

Talking

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action



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Inside this issue

Celebrating 10 years of standing up for women's rights!

Rebuilding after the earthquake and tsunami in Indonesia

The difficult decision faced by women in Kenya



Thanks to your support

Evelyn Paul participating in a 'Women I Tok Tok' workshop. After you got behind her, Evelyn was able to prepare for future disasters with her community.

Celebrating 10 years of standing up for women's rights across the world



Michelle Higelin
Executive Director

This year marks a decade since ActionAid was established in Australia, joining a global movement standing with women and girls to confront injustice for over 45 years.

As always in disasters and their aftermath, it's people who already face discrimination and injustice who suffer the worst effects. Thanks to your support, over this last decade we have stepped up our efforts to advance women's rights around the globe.

From supporting their responses to emergencies like the recent earthquake and tsunami in Sulawesi, Indonesia, to standing beside women in Uganda accessing their land rights, I am proud of the work we've accomplished together to support women driving change in the face of adversity.

Our critical work is gaining momentum. I've seen this first hand in places like Afghanistan and Jordan, where women are learning about their rights and finding the confidence to speak out in ActionAid's Safe Spaces.

A personal highlight for me has been standing in solidarity with women affected by the worst impacts of climate change. In Kenya, women are adapting their farming techniques and becoming more resilient in the face of emergencies such as floods. In Vanuatu, one of the world's most disaster prone countries, women like Flora – who you'll read about in this issue - are on the frontline and leading responses in a country where they are often excluded from decision making.

Here in Australia, we've been working hard to build a community of activists that can drive forward our campaigning efforts to address the structural causes of poverty and injustice. Together, we've used our people power to successfully hold an Australian mining company to account for its impact on women's rights in South Africa.

This work would not be possible without people like you, who stand with us every step of the way.

It goes without saying that we are built on a great legacy. I look forward to what we will achieve together over the next 10 years, working to claim the rights of women and fight poverty and injustice around the world.

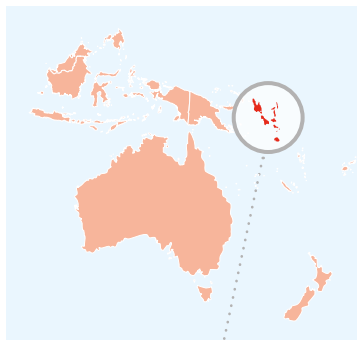
I hope you're inspired by the incredible stories you'll read in this issue. I look forward to all that we will continue to achieve together.

In strength and solidarity,

Michelle Higelin
Executive Director

Hope in the face of disasters in Vanuatu

Together we're supporting women like Flora to prepare for future disasters in Vanuatu.





© Solaye Strider, ActionAid Australia

Thank you for supporting women like Flora to plan for and respond to emergencies in Vanuatu.

She and her community are finding the confidence to raise their voices and become powerful agents of change.

Vanuatu is one of the most disaster prone countries in the world. In 2015, it was struck by Cyclone Pam – the worst cyclone on record to ever hit the country.

Flora remembers the day vividly. The deep worry for her children weighed heavily on her heart, and in the aftermath, the burden of work fell on the shoulders of women like her:

“Women does many work, does many duties during a disaster like that. They have to prepare food and prepare water, to boil water for children, and to wash clothes - make sure children have good food to eat and good water to drink.”

The Women I Tok Tok Tugeta forum was set up in 2015, as part of ActionAid Australia’s response to Cyclone Pam. Women have used the forum as a space to receive support, have their voices heard, collaborate and build their resilience ahead of future disasters.

“I have prepared myself. After this forum through ActionAid, I have trust in me that I have to bring my women together, and encourage them how to trust themselves, to prepare themselves, and work harder to face another disaster.”

Through stepping up to take leadership in emergency preparedness and response, Flora and the women in the forum have started to challenge perceptions of what a woman’s role should be, and gain respect for their leadership from the rest of the community.

Thank you for helping women like Flora to raise their voices and become strong leaders in Vanuatu.

UPDATE:
**Indonesia
earthquake
and
tsunami**

On September 2018, a series of earthquakes struck the island of Sulawesi, Indonesia. They were followed by a tsunami with waves up to 6 metres tall that devastated the city of Palu.

The disaster killed over two thousand people and seriously injured thousands more. Over 1.4 million people were affected by the devastating impacts of the earthquake. We know women are usually most affected by disasters like this, with a greater risk of experiencing gender based violence.

We worked with women at the centre of the crisis, who mobilised and responded immediately to ensure women's needs were met. Thank you for your support!

How has ActionAid responded to the crisis?

Our office in Indonesia, YAPPIKA ActionAid, has been on the ground, working with local partners to provide emergency supplies like food, water and shelter to those most affected.

Thanks to your generosity, Indonesia is slowly rebuilding their communities after the catastrophic events that occurred last September.



▲ Dewi, one of several female medical volunteers, checks the blood pressure of a man impacted by the earthquake.



▲ The city of Palu, Indonesia after the earthquake and tsunami struck and devastated communities.

Together we have:



Mobilised a **women centred emergency** response, reaching over 60,000 people and distributing supplies including tents, tarpaulins, water, food, nappies, sanitary protection, baby powder, baby oil, sarongs and baby clothes.



Activated a **women-led protection and livelihoods** recovery program reaching 22,728 people.



Set up 3 Women Friendly Spaces **reaching 2000 women** living in areas affected.



Provided **food support to 1,785 families** through community kitchen and food kits.



▲ Local women leading the sorting and distribution of donated clothes at Langaoge coconut farm. Over 1500 people found shelter at the farm when their coastal town of Donggala was struck by the earthquake and tsunami.



▲ Yanti sits on top of donated supplies in Langaoge coconut farm, Indonesia. ActionAid distributed emergency supplies like food, water and shelter.



© Sabin Shrestha/ActionAid

Breaking barriers for over 10 years in Nepal

For over a decade ActionAid has been breaking down barriers in communities around Nepal. Home to the breathtaking Himalayas, it is also one of the most disaster prone countries in the world with deep rooted patriarchal norms and structures that entrench poverty and inequality.

Thanks to supporters like you, the last 10 years have been monumental for women in Nepal. They are leaders in their communities and are driving critical change throughout the country.

You've helped achieve over 10 years of change through:



Establishing women community groups

“I grew up believing that women should be isolated during their menstruation. Being a member of the women’s group changed my life.” – Tara, member of an ActionAid women’s group

ActionAid-supported women’s groups in Western Nepal have helped prevent patriarchal practices like ‘chhaupadi’, which banishes women from their homes after they’ve given birth and when menstruating. This practice has caused the deaths of women forced to live in separate huts and cow sheds, leaving them vulnerable to infection and animal attacks. Through the groups, more than 1,400 women have stopped practicing this custom. ActionAid and its partners have also helped to establish over 10 ‘chhaupadi free’ communities in Western Nepal.



Driving women’s independence

“Through the ActionAid agricultural group I got many opportunities... by selling the seeds I do not have to worry about my family’s basic needs.” – Janasara, Farmer from Bajura

Women in Nepal are often restricted to household work and denied access to property, which leaves them reliant on their husbands for basic necessities. To combat this, ActionAid has supported the women-led Equality Development Centre in Nepal. As a result, over 20 agricultural groups have gained vegetable farming training, climate adaption farming skills and land ownership certificates, enabling women to increase their independence and their ability to live a life of dignity.



Standing in solidarity with women leading responses to emergencies

“The women were happy in the safe spaces, they say they learned a lot and it healed their trauma.... The women are now taking a lead on the reconstruction work”. – Malati, ActionAid Nepal Women’s Rights Officer

Nepal is prone to disasters like earthquakes, floods and landslides. In the 2015 earthquake, more than 8,000 people died and many more were injured. In the aftermath of the earthquake, ActionAid helped set up 30 Women Friendly Spaces, where women could safely access services and understand their rights. Now these Women Friendly Spaces have become a place where women discuss how they would like to reshape their communities, and are encouraged to take on active leadership roles and claim their rights.



Activists in Sydney gathered to hear from Millicent about how her community in South Africa has been affected by climate change and mining.

Phola women stand up for their rights

After months of campaigning, mining company South32 has agreed to work with women impacted by one of their coal mines in South Africa.

In June of 2018, ActionAid launched a campaign to support women from Phola, South Africa, who are being impacted by Australian mining company South32. Thanks to your support, we raised over \$12,000 to launch an investigation into the effects of a South32 coal mine just a few kilometres from their community.

The results of the investigation were staggering. The women reported an increase in gender-based violence since mining began in their area. They also experienced polluted air and water, damage to their homes and a spike in mining-related health issues.

With the results in hand, ActionAid activists around the country mobilised to ensure South32 were held to account.

At the South32 AGM, we called on the company to listen to the women, and after months of mounting pressure, South32 agreed to meet with them.

Thanks to everyone who gave to our crowdfunder, Millicent Shungube from the Greater Phola Ogies Women's Forum was able to visit Australia and voice her community's concerns to senior members of South32's leadership team. As a result, South32 committed to address them.

Thank you for your support – you're playing a vital role in helping Phola women achieve justice for their community.



Millicent Shungube from the Greater Phola Ogies Women's Forum in South Africa meeting with Activists at a Melbourne Event.

Activist snapshot

In honour of International Human Rights Day, ActionAid Australia activists led a massive day of action to call on MPs and Senators to pledge their support for a human rights watchdog that would ensure justice for women impacted by Australian mining companies overseas.

Activists dropped in on 12 MPs and senators around Australia, and delivered a petition calling for their support.

ActionAid activists also gathered real-life "watchdogs" outside the Labor National Conference, hounding the ALP for a watchdog that would protect women's rights.



Help us continue to put women's rights at the forefront of the government agenda by signing the petition for a Human Rights Watchdog, go to: <https://actionaid.org.au/actions/alp-human-rights-watchdog/>

Strong Women Adventure

Have you ever dreamt of trekking Nepal's Annapurna foothills, through terraced rice fields, across pristine rivers and snow-capped mountains?

We're excited to launch our first Strong Women Adventure in 2020! Join us on the adventure of a lifetime while getting behind women's rights. You will have the opportunity to see ActionAid's work firsthand and meet some of the extraordinary women you empower. We can't wait to tell you more.

Stay tuned for further updates in 2019.



To register your interest call Monique on 1300 66 66 72 or email Monique.Corkin@actionaid.org



Frocking Hilarious is back

After sell-out shows in Melbourne and Sydney, Frocking Hilarious is returning this year with an unmissable line-up of Australian's funniest women!

Last year's events received five star reviews and it featured comedians like Judith Lucy, Claire Hooper and Wendy Harmer. This year is set to be bigger and better.

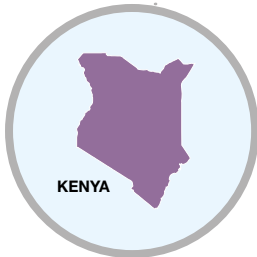
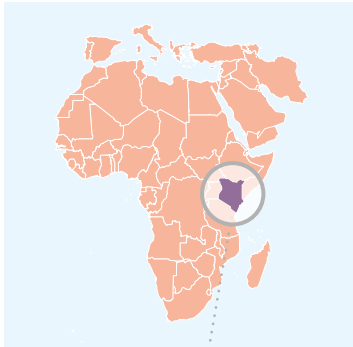
Grab your best bunch of friends and book yourselves in for a fabulous night of all female comics and rip-roaring belly laughs, all while supporting ActionAid's women's rights work around the world.



To check dates near you and buy tickets go to:
www.actionaid.org.au/frockinghilarious

Food or education.

The difficult decision faced by women in Kenya



Nancy Thaara is a mother to three children who lives in the remote farming village of Kayonga, Kenya. Over the years she has struggled to send her children to school.

Women like Nancy have depended on farming as a source of income, however the changing climate means farming can no longer be relied on. Many women have been left with no choice but to walk long distances in search of food and water for their children, putting them at high risk of sex trafficking and violence.

“Women in this village walked long distances to neighboring communities looking for menial jobs and food. We used to exchange our baskets with cereals from women living in a neighboring community. This left us with no money to pay school fees for our children, who ended up dropping out,” Nancy explains.

For decades, women like Nancy have endured extreme poverty in Kenya. Patriarchal norms and traditional practices like early marriage and female genital mutilation run deep, further entrenching poverty and injustice for women.

However, Nancy was able to access training provided by ActionAid Kenya where she learnt skills like financial management, leadership and climate resilience. Nancy put her skills into practice and with new farming techniques in hand she began to make a living through her crops. Through her hard work and entrepreneurial skills, she is now earning enough money to send her children to school.

“Our women no longer walk long distances in search for labour and food since we are now harvesting higher yields from our crops. We have moved a step further.... and can now afford to take our children to secondary and even colleges and universities.”

Nancy is also now a respected leader in her community, managing agricultural projects and contributing to decisions. “I remember that time I struggled to speak in presence of people but today I can and I am leading in various groups and community institutions” says Nancy.

But there is still a long way to go. Although most women in Kenya live in farming villages, they own less than one percent of the land. Women need access to training, and support to become decision-makers and leaders in their communities. Women like Nancy should not have to face the difficult choice of either feeding their children or providing them with an education.

Will you help more women like Nancy access training so they can learn valuable skills and send their children to school?

We must stand with women like Nancy to help break cycles of poverty. Together we can help mothers send their children to school.



Nancy (centre) with other members of her local women's group.

© Ekarna Nyaga/ActionAid

Your support can help:



Provide training where women like Nancy can learn financial management and climate adaptation skills to build a livelihood and provide for their children.



Empower women like Nancy through women's groups where they can learn leadership skills and become key decision makers in their communities.



Support women farmers to learn about their land rights and access the legal services they need to claim them.

Thank you

for empowering women and
girls to claim their rights
and fight injustice.

ActionAid Australia
Level 3
25 Cooper Street
Surry Hills, NSW, 2010

1300 66 66 72
www.actionaid.org.au
supporter.au@actionaid.org