

OUR ROLE IN A DECADE OF ACTIVISM

A BLUEPRINT FOR A
SECRETARIAT THAT BUILDS
THE POWER OF YOUNG
PEOPLE TO ORGANIZE
AND CREATE **CHANGE** IN
UNCERTAIN TIMES

OUR ROLE IN A DECADE OF ACTIVISM

Welcome! This paper is meant for staff, interns, and volunteers who want to understand how the secretariat in ActionAid Denmark is organized. The paper provides an overview of our *structure, organizational culture, and principles* that guide us as we work together to achieve the strategy.

1. WHY ARE WE HERE?

Our **strategy** provides a clear role and theory of change for us at the secretariat:

We focus on strengthening young activists and movements. We support these agents of change in creative activism, leadership development, and organizing so that they can realize changes.

The world is facing multiple interconnected crises, and in the coming strategy period, we will have a special focus on two of the largest challenges of our time: the democratic and the climate crisis.

Within this overall frame, we have three key goals that we are organizing around.

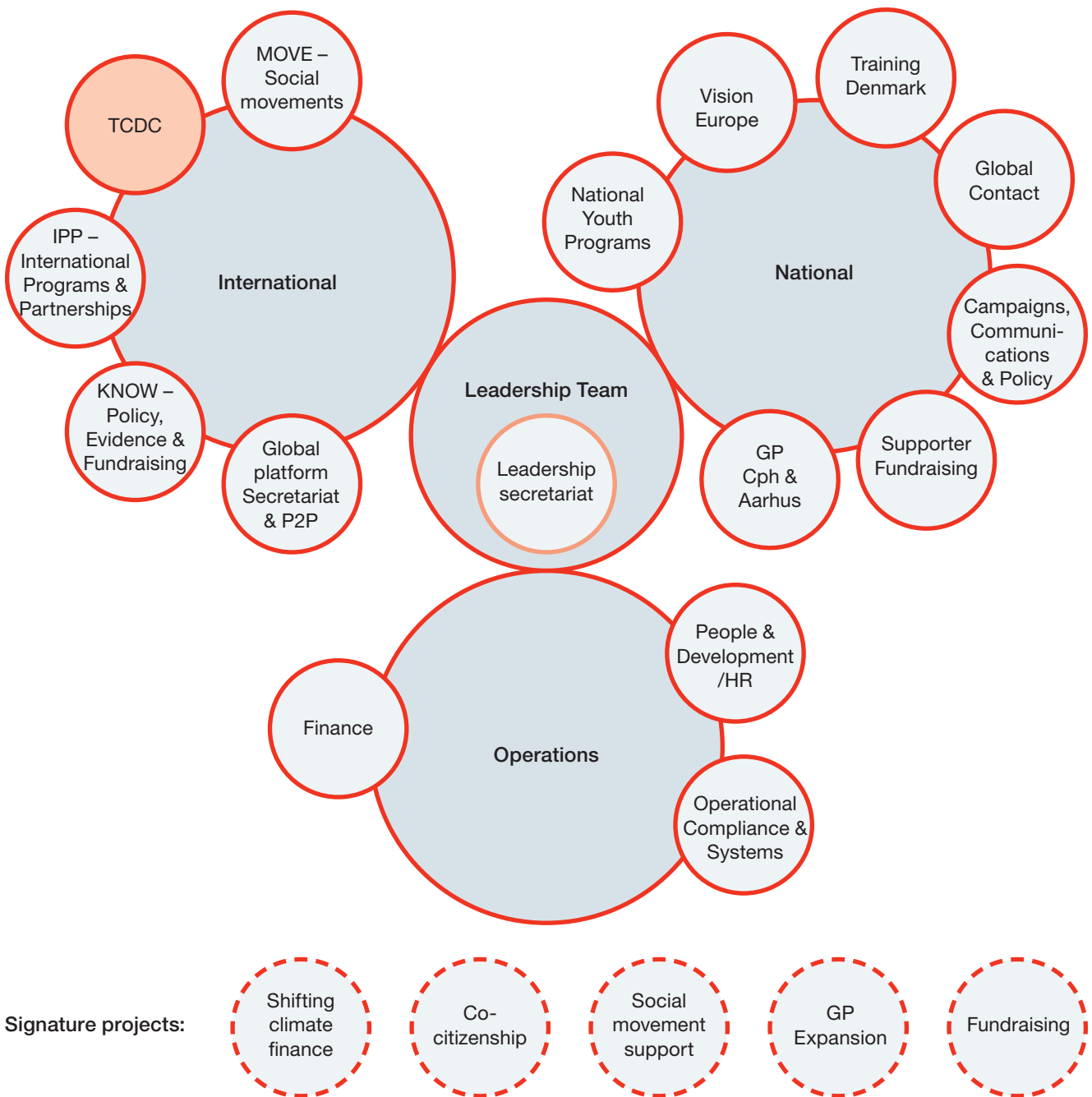
We want to:

- Counter polarization and discrimination and strengthen civil rights and meaningful citizenship
- Stop investments in fossil fuels and move billions to a just transition on the front lines of the climate crisis
- Strengthen young activists and social movements and help them achieve political and social change

In addition, we have committed to financial targets needed to achieve the goals.

2. HOW DO WE WORK TOGETHER? OUR STRUCTURE

We have organized ourselves according to the new strategy. All staff are organized in teams that deliver on specific parts of the strategy and involved partners. In addition, we have five signature projects, which bring people together across the organization to ensure progress on the key goals mentioned above.



3. CLUSTERS AND TEAMS – THE BUILDING BLOCKS

Our basic structure is based on teams with delegated authority and initiative within given areas. We bring teams together in clusters to support clear lines of reference with the senior leadership (LT) – consisting of the cluster directors - and to support collaboration in-between teams in the same cluster. The clusters are thus designed to support accountability to the senior leadership, but also to support collective leadership and collaboration between the teams.

3.1 INTERNATIONAL CLUSTER

The international cluster is responsible for our programs and policy work in the Global South, and our collaboration with ActionAid country partners. It consists of four teams and our international training center in Tanzania (TCDC).

3.1.1 International Programs and Partnerships

The IPP team develops and manages our programs and partnerships with ActionAid and local partners around the world. They have country knowledge and relationships, and support high-quality program coordination, communication, and accountability at the country level in line with our focus on localization. The primary partners are ActionAid organizations.

3.1.2 KNOW - Policy, Evidence and Fundraising

The Policy, Evidence and Fundraising team manages global programs, develop knowledge, resources, and evidence on our approach to climate justice, youth-led humanitarian work and Leave No One Behind¹, communicate our impact and support institutional fundraising. The primary partners are donors, local partners, and the ActionAid Global Secretariat.

3.1.3 MOVE - Global Center for Youth Activism and Social Movements

The social movement center leads our support to social

movements globally. They develop and manage digital training programs, develop resources, and support action-research² and communication around social movements. The Global Center is co-managed with ActionAid India, ActionAid Nigeria and TCDC. The primary partners are social movements, research institutions global social movement-minded organizations.

3.1.4 TCDC

TCDC is our flagship training and conference center in Tanzania. It specializes in developing transformational leadership in young people, through leadership training, social dialogues, and knowledge-dissemination. The primary partners are African civil society organizations, Danida Fellowship Center, and ActionAid organizations.

3.1.5 Global Platform Secretariat and People2People

The Global Platform secretariat manages the global platform network together with relevant ActionAid organizations and other partners, including support to expansion, quality and identity of the platforms as well as supporting joint campaigns, events, training, reporting and fundraising within the Network. The primary partners are the Global Platforms.

3.2 NATIONAL ENGAGEMENT CLUSTER

The National Engagement Cluster is responsible for our program, campaigns, and engagement work in Denmark, as well as our European networks and exchange. It consists of six teams.

3.2.1 Campaigns, Communication and Policy

The Campaigns, Communication and Policy team drives impactful campaigns and builds change coalitions within climate justice and co-citizenship. They are organized around these two change goals and have knowledge and skills within popular and digital mobilization and organizing, policy analysis, communication, and alliance building. The primary partners are online supporters, volunteer organizers and allies.

1) The transformative vow of the UN Sustainable Development Goals

2) A form of research carried out without trying to distance or separate oneself from the company or the area being researched in order to achieve a direct and immediate impact on the research area.

3. CLUSTERS AND TEAMS – THE BUILDING BLOCKS

3.2.2 Supporter Fundraising

The Supporter Fundraising team builds our relationship with our supporter base and members. They are responsible for supporter fundraising, expansion and retention of our supporter base and member communication, such as newsletters and homepage. The primary constituency are members and supporters.

3.2.3 National Youth Program

The National Youth Program (NYP) lead our local rights work throughout Denmark. They manage programs that support co-citizenship and participation for youth in marginalized communities. The program has different local rights programs and thus covers national outreach. The primary partners are local organizations, volunteers, and municipalities.

3.2.4 Global Platform Copenhagen and Aarhus

The Global Platform (GP) Copenhagen and Aarhus teams will develop our physical spaces on Fælledvej and Mejlgade as vibrant environmental and social hubs in the communities. The teams' responsibilities include development of the physical spaces and activities and bringing in new partners and tenants, management of cafés, hostel, and tenancies, and running operations and maintenance of the facilities, with support of volunteer and social mentorship programs. In Copenhagen, the yard and HQ showcase collaborative green solutions together with partners in the local community. The primary partners are green organizations and movements, volunteers, local organizations, and the general public.

3.2.5 Training Denmark

The Training Denmark team overseas our training program at schools, our Global Contact programs, and leadership and campaign trainings for Danish and European volunteers and activists in our hubs in Copenhagen and Aarhus. The primary partners are educational institutions and activists.

3.2.6 Global Contact

The Global Contact (GC) team oversees our global volunteer, work exchange and internship programs. In the coming years, the programs will increasingly focus these activities on climate action, expanded European programs, and on an international folk high school program built around the Global Platform network. GC will connect to the change goals on climate justice and co-citizenships. The primary partners are young people, the Global Platforms, and European organizations.

3.2.7 Europe Vision

The Europe Vision team is a new investment. The team will connect to at least 50 European movements and youth groups and build networks, capacity programs, unified campaigns, and also explore possibilities together with local partners to establish new Global Platforms.

3.3 OPERATIONS CLUSTER

The Operations Cluster supports the organisation through ensuring effective operations, systems, and processes now and in the future, developed in close corporation with members across the organisation and to help the organisation securing an effective use of resources. It consists of three teams.

3.3.1 Finance

The finance team is responsible for all accounting, financial and project controlling and reporting. They ensure sound financial management, as well as the supporting of team leaders and directors in team and project/grant budgeting and reporting, accurate and regular financial tracking, and the improvement of efficiency. The primary partners are team leaders and directors.

3.3.2 Human Resources

The Human Resources team is overall responsible for staff well-being, development, and retention, including all policies, contracts and systems related to staff. They support the team leaders in the day-to-day recruiting and managing of staff in line with our feminist leadership principles. The primary partners are team leaders.

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3.3.3 Operational Compliance & Systems (OCS)

The Operational Compliance & Systems team is responsible for maximizing the efficiency of team leaders and staff through simple, integrated, and easy-to-use systems and digital tools. The team supports basic compliance and risk management, easy access to and visualization of relevant data and information, as well as the teams' use of digital projects, systems integration, and better use of data and reporting across the organization. The main partners are team leaders.

3.4 SIGNATURE PROJECTS

The Signature Projects are cross-cutting initiatives that bring together people across departments. They have three main functions:

- Drive and report on progress on priority areas of strategy
- Develop and document signatures of work that can be used for communication, policy, and fundraising
- Share knowledge and resources across relevant teams in the organization

The signature projects are not independent teams with own activities but rather forums for collaboration and synergy between teams to better deliver on the strategy.

Each signature is led by a team leader or staff member with a sponsor from the leadership team and has terms of reference with yearly deliverables. They report back to the management group on a quarterly basis and provide input to a progress report to the board.

The Five Signatures are:

- Co-citizenship: Establish national change coalitions that expand civic rights and participation
- Climate finance: Move billions to locally led just transition

- Social Movements: Build a global center for youth activism and social movements
- Global Platform network: Expand our network of Global Platforms to 75 Platforms and Hubs across the world
- Fundraising: Strengthen our institutional fundraising

3.5 LEADERSHIP TEAM

The Leadership Team is collectively responsible for the work of the secretariat, for strategic management and cooperation with our own governing structures, with ActionAid International, and with other organizations/partners. The Leadership Secretariat, reporting directly to the Secretary General, supports our dialogue and engagement with key stakeholders – policy makers, media, staff, and our own Board and Council.

3.6 ROLE OF CLUSTER DIRECTORS

The Cluster Directors are responsible for strategic leadership and good collaboration across the organization. The Cluster Directors provide coordination and guidance for Team Leaders within their cluster and ensure prioritization and accountability to the strategy and Board. They are overall responsible for ensuring that teams reach financial and change goals and provide final approval of budgets and key decisions within their cluster. Cluster Directors are expected to spend (ballpark) 60% of their time on strategic and cross-departmental collaboration and development and 40% on operations.

3.7 ROLE OF TEAM LEADERS

The Team Leaders are responsible for coordinating the day-to-day work of the team and connected volunteer groups, for developing annual work plans and budgets aligned with AADK's strategy, policies, budgetary situation, and priorities as directed by Cluster Directors. Each Team Leader is responsible for follow-up and ensuring transparent reporting on progress and deliveries, and for ensuring the team's health and wellbeing including staff

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management aligned with DKs staff policies and feminist leadership principles. The Team Leader ensures that the team has the competencies needed to deliver the team's agreed workplan. The Team leader is also responsible for pro-actively looking for opportunities for development, efficiency, and innovations within their area. The Team Leader reports to a Cluster Director and is expected to spend (ballpark) 20% of their time on strategic and cross-departmental collaboration and development, while 80% is spent on leading the team and the associated operation and administration.

Team leaders are supported in decentralized operations management with digital tools, "how-to" documentation, and dedicated partners in HR, Finance and the Operational Compliance and Systems team OCS.

3.8 CROSS-ORGANIZATIONAL DECISION-MAKING FORUMS

3.8.1 Management Group

The Management Group consists of team leaders and cluster directors. The group meets every other month focusing on operational matters, organizational health, and feminist leadership. The group also monitors progress on the signature projects to ensure cross-team cooperation on the strategy.

3.8.2 Cooperation Committee

The Cooperation Committee ("Samarbejdsudvalg") is the main forum for dialogue and cooperation between staff and management and consists of three staff representatives (including the two union shop stewards), the Secretary General, Finance and Administration Director, and the Head of Human Resources, in a counseling role. The committee meets four times a year and discusses issues relevant to working and employment conditions.

3.8.3 Work Environment Council

The Work Environment Council ("Arbejds miljøudvalg") promotes a healthy and safe working environment. The committee is made up of two staff representatives and the Head of Human Resources and is responsible for carrying out and following up on the regular organizational health check.

4. HOW DO WE WORK TOGETHER? CULTURE

We strive towards a culture where staff are empowered and are empowering others to achieve a common purpose. For you as an individual staff member, it means you should a) understand the goals we are working towards and your role in them, b) have the resources needed to contribute your part and c) be personally accountable for your results and collaboration, including actively seeking and providing support and feedback to others.

4.1 FEMINIST LEADERSHIP PRINCIPLES

Our main guide in creating this culture is the feminist leadership approach, which is shared across the ActionAid federation. We are committed to feminist leadership defined as positive and inclusive use of power (also social power) to build an organization capable of changing the world. The 10 feminist leadership principles give us a path to follow and a vision of how we build an organization which is generous, diverse and inclusive, where we celebrate our successes and learn from our failures and where professionalism is combined with openness, curiosity and kindness and where everyone, regardless of background, can thrive and develop. This means ensuring that everyone can participate on equal terms, working more digitally to support collaboration with colleagues around the world, being more open and inclusive towards volunteers, expanding our social mentorship program, and moving more of our (internal) communication to English, e.g. communicate in English on common Teams channels, include non-Danish speaking colleagues in informal chats etc. We will proactively seek diversity when we recruit new staff, offer trainings and recruit volunteers.

4.2 FEEDBACK

A key part of our culture is respectful feedback. We all have blind spots and make mistakes. And we all need appreciation and positive acknowledgement. We strive to create a culture together where feedback is asked for and given often and directly, with respect and a genuine interest in the person it is being given to and our shared purpose. We do not tolerate back-biting or cynicism.

4.3 DIGITAL TOOLS, REMOTE WORK, AND SELF-MANAGEMENT

Over the years we have become more reliant on all sorts of technology in our work - from human resource management and finance applications to tools for operating our platforms to help us collaborate globally. Digital technology offers opportunities for more transparency, efficiency, automation, and remote collaboration. However, systems also create the potential for harmful data exposure. Additionally, system-bloat can lead to organizational strain when platforms fail to integrate or when simple tasks become overly complicated.

We strive to create and maintain few, simple and easy-to-use systems that allow leaders and staff to improve self-management and collaboration. The goal is to minimize the amount of time that we use on internal processes.

4.4 HYBRID TEAMS, REMOTE WORK AND SELF-MANAGEMENT

We have become a global workplace with many hybrid teams with staff placed abroad, and in Copenhagen and Aarhus. Staff in Copenhagen and Aarhus are expected to spend more time at the office than at home but are allowed regular work-from-home time in coordination with their team leader and are encouraged to use digital tools to break down barriers of geography. We see a future in which we have well-connected hubs across the world and are able to provide network and support to groups at a whole new level.

4.5 LOCALIZATION

AADK is a globally oriented organization and a part of the global federation ActionAid International. We are thus committed to staying as close as possible to the communities we work in around the world by placing staff and resources internationally. In practice this means shifting power to the partners and transferring more funds and responsibilities to partners, hiring, and posting staff around the world, and considering where different responsibilities are best placed.

4. HOW DO WE WORK TOGETHER? CULTURE

4.6 CLIMATE POLICY

AADKs current Climate Policy covers the strategy cycle 2018-2022. The objective is to eventually ensure CO2 neutrality: “By 2030 we aim to have achieved neutrality in all our national work and operations in Denmark. In our international work we recognize the challenge of achieving neutrality due to our air travel, but we will reduce these emissions and explore compensation methods.” The policy rests on four main pillars³:

- Sustainable development of ActionAid DK’s premises and operation
- Transportation (allocating CO2 quotas to teams, book flights with lowest CO2 emissions, no domestic flights etc.)
- Climate compensation (investigating if and how compensation for emissions can be made from 2020 onwards)
- Digital solutions (investing in technology, focus on digital collaboration and meeting tools, online trainings etc.)

4.7 ENGAGING VOLUNTEERS AND BUILDING LEADERSHIP IN OTHERS

We know that you can’t staff social change. Our main purposes as a secretariat are to build wider leadership and expand the possibilities for volunteers, individual and collective members and others to take active action. In practical terms, this means that staff and teams at all levels are responsible for considering how to engage volunteers and activists, spot and empower potential leaders and hand over responsibilities where possible.

A key area of exploration is how we can link activists

and volunteers together digitally, nationally, and globally around concrete campaigns and struggles.

4.8 PERSONAL AND CAREER DEVELOPMENT

As part of our mission of building youth activism and leadership, we try to create journeys within our organization for supporters, volunteers, and staff. Perhaps you start volunteering with Global Contact and become an activist or staff member when you return. Or start in a training program and end up as a trainer or mentor yourself. Or start as intern, take some years abroad and end up as team leader. These journeys will be different depending on peoples’ interests, life-situations, and capacities, and how they align with our strategy, but through our training, skills development programs and management practices, we seek to give people opportunities to grow. In the trade-union/local agreement, a fund was established to support Career Development⁴.

Please visit the document center for more information on how AADK is structured including role of Board, Council, volunteers, and partners policies.

4.9 LIVING OUR VALUES

We are an organization that strives to live the values we preach. We believe in the power of the community and therefore we have a communal lunch agreement, a monthly hybrid house meeting for all staff to learn about each other’s work - and to sing together. We also invite all staff to attend an optional ‘event of the month’ outside normal working hours; e.g., Friday bar, a demonstration, ‘Culture Night’ etc.

We fight for climate justice, and therefore our lunch agreement is 100% vegetarian. We also have climate policy guidelines on when and how to travel, focusing on limiting our CO2 emissions.

3) Read more on InSight — https://mellempfolkeligtssamvirke.sharepoint.com/sites/AADK/Documents/_insight/the_source/AADK%20CLIMATE%20POLICY.pdf#search=climate

4) Read more on InSight — <https://mellempfolkeligtssamvirke.sharepoint.com/sites/AADK/InSight/InSight.aspx>

