

Action



Changing the world
with **women and girls**

act:onaid

Inside, read about
how girls like Maria
are working hard to
beat period poverty

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

Partnership is at the heart of everything we do at ActionAid.

The world is facing substantial challenges, and none of us can address them alone. Now more than ever it is essential for people to come together and form partnerships through which our strength and capabilities can be multiplied. This has always been ActionAid's approach, and it works.

The stories in this issue of Action magazine all show the power of working in partnership. From those whose lives have been upended by the war in Ukraine to the families and communities feeling the devastating impact of the ongoing food crisis in East Africa, your generosity is enabling us to turn strong partnerships into life-saving action.

Thanks to your help, we are working directly with communities, women's groups and networks, social movements and other allies. Our aim is to tackle the structural causes and consequences of poverty and injustice, and ultimately to build a better world.

In this, the year of our 50th anniversary, we wanted you to see clearly the impact we are having together. Because our most vital partners – the ones without whom none of our work would be possible – are people like you.

Thank you.

John Good

Acting Chief Executive
ActionAid UK

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Erratic rainfall has led to successive failed harvests in East Africa, including in Somaliland.

A vital lifeline

How your support is proving vital to the people of Ukraine

When Russia invaded Ukraine in February, the impact on the Ukrainian people was devastating. Almost overnight, a country that had been peaceful and prosperous was transformed into a battleground. Air and ground attacks claimed thousands of civilian casualties and millions of people were left with no choice but to flee their homes.

The majority of these displaced people – whether they moved within Ukraine or crossed the border into neighbouring countries – have been women and children. Having lost so much, they are also at heightened risk

of gender-based violence, trafficking and abuse.

Your generosity enabled us to take action straight away. ActionAid has been working closely with our partners inside Ukraine to keep people safe amid the chaos and devastation of war. One particular area of focus has been on supporting people of colour, many of whom have had their experience of disaster compounded by racism.

Through partnerships with grassroots feminist organisations in Ukraine, in Poland, Romania and Republic of

ActionAid staff at Zosin crossing point on the Polish side of the Ukraine-Poland border in February

© Simona Supino/ActionAid

© Simona Supino/ActionAid

ActionAid and partner staff at Hrebennie, a crossing point on the Polish side of the Ukraine-Poland border in February

Moldova, we have been able to bring in immediate support such as food and medicines, as well as helping to prevent violence and exploitation of those who have lost everything. We have even been able to offer services

like housing, counselling support and legal advice, all of them vital in helping people adjust to their new situation.

None of this work would have been possible without ActionAid supporters. Your generosity in response to the Disasters Emergency Committee (DEC) appeal, of which we were a part, helped raise an impressive €15m, which has been put to immediate use across the region.

Sadly, as this issue of Action magazine goes to print, the crisis shows no sign of letting up. We will be sure to keep you updated on the difference your kindness is making, to women, children and families facing the worst conflict seen in Europe since the end of the Second World War.



Displaced women and children arrive at Hrebennie, on the Polish side of the Ukraine-Poland border in February

© Simona Supino/ActionAid

East Africa food crisis

Nimo, with her child in Satiile village, Somaliland

The life-saving work you are making possible in drought-stricken Somalia, Kenya and Ethiopia



© Khadija Farah/ActionAid

As the worst drought in 40 years continues to ravage East Africa, the situation has become critical for more than 20 million people, half of them children. In the worst-affected countries – Somalia, Kenya and Ethiopia – levels of hunger are spiralling upward, with huge numbers of lives hanging in the balance.

According to UNICEF, the number of people in need has risen by a sobering 38% since February this year. Hundreds of thousands of children are already malnourished and areas of Somalia, where ActionAid works in the autonomous area of Somaliland, are on the brink of famine.

It is essential that we do all we can to keep people safe from hunger.

Women and girls are bearing the brunt of this emergency. They are trying to survive and care for their children whilst at risk of increased gender-based violence and exploitation – a pattern that is sadly common whenever disaster strikes. Young women are in particular danger, as the stress on income and food availability means they are marginalised both as women and young people.

The escalating food crisis has been driven by four years of failed harvests and erratic rainfall in East Africa. The severe water shortages and crop

failures have led to the deaths of more than 3 million livestock in Kenya and Ethiopia alone. In a place where so many people depend on farming to make a living, this is a devastating loss.

Meanwhile, drought-affected communities are also struggling to cope with the consequences of other shocks: conflict in Somalia and Ethiopia; the socio-economic effects of the Covid-19 pandemic; swarms of desert locusts devouring crops; and the rise in global food and energy prices due to the Ukraine war.

The impact of your support on the hunger crisis

With your support, across the affected region, ActionAid's emergency teams are working with local partner organisations, women leaders and young people to provide life-saving food relief, water and livelihoods support including cash assistance to help people buy food.

Along with our partners, we are striving to build resilience in drought-prone communities, by promoting

sustainable agricultural practices and innovative water-harvesting techniques, as well as working with farmers to improve the health of their livestock.

We know from 50 years of experience that crisis response is more effective with women at its heart. That's why we are providing disaster management and climate adaptation training to women-led disaster committees and local women's organisations, to support their leadership in the response.

Your generosity is enabling us to set up safe spaces to support survivors of gender-based violence as well as protection services, including psychosocial counselling, medical and legal support.

This hunger crisis is severe and ongoing, and we'll be sure to keep you updated on the situation as it unfolds. But one thing is certain – by enabling our partnerships on the ground to be effective, your support is making a life-saving difference.

Erratic rainfall has led to successive failed harvests in East Africa, including in Somaliland



© Daniel Jukes/ActionAid

Zero Violence Ghana

Improving working conditions in the informal sector in Ghana

Around the world, many people work in informal jobs such as street vendors, cleaners or farm labourers. A disproportionate amount of this work is done by women – in Ghana, for example, women make up approximately 88% of the informal sector.

Informal sector workers often experience bad conditions, low wages and lack benefits like sick pay. They generally don't have an employment contract and don't know about the laws and regulations which are meant

to protect them. This also means that many informal workers are vulnerable to harassment, violence and exploitation in the workplace. As women make up a majority of this workforce, they are often the ones who suffer.

At ActionAid, we believe that nobody should feel unsafe at work, which is why we are working in Ghana – with the help of players of the People's Postcode Lottery – to improve working conditions for everyone in the informal sector.



Memunatu Sayibu is happy to have completed her tailoring apprenticeship

© Abdulai Saale ActionAid

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Lasting change for informal sector workers

A key part of the project is teaming up with workers to ensure they are informed about their rights, responsibilities, and the laws which exist to protect them. ActionAid provides in-person training sessions and safe spaces for discussions, as well as setting up groups on social media, to share this information with employees. This is helping workers to report concerns and get them resolved.

Memunatu Sayibu (pictured) is a 25 year old apprentice tailor in northern Ghana, who said that her working environment improved greatly after the training provided by ActionAid.

Alfred, who works in a bar, said, "I used to work seven days a week without rest until I attended the training ActionAid organized. I got to know I had a right to a rest day and leave period, as well as maximum working hours. I mastered courage, approached my employer, and he admitted that my request was lawful. I have now been given every Sunday as a rest day."

Our local staff are also training employers on the importance of providing good working conditions. Yakubu Jinsun is an employer who attended an ActionAid training and has since taken steps to improve conditions for his employees and apprentices.

Before the training he did not involve apprentices in decision-making in the garages he manages and said they were

My master at times assigned me to other work, such as fetching water, washing her clothes. I was considering abandoning the apprenticeship. However, I changed my mind because my working conditions at the shop improved. I wish to thank ActionAid and (local NGO partner) Songtaba for creating this peaceful and effective working environment for me.

Memunatu Sayibu

sometimes assigned farm work or house chores. However, he says, "the training was a great eye opener for me and my colleagues" and as a result "we reformed most of our policies and activities to make the work environment friendly."

As well as working with employers and employees, ActionAid is working with government officials in the Labour Department to raise awareness about the importance of implementing policies and enforcing existing labour laws to protect workers in the informal sector.

Our work will help provide protection against all forms of discrimination, harassment, and violence in the workplace, so that they can be safe places for everyone. It is thanks to the generosity of the players of the People's Postcode Lottery that this incredible work has been made possible.

People power: the global impact of our campaigns

© Daniel Jukes/ActionAid



Community Campaigners and climate activists from the Global South coming together in rainy Glasgow to join the call for climate and gender justice at COP26

ActionAid works with local staff in 45 countries so that women and girls can work their way out of poverty. But we know that this alone is not enough. To change lives for good, we need to fight the root causes. That's why we campaign across the world to fight inequality so that all women and girls, everywhere, can create the future they want.

ActionAid campaigns

ActionAid has always worked with activists and campaigners to raise their voices and take the fight for a gender-just world to those in power.

Working in some of the world's poorest countries, we build the skills of women and girls to advocate for themselves

and we make and share space, so women and girls have a seat at the table to influence decision-makers.

We strive to do this in the UK too through our Community Campaigner network, a group of diverse feminist activists of all genders who have played a vital role in creating and

sustaining positive change, building global solidarity with women and girls.

Being a campaigner can be a bit daunting amid what can feel like a constant stream of bad news, like a recent major step backward for reproductive rights in the U.S. But there is so much that collective action can and has achieved.

In recent years we have campaigned on ending violence against women and girls – by demanding equal rights, economic empowerment, and education.

From rallying with over 250,000 people back in 2018 as part of the Women's March in response to the then US President Donald Trump's first visit to the UK; to joining forces with climate activists and campaigners from all over the world in 2021 to attend the UN International Climate Summit in Glasgow; to joining thousands of others across the UK in 2022 to tell MPs and Peers to block the Government's anti-protest bill. We've continued to raise our voices to make sure that women and girls everywhere can live safe from violence and create the future they want.

Ending workplace harassment and violence

Over the past three years, we have teamed up with women lawyers, international trade unions and other

charities to help end violence. ActionAid Community Campaigners have held stunts, written to MPs calling on governments to act urgently and met with activists in Ghana to share tactics.

ActionAid embarked on a major campaign in 2019 – to get governments everywhere to ratify ILO C.190: the first international framework to end harassment and violence in the world of work.

The tireless campaigning and advocacy from campaigners worldwide led to real breakthroughs. So far, 19 countries have committed to ratifying this Convention – and on 7 March 2022, the UK government joined them, ratifying ILO C. 190 with a view to implementing it this year. This legislation will uphold the rights of everyone to a workplace safe from violence and harassment.

So, what next?

Now more than ever, our Community Campaigners are calling for you to get involved and show your solidarity. In the UK we have started laying the groundwork for our next campaign asking the UK Government to restore and increase funding for sexual and reproductive health services overseas, to improve access to safe abortion and liberalise existing abortion laws.



Community Campaigner, Atoshi talking to festival goers at Latitude about our latest campaign.

In preparation for this campaign, Community Campaigners went to Latitude Festival back in July. They chatted to festival goers and encouraged them to sign a pledge to say that they would support women,

girls and everyone who can fall pregnant to access their reproductive rights and show solidarity with all those who are denied their rights.

Winning change can be a slow process, but the sheer dedication, commitment, and persistence from Community Campaigners has helped to keep up that momentum!

Our very existence is key to creating the change we want to see, and you can be part of it!

Join our Community Campaigners!

We all have our role to play in creating a better world. The more people we can get involved in ActionAid's

campaigns the bigger our collective power will be to demand reproductive justice, and gender justice.

This is going to take all of us. Will you join our community campaigner network?

Community Campaigners are ActionAid supporters who volunteer some of their spare time to engage with our work on a deeper level. We teach you campaigning and feminist leadership skills and it's a great opportunity to become part of a diverse network of individuals who want to build solidarity within a global movement.

Would you like to get involved?

You could attend online or in-person events, trainings and meetings, or take part in essential actions like signing petitions or emailing MPs to demand change. Join our global movement fighting for change with women and girls by emailing campaign@actionaid.org

Community Campaigners and allied organisations handing in a petition to the Home Office to protect our right to protest



Maria's Story:

Share a Better Period

For many girls across the world who do not have access to menstrual products, the arrival of their period brings a whole new set of problems. This is especially the case for those who are living as refugees – girls like Maria*.

Maria is a 16-year-old refugee from South Sudan. For the last four years she and her mother have been living in a refugee settlement in Uganda, a country that has taken in more than 1.5 million refugees. The Covid-19 pandemic and rising food prices have had a serious impact on basic supplies in settlements like Maria's. Not only are staple foods hard to come by, but period products are too.

With your help, ActionAid is providing training to feminist leaders such as Razia Yazid to support girls living in their communities. Razia is an activist who lives in the settlement and who attended feminist leadership training under ActionAid's Global Platform. Razia now runs workshops on how to make reusable pads, as well as women's rights and sexual reproductive health, for girls like Maria who live in the settlement.

What is your favourite subject?

I go to high school and my favourite subject is Biology. When they are teaching I just feel joy. I like it so much.

When did you first learn about periods?

At school we learn about menstruation and periods but not in detail, and not about how to manage our periods, such as how to make reusable pads.

What did you do when you started your period? Did you have pads?

[My period] started during the night. I went straight to [my mother] and I told her what was happening and that I didn't understand what was happening to me. She understood and told me to take a shower to freshen up. After that she brought me some new underwear and some pads to change into. She showed me how to use the pads and explained that my period would come every month now and this is what you need to do. My mum said I had to be careful when I'm on my period and be smart.

Tell me about the workshops you attended.

In the workshop we learnt about making reusable pads and about early marriages, teenage pregnancy and family planning.

How has this changed things for you?

The pads have changed my life in a way. They are cheap because I can make [them] myself rather than going to buy [them] in the market.

Do you teach others about what you learn?

We teach our friends about sex and the disadvantages of early marriage and pregnancy.

Would you say that you have enough pads every month?

Yes, I do have enough pads every month now. I have six that I wash and reuse.

Tell me about what rights you have learned about and what this means?

I learnt about my right as a girl to be educated; my right as a girl to speak.

How has this knowledge changed things for you?

Now that I've learnt about my rights I know that I can speak for myself. I'm Head Girl at my school now. I gained confidence through what [I learned]; that as a girl you have a right to speak.

Original interview conducted by Edna Ninsiima.

Maria learned about making reusable pads at a workshop run by Razia

“Why I included ActionAid in my Will”

As a supporter of our work, you are helping women and girls to unlock their potential every day. Did you know that you can continue to have a profound impact on the lives of women and girls long into the future?

Leaving a gift in your Will to ActionAid is a powerful way to ensure that your values and generosity live on.

Jackie from Bristol began supporting ActionAid in 1986 and has sponsored a total of five children through our Child Sponsorship programme. She explains why she has decided to leave a gift in her Will to ActionAid:

“There came a point in my later life where I decided that I ought to write my Will. I just wanted to get things in order, so I didn’t have to worry about it anymore. Once I had included my family in my Will, I decided that leaving something for the future generations of the people and communities that I have supported during my lifetime would be a great thing to do.

“I have always been very impressed with the way ActionAid uses its money and the longevity of my association and trust in ActionAid led me to choose them.

I have always focused on the long-term impact of regular giving and leaving a gift in my Will to ActionAid felt like the ultimate long-term impact I could have.”



Jackie is a long-term ActionAid supporter and has decided to leave a gift in her Will to support future generations

“I found it incredibly easy to leave a gift in my Will. To anyone thinking about writing theirs, I would say ‘Do it!’ There are now so many different services that support people in writing their Wills – anyone can do it.”

Jackie

Your Legacy. Her future.

Leave a lasting gift for women and girls

Diana, 12, attends one of 5,000 girls' forums in Kenya, supported by ActionAid. The girls' forums provide girls with a chance to gain basic literacy and numeracy and to learn about their rights



By remembering ActionAid in your Will, you can help empower women and girls to build better lives for themselves, their families and their communities. You will be helping to create a better world – one in which women and girls can enjoy the freedom, the opportunities and the future they want.

To learn more about leaving a gift in your Will to ActionAid, please visit www.actionaid.org.uk/legacies

You can also contact us at legacies@actionaid.org or by calling our friendly Supporter Contact team on 01460 238 000

ActionAid is a charity partner of Will Aid. You can make your Will in November for a suggested donation instead of the solicitor’s fee. However, places are limited – find a local participating solicitor at www.willaid.org.uk



"It is encouraging to see the women in my community become motivated seeing my success"

Momena is a mother of four living in Bangladesh. When her husband fell ill, her family struggled to pay for his treatment and children's school materials.

But Momena took action. She joined a women's farmers group that ActionAid established in her community. Through this group she learned not only how to cultivate fish but how to establish a business to sell them.

"I attended a three-day training session at a local fishery and now we earn a steady income selling

young fish," says Momena. "After our training, we obtained a loan from the ActionAid women's farmers group for BDT 10,000 [£84] which enabled us to install a hatchery in our home."

Momena and her husband Mosarof now work together running their successful fish business.



Momena has worked hard to make her fish business a success, securing the future for her family, including her youngest child Jonaid



By sharing her knowledge of fish farming, Momena is helping her whole community to thrive

"We started to produce young fish to sell to the fish growers, which was much better for my husband's health, and working together meant our income started to increase. This has increased our monthly income to BDT 25,000 [£211].

"This income has opened so many doors for us. We have saved for the operation that my husband desperately needed, and we've leased some land where we have created a pond with fish to sell at the markets.

"I can now support my children with their studies and my husband has received his surgery – none of which would have been possible if we hadn't attended the ActionAid fish rearing course."

Momena has worked hard to make her new business thrive, securing the futures for her children. But she is

also making a difference well beyond her home.

"My hatchery has had a great impact in my community too, because the fish growers are getting their fish supply within our village, which has reduced the cost and time for them."

"It has changed the course of our lives and secured our family's future – thank you!"

Momena

Momena's ambitions continue to grow. Her dream now is to have more ponds, sharing her knowledge and encouraging more women to become involved in the fish industry. Your support has enabled her vision and hard work to flourish, and she is now looking ahead to a much brighter future.

The 137 Challenge

Complete **137**

squats, step ups
or sit ups

per day for one month

A great way for you to get active and raise vital funds for ActionAid

This October, put your fitness to the test and take part in The 137 Challenge. Complete 137 sit-ups, squats, or step-ups per day for one month and fundraise to help end violence against women and girls.

Why 137?

One in three women will experience some form of violence in their lifetime, and 137 women are killed every day by a partner or family member.

But across the world, women and girls are fighting to claim their rights and change the systems and beliefs that make violence acceptable.

ActionAid is working with communities to prevent and respond to violence and create long-term change. Your support could help survivors seek justice and fund women's groups who train parents, teachers, local police

and legal advisors to recognise signs of violence and report it.

Supporter Helen took part in The 137 Challenge last year with her family and said

"We loved it. I felt myself getting stronger each day and raised money for an excellent cause."

Up for the challenge?

Visit www.actionaid.org.uk/challenge to find out how you can get involved this October!



Helen and her family taking part in last year's 137 Challenge