews, all service delivery was an entry point aimed at mobilizing the target group and the most important activity was advocacy and lobbying for enacting legislation. This difference in opinion can be due to:

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<sup>44</sup> In some cases there was no mention about the advocacy

Sr#	Actor	Potential reason for different opinion on RBA related activities in the project
1	ActionAid	Being focussed on advocacy and lobbying is ActionAid's strength as an organization and is within its mandate. ActionAid through its experiences realizes that addressing needs of the target group can be addressed much better if a policy securing their rights is enacted. Advocacy forms the base of RBA adherence for ActionAid Pakistan.
2	Implementing partner	Advocacy for child protection policy has been on the organization's agenda from even before it partnered with ActionAid. It is also in line with the organizational mandate. Advocacy work therefore tags the project as an RBA project for the partner.
3	Project Staff (including peer educators)	They refer to outreach targets and awareness raising sessions as that is the key part of the work that they do. They refer to the 'referral point' as provision of free primary healthcare helps them motivate target group in the field to benefit from the project. Due to their limited capacity RBA adherence in the project means letting target group know that what rights they have in the field.
4	Target group members	RBA for them means that they are given their rights; specifically in terms of fulfilling their basic needs. Due to living in depravation and due to other structural causes of this depravation i.e poverty, illiteracy etc they seek short term immediate solutions to their problems – i.e. asking the project to extend the maximum service delivery that it can.

This implies that RBA is seen by different actors as different things and that Theis (2004:14) was right is saying 'one size of RBA does not fit all' – not only in terms or organization but also in terms of individual perception. The versatility in thought need not be consistent if every actor performs his role within the RBA framework; however, knowing the bigger picture is important. AAPk should take measures to make target group and project staff understand how advocacy and enactment of policy will benefit them in terms of need fulfilment. Without this understanding it will be difficult to achieve sustainable mobilization.

Furthering response to the research question two, this study has identified the following factors which contribute to non-adherence to RBA in the project researched.<sup>45</sup> Mechanisms for addressing these causes will contribute to improved adherence to RBA by AAI and AAPk:

a) *Thinking twice about short term – project funding*

The Corti project was funded from 2008-2009 in its first phase of funding. Due to the progress made at ground level, AAI supported very few activities after the project funding ended from its program funds. Due to limited resources all project activities could not be sustained – this caused damage on ground i.e. street children/youth who had just quit drugs, relapsed; target group mobilized on ground scattered and lost interest as there were no services. The second phase of funding started in 2010 – this was after a stagnant period of six months with no funding and/or activities on ground. Mobilizing the community and regaining the trust and rapport building with street youth was much more difficult this time.

Short term project funding is one of the key reasons why RBA cannot be adhered to and be internalized in interventions. RBA takes time in terms of being adopted and internalized, in being understood by staff, in initiating a change at ground level and in bringing about sustainable outcomes. Jones (2005:94-97) and Ball (2005:294) have emphasized that organizations need to move away from short term funding to address structural issues. This study confirms their finding. In short term projects, organizations need to show results in limited time which hinders application of RBA.

b) *Overcoming Capacity Issues:*

The capacity issues identified in this research has been grouped into the following categories:

– Staff capacity within AAI

Staff capacity at various levels in AAI varies greatly and needs capacity building initiatives aimed at increasing staff capacity for internalizing RBA. This has been highlighted by Offenheiser and Holcombe (2003:297-298), Ball (2005:281), Rand

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<sup>45</sup> Most of these can be generalized for other development projects too.

and Watson (2007:38), Brown et al (2010:31), AAPk's annual reports (2008, 2009 and 2010) and Archer (2011:353)

– Partner Capacity

The study identifies partner capacity as the major challenge in implementing RBA. Local organizations which are partners for implementing interventions do not have capacity or frameworks guiding them for implementing RBA. No matter how perfectly an organization internalizes RBA, if its partner does not have the capacity to implement RBA at ground level, the intervention will not produce expected outcomes. Cohen (2004:15), Brown et al (2010:5) and Archer (2011:353) have all recommended AAI to invest on partner capacity building. This study reinforces their recommendation as understanding of RBA at partner level was very limited.

c) *Addressing monitoring system limitations*

For ensuring RBA in interventions organizations need to monitor and evaluate both processes and outcomes. There is need to device indicators and monitoring mechanisms for monitoring processes and outcomes. (UN Statement of Common Understanding on HRBA, 2003, Sen Gupta 2004:3, 6; and Jonsson 2005:59-60) Presently, AAI is only monitoring processes as its monitoring system (ALPS) does not allow process monitoring.

d) *Increase investment on staff members and baseline research*

Presently, Corti project is being overseen by full time AAPk employees who have full work plans of their own under thematic sponsorship work. This affects how much attention is given to the project on the ground. Despite trying hard and being motivated, there are limitations on how much work an individual can take up and deliver on. Recruitment of new and expert staff is also recommended by Theis (2004:57) and Ball (2005:281).

Investment for baseline research is also a need for developing RBA interventions. Eg the project proposal for Corti focuses on increased advocacy and decreased service delivery. On the other hand interviews with the target group showed that the target group prefers some more addition to service delivery. The project staff also thought that service delivery should be scaled up a notch for better trust building and participation of target

group. This identifies a loophole in the bottom up proposal development process i.e. why was the input from community/project staff not addressed while proposing the project? This can be due to the donor's preference for less service delivery, AAI's mandate for up-scaling advocacy work or simply a flaw in the proposal development process whereby staff did not follow RBA thoroughly in project design.

e) *Limitations due to donor formats and templates*

Donor formats and templates sometimes restrict organizations in explicitly stating and elaborating many RBA components that they might consider central to their work. Similarly, reporting templates can also impose the same restriction on organizations and staff<sup>46</sup>.

f) *Need for institutionalization of projects within AAPk work*

AAPk heavily focuses in maintaining quality in their sponsorship work because in terms of funding sponsorship funds are its bloodline. However, its project work is not institutionalized within broader sponsorship work. Projects get much less attention; there is no mention of Corti project in AAPk's annual reports of 2008 and 2009. The 2010 annual report mentions the Corti project under the HIV theme<sup>47</sup> as its umbrella. The Impact Assessment and Shared Learning officer (IASL officer)<sup>48</sup> does not monitor the donor funded projects (including Corti project) but AAPk thematic staff<sup>49</sup> monitors it. AAPk's website does not mention this project. An understanding within AAPk exists that the Corti project is being implemented under the HIV theme however; the project has now evolved<sup>50</sup> moving beyond the scope of HIV only and addresses child protection now. With non-institutionalized donor funded AAPk is working on two different areas – sponsorship work and donor funded project work without benefitting from learning and good practices from them.

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<sup>46</sup> This was highlighted in interviews with project staff

<sup>47</sup> HIV theme work involves siding with people living with HIV and AIDS, campaigning and lobbying rich governments and international institutions to make access to drugs, care and treatment fair and unbiased.

<sup>48</sup> whose role is to document good practices and share information across ActionAid based on learning from fieldwork

<sup>49</sup> ActionAid's programme officer for HIV monitors the Corti project

<sup>50</sup> As it started off as an HIV awareness project

# 5. Conclusion and Recommendations

## 5.1. Summary of findings

The main aim of the research was to explore the adoption of RBA by ActionAid deeper than previous literature had done so. This is because a gap in literature was observed while it was being reviewed for purposes of this research – there is comprehensive literature on rights, the right to development and rights based approach in a theoretical perspective. However, there is rarely any literature on how RBA has been adopted by organizations, how it has challenged or implicated organizations and how and to what extent organizations adhere to RBA in their day to day processes and interventions.

An ActionAid project funded by an external donor which ActionAid claims to follow RBA was selected and the research focussed on how RBA was being implemented in the project. The study also aimed to determine whether the understanding of RBA within ActionAid staff is consistent or not. The research dug deeper to determine the factors contributing to non-adherence to RBA in ActionAid's project and to identify factors contributing to inconsistent understanding of RBA amongst ActionAid's staff members. Since the organization under consideration has a large and complex structure and its work is spread around forty three countries across the globe, this study focussed on a very small part of its work.

The study found that the understanding of RBA amongst ActionAid staff varied greatly and that staff were aware of this inconsistency. Being a large structure limits an organization's capacity to ensure consistencies easily and ActionAid despite making some efforts has not yet accomplished a consistent understanding of RBA in-house. According to the literature reviewed, ActionAid is not the only organization with this problem. Other international NGOs like OXFAM and CARE are going through similar challenges. The study identified the complexity of ActionAid's structure, absence of organizational RBA framework, varying staff capacities, lack of capacity building initiatives specifically around RBA, organizational turnover and support for previous approaches to development (needs based approach for example) as the factors causing this inconsistency.

In terms of ActionAid's adherence to RBA; it was found that ActionAid is very strong in some area but has miles to go in others. For example in terms of working 'with' the target group, mobilizing them and devising empowering strategies or involving the target group in its work – the beneficiaries spoke louder than ActionAid about how they have been at the core of the intervention. However, in areas like supporting duty bearers for fulfilling their duties or capacity building of duty bearers – the project exhibited apparent weaknesses. ActionAid was also found to be limiting service delivery activities to an extent where the target group and project staff highlighted need for a balance between service delivery and advocacy. ActionAid was observed to be monitoring outcomes only while RBA explicitly calls for monitoring both processes and outcomes. Building partner capacity fell under the 'miles to go' area for ActionAid according to this study. The researcher also observed that ActionAid staff at all levels was highly motivated and deeply driven by causes ActionAid works for. They adhered perfectly to their values of open information sharing and transparency and themselves highlighted areas needing improvement.

The study identified factors which contributed to the non-adherence or limited adherence of ActionAid as (a) implementing short term projects was found to limit ActionAid's capacity to adhere to RBA as instant results are required by donors and the reporting focuses on outcomes and not impact. RBA takes time to change situations and project funding is usually too short term to instigate changes through RBA (b) Capacity issues within ActionAid and partner organization. The varying understanding of RBA within ActionAid and very limited understanding of RBA in the partner organization majorly contributes to non-adherence to RBA at ground level. (c) Monitoring system limitations – ActionAid is thoroughly monitoring outcomes of the project which has helped it improve the project overtime however, no attention is being given to process monitoring which in itself is non-adherence to RBA (d) Lack of investment on baseline and staff time – lack of resources and high work load of staff has also been identified as a factor (e) Donor formats and templates limit the organization's ability to explicitly document RBA guided project designs and reports which creates potential for omission of valuable information. (f) Non-institutionalization of projects within AAPk work was observed to be a major factor in the project's limited adherence to RBA as the project could not benefit from broader AAPk policies, monitoring, learning and experiences.



The study confirmed the findings and observations in previous literature. However, it has added more to the literature, in terms of feeding in information from various hierarchies within the organization, identifying adherence or non-adherence at different stages of the project cycle and digging deeper for the causes/factors behind the immediate research questions.

In a nutshell, AAPk was found to be strong in some areas for adhering to RBA and weak in others which allows room for improvement. The study found variation in the way AAI staff at various hierarchies understood RBA. The results of the study reinforced previous recommendations and endorsed findings by previous literature (Cohen 2004, Chapman 2005, Brown et al 2010 and Archer 2011).

## **5.2. Recommendations:**

1. Strong measures should be taken for institutionalization of project work within the broader sponsorship work of AAPk.
2. Sustained investment in staff capacity building around RBA would be advantageous for AAI as it will improve the quality of the work on ground along with contributing to consistent understanding of RBA within staff.
3. A set level of understanding of RBA should be a pre-requisite of hiring and capacity building around RBA should be part of induction programmes in AAI.
4. Resources should be allocated for partner's capacity building and partners should be encouraged to develop their RBA frameworks.
5. Multiple sources of funding should be sought for short term projects so that they can be medium-long term initiatives and they do not cease suddenly due to lack of funds wasting time and effort contributed to them.
6. A balance between service delivery and advocacy work should be sought for better involvement of target group and increased ownership at community level.

7. HIVE<sup>51</sup> is an ideal tool for AAI for capacity building and information sharing. It should be actively used to promote RBA and to increase staff's knowledge about it. Staff should be equipped with skills to effectively use and benefit from HIVE.

AAI is a complex and large organization. The approaches used across the organization have the potential to differ radically due to different contexts and varying needs at ground level. Therefore, the findings from the study cannot be generalized over the entire organization. However, the findings and recommendations of this study can broadly guide approaches applied to existing and future initiatives and interventions.

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<sup>51</sup> ActionAid's intranet

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# Appendices



## **Appendix 1 – Interview Guide for AA Italy and AA International Secretariat**

1. What are your key functions (roles and responsibilities) in relation to Corti Foundation project?
2. What do you think are the major differences between HRBA and other approaches to development?
3. In your opinion, what are the principles and elements of HRBAP?
4. Does AA Italy have a specific strategy/framework on HRBA? If no, what document/framework etc is used for mainstreaming RBA in daily work?
5. Are there any specific components or activities in the Corti project which you think promote HRBA?
6. What do you think can be the keys challenges in implementing Corti project through a HRBA?
7. Do you think Corti project has a good balance between service delivery and advocacy/capacity building?
8. Do you think the time barred funding of Corti project impacts the policy advocacy being done as part of this project? If yes, how does AA plan to sustain the policy advocacy rooted in this project?
9. Do you think staff knowledge across various levels of the organizations (international, national, local) is consistent regarding RBA? If no, what can be possible factors of this?
10. Has AA undergone any reviews etc for analysing RBA implementation across the organization? If yes, when?
11. What areas do you think AA can improve on in terms of implementing RBA?

## Appendix 2 - Interview Guide for AAPk

1. What are your key functions (roles and responsibilities) in relation to:
  - a. Corti Foundation project
  - b. Ensuring implementation of HRBA in the project
2. What do you think are the major differences between HRBA and other approaches to development?
3. In your opinion, what are the principles and elements of HRBAP?
4. Does ActionAid have a specific strategy/framework on HRBA? If yes, at what level (local, provincial, national, international)? If no, how is a uniform understanding of HRBA ensured within the organization?
5. How are projects designed in ActionAid? Who generates project idea and how, how is it developed into a project? Who suggests activities? How is a project shared across the organization (from local to international level) and how is funding sought?
6. Was the Corti project designed through a HRBA? If yes, how so?
7. Are there any specific components or activities in the Corti project which promote HRBA?
8. How is conformity to HRBA ensured in Corti Foundation project as a whole (i.e. how was HRBA conformed to at all stages e.g. design, planning, day to day implementation and monitoring)?
9. Do you think all the elements of the HRBA are fulfilled in the Corti Project? If yes, how can this be confirmed? If no, what factors do you think impede this?
10. What do you think are the keys challenges in implementing Corti project through a HRBA?
11. What factors do you think have impeded or affected ideal HRBAP in the Corti project (if any)?

### **Appendix 3 - Interview Guide for Implementing Partner**

- a) What are your key functions (roles and responsibilities) in relation to Corti Foundation project?
- b) What do you think are the major differences between HRBA and other approaches to development?
- c) In your opinion, what are the principles and elements of HRBAP?
- d) Does Sahil have a specific strategy/framework on HRBA? If yes, at what level (local, provincial, national)? If no, how is a uniform understanding of HRBA is ensured within the organization?
- e) How are projects designed in Sahil? Who generates project idea and how, how is it developed into a project? Who suggests activities? How is a project shared across the organization (from local to national level) and how is funding sought?
- f) How was Sahil involved in the design of the Corti Foundation project?
- g) Are there any specific components or activities in the Corti project which you think promote HRBA?
- h) How is conformity to HRBA ensured in Corti Foundation project as a whole by Sahil (i.e. how was HRBA conformed to at all stage e.g. day to day implementation and monitoring)?
- i) Do you think all the elements of the HRBA are fulfilled in the Corti Project? If yes, how can this be confirmed? Can you mention any notable indicators? If no, what factors do you think impede this?
- j) What do you think are the keys challenges in implementing Corti project through a HRBA?
- k) Do you think Corti project has a good balance between service delivery and advocacy/capacity building?
- l) Do you think the time barred funding of Corti project impacts the policy advocacy being done as part of this project? If yes, how does Sahil, as an actor for policy advocacy, plan to sustain the policy advocacy rooted in this project?
- m) What factors do you think have impeded or affected ideal HRBAP in the Corti project (if any)?

## **Appendix 4 - Interview Guide for Project Staff**

1. What do you think are the major differences between HRBA and other approaches to development?
2. In your opinion, what are the principles and elements of HRBAP?
3. How is conformity to HRBA ensured in Corti Foundation project as a whole (i.e. how was HRBA conformed to at all stages e.g. design, planning, day to day implementation and monitoring)?
4. Do you think all the elements of the HRBA are fulfilled in the Corti Project? If yes, how can this be confirmed? If no, what factors do you think impede this?
5. What do you think are the keys challenges in implementing Corti project through a HRBA?
6. What factors do you think have impeded or affected ideal HRBAP in the Corti project (if any)?
7. Do you think implementation of Corti project follows a HRBA to programming and implementing all the way through to the grassroots levels? If yes, how has this been confirmed and if no, what factors do you think have impeded this?
8. Does the Corti project have an advocacy/capacity building component along with the service delivery initiatives? How is a balance achieved between these components?
9. Do you think this project could have been successful if there was no service delivery involved? If yes, how so and if not, why not?
10. Do you think there is a tendency in the project to tilt more towards service delivery? If yes, what factors are responsible for this tilt?

## **Appendix 5 - Focus Group Discussion Points for Discussion with Peer Educators and Beneficiaries**

1. Does the project/initiative address your needs?
2. Were you involved in the design of the project? If so, how and to what extent?
3. Do you feel that you actively participate in the project/initiative? If yes, how and at what levels? If no, how can this be improved? What specific levels would you want to participate at?
4. What are the key activities in this project/initiative?
5. Do you think this project/initiative has benefitted you? If, yes, how so? If not, why not?
6. Do you think this project/initiative has a strong impact? If yes, how can it be sustained? If not, why not?
7. Is this project/intervention sustainable? If yes, what were/are the key factors contributing to its sustainability? If not, why not?

## Appendix 6 – List derived from UN Statement of Common Understanding for assessing adherence to RBA

Sr#	Unique Characteristics	Project Design/Proposal development
1	Assess, identify human rights claims of right holders	
2	Identify corresponding duties of duty bearers	
3	Identify structural causes of rights violation	
4	Assess capacities of rights holders (to claim rights) and duty bearers (to fulfill duties)	
5	Develop strategies to build these identified capacities	
6	Programs monitor and evaluate processes and outcomes	
7	People identified as key active actors (not passive recipients of aid)	
8	Participation; both as a means and goal	
9	Empowering strategies	
10	All stakeholders analyzed	
11	Vulnerable/marginalized/Disadvantaged focused	
12	Local Ownership	
13	Aimed at disparity reduction	
14	Uses both top-down and bottom up approaches in synergy	
15	Situation analysis identifying immediate, underlying and basic causes of development problems	
16	Measurable goals set	
17	Strategic partnerships; developed and sustained	
18	Accountability to all	

## **Appendix 7 – UN Statement of Common Understanding (2003)**

### **The Human Rights Based Approach to Development Cooperation Towards a Common Understanding Among UN Agencies**

#### **Introduction**

The United Nations is founded on the principles of peace, justice, freedom and human rights. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights recognizes human rights as the foundation of freedom, justice and peace. The unanimously adopted Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action states that democracy, development, and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms are interdependent and mutually reinforcing.

In the UN Programme for Reform that was launched in 1997, the Secretary-General called on all entities of the UN system to mainstream human rights into their various activities and programmes within the framework of their respective mandates.

Since then a number of UN agencies have adopted a human rights-based approach to their development cooperation and have gained experiences in its operationalization. But each agency has tended to have its own interpretation of approach and how it should be operationalized. However, UN interagency collaboration at global and regional levels, and especially at the country level in relation to the CCA and UNDAF processes, requires a common understanding of this approach and its implications for development programming. What follows is an attempt to arrive at such an understanding on the basis of those aspects of the human rights-based approach that are common to the policy and practice of the UN bodies that participated in the Interagency Workshop on a Human Rights based Approach in the context of UN reform 3-5 May, 2003.

This Statement of Common Understanding specifically refers to a human rights based approach to the development cooperation and development programming by UN agencies.

#### **Common Understanding**

1. All programmes of development co-operation, policies and technical assistance should further the realisation of human rights as laid down in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other international human rights instruments.
2. Human rights standards contained in, and principles derived from, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other international human rights instruments guide all development cooperation and programming in all sectors and in all phases of the programming process.
3. Development cooperation contributes to the development of the capacities of ‘duty-bearers’ to meet their obligations and/or of ‘rights-holders’ to claim their rights.

1. All programmes of development co-operation, policies and technical assistance should further the realisation of human rights as laid down in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other international human rights instruments.

A set of programme activities that only incidentally contributes to the realization of human rights does not necessarily constitute a human rights-based approach to programming. In a human

rights-based approach to programming and development cooperation, the aim of all activities is to contribute directly to the realization of one or several human rights.

2. Human rights standards contained in, and principles derived from, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other international human rights instruments guide all development cooperation and programming in all sectors and in all phases of the programming process.

Human Rights principles guide programming in all sectors, such as: health, education, governance, nutrition, water and sanitation, HIV/AIDS, employment and labour relations and social and economic security. This includes all development cooperation directed towards the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals and the Millennium Declaration. Consequently, human rights standards and principles guide both the Common Country Assessment and the UN Development Assistance Framework.

Human rights principles guide all programming in all phases of the programming process, including assessment and analysis, programme planning and design (including setting of goals, objectives and strategies); implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

Among these human rights principles are: universality and inalienability; indivisibility; inter-dependence and inter-relatedness; non-discrimination and equality; participation and inclusion; accountability and the rule of law. These principles are explained below.

- **Universality and inalienability:** Human rights are universal and inalienable. All people everywhere in the world are entitled to them. The human person in whom they inhere cannot voluntarily give them up. Nor can others take them away from him or her. As stated in Article 1 of the UDHR, “All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights”.
- **Indivisibility:** Human rights are indivisible. Whether of a civil, cultural, economic, political or social nature, they are all inherent to the dignity of every human person. Consequently, they all have equal status as rights, and cannot be ranked, a priori, in a hierarchical order.
- **Inter-dependence and Inter-relatedness.** The realization of one right often depends, wholly or in part, upon the realization of others. For instance, realization of the right to health may depend, in certain circumstances, on realization of the right to education or of the right to information.
- **Equality and Non-discrimination:** All individuals are equal as human beings and by virtue of the inherent dignity of each human person. All human beings are entitled to their human rights without discrimination of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, ethnicity, age, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, disability, property, birth or other status as explained by the human rights treaty bodies.
- **Participation and Inclusion:** Every person and all peoples are entitled to active, free and meaningful participation in, contribution to, and enjoyment of civil, economic, social, cultural and political development in which human rights and fundamental freedoms can be realized.
- **Accountability and Rule of Law:** States and other duty-bearers are answerable for the observance of human rights. In this regard, they have to comply with the legal norms and standards enshrined in human rights instruments. Where they fail to do so, aggrieved rights-holders are entitled to institute proceedings for appropriate redress before a competent court or other adjudicator in accordance with the rules and procedures provided by law.



### 3. Programmes of development cooperation contribute to the development of the capacities of duty-bearers to meet their obligations and of 'rights-holders' to claim their rights.

In a HRBA human rights determine the relationship between individuals and groups with valid claims (rights-holders) and State and non-state actors with correlative obligations (duty-bearers). It identifies rights-holders (and their entitlements) and corresponding duty-bearers (and their obligations) and works towards strengthening the capacities of rights-holders to make their claims, and of duty-bearers to meet their obligations.

#### **Implications of A Human Rights Based Approach to Development Programming of UN Agencies**

Experience has shown that the use of a human rights-based approach requires the use of good programming practices. However, the application of "good programming practices" does not by itself constitute a human rights-based approach, and requires additional elements.

The following elements are necessary, specific, and unique to a human rights-based approach:

- a) Assessment and analysis in order to identify the human rights claims of rights-holders and the corresponding human rights obligations of duty-bearers as well as the immediate, underlying, and structural causes of the non-realization of rights.
- b) Programmes assess the capacity of rights-holders to claim their rights, and of duty-bearers to fulfill their obligations. They then develop strategies to build these capacities.
- c) Programmes monitor and evaluate both outcomes and processes guided by human rights standards and principles.
- d) Programming is informed by the recommendations of international human rights bodies and mechanisms.

Other elements of good programming practices that are also essential under a HRBA, include:

1. People are recognized as key actors in their own development, rather than passive recipients of commodities and services.
2. Participation is both a means and a goal.
3. Strategies are empowering, not disempowering.
4. Both outcomes and processes are monitored and evaluated.
5. Analysis includes all stakeholders.
6. Programmes focus on marginalized, disadvantaged, and excluded groups.
7. The development process is locally owned.
8. Programmes aim to reduce disparity.
9. Both top-down and bottom-up approaches are used in synergy.
10. Situation analysis is used to identify immediate, underlying, and basic causes of development problems.
11. Measurable goals and targets are important in programming.
12. Strategic partnerships are developed and sustained.
13. Programmes support accountability to all stakeholders.