

# Action

Change lives. **For good.**

**act:onaid**

"LIFE IS HARD FOR  
THE WOMEN I MET,  
BUT I WAS ABLE TO  
SEE HOPE."

Inside, read about BAFTA award-winning actress and *Luther* star Wunmi Mosaku's trip to Ghana, where she witnessed our life-changing work with women and girls.




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Photo credit: Abbie Trayler-Smith/ActionAid

Jyoti, a survivor of domestic violence, was helped by ActionAid's Gauravi One-Stop Crisis Centre in central India. She now works as a counsellor at the centre, which provides survivors with medical, legal and emotional support.

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Last winter, we launched our **Home Shouldn't Hurt** appeal, to help support our One-Stop Crisis Centres in India and shelters in Uganda.

At these support centres, survivors of violence can access medical treatment, counselling and legal advice – all under one roof. It's because of people like you that our Christmas appeal raised more than £300,000 to help women like Talat (whose story is on page four) rebuild their lives after facing violence.

Also in this edition is the heart-warming story of BAFTA-winning actress Wunmi Mosaku's trip to Ghana last month, in support of our new justice for women campaign. Read more on pages 10-13.

Thank you for all that you do to help women and girls living in poverty claim their rights and reach their potential. We're so grateful for your continued support and hope you enjoy reading stories about the lives that are being transformed thanks to your generosity.



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Cover photo credit: Abbie Trayler-Smith/ActionAid



## HOME SHOULDN'T HURT

# From survivor to rickshaw driver

When Talat's husband and his family began abusing her, she sought support from our One-Stop Crisis Centre in central India. There, she learned a vital skill that's helped change her life.

Soon after Talat got married aged 17, her husband's family began to abuse her. They would demand money and prevent her from leaving the house on her own – not even to visit her mother.

After suffering five months of abusive behaviour, Talat's mother helped her daughter leave her controlling husband. Talat then received support from staff at ActionAid's Gauravi One-Stop Crisis Centre in Madhya Pradesh, central India.

At the Gauravi centre, survivors of violence can access immediate and comprehensive support, a safe place to sleep and emotional, medical and legal help, all under one roof. **Since the centre opened in 2014, it has supported 39,777 women and girls – that's around 22 survivors every day.**

As part of a support programme at the centre, women can learn new skills

such as driving or baking. Talat chose to train as an auto-rickshaw driver. "When I had the opportunity to learn to drive, I chose it because I wanted to learn something different," she says.

Talat lacked confidence when she first went behind the wheel, but now feels happy on the road. In the future, she hopes to transport women and girls to and from the centre, as well as teach other women to drive.

Thanks to the generous support given towards our Christmas appeal, we can provide more women and girls like Talat with the support they need after experiencing violence and abuse. With your help, we are hoping to build 11 more One-Stop Crisis Centres in India this year and train even more workers and volunteers to help survivors of violence rebuild their lives. •

Learning to drive helped domestic violence survivor Talat, 26, rebuild her life and regain her confidence.

Sikola manages a temporary kitchen for displaced people in Indonesia.



## INDONESIA

# Promoting women's leadership in emergencies

During conflicts and natural disasters, women and girls often play a critical role in the survival of their families and communities. ActionAid's unique approach in an emergency is to empower local women to take a leading role in the response. In our experience, local women are best placed to know what their communities need and distribute life-saving support quickly and fairly.

In times of crisis, women and girls are especially vulnerable to sexual exploitation, violence and abuse. Our ongoing emergency response work has seen us supporting women-led task forces, which monitor and report instances of violence. We have also helped build women-

friendly spaces where mothers can breastfeed in private, receive hygiene kits and access emotional support.

When a series of earthquakes hit Indonesia in September, triggering a tsunami and killing more than 2,000 people, our local partners were already on the ground and therefore able to quickly turn our focus to recovery. In the first two weeks, our local community-led task forces helped us reach 60,821 people and we provided food for 1,785 families through community kitchens.

In the countries we work in, we are continuing to help train and promote women as future leaders in disaster-preparedness and resilience.

## Here's how we've responded to the emergency in Indonesia:

Our emergency appeal raised nearly

£1.2m

400

hygiene kits were distributed to women and girls to manage their periods safely

3

women-friendly spaces were set up, reaching at least 600 women directly

1,785

families were provided with food through community kitchen and food kits

60,821

affected people were reached during the first two weeks of the crisis. •



# NOT THIS GIRL, KENYA

## Text to thrive: supporting survivors

Irene and Joshua are volunteers at an ActionAid-supported SMS scheme in Nairobi. The project allows survivors of violence to report cases of abuse via a free and confidential text messaging service.

Irene joined the service two years ago, after completing a diploma

in criminology and gender-based violence. She acts as a support system, receiving calls and text messages from survivors and referring them to a relevant service.

Joshua has volunteered at the service since completing paralegal training two years ago. He speaks to survivors and

Irene is a volunteer for an ActionAid-supported SMS scheme for survivors of violence in Kenya.



Joshua is an SMS system operator and volunteer who responds to texts from those in need.

provides support as an SMS system operator. “Mostly we deal with assaults or domestic violence cases,” he says.

When Irene was six, her housekeeper began sexually abusing her. The housekeeper would threaten to hurt Irene if she told anyone, so she kept the abuse to herself. It was only after receiving training at the SMS project and working with survivors that Irene has been able to start speaking about her own experience, and even tell her mother about what she went through. “I have healed,” she says, reflecting on her time spent volunteering at the scheme.

Since ActionAid and our partner organisation set up the service in 2015, it has led to the handling of more than 500 cases. Data from the service is used to prove to policy makers that there is a serious problem with violence in Kenya that needs to be urgently addressed.

The nearly £1.2 million raised during our #NotThisGirl appeal last spring is helping support women-led projects like this life-changing SMS service. Thanks to the ongoing support of people like you, these groups are continuing to ensure that survivors in Kenya are heard, supported and have the backing of the law. •



"Ghana's always had this positive force in my history."

In March, *Luther* star Wunmi Mosaku visited Ghana with ActionAid. She met with survivors of domestic violence and learned about our work helping them access the justice they deserve. Wunmi's grandmother, who narrowly escaped an arranged marriage, was raised in Ghana – so the trip was a powerful homecoming.

Wunmi pictured with Anabaabena, 39, during her trip. Anabaabena is a sergeant for the Ghanaian town of Wa's domestic violence and victim support unit.



When Wunmi Mosaku embarked on her trip to Ghana with ActionAid, she was nervous about what to expect. The Nigerian-born actress, who was raised in Manchester, had always felt a personal connection with the progressive West African nation.

Wunmi's affinity with Ghana stems from the role the country played in the life of her beloved grandmother, who was raised there. When Wunmi's grandmother returned to her homeland of Nigeria as a teenager, she was shocked to find that her uncle had set up a marriage for her without her consent. "Grandma always said that if she hadn't spent time in Ghana, she wouldn't have fought back against that marriage," Wunmi says. "She would never have met my grandfather and I wouldn't be here."

**I wanted to see for myself how ActionAid supports women and girls to be educated and empowered.**

**Wunmi Mosaku**

The trip was an emotional one for Wunmi, not only because of her connection with the country but also because of the stories that women and girls in Ghana told her. She was moved and inspired to hear about

their experiences surviving violence and attempts to access justice for crimes committed against them.

One way that ActionAid is supporting survivors of violence in Ghana is through our Community Anti-Violence Teams. Known as COMBAT squads, these teams are comprised of local women and men who work within their communities to raise awareness about ending violence, as well as rescue girls from child marriage and support survivors.

During her trip, Wunmi was moved to meet Vida, a survivor of violence who now works for her local COMBAT squad. "Vida's face lit up when she told me about her work with ActionAid," says Wunmi. "It's changed her life and the lives of women in her community."

Wunmi was inspired by the courageous women she met as well as by our work supporting women to raise their voices and demand change. She felt hopeful to see young girls learning about their rights and the importance of receiving an education. "When I met these girls, it made me think of my mum and the dedication my grandma had to receiving an education," says Wunmi.

High numbers of women and girls in Ghana face violence, discrimination and abuse. It's common for girls to be forced into marrying young



Wunmi with Vida, a survivor of violence who now works for her local COMBAT squad.

and many women face domestic and other forms of violence.

ActionAid UK and ActionAid Ghana are working with our local partners to demand that the voices of women and girls are heard.

We are also working with women and girls across Ghana to campaign for Ghana's Domestic Violence

Bill, which was passed in 2007 but hasn't been effectively funded or implemented, to be fully applied.

Will you side with survivors of violence and join us in campaigning to fix the justice system? Sign up to the campaign at [actionaid.org/justice](https://actionaid.org/justice). •



Photo credit: Jennifer Huxta/ActionAid

Marcelene can now use the girls' room at school when she has her period.

Tackling period taboos and improving access to sanitary products can help women and girls – even those living through humanitarian emergencies – reach their full potential.

With your support, we continue to work with communities to provide girls' clubs and washrooms in schools. These safe spaces are equipped with sanitary products, to help girls manage their periods freely and without shame.

Seventeen-year-old Marcelene, from Rwanda, is one of the girls who has benefitted from an ActionAid girls' room. Marcelene used to miss school

when she had her period because her family couldn't afford sanitary products, but she now uses the girls' room we helped build.

“Before... so many girls were missing school,” she says. “Now, if you get your period at school you change and go back to class.”

This World Menstrual Hygiene Day, why not stand with girls like Marcelene and say **#MyBodyIsMine?** •

# Why we're proud to say #MyBodyIsMine

Stand in solidarity with women and girls everywhere this World Menstrual Hygiene Day

Periods are a normal part of life but millions of women and girls are held back by stigma and shame surrounding menstruation – particularly those living in poverty.

When women and girls are denied the ability to manage their periods with

dignity, cycles of poverty and gender inequality become harder to break.

**That's why on World Menstrual Hygiene Day, which falls on May 28 every year, we're asking you to support our #MyBodyIsMine campaign.**



Photo credit: Emma Thompson/ActionAid

ActionAid ambassador Emma Thompson supporting our #MyBodyIsMine campaign last year.





## PEOPLE'S POSTCODE LOTTERY

# Lights, camera, ActionAid!

Can you imagine running a video workshop for 10 people who have never held a camera before? Challenging? Yes, but that didn't stop us.

Last August, ActionAid ran a video workshop for 10 members of an ActionAid women's cooperative in Rwanda. All the participants survived the Rwandan genocide in 1994. Because of their experience, they understand that violence against women and girls increases during times of conflict and that fighting inequality is therefore vital to prevent sexual abuse in the future.

After nine days of skills training led by ActionAid, the 10 women produced two short films. One film highlighted the benefits of joining a women's cooperative and the other called for greater access to legal and medical support for survivors of violence in rural areas.

Producing these films not only helped boost the confidence of the women involved, but also raised awareness of the scale and impact of gender-based violence in their community.

Their films made such an impact that after a public screening for friends, family and members of the community, several local leaders committed to help women join cooperatives and access local support services.

This project was funded by players of People's Postcode Lottery, which is challenging violence against women and girls in Rwanda, Kenya, Ethiopia and Ghana. Thanks to this partnership, we have reached more than 60,000 women and girls over the past year. •

Lucie is a member of an ActionAid women's cooperative in Rwanda. She participated in a video workshop to highlight gender-based violence in her community.



Take

# ACTION

for **actionaid**



Make 2019 a year to remember by taking on a challenge event for ActionAid.

From skydives to bike rides and sponsored swims to mountain climbs, the options are countless and we're here to help find the perfect challenge for you.

### Saddle up

🕒 4th August 2019

If cycling is your thing, then dig out your Lycra and join our Prudential RideLondon-Surrey 100 team! Pedal your way through 100 miles of closed roads, from landmark-filled London out to scenic Surrey and back again.



**“Changing the lives of women and girls was all the motivation I needed.”**

**Giulia, who took up the RideLondon challenge last year.**

### Fancy a dip?

🕒 21st September 2019

Dive in and join 6,000 swimmers in Hyde Park's famous lake, The Serpentine, used as a venue in the 2012 London Olympics.



### Test your limits

Trek through breathtaking valleys, dense forests and across glacial rivers, enjoying tantalising glimpses of the mighty Everest as you reach base camp.



### Calling all thrill seekers

Soar to new heights with a sponsored skydive. Feel your adrenaline skyrocket as you leap out of a plane at 10,000 feet to help change lives for good.

### Can't find a challenge that suits you?

That's not a problem! You're welcome to take something you enjoy and turn it into a fundraiser for ActionAid, like our supporter Fran, who used her creative talents to make soaps and candles to sell.



**“I love fundraising for ActionAid. I find it really rewarding to do something I enjoy, while knowing that the money I raise is going to such a worthy cause.”**

**Fran, who has fundraised for ActionAid.**



ActionAid supporter, Ashwin, feeling triumphant as he reaches Everest Base Camp in 2018!

**Whichever challenge you opt for, we'll be here to support you every step of the way with training advice and fundraising tips to help you reach your goal.**

Visit [actionaid.org.uk/challenges](http://actionaid.org.uk/challenges) to find out more.





Thanks to child sponsorship, children like Thi Ngoan (center) and her friends have safe, clean water at school.

# "Having fresh water is wonderful."

In Vietnam, many schools only have access to a well filled with dirty water. But thanks to our incredible child sponsors, this is changing.

More than 5,500 children now have access to safe drinking water thanks to the water cleaning systems ActionAid has installed in schools.

As a result, fewer than 5% of children have missed class because of illnesses caused by dirty water.

Our child sponsors are the lifeblood of ActionAid and help us support thousands of children every year.

**Could you be one of them?**

**To find out more about how you can sponsor a child today, visit:**  
[actionaid.org.uk/sponsor-a-child](http://actionaid.org.uk/sponsor-a-child)