

Talking

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SPRING 2019

TEN YEARS ending poverty together!



Varou Mat is helping her
Cambodian community
get ready for disasters
caused by climate change.

Because of your support,
she's become a respected
local leader.

A DECADE of empowerment



Michelle Higelin
Executive Director

This year, we are proud to celebrate 10 years of supporting women as ActionAid Australia. In 2009, we joined the ActionAid Federation's 40-year legacy of fighting poverty and injustice. Ever since, contributions from generous people have been supporting women's rights in emergencies, climate justice, and economic empowerment across the world.

ActionAid supporters like you have had a busy decade.

In **2009**, we helped women to claim their economic rights in Palestine.

In **2011**, we helped train 5,720 women farmers in Kenya and Uganda in management of finances, land, livestock, and seeds.

In **2013**, after Typhoon Haiyan, we supported over 163,000 people in the Philippines.

In **2015**, following Cyclone Pam, we helped build women's information centres supporting over 8,000 women in Vanuatu. Following two earthquakes in Nepal, ActionAid supporters helped over 152,970 people across the country recover their livelihoods after the disaster.

In **2016**, ActionAid supporters facilitated a social enterprise helping women clothing producers in Myanmar access a global market.

In **2017**, supporters helped make cities safer for women in Cambodia, Zimbabwe and Bangladesh.

In **2018**, we helped 5120 people in Afghanistan gain improved access to food.

ActionAid also supported projects in 14 countries that empowered 169,244 people, including 85,000 women and girls.

None of this would have been possible without your contribution.

If one thing has always proven true over the course of this past decade, it's that women are incredibly powerful agents for change.

When supporters like you help women lead in their communities, they are able to secure greater access to resources. They can drive initiatives to hold governments accountable. And when humanitarian crises and conflicts do hit, women can take charge in protecting their rights.

We have built a strong legacy together in the last 10 years. Over the next decade, I look forward driving our vision of a just, equitable and sustainable world.

I can't thank you enough for your support.

In strength and solidarity,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Michelle Higelin', with a long, sweeping underline.

Michelle Higelin
Executive Director

10 YEARS fighting for women's rights

Over the past ten years, ActionAid Australia supporters have helped women stand up for their rights. You have helped them to lead in disasters and emergencies, work for climate justice and empower themselves economically.

The decade past has seen women everywhere challenged in so many ways – from political injustice and oppression to disasters like cyclones and droughts. Thanks to supporters like you, women in communities all over the world have been able to rise to these challenges and support their families and communities. Here are just a few examples:



Archie Law with a group of ActionAid Myanmar Change Makers in Mandalay state, Myanmar.



Women farmers who were part of the support group standing in the farm they had cultivated.



2009

After 50 years as Austcare, ActionAid Australia joins the global ActionAid federation.



2011

5,720 women farmers in Kenya and Uganda are empowered to run their farms more productively in the face of climate change.

Today ActionAid supporters have impacted the lives of 25



ActionAid staff support women survivors to lead response efforts in the Philippines.



Women from Vanuatu taking part in a disaster preparedness workshop.



Hay, 37 years old farmer from O'Rum Cheik village in Cambodia.



2013

When Typhoon Haiyan hits the Philippines, women's disaster recovery groups mobilise to help 163,000 people.



2015

Cyclone Pam hits Vanuatu, and your support helps build vital women's information centres that also sow the seeds for women's climate leadership well into the future.



2017

1,900 female entertainment workers in Cambodia demand better healthcare and more streetlights, making their city safer for all women.

million people in 45 countries. Thank you!

REFLECTIONS AND HOPES for the next 10 years



Megs Alston is a Board Vice-President of ActionAid. Megs has been part of the Board since 2011 and has worked in international development for over 25 years. As part of ActionAid's 10-year anniversary, Megs reflects on some of the successes she's seen and her hopes for the future.



Megs Alston
Vice-President of ActionAid

Why are women's rights and ending poverty important to you?

Women are disadvantaged all over the world. But by claiming their rights and gaining equality and opportunities to improve their lives, families and whole communities can benefit as well.

What ActionAid work do you feel most proud about?

ActionAid's work on women's rights in emergencies is fantastic. Women have rarely been given a voice in humanitarian disasters in the past, and sadly this is an area which we are going to see much more of in future due to the effects of climate change.

Why did you start supporting ActionAid?

I liked the fact that they use a human rights-based approach to development, which I firmly believe is the best way to achieve change. This means they enable women and communities to advocate for themselves, which is a key element to sustainable change.

I also believe campaigning is crucial so that we in 'developed' countries can see how our behaviour and that of our

corporations and governments can negatively affect people in other parts of the world. ActionAid has developed an important campaigning capacity which has had some significant successes.

As a Board member what difference do gifts in Wills make to ActionAid's work with women and girls?

Having been on the Board of ActionAid Australia for the past eight years I have seen firsthand what a difference gifts in Wills have made to women's lives.

What better legacy can we leave than to know that these funds will be used directly to support the struggle of women and girls, who merely because of their gender, have nothing like the chances and opportunities that many of us and our families take for granted?

What are your hopes for ActionAid over the next 10 years?

I hope ActionAid becomes further recognised as a leader on women's rights. Not only for women in emergencies, but also on climate justice for women and in advocating for just economic policies and better access to resources for women.



**EMERGENCY
UPDATE:**

Cyclone Idai

In March 2019, Cyclone Idai ripped through Mozambique, Malawi and Zimbabwe, affecting three million people, killing at least 700 and destroying 400,000 homes.

The cyclone caused huge destruction, leaving women and children particularly vulnerable to gender-based violence, hunger and diseases like cholera.

Thanks to your support, ActionAid's local staff, along with many female community members, helped stop the spread of life-threatening diseases. They provided hygiene kits for women and girls, water purification tablets, and mosquito nets for new and expectant mothers.

With your help, ActionAid supported women to protect their rights, reduce disease and malnutrition, and lead the recovery of their communities.

▲ Regina Armando sits with her twins in Água Rural Camp. Nearly 15,000 people in Regina's district were living in one of only 14 camps after being displaced by Cyclone Idai.



TOGETHER WE'VE



Provided
agricultural
supplies to

**over
3000**

women farmers



Leaneor, a mother of 5, has come with her daughter to collect a dignity kit.



Rosa Jaisora, a local leader, explaining how women were affected by flooding and distributing dignity kits to her community.



Reached out to help over

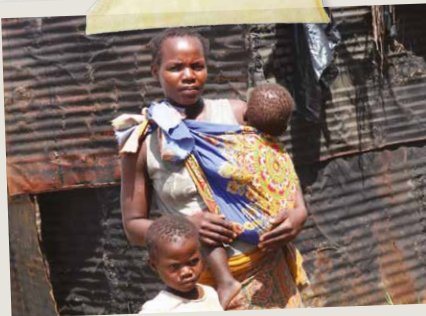
18,000 people in total



Distributed over

**2000
hygiene**

**kits to help
women stay
clean and safe**



Regina Armando sits with her twins in Agua Rural Camp. Nearly 15,000 people in Regina's district were living in one of only 14 camps after being displaced by Cyclone Idai.



Helped over

**5000
students**

**replace the
school supplies
they'd lost**



THRIVING in the face of violence

Thank you so much for helping women in Uganda take control of their lives after experiencing gender-based violence. Your support means, ActionAid women's shelters can help survivors of violence make a new start.

Harriet, 42, was one such survivor. She experienced dreadful beating and abuse for 14 years at the hands of her husband. Despite these terrible circumstances, she still managed to provide food and pay school fees for her children.

Traumatized from the abuse she'd received but determined to survive, Harriet left her husband and made contact with the ActionAid Women's Shelter in Kampala. There, she was able to access counselling after her ordeal and get training in new skills, along with the funds to start her own business.

Becoming empowered economically is vital to helping survivors like Harriet live independently. By earning an income, women in Ugandan society are respected and decreasing the prevalence of this kind of violence.

But Harriet wasn't content with earning money to support her own family. She also wanted to help other women. She chose to start a business making re-usable sanitary pads to help girls attend school, even when they have their periods.

Today, Harriet's business is thriving. She has trained over 22,000 girls all over the country to make sanitary pads, stay in school and gain livelihood skills.

Today, because of the help of ActionAid supporters like you, Harriet is a proud business leader and a self-proclaimed women's rights activist. Her work has touched the lives of thousands of women across Uganda.

Thank you so much for supporting incredible women like Harriet to survive, thrive and help others after experiencing gender-based violence.

STANDING UP for women's rights

The Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) is a trade deal under consideration by the Australian government. If this deal is signed in its current form, it is likely to undermine women's access to decent work.

It will drive down wages as countries compete to lower production costs for corporations. In so many cases, women will be worst affected as they work in the lowest paid industries like garment manufacturing.

But that's not all – the new deal would reduce trade tariffs, leaving countries with less to spend on essential public services like schools and hospitals. It could even leave low-income countries financially devastated by corporate lawsuits.

With your support, ActionAid Australia and our allies around the world are fighting back to combat corporate power with people power. Along with our colleagues from ActionAid Vietnam, we spoke to delegates at the closed negotiations in Melbourne.

As negotiations continue throughout this year, we won't let up the pressure until we get a fair deal for women.



▲ Staff from ActionAid Australia and Nguyen Phuog Thuy from ActionAid Vietnam attend negotiations in Melbourne.



▲ At our women and trade roundtable, Thuy Nguyen Phuog shared how RCEP would jeopardise the livelihoods of women workers in Vietnam.

“Women’s rights organisations should have an ongoing seat at the table to ensure our demands for fairness and human rights are properly heard. But we hope that when we all raise our voice on the same issues, the negotiators from each country will consider our recommendations.”

Nguyen Phuog Thuy, ActionAid Vietnam.
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THE POWER of women's laughter

On Thursday 16th May, nine of Australia's best female comedians took to the stage of Sydney's Enmore Theatre for the sixth Frocking Hilarious all-female comedy extravaganza.

Judith Lucy, Steph Tisdell, Fiona O'Loughlin and Effie Stephanidis - along with many more talented female standups - had the sold-out thousand-person crowd in stitches.

Aside from the jokes, Frocking Hilarious is all about driving home an important message about the power of women's laughter. Each and every day, we are so inspired by the strength and resilience of the women we work with. In the face of adversity, they continue to laugh, persevere and stand up for their rights.

Thank you to everyone who came along and stood in solidarity with women around the world.



Want in? **Join us for Frocking Hilarious Melbourne** on 23 November at the Alex Theatre in St Kilda! The show will feature Fiona O'Loughlin, Claire Hooper, Jude Perl, and Kirsty Webeck among many others.



STRONG women (and men) wanted!

Are you a fitness feminist? We're looking for women and men of all abilities who want to challenge themselves and improve their wellbeing in support of women's rights.

The Strong Women Challenge will kick off on 4th November, with the goal of raising money for strong women fighting for equality and justice around the world.


As a Strong Women Challenge participant, you'll take part in 21 days of fun exercises to strengthen your body and mind. Designed by fitness experts the workouts are varied to cater for all levels, from newbies to gym junkies.

We'll be with you every step of the way, providing inspiration, explainer videos and tips.

Best of all, you'll know that every dollar you raise will help women around the world build collective strength as they stand up for their rights.

Building on the success of last year's program, which raised \$44,000, this year's Strong Women Challenge will be bigger and better than ever.



 Join us by going to www.strongwomenchallenge.org.au or calling on **1300 66 66 72**



HELP women rebuild their lives in Indonesia

In September last year, a devastating earthquake struck Indonesia. In the tsunami that followed, Ningsih's family home was washed away. Terrified, the young mother took her young son and fled for her life.

Ningsih's family fishing boats were also destroyed, leaving her with nowhere to call home, no income, and haunted by the trauma of what she'd been through. Food, electricity and clean water were scarce.

Ningsih was just one of many thousands of people whose lives were wrecked by this disaster. Many lost their lives and so many more were left mourning loved ones. Those who survived are now facing the devastating loss of their homes and livelihoods.

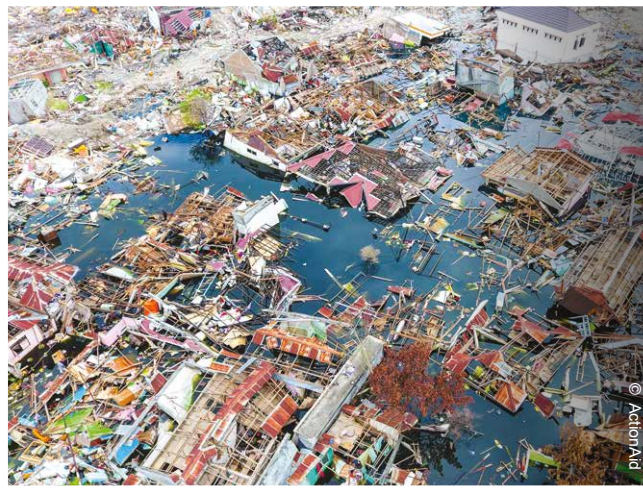
In the aftermath of emergencies like this, women like Ningsih are always at higher risk of violence and even trafficking. Their voices and needs are not heard by authorities, and male leaders don't recognise their skills in helping their communities to recover.

Through ActionAid, Ningsih was able to access training on women's rights, waste management and new farming methods. Ningsih and members of her women's group have been sharing their newfound knowledge with their communities and helping women stand up for their rights to take a public role in disaster recovery.

As Fiani, another Indonesian leader, says: "For these women, deciding to tell and share their experience is already a big step. It's first step towards a different awareness of their rights."



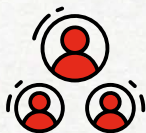
▲ Women receiving resources after the earthquake.



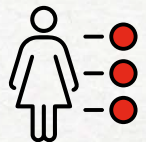
▲ Aerial shot of the devastation caused by the earthquake and tsunami in Indonesia.

Can you make a gift to enable more women in Indonesia rebuild their lives together and be better prepared for future emergencies?

Here's how your gift will help:



PROTECTION TRAINING to support women claim their rights;



SKILL BUILDING in vital areas like waste management and new farming methods;



SUPPORT to come together with other women and share the burden of recovery from the disaster.

Over the last 10 years we've seen time and time again how helping women take the lead after disasters can transform whole communities and even societies.

With your support, more women like Ningsih will be able to empower themselves and become strong and effective leaders in the face of disasters. Can you make a gift to help them claim their rights and lead the way in recovering from disaster?

Your support is so much appreciated.

Thank you

**for 10 years of empowering
women 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**