



Action

Changing the world
with **women and girls**

act:onaid

WOMEN BY WOMEN

Meet the courageous
women in front of and
behind the lens.

Issue 20 Autumn 2021

Welcome to your Autumn 2021 edition of *Action* magazine!

When I joined ActionAid as Chief Executive back in May, I really could hardly believe my luck: starting my dream job working for this exceptional organisation, and one with so many dedicated and impassioned supporters.

I've devoted my career to championing gender equality and building a fairer world, so ActionAid really does feel like a perfect fit. I mean, 'Changing the world with women and girls' – what goal could be nobler than that? I look forward to standing alongside you as we pursue it together.

Obviously these have been deeply unusual times, with every single area of our work having been affected by the Covid-19 pandemic. I have been very impressed by the myriad ways in which ActionAid has adapted throughout the crisis, with staff, volunteers and partners working to deliver vital services, while supporters have stepped up to ensure teams have the resources they need.

All of this essential work – and much more besides – is only possible because kind people like you made the choice to give your support to women and girls around the globe. As the pandemic has shown us, inequality has damaging consequences. The good news is, if we work together, we can create a better, fairer and more inclusive world. Let's get to work.



Frances Longley
Chief Executive
ActionAid UK

Changing the world
with women and girls
actionaid

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Cover photo credit: Etinosa Yvonne/ActionAid

Photo credit: Angkor Films/ ActionAid



Lon planting mangrove saplings in Kampot province, Cambodia.

Contents:

She is the answer Doubling the impact thought UK Aid Match	4
Gaza Crisis appeal Bringing hope and help – amidst the horrors of war	6
Roundups An innovate new way to support women and girls	8
Share a better period Together we are ending period poverty	10
Women by women Celebrating women in front of and behind the lens	14
Giving the gift of fun! Top five reasons to use the Gift Fund this year	16
People's Postcode Lottery How players are supporting young women in Ghana.	17
From Manchester to Bangalore A remarkable fundraising feat by staff of _VOIS	18

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She is the answer



Samphy is helping women and girls on the frontline of the climate crisis in Cambodia.



Photo credit: Cindy Liu / ActionAid

In many of the countries facing the worst effects of climate change, women are among the hardest hit by the powerful storms, floods and droughts. Despite this, too often they are excluded from decision-making that impacts their communities and how they respond to climate change.

That's why this year's **She is the answer** appeal asked for your help in changing that. And thanks to your generosity, and a vital partnership

with the UK Government's Aid Match scheme, the campaign was a tremendous success!

Your response has been overwhelming. We raised £2.26m, including £1.08m of match funding from the UK Government, thanks to incredible supporters like you. It was wonderful to see so many people moved to take action. These kind donations will make a very real difference to communities facing climate change.

Funds from the "She is the answer" appeal will help communities around the world. In particular they will support Women Champions in countries such as Cambodia that are most vulnerable to the effects of our changing climate. Millions of lives and livelihoods there are already at risk, due to increased flooding and powerful storms devastating farms and fisheries – industries in which many of the workers are women.

In Cambodia, with the support of ActionAid, Women Champions are working at the forefront to make lasting change in the face of the climate crisis. They study climate resilience, they teach their neighbours about sustainable farming and they work with government to make high-level change. The Women Champions programme is already up and running, but the matched funding from this appeal will enable us to reach even more women and girls in the upcoming three years of the project.

Pioneering women like ActionAid team member Samphy Eng are playing a central role in helping Cambodia plan for a future marked by climate change. "It is so important that we challenge traditional patriarchal structures – we must champion women leaders and make sure their voices are heard so that women and girls are no longer marginalised," she says. "Only then

can communities truly thrive in our new world altered by climate change. The Women Champions I work with give me hope and I would love to see the network grow."



Thyda, 13, said this year, the height of the floodwater was higher than ever before.

Photo credit: Angkor Films / ActionAid

Gaza Crisis appeal

Bringing hope and help amidst the horrors of war

When hostilities between Israel and Palestine escalated in May, your generosity made it possible for our teams and partners on the ground to save lives and provide essential services to the people of Gaza.

Your response to our emergency appeal was swift and extremely heartening. With widespread destruction bringing the already fragile Gaza strip to the point of humanitarian crisis, the need for our support was urgent. Thousands of people had lost their homes, their livelihoods and their loved ones, with many people sustaining serious injuries even as the medical system was stretched to breaking point and beyond.

In addition to distributing essential supplies like blankets, cooking gas and hygiene kits, our women-led response also provided fuel for

generators and mobile clinics, as well as medicine for those in great need. But your generosity went even further.

Supporting the mothers and children of Gaza

Helana Mesleh works as a psychologist at the ActionAid-supported Al-Awda Hospital in northern Gaza. During the attacks, she gave counselling to women in the hospital as well as remotely, once they had been discharged, using social media apps like WhatsApp and Messenger.

The violence has taken a toll on the mental health of new mothers, says Helana. “Some women were unable to breastfeed their babies, hug them or even accept them because they came during difficult circumstances.”

“Some women had other symptoms such as sleep disorders and eating disorders as a result of the bombing and fear of losing their children, loved ones or homes, especially in the northern area of the Gaza Strip.”

Helana says that her team is seeing an increase in women experiencing postpartum depression. They are supporting families whose homes have been destroyed and those who have lost loved ones during the attacks.

Along with local partners, ActionAid is providing psychosocial support to



200 women and 200 children most affected by the recent conflict. Helana and her team have worked with those whose mental health was affected by the attacks, helping them deal with the trauma and stress.

“Pregnant women would be usually very happy, preparing everything to welcome their new-born babies,” Helana says. “But the war and its consequences have prevented them from enjoying those moments.

“Those women were experiencing unexpected psychological grief and pain. We’ve also have noticed that women suffered from dissatisfaction, continuous crying and rejection towards their babies.”

When crisis and conflict arise, all too often it is women and children who suffer most. Thank you for making a difference in Gaza – and around the world – with your kind support of ActionAid. •

Helana provided counselling to new mothers cope with the trauma of giving birth during the violence.

Help change the world every time you shop

A new way to support women and girls – this innovative app allows you to donate your spare change digitally

We used to support the causes we care about by dropping spare change into the charity box on the shop counter. Today, with so many of us relying on contactless card or mobile payments instead of cash, the Roundups app provides a safe and secure digital alternative to the cash donation box.

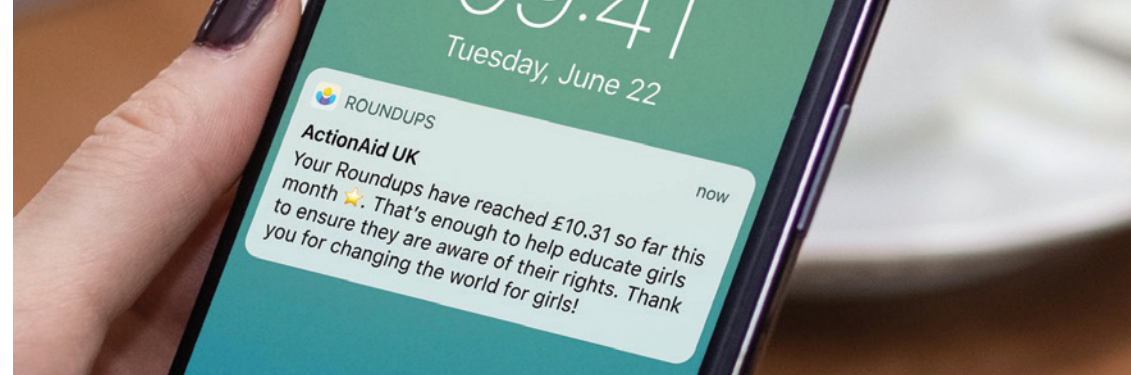
Roundups works with all major banks. If you simply download the app, connect your card and spend as normal, it will automatically round up your payments as you shop and

donate the spare change to ActionAid. You can round up to the nearest 10p, 50p or £1 (so, for example, if your grocery shop comes to £16.33, that total could be rounded up to £16.40, £16.50 or £17.00, with the surplus going to ActionAid). To ensure you are in control, you can also set a weekly limit and pause donations at any time.

“Small acts, when multiplied by millions of people, can transform the world.”
- Howard Zinn

£2.95 spend **now**

5p donation **now**



Every time you shop online or in-store, your spare change will make a real and lasting difference to the lives of women and girls around the world.

What's more, you can follow the impact of your donations with bitesize updates and real, life-changing stories inside the app. For example, we'll show you how your donations are helping to educate girls on their rights, or enabling someone to go to school.

We could not do what we do without people like you. Whether you're sponsoring a child taking on a challenge, donating to our emergency appeals or getting involved in campaigns, ActionAid supporters make all our life-changing work possible. Why not stretch your donations a little further by activating Roundups? Every time you shop, you'll be sending a few pence our way. Imagine the huge difference to women and girls if hundreds or even thousands of our supporters were to do this.

Activate Roundups in minutes:


- 1 Download app and sign up.
- 2 Safely connect your card.
- 3 Spend as normal.
- 4 Give vital support to women and girls!

Scan here to get started



Or go to:
www.roundups.org/actionaid





Hima, 18, received sanitary pads in the relief package distributed by ActionAid's local partners.

Together we're ending period poverty

Around the world, far too many women, girls and people who menstruate still do not have access to the menstrual products and private spaces they need to manage their periods with dignity. This can have severe effects on almost all areas of their lives – physical and mental health, education, employment and more.

At ActionAid, we believe that nobody should be held back because of their period. We want girls to be able to remain in school, rather than staying home several days every month because of period shame. We're tired of menstruation being a taboo topic that isn't discussed – we've seen the effect of that stigma on so many people's lives.

That's why, with the help of our brilliant supporters, we're raising our voices about period poverty and working to make it a thing of the past!



Helping win the fight against period poverty

There's an unwritten rule that if someone – anyone – needs a tampon, you help them out if you can. Whether it's your best friend, a stranger in need or someone on the other side of the world, if someone asks you for a tampon, you give it to them.



That idea was the inspiration behind our Share a Better Period campaign, which you might have seen in recent months. We asked our supporters to donate what they could, so that women, girls and people who menstruate – all around the world – would have access to the sanitary products they need. And you really came through.



Your support of our Share a Better Period campaign showed us that you share our commitment to this important issue. With your kind help, ActionAid can keep working with women and girls, community leaders, men and boys, schools and governments to **help end period poverty around the world – once and for all.**

Here are just some of the ways you're helping make a difference:



- In Malawi, with your support, we're providing training on how to make reusable sanitary pads, which are affordable and sustainable.
- In our girls' clubs and safe spaces in schools in Rwanda, we're helping girls learn about their bodies, menstruation and health – building confidence and coming together to advocate for their rights.
- Working with refugees on the Greek island of Lesbos, we distribute kits containing menstrual products, soap and clean underwear, so women, girls and people who menstruate can manage their periods safely and with dignity.



As you can read below, the Covid-19 pandemic has really served to highlight just how badly things need to change.

Thanks to your kind support of 'Share a Better Period,' we can keep working to make that change happen.

Sharing a Better Period in Nepal:

During the Covid-19 pandemic, as in so many crises, women and girls and marginalised groups have been especially vulnerable, not just to the virus itself but to its wider impact on society.

In Nepal, economic effects of the pandemic have hit hard. Many families lost their livelihoods and many schools had to close. Nutritious food has been harder to come by. The lockdown situation increased the workload for women as well as leading to a significant

increase in cases of domestic violence. Against this backdrop, every month, women and girls have still had to go through their monthly cycle. Many faced problems managing their periods due to sanitary pads being either unavailable or too expensive for them to afford.

ActionAid has been mobilizing through our local partner, reaching out to vulnerable communities in Nepal. As well as raising awareness about safety measures to stop the spread of Covid-19 and distributing relief packages and key provisions, we also distributed more than 5,400 sanitary pads to girls, women and people who menstruate, so they could manage their periods with dignity during the crisis. •



Photo credit: Narendra Bhanu BK/ ActionAid

During the pandemic, ActionAid supported the provision of handwashing and hygiene supplies to communities across Nepal.

Women by Women

A new photography exhibition celebrates the work of women in front of and behind the lens

As an organisation, ActionAid is committed to telling people's stories with dignity and humanity. Our Women by Women campaign also shines a spotlight on the incredible – but often overlooked – talent of women photographers in the countries where we work.

To create the campaign, pairs of women – a photographer and a subject – came together to share empowering stories, shatter stereotypes and highlight the next generation of women leaders.

And now we are holding an exhibition of these Women by Women photographs, open to the public from **Thursday 16 to Sunday 19 September** at **gallery@oxo, Southbank, London**. Shot by women photographers from Bangladesh, Palestine, Nigeria, Senegal and Vietnam, the exhibition celebrates courageous women in challenging circumstances who are breaking down barriers in their communities.

If you are able, we hope you'll come and experience these impressive and diverse works for yourself. Seen up close and in person, they have a power that is hard to deny. •



Nigerian Photographer Etinosa Yvonne

"Every time I look at Grace's portrait, I just feel happy. I went to her house and I just thought I want to make this woman look beautiful. Because despite her circumstances, she is strong."
Etinosa Yvonne

To find out more about our Women by Women campaign, please visit voices.actionaid.org.uk/women-by-women/

Photo credit: Lola Ayanda/ActionAid



Bose is the founder of a grassroots organisation supporting women experiencing gender based violence in Nigeria.



Grace, with the support of a women's collective, is helping women to fight for their land rights in Nigeria.

Share the kindness Giving the gift of fun!



Thanks to donations made to the Gift Fund in Jirapa and Lambussie, 56 children received exercise books, pens and pencils to help them with their education.

Photo credit: Jirapa Farmers Network/ActionAid

We all love to give gifts to those that we care about, as a way of showing how much they mean to us. And our child sponsors are no different. Whilst we encourage child sponsors to write and send cards and photos to their sponsored child, **we ask them not to send physical gifts.**

Instead, we encourage child sponsors to donate to the Gift Fund. Here are our top five reasons why this is the best way to give the gift of fun!

1. The Gift Fund makes gift giving easy, cost effective and fair.
2. 100% of Gift Fund donations are spent on gifts for the children - and

not just on one child, but on as many children as possible in the community.

3. No postage or delivery costs, means every penny goes towards the gifts.
4. The Gift Fund provides gifts the children need and choose themselves, like uniforms, sports equipment, notebooks, pens and pencils.
5. We can purchase items locally, which means better value for money, as well as helping the local economy.

To find out more, visit
actionaid.org.uk/gift-fund



A trailblazing generation How players of the People's Postcode Lottery are supporting young women in Ghana.

In some parts of Ghana, deep-seated patriarchal beliefs and practices have kept women and girls from actively participating in leadership and decision-making. All too often they are dismissed as inexperienced, and young women or those living with disabilities can be even more vulnerable to abuses of their rights.

The good news is that change is happening. In Ghana, players of People's Postcode Lottery have enabled us to set up groups for young women in secondary schools and communities across the country. In these female-only spaces, girls and young women can discuss equal rights and have opportunities to develop new skills, gaining the confidence they need to become more involved in leadership and decision-making.

Each group has between 30 and 40 members and is supported by a female mentor through a specially developed and wide-ranging curriculum. The groups also aim to create an inclusive environment for girls and young women with disabilities and to advocate for disability rights.

Taking this work further, ActionAid Ghana has worked with 94 young women

with disabilities, providing business and financial management training to help them to start up their own enterprises. The women were then provided with materials they need to establish their businesses, setting them on the path to greater economic empowerment and financial independence.*



People's Postcode Lottery have supported young women like Memunatu, 25, with soap making training

"ActionAid gave me the opportunity to learn a livelihood skill in soap making. I have successfully completed the soap making training and indeed I have acquired a lifetime skill which will make me financially independent. I now have soap for domestic use and make profit to support my family and children's education." **Memunatu Ibrahim**

Photo credit: Alia Mumuni/ActionAid

From Manchester to Bangalore without leaving the country

A remarkable fundraising feat takes a team all the way to India (virtually!)



We're always extremely impressed by the dedication and creativity of our supporters when it comes to fundraising. The range of challenges you set yourselves, and the commitment with which you complete them, never fails to astound us.

One notable recent example was a team effort carried out by the intrepid staff of _VOIS, a division of Vodafone who have offices in Manchester, Glasgow and across the world. They were inspired by ActionAid's work on the frontline of the Covid-19 pandemic in India and so they set out to raise

money to help keep more people – including their own colleagues – safe from the virus.

A team of 45 staff came together to virtually travel the 8,195km (5,092 miles) from Manchester to their office in Bangalore, India. Each member of the group aimed to complete at least 5km per day – by walking, running, cycling and more.

The indomitable participants in what came to be known as the '5k a Day in May' fundraiser truly outdid themselves, crossing the virtual finish line before the deadline and raising an impressive £4,350 for ActionAid. The Vodafone Foundation generously matched this total, doubling the impact of the hard-working fundraisers.

We're deeply grateful to everyone who took part in this incredible effort – the funds raised will go a long way towards ensuring the continuation of our work to stop the spread of Covid-19 in India. We look forward to future collaborations with _VOIS and Vodafone. **Great work, everyone!.**



Emma Glover-Watkins



Dean Horton





Linda and Jeff Marsden,
who kindly left a gift in
their Will to ActionAid

Your legacy. Her future.

How a gift in your Will could help educate women and girls, and transform the world.

Around the world, nine million girls of primary school age will never start school or set foot in a classroom. This has to change.

At ActionAid, we believe every girl has the right to an education. That's why we're partnering with Will Aid to make it easier for our supporters to leave a legacy that could change girls' lives

by supporting our work for generations to come.

Through Will Aid, participating solicitors will be waiving their fee for writing a basic Will. Instead, your solicitor will invite you to make a voluntary donation to Will Aid. These donations will support the vital work of nine partner charities, including ActionAid.

How to take part:

If you would like the peace of mind of having a professionally drawn up Will and knowing your wishes will be carried out, here's how to take part in Will Aid.

From September onwards, use Will Aid's online search at www.willaid.org.uk to find a solicitor near you. If you prefer, you can email enquiries@willaid.org.uk or call 0300 0309 558 for details.

You can then contact your local solicitor directly, to make an appointment in November.