

Action

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Inside

Practised power yields lasting change.

Discover stories of women turning local challenges into positive change for their communities.

Welcome to your Spring 2026 edition of Action.

This month, we're featuring women who've used their lived experience to meet challenges head on in Vanuatu, Rwanda and beyond. Read on to find out how your gifts are supporting these women to transform their communities for good.

Rising from the tremors

When the ground cracked beneath her, Helen Bong's first instinct was to protect the people around her. It was 17 December 2024 and Helen, a Finance and Operations Manager at ActionAid Vanuatu, was caught in a devastating 7.3 magnitude earthquake that struck the capital, Port Vila.

It was one of the worst earthquakes to hit the islands, killing at least 14 people, injuring over 265 and displacing more than 2,000.

Helen was a key member of ActionAid's disaster response team, mobilising resources, conducting assessments and ensuring that aid went where it was needed most. **"In an earthquake, every second counts,"** she says.



© Isabella Rosa/ActionAid



Women are special. We are unique. Even when the world shakes around us, we stand firm because we have families, communities, and futures to protect."

Helen Bong

The smallest things

The situation was dire, with water pipes ripped up and shops running out of food. Essentials were in short supply. Those most at risk were the elderly, pregnant women and young girls. Many women had to walk long distances to fetch water, often in dark and unsafe areas. So, Helen and her team added solar torches to the essentials kits they were handing out.

“A woman told me, ‘Thank you for this torch. Now I feel safer when I walk to get water at night,’” recalls Helen. “Sometimes, it’s the smallest things that make the biggest difference.”

They also went beyond the obvious. They looked out for additional needs, like providing extra food for women who were missed in the initial assessments.

Helen learned how to respond to crises, like this earthquake, by doing the work. Her leadership, shaped more by experience than formal training, demonstrates the power of practical knowledge and strong community networks during a disaster response.

“When we go to communities, we don’t just see numbers, we see faces, we hear stories, we understand the struggles,” reflects Helen. “That’s the difference when women lead.”

This is just one way that your support is helping women practise their power around the world. Thank you.



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The government declared us free but even then we had to protest to claim our rights.”

Biruni

© Uma Bista/ActionAid

Standing firm for the land that's theirs

Determination and grit have made Biruni the activist she is today. As a community leader in southwestern Nepal, she defends the rights of those around her – skills forged through decades of graft.

For generations, Biruni was trapped in a form of hereditary bonded labour known as the Kamaiya system. “We had nothing to call our own,” she recalls. “We were forced to live and work at the landowner’s house.”

Even when people rose up through the Kamaiya Freedom Movement, which pressured the government into abolishing Kamaiya in 2000, Biruni’s life didn’t change. She worked another three years as a bonded labourer. “I had no idea about our freedom,” she says. “Nobody told me.”

Then, local groups began setting up literacy programmes. Biruni joined these courses at night, after an exhausting day working. There, she met other women like her and began organising. Branded a troublemaker by landowners, she remained undeterred.

“Education helped us to see clearly,” she says. “But we also realised we were being served an injustice. Education helped us to understand that we need to fight for ourselves.”

Demanding women’s rights

Biruni and her fellow women noticed that the Kamaiya Freedom Movement was ignoring women’s needs. In response, they set up the Kamaiya Mahila Jagaran Samaj (KMJS) to represent the issues of women freed from bonded labour.

Today, Biruni is chair of KMJS, which is an ActionAid partner. Through it, she and her colleagues have been demanding compensation, land and protection. But when the government finally gave them land, much of it was in flood-prone areas. This was a body blow for the community – Nepal is among the top 10 countries most affected by climate disasters. Flooding, landslides and waterborne diseases are now common, blighting the land they received. Women tend to be among those hit hardest.

This has put Biruni and her community at constant risk of losing the land and livelihoods they’ve fought so hard for. There’s also the legacy of the Kamaiya system, which in some cases has left people without land certificates to prove ownership, making their position even more precarious. And on top of that, women are not allowed to own land on their own.

So, Biruni and her community are using their lifelong experience to shape their future. They work together to make things happen. “We work on women’s rights, education rights, making better livelihoods, and then disaster resilience,” she says.

And with your support, ActionAid works alongside them, backing their demands and providing resources so they can keep strengthening their communities.

Thank you.



© Uma Bista/ActionAid



Practise your own power through our new collective

ActionAid is launching a new national, feminist collective of supporters like you who want to take action for gender justice.

Join this community of volunteers and practise your own power through activism, advocacy and awareness-raising to support ActionAid's work as we build a fairer world together with women and girls.

Whether you're a longstanding supporter, an experienced campaigner, or completely new to ActionAid, joining our collective gives you the chance to connect with like-minded feminists who share your passion for challenging injustice,

combatting structural inequalities and demanding lasting change.

ActionAid's newest collective offers online and in-person spaces to connect, collaborate and organise. As a member, you'll be able to learn new skills, and can link up with others to attend marches, organise events, lobby MPs and much more.

Tap below to register your interest, and we'll be in touch to get you started.

Join us and be part of a growing movement for feminist change.



You could win
£25,000!

Every week, there's a 1 in 63 chance of winning, so it really could be you.

Our lottery players are part of something bigger: a community of supporters who are helping women build a better future for themselves and their families.

For just £1 a week, you could win up to £25,000 – all while supporting ActionAid's work with women and girls around the world. It's a simple way to make a powerful difference. And for some of our supporters, that £1 per week has led to something extraordinary.

Visit actionaid.org.uk/lottery for more information and to start playing today.

Winner spotlight

Hilary



In January, Hilary won an incredible £25,000 – all from playing just one number she's held since 1998. Hilary continues to play today, and is a long-standing regular donor to many of our programmes. Her win is a powerful reminder that one small action each week can make a life-changing difference.

Challenge yourself!

Take on a fundraising challenge and discover your power as you stand with the women and girls around the world who are leading the way towards an equal, fair and just future.

From running a marathon, to crafting in your community, the ways to fundraise are endless. Supporter Catherine (*pictured right*) took part in the scorching Sahara Desert Trek. She said:



I believe everyone deserves the opportunity to thrive and live a life free from inequality and injustice. I'm proud to fundraise for ActionAid and support the rights of women and girls. That's the kind of change I want to be a part of."

Feeling Inspired?

Tap here or visit actionaid.org.uk/events to get involved!



Finding their power through **period pride**

“The most important thing for a girl is to value herself,” says 20-year-old Ingabire (*pictured left*). A participant at ActionAid’s summer 2025 camp for schoolgirls in Rwanda, she was brimming with newfound confidence about periods, consent and claiming her rights.

Although school enrolment for girls and boys is equal in Rwanda, girls’ attendance drops when they have their period. Pads are expensive, and schools often lack safe and hygienic spaces for girls to manage their periods with dignity.

Stigma around periods is another problem, with few being able to talk openly about them. It’s this period poverty that holds girls back and too often blocks their potential. That’s where the girls’ camps come in.

Learning and lending solutions

“One thing I learned from the ActionAid camp is how to track [my] menstrual cycle, which I didn’t know before,” says Ingabire. “I learned how to make reusable pads, so I don’t have to go to the market to buy them – I can make them myself.”

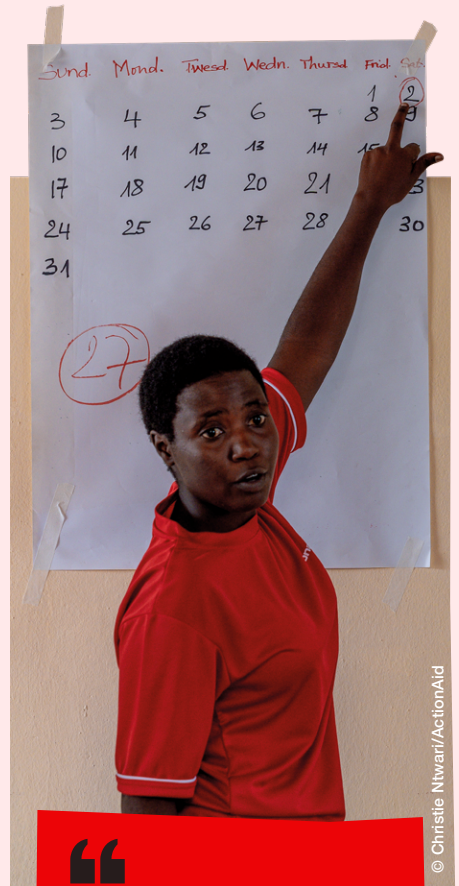
“Poverty affects girls, especially by preventing them from accessing pads or the soap to wash,” adds 18-year-old Yvette (*pictured right*). She attended the same camp with Ingabire, along with more than 100 other girls.

“Sometimes, they have to get these elsewhere, just to manage these challenges. But we learned that... The first solution... is to make reusable pads, which we can use multiple times... We will also encourage those who haven’t learned [about reusable pads] yet and show them how to make them.”

By learning and sharing solutions, Yvette, Ingabire and the hundreds of girls who have attended our camps can keep spreading knowledge and awareness about period care and their health rights, and demanding period justice. This brings them ever closer to securing the futures they want.

As Ingabire says: “As girls, we also have a voice, and we have many goals that we want to achieve.”

By supporting ActionAid, you’re helping girls reach their goals. We support girls in Rwanda not just through our summer camps but all year round, with over 77 school clubs for more than 2,300 girls. Many of these clubs have created dedicated rooms in schools where girls can manage their periods safely and hygienically. Thank you.



© Christie Ntwari/ActionAid



When girls have the power to choose things that benefit them, society functions better.”

Yvette, a student in Rwanda who attended an ActionAid girls camp



Put your love into action

When we lose someone we love, finding a way to honour their life and their values is a lasting way to celebrate their memory.

A Love in Action tribute is an online space where you, your family and friends can share stories and photos of your loved one, taking time to remember their passion for justice and creating a safer world for us all.

Your Love in Action tribute will raise vital funds for women and girls, ensuring they can continue building the kind of world your loved one would hope to see.

Keep your loved one's memory alive through a tribute fund with ActionAid.

Visit: actionaid.muchloved.org



Looking for a meaningful gift?



Our online ethical shop has gifts available throughout the year. Find out how you can give differently while supporting ActionAid.



Make your giving go further

If you're looking for something thoughtful and impactful for that special someone, our range may have just what you need.

These gifts offer the perfect way to reflect your loved one's values while helping to create a fairer world. They don't just say, I'm thinking of you. They also say, this does something real. From distributing emergency essentials — like food, water and shelter during crises — to providing access to schools, period packs and business training, your gifts will help women, girls and their communities thrive.

Gifts start from **as little as £11** and can be personalised with your own message, making them ideal for birthdays, celebrations or simply to show someone you care.

So, the next time you're looking for a present, think of ActionAid's ethical shop and choose a gift that changes lives.

Gifts in Action



Emergency Baby Kit



Water Tap



Backpack to Learn



Beekeeping Kit

View our full range of inspiring gifts at [actionaid.org.uk/gifts](https://www.actionaid.org.uk/gifts)