Empowering the Most Vulnerable First

APA — A PARTNERSHIP with AFRICA

CVM — Comunità Volontari per il Mondo

Joint Strategic Plan
2025 ⟶ 2030

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APA & CVM: Empowering the Most Vulnerable First.

01

Introduction

1.1
Forward-Purpose of the Joint Strategy

The Boards of **APA** and **CVM**, are honoured to share this **Joint Strategic Plan 2025–2030** — a shared commitment shaped by what we witness every day: the strength and dignity of people who survive on the margins, and whose voices are too often unheard.

Over the past 15 years, **APA** and **CVM** have built a partnership grounded in trust, solidarity, and deep respect for the communities we serve. Together, we have stood beside street children, domestic workers, families living in informal settlements, and rural communities forgotten by formal systems.

We have seen the faces behind the statistics — particularly those of women and girls exposed to violence, exploitation, and exclusion — and they continue to inspire us to do better, and to go further.

This strategy renews our focus on the poorest of the poor — people not just living in poverty, but often invisible to public systems. It calls on us to prioritise vulnerable women and girls, those facing gender-based violence, and those trapped in cycles of hardship with limited access to justice, education, or opportunity. These are the communities where real, lasting change begins.

APA–CVM Strategic Plan 2025–2030 aligns strongly with the direction of the Ireland's Policy for International Development, '*A Better World*'. At its core is the commitment to 'reach the furthest behind first,' prioritising people living in extreme poverty and those most vulnerable — including women and girls affected by gender-based violence, conflict, and climate shocks. The Irish Aid strategy identifies four interconnected priorities: (1) gender equality, (2) reduced humanitarian need, (3) climate action, and (4) strengthened governance. These are underpinned by a commitment to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), conflict sensitivity, and locally led partnerships.

The **APA–CVM** Strategic Plan echoes these themes by focusing on the poorest of the poor, promoting gender justice, responding to climate impacts, and ensuring local partners are at the centre of design and delivery. Our work in Ethiopia and Tanzania directly supports Ireland's focus on sub-Saharan Africa and fragile contexts, making this alignment a core strength of our joint approach.

This plan is not just words on paper. It is our promise to work smarter and more closely together — to find those hidden in the shadows, and to make sure they are not left behind. Through the creation of a Joint Strategy Steering Committee, new operational working groups, and more open sharing of resources and skills, we are building a partnership that is more resilient, more responsive, and more able to reach people where they are.

We are especially proud that this plan marks a new chapter for **APA** in Africa. In collaboration with **CVM**, we will co-lead and co-resource programmes that directly confront the everyday barriers people face — from safe water and decent housing, to gender equity, climate shocks, and insecure livelihoods. In every area, we will focus first on those with the least.

We also recognise that the climate crisis is no longer a distant concern — it is a present and growing reality. Its impact is felt first and hardest by those who have contributed least to the problem. This strategy commits us to climate resilience, to supporting adaptation and sustainable livelihoods, and to ensuring that those most affected are empowered to lead the response.

To our partners, supporters, volunteers and community leaders: thank you for walking alongside us. This plan is yours too. We invite you to hold us accountable, to join us on the ground, and to help us prove, day by day, that real change is not only possible — it is inevitable when we build it together, and when we build it with those who have been kept in the shadows for far too long.

John Rice
Chairperson, APA Board

Paolo Padovani
President, CVM

Tsehay Mogesse Gashaw, Social Program Head, **CVM** and Mary Healy, Deputy Head of Development Cooperation, Embassy of Ireland in Ethiopia, Feb. 2025.

APA & **CVM**: Empowering the Most Vulnerable First.

1.2
Methodology and Stakeholder Engagement

In early 2024, the Boards of **APA** and **CVM** established a dedicated Strategy Working Group to shape a new five-year plan for 2025 to 2030. This new strategy builds on what both organisations have learned over the years, while looking ahead to the emerging needs of our communities and partners. From the outset, the aim was to ensure an inclusive, collaborative process — one that brought everyone to the table: **APA**, **CVM**, and our African partner organisations, particularly those working with domestic workers and street children projects.

Between June and August 2024, five formal meetings were held to bring together the Strategy Working Group, **APA** and **CVM** staff and management, and representatives from our African partner organisations. These meetings — conducted both online and in person — ensured that everyone involved had the opportunity to contribute. Sessions were recorded to ensure transparency, and key takeaways were documented for reference.

In addition to regular meetings, a detailed questions-and-answers series was conducted to examine the foundational aspects of the **APA– CVM** partnership. Thematic sessions covered the history and governance of the partnership, financial management, project implementation, retail operations and volunteering, public fundraising, communications, and development education.

Participants also discussed possible future scenarios for **APA–CVM** in 2030 — including topics such as organisational growth, location, governance and reporting requirements, environmental and social governance (ESG) considerations, the role of business and corporate social responsibility (CSR), and sustainability practices across charity shops.
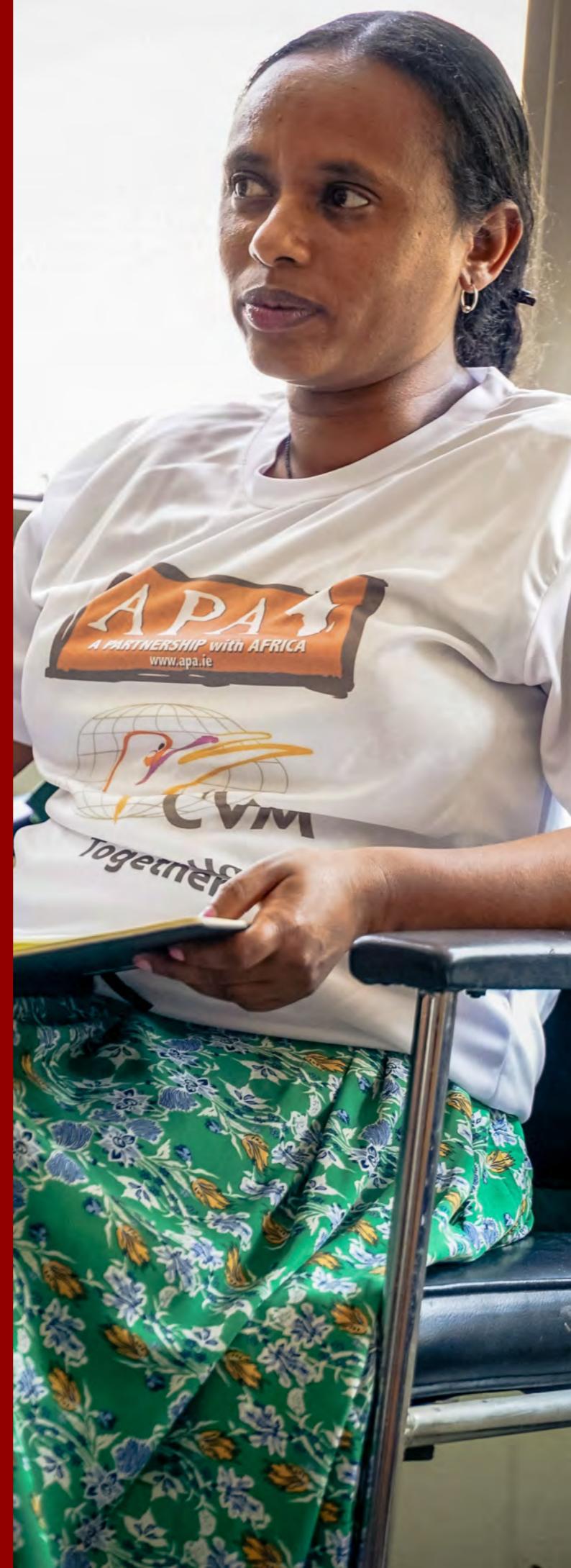
Forward-looking themes were explored as well, including how artificial intelligence can improve core functions like data analysis, financial reporting, administration, and translation. There was also meaningful discussion on the future skills needed by trustees, the potential for replicating field models, the development of new funding streams, and how best to engage stakeholders at local, national, and international levels.

To ensure that the new strategy was grounded in robust evidence and critical reflection, the Working Group used a combination of analytical tools. A SWOT analysis helped us identify what we do well, where we face challenges, and the opportunities and risks emerging in our operating environment. African partners played an important role here, offering valuable local insights that enhanced our understanding of internal and external dynamics. A PESTEL analysis enabled us to examine broader political, economic, social, technological, environmental, and legal trends that affect our work — particularly in Ethiopia and other programme countries. We also conducted benchmarking exercises with similarly sized organisations to explore where **APA** and **CVM** could lead, adopt new approaches, or improve existing ones.

Alongside these technical tools, the Working Group undertook an in-depth review of **APA**'s organisational profile, previous strategy documents, and foundational statements of vision, mission, and values. Members of the group were asked to dedicate time to debating and refining strategic priorities, reaching agreement on clear objectives, and designing a practical and achievable system for measuring and reporting impact. This was then presented to both the board of **APA** and **CVM**.

The establishment of this Working Group significantly strengthened the way **APA** and **CVM** plan together. Importantly, it also brought our African partner organisations into the process in a more consistent and meaningful way. A particularly valuable component were the field visits carried out by **APA–CVM** management to Ethiopia, where meetings were held with local community leaders, domestic worker groups, and teams working with street children. These field-based conversations added a vital layer of insight to complement the more structured Working Group sessions and ensured that local voices were not just heard but helped shape the direction of the plan harnessing the strength of local knowledge.

Following this extensive engagement process, a Strategy Drafting Group was engaged to complete an initial draft of the **2025–2030 Strategic Plan**. This was circulated to partners in Ethiopia and Tanzania for feedback and also shared with Vincent O Neill, former Ambassador of Ireland to Kenya and to Jordan — and senior manager with Irish Aid — who provided external commentary and guidance. This additional layer of review helped ensure that the views of all stakeholders were reflected in the final strategic framework, and that the plan met accepted international standards for partnership, accountability, and programmatic relevance.

While bringing together such a wide range of perspectives took time, the presence of a clear timetable and meeting structure provided helpful discipline. As the first few sessions progressed, shared understanding and trust began to build. From this, a common vision and mission for **APA– CVM** and our partners emerged, guiding the next phase of drafting.

Of course, coordinating all of this work virtually through Zoom was not without its challenges. Remote collaboration often made it more difficult to reach quick decisions or brainstorm informally. However, the group responded by developing practical ways to work smarter together. In simple terms, we found ways to function as one cohesive partnership — reducing duplication, encouraging those with expertise to lead, and helping each other improve by sharing what works. With this shared direction in place the Strategy Drafting Group was tasked with turning our collective input into a practical, deliverable plan.

This strategy reflects genuine joint leadership between **APA** and **CVM**, built in close cooperation with African partner organisations.

It is shaped by real-world insights — not just desk research — and grounded in the lived experience of those delivering and benefitting from our programmes.

It offers a practical, joined-up approach to the challenges ahead, with a clear commitment to sharing skills, resources, and learning across the partnership.

This new plan serves as our roadmap for the next five years: a strategy that is focused, flexible, and prepared to deliver measurable impact where it matters most.

Aidan Clifford,
Chairman, **APA/CVM** Strategy Working Group & Drafting Group

A leather artisan at work in the studio of *Linu Leather* in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. *Linu Leather* has become known for producing high-quality leather products, including bags, wallets, shoes, and accessories. *Linu* is part of a growing movement to showcase Ethiopia's leather products on the global market. By producing leather goods locally, *Linu Leather*, along with other Ethiopian brands, contribute to Ethiopia's economy, particularly in terms of job creation and skills development. The company is part of the broader efforts to add value to the raw leather produced in Ethiopia rather than exporting it in its raw form, which is one of the key priorities of the country's leather industry. *Linu* is one of the beneficiary SMEs of the FELPAA training programme, which provides job and life skills training to potential and returnee migrants.

1.3
Executive Summary

Irish citizens have been instrumental in helping some of the poorest and most vulnerable people in the world to find new hope, and to build better lives for themselves and their families.
[Irish Aid, A Better World, Foreword]

The **APA–CVM Strategic Plan 2025–2030** is a bold and unified roadmap designed to deepen our joint commitment to social justice, human dignity, and sustainable development. Grounded in Irish Aid's *A Better World* policy and the UN Sustainable Development Goals, this five-year strategy outlines how **APA** (A Partnership with Africa) and **CVM** (Comunità Volontari per il Mondo) will work together to empower the most vulnerable first—particularly women, children, and communities affected by poverty, marginalisation, and climate shocks.

Built on nearly two decades of collaboration, this strategy strengthens the operational, programmatic, and governance ties between **APA** and **CVM** across Ireland, Italy, Ethiopia, and Tanzania. Together, we will co-design and co-deliver inclusive, locally led initiatives that create long-term impact in four interconnected areas:

1. **Protecting Women's Dignity and Human Rights, Fostering Their Empowerment and Leadership**
Advancing dignity and protection for women through legal reforms, skills training, and women-led cooperatives.

2. **Supporting Rural Communities to Face Climate Change and Address Their Basic Needs**
Expanding access to sustainable agriculture, clean water, and energy for over 100,000 people in vulnerable rural communities.

3. **Reducing Inequalities Through Job Creation, Skills Training, and Knowledge Transfer**
Training and supporting 25,000 individuals—especially youth, women, and street-children—with pathways to decent work.

4. **Mobilizing People in Ireland and Italy to Achieve Global Justice**
Mobilising public engagement in Ireland and Italy through education, advocacy, and The Circular Economy initiatives that reach 10s of thousands of people annually.

The strategy also lays out robust joint governance systems, financial sustainability plans, risk management frameworks, and monitoring tools to ensure measurable outcomes and transparency. With shared leadership, integrated teams, and community-driven design, the **APA–CVM** partnership is positioned to deliver scalable solutions that truly leave no one behind.

1. APA Strategic Role in Africa – Expanding Programmatic Ownership

The plan outlines **APA's** intention to expand its leadership role in programme delivery in Africa, including new areas led and co funded by **CVM** and **APA:**

- **Water, Hygiene, and Sanitation (WASH) Projects**
APA will take on a co-leadership role and increase co-funding with **CVM** on water projects, expanding its impact in addressing water poverty and basic needs in rural communities.

- **Rural Development and Livelihoods**
APA will consolidate work with **CVM** to build new funding streams and operational capacity to expand rural livelihoods, including agricultural training, environmental restoration, and climate resilience initiatives.

- **Sustainability Pilots and Local Enterprise**
APA will co-lead and expand contributions to scaling income-generating initiatives, such as cooperatives, leatherworking, and circular economy projects, to strengthen rural economies.

This expansion offers **APA** greater visibility as a development partner in rural and environmental sectors, aligned with Irish Aid's and the SDGs' focus on climate and resilience.

2. Strengthening Governance and Coordination

At the heart of the plan is a governance structure designed to provide comprehensive oversight, accountability, and shared leadership:

- **Joint Strategy Steering Committee (JSSC)**
  A bi-annual meeting of the governance body comprising senior management and board representatives from **APA** and **CVM**, with representation from Ethiopia and Tanzania. The JSSC provides oversight of the strategy, approves adjustments, and has joint accountability to both boards.

- **Joint Operational Working Groups**
  1. Projects Working Group: Coordinates programme design, delivery, monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL) and reporting.
  2. Finance Working Group: Aligns budgeting, financial reporting, and donor compliance.
  3. Communications & Public Engagement Working Group: Strengthens joint messaging, media production, and public campaigns.

These structures ensure that staff and leadership of both organisations work in greater alignment, with clear reporting lines and shared responsibility for achieving impact.

3. Advancing Joint Learning and Resource Sharing

This plan builds on existing shared roles, such as the Projects Officer, Grant Writer, and Communications Consultant, while committing to expand joint staffing and technical collaboration where feasible.

Key priorities include: Shared training and knowledge exchanges across staff, volunteers, and boards. Cross-border learning visits and virtual workshops. Joint content production (case studies, media, advocacy materials) for use across both organisations. Exploration of shared operational services, such as finance systems, IT infrastructure, or specialist consultancy.

4. Building Organisational Sustainability and Shared Success

The partnership will continue to invest in:

- Volunteer engagement in both Ireland and Italy, including **APA**'s retail network and **CVM**'s youth and civil service programmes.
- Diversified fundraising from institutional, corporate, and public sources, including joint campaigns and donor stewardship.
- Digital transformation, leveraging AI, CRM systems, and data analytics to improve impact measurement and reporting.

This strategy marks an important shift toward deeper integration, shared leadership, and joint accountability, positioning APA and CVM as stronger together. With clear structures for governance, learning, and programme delivery, and a renewed commitment to expanding APA and CVM's programmatic leadership in Africa, this plan provides a sustainable pathway for partnership growth and greater impact in the years ahead.

Fr. Owen Lambert
CEO, **APA**

Marian Ascani
CEO, **CVM**

Bete Selam Women and Children Temporary Shelter provides temporary shelter, psychosocial support, legal aid, medical care and skill-building programs to vulnerable women and children, particularly returnee migrants and those who are facing various forms of abuse, domestic violence, or exploitation. It provides immediate protection and assistance, helping them to recover, regain their independence, and rebuild their lives. *Bete Selam* is regarded as one of the key shelters for women and children in Addis Ababa. Over the years, it has made a significant impact by providing a safe haven for hundreds of women and children in need of urgent protection and care.

02

Two Partners, One Vision

APA's and CVM's focus on women's empowerment intersects with *Linu Leather's* efforts to provide economic opportunities for women, in the traditionally male-dominated field of leatherworking.

2.1 A Partnership of Equals: The Evolving Relationship Between APA and CVM

The partnership between A Partnership with Africa (**APA**) and Comunità Volontari per il Mondo (**CVM**) stands as a deeply integrated and principled collaboration that exemplifies a holistic model of international solidarity, grounded in mutual respect, shared values, and complementary strengths.

Since its formalisation in 2004, the **APA–CVM** partnership has evolved into more than a project-based collaboration. It is a strategic alliance rooted in a common vision: to build a world where justice, equality, dignity, and self-determination are not privileges but universal rights.

Shared Origins, Common Philosophy

Both organisations were born out of lived experience and ethical commitment. **APA**, established in 2004 in Dublin, was founded by Spiritan priest Fr. Owen Lambert after decades of service in Ethiopia. It emerged with a vision of creating lasting change by empowering local communities in Africa through equitable partnerships and global awareness. **APA**'s mission—to facilitate equal access to basic services and unlock the potential of the most vulnerable—embodies the Spiritan values of solidarity, service, and justice.

CVM, founded in 1978 in Italy, also began with a personal and ethical calling. It was formed by volunteers returning from the Global South who wanted to sustain their commitment to the people and communities they had encountered. For **CVM**, development is a process of liberation—freeing people from the injustices of poverty, marginalisation, and systemic neglect. Its philosophy of working with the poor, not for them, shapes all of its actions. **CVM** has implemented projects in countries including Ethiopia, Tanzania, Congo, Zambia, and Bangladesh, while maintaining strong domestic roots in Italian civil society through education and volunteerism.

Though **APA** and **CVM** originated in different countries and contexts, both are grounded in the belief that true development must be participatory, community-led, and globally interconnected.

Distinct Roles, Shared Vision

The partnership is built on the foundation of complementarity, not hierarchy. **APA** and **CVM** each bring distinct capacities to the relationship, which are mutually reinforcing. **APA** focuses on strategic direction, policy development, development education, advocacy, monitoring and evaluation, and donor engagement—particularly in the Irish and European contexts. It also oversees three volunteer-led charity shops in Ireland that promote the circular economy, generate unrestricted income, and serve as platforms for community engagement.

CVM, in addition, provides operational depth and field-level execution. It has established programme offices in Ethiopia and Tanzania, staffed by experienced local teams and supported by international volunteers. **CVM** brings extensive expertise in implementing gender equality, labour rights, water access, child protection, and migration and reintegration programmes in difficult and complex environments. Its local partnerships—with trade unions, government ministries, and community-based organisations—ensure that interventions are not only effective but embedded in local systems.

Together, **APA** and **CVM** form a North–South partnership that is equitable, non-extractive, and oriented toward long-term social transformation.

Credit: Asmae Dachan, **CVM Italia**

2.2 Lessons from Past Strategies

The CVM–APA Partnership: A Proven Engine for Systemic, Scalable Impact

Across more than a decade, **CVM** and **APA** have built a partnership that consistently converts community trust and government alignment into durable systems change. The coalition's hallmark is a facilitative model: strengthen public coordination, equip civil society, mobilise faith and community leaders, and then channel this capacity into services that scale and last. Independent evaluations document strong results in three arenas—public health/HIV, water and WASH, and labour rights and safe migration for domestic workers—backed by hard numbers on reach, functionality, and behaviour change. The pattern is clear:

1. co-design with authorities and communities,
2. invest in coordination and capacity,
3. deliver targeted services for vulnerable groups, and
4. institutionalise gains through policy and budget commitments.

What the partnership delivers

1) System strengthening that sticks.

In Amhara, Ethiopia, the partnership helped make the multi-sectoral HIV response real: HAPCO/HAPCC mechanisms became functional "vertically and horizontally," with bottom-up strategic plans reaching from kebele to region and formal commitments like a minimum 2% of recurrent budgets earmarked for HIV/OVC support across sectoral offices—an institutional investment that sustains action beyond project cycles. Regional government also moved to fund RHAPCO directly.

2) Community engines for protection and service uptake.

CVM–APA repeatedly catalyse local structures that continue working after projects end. In one Irish Aid-funded programme, Community Care Coalitions expanded to 535 kebeles (target 160), while in Tanzania Women & Children Rights groups were established/revitalised across all villages in the district—creating a grassroots base for protection and referral.

3) Strategic use of faith and civic leadership.

The partnership engaged Orthodox and Muslim leaders to mainstream prevention messages and reduce stigma, with the Bahir Dar Orthodox Bishop raising HIV at the national bishops' conference and Muslim leaders mobilising peers, including cross-country spillovers. This widened reach and legitimacy in ways few actors can replicate.

4) Value for money with rigorous controls.

Evaluations note lean operations (government-rate per diems), strong financial procedures, and Ethiopian-led management teams—practical markers of cost-effectiveness and contextual ownership.

Evidence of impact across sectors and years

HIV and public health (Amhara)

- **Knowledge and attitudes shifted at population level**, with surveys showing 90–95% of respondents knowing HIV transmission and protection by 2004; churches, schools and drama were dominant channels—signals of deep social embedding.
- **Coordination translated into access.** The region reported large expansions in HCT/PMTCT/ART sites and uptake within the project period, underpinned by functioning coordination and communications across administrative levels.
- **Vulnerable groups organised and funded.**

Associations for PLWHA, orphans, women/housemaids formed or strengthened; revolving funds and IGAs reached high success rates (e.g., 92% among poor rural women), demonstrating livelihood resilience alongside health outcomes.

Water and WASH (Oromiya, Wolayta)

- **High functionality and satisfaction.** A follow-up on **155** Oromiya schemes showed **88%** functionality and **89%** community satisfaction—well above regional averages—thanks to technically sound designs coupled with early, robust community management structures.

- **Scale and efficiency**. In Wolayta (2005–07), over **38,000** people were reached—more than double the plan—via appropriate technologies and integrated hygiene approaches. External joint monitoring by EU/Italian Cooperation endorsed the overall strategy and execution.

Labour rights, safe migration, and reintegration (Ethiopia & Tanzania)

- **Performance against plan.** In the emPoWeRD programme, **54%** of indicators met targets and **34%** exceeded them; the single major shortfall reflected stricter, improved data verification rather than real decline—an indicator of honest measurement.

- **Mass awareness and demand creation.** Rights and safe-migration messaging reached ~*67.15 million people in Ethiopia and ~2.66 million in Tanzania*, fuelling recruitment into associations and shifting norms.

- **Skills, incomes, and financial inclusion.** Professional training far outpaced plans (**2,801** ETH; **1,091** TZN), with reported salary gains of **+40%** (ETH) and **+100%** (TZN). Among prospective migrants, **100%** opened bank accounts pre-departure—practical protection for remittances and savings.

- **Protection and dignified return.** In Addis Ababa, the shelter assisted 664 returnees (189% of target); 695 completed business/life-skills,

220 launched micro-businesses, and 66–78% were still operating after 24 months in tracked cohorts—tangible reintegration outcomes.

- **Policy traction.** Ethiopia established a MOLSA task force toward ILO C189 ratification, while Tanzania advanced parliamentary debate—evidence of credible convening power and institutional influence.

Why this keeps working (the APA-CVM "multiplier")

A facilitative, systems-first method.
Rather than front-line substitution, the partnership consistently acts as a catalyst—equipping public systems, training local animators, and fostering civil society voice—so that improvements are owned by those who will sustain them. This logic is explicit in evaluations that credit the approach with enabling communities, religious institutions and government officials to analyse problems, define solutions, and maintain ownership.

Cross-pillar learning and credibility.
Competence built in HIV coordination (planning, multi-stakeholder fora, IEC) transferred to later agendas like domestic work and safe migration (multi-stakeholder conferences, task forces, evidence generation). The same convening and accompaniment skills that grew PLWHA associations now underpin domestic worker unions and employer engagement.

Evidence-led, HRBA-aligned management.
The partnership has progressively strengthened monitoring—/20 indicators across two countries (35 tracked values) with human-rights markers—to ensure transparency and adaptive decision-making. When evidence requirements tightened (e.g., physical proof of contracts), teams accepted the short-term hit to scores to improve rigour.

Cost-conscious, locally led delivery.
Ethiopian staff lead management in-country; financial discipline and government-rate cost norms maximise programme value, a point repeatedly noted by evaluators and partners.

What this means for donors and authorities

1. **You're buying systemic capacity—not just outputs.** Budget commitments (e.g., 2% recurrent allocations), new government task forces, and functioning community structures are durable public goods your funding helps create.

2. **Returns materialise in multiple sectors.** The same partnership that achieved 88% scheme functionality in WASH also delivered millions-scale rights awareness and measurable income gains for domestic workers, showing unusual versatility with consistent quality.

3. **Risk is managed through proximity and ethics.** Local leadership, trusted faith/community intermediaries, and rigorous monitoring reduce reputational and implementation risk—while enabling rapid adaptation to policy or data shifts.

Over years and across sectors, the **APA-CVM** partnership has demonstrated a repeatable playbook for public-interest outcomes: coordinate systems, empower communities, deliver targeted services, and secure policy and budget anchors. The numbers—*88% functional water schemes, tens of millions reached with rights messaging, thousands trained with documented income gains, hundreds of returnees reintegrated and businesses sustained*—sit on top of something rarer: institutions that now do more, better, with their own means. That is the partnership's enduring value.

Each programme is designed and implemented through a **collaborative planning process**, with **APA** and **CVM** conducting joint assessments, reviews, and field visits. This integrated monitoring and evaluation system ensure that learning is shared and improvements are continuous.

Inclusive Structures and Community Engagement

Both **APA** and **CVM** embrace inclusive, participatory structures at the heart of their organisations. **APA** is governed by a 10-member board with expertise in development, finance, and communications, and is supported by a core management team and a national network of volunteers. Its charity shops in Athlone, Carlow, and Hacketstown involve over 50 volunteers and are linked to government employment schemes like Community Employment (CE) and the workplace initiative scheme (TUS).

CVM's governance structure includes an Assembly of Members and a Board of Directors, while its operations rely on a blend of professional staff and committed volunteers—many of whom are alumni of its international volunteer placements. **CVM**'s "community of volunteers" model ensures continuity, passion, and a deep-rooted connection to the values of service and justice. Volunteering is not transactional; it is a shared responsibility that fosters global citizenship and mutual learning across cultures.

Alignment of APA-CVM Partnership Work with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

The collaboration between **APA** and **CVM** aligns with several key United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This alignment ensures that the partnership's strategies and projects contribute to global development priorities.

SDG	Goal Title	Alignment with APA-CVM Work
1	No Poverty	- Vocational training and education for domestic workers and street children provides sustainable livelihoods.- Retail network and social enterprises offer employment opportunities.
2	Zero Hunger	- Empowered domestic workers gain stable incomes, improving food security for their families. Child-focused projects support nutrition for vulnerable children.
3	Good Health and Well-being	- Projects address health and safety conditions for domestic workers.- Access to health education and services for street children and young domestic workers.
4	Quality Education	- Vocational Education training and education (VET) equips vulnerable groups with market-relevant skills in Africa.- Development education initiatives raise awareness in schools in Ireland and Italy.
5	Gender Equality	- Focus on women's rights through domestic worker associations. Projects address gender-based violence and workplace discrimination.
6	Clean Water and Sanitation	- Water projects improve access to safe drinking water, particularly in rural areas.
8	Decent Work and Economic Growth	- Professional training and education programmes lead to safer working conditions and fair wages. Shops provide local employment and training and promote fair labour practices.
10	Reduced Inequalities	- Advocacy for migrant domestic workers reduces social and economic disparities. Projects focus on marginalized groups, including street children and child labourers.
11	Sustainable Cities and Communities	- Shops contribute to the circular economy through recycling and repurposing goods. Community engagement activities promote social cohesion.
12	Responsible Consumption and Production	- Retail network promotes sustainable consumption through second-hand goods and recycling initiatives.
13	Climate Action	- Environmental education and eco-friendly operations in Ireland, Italy and Africa address climate change impacts.- Initiatives to reduce carbon footprints in operations and supply chains.
16	Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions	- Partnerships with governments and unions promote legal rights for domestic workers. Projects engage local authorities to protect children's rights and prevent exploitation.
17	Partnerships for the Goals	- Collaboration between **APA**, **CVM**, Irish Aid, and local African organisations exemplifies multi-stakeholder partnerships. Shared governance structures and joint fundraising strengthen global cooperation.

APA & **CVM**: Empowering the Most Vulnerable First.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT G⊙ALS

Key Highlights of SDG Alignment

- **Holistic Approach:** The partnership addresses both immediate needs (poverty alleviation, education, and health) and systemic issues (gender equality, labour rights, and sustainable development).

- **Inclusive Growth:** The focus on vulnerable populations (women, children, migrants) ensures that no one is left behind, in line with SDG principles.

- **Environmental Stewardship:** The retail network and operational strategies promote sustainable consumption and production patterns.

- **Local Empowerment:** Community-driven approaches ensure long-term sustainability and local ownership of initiatives.

By aligning our work with the Sustainable Development Goals, **APA** and **CVM** not only strengthen the relevance of the programmes but also ensure they are part of the global movement toward a more just, equitable, and sustainable world.

Inside the kitchen of Neima's roadside cafe in Bonesha, Alem Gebeya, Ethiopia. See p2.

03

A Unified Path Forward

3.1 Rationale for One Strategy

The decision to deepen the partnership between **APA** and **CVM** is a strategic response to the evolving demands of global development cooperation—particularly those outlined by Irish Aid's *A Better World* policy and the EU's emphasis on localisation, resilience, and rights-based approaches. Both donors are increasingly focused on programming that is locally led, partnership-driven, and anchored in shared accountability—precisely the foundation upon which the **APA–CVM** relationship has been built over nearly two decades.

By formalising this joint strategy, **APA** and **CVM** are not only increasing operational coherence and mutual accountability, but also enhancing their ability to access and deliver on larger-scale, multi-year funding mechanisms from institutions like the EU (e.g. NDICI–Global Europe) and Irish Aid. Through this partnership, the organisations combine complementary strengths—**APA**'s expertise in development education, public engagement, and donor coordination in Ireland, and **CVM**'s extensive field experience in Tanzania and Ethiopia, with a focus on livelihoods, gender equality, and basic services. This dual footprint aligns strongly with both funders' strategic objectives, including reaching the furthest behind, supporting women and girls, building climate resilience, and advancing global citizenship education.

Furthermore, the partnership reflects Irish Aid's growing emphasis on civil society cooperation, and positions both organisations to meet the EU's co-financing, consortia, and localisation requirements with greater credibility and administrative readiness. In a competitive and increasingly outcomes-driven donor landscape, **APA** and **CVM**'s unified strategy strengthens not only programme delivery, but also policy engagement, innovation, and sustainability—offering a model of partnership that is both scalable and values-led.

3.2 Current Global Trends

Funding Challenges and Shifting priorities:

Foreign Aid Reductions: The U.S. and EU foreign aid reductions present clear challenges for NGOs focused on migration, but they also open doors for innovation and local empowerment. By diversifying funding, strengthening regional partnerships, and focusing on scalable interventions, NGOs can continue to effectively protect Ethiopian and Tanzanian workers migrating to the Middle East, despite these fiscal constraints.

Shifting Focus from Traditional Aid Models to Results-Based Funding: Many international donors, including bilateral aid agencies and multilateral institutions, are increasingly prioritizing results-based financing (RBF). This model focuses on measurable outcomes and performance indicators. Donors want to see clear evidence that the funds they invest lead to tangible results, such as poverty reduction, job creation, or improved access to basic services. Projects that focus on long-term goals like community empowerment, gender equality, or sustainable development must be able to show quantifiable results

The Rise of Corporate and Private Sector Funding: Corporate social responsibility (CSR) programs and private sector involvement in development are on the rise. Donors from the private sector, including corporations, foundations, and social impact investors, are increasingly interested in supporting market-driven solutions that provide a return on investment or are directly tied to business models.

Increased Focus on Humanitarian Aid and Emergency Relief: The global increase in emergencies, such as climate-related disasters, pandemics, and conflicts, has led to a shift in donor funding toward humanitarian aid and emergency response programs. Global crises, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, have shifted priorities for many donors, increasing the demand for short-term relief over long-term development.

Localisation - Emphasis on Local Empowerment: There's a growing movement to "decolonize" aid, advocating for the transfer of control and resources to local entities. Some organisations are increasing funding to local civil society groups, promoting a shift from traditional charity models to partnerships based on solidarity.

Technological Integration: Adoption of Artificial Intelligence, NGOs are increasingly leveraging AI to enhance their operations. Applications include providing personalized education for children in crisis zones and forecasting extreme weather events to enable proactive responses

Migration: Young women, from Ethiopia and Tanzania are attracted to the Middle East for domestic work, driven by poverty, unemployment, and limited opportunities, with many women resorting to irregular channels despite high risks. Policy frameworks exist, yet weak enforcement and lack of complaint mechanisms leave workers exposed. In destination countries, the *Kafala* system continues to bind workers to employers, enabling abuse, wage theft, and exploitation.

Child domestic work also remains a major concern: in Ethiopia, girls are deceived into exploitative household labour, while in Tanzania an estimated one million children—mostly girls—work in private homes with little protection or access to education. Studies confirm widespread abuse of adult migrant workers abroad, who are often isolated and unaware of support services.

These vulnerabilities are compounded by climate change eroding livelihoods, political instability (particularly in Ethiopia), fragile health services, and the broader global rise in modern slavery. For organisations like **CVM** and **APA**, the challenge is to combine advocacy for reform with practical support and protection, while building strong partnerships with governments, unions, and civil society to advance sustainable and safe migration.

Growing Inequality – Considering that 5% of Africans now control more than double the assets of the bottom 95% a wider global trend of deepening inequality exists within Africa's Countries themselves. Development organisations must therefore go beyond promoting economic growth alone, which risks reinforcing these divides, and instead prioritize reducing inequality by targeting excluded groups, strengthening services, and promote appropriate policies. Only by making equity central can lasting and inclusive progress take place.

3.3
Shared Values and Principles

APA−CVM: A Partnership for Lasting Change

APA (Ireland) and **CVM** (Italy) have built a unique alliance that connects policy expertise, education, and advocacy in the Global North with trusted, long-term grassroots action in Africa. Together, we focus on those furthest behind first—especially vulnerable women, children, and migrants—tackling inequality, poverty, and climate challenges through shared vision, joint resources, and mutual respect.

Rooted in solidarity and guided by common values, our partnership delivers tangible results: empowering communities, influencing policy, expanding rights, and building resilience. Over the next five years, we will deepen this collaboration—growing our funding base, strengthening advocacy, embracing innovation, and amplifying local leadership—to create sustainable, just, and inclusive futures in Ethiopia, Tanzania, and beyond.

Serkalem Hailu and Elsabet Chuchu, both aged 17, work as domestic workers. In Ethiopia, domestic workers—especially young girls and women—are often at high risk of exploitation, abuse and economic marginalization. **APA and CVM** provide vocational training programs, educational support, life skills training and psychosocial counselling to boost the confidence of young domestic workers and help them develop a sense of self-advocacy.

Individual Profile:
A Partnership with Africa (APA)

A Partnership with Africa (**APA**) is an Irish Non-governmental organisation (NGO) based in Kimmage Manor, Dublin. **APA** facilitates development through partnership with the people of Africa. The founder and Chief Executive is Fr Owen Lambert, a Spiritan missionary priest who worked for over 30 years in Ethiopia.

1. Organisational Set-up

Organisation Structure
APA operates with a solid organisational set up, including the following component parts:

Legal and Operational Presence
Headquarters: A Partnership with Africa (**APA**) is an Irish Non-governmental organisation (NGO) based in Kimmage Manor, Dublin and was founded in 2004 as a registered company no. 372427, charity no. CHY15814 and Charities Regulatory Authority no. 20055547 .

Governance and Leadership
APA is governed by a Board of Directors consisting of 10 Director members with individual expertise in the areas of finance, auditing, management, development education, marketing and communications and public fundraising. The Board of Directors is the decision making body of the organisation and the current Chairperson is John Rice.

The Chairperson oversees the organisation with support from the Chairperson of the Internal Audit, Finance and Risk Committee. This committee is responsible for financial oversight; and by the CEO and Deputy CEO in this work.

Operational Team
APA has a Management Team which consists of the CEO, Deputy CEO (Project Officer) and Accounts Officer. **APA** engages the services of and external consultancy firm during the annual audit. Other functions include - a Development Education Coordinator, Social Media Assistant (volunteer) and Administration Assistant.

APA has three charity shops nationally which are staffed by teams of volunteers locally and include Irish government funded employment and back to work initiatives - TUS and CE scheme employees. The shops are centrally managed through the **APA** head office at Kimmage Manor, Dublin 12.

Core Areas of Focus
Taking the strategic pillars of work for **APA**, the core areas of focus are set out as follows:

Strategic Partnerships – Connecting stakeholders from the Global North with African organisations to strengthen development efforts.

Programme Support – Providing ongoing assistance to implementing partners through consultation, monitoring, evaluation, and collaboration with local governments.

The Empowerment of women: APA works with its partner **CVM** to promote women's rights, particularly for domestic workers, and engages in advocacy to improve the legal recognition of domestic work in both Ethiopia and Tanzania.

Migration and Returnee Support: APA runs programmes with its partner **CVM** that assist migrants, particularly women, in accessing legal and safe migration pathways, and provides reintegration services for returnees.

Awareness Raising – **APA** is expanding volunteer-led charity shops, increasing media outreach, and growing the Global Citizenship Education programme.

Education and Citizenship: APA has been active in educating the public about global citizenship and sustainable development through its EU funded Global Education Time (GET) programme involving teacher training and education and curriculum development focusing on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The Circular Economy: promotion and development of the SDG concept of the Circular Economy through a focus on reusing, recycling

and upcycling clothes, furniture and other goods through **APA**'s regional network of charity shops; which generate training and education opportunities, social enterprise activities and provide an unrestricted source of public fundraising for **APA**'s work in Africa.

2. Operational Modalities

APA provides strategic oversight to implementing partners in Ethiopia and Tanzania through policy development, training and education, monitoring and evaluation, research, and advocacy. **APA** promotes government engagement to ensure local ownership of projects and sustainability. It conducts regular strategic consultations and field visits to assess programme impact and adherence to best practices.

Stakeholder Engagement is key to **APA**'s approach and the most effective way to engage local governments is through simultaneously approaching government both at the local grassroots level, the regional level, and the federal level. Through forging partnerships at the local level, local politicians and key government bureaus see the progress made first-hand and begin to own the development initiatives sponsored by **APA** and partners. This grassroots engagement builds momentum and fosters a strong reputation at the local level, which assists in building partnerships with government at the regional and federal level.

APA believes this approach leads to sustainable development, and **APA** is careful to support only organisations that are in alignment with its development philosophy. Currently, **APA** emphasizes to all partners the importance of developing a relationship with local governments from the design phase of the project through to sustainability plans.

3. Partnership

Taking a partnership approach is critical to the operational approach of **APA** and it collaborates with a range of local, national and international partners to have the greatest impact, efficiency and sustainability of its work.

APA CVM Joint statement: The partnership between **CVM** (Comunità Volontari per il Mondo) and **APA** (A Partnership with Africa) is a strategic alliance grounded in a shared commitment to sustainable development and human rights. This partnership goes beyond individual projects and involves joint planning, resource sharing, and mutual support in all of **CVM**'s initiatives. Together, **CVM** and **APA** work to empower local communities, with a specific focus on improving the lives of vulnerable groups, including women, children, and migrants. This deep, sustained partnership reinforces their collective mission to promote social justice, equality, and dignity in the Countries of intervention. In this context,

- **APA**'s Role: Focuses on networking, advocacy, development education, research, monitoring and evaluation, policy, and strategic oversight.

- In addition, **CVM** provides on-the-ground infrastructure, project implementation, and daily engagement with local African partners.

APA also works closely through **CVM** with local government agencies, other NGOs, community organisations and grassroots groups to design and implement projects that are tailored to the specific needs of each region it works in.

Maintaining a key partnership with **CVM** has been central to **APA**'s strategic interest, as **CVM** offers **APA** an opportunity to utilise a trusted, verifiable, long term grassroots partner that connects directly to the local associations it seeks to support. In 2019, the original Consortium Agreement was updated and approved by both **APA** and **CVM** and supported the continued development of the mutual partnership. Thus, the current model of development outlined in this strategic plan and **APA**'s role within the partnership should continue and become more closely aligned for the next five years.

4. Funding Modalities

APA funding originates from a variety of sources, including government grants, private donations, fundraising campaigns, and partnerships. The main funding modalities for **APA** include:

- **Irish Government funding through Irish Aid.**

- **EU Funding** for Development Education and Global Citizenship initiatives.

- **Institutional donors such as** the HOPE Foundation, Lorna Byrne Foundation, Self Help Africa (SHA) and other smaller co-funders.

- **Charity Shop** network funding through the sales of donated goods and furniture.

- **Public Donations: APA** receives financial support from individuals, private donors, and businesses.

- **Fundraising Campaigns: APA** organizes an Annual Networking Event with keynote speakers aimed at updating existing donors on the work of the organisation and targeting new donors.

- **Strategic Partnerships** on fundraising initiatives with SMEs around Ireland.

- **Corporate Support**: **APA** also partners with large companies who support their projects through corporate social responsibility (CSR) programmes

5. Global Citizenship Education (GCE)

APA integrates GCE into its awareness-raising strategy, focusing on global citizenship, community engagement, and storytelling. Funded under the EU Global Education Time (GET) programme.

The GET programme educates Irish second level school children and communities on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) through school curriculum integration, advocacy, and training and education of teachers.

Awareness raising efforts also include storytelling through journalism, documentaries, and reports to build empathy and support for development initiatives. Links are also made, where possible between schools and **APA** Charity shops operating locally.

6. APA National Charity Shop Network

APA operates three charity shops in Athlone, Carlow Town, and Hacketstown, run by over 50 volunteers and supported by government employment schemes like CE and TUS. These shops generate funds for African programmes while promoting the Circular Economy.

APA provides oversight, funding for overheads, and a collection service for furniture and second hand goods which is coordinated by volunteer drivers in the Dublin area, while local volunteers manage daily shop operations including sales, shop layout, stock rotation, merchandising and daily cashing up.

APA Charity Shop in Athlone is managed by Caroline Buckley. The shop is entirely staffed by volunteers and sells donated items, including clothing, household goods, and furniture. The proceeds from all sales directly contribute to **APA's** work on the ground in Ethiopia and Tanzania.

APA & **CVM**: Empowering the Most Vulnerable First.

Individual profile: Comunità Volontari per il Mondo (CVM)

1. Organisational set up

CVM (Comunità Volontari per il Mondo) is an Italian non-governmental organisation (NGO) that has been operating since 1978. The organisation is dedicated to addressing poverty and social injustice, particularly in Africa, and works on development projects to support marginalized communities.

Organisational Structure
CVM operates with a strong organisational foundation, including the following key elements:

Legal and Operational Presence:
Headquarters: The legal headquarters of **CVM** is located in Ancona, Italy, with an operational office in Porto San Giorgio - Italy. International Presence: The organisation operates in Ethiopia, Tanzania, with field offices in cities such as Addis Ababa (Ethiopia), Bagamoyo, and Morogoro (Tanzania).

Governance and Leadership: CVM is governed by an Assembly of Members and a Board of Directors, which are the main decision-making bodies. The Assembly includes 85 members, and the Board of Directors has 7 members, with the President being Paolo Padovani. The President oversees the organisation, with significant support from a Vice President and the Director. Additionally, there is a Board of Auditors responsible for financial oversight.

Operational Team: CVM's operational team includes both local staff and international volunteers. In Italy, **CVM** has a team of volunteers and staff supporting its outreach and fundraising efforts. On the ground in Ethiopia and Tanzania, local teams are focused on implementing projects, especially related to women's rights, education, sustainable water access, and migration.

Core Areas of Focus:
Human Rights and Gender Equality: CVM works to promote women's rights, particularly for domestic

workers, and engages in advocacy to improve the legal recognition of domestic work in both Ethiopia and Tanzania.

Water and Sanitation: The organisation has implemented water projects, such as sustainable water systems in rural Ethiopia, which help provide clean water to thousands of people.

Education and Citizenship: In Italy, **CVM** has been active in educating the public about global citizenship and sustainable development through seminars, courses, and public engagement.

Migration and Refugee Support: CVM runs programmes that assist migrants, particularly women, in accessing legal and safe migration pathways, and provides reintegration services for returnees.

2. Operational modalities

The operational modalities of **CVM** (Comunità Volontari per il Mondo) focus on a multi-tiered approach to creating sustainable development and social change. Key elements of their operational approach include:

Community Empowerment: CVM supports local communities in Ethiopia, Tanzania, and Italy through education, advocacy, and direct development projects. These include domestic worker training and education, water access programmes, and support for vulnerable children and migrants.

Collaboration with Stakeholders: CVM works alongside local governments, institutions, and communities to implement and sustain projects. This collaboration ensures that interventions are culturally relevant and supported by local networks.

Global Citizenship Education: In Italy, **CVM** promotes global citizenship education (ECG) through teacher training and education programmes and public campaigns that address topics like human rights, sustainability, and social justice.

Volunteer Engagement: Volunteers play an integral role in **CVM**'s operations, both in Italy and in the field, ensuring a grassroots approach to development and project management.

Sustainability and Advocacy: CVM advocates for legal reforms, such as the recognition of domestic work as a formal profession, and strives to ensure that all its programmes are sustainable and have long-term impacts on the communities served.

This approach ensures holistic, community-led development across **CVM**'s areas of operation.

3. Partnerships

The partnership approach is central in the operational approach of **CVM** and it collaborates with a wide range of local, national, and international partners to maximize the impact of its work.

Strategic partners:
The partnership between **CVM** (Comunità Volontari per il Mondo) and **APA** (A Partnership with Africa) is a **strategic alliance** grounded in a shared commitment to **sustainable development** and **human rights**. This partnership goes beyond individual projects and involves joint planning, resource sharing, and mutual support in all of **CVM**'s initiatives. Together, **CVM** and **APA** work to empower local communities, with a specific focus on improving the lives of vulnerable groups, including women, children, and migrants. This deep, sustained partnership reinforces their collective mission to promote social justice, equality, and dignity in the Countries of intervention.

Collaboration with Local and National Stakeholders
CVM works closely with local governments, NGOs, community organisations, and grassroots groups to design and implement projects that are tailored to the specific needs of each region:

In Ethiopia **CVM** collaborates with local **government bodies** like the **Ministry of Women and**

Social Affairs (MoWSA) and **regional authorities** in Amhara and SNNPR to tackle issues such as child protection, domestic workers' rights, and water access. **AEDWU** (Andinet Ethiopian Domestic Workers Union) is a key local partner in Ethiopia working to formalize domestic work and improve the working conditions of domestic workers. Others partners include **CETU** (Confederation of Ethiopian Trade Unions). **Biruh Tesfa (BTTA)** a network of street children involved in providing support to street children and adolescents, focusing on their rehabilitation and reintegration into society. **Muday Health and Social Support Association (MYHSA)** an association of HIV+ teenagers.

In Tanzania key partners are **CHODAWU - The Conservation, Hotels, Domestic, Social Services, and Consultancy Workers Union**, VETA (Vocational Education and training and education Authority) and the **University of Dar Es Salaam.**

CVM's cooperative partners are also:

IDWF - International Domestic Workers Federation – a global network advocating for the rights and dignity of domestic workers worldwide cooperates with **CVM** in Ethiopia and Tanzania to advance the rights of Domestic Workers.

CIFA - Centro Internazionale per l'Infanzia e la Famiglia (Italy) cooperates with **CVM** in the FELPAA Project to advance the transfer of skills producing leather products to returnees youth and women,

CEFA - Centro Educazione e Formazione per l'Africa (Italy) - collaborate on projects aimed at improving agricultural practices, increasing food security, supporting sustainable farming and access to water in rural communities in Ethiopia. The Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore (Italy) – is a partner in training staff and Veta Teachers in Tanzania.

CVM is member of the following networks: **FOCSIV (Federazione degli Organismi Cristiani Servizio Internazionale Volontario)** - a federation of Italian

Christian organisations involved in international volunteer service and development cooperation, AOI (Associazione delle Organizzazioni Italiane di Cooperazione e Solidarietà) - an Italian network of NGOs committed to international cooperation and development. AOI provides a platform for its member organisations, like **CVM**, to engage in joint advocacy, capacity building, and knowledge sharing and Marche Solidali - a network of over 38 organisations based in the Marche region of Italy, dedicated to international cooperation and solidarity.

4. Funding modalities

CVM (Comunità Volontari per il Mondo) funding originates from a variety of sources, including government grants, private donations, fundraising campaigns, and partnerships. The main funding modalities for **CVM** include:

Donations: CVM receives financial support from individuals, private donors, and businesses. Donors can also contribute through legacy gifts or 5x1000 donations, which allow individuals to allocate a portion of their taxes to the organisation.

Fundraising Campaigns: CVM organizes seasonal fundraising campaigns, such as during Christmas and Easter. These campaigns involve local communities and organisations in different parts of Italy.

Grants from Public Institutions such as AICS (Italian Agency for Cooperation and Development), Marche Region, CEI (Italian Bishops Conference), UBI - (Union of Italian Buddhists)

Strategic Partnerships with **APA** (A Partnership with Africa)

Corporate Support: CVM also partners with companies who support their projects through corporate social responsibility (CSR) programmes

5. Education to Global Citizenship (ECG)

Global Citizenship Education (GCE) is a foundational element of **CVM**'s strategic vision, rooted in over three decades of experience and advocacy. Evolving from the 1970s philosophy of *Education to Global Citizenship (ECG)*— initially promoted by FOCSIV—**CVM**'s GCE work challenges the traditional North-South divide by fostering a global, human-centred perspective that emphasizes sustainability, equity, and shared responsibility. **CVM**'s methodology is built on intercultural dialogue, empathy, and participatory learning, aiming to dismantle ethnocentric views and cultivate critical awareness of global interdependencies such as climate change, inequality, and migration.

A key driver of this mission is the *Intercultural Seminar for Teachers*, an accredited, Ministry-recognised programme that has, for the past 17 years, equipped educators with the tools to integrate social justice, sustainability, and human rights into school curricula. Collaborating with national education authorities, universities, and international cooperation bodies, **CVM** advocates for a pedagogical revolution that prepares young people to become informed, responsible, and active global citizens. Its formally recognized teacher development model not only ensures professional legitimacy, but also sustains **CVM**'s impact across the Italian educational system, embedding global citizenship principles at every level of learning and reinforcing the organisation's enduring role in shaping a more just and interconnected world.

6. Volunteering as a Core Value

CVM's philosophy of volunteering is rooted in the belief that volunteers are not simply helpers but key agents of systemic change, working alongside— rather than for—communities in the Global South.

From its founding by returned volunteers committed to justice and human dignity, **CVM** has fostered an ethos of collaboration, humility, and mutual learning. This approach rejects hierarchical aid models in favour of horizontal partnerships where volunteers co-create sustainable, locally anchored, and globally informed development initiatives. Central to this is the principle of gratuitousness, where service is driven by shared values rather than financial incentives, and supported through training, cultural immersion, and reflection to ensure meaningful integration into host communities.

Volunteers include not only those engaged in direct project work but also educators, with **CVM**'s long-running *Intercultural Seminar for Teachers* providing a unique platform for teachers to integrate social justice, sustainability, and human rights into their classrooms, multiplying impact across generations.

More than an organisation, **CVM** operates as a community of values, uniting staff, local actors, teachers, and international volunteers in a shared mission of solidarity and sustainable development. Teachers who participate in **CVM**'s programmes become multipliers of change, fostering global citizenship in their students while deepening their own intercultural understanding.

Volunteers from Italy and beyond engage as peers in community life—bridging divides, dismantling ethnocentric perspectives, and fostering mutual respect across cultures. Every contribution, regardless of role, nationality, or duration, is valued equally, helping **CVM** remain agile, responsive, and deeply embedded in the realities it serves.

By investing in volunteers and educators alike as both change-makers and learners, **CVM** continues to grow a global network dedicated to justice, solidarity, and long-term social transformation.

APA and **CVM's** work with the leather sector in Ethiopia is part of a broader effort to support entrepreneurship, job creation, and sustainable livelihoods for for vulnerable populations, such as youth, women, and returnee migrants.

APA & CVM: Empowering the Most Vulnerable First.

Combined SWOT Analysis Summary: Positioning the APA–CVM Partnership for Impact

This combined SWOT analysis reflects the maturity and strategic potential of the **APA–CVM** partnership. It highlights shared strengths, including deep alignment with the SDGs and Irish Aid priorities, a solid donor base, proven programme impact, and complementary expertise—**APA** in advocacy and education, **CVM** in frontline delivery. The partnership's focus on dignity, empowerment, and poverty reduction is backed by long-standing government and community relationships, making it well-positioned to scale through joint funding and advocacy efforts.

At the same time, internal challenges such as overreliance on key individuals, limited digital infrastructure, and fundraising capacity require strategic attention. The external landscape presents both opportunities—from EU funding and social enterprise growth to youth engagement—and threats, including climate instability, global funding shifts, and volunteer burnout. This analysis underlines the need for a focused, adaptive strategy that strengthens internal systems while seizing emerging opportunities for growth and influence.

Strengths

- Strategic alignment with SDGs and Irish Aid policy pillars, particularly in gender equality, sustainable livelihoods, and global citizenship education.
- Long-standing relationship with Irish Aid and Italian institutions, plus diverse donor base (EU, public fundraising, charity shops, CSR).
- Proven record of positive impacts.
- Deep-rooted experience in development: **APA** in policy, education, and advocacy; **CVM** in field-based programme implementation.
- Strong poverty-focused programming that centres on dignity, empowerment, and access to basic services.
- Cost-effective structure with high volunteer engagement and low operational overhead.
- Trusted government partnerships in Ethiopia and Tanzania at local, regional, and national levels.
- Proven educational outreach in the Global North, supporting awareness and solidarity.

Weaknesses

- Overreliance on key individuals for coordination and leadership in both organisations.
- Limited social media and digital engagement, particularly in branding and fundraising.
- Operational back-end systems (finance, data, IT) in **APA** require investment for full digitisation.
- **APA**'s charity shop operations are geographically limited and could be vulnerable without volunteer continuity.

Opportunities

- Expansion of the charity shop model as a social enterprise and circular economy initiative.
- Increased visibility through enhanced communications, branding, and digital fundraising tools.
- Greater access to EU development funds, especially through joint partnership applications and strategic consortia.
- Leveraging Ireland's strong development cooperation stance under the Global Ireland framework to deepen government partnerships.
- Tapping into the Piano Mattei plan from the Italian government to enhance **CVM**'s funding and visibility in Africa.
- Broader influence through global advocacy on migration, gender rights, and sustainable development.
- Youth engagement in Europe and Africa as a long-term sustainability and leadership strategy.

Threats

- Shifting international funding paradigms favouring local actors could affect intermediary organisations like **APA** and **CVM**.
- Political instability, economic shocks, and climate-related disruptions in programme countries may threaten project continuity.
- Increasing competition for traditional donor funds, including Irish Aid and EU budgets.
- Risk of volunteer burnout or turnover affecting community initiatives and charity shop staffing.
- Global economic downturns or inflationary pressures could impact donor giving and operational costs.

Strategic Alignment and Future Growth

In 2017, **APA** and **CVM** formalised a joint five-year strategic plan, defining their shared goals, geographic focus, and thematic priorities. Although **APA** also operates under a 2019–2024 strategic plan to define its distinct contributions, both documents serve as roadmaps for a shared future.

Looking ahead, the partnership is set to evolve in several key directions:

- **Deeper integration of planning and fundraising**, including co-designing multi-year programmes and seeking joint funding, particularly from the European Union, philanthropic foundations, and corporate social responsibility (CSR) channels.
- **Geographic and thematic expansion**— potentially extending the partnership model to other African countries, and exploring emerging issues such as **climate resilience**, **urban inequality**, and **digital empowerment**.
- **Digital transformation**, including enhanced data systems, volunteer engagement platforms, and social media strategies to increase public visibility and operational efficiency.
- **Policy influence and advocacy**, leveraging the combined experience of **APA** and **CVM** to inform national and international debates on aid effectiveness, gender equality, migration, and global education.
- **Engagement with youth movements** and civic society, especially through schools and universities, to inspire the next generation of global citizens and development professionals.

This evolution is underpinned by a shared commitment to sustainability, transparency, and mutual accountability. The partnership will continue to respond flexibly to changing global conditions—including political instability, economic challenges, and environmental threats—while remaining rooted in the lived experiences of the communities it serves.
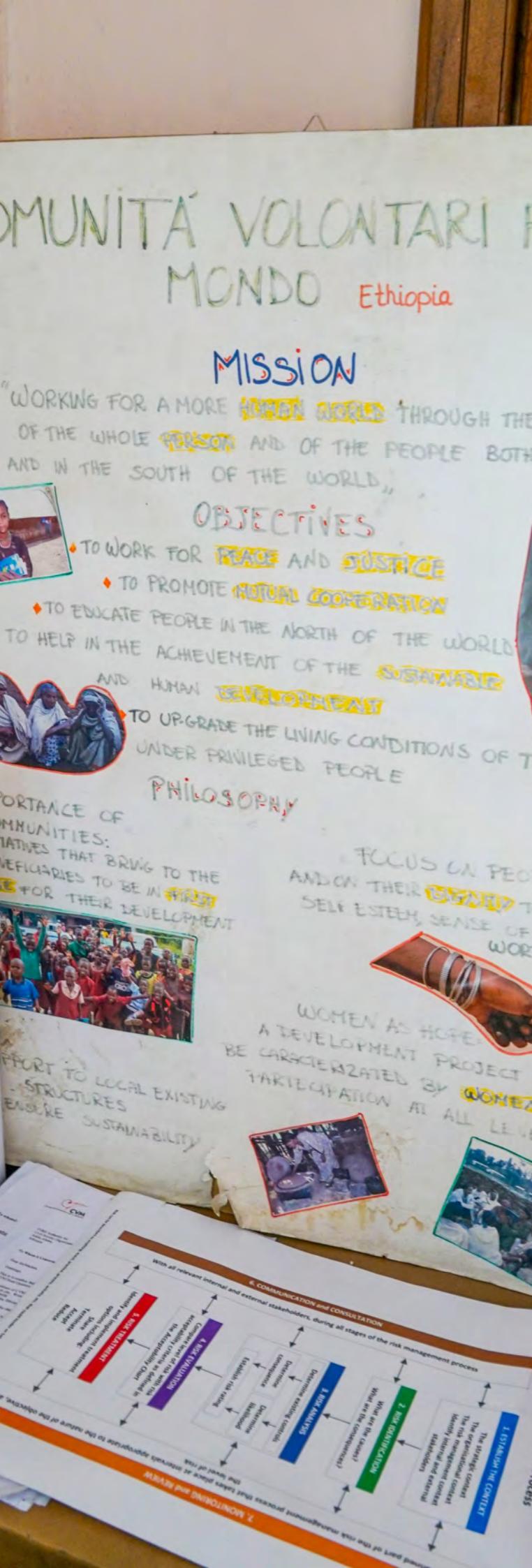
3.4 New Joint Vision and Mission

Based on the reflections on our history, achievements, and partnership, **APA** and **CVM** now set out a renewed vision and mission that reflect both organisation's deep roots and forward-looking aspirations. This updated vision reaffirms our commitment to a world of dignity, equality, and opportunity for all, with a sharp focus on those most marginalised, particularly vulnerable women, children, and migrants. Our mission builds on proven approaches to partnership, local ownership, and sustainability, while embracing the priorities of the Sustainable Development Goals, Irish Aid, and urgent climate action. It positions **APA CVM** and its partners to respond with agility and purpose to emerging global challenges, ensuring that our collective efforts remain relevant, impactful, and firmly anchored in our shared values of solidarity, justice, and respect.

Joint Vision

We strive for a just, peaceful, and inclusive World where all persons and communities have the opportunity to grow, develop, and access essential services, fostering dignity, equality, and shared prosperity.

Ci impegniamo per un mondo giusto, pacifico e inclusivo, in cui tutte le persone e le comunità abbiano l'opportunità di crescere, svilupparsi, soddisfare i propri bisogni primari, promuovendo dignità, uguaglianza e prosperità condivisa.

Joint Mission

Through a partnership-driven approach, we work alongside local communities to support and empower vulnerable populations, particularly domestic workers and street children. By equipping local leaders—especially women—with the skills and resources to drive sustainable solutions, we foster systemic change that advances social justice and sustainable development. We work to transform systems of inequality, ensuring that every individual can live with dignity and freedom while building resilient communities for future generations.

Con un approccio basato sul partnariato, lavoriamo al fianco delle comunità locali per sostenere l'emancipazione delle popolazioni vulnerabili, in particolare lavoratrici domestiche e bambini di strada. Supportiamo le leader locali—soprattutto donne—con le competenze e le risorse necessarie per promuovere soluzioni sostenibili, favoriamo un cambiamento sistemico che promuova la giustizia sociale e lo sviluppo sostenibile. Operiamo per trasformare le strutture di disuguaglianza, garantendo che ogni individuo possa vivere in dignità e libertà, costruendo comunità resilienti per le future generazioni.

Joint Values

- **Solidarity- Inclusion and partnership**
- **Commitment-voluntarism, justice and sustainability**
- **Respect-Equity and integrity**

3.5 Strategic Pillars and Priorities (2025-2030)

Women and girls remain hardest hit by the effects of extreme poverty, climate change and conflict. They are blocked from economic opportunity, and disempowered by the burden of unpaid care and domestic responsibilities.
[Irish Aid, A Better World, Gender Equality]

The protection and promotion of fundamental rights, with particular reference to gender equality and considering the role that women play in local development, constitute a priority of Italian foreign policy.
[Documento di programmazione triennale della cooperazione allo sviluppo 2024–2026]

To achieve the shared vision of **APA** and **CVM**, the 2025–2030 strategy will focus on four core programmatic goals, each supported by targeted strategies and measurable outcomes. These goals reflect the organisations' long-standing commitments, while also responding to emerging needs, global trends, and lessons learned from past programme cycles.

Goal 1: Protecting Women's Dignity and Human Rights, Fostering Their Empowerment and Leadership

CVM and **APA** are committed to advancing women's dignity, rights, and empowerment, particularly in the domestic work sector where exploitation, trafficking, and violence remain widespread. Drawing on years of experience in Ethiopia, Tanzania, and beyond, the organisations are now positioning themselves to scale up impact by focusing on legal reforms, professionalisation of domestic work, and stronger representation of women in decision-making.

Strategic Actions
Future efforts will concentrate on ensuring that domestic work is formally recognised and regulated, with ILO Convention 189 fully ratified and implemented. Building on the foundations already established in Ethiopia and Tanzania, vocational training curricula will be expanded and institutionalised, giving domestic workers recognised qualifications and pathways to secure, decent employment.

The next phase will also strengthen reintegration systems for returning migrant women and broaden advocacy for safer migration channels through more robust bilateral agreements with destination countries.

At the same time, **CVM** and **APA** will continue investing in the growth of women's organisations, ensuring that domestic workers' unions and associations play a leading role in shaping labour rights and social protections at both national and regional levels.

Expected Outcomes by 2030
- Ratification and enforcement of ILO Convention 189 in Ethiopia and Tanzania, accompanied by national labour law reforms.

- Nationwide adoption of standardised domestic worker training curricula.
- Trained domestic workers employed under formal contracts with improved wages and conditions.
- Robust reintegration mechanisms in place for returning migrant women, with reduced rates of re-trafficking and exploitation.
- Stronger domestic worker unions (AEDWU, CHODAWU) with expanded membership and active participation in national policy processes.
- Greater visibility and influence of women leaders in shaping migration, labour, and social protection policies at regional and global levels.

Indicators
- Number of trained women employed in formal sectors
- Number of domestic workers covered by national labour protections
- Number of policy dialogues with government or trade unions
- Number of functioning women-led cooperatives

Goal 2: Supporting Rural Communities to Face Climate Change and Address Their Basic Needs

CVM and **APA** remain committed to building climate-resilient rural communities by integrating sustainable agriculture, clean water access, energy efficiency, and women's empowerment into a comprehensive approach. Drawing on years of experience in community development in Ethiopia and beyond, we now aim to expand and scale interventions that respond simultaneously to environmental challenges and basic human needs.

Strategic Actions
The strategy looks ahead to promoting climate-smart agriculture and agroforestry to secure food production while protecting natural resources.

Soil and water conservation practices will be deepened to ensure sustainable farming, expanded access to clean water as a cornerstone for health, agricultural productivity, and stability.

Women's empowerment remains central: by strengthening women's cooperatives, ensuring access to resources, and enabling leadership roles, the strategy will foster women's economic independence and decision-making power within households and communities. Improved access to energy-efficient technologies, such as modern cooking methods, will both reduce deforestation and free women from labour-intensive tasks, allowing greater participation in education and income-generating activities.

CVM and **APA** will focus on scaling up community-led solutions, ensuring that interventions are locally owned and replicable without heavy external support. Partnerships with local and national governments, cooperatives, and international actors will be leveraged to embed successful approaches into national climate adaptation and sustainable development strategies. This future direction seeks not only to address immediate vulnerabilities but also to ensure that rural communities thrive in the long term despite the challenges of climate change.

Expected Outcomes by 2030
- Widespread adoption of climate-smart agriculture and agroforestry, leading to improved food security and sustainable land use in targeted regions.
- Soil and water conservation practices institutionalised at community level, reducing erosion and ensuring reliable agricultural productivity.
- Universal access to safe drinking water in project areas, improving health, education, and economic stability.
- At least 50% of households in target areas using energy-efficient cooking technologies, reducing deforestation and indoor air pollution.
- Women's cooperatives established and strengthened in all intervention areas, with women holding leadership positions.
- Significant reduction in women's time spent on water collection and firewood gathering, matched by measurable increases in their participation in education, business, and community leadership.
- Promote advanced methodologies for mapping and management water schemes by local and Regional authorities in Ethiopia
- Integration of CVM and APA models for climate adaptation and gender equality into national policies on agriculture, water, and energy, ensuring sustainability and scalability across Ethiopia.

Indicators
- Number of households using clean cooking technologies
- Number of communities with year-round clean water access
- Number of women in leadership roles in rural resilience projects
- Increase in crop yields or income among participating farmers

Goal 3: Reducing Inequalities Through Job Creation, Skills Training, and Knowledge Transfer

CVM and **APA's** acquired years of experience in promoting education, vocational training, and women's empowerment to reduce poverty and inequality among the most marginalized groups, including street children, girls from poor families, and single mothers.

Future initiatives will focus on creating inclusive opportunities that combine access to quality education, skills training, and economic empowerment with strong local partnerships. The aim is to break cycles of poverty and exclusion, ensuring that women, youth, and vulnerable families gain the tools to achieve self-sufficiency, leadership, and long-term resilience.

Strategic Actions
Expanding vocational and technical training will remain central, with a priority on standardising curricula and ensuring nationally recognized qualifications, particularly in domestic work and other market-driven sectors such as leather production.

Education continuity for street children and trafficked minors will be pursued through community-based mechanisms that address family poverty and reduce dropout rates.

Women's empowerment will be advanced through cooperatives, small business support, and agricultural training in climate-smart practices, reinforcing both food security and economic independence.

Partnerships with local actors, apprenticeships, and job placement programs will strengthen links between training and employment, ensuring that skills development translates into sustainable livelihoods and social mobility.

Expected Outcomes by 2030
- Promote community mechanisms to address issues of street children and school dropouts.
- At least 50% of program graduates (youth and women) employed in formal jobs or running sustainable small businesses.
- Expanded network of women's cooperatives with access to microcredit, training, and markets, contributing to higher household incomes and community resilience.
- Integration of CVM and APA's training models into national TVET and employment policies, ensuring replication and scale.
- Expand cooperation and capacity building of CSOs active in promoting wellbeing and support to street children.

Indicators
- Percentage of certified graduates employed or self-employed

- Percentage increase in average income of trained individuals
- Percentage of micro-enterprises sustained for 2+ years
- Education continuity rate for supported minors

Goal 4: Mobilizing People in Ireland and Italy to Achieve Global Justice

APA and **CVM** will mobilise people in Ireland and Italy to take action for global justice by strengthening Global Citizenship Education (GCE), expanding public engagement, and promoting solidarity-driven initiatives. The partnership will build on its established presence in schools, communities, and charity shops to inspire critical thinking and meaningful action on interconnected global challenges.

Strategic Actions

A central focus will be advancing SDG 4.7, ensuring that learners acquire the knowledge, skills, and values needed to promote sustainable development, gender equality, human rights, peace, and cultural diversity. Through interactive workshops, advocacy campaigns, and volunteering opportunities, young people will be encouraged to understand and act on global interdependence, linking their daily choices to broader issues of migration, inequality, and climate change.

The circular economy charity shop model will continue to grow as both a fundraising tool and a platform for awareness on sustainable consumption and the SDGs. Public campaigns and communication strategies will expand the reach of advocacy on global justice issues, while volunteer networks in both countries will play a key role in sustaining solidarity initiatives and amplifying citizen voices.

Expected Outcomes by 2030

- Over 10,000 people engaged in global justice education and campaigns.
- GCE programmes delivered in at least 250 schools and community groups, embedding SDG 4.7 in teaching and learning practices.

- Stronger public awareness of global interdependence, with young people demonstrating increased commitment to solidarity and sustainable lifestyles.
- Maintain and develop network of volunteers and advocates actively influencing debates on global justice issues.
- Charity shops fully aligned with circular economy principles, serving as hubs for education on sustainability and the SDGs.

Indicators

- Number of students and teachers trained in SDG-aligned curricula
- Number of campaigns/events held and audience reach
- Number of volunteers engaged in APA-CVM activities
- Number of charity shop initiatives linked to GCE goals

Together, these goals and strategies provide a coherent and impact-driven roadmap for the next five years. They are designed to maximise the effectiveness of the **APA–CVM** partnership while delivering meaningful, measurable outcomes for the communities and individuals at the heart of their mission.

APA and **CVM** offer psychosocial counseling to domestic workers in Tanzania, particularly those who have experienced abuse, trauma, or stress in the workplace. Many domestic workers face mental health challenges due to harsh working conditions, isolation, and lack of social support, which makes psychosocial counselling an essential part of **APA** and **CVM's** intervention.

04

Partnership Governance

4.1
Strategic Management Objectives

As **APA** and **CVM** look toward 2030, we recognise that achieving our shared vision demands more than programme delivery—it requires a resilient, well-resourced, and future-ready partnership.

The following objectives set out a clear framework for how we will grow together, strengthen our joint capacity, and enhance our ability to respond to the needs of the communities we serve.

From diversifying our funding base and amplifying our public voice, to investing in our people, managing risks, and embedding environmental sustainability, each objective reflects a strategic choice to deepen our collaboration and maximise our collective strengths.

Together, these priorities will ensure that our partnership remains dynamic, credible, and impactful well beyond the lifetime of this plan.

Objective 1: To continue to broaden both organisations' financial bases by jointly exploring and securing diverse funding streams

APA and **CVM** benefit from strong national and institutional support—primarily from Irish Aid and AICS respectively and the EU—through which we manage a diversified funding portfolio. To ensure long-term sustainability and reduce dependence on a limited number of donors, it is critical to jointly explore new funding streams.

This includes strengthening collaboration in identifying and applying for international grants, particularly from EU programmes, foundations, and other bilateral donors. Joint fundraising campaigns, corporate partnerships, and innovation in public engagement (e.g. digital giving, CSR opportunities) will also be explored.

Unrestricted funding—such as that generated through **APA**'s charity shops and **CVM**'s national campaigns—will be strengthened to provide more flexible resources for core operations and strategic investments.

By working together on fundraising strategies, donor mapping, and proposal development, **APA** and **CVM** will position themselves to expand their impact while managing financial risk effectively.

Expected Outcomes by 2030

- At least **30% of the joint budget derived from new funding sources** beyond existing funding sources.
- Access to at least **three new institutional or private donors** secured.
- Increased proportion of **unrestricted and flexible funds**, supporting long-term sustainability.
- Enhanced **joint fundraising identity**, building public trust and brand recognition across Ireland, Italy, and partner countries.

Objective 2: Increase visibility and advocacy for APA and CVM domestically and overseas through targeted media campaigns and enhanced social media presence with consistent messaging, visuals, and joint branding across projects

APA and **CVM** recognise that effective communication is essential not only for raising awareness and advocating for social justice, but also for building trust among partners, donors, and the wider public. To this end, the two organisations will jointly coordinate communication efforts to ensure stronger visibility, coherent messaging, and increased engagement across platforms in Ireland, Italy, and programme countries.

Pooling resources and aligning media strategies will enhance impact, reduce duplication, and project a unified identity rooted in shared values and goals. Communication activities will support both programmatic advocacy (e.g. on domestic workers, climate justice, youth empowerment) and organisational visibility, strengthening our positioning in the sector and among key stakeholders.

Expected Outcomes by 2030

- Align branding guidelines across **APA** and **CVM** projects, reports, and online platforms as appropriate.
- Share content, visuals, and storytelling assets to amplify voices from the field through joint blogs, videos, podcasts, and photo stories.
- Coordinate efforts on social media, ensuring regular and engaging content aligned with strategic themes.
- Strengthen connections with journalists, influencers, and media outlets in Ireland, Italy, and East Africa.

Objective 3: To empower our greatest asset—our people—through targeted training in governance, emerging technologies, project management, and fundraising, strengthening their leadership and impact within the organisation and in the achievement of our joint vision and mission

APA and **CVM** recognise that people—staff, volunteers, youth, and supporters—are the most valuable resource for advancing our shared mission. To expand a resilient, future-oriented alliance, we must invest in their skills, knowledge, and leadership potential in our organisation.

This objective places particular emphasis on opening up the organisations to new generations, encouraging the active participation of younger members and emerging leaders. Their engagement is key to innovation, relevance, and the long-term sustainability of our work.

In parallel, fostering intergenerational dialogue within the organisations will help bridge experience with new ideas, ensuring that institutional memory and lived wisdom are passed on while embracing fresh energy and creativity.

Expected Outcomes by 2030

- Develop structured training pathways in new project design, fundraising, digital tools, advocacy, and governance for staff, volunteers, and youth contributors.
- Create spaces for intergenerational dialogue (e.g. mentoring schemes, joint workshops, storytelling sessions).
- Promote youth-led initiatives within programmes and communication campaigns to enhance ownership and visibility.
- Encourage participatory leadership models, where younger staff and volunteers contribute to strategic decisions and innovation.
- Support staff and volunteers in embracing

emerging technologies (AI, digital M&E tools, collaborative platforms) to improve efficiency and reach.
- Develop succession and leadership transition plans that include future staff and volunteers in governance pipelines, while harnessing existing expertise.

Objective 4: Jointly strengthen the organisation's resilience by establishing new comprehensive risk management protocols that address both security and financial risks

In an increasingly volatile global context—marked by political instability, climate shocks, funding unpredictability, and emerging threats—**APA** and **CVM** must prioritise the development of robust, integrated risk management systems. Strengthening organisational resilience is essential to safeguard staff, projects, and long-term impact.

This objective focuses on the joint development and implementation of comprehensive risk management protocols, covering both security risks in programme countries and financial risks related to funding fluctuations, donor dependency, and compliance requirements.

By taking a proactive, preventative approach, **APA** and **CVM** can reduce exposure to shocks, respond quickly to emerging threats, and maintain operational continuity even in uncertain environments.

Expected Outcomes by 2030

- Review and update the joint security policy tailored to the operational realities of Ethiopia and Tanzania.
- Review and update the incident response protocols and communication chains for staff and volunteers in-country.
- Maintain a real-time risk monitoring system (using apps or dashboards) linked to local security alerts and government advisories.

- Create a Joint Financial Risk Assessment Framework, reviewing vulnerabilities such as donor dependency, currency fluctuations, and project funding gaps.
- Maintain a financial reserve and contingency fund, especially for core operational costs and emergency response of a minimum 3-month operating reserve to buffer financial disruptions.
- Strengthen data protection, cybersecurity, and digital continuity systems for donor data and financial systems.
- Update the shared Risk Register and Incident Reporting System.

Objective 5: Incorporate sustainable practices across all operations, focusing on reducing the organisation's carbon footprint, managing waste, and promoting eco-friendly initiatives

As organisations committed to social justice and sustainable development, **APA** and **CVM** recognise the importance of leading by example in how we operate. This objective seeks to embed environmental sustainability into all aspects of internal and external operations, from field activities and office practices to logistics and communications.

Reducing the environmental impact of our work is not only aligned with the UN Sustainable Development Goals (particularly SDG 12 and 13), but also strengthens our credibility with partners, donors, and the communities we serve.

To complement this shift, **APA** and **CVM** will also produce their Social and Environmental Impact Report, showcasing progress in sustainability, social justice outcomes, and ethical practices. This report will serve as a tool for transparency, advocacy, and donor engagement.

Expected Outcomes by 2030

- Conduct a baseline environmental audit to assess energy use, travel, procurement, and waste practices across all offices and field operations.
- Expand **APA**'s circular economy practices from charity shops (reuse, upcycling, repair) as a shared learning model.
- Introduce waste reduction protocols and recycling policies in all office and shop environments.
- Raise awareness among staff and volunteers through eco-literacy training sessions.
- Develop Social and Environmental Impact Reports and update every two years.
- Disseminate report findings through public events, digital platforms, and donor briefings.

4.2
Leadership and Roles

Management Structure and Volunteer Engagement (2025–2030)

As **APA** and **CVM** work to deepen their partnership over the next five years, both organisations will continue to operate their national staffing structures independently, reflecting the unique operational and legal contexts in Ireland and Italy. However, recognising the value of cross-organisational collaboration, the strategy outlines a flexible model where shared staffing, expertise, and volunteer engagement can be leveraged when mutually beneficial.

Shared Resource Model

Currently, **APA** and **CVM** share several strategic support roles that strengthen the connection between the two organisations and enhance joint programme delivery, communications, and fundraising. These include:

- Two Projects Officers – Based in Ireland and Italy, these roles acts as a key liaison between **APA** and **CVM**, supporting programme coordination, reporting, and partnership communication.
- Grant Writer – Provides dedicated expertise in securing institutional and foundation funding to support joint programmes in East Africa.
- Communications Consultant (Africa, Ireland, Italy) – Specialises in producing high-quality case studies, short films, and photography from field projects. This content is used across **APA** and **CVM** channels to raise awareness, engage supporters, and mark global advocacy days.
- External Evaluator Consultant – for Monitoring, learning and Evaluation (MEL).

Future Opportunities for Shared Engagement

Looking forward, **APA** and **CVM** will explore further opportunities to:

- Share technical roles, such as finance, MEL (Monitoring, Evaluation & Learning), or digital communications specialists, particularly when remote working makes this efficient and cost-effective.
- Exchange and mobilise volunteers between Ireland and Italy, including through joint events, knowledge exchanges.
- Collaborate on joint training and capacity building for staff and volunteers across both organisations.

4.3
Decision Making and Accountability

Independent but Coordinated Operations

While **APA** and **CVM** will retain separate national teams, the shared resource model allows both organisations to maximise value, reduce

duplication, and ensure that shared projects benefit from collective expertise and unified messaging.

This coordinated but flexible structure positions **APA** and **CVM** to respond to opportunities and challenges with greater agility and impact, while maintaining their independent national identities and community-led approaches.

Joint Strategic Oversight- Joint Strategy Steering Committee (JSSC)

As part of this structure, **APA** and **CVM** will establish a **Joint Strategy Steering Committee (JSSC)** to provide high-level governance, oversight, and strategic direction for the partnership.

The JSSC will be composed of senior management and board representatives from both **APA** and **CVM** and external expertise. The committee will meet bi-annually to:

- Oversee the implementation of the Joint 5-Year Strategic Plan.
- Review progress against agreed objectives, outcomes, and key performance indicators (KPIs).
- Discuss and approve strategic pivots or adjustments based on internal learning or external changes.
- Manage conflict resolution processes between the two organisations if required.
- Monitor external environmental factors, including political, economic, or sectoral developments, and guide the partnership's response.
- Ensure alignment with governance standards in Ireland, Italy, and partner countries in Africa.

In addition to this joint committee, the partnership is already strengthened by cross-representation at governance level:

- **CVM** currently holds representation on **APA**'s Board of Directors and Finance Committee, providing insight and accountability across both strategic and financial matters.

- **APA** participates in **CVM**'s Annual General Meeting (AGM), ensuring alignment with **CVM**'s governance and strategic priorities.

Looking ahead, **APA** and **CVM** recognise the importance of including local expertise in decision-making. The JSSC will invite representation from partners in Ethiopia and Tanzania, ensuring that the voices, knowledge, and lived experiences of local staff and partners directly inform strategic discussions and decisions. This inclusive approach will help ground the partnership's governance in first-hand realities, promoting greater relevance, ownership, and impact in the communities **APA** and **CVM** serve.

Reporting Frameworks

Between 2025 and 2030, **APA** and **CVM** will deepen their joint commitment to empowering the most vulnerable first, in line with the principles of Irish Aid's *A Better World*. While maintaining independent staffing structures in Ireland and Italy to reflect national legal and operational contexts, both organisations will adopt a more agile approach to expertise, staffing, and volunteer engagement.

This flexible model recognises that pooling skills, resources, and knowledge—wherever feasible—enhances both impact and efficiency. Cross-border collaboration, inclusive governance, and strategic personnel exchanges will strengthen our collective capacity to respond to complex challenges, pursue joint funding opportunities, and amplify our voice in global advocacy. By working as one partnership, we will drive more sustainable change across all the communities we serve.

Joint Operational Working Groups

To support the delivery of the Joint Strategic Plan (2025–2030), **APA** and **CVM** will establish three operational working groups that will function under the mandate of the Joint Strategy Steering Committee (JSSC) and the respective Boards of both organisations. These groups will bring together staff from **APA** and **CVM** with relevant expertise to strengthen collaboration, operational coordination, and strategic delivery across three key areas: Projects, Finance, and Communications.

1. Joint Projects Working Group

Purpose:
To coordinate the planning, delivery, monitoring, and evaluation of all joint programmes in Ethiopia, Tanzania, and any future country of involvement.

Functions:
- Develop shared project work plans and reporting frameworks, including security risks from the field.
- Ensure alignment with donor contracts and compliance requirements.
- Share learning and best practices from field operations.
- Coordinate joint Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) processes.
- Facilitate cross-team communication between Ireland, Italy, Ethiopia, and Tanzania.

Membership:
- Project Managers from **APA** and **CVM**.
- Country Representatives-Ethiopia and Tanzania
- Project Officers (social and technical coordinators)

2. Joint Finance Working Group

Purpose:
To strengthen financial oversight, transparency, and joint resource mobilisation efforts.

Functions:
- Coordinate budget planning for joint projects and fundraising initiatives.
- Align financial reporting systems and improve data-sharing processes.
- Support audit readiness and donor financial compliance.
- Explore opportunities for joint resource mobilisation and diversification.
- Monitor financial risk and sustainability indicators.

Membership:
- Finance Officers from **APA**, **CVM**, Ethiopia and Tanzania.
- Grant and fundraising leads.

3. Joint Communications & Public Engagement Working Group

Purpose:
To unify messaging, strengthen public engagement, and promote the visibility of joint impact across Europe and Africa.

Functions:
- Develop joint communications plans for campaigns, advocacy, and fundraising.
- Coordinate content production, including project case studies, photography, and video.
- Align public messaging for joint events, social media, and advocacy days.
- Share media and donor engagement strategies.
- Strengthen brand integration across both organisations.

Membership:
- Communications and fundraising leads from **APA** and **CVM**
- **APA CVM** Social Media sub committee
- External consultants supporting media production (as appropriate)

Governance and Accountability
- Each working group will operate under the delegated authority of the **APA** and **CVM** Boards through the JSSC.
- Working groups will meet quarterly, with the flexibility to convene more frequently as needed.
- Progress and key recommendations will be reported bi-annually to the JSSC for oversight and strategic alignment.

APA Networking Event in Dublin, Nov. 2024

4.4
Financial Sustainability and Resource Mobilization

The **APA–CVM** partnership is underpinned by a strong commitment to transparent governance and strategic oversight, ensuring that all programmes are aligned with shared values, community needs, and measurable impact.

Both organisations recognise that achieving long-term development outcomes requires not only effective delivery but also continuous reflection, learning, and responsible stewardship of resources.

Oversight mechanisms are guided by clear decision-making processes, regular joint reviews, and collaborative planning that promotes consistency, shared ownership, and mutual accountability.

A key pillar of this strategy is the commitment to financial sustainability. **APA** and **CVM** will continue to diversify funding streams through a combination of institutional grants, public fundraising, partnerships with corporate and philanthropic actors, and income from the Circular Economy initiatives such as **APA**'s charity shops.

Efforts will also focus on strengthening joint fundraising strategies and building long-term financial reserves that enhance the partnership's ability to adapt to changing funding environments while maintaining programme continuity.

Accountability and performance measurement are central to how the partnership operates. Both organisations are committed to setting clear targets, collecting reliable data, and using evidence to guide decision-making and programme improvement. Monitoring and evaluation systems will be strengthened to ensure that progress is tracked consistently, results are documented

and shared, and stakeholders—particularly communities in Ethiopia and Tanzania—have a voice in assessing the effectiveness of interventions.

Finally, the **APA–CVM** partnership recognises the importance of robust risk management, particularly in the face of increasing political, economic, environmental, and operational uncertainties. In the coming years, both organisations will enhance their risk frameworks by developing updated protocols for financial oversight, security, safeguarding, and reputational management. These measures will ensure that the partnership remains resilient, responsive, and trusted by the communities it serves and the donors that support its work.

Managing the Strategy

By 2030, **APA** and **CVM** aim to be recognised leaders in labour rights advocacy for vulnerable groups, sustainable development programming, and regionally-driven humanitarian work. Our mission is to empower domestic workers and street children by implementing scalable, inclusive, and measurable programmes rooted in dignity, rights, and community leadership.

Strategy Governance Framework
- Establish a Joint Strategy Steering Committee (JSSC) comprising senior leadership from **APA** and **CVM**.
- Meet bi annually to oversee progress, approve strategic pivots, and ensure alignment.
- Ensure representation from Africa-based country offices and advisory boards.

APA–CVM Consultative Mechanisms
- Joint Monitoring and Evaluation visits and engagement with field partners.
- Field visit Strategic Reflections between Ireland, Italy, and Africa as resources allow.
- A focus on meeting in person where possible to promote the relationship between **APA**, **CVM** and African Partners.
- Use of webinars for internal members of the organisations on relevant topics.

- Shared knowledge platforms (cloud-based) for document storage, collaboration, and communications.

Wider Partnership Review Process
- Meetings with external partners (e.g., Irish Aid, local NGOs, trade unions).
- Periodic stakeholder mapping and engagement analysis.
- Mid-term strategy review in 2027.

Lion Leather is a local enterprise in Addis Ababa, building an international reputation for producing high-quality leather goods. **APA** and **CVM's** support helps to improve the production processes, skills development, and market access for artisans from vulnerable communities.

05

Measuring Impact

5.1 Learning by Doing

The **APA–CVM** partnership will be strengthened not only through planned activities but also through continuous reflection, adaptation, and evidence-based decision-making. Rather than viewing KPIs solely as static measurements, the partnership will adopt a "learning by doing" approach in which the effectiveness of joint strategies is assessed against the realities of implementation in Ireland, Italy, Ethiopia, Tanzania, and other programme countries.

The governing bodies of both organisations will review partnership outcomes periodically drawing on feedback from staff, volunteers, partners, and beneficiaries. Particular attention will be paid to whether the partnership is fostering genuine collaboration, trust, and mutual accountability, and whether joint actions are producing results greater than either organisation could achieve alone. This process will not only look at outputs—such as shared projects, communications, or events—but also longer term outcomes.

Capacity building and mutual learning will be treated as core outcomes in themselves. The analysis will explore whether joint training, knowledge exchange, and collaborative project design are enhancing organisational capabilities and enriching approaches to advocacy, fundraising, and community engagement. Similarly, the Boards and joint steering committees will examine whether feedback mechanisms are being used effectively to identify challenges, resolve tensions, and introduce adjustments before they grow into obstacles.

Ultimately, the assessment of partnership effectiveness will be grounded in evidence: staff surveys, volunteer feedback, partner consultations, and documented experiences from the field. This evidence will allow APA and CVM to track not only the health of the partnership but also its contribution to stronger programmes and better outcomes for domestic workers, street children, and other vulnerable groups. By making space for reflection, transparency, and corrective action, the partnership will remain dynamic, resilient, and responsive to the shifting contexts in which it operates.

5.2 Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for Africa Country Projects (2025–2030)

The Africa Country Project KPIs are designed to ensure that **APA** and **CVM**'s work in Ethiopia, Tanzania, and any future programme countries is delivering measurable, lasting change for those most at risk.

These indicators will allow us to track reach, quality, and sustainability across our interventions, ensuring that domestic workers, street children, and other vulnerable groups benefit from targeted support. They will also help us assess the strength of local leadership, the diversity and stability of funding, and the real-world outcomes in livelihoods, policy change, and innovation.

By consistently monitoring and reviewing these metrics, we will be able to adapt quickly, strengthen accountability, and ensure our collective efforts are grounded in the priorities of local partners and the lived realities of the communities we serve.

1. Programme Reach and Participation

- Number of Domestic Workers participating in accredited training, literacy, life skills, or rights-based education programmes.
- Number of Street Children reached through educational, vocational, or social reintegration programmes.

2. Local Ownership and Leadership

- Number of Project activities implemented by Local Partners, including domestic worker associations, local NGOs, or community-based organisations.

3. Financial Sustainability

- Percentage of Country Programme Budgets sourced from diversified revenue streams (e.g., government grants, public fundraising, corporate partnerships).

4. Livelihoods and Employment Outcomes

- Number of Vocational Training Graduates completing certified courses.
- Number of Professionally Qualified Domestic Workers securing written contracts, salary increases or employment.
- Number of Graduates with Basic Business Training starting enterprises within 6 months of completion.
- Number of teenage Street children becoming self-sufficient through gaining employment following training or setting up small enterprises with startup funding.
- Number of Domestic Worker children back to school.

5. Policy and Advocacy Impact

- Number of Countries (e.g., Ethiopia, Tanzania, others) where **APA-CVM**-supported advocacy contributes to progress on ILO Convention 189 ratification and/or implementation.
- Impact on public attitudinal change towards marginalised groups.
- Influencing policy in Labour Law benefiting marginalised groups.
- Advocating for Safe and legal migration paths.

6. Innovation and Digital Integration

- Use of AI-Powered Monitoring Systems to improve project efficiency, data tracking, and beneficiary follow-up.

7. Donor and Partner Engagement

- Funder Scores gathered through annual feedback or partnership review processes.
- Donor Retention Rates, measuring repeat commitments or multi-year renewals from key institutional and public supporters.

5.3 Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for Building the APA-CVM Partnership (2025–2030)

Strengthening the **APA–CVM** partnership over the next five years will require deliberate action, measurable progress, and a shared commitment to collaboration at every level. These Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) are designed to track not only the tangible outcomes of our joint work but also the health and depth of the relationship itself. They reflect our intention to embed the partnership into daily operations, governance, and organisational culture, ensuring it is visible, valued, and actively nurtured across both organisations.

By monitoring integration, mutual learning, trust, and shared achievements, we will ensure that this strategic alliance continues to evolve as a model of effective cross-border cooperation, ultimately delivering greater impact for the communities we serve.

1. Internal Partnership Integration

- Partnership Awareness Across Staff and Volunteers
- Partnership referenced in internal staff communications (newsletters, staff meetings).
- Visible Partnership Messaging
- **APA** and **CVM** co-brand joint communications and materials by 2027

Partnership narrative included on both organisations' websites and social media profiles.

2. Cross-Organisational Relationship Building

- Staff and Volunteer Exchanges - Pilot virtual team-building or knowledge-sharing sessions bi-annually.
- Increased Participation in Each Other's Events - **APA** staff/volunteers attend **CVM**'s AGM annually. **CVM** staff participate in **APA**'s Annual Networking Event.

3. Collaborative Culture and Joint Working

- Growth of Joint Working Groups - (Projects, Finance, Communications) actively staffed by both **APA** and **CVM** by 2026
- Clear joint work plans and role-sharing established for each group.
- Shared Ownership of Partnership Success - Partnership performance included in senior staff objectives and performance reviews.
- Board-level updates on partnership health at every Board meeting of both **APA** and **CVM**.

4. Mutual Capacity Building and Knowledge Exchange

- **Cross-Training Opportunities** - Joint training session or webinar on shared themes (e.g., MEL, communications, governance). Cross-involvement in proposal development, donor engagement, or advocacy planning.
- **Shared Learning Products** - One learning briefs or case studies published annually featuring voices from both organisations.

5. Partnership Health and Trust Monitoring

- **Internal Partnership Satisfaction Session** - Staff and volunteer session measuring perceptions of partnership value, collaboration quality, and mutual respect and Feedback loops to share and act on session results.
- **Conflict Resolution Process** - Documented conflict resolution mechanism reviewed and agreed upon by both Boards and JSSC by 2026 and Partnership health discussed as a standing item on JSSC meeting agendas.

5.4 Resource Allocation and Management

- Annual budget allocation aligned with priority outcomes.
- Innovation fund for digital tools, sustainability pilots, and partnership incubation.
- Transparent reporting for donor visibility.
- Annual cost-effectiveness reviews for strategic initiatives.

5.5 Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL)

Continuous Learning and Adaptation Strategies

- Learning reviews across all teams.
- Annual "What Worked, What Didn't" reviews.
- Research collaborations with local and international universities.
- Agile adaptation protocols embedded into project cycles.

Risk Management and Sustainability Planning
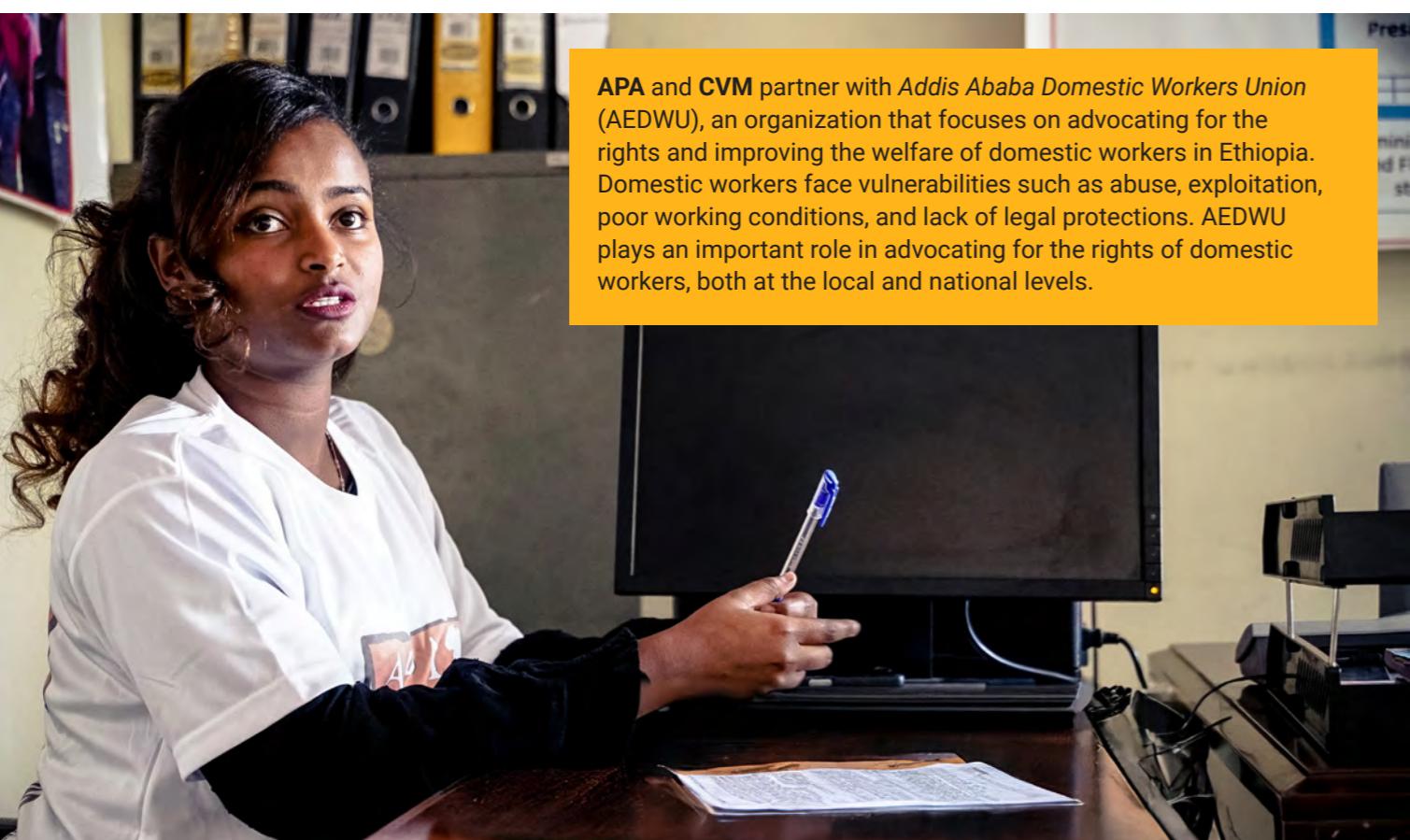
Risk Assessment and Mitigation Strategies

- Quarterly risk mapping including operational, financial, reputational, and regional factors.
- Organisation continuity and emergency protocols for field offices.
- Partner diversification to reduce funding and delivery dependencies.

Long-term Sustainability Measures

- Growth of social enterprises linked to the Circular Economy.
- Donor-to-investor transition programme for sustainable giving.
- Local leadership succession planning and governance reviews.
- Branding and storytelling strategy for public trust and donor visibility.

Succession Planning and Capacity Retention

- Staff development pathways in country offices, Tanzania and Ethiopia.
- Mentorship initiatives for mid-and senior-level staff.
- Annual capacity gap assessments and investment in upskilling.

APA and CVM partner with *Addis Ababa Domestic Workers Union* (AEDWU), an organization that focuses on advocating for the rights and improving the welfare of domestic workers in Ethiopia. Domestic workers face vulnerabilities such as abuse, exploitation, poor working conditions, and lack of legal protections. AEDWU plays an important role in advocating for the rights of domestic workers, both at the local and national levels.

5.6 Case Studies

A Heart-Wrenching Journey: The Story of Medina Mahmud

Medina Mahmud, a 38-year-old devoted mother of two, endured unimaginable hardships to provide a better life for her family. Her eldest daughter, a 19-year-old Grade 12 student, and her 16-year-old son, an 8th grader, depended on her resilience and courage.

In 2012, Medina's family was in dire straits. Her mother purchased a small piece of land with a loan, but they lacked funds to build a proper house. For two years, they lived in a flood-prone shack, battling heavy rains. The children frequently fell ill, and Medina's mother's health deteriorated under the harsh conditions.

Migration and Exploitation

Determined to change her family's fate, Medina migrated to Saudi Arabia to work as a domestic worker. At first, her employer treated her kindly, but this soon turned into cruelty. She was subjected to constant physical and mental abuse, punished if she could not complete tasks quickly enough. Surveillance cameras monitored every room, including the bathroom, stripping her of privacy and dignity.

Her employer, a police officer, used her position to track Medina when she tried to escape. She was dragged back and threatened with severe consequences if she attempted to flee again. For one year and seven months, Medina endured unimaginable abuse, including being forced to undress and enter her employer's husband's room.

Desperation and Survival

The relentless suffering drove Medina to attempt suicide by drinking drain cleaner. She survived but sustained severe injuries, requiring two years of treatment with a feeding tube due to throat damage. Her back, covered in scars from beatings, required skin grafts. Medical reports confirmed

widespread fractures, scars from excoriations, and whip marks, evidence of inhumane treatment.

Return and Reintegration

After intensive treatment, Medina returned to her home country. However, her suffering continued, as doctors warned removing her feeding tube could be fatal. This plunged her into despair, and her family lived under constant psychological distress. They required ongoing psychosocial support to rebuild their lives.

Her case reached the Ethiopian Embassy in Abu Dhabi, which—together with the Apostolic Vicariate of South Arabia—opened a case against her employers and financed her hospital treatment. CVM Ethiopia coordinated her repatriation with support from the *Ethiopian Red Cross* and *Alert Hospital*, which waived medical fees. CVM also facilitated her follow-up care at *Black Lion Hospital* and arranged weekly psychosocial support visits.

The Fight for Justice

CVM Ethiopia remains in contact with the Apostolic Vicariate of South Arabia and the Ethiopian Embassy in Abu Dhabi to help Medina pursue justice. Winning her case would bring immense relief to her and her family.

Medina's journey is one of extraordinary courage in the face of devastating adversity. Her story underscores the urgent need for protection, compassion, and justice for victims of abuse worldwide.

Mariam Ally – From Child Domestic Worker to Community Leader

Background

Mariam Ally began working as a **domestic worker (DW) at the age of 12** in Mbeya, Tanzania, while still enrolled in primary school. Shortly after, she was moved to **Tanga** to serve in the household of a friend of her employer. For the next four years, she worked under challenging conditions and had no opportunity to continue her education.

Challenges

At age 12, during her employment in Tanga, Mariam became **pregnant by the son of her employer**. As a result, she was **evicted from the household** and left without support. With nowhere to turn, she approached the **local Street Chairperson**, who assisted her through pregnancy and the birth of her child. After six months, Mariam needed to find new work while raising her baby, which pushed her to continue in domestic service despite lacking formal qualifications.

Intervention

Mariam's turning point came when she accessed **professional training through the APA/CVM project** after relocating to **Bagamoyo** with her employer. The training offered:

- **Practical skills** to raise her standards of work.
- **Personal development**, which boosted her confidence and self-worth.
- A **certificate of training**, which became her only formal qualification, as she had been unable to complete her schooling.

Outcomes

The training transformed Mariam's personal and professional life:

- She was able to **negotiate a salary increase** and improve her working conditions.
- She gained **respect and recognition** in her workplace and community.

- Her son is now enrolled in **secondary school**, providing him with opportunities she never had.
- Mariam is **happier and more secure**, attributing her progress to the support she received through the Association.

Leadership and Community Impact

Today, Mariam continues to work as a domestic worker in Bagamoyo, but she has grown into a **leader and advocate**:

- She serves as the **Chair of the Dunda Ward Domestic Workers Group**, representing and supporting other workers.
- She uses her experience to encourage other DWs to join the Association and benefit from collective support and training.

Lessons Learned

- **Early intervention and support structures** (such as local leadership) are crucial for vulnerable child workers.
- **Training and skills development** empower domestic workers to improve both their livelihoods and self-esteem.
- **Collective organization** through associations enables DWs to move from vulnerability to empowerment and leadership roles.

Margareth Edesi – Building Confidence and Educating Others

Background

Margareth Edesi comes from Ruvuma, Tanzania. She has been working as a domestic worker (DW) for seven years. In 2019, her sister arranged a job for her in Bagamoyo, where she traveled alone and, like many other DWs, was met at the bus stop by her employer upon arrival.

Challenges

Margareth began her work journey with little support or awareness of her rights. Like many domestic workers, she faced isolation, lack of voice, and vulnerability to unfair treatment.

Intervention

In 2022, Margareth joined the Domestic Workers Association in Bagamoyo, supported by APA/CVM. Through her membership, she:

- Gained awareness of her rights as a domestic worker.
- Built confidence to speak up and share knowledge.
- Found solidarity and encouragement from fellow workers.

Outcomes

- Margareth is now able to educate her fellow workers about their rights.
- She is increasingly seen as a peer educator and advocate within her community.
- Her participation in the Association has empowered her both personally and professionally.

Lessons Learned

- Peer-to-peer education is an effective way to spread awareness among DWs.
- Association membership builds confidence and agency, particularly for women who begin their work journeys in isolation.

06

Conclusion

A shared commitment beyond 2030

While this Strategic Plan charts our shared direction to 2030, **APA** and **CVM** are equally committed to sustaining and deepening our partnership well beyond its formal end date. The trust, solidarity, and joint achievements built over decades form the foundation for a renewed partnership agreement that will adapt to future challenges and opportunities.

We will continue to stand together in championing the rights and dignity of the poorest and most marginalised, aligning our work with evolving community needs, the Sustainable Development Goals, and global development priorities. This long-term collaboration will remain rooted in mutual respect, shared resources, and the conviction that lasting change is only possible when we work side by side with the communities we serve — for as long as we are needed.

Appendix A

About A Partnership with Africa (APA)

APA Overview: Current Vision, Mission, Values, and History

APA Current Vision
A just world where all people are equally empowered to realise their full potential; here all have universal access to basic services such as food, shelter, education and health.

APA Current Mission
We work globally in a spirit of partnership with local communities and institutions to facilitate equal access to basic services and empower the most vulnerable citizens of the world to reach their full potential.

APA Values

Respect
APA supports the dignity, potential and contribution of all project participants, partners, donors, volunteers and staff.

Integrity
APA is intent on acting consistently in line with its mission, being open and honest in what we do and say, and accepting responsibility for our collective and individual actions.

Commitment
APA commits to working in partnership with the most vulnerable in the global community to realise their full potential.

Voluntarism
APA welcomes the participation of volunteers in the service of the organisation's mission both in Ireland and overseas

History of A Partnership with Africa (APA)
A Partnership with Africa (APA) is an Irish NGO, founded in 2004 and based in Dublin, Ireland. The organisation focuses on development through partnerships, connecting African institutions, organisations, and communities to global resources. APA's work prioritizes empowering women, girls, children, and other marginalized groups in Ethiopia and Tanzania by advocating for their rights, supporting their economic independence, and rebuilding their dignity.

Strategic Approach & Key Activities

APA's approach follows a "theory of change", which emphasizes local empowerment, global awareness, and capacity building. The strategy includes:

- Identifying injustice in African communities and supporting local empowerment.
- Forging strategic partnerships with likeminded organisations.
- Providing programme support to implementing partners in both the Global South and North.

APA Networking Event in Dublin, Nov. 2024

APA & CVM: Empowering the Most Vulnerable First.

2.   About CVM

CVM Overview: Current Vision, Mission, Values, and History

CVM Current Vision
Development as a process of liberation

CVM Current Mission
The ultimate goal of all our work remains unchanged. Today, as thirty years ago, the challenge remains the "development of the whole person and of all persons". Hunger, AIDS, the lack of primary goods - food, clean water, decent housing, education - and other forms of injustice and marginalization, deprive men and women of the possibility of a normal life and of their dignity as people. For **CVM**, development is first and foremost a process of liberation from the oppression of poverty. Unleashing the potential inherent in each person is the recurring strategy in all activities and proposals of **CVM**.

CVM Current Values

Respect
CVM supports the dignity, potential and contribution of all project participants, partners, donors, volunteers and staff.

Integrity
CVM is intent on acting consistently in line with its mission, being open and honest in what we do and say, and accepting responsibility for our collective and individual actions.

Commitment
CVM commits to working in partnership with the most vulnerable in the global community to realise their full potential.

Voluntarism
CVM welcomes the participation of volunteers in the service of the organisation's mission both in Ireland and overseas

About CVM

Community Volunteers for the World (**CVM**) is an Italian NGO dedicated to fighting poverty and social injustice through self-development projects and global awareness initiatives. Founded in 1978 by young volunteers returning from experiences in developing countries, **CVM** was established to continue supporting marginalized communities and advocating for a more just world.

Core Mission & Philosophy

- **CVM** believes in working "with the poor and not for the poor," emphasizing collaboration over charity.

- It is a community-driven organisation where relationships, shared ideals, and experience exchange fuel international cooperation.

- **CVM** aims to liberate people from poverty by unlocking their potential and providing access to essential resources.

Key Milestones & Global Reach

- 1980: Launched its first volunteer-led project in Ethiopia (Wolaita), focusing on water access in rural areas.

- Since 1982 eligible to receive funding from the Italian Government

- Over 45 years of international cooperation, **CVM** has worked in Ethiopia, Congo, Zambia, Bangladesh, China, Tanzania, and Zanzibar.

- 2001: Expanded beyond regional and national borders, renaming itself from Centro Volontari Marchigiani to Comunità Volontari per il Mondo (Community of Volunteers for the World) (**CVM**).

- Since 2001 recognized by the Italian Ministry of Education for teachers' training

- 2005: Began a strategic partnership with **APA** (formerly AIDS Partnership with Africa) to amplify their impact in Africa.

Development as a Process of Liberation

CVM views development as a process of liberation, focusing on eradicating:

- Hunger and lack of basic needs (food, water, shelter, education).

- Health crises like HIV/AIDS.

- Systematic marginalization and injustice.

By empowering local communities and advocating globally, **CVM** continues to drive sustainable change and promote a more just and equitable world.

APA & **CVM**: Empowering the Most Vulnerable First.

Appendix B

Organisational Charts (APA and CVM)

1.2 APA Management Structure (Ireland)

APA Ireland's operations will be managed under a lean but effective structure that aligns closely with the goals of accountability, transparency, and community integration.

Role	Responsibilities
Country Director (Ireland)	Oversees national operations, projects department, strategy implementation, and partner engagement.
Retail & Social Enterprise Team	Manages shop network, expands sustainable enterprise models, and oversees volunteer coordination.
Finance and Compliance Team	Handles budgeting, grant reporting (e.g., Irish Aid), audit processes, and regulatory compliance.
Fundraising & Partnerships Team	Drives public fundraising, manages donor relations, and coordinates with corporate/social impact partners.
Communications & GCE Team	Leads branding, social media, campaigns, and EU Development Education initiatives in schools and community groups.
Volunteer Team	Supports recruitment, training and education, recognition, and retention across shop locations.
IT and Digital Infrastructure Support (outsourced)	Maintains digital tools, CRM systems, donation platforms, and website functionality.

Volunteer Engagement Strategy (2025–2030)

Volunteers remain central to APA's success, particularly in its national retail network, which is supported by approximately 45 dedicated volunteers across its national retail network. Volunteers also contribute to public engagement and administrative activities at the head office. This strategy aims to strengthen recruitment, retention, and recognition of volunteer contributions, with a focus on building sustainable volunteer leadership capacity.

Key Elements of the Strategy

1. Recruitment
- Strengthen partnerships with Youth/Volunteer Centres and local community groups to broaden outreach.
- Run bi-annual volunteer recruitment campaigns via social media, local radio, newspapers, and APA's website.
- Introduce youth volunteering pathways, collaborating with nearby colleges to engage younger volunteers in community action and social justice initiatives.

2. Training and Education
- Provide a standardised induction toolkit, including a volunteer policy manual and introductory video.
- Facilitate role-specific mentoring and shadowing to ensure new volunteers feel prepared and supported.
- Offer digital literacy workshops to help volunteers engage with APA's tech platforms, internal communications, and social media.

3. Motivation and Recognition
- Feature regular Volunteer Spotlights in APA's newsletter and social media channels.
- Celebrate contributions through an Annual Volunteer Appreciation Day, with certificates or small awards.
- Recognise volunteer milestones, such as 100-hour and 500-hours worked to highlight long-term commitment.

4. Engagement, Retention, and Development
- Conduct regular check-ins with volunteer teams in each shop to maintain open communication and address concerns.
- Create volunteer focus groups to gather feedback and involve volunteers in shaping shop operations and policy improvements.
- Provide small stipends or travel allowances, where funding allows, to support volunteers facing financial barriers.
- Maintain WhatsApp groups for real-time updates, community-building, and team connection.
- Develop pathways into paid shop management or coordination roles for volunteers who wish to progress.

Misrak Polytechnic College is a higher education institution located in Ethiopia, with its campus in Wolaita Sodo.

1.3 CVM Management Structure – Italy

CVM's management structure is designed to support both its domestic activities in Italy and its international programmes, including those delivered in partnership with **APA**. **CVM** operates as a registered Italian NGO with a dedicated management team and governance body (Consiglio Direttivo).

CVM's management team works closely with the Consiglio Direttivo (Board of Directors), which provides governance and strategic oversight, and engages **APA** through cross-representation in key decision-making spaces such as **APA**'s Finance Committee and the annual **CVM** AGM.

Role/Department	Responsibilities
Director/General Secretary	Provides overall leadership and strategic direction.
Programmes Manager (Africa Focus)	Oversees project implementation in Ethiopia, Tanzania, and other regions.
Finance & Administration Team	Manages financial operations, donor reporting, and compliance with Italian regulations.
Fundraising & Communications Team	Leads public campaigns, donor engagement, and branding.
Volunteer & Membership Coordinator	Supports **CVM**'s network of volunteers and local groups across Italy.
Joint Projects Liaison Officer	Connects **CVM**'s operations with **APA** for joint project coordination.
External Consultants (e.g., Grant Writer, Communications Specialist)	Provide specialist support for funding applications and media production.

CVM Volunteer Engagement – Italy

CVM's volunteering programmes in Italy form a core part of its domestic mission to engage Italian citizens in global solidarity, active citizenship, and international cooperation. **CVM** runs structured volunteer programmes aimed at youth, students, and community members who want to contribute to social justice both locally and internationally.

Key Volunteering Programmes in Italy

1. National Civil Service (Servizio Civile Universale)
- **CVM** offers formally recognised Civil Service placements, allowing young Italians to dedicate 8–12 months of paid community service to social projects in Italy or abroad.
- Participants receive training, mentoring, and practical experience in areas such as human rights education, environmental action, and community development.
- The programme builds professional and civic skills, contributing to the personal development and employability of participants.

3. Community Volunteering and Events Support
- **CVM** mobilises local volunteers across Italy to support its public events, advocacy campaigns, and fundraising activities.
- Volunteers contribute to awareness-raising actions, such as the annual "Festa dei Popoli" (Festival of Peoples), which celebrates cultural diversity and inclusion.
- Volunteers also assist with communications, logistics, and outreach for **CVM**'s national campaigns promoting fair work, anti-trafficking, and migrant rights.

Volunteer Development and Retention
- **CVM** provides training, mentorship, and recognition for all volunteers, ensuring they feel valued and supported in their roles.

Volunteers are encouraged to stay engaged as members or supporters beyond their formal placement periods, building a lasting community of solidarity around **CVM**'s mission.

The *Ethiopian Bureau of Justice* plays a critical role in combating human trafficking in Ethiopia by focusing on legal frameworks, policy development, and implementation of anti-trafficking measures. The Bureau operates within the broader framework of Ethiopia's legal and justice system and collaborates with **APA** and **CVM** to prevent and address trafficking in persons.

This five-year strategy outlines how **APA** (A Partnership with Africa) and **CVM** (Comunità Volontari per il Mondo) will work together to empower the most vulnerable first—particularly women, children, and communities affected by poverty, marginalisation, and climate shocks.

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