

**ACTION PROFESSIONALS' ASSOCIATION FOR  
THE PEOPLE**

**Strategic plan  
(2005-2007)**

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## **I. ORGANIZATIONAL BACKGROUND**

APAP is a non-partisan, indigenous non-governmental organization established in 1993 with the main objective of providing legal and professional services to the poor women and children. It also aims at accessing human rights and legal information to these groups so as to enable them use the law and human rights as a resource in bringing about an attitudinal change in the development process.

To realize these objectives, APAP, ever since its establishment, has been designing and carrying out a number of programs and activities in Addis Ababa and major regions of Ethiopia.

It may be appropriate to classify APAP's interventions in three stages in terms of approaches, strategies and coverage. The first stage spans from 1993 until its deregistration in August 1995 by the former Relief and Rehabilitation Commission on technical grounds. In this period, APAP's area of operation was limited only to Addis Ababa. Nevertheless, some pioneering activities were carried out that laid fertile ground for future activities of APAP. The Legal Assistance Program targeted people including women who are unable to afford such services. In the Community Legal Education activities, community members were familiarized with basic rights as well as the functioning of the legal system. The Para-Legal Training Program conducted in poor neighborhoods in Addis Ababa led to the establishment of self-help organizations by targeted individuals to address their social problems. A project to combat child prostitution was also implemented based on the same ideal.

APAP also tried to make its intervention a national issue by organizing national and international workshops on paralegal training, legal aid and public interest lawyering, public defense, and child prostitution. In August 1995, APAP's registration was cancelled. As a result all programs had to be abandoned. The process of resolving the issue took almost two years. However, staff members in their individual capacity were involved in a number of relevant activities. First, an assessment on the state of administration of juvenile justice in Ethiopia was conducted which closely studied the juvenile justice administration in nearly all regions and in Addis Ababa. As a continuation of this assessment, an independent study on the role and relevance of traditional and community-based institutions in promoting the rights of children was also conducted. This in turn allowed an examination of the potentials and limitations of community level voluntary institutions to act as institutions of promotion and protection of human rights. Finally, extensive study and preparation was made to organize a training course (and manual) on the link between human rights and development. This was also very useful in gaining insight into the relevance and uses of human rights and the law to such issues as gender, participation and development, as well as in developing expertise in designing relevant, need-specific training programs.

The formal registration of APAP in 1997 heralded the second phase in APAP's intervention and lasted until the end of 1999. APAP has planned and implemented a two-year operational plan beginning from January 1, 1998 to December 31, 1999 in collaboration with governmental institutions, in particular, with justice sectors of the Amhara, Oromia, Southern Nations Nationalities and People's Regional states,

Harar, Dire Dawa and Addis Ababa Administration. In all the regions mentioned, APAP was able to organize consultation workshops for identifying the pressing needs and the area of intervention in the respective regions. Apart from this, APAP also conducted a number of human rights and paralegal training workshops in all regions. The workshops targeted public prosecutors, police, social court judges, women and community leaders and kebele administration officials.

In addition to human rights promotion activities, APAP initiated the formation of voluntary, autonomous professional associations in different regional states. It also provided technical, financial, material as well as training support to the newly emerging voluntary and autonomous associations which are supposed to engage in human rights promotion and legal service provision activities to the disadvantaged women and children living under difficult circumstances as well as the poor.

Moreover, the implementation of the two-year operational plan has helped APAP to accumulate a wealth of experience and competence in organizing trainings, producing training manuals, conducting action-oriented research, and generally in identifying areas APAP could best and successfully carry out. It also helped it to identify and establish good working relationship with its donors, regional governments and law enforcement and judicial bodies, community-based voluntary associations and professionals as well as to draw lessons for refining its operations and management, revising statute, introducing a computerized accounting system and a new financial manual.

The third and final stage covers the period from 2000-2004 during which APAP successfully designed a strategic plan and tried to become more focused in efforts to make its intervention more observable, monitorable as well as proactive by selecting corruption as organizing theme. During the period, APAP developed expertise in organizing and conducting human rights training workshops, as a result of which community leaders, the police, judges, prosecutors and administrators benefited from orientations that equipped them with the capacity to fight corruption and human rights violations. Besides, material and technical support was extended to a number community level institutions (e.g. amateur groups, professional associations, traditional institutions) to enable them become more actively involved in human rights promotion and protection activities. Interventions towards enhancing their capacity in mobilizing their constituency in promotion of human framework were also carried out. A variety of publications including leaflets, booklets and posters were produced to meet the same objective.

Moreover, APAP has been involved in research activities on the problem of corruption and its impact on human rights in general and economic, social and cultural rights in particular. A lobbying workshop was also organized on the justiciability of human rights in Ethiopia.

Generally, in the past five years, APAP has tried to focus all its activities on a single problem which is gravely affecting the poor, women and children. Though APAP had chosen the problem of corruption in order to be more focused and bring about measurable impact, it was not entirely without any limitations. Nevertheless, the exercises in the past

five years has been valuable experience which enabled APAP to venture on more focused programs and strategies for the benefit of the poor, women and children.

The present strategic plan also puts emphasis on alleviating poverty affecting the poor, women and children using human rights and the law aimed at bringing about sustainable development in Ethiopia

## **II. THE STRATEGIC PLAN DEVELOPMENT PROCESS**

While developing the present strategic plan, APAP had thoroughly examined its experience and expertise as well as current global and national developments. As always, it devoted particular attention to find ways and means for effectively addressing, with in its own mandate, the extreme poverty affecting the poor, women and children.

In particular, the following specific issues have enabled APAP to devise a more refined strategic direction in the future.

**Evaluation meetings in APAP.** APAP has a well-developed practice of holding regular program evaluations, at least bi-annually and annually. These evaluation exercises have contributed a great deal to identifying weaknesses and strengths in relation to strategies and programs designed and implemented by APAP. The various adjustments and revisions made in programs and approaches in the past are credited to these exercises.

**Discussion papers in APAP.** Each staff member has produced researched papers on the specific strategic and operational issues and extensively discussed them together with

others. The exercise has guided APAP to further refine and articulate recommendations and proposals for the present strategic plan. The research papers discussed covered the following relevant topics: 'The process of strategic plan preparation,' 'Analysis of APAP's vision, mission, objectives and programs', 'Analysis of the strengths and weaknesses in selecting APAP's target groups and addressing their needs', 'Effectiveness of strategies employed by APAP', 'Analysis of APAP's problem identification method', APAP's operational areas vis-à-vis the effectiveness of its interventions', 'APAP's relationship with its stakeholders', 'Impacts of APAP's intervention', 'Constituency building', 'Potential areas of interventions in the future' and 'Sustainable fundraising mechanisms'

**External evaluation reports.** In the past two years, one major evaluation was carried out by external consultants. Though the report is generally positive about the overall performance of APAP, it also indicated some major problems that may undermine APAP's achievements. One of the major problems identified has been the apparent lack of focus on the targets. It was in fact noted that greater attention was given to intermediary targets such as the judiciary and law enforcement. The other major problem indicated relates to the inability to evaluate outcomes or impact of activities on the poor, women and children.

**National workshops on the enforceability of human rights.** In 2002, APAP organized a consultation workshop on the justiciability of economic, social and cultural rights in Ethiopian courts. Generally, the outcome of the workshop revealed that there are indeed obstacles to enforce these particular rights in Ethiopian courts or through similar

mechanisms apparently due to lack of awareness, absence of subsidiary laws or lack of judicial activism.

**Research reports.** In the past five years, APAP has produced three major research reports. These reports covered such themes as the problem of enforceability of human rights in Ethiopian courts, overview of corruption and the legal system, and the impact of corruption on economic, social and cultural rights. The findings of the researches in relation to corruption, in particular, highlighted the absence of transparent laws and regulations as well as mechanisms to fight corruption in Ethiopia and their adverse effect on the realization of economic, social and cultural rights. The other research reports elaborated on the problem of enforcing human rights in the Ethiopian courts for different legal, technical and practical reasons including lack of awareness about the specific rights, lack of judicial activism and absence of appropriate legislations.

**Assessment.** An extensive assessment was carried out by APAP in the regional towns as well as in Addis Ababa where APAP operated. The assessment was aimed at identifying specific human rights issues affecting the poor, women and children. Thus, poor peoples living in poor neighborhood/slums were the major informants for the survey in which they were solicited to relate their understanding of such notions as poverty, rights, and law. This approach has enabled APAP to appreciate how the poor define poverty as expressed and experienced by themselves. As a result of the exercise, specific economic and social right problems affecting the poor, women and children were identified on which APAP will be focusing in the future. These were problems related to *housing, education, health and food*. Moreover, the assessment had examined obstacles hampering

the active participation of the poor in matters affecting their life by using legal institutions effectively. In the process, APAP was also able to witness people affected by HIV/AIDS as most vulnerable groups in present day Ethiopia. On the other hand, the assessment was also aimed at looking for relevant partners such as community institutions and civil society organizations who may join hands in addressing the identified problems of the poor, women and children more concretely.

**National consultation workshop.** A national consultation workshop was organized to reinforce the findings of the assessment. The workshop was aimed at creating a discussion forum among stakeholders on the findings of the assessment. Apart from this, discussion papers were presented by experienced professionals on different topics including; '*Idirs*' and other social institutions as means of reaching the urban poor', 'Accessibility and effectiveness of the legal system to the poor', 'Recurrent legal and human rights problems encountered in relation to HIV/AIDS', 'Promoting pro poor policies', and 'Experience of NGOs in working with '*Idirs*'

**Pilot project in Dessie.** The pilot project carried out in Dessie was basically aimed at collecting input for the present strategic plan. Indeed, the outcome of the project has contributed a great deal, in particular, in relation to the need to focus on specific problems affecting the community and conducting coordinated and integrated interventions.

Consequently, APAP has learned the following major lessons;

- The need to retain its previous vision;

- The need to be more focused in relation to strategies and activities to effectively address the problem of the poor, women and children;
- The need to establish close contact with the poor, women and children;
- The need to target specific human rights issue directly affecting the poor, women and children to bring about observable change;
- The need to adopt multi-level intervention approach from the grassroots up to the global level;
- The need to engage more on policy work and legislative advocacy to protect the interest of the poor, women and children;
- The need to focus more on utilizing existing community level structures like *idirs*;
- The need to be more focused in terms of area of operation; and
- The need to establish evaluation and monitoring system to follow up and measure the impact of program activities more scientifically.

### **III. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE STRATEGIC PLAN**

The conceptual framework determining the design of the strategic plan can be explained through discussion of the notions of poverty, rights-based approach and ESC rights activism as these are linked to APAP's institutional history and mandate. By so doing, it is to be argued that poverty remains to be the targeted problem in APAP; that the rights-based approach defines the logic of intervention; and that ESC rights are to be taken as entry points for a rights-based approach to poverty reduction. It is also to be established that the right to housing, adequate food, health care and education are the specific ESC rights affecting the survival, dignity and security of the targets of APAP. While we believe that this framework is not a new import to APAP, it is worth noting that the

framework analysis adds sharpness, increased focus, and improved clarity to the intervention logic adopted in the strategic plan.

As indicated in its strategic plan for the past five years, APAP has remained faithful to its mandate which is aimed at making legal and human rights information and services accessible to the poor, women, children and other marginalized social groups. The mandate was adopted with a view to addressing the root causes of poverty from the legal and human rights perspective as well as in linking the profession of the law with peoples' endeavor to address the overriding problem of poverty in Ethiopia. The mandate particularly evolved from a thoughtful commitment of its founders to promote the utilization of the legal and human rights framework as a necessary resource in the fight against poverty and other obstacles to development.

APAP's intervention in implementing its mandate varied in thematic and spatial focus, nature of strategic entry points, and assignment of roles to itself and relevant stakeholders. Provision of legal aid, community level legal education and paralegal training have been the focal points for APAP's intervention during the initial stage of its establishment. It was later to embark on progressively broadening human rights education initiatives focusing on intermediate targets. A relatively more focused and systematic intervention was the execution of the past strategic plan, which had corruption as an organizing theme of the strategic plan founded on its experience and institutional development as well as the influence of global trends in the field and in development cooperation.

The common denominator of all these interventions is the commitment and focus shown in addressing the national poverty problem with due recognition, promotion and utilization of the instrumental function of the law and human rights. At the background of such an intervention was the understanding of poverty as a multi-faceted problem that need to be addressed from different angles and requiring a multi-level intervention with the active involvement of those affected by it. This notion implies, among other things, that poverty should be seen beyond income poverty and as a situation caused and sustained by the dynamics of power relationships in the processes of resource allocation, policy and decision making, and distribution of benefits resulting therefrom.

The dominant discourse around the meaning of poverty/development and its link to human rights seems also to inform the institutional experience and wisdom. Key points in this regard include:

- The adoption of the human development approach by UNDP in which the concept of poverty goes much beyond just income poverty and which signifies an acceptable level of deprivation of well-being that a civilized society considers incompatible with human dignity;
- The elaboration of the right to development and main features of a rights-based approach to poverty reduction by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and specialized agencies of the UN;
- Promoting UN reform by adopting rights based development since 1997 in an effort to mainstream human rights in the programs and operations of the UN;

- Amartya Sen's theory in "Development as Freedom"(1999) in which he defined poverty as capacity deprivation in that development is not the acquisition of more goods and services but the enhanced freedom to choose, to lead the kind of life one values; UNDP, Human Development Report(2000) linking human rights and human development by adopting Sen's capability/freedom approach;
- The recognition given to human rights in the law and practice of international relations as legal norms implying obligations by states to respect, protect and fulfill the rights in question and duties on individuals and other non-state actors to contribute towards the realization of those rights;
- Promotion of human rights education as effective means of enhancing people's capabilities that facilitate their own social transformation through participation in decisions that affect development;
- The evolution of international development from economic development in the 1950's and 60's to social development and eventually in the 1980's and 1990's to sustainable and people-centered development; and
- Voices of the poor (World Development Report, 2001) crying out loudly how poverty is also powerlessness, marginalization, exclusion as well as lack of dignity, security, self-respect and justice.

These are not only within the conceptual understanding of APAP on poverty, development and the link between them. These are reflective of a rights-based approach to development to which APAP remains loyal throughout its institutional life. The logical outcome is the understanding of poverty by APAP as deprivation of capabilities as well

as gross violation of human rights characterized by a state of indignity, inequality, injustice, dis-empowerment and exclusion. In this understanding of poverty, human rights, both civil/political and economic/social/cultural rights, hold at the same time constitutive as well as instrumental importance in the process of development. This implies that human rights are ends in themselves and goal of development. In this respect, The observance of human rights creates an enabling environment facilitating the development process.

APAP thus believes that development and poverty reduction efforts in Ethiopia and elsewhere need to be addressed from the human rights perspective by adopting a rights-based approach to development and poverty reduction.

As indicated above, the rights-based approach is not a new import to APAP in this strategic plan. APAP has been trying to promote and operationalize it right from its inception and especially since it was accorded recognition by its relevant stakeholders. Yet it is worth noting that there is a progressive emphasis from time to time on becoming more proactive and down-to-earth rights advocacy institution. Resources in a rights-based approach include not just GDP or output or employment, but also legal, technical and institutional resources. APAP has been intervening in the improvement of these resources so that the prospect for the realization of all other rights improves.

APAP's rights-based commitment could also be traced to the strategies it adopted in its formative stage and later in the implementation of the previous strategic plan. Indeed, these strategies had a focus on education for transformation, community mobilization and

organization engendered by a human rights education movement as per the thinking of the Brazilian educationalist, Paulo Friere. APAP's employment of litigation and legal aid programs, paralegal training and basic community legal education can also be seen as rights-based advocacy whose objective is to remedy injustice by enforcing the law, in changing the structures perpetuating injustice and inhibiting development. The emphasis given to participation and participatory processes, recognition to equality and non-discrimination, and accountability of duty bearers in the programs and projects of APAP reflect as well longstanding commitment to the main principles of the rights-based approach.

APAP plans to have a more articulated rights-based commitment for the purpose of the present strategic plan, which combines poverty reduction, human rights observance and activism. As presented below, the approach aims at increasing availability, accessibility and quality *education, health care, housing and food* by the poor, women and children through changes in policies and laws, attitudes and perceptions, institutions and institutional mechanisms, quality of public service, monitoring and participation. As a result, it is possible to consider that the current strategic plan is a rights-based ESC rights activism. It may appear that the adoption of this approach departs from APAP's experience and mandate. Yet it can be easily established that the change is rather in the strategic focus and entry point which is reflective of institutional maturity and a thorough analysis of the internal and external environment.

For one thing, ESC rights have always been dealt with in APAP's plans and programs since its inception. The public education programs using leaflets, posters, drama, more

structured human rights education and training programs as well as research and publication activities have dealt with various ESC issues including in relation to corruption and the plight of women and children.

Secondly, the realization of ESC rights is closely linked to poverty reduction in a rights-based approach. Addressing ESC rights means challenging structures and interests which govern resource allocation and perpetuate poverty. ESC issues are the issues which concern poor people most since it is within these issues that they locate their rights. Poverty has at least two dimensions, according to Arjun Sen Gupta. The first is income poverty which relates to what percentage of the population subsists below a minimum level of income or consumption. The second is related to the capability of the poor to come out of poverty in a sustainable manner by having increased access to facilities like *health, education, housing and nutrition*.

Thirdly, it is a lesson well learnt that the concern of an institution like APAP should be identification of the problem that most affects its target groups. As presented above, the strategic planning and elaboration process has led to the identification of problems in the realization of rights to *education, health, housing and food* and that the urban poor, women and children in APAP's intervention area represent the most affected and vulnerable groups. It is possible to argue conversely that APAP targets the poor, women and children because they are the most affected and marginalized in relation to the realization of their human rights in general and the specific ESC rights in particular.

Fourthly, APAP plans to continue influencing the legal and policy formulation and implementation process through the utilization of human rights norms and standards having ESC rights as entry points. A rights-based approach to social and economic security means that people's access to basic needs is protected by law and legal mechanisms. Issues of health, education, food, shelter, vulnerability, marginalization, equity and gender and similar matters are formulated in normative terms in International Covenant on ESC Rights and other international and national laws. A human rights approach to ESC rights allows focusing attention on those who lag behind others in enjoying these rights and on the requirement of taking positive action including at the policy, institutional, and legal framework and the local, national and international levels. It is likely that such actions lead to a well functioning human rights system in the long run.

Note however that focusing on ESC rights does not mean that these rights are more important than or independent from civil and political rights. They warrant specific focus only because they had been ignored for long and only little was done to popularize and elaborate these rights as human rights. Otherwise, ESC rights activism is just an entry point to engender a wider democratic space in the realization of human rights by the mobilization of civil and political rights such as the right to information, equality, participation, and the human rights principles of accountability, transparency and non-discrimination. It needs also to be clear that participation by the community in an advocacy effort for the realization of ESC rights promotes long-term efforts to nurture a human rights culture. The entire human rights movement is founded on the equal

treatment of every individual human being, equality of opportunity, and the demand for justice, irrespective of whether the entry point is civil and political issue or ESC concern.

What is implied by APAP's commitment to the rights-based approach will be thoroughly discussed in the presentation of the strategic plan. Yet, it is appropriate that we now discuss its main elements.

ESC rights are human rights entailing obligations. Ethiopia ratified the International Covenant on ESC Rights on June 11, 1993 and this law has become part and parcel of the law of the land according to the Constitution. There are also constitutional provisions dealing with these rights as fundamental rights and as guiding principles of state policy. As a result, the Ethiopian Government is accountable for its obligations of respecting, protecting and fulfilling ESC rights including the right to adequate food, health care, education and housing at the international law and within national constitutional frameworks. The rights holders are all Ethiopians including the poor, women, and children in the operational areas of APAP.

The realization of ESC rights demands enhancing the capability of both rights holders and duty bearers. Rights holders need to be empowered to contest for their rights through administrative, legal, political, social and private channels and at the local, national and international levels. Likewise, duty-bearers need to be aware of their obligations and the means to discharge it. These demand creating an enabling environment defined by the policy and legal framework, engagement in the elaboration of the content of the rights

and the corresponding obligations taking into account local context, and developing indicators to measure state's 'progressive realization' performance .

APAP identifies indivisibility and interdependence of rights, accountability, participation and non-discrimination as essential principles of commitment for the realization of the ESC rights under question in the strategic plan.

Working together is also considered as relevant operational principle in the implementation of the programs. This involves working together with the government, CBOs, and other non-state actors in a spirit of collaboration and cooperation so as to attain shared objectives. Working with government becomes particularly essential because ESC rights are in active phase of formation and elaboration and their realization necessarily involves the development of government policies and programs. Collaboration and cooperation with the other actors implies that APAP be involved initiating community monitoring and the promotion of rights based approach and ESC rights activism at different levels and in a multi-sectored approach.

## **V. VISION AND MISSION OF APAP**

APAP has a defined vision and a mission statement which are articulated in the previous strategic plan. As stated in that document and as it exists now, the vision is:

*A society in which the whole spectrum of human rights are respected for all Ethiopians in a holistic development process which protects the interests and rights of the urban and rural poor, women and other marginalized*

*social groups and empowers them to be active, effective, and informed participants in the development, decision making and legal process.*

It is apparent that the vision of APAP indicates the state of human rights and that the whole spectrum of human rights is not respected for all Ethiopians. The vision statement connotes that the prevailing development process is not yet holistic, as a result of which the rights and interests of the target social groups might not be protected. Despite the incorporation of the right to development and the political will of the government to follow a holistic development approach in the Constitution, a lot remains to be done in this regard. Lack of awareness about the role and place of human rights in development, scarcity of resources, lack or absence of civil society to mobilize resources are some of the factors which would contribute to the prevalence and persistence of the problem.

The vision also underlines that the poor, women and children are not informed, active and effective participants in decision making, as well as in legal and development processes that affects their lives. The marginalization of the target social groups may be attributed to the absence of systematic and empowering legal and human rights education that enables them overcome their exclusion from decision-making and legal and development process.

APAP has stated its mission statement which is as follows:

*Working for the full realization of social, economic and cultural rights of the poor, women, children and other marginalized groups who are experiencing poverty, injustice, insecurity and exclusion so that they*

*would be informed, active and effective participants in the development and decision making process affecting their lives by closely working with them and in collaboration with other civil society institutions on laws, policies and practices that have negative impact on the realization such rights .*

The mission statement explains the mechanisms to be employed for the realization of the vision of APAP. It asserts that empowering the poor, women and children to become informed, active and effective participants in matters affecting their life is necessary. It further indicates that APAP would employ as the main strategy the mobilization of civil society and community-based institutions to bring about measurable change.

Unlike the previous mission statement, in the present one APAP is envisaging a situation where it would be working together with Civil Society Organizations including community level institutions. This particular approach has the objective of directly reaching the poor, women and children more than ever.

## **VI. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

There are a number of causes that contributed to the non-realization of economic and social rights in general and the right to adequate housing, education, health and food in particular in Ethiopian context. The following table illustrates some of the major problems to be addressed in the future interventions as well as the opportunities available for APAP towards realizing those particular rights identified.

	<b>CAUSES FOR THE NON REALIZATION OF THE RIGHT TO HOUSING, EDUCATION AND HEALTH</b>	<b>OPPORTUNITIES</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ESC rights are not given due attention in the Ethiopian Constitution</li> <li>• The right to education, health, food and housing are recognized as social objective in the Ethiopian Constitution (and not explicitly in the section providing for human rights) leaving the specific rights at the mercy of policy makers and legislators.</li> <li>• The apparent confusion as to the status of international human rights law at national level.</li> <li>• Apparent lack of agreement on the definition of the ESC rights.</li> <li>• Worldwide ESC rights were not given due attention</li> <li>• Lack of initiative to engage in ESC rights activism by different actors.</li> <li>• Silence adherence to the traditional</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ESC rights are being elaborated (The CESCR has elaborated the right to housing, education , food and health in its general comments)</li> <li>• Attention is being given to poverty reduction by the government.</li> <li>• Livelihood rights (such as food, health, education) are a priority in Ethiopia.</li> <li>• Wider experience and acceptance in ESC activism worldwide.</li> <li>• Wider acceptance of the Right based approach to poverty reduction by CSOs.</li> </ul>

	<b>CAUSES FOR THE NON REALIZATION OF THE RIGHT TO HOUSING, EDUCATION AND HEALTH</b>	<b>OPPORTUNITIES</b>
	<p>dichotomy of rights between civil and political on the one hand and economic social and cultural rights on the other.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Governments focus mainly on income poverty in its poverty reduction strategy.</li> <li>• Holistic approach to poverty reduction adopted only at sectoral level and not at grassroots.</li> <li>• Lack of awareness about ESC rights at all levels including the right holders and the duty bearers.</li> <li>• Exclusion of political capital (participation and empowerment) in livelihood interventions.</li> <li>• ESC rights are not being monitored by Human rights NGOs in Ethiopia from a rights perspective.</li> <li>• Lack of focus in ESC rights in human right education activities.</li> </ul>	

## **VII. OVERALL GOAL**

The strategic plan has defined its overall goal as follows:

*All women, children and poor in APAP's intervention area enjoy their right to food, health housing and education.*

It is to be noted, however, that as per the principle of indivisibility/interdependence of rights, the enjoyment of the specific rights mentioned in the goal is dependent upon the realization of other rights as well. The right to work is, for instance, necessary for the realization of the right to housing and education. On the other hand, the right to education is equally necessary for the realization of the right to work. On the whole, the goal rather explains the determination on the part of APAP to be more focused on the pertinent human rights issues affecting the poor, women and children.

## **VIII. GENERAL OBJECTIVES**

APAP formulates the following general and specific objectives directed towards attaining its overall goal. All objectives are intended, in the long run, to enable the poor, women and children have access to health services, housing, food and education.

The objectives would, in particular, assist APAP in designing appropriate strategies, programs as well as specific activities for the future.

The following are identified as the general objectives of the strategic plan.

- Enhancing the capacity of the rights holders (or the poor, women children, and people affected by HIV/AIDS) to claim their rights from duty bearers, the state and its agencies
- Influencing the legal framework at local and national level affecting the full realization of the right to housing, education, food and health.
- Enhancing the capacity and commitment on the part of the state and its agencies to discharge their obligation with regard to housing, education, food and health.
- Facilitating the engagement of civil society institutions in the realization of the right to housing, education, food and health.

## **IX. STRATEGIES**

The following are the main strategies to be used in future interventions:

**Education and training:** Employing focused education and training programs aimed at raising the awareness of the general public, the poor, women and children as well as relevant government agencies about economic, social and cultural rights in general and the right to housing, education, health and food in particular.

**Research and publication:** Aimed at conducting research activities and publications to bring about attitudinal changes and influence laws, policies and practices on the right to housing, education, health and food.

**Media advocacy:** Aimed at persistent and continuous use of the media to sensitize and influence relevant stakeholders on the right to housing, education, health and food.

**Networking:** Aimed at mobilizing civil society institutions for the realization of the right to housing, education, health and food.

**Lobbying:** Aimed at organizing workshops and other forums to influence change in the laws, policies and practices affecting the right to housing, education, health and food.

**Facilitating the establishment of Community Level Legal Resource Center:** Aimed at engaging in institutionalization of the protection and promotion of the right to housing, education, health and food at community level and establishing closer attachment with the poor, women and children.

**Legal aid and public interest litigation:** Aimed at engaging in litigation and at representing the poor, women and children to bring their cases to a court of law and as a mechanism to sensitize the public and relevant government bodies with regard to the justiciability of the right to housing, education, health and food.

## **X. PROGRAMS**

APAP has adopted three programs putting together similar strategies and taking into account the overall goals and correlated strategies.

### ***A. EDUCATION AND MOBILIZATION PROGRAM***

APAP's role in promoting ESC Rights activism and realization of the rights to adequate food, housing, health care and education is that of facilitating the empowerment of rights

holders to claim their rights from duty bearers. As it may be noted, APAP has rich experience in participatory education and training as well as relevant skill and expertise. The current program builds on that wealth of experience and skills by combining education and mobilization. It is expected that the program leads to critical consciousness and praxis towards the mobilization of community people and resources for the contestation of ESC rights to adequate food, housing, health care and education. The program will also lead to the establishment of community level human rights resource centers to be manned by ESC trained paralegals. These paralegals will have to assume roles of educating and mobilizing the community, rendering basic legal assistance services, and coordinating community monitoring in the realization of ESC rights. The would-be paralegals are to be drawn largely from *Idirs* since these have shown interest in housing the community level resource center envisaged as an outcome of the education and mobilization program. Women and youth associations as well as child rights clubs will also be targeted since these are not usually represented in *Idirs*.

## ***B. RESEARCH AND PUBLICATION***

This program has the purpose of feeding information to the other programs and making available data and analysis for relevant stakeholders with a view to promoting of ESC rights activism in a rights-based approach. It is thus expected that it would deal with such tasks as elaboration of the rights, identification and formulation of indicators, collection of data and producing educational materials.

## **C. POLICY WORK, LEGISLATIVE ADVOCACY AND LITIGATION**

### **PROGRAM**

This program has the objectives of ultimately creating the enabling and empowering environment for the contestation of ESC rights by rights holders and for improving the performance of the state in discharging its progressive realization obligations. The program constitutes three interrelated strategies. The first is policy work or policy advocacy that aims at the formulation and evaluation of policy from a rights perspective. The Ethiopian government, like all other governments, has extensive pro-poor programs and policies in food security, health, housing and education sectors. Secondly the program involves legislative advocacy. APAP intends to use legislative advocacy as a lobbying tool to remind the Government of its obligation under international law to develop legislation to progressively achieve economic and social rights. Thirdly, litigation is planned to be used to advance survival rights to make individual human rights claims, to raise public awareness, to help elaborate the content of rights and as a long term strategy for law reform.

## **XI. STAKEHOLDERS**

**Poor women and children.** As indicated in the Vision and Mission statements, APAP works to change the lives of the marginalized sections of the society particularly the poor, women and children by employing different strategies. Individuals affected by HIV/AIDS are also targeted, as the most affected marginalized groups in present day Ethiopia.

**Community Level institutions (*Idirs*).** As per the finding of the assessment conducted by APAP, *Idirs* were identified as the most effective channels to effectively reach target

groups. They are relatively democratic, transparent and sustainable. The fact that they have already consented to work with APAP makes them extremely relevant actors to realize APAP's objectives. Therefore, APAP would be carrying out sustainable projects with them. On the other hand, other community level institutions such as women associations, youth groups, professional associations operating in the localities will also be targeted.

**The judiciary.** One of the problems hindering the realization of economic, social and cultural rights is the apparent misconception by courts that economic, social and cultural rights are not justiciable. At times, the overriding opinion is that the legal framework is not clear or allows judges to entertain cases involving economic, social and cultural rights thereby uncovering, perhaps, lack of judicial activism. Therefore, courts/judges are relevant stakeholders in the realization of the right to housing, education, health and food. Strategies aiming at sensitizing judges about the nature and scope of economic and social rights as well as the jurisprudence on the issues are devised.

**Policy/law makers/ implementers.** The realization of the right to housing, education, health and food may depend much on how existing policies and laws are relevant to the needs and interests of the poor, women and children. In this light, APAP has to work towards influencing law makers and relevant government bodies in devising appropriate pro poor policies and laws. Appropriate government agencies at local level that implement policies directly related to housing, education, health and food are called on to embark on adopting practices or mechanisms that are responsive to the needs and interests of the poor, women and children.

**Civil society institutions:** As already indicated, housing, health, education and food rights may not be realized by judicial means alone. The concept of progressive

realization makes it starkly clear that the realization of such rights, in many instances, may depend on the way policies and laws are endorsed and implemented. The presence of inappropriate policy, or else absence of it, may also call for a re-examination of a policy or the adoption of a new one. As a small organization, APAP may not have the required leverage to influence the government all by itself. It needs the collaboration of other civil society organizations that would be sensitized about the nature and scope of the specific rights identified and become active actors in the policy dialogue with relevant government offices

## **XII. AREA OF OPERATION**

Due to capacity limitation, APAP has been working in previous years in Oromia, Amhara, SNNPR and Harar and Regional States as well as in Addis Ababa and Dire Dawa. Having already established strong working relationships with relevant government authorities as well as a number of community level institutions, APAP will continue to target these regions in the future. APAP has learned from experience that it cannot afford to move to new places all of a sudden due to time and capacity limitations.

Unlike the past years, however, APAP has reached a stage where it has to make clear its position regarding its operations in rural and urban areas. In the past, it was maintaining that programs and activities are targeting the poor, women and children residing both in rural and urban areas. But in the present strategic plan, its intervention will be entirely directed towards the urban poor. However, such a measure does not indicate a total shift from the past. The only reason is that, in the past, APAP was not able to reach the rural

areas properly largely due to capacity limitation. It finds it appropriate therefore to intensively work in urban areas to bring about a concrete result.

However rural areas and other regions would not be entirely excluded from the benefits of APAP's interventions. Activities geared towards policy and law reform and litigation, for instance, would have similar and reverberating effect for all Ethiopians residing in every part of the country.

### **XIII. SUSTAINABILITY**

The issue of sustainability has always been a prime concern of APAP. In the past, working with community level institutions was aimed at replicating the human rights promotion and protection activities at local level in a sustainable manner. The initiation and strengthening of professional associations, such as regional lawyers associations, have a similar purpose of institutionalizing the provision of free legal aid service and promotion of human rights at local level.

Similarly, in future interventions, the issue of sustainability is given greater emphasis perhaps more than ever before. Therefore, facilitating the establishment of Community Resource Centre at community level, owned and coordinated by *Idirs*, secures the sustainability of APAP's intervention. Moreover, the mobilization of CSOs to structure their efforts in more formal networks would be the basis for future advocacy work on economic and social rights issues in consistent and sustainable manner.

#### **XIV. MONITORING AND EVALUATION**

APAP has the experience of regularly monitoring and evaluating its programs and activities. Such a practice had tremendously helped APAP to revise its programs and approaches. But problems related to evaluating the impact of programs and activities on the poor, women, and children have been identified by the evaluation process. Such problems might have emerged due to the absence of monitorable impact/outcome indicators, lack of baseline information or clear benchmarks enabling APAP to compare its achievements against its failures. It might as well be due to the nature of the human rights work itself, as many writers argue that practical difficulty in measuring, for instance, changes in attitudes within a short period of time.

At any rate, monitoring and evaluation of program activities in a systematic manner will be developed in APAP in the future. Program activities shall be designed in a manner clearly allowing the measurement of process as well as outcome changes towards the realization of the right to housing, food, education and health.