

Action



Changing the world
with **women and girls**

act:onaid

Women in **action** 

Find out how amazing
women like Taposhi
are leading their
communities in times
of crisis and beyond

Issue 21 Spring 2022

Welcome to your Spring 2022 issue of *Action* magazine!

In these pages you'll meet some extraordinary women and read some truly inspiring stories of the work that is being done all over the world, thanks to your kind support of ActionAid.

As we celebrate our 50th anniversary, ActionAid is devoting part of the year to highlighting the tremendous importance of women in preventing and responding to disasters. In this issue of *Action*, you can learn more about our Women in Action campaign, and meet some of the women who are carrying out this life-saving work.

Tragically, because women tend to be more socially marginalised and economically disadvantaged, more women than men are killed by disasters like tsunamis and earthquakes. This is why it is vital that we work to make emergency preparedness more equal, bringing women more to the forefront.

This issue also contains updates on our Aid Match appeals and our response to the recent COP26 climate conference in Glasgow. You'll read about amazing young fundraisers and find out about the long-term positive impact of child sponsorship. On every page, you'll see the difference your generosity is making.

I hope you will be inspired by the amazing women you'll meet in this issue. Thank you, from all of us, for your kind support that makes their work possible.



Frances Longley
Chief Executive
ActionAid UK

Changing the world
with women and girls
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Taposhi is an activist, campaigning
for women to become leaders
during emergencies.

Aid Match updates

She is the answer + Not this girl

Hok, 35, a Woman Champion, gives a workshop to members of the community in Pursat province, Cambodia.



Matching your donations with

ukaid

© Cindy Liu / ActionAid

Double the impact: The difference you've made through UK Aid Match appeals

In recent years, ActionAid has twice secured match funding from the UK Government, enabling your donations to go twice as far in supporting some amazing projects with women and girls.

In 2018, our Not This Girl campaign focused on ending violence against women and girls in Kenya. Then, with last year's She is the Answer campaign, we sought to support Women Champions in Cambodia – training and equipping women to take leading roles in keeping their communities safe from the effects of climate change.



Members of Sauti ya Wanawake in Garashi conducting outreach visits for out-of-school girls.

© Mfalme Afrika Production/ActionAid

With both campaigns, you – our generous supporters – stepped up and seized the opportunity to make double the difference. Thanks to UK Aid Match funds, the Government matched your donations pound for pound, and the results were amazing...

Ending gender-based violence in Kenya: Not This Girl (2018)

Thanks to incredible supporters like you, we raised over £2m, including £1.1m of match funding from the UK Government. In the years since, we've been working hard to end gender-based violence through our local rights teams and partners, with the leadership of incredible local women and girls. This work included community forums (Kongomanos), school forums, peer support groups and training of Women's Rights Networks as well as public servants and others with the power to make change, including community leaders, police and health officials. By the end of the project, 5,464 girls at risk of dropping out of school had accessed safe spaces, such as dedicated school forums and peer support groups. 87% of girls said they were now more confident reporting violence and had increased awareness of the different reporting pathways and support available to them.

Climate resilience in Cambodia: She is the Answer (2021)

ActionAid supporters gave generously to our She is Answer appeal. We raised an incredible £2.26m, including £1.08m of match funding from the UK



A Sauti ya Wanawake member speaking to girls during a Girls' Forum meeting in Singwaya Primary School, Kilifi County.

© Mfalme Afrika Production/ActionAid

Government. The funds raised are going towards a three-and-a-half-year project promoting women-led approaches to building resilience against climate change in Cambodia – from sustainable farming and flood prevention to government-level policy change. The project launched in mid-December 2021 and will run until March 2025, with ActionAid Cambodia collaborating with four Cambodian partner organisations. The project will benefit over 19,000 women leaders, school children and community members across four provinces in Cambodia.

Our amazing supporters helped us make the very most of these valuable opportunities – thank you for giving to our UK Aid Match appeals and doubling your impact!

The climate crisis is a feminist issue

When the COP26 climate conference came to Glasgow in November, ActionAid seized the opportunity to push for climate justice that includes and empowers women and girls.

With world leaders coming together to make decisions about our climate future, we wanted to ensure the voices and expertise of women and girls were included in the decision making.

This is because climate change is a feminist issue. Firstly, women and girls make up 80% of people displaced by climate change and are often disproportionately affected by climate impacts. Secondly, women and girls have the skills and expertise needed to design effective, and just, climate solutions. They are absolutely central to the answers.

That's why we wanted to take action at COP26. Thanks to more than 7,000 of our supporters, our demands were displayed on bus shelters throughout Glasgow – calling on world leaders to provide financial support to those on the frontlines of climate change, so that they can continue to lead in the development of sustainable climate solutions.

However, unfortunately, COP26 delivered weak financial pledges for women, girls and their communities on the frontlines of climate change. Instead, the priorities

of wealthier countries were allowed to dominate. This lack of solidarity will exacerbate the rise in humanitarian crises that are linked to climate change. Diaka Salena Koroma, ActionAid Activist from Sierra Leone, says;

“We need to see these rich countries put in the funding for countries that are really being affected by climate change, and also make sure there is representation of the voices that matter.”

**Diaka Salena Koroma,
ActionAid Activist**

Ultimately, achieving climate justice also requires fighting for gender justice.

Taking action for change...together

Despite the disappointing financial pledges there was evidence of solidarity and signs of hope at the conference.

With the help of our supporters and changemakers, we elevated the voices of those on the frontlines of climate change during COP26.

© ActionAid Australia/Claire Douglas



ActionAid, alongside local partners, is supporting women such as Natividad (pictured) to adapt to climate change.

We also fought for feminist climate justice through our Earth Walk, media outreach and campaigning activities on Gender Day and throughout the conference.

For our Earth Walk thousands of people like you, our supporters, came together and marched for climate justice outside COP26. We projected the footage of **7,000 activist walkers from 42 countries, who together covered 43,000km**. We livestreamed it via YouTube and had speakers and activists from all over the world join us. This put the voices of women and girls from all around the globe, who couldn't attend COP, centre stage to talk about their experiences of the climate crisis.

Whilst the strength and power of women and girls at COP26 gave hope,

there is further to go and so much more to do. Women's leadership is absolutely crucial for ensuring that climate action is effective, sustainable and just. But women are still shut out of decision-making spaces and often lack basic rights, further preventing them from meaningful involvement in climate action.

Post COP26: What now for ActionAid?

At ActionAid UK, our work with women and girls on the frontlines of climate change, disasters and crises is more relevant than ever. Together with our partners and with you, our supporters, we must not give up the fight for climate justice. To become an ActionAid campaigner and fight for climate justice for women and girls, go to actionaid.org.uk/campaign



ActionAid supporters at the Global Day of Action for Climate Justice.

© Jenna Fairneau/ActionAid

Bringing women to the heart of disaster response

At times of crisis, from natural disasters to manmade conflict, women are often the first to respond, playing a critical role in crisis prevention and response. Throughout the Covid-19 pandemic, time and time again, we have seen the life-saving difference it makes when women can take the lead in disaster response.

Despite this fact, the current humanitarian system is male-dominated, with women under-represented in – or completely absent from – formal leadership roles. This means that women and girls are often excluded from the decision-making processes that impact their lives.

ActionAid is looking to change that, which is why we launched our Women in Action campaign.

Our 50 years of experience have shown us that disaster response and prevention is most effective when women are at the heart of it. Women know exactly what their communities need, getting life-saving supplies quickly and fairly to those who need them most.

With your support, we can challenge the status quo and help ensure these amazing women are in a position to lead their communities – in times of crisis and beyond.

Taposhi campaigns for women to take leadership roles within their communities during times of crises.

© Fabeha Monir/ActionAid



Taking action as the waters rise – Taposhi's story

Taposhi is 20 years old and works as a farmer in northern Bangladesh. With her community becoming increasingly affected by floods, she decided to take action.

With the help of training and support from ActionAid, Taposhi has become an activist and organiser, bringing her neighbours together to learn about ways to lessen the impact of the floods.

Q: Why have you chosen to get involved with activism?

A: I want to do something for my village. Because of my hard work, if something can change or I can bring everyone together to change our society, then all my hard work will have paid off. I got involved with ActionAid more than two years ago. I have received training and attended several meetings throughout year. I have learned mainly how to lead

© Fabeha Monir/ActionAid



during emergencies and how can we work as a community.

Q: What form does your activism take?

A: I am always organising and arranging meetings in my yard. I am talking to girls and women by going door to door. My husband also helps me to reach to the men of our village. I urge people not to cut trees or be dependent on coal. I also tell them to save our riverbank and not to destroy our forest. We have to plant trees and be careful not to do harmful things to the environment.

Q: How have your neighbours reacted to your activism?

A: It was very difficult in the beginning. People did not want to listen to me. And girls were bullied if they helped me. But now things are changing. Villagers understand I want good for them and for the village. Now, in times of crisis, people come to me and we plan what to do to face disasters and other problems.



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Women in action

Haiti Earthquake Response



© Fabienne Douce/ActionAid

Ysnelle, 36, a first responder holding the contents of the dignity kits that she will distribute to beneficiaries, Jacquet, Jeremie.

Your wonderful support is powering so much vital work around the globe, bringing women to the heart of disaster readiness and response. This has been especially important and effective in Haiti, a country which has sadly experienced a number of serious disasters in its recent history.

The power of Women in Action was made very clear in Haiti last summer. On 14 August, a powerful 7.2 magnitude earthquake struck the south-west of the island. It affected 800,000 people, killing 2,248 and injuring more than 12,700. Treating the injured proved seriously challenging since the quake damaged or destroyed approximately 90 health centres in addition to well over 100,000 homes.

In the aftermath of the quake, ActionAid moved into action immediately, mobilising resources to support families in the most affected communities, with everything from food and shelter to cash and food assistance.

Our network of first responders – many of whom are women – were absolutely vital in this effort.

Ysnelle: First Responder

Ysnelle Jean, 36, is a seamstress and mother of four children in Haiti. She's also a woman first responder, trained by ActionAid to take vital steps to help her community if disaster strikes.

“After the earthquake, people were very traumatised. I remember one lady who lost her house. She was not in the house when the earthquake happened. She was in shock when she saw her house. I took time to talk to her so she could understand that even [if] the house is destroyed, she's alive, which matters more.”

“With my emergency kit, I was able to give first aid to the injured people. For me, the most important thing was to support girls, women, little children, pregnant women, people living with disabilities. These were people we needed to find a shelter [for]. We helped

them find shelter in a school in our community, where they would stay until they found somewhere else to go.”

“We know that women are exposed to sexual violence, especially rape after any disaster. We checked the shelters and set a sleeping space for only women and girls. They trusted us as women. We also work with the men, to sensitise them to the issue of sexual violence against women.”

“With ActionAid building the network of women leaders and providing training to us on several levels of interventions during emergencies, we gained skills and we are now known within the communities and help anyone in need.”

Thank you for helping support Women in Action like Ysnelle. Your generosity is changing – and saving – lives.



© Fabienne Douce/ActionAid

ActionAid Women First Responders Johanne, Ysnelle and Elcia fill the dignity kits in preparation for their distribution to the local women in the community of Jacquet, Jeremie.

The life-changing impact of your generosity



© ActionAid Ghana

Victoria is a member of ActionAid's Women in Baking group.

In communities affected by poverty and crisis, women are taking the lead in making change. Your support for ActionAid's work is helping women build better futures for themselves and those around them.

You're helping women like Victoria to gain new skills in Ghana

"As a single mother, life became very difficult trying to take care of my three children. All I had was a small piece of land that I grew crops on to feed my family and earn a meagre living. I could barely afford to feed us every

day and cover expenses such as school materials," explains 45-year-old Victoria from Ghana.

"I joined ActionAid's Women in Baking group in my community. I received training on how to bake bread and to help us get started we received a dough mixer, an oven and baking trays.

"Since my initial training I have learnt other areas of baking, such as pastries. I'm now a skilled baker with regular customers buying from me each week.

"I have been able to earn enough from my baking to support my children's education. I credit my success in

providing for my children to your support. Life would have been very different without it – thank you!"

You're supporting women in Burundi to transform their communities with improved farming techniques

"Hello from Burundi. My name is Scholastique, and I am a 47-year-old mother of six children. My family relies on me growing crops for our food and selling my surplus at the markets.

"I was frustrated and saddened that despite my hard work, my harvests were poor. I struggled to provide an income to cover expenses. My three older children left school early because I was unable to pay their school fees or purchase the materials they needed.

"[At the local ActionAid-supported women's group] I learned that planting the same crops in the same soil year after year had left it lacking in vital nutrients. But by using the manure from my animals and rotating my crops each year, I could improve the quality of my soil and my yield.

"I am pleased to share with you that since the training organised by ActionAid, my harvests have improved so much. I am now in the business of selling maize flour and green bananas produced from my own fields. I am happy that my hard work has paid dividends and I can now afford to buy nutritious food for my family - and my children are able to attend school."



© Fred Munyampeta/ActionAid

Scholastique is now building a new house, together with her husband, using income generated through their small business selling maize flour and green bananas.

A positive step in the child sponsorship journey



For 50 years, child sponsorship has played a vital role in the work of ActionAid. Our amazing child sponsors do not simply change the life of the child they sponsor, but they bring about wider transformation through a range of different projects, carried out in partnership with community members.

From wider education access and women's networks to improvements in farming, when a child sponsorship project is complete, it marks a moment of transition – a moment of hope and celebration. This is when communities feel ready to take full control and ownership of the projects. This handover makes it possible to fund new projects in different locations, spreading the benefits of child sponsorship further.

Here are two stories that demonstrate the long-term impact of child sponsorship.

Ann, Kenya: “Attitudes towards the education of girls had to change”

Ann is a primary school teacher in Kuria, Kenya, and she has seen first-hand the transformation made possible by ActionAid's Child Sponsorship programme.

“Since ActionAid came to work in Kuria, I have seen a transformation in the lives of people, especially the women and girls. Through training and discussions with parents, teachers, children and

community leaders, we came to understand how much girls had been disadvantaged in many areas of their lives, including education. This was a big eye-opener for us. We realised that attitudes towards the education of girls had to change.

“As a mother and a teacher, I feel very satisfied when I look at girls in Kuria now, compared to 10 years ago. They have become confident and assertive and their self-esteem has grown. Long live education for all the children of Kuria and the world at large!”



Ann, a primary school teacher, has seen a change in attitude towards the education of girls.

© ActionAid/Kenya

The impact of child sponsorship in Kuria, a community in Kenya - helping to improve education for girls

Over **1,500** girls were protected from female genital mutilation (FGM)

Over **2,000** girls who lived too far away from school were able to stay at the ActionAid supported safe house and continue their educations

Over **350** girls progressed to college or university (before the project began in 2008, only 20 girls had ever continued to further education.)

Omatla, South Africa: “The water tank has solved all our problems.”

Although child sponsorship has now ended in South Africa, it has left a lasting legacy and made a positive difference in the lives of people in Joe Morolong municipality.

Accessing water in Joe Morolong, was one of the biggest challenges faced by the community. Thanks to the support of child sponsors we were able to install water tanks, develop rainwater catchment projects and improve farming techniques to retain water in the soil. The water tanks were an immediate benefit, providing safe, clean water to thousands of people, including children in school.

Twelve-year-old Omatla explains how the water tank improved her school life. “I love my school and my teachers, but it was very difficult to learn when there was no water. I had to walk back home to get a drink and sometimes I didn't want to walk all the way back to school. But now the water tank has



Omatla likes to water the school garden, vegetables grown there are used for school meals.

solved all our problems. I want to keep learning so I can become president one day – then I will make sure all schools have water!”

Over the lifetime of this project in Joe Morolong, South Africa, we were able to install around 5,000 water tanks like the one in Omatla's community.

© ActionAid South Africa

What happens when a child sponsorship project ends? Your questions answered



Does a child sponsorship project have a set timeframe? No, the duration of each project will depend on a range of factors including the scale of the work and the circumstances under which it will be carried out. Our focus is always on impact rather than time, so we'll be there for the long term, supporting our partners, volunteers and members of the community.

Can I continue to sponsor a child when a project ends? Of course! If a particular child sponsorship comes to an end, many of our child sponsors continue to sponsor a different child. In some cases this may be in the same country as before, but it could equally be in a different one. It all depends on the locations of the projects that require the long-term funding child sponsorship provides.

Are community members involved in a project's closure? Yes. Children, their families and communities are aware at the beginning that the project will close one day. As well as being involved in the planning and execution,

they are also involved in the 'phasing-down' activities of the project and in projects that continue but no longer require ActionAid's support.

Can I still write to my sponsored child after a project ends? While ActionAid will keep monitoring and providing support to projects even after child sponsorship has ceased, we cannot keep you in touch with a particular child. Due to our child protection policy, we also cannot provide personal details to allow contact to continue.

When will I, as a child sponsor, know a project is closing? As a sponsor you are our partner in the project. As long as we have your up-to-date details and permission to contact you, we will always keep you informed of the changing plans within a community. We usually will get in touch around 12 months before a project is due to close, keeping you up to date and giving you plenty of time to write a special final message to your sponsored child.

If you are a child sponsor and any of your details have changed, please send us an email at supportercontact@actionaid.org or call us on 01460 238 000 to let us know.

Walking together to change the world



Pupils at two London schools raise thousands by completing sponsored walk.

Highgate School in London – and their sibling school in Tottenham – have impressively raised nearly £15,000 to help change the world with women and girls. Paula Zoido-Oses, the school's Politics teacher told us why students chose ActionAid.

“The pupils voted for ActionAid as sexism and sexual violence against girls and women as well as discrimination on the basis of gender is something they feel very strongly about. The school runs several feminist societies and there is a pupil action group dedicated to Anti Sexual Violence and Sexism as well. Over 2,375 pupils took part in the 16.4 mile walk around Haringey Borough.

“The walk was a lovely day out and we enjoyed connecting with our local landscape. That is not to deny the fact

that it is a very long and tiring walk! We kept ourselves entertained with riddles and chatting about the impact of the money we raised.

“We can't wait for our next chance to raise money for ActionAid. This is a great cause and the team offer fantastic support and communication throughout. If you are thinking about starting a school fundraiser - just do it!”

So many ways to fundraise!

Whether you're a teacher or parent, supporting ActionAid throughout the school year is a great way to engage students with our work and raise vital funds through fun activities. Get in touch with Sophie to find out more at events@actionaid.org

There are lots of ways for anyone to make a difference, either personally, at work or as part of your faith group. Get inspired here:



The power of a gift in your Will to ActionAid

Adori, 13, lives in northern Bangladesh, an area that has been badly affected by flooding.

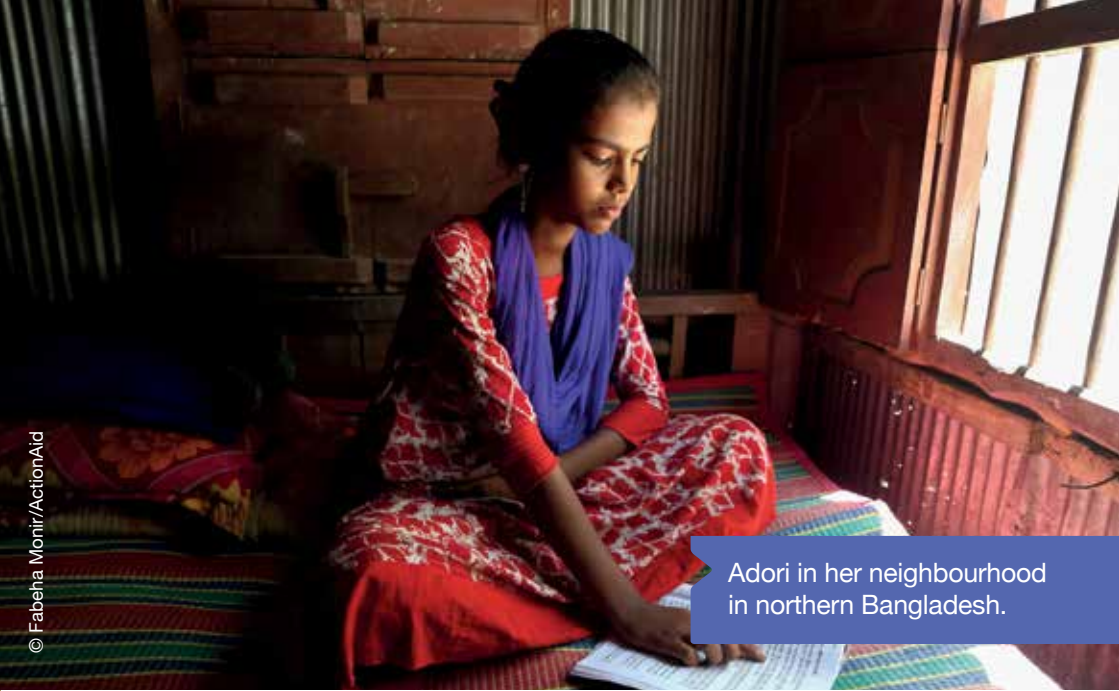
As more of our supporters choose to include gifts to ActionAid in their Wills, we wanted to spotlight just one of the countless ways in which these valuable contributions positively impact the lives of women and girls around the world.

Adori's story

When Adori's community in northern Bangladesh was devastated by flooding, her school closed as it was too dangerous to travel in the floodwater. The lack of access to her school made it difficult for Adori to study and consequently her education was affected, just like many other children in her community.

Thanks to the generosity of our supporters, including those who remember us in their Will, ActionAid has carried out a great deal of work alongside Adori's community. We have been able to provide essentials to help people cope during the floods, including sanitary pads, torches, food and hygiene items. ActionAid has also run meetings in the area to raise awareness of key issues like education and forced marriage.

Adori is glad to have this support. She says, "Action Aid activities are helping our community to change for the better."



© Fabeha Monir/ActionAid

Adori in her neighbourhood in northern Bangladesh.

Adori is a girl with big dreams. "I want to become a doctor someday," she says. "I have seen how people suffered during the flood, especially women and children. Women do not want to go to a male doctor. If I can become a doctor, I can help my people."

By writing ActionAid into your Will, you can leave a lasting legacy of hope for women and girls like Adori. We want to help simplify the Will writing process and provide support where possible.

Have your Will written or updated for free

ActionAid is a member of the National Free Wills Network, which offers a local Will-writing service – with ActionAid paying a discounted rate on your behalf.

Receive a list of participating solicitors in your area, along with useful information about writing your Will, by sending your full name and postal address to legacies@actionaid.org If you take up the offer, there is no obligation to include a gift to ActionAid, however, we hope that you will consider us.

You can learn more by visiting us online at actionaid.org.uk/legacies

If you have any questions, why not speak to a member of our Supporter Contact team? You can call us on **01460 238 000**, Monday to Friday from 9am to 5:30pm.



Women from six REFLECT action circles celebrate the opening of their new community school garden in Koussanar, Senegal.

Celebrating five years of partnership with the People's Postcode Lottery

Over the past five years, players of the People's Postcode Lottery have raised over **£13,000,000** for ActionAid, helping us work to end violence and fight poverty in **26 different countries** around the world.

Over 40 projects have been supported by the players of the People's Postcode Lottery. These include women-led emergency responses in many humanitarian crises - from Covid-19 in Indonesia to flooding in Mozambique - as well as funding new research to support policy changes on women's rights

issues globally. This year players have also enabled us to expand our programme in Zimbabwe, reaching over 17,000 people to prevent violence against women, girls and people with disabilities and amplify all girls' voices.

From all of us at ActionAid, thank you to players of the People's Postcode Lottery!

If you would like to learn more or start playing, visit <https://bit.ly/3JOUtqe>