

Action for Rural Education (A.R.E)



Draft Strategic Plan

2011-2015

www.areghana.org

1.0 Introduction

A.R.E envisions a prosperous rural society. With a mission to enhance access to quality social services and promote the participation of rural people in democratic governance as a means of reducing poverty, A.R.E has the following objectives:

Aims and Objectives

- Improved quality of health in rural areas.
- Enhanced access to quality basic education.
- Strengthened participation of grassroots in development decision making.
- Enhanced quality, responsiveness and accountability in social services delivery.

A five year Strategic Plan (2010-2014) will seek to consolidate gains made in poverty eradication through advocacy and community mobilization to promote quality basic education, quality health and better governance in rural Ghana. It will also strengthen the participation of A.R.E in the development, implementation, and monitoring of development plans and policies -education, health, environment, governance-as a prerequisite for achieving Millennium Development Goals on education, health and poverty reduction, through better social and political and governance in Ghana.

This is expected to be achieved under five core intervention areas each of which outlines clear strategic objectives, expected results and outputs.

The strategic plan adopts a Right Based Advocacy approach to social services advocacy with emphasis on addressing disparities in access to quality basic education among rural populations and vulnerable groups (disabled, HIV orphans), good governance, HIV and quality environmental management. Duty bearers at all levels and right holders in the education, health, local government and environment sectors are key targets.

With the effective implementation and monitoring of the new strategic plan over the next five years we envision that A.R.E will strengthen its institutional and governance structures and expand the geographical and thematic scope of its operations in Ghana. It will also transform A.R.E into a strong voice for Civil Society advocacy, in respect of pro poor education, health, social and political governance policies in Ghana.

2.0 Core Intervention Area 1: Institutional and Organizational Development-The variations and complexities of contemporary development advocacy demands a dynamic and responsive organization with requisite manpower capacity, technical and administrative resources. Strengthening institutional governance, and enhancing the human resource quantity, quality and efficiency is of immense relevance to A.R.E in the next five years.

2.1 Strategic Objective: A strengthened advocacy and community mobilization organization with effective governance and management structures and systems, well motivated and committed staff able to deliver quality program outputs.

Expected Result 1: Strengthened institutional governance

Output 1.1: Quarterly Governing Council Meetings held

Quarterly Governing Council meetings shall be held to discuss issues relating to the institutional and program strategic direction of A.R.E upon which decisions shall be made to inform direction and strategy at the Program Office of A.R.E.

Output 1.2: Functional Human Resource and Financial Management Systems

The full operationalization of the conditions of service for staff and financial management systems and controls is imperative for effective institutional management of the Coalition. Best practice requires an annual review of conditions of service and the institution of stringent financial management systems to reflect the realities in institutional and human resource management. A financial and Human Resource manual shall be produced for use by the A.R.E Program Office. The conduct of annual internal and external financial audits shall be internalized and sustained.

Expected Result 2: Strengthened management and administrative capacity to deliver on programs.

Effective Human Resource Management is a key component in non-profit management. Enhanced staff availability, capacity and motivation at the National Secretariat coupled with improved administrative and technical resource availability and sustained funding is vital to ensuring an effective A.R.E

Output 2.1: Administrative and technical logistics requirements provided

At the Program Office in Twifo Praso, one official vehicle, 2 Laptops, a photocopier and a projector will be required to enhance work. An Accra office will be opened to coordinate the activities of the Twifo Praso Program Office. An office space with 2 laptops, a printer and photocopier, shall be required in 2011.

Output 2.2: Sustained funding secured

A fundraising desk shall be set up at the National Office of A.R.E and manned by interns/ volunteer fundraisers who will be engaged on an annual basis to raise funds for the A.R.E. Emphasis will be on securing core funding (from local and international

private, government and non-profit sources) to sustain A.R.E's institutional and program needs.

Output 2.3: Enhanced staff capacity the Program Office and National Office

The A.R.E Program Office shall require four additional program staff to fill current staff vacancies and to make A.R.E more responsive in pursuit of its program agenda. The staffs shall include a Fundraiser (intern/volunteer), an Administrative officer and a full time Accountant at the National Office in Accra. A Program officer is required to assist in program implementation at the Program Office in Twifo Praso. Conditions of service of staff should reflect current trends in the Civil Society arena and economic realities in Ghana.

Expected Result 3: Operational Monitoring and Evaluation strategy.

Output 3.1: Develop M&E framework for A.R.E's Program Monitoring and Evaluation.

An M&E system that measures the performance of A.R.E within the context of this strategic plan will be developed and implemented. The availability of an effective feedback on the progress of A.R.Es interventions is vital in assessing A.R.E's progress towards program and institutional milestones and affords opportunities for evidence based review.

Core Intervention Area 2: Effective Media Advocacy

Strategic Objective: To strengthen media partnerships in favour of development issues in rural Ghana by creating an alliance that responds promptly and consistently to emerging rural development (education, health, environment and governance) issues in Ghana.

Expected Result 1: Build efficient partnerships between A.R.E and the Media at national, regional and district levels to increase A.R.E's responses to development (education, health and governance) issues in rural Ghana.

Output 1.1: Develop and operationalize a media engagement strategy

The media is a key resource in development advocacy in Ghana. A.R.E has in the past benefited from media coverage of its activities and minimal partnership and engagement focusing mainly on educating the public on rural education issues. Stepping up A.R.E's advocacy on policy and practice issues in rural Ghana shall require a more ambitious strategy of utilizing the media and not just partnering it. Indeed our vision in the next five years is to use the print and electronic media at local and national levels, as a strategic resource for advancing advocacy strategies, mobilizing opinions,

generating and moderating pro-poor rural education, health, environment and governance debates.

Core Intervention Area 3: Education For All

Education is a basic human right which is guaranteed by the Constitution of Ghana. However social structures and values, economic constraints and challenges in education management has resulted in the exclusion of some groups from equitable access to enjoyable quality basic education in Ghana on the basis of gender, disability and geographical location. Promoting the education rights of these vulnerable and excluded groups through advocacy, policy dialogue and engagement and empowerment is key to achieving the EFA goals in rural Ghana. These issues will therefore be a key focus of A.R.E for the next five years toward ensuring equitable access to quality basic education in Ghana.

Strategic Objective: To promote inclusive education mainstreaming in education policy formulation, planning and implementation at all levels towards ensuring equitable allocation and distribution of educational resources at the basic level for all vulnerable groups including girls, persons with disability and children in deprived areas.

Expected Results 1: Existence of an education policy and implementation framework which mainstreams concerns of gender, disability and rural-urban disparities at all levels.

Output 1.1: Pro-vulnerable education policies and programmes advocated

Knowledge-based advocacy campaigns for the promotion and adoption of pro-vulnerable education policies will be pursued targeting the public, education service providers and development partners. These will be at national, regional and district levels through durbars, mass media, and publications. Sector dialogue with duty bearers at both national and local levels will also be pursued to ensure that existing education policies and programmes are recast to integrate issues of gender, disability and rural-urban disparities. Emphasis during such engagements will be on promoting policies and guidelines aimed at ensuring the provision of gender and disability sensitive education infrastructural facilities, equitable distribution of education resources including teaching and learning materials, access to affordable energy sources and other learning enhancing amenities in deprived communities. Advocacy will also emphasize equitable access to existing pro-poor policies such as the Capitation Grant, free school uniforms, school feeding programmes with due considerations for the special needs of girls, children with disability and children in deprived and rural communities.

Expected Result 2: Enhanced and efficient needs-based system for equitable allocation and distribution of educational resources at all levels

Output 2.1: Teacher postings and transfers at basic level monitored to ensure equity for needs of girls, disabled and rural/deprived populations.

A.R.E will conduct researches into teacher distribution at the basic level in Ghana to inform policy and practice in education policy management in favour of the excluded. Researches will seek to draw comparisons in terms of access to and availability of teachers for girls, persons with disability and children in deprived areas. The research outcomes will form the basis of independent assessment reports on the status of teacher distribution in general and the extent to which it is in favour of vulnerable groups in the country. There will be engagements with the MOE, GES, GNAT, MLGRD, Disability Council and other stakeholders at all levels(as appropriate) to foster improvements in distribution of teachers in the country.

Core Intervention Area 4: Quality Development Resource Governance

Strategic Objective: To deepen education and development policy dialogue between government and civil society at the local and national levels, within a transparent and accountable education resource governance environment.

Expected Result 1: A.R.E represented on regional and district level social services planning and review committees and making meaningful inputs into education policy development, implementation monitoring and evaluation.

Output 1.1: Enhanced capacity of A.R.E to participate in education sector dialogue at all levels.

The capacity of A.R.E staff will be strengthened through capacity building sessions in policy analysis and advocacy, dialogue strategies and participatory budgeting, to enhance their effective participation in education, health and environment sector dialogue with regional and local education, health and environmental duty bearers and policy makers.

Output 1.2: Sustained resources for sector dialogue at local and regional level.

The availability of financial resources is crucial to sustaining and strengthening sector dialogue at all levels. Funds shall be provided to facilitate A.R.E's participation in education sector planning, budgeting and review sessions at the district and regional

levels. A.R.E will in partnership with its national level partners, also participate in sector review sessions in health, education and environmental governance at the national level.

Expected Result 2: A.R.E utilizing accountability channels to track the utilization of development resources at the local level to improve the efficiency of education, health, and environmental resource utilization and management.

Output 1.1: Evidence based data for quality engagement on development resource utilization. The availability of equitably allocated and adequate resources is essential to a meaningful development resource tracking program. A.R.E shall be involved in social services financing campaigns to influence the allocation of national level resources in favour of the real social needs in rural Ghana. Tracking the utilization of resources will be paramount to ensuring efficiency in resource utilization. The findings of social services resource tracking exercises shall be analyzed and compiled into a report with clear advocacy targets and engagement strategies. A.R.E shall engage education, health and environment duty bearers and policy makers on the policy and practice recommendations and issues raised in social services resource tracking surveys.

Output 1.2: Enhanced capacity of A.R.E in development policy analysis and advocacy:

A.R.E should play a leading role in analyzing education, health and governance policies and disseminating its findings and recommendations with the wider Ghanaian public, especially policy makers and duty bearers. Capacity building sessions in policy advocacy, analysis and engagements will be fashioned for A.R.E staff. This will make public policies more accountable and responsive to the needs of rural people.

Expected Result 3: Effective Climate Change Management-Some occupational and social practices in rural Ghana affects the effective management of climate change in Ghana which directly affects agriculture output and food production. Educating rural Ghana on the causes and effects of climate change on agriculture productivity is imperative to ensure sustained sufficiency in food and cash crop production and livelihood protection.

Output 1.1: A.R.E shall build the capacity of farmers and fishermen on the current climate change regime and how it affects food productivity. Our interventions shall also promote the adoption of responsible environmental practices to reduce the potentials and effects of climate change on fishing and farming.

Core Intervention Area 5: Quality Health for All

Strategic Objective: *A healthy nation is a wealthy nation. A.RE shall work to reduce HIV infections , eradicate Malaria and promote quality maternal and child health in rural Ghana.*

Expected Result 1: Enhanced capacity of local communities to take local initiatives against HIV and Malaria and promote quality child and maternal health.

Output 1.1: Strengthened community knowledge of HIV and Malaria: A.R.E shall work with its partners to strengthen the knowledge base of community members on HIV and Malaria prevention and control strategies, and enhance their capacity to advocate healthier lifestyles and sexual behaviors among rural people, especially the youth, children and pregnant women.

Output 1.2: Improved maternal and child health-A.R.E shall work with district and national level partners to educate mothers on quality maternal and child care and basic hygiene practices. Furthur, A.R.E shall advocate the availability and accessibility of health facilities and personnel to facilitate reduced maternal and child deaths in rural Ghana. Strategies will include Behavior Change Communication at the community level, advocacy and Capacity Building

Expected Result 2: Improved quality of and access to health care

Output 2.1: A.R.E shall play a leading role in advocating the availability and accessibility of quality health facilities, personnel and services to rural people in Ghana. This will ensure drugs and equipments needed for curing, preventing and eradicating Malaria as well as services needed to reduce HIV are and available to rural populations.

Output 2.2: A.R.E shall advocate the removal of all costs and administrative barriers associated with the provision of quality health care, especially for Malaria and HIV related illness and advocate the implementation of pro poor health interventions that makes access to quality healthcare, free for all rural people. Emphasis will be on the availability of anti malarial and anti retroviral drugs.

Summary Budget

Years	Program (USD)	Institutional (USD)	Total (USD)
2011	300,000	200,000	500,000
2012	300,000	150,000	450,000

2013	300,000	150,000	450,000
2014	300,000	150,000	450,000
2015	300,000	150,000	450,000
Total			2,300,000