

# An introduction to ActionAid



## How we work

- ▶ We work in 45 countries across Africa, Asia and Latin America
- ▶ We focus on fighting the causes of poverty, not just the effects
- ▶ We don't give handouts or tell people what to do, because in the long run we know that doesn't work
- ▶ We don't impose solutions, but work with and listen to communities, empowering them with the tools to take responsibility for their own lives, to create sustainable change

# Education

- ▶ Over one billion people, mostly women, lack a basic education
- ▶ Illiteracy and poverty are closely linked
- ▶ We believe that education is a right. It's the key to a better childhood, and a better future for children, their communities and their countries
- ▶ We work to create free, compulsory, quality education for all – boys and girls. We educate parents and communities on the importance of education and empower them to change their communities for the future



**“Today is the happiest day in my life. For a very long time we never had a school in this community. Now that it is completed I feel very proud because all our efforts for the past years have yielded fruit. Our children can now access free and quality education.”, Mama Fatu Sesay, Kola Tree, Sierra Leone, a project that inspired and brought together an entire community.**

# Hunger

- ▶ Every day, one in six people goes to bed hungry
- ▶ That's a billion people worldwide
- ▶ Yet the world produces more than enough food for everybody – the issue is access
- ▶ We are promoting sustainable farming in over 30 countries, providing practical support, tools, training and empowering people to claim their land rights so that communities can sustain themselves and work themselves out of the poverty cycle



**Leya Chede from Katiriyo, Uganda, and her family of nine previously went hungry, but an ActionAid-supported agricultural programme has enabled her to grow surplus maize and groundnuts, buy and rear goats. She now teaches others to do the same. "When I planted the groundnuts in the first season I harvested seven bags of groundnuts and 27 bags of maize grains. This was to change my life forever."**

# Women's rights

- ▶ Women around the world are more likely to live in poverty, simply because they are women
- ▶ Women's unequal position in society means they have less power, money, protection from violence and access to education and healthcare
- ▶ ActionAid is supporting women around the world to stand up and claim their rights, empowering them with education and knowledge so that they can transform their societies and fight the causes that keep them poor



In Malawi, one ActionAid project worked to improve the literacy of 575 women, enabling them to access micro-credit loans, buy seeds and tools and secure loans to buy oil, honey and candle making equipment. They can now feed their families and generate income, providing them a route to work themselves out of poverty.

# Emergencies

- ▶ 300 million people are affected by conflict or natural disasters each year and it is those who are most vulnerable, and with the least resources who suffer the greatest impact
- ▶ When disaster strikes, we respond within hours, providing vital things like food, water and shelter
- ▶ But our focus is on the long term. We link our emergency response to our ongoing projects in the region, and focus on sustainable solutions to strengthen communities against future crises



Gladys' village in Eastern Kenya has been part of a sustainable agriculture project to strengthen the community against drought, providing hardy seeds, local irrigation and crop diversification. "Before I only grew maize and beans, but now I grow bananas, sweet potatoes, onions, avocados and berries. I grow enough food to feed myself and have even managed to install electricity in my house."

# Governance

- ▶ Poverty is a result of unequal and unjust power relationships within and between families, communities and countries
- ▶ Fair, accountable governance is at the heart of building a just society and is crucial to ending poverty and promoting human rights
- ▶ We help people to hold governments to account, fight for justice, end discrimination and corruption, and take control of the decisions that shape their lives



Advocacy work by ActionAid and its partners in Zambia has shifted the location of the government's farmer support programme from town to village. The community is now responsible for the distribution of seeds and supplies, meaning that recipients are better identified and corruption is avoided. In 2010 50,000 more farmers benefitted from the scheme.

## **We're ActionAid**

We're people who are dedicated to ending extreme poverty

We're a partnership between people in poor countries and people in rich countries – all working together to end poverty for good

Together, we can make a lasting difference

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