

act:onaid

ACTIONAID AUSTRALIA

Annual Report **2020**



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Who we are

ActionAid is a global women's rights organisation supporting women living in poverty and exclusion to stand up against injustice and claim their rights. We put the lived experience and leadership of women at the heart of everything we do.

Vision

A just, equitable and sustainable world in which every person enjoys the right to a life of dignity and freedom from poverty and all forms of oppression.

Purpose

To achieve social justice, gender equality and poverty eradication by working with people living in poverty and exclusion, in partnership with people's movements and grassroots activists.



ActionAid Australia fights for women's rights globally

Women's Leadership on the Frontlines

ActionAid Australia stands in solidarity with women on the frontlines of injustice. We support women's self-determination by giving women the knowledge, skills and resources they need to drive change for themselves and their communities.

Watch this 3-minute video featuring Executive Director, Michelle Higelin and Women's Rights in Emergencies Manager, Carol Angir



WOMEN MAKE UP 70% OF THOSE IN POVERTY AND FACE INJUSTICES ON A DAILY BASIS

ActionAid

Press play



A message from our Executive Director and Board Chair

2020 was a year like no other. It began with bushfires raging across Australia which served as a stark reminder that the climate crisis is upon us, and within months our world transformed as we were hit by the largest ever global humanitarian crisis. COVID-19 has taken the lives of over three million people and left no country untouched. Women have borne the brunt of the resulting health and economic impacts as violence against women has skyrocketed, alongside women's unpaid work and widespread job losses.

In this moment of crisis, ActionAid has scaled up its response, reaching over 10 million people in over 40 countries. This has supported women on the frontlines of intersecting health, economic and climate crises to prevent infections, distribute emergency relief and



begin to build back better. Our investment over the past five years in supporting women to prepare for crisis has delivered clear dividends for gender equality as women-led emergency response teams in countries like Vanuatu, Fiji, Bangladesh, Kenya and the Philippines have stepped up to keep their communities safe and their leadership and innovation has been recognised.

Amid this backdrop, ActionAid launched its new strategy, Time to Rise: Women's Leadership for Global Justice, recognising that we face a devastating reality that decades of progress on gender equality has been eroded in less than a year. Now more than

ever, as Australians we need to rise up against the growing injustices witnessed through this pandemic – inequalities in access to resources, health care, social protection and vaccines.

Thank you so much to all of our supporters and partners who have stood by us through these challenging times and supported our efforts to drive change by signing petitions, joining events, community organising and funding critical work. We are so proud of what we've been able to achieve together and acknowledge the incredible leadership provided by staff, volunteers and supporters to innovate and rise up in one of the toughest years on record.



Michelle Higelin,
Executive Director



Jeremy Hobbs,
Board Chair



Our refreshed strategic priorities

Covid-19 has exposed inequalities within and among countries in access to health care and economic security and glaring gender disparities in all regions. ActionAid Australia is determined to use this moment of societal upheaval for a radically new approach. It's time for a reset that drives justice for all women everywhere.

Our approach is one of self-determination. Our agenda has and always will be driven by the priorities of women at the forefront of efforts to shift power and build movements that challenge patriarchy and injustice.



Our strategic priorities are:



Promoting economic justice for women by working to secure just economic policies and more equitable redistribution of resources



Advancing climate justice by supporting women most affected by climate change to build resilience and adapt to climate change, while influencing policies that mitigate and reduce its impacts



Securing and protecting women's rights in emergencies by promoting the leadership of women most affected by crisis.

We have bold ambitions for the next three years – we want to support 100,000 women living in poverty and exclusion worldwide to lead efforts to advance their rights and resilience to crises. We will use technology to accelerate change, including sharing resources and expertise across borders and amplifying women's voices. We will work to build a movement of 100,000 Australians, harnessing unstoppable people power to win campaigns for economic and climate justice and advance a better world for all women.

This is the moment for women to collectively rise up against injustices. Building on more than 50 years of experience, over the next three years we will work in solidarity with women on the frontlines of injustice, alongside allies and movements in Australia and globally, to drive a global feminist reset towards a more just, equitable and sustainable world for all. Will you join us?



ActionAid Australia fights for women's rights globally

Women's Leadership on the Frontlines

Advancing climate justice for women

Promoting economic justice for women

Securing and protecting women's rights in emergencies

Advancing climate justice for women

ActionAid response to a global pandemic

act:onaid

Where we work

ActionAid Australia directly funds work

ActionAid global work

EUROPE
Denmark
France
Greece
Ireland
Italy
Netherlands
Spain
Sweden
Switzerland
United Kingdom

AMERICAS
Brazil
Guatemala
Haiti
USA

AFRICA
Burundi
DRC
Ethiopia
Gambia
Ghana
Kenya
Liberia
Malawi
Mozambique
Nigeria
Rwanda
Senegal
Sierra Leone
Somaliland
South Africa
Tanzania
Uganda
Zambia
Zimbabwe

PALESTINE
Arab Region
Lebanon
Jordan
Palestine

UGANDA

KENYA

AFGHANISTAN

NEPAL

BANGLADESH

MYANMAR

CAMBODIA

THE PHILIPPINES

INDONESIA

ASIA
Afghanistan
Bangladesh
Cambodia
India
Indonesia
Myanmar
Nepal
Thailand
Vietnam
The Philippines

AUSTRALIA

THE PACIFIC
Australia
Tonga
Fiji
Samoa
Solomon Islands
PNG & Bougainville
Vanuatu

THE PACIFIC

Our response to a global pandemic

As Covid-19 spread rapidly across the world, ActionAid's global network quickly mobilised to support women and girls on the frontline of the crisis to stop the spread, save lives and defend women's rights.

Women – as the majority of the world's health workers, carers, home-schoolers and informal workers – have had to bear the worst impacts of the global pandemic. As lockdowns shut down cities and job losses increased, so too did poverty and hunger. And gender-based violence skyrocketed globally causing a “shadow pandemic” that threatened to undo a decade of advancement in women's rights.

Crises exacerbate existing gender inequalities, but entire communities benefit when women are equipped to lead. This is why ActionAid focused on supporting local women to lead efforts to prevent the virus from spreading in their communities.





**ActionAid reached more
than 10 million people
globally**

Working with local partners, ActionAid had reached more than 10 million people by July 2020, providing life-saving essentials such as food, soap and water, as well as funding women's protection shelters and combating the spread of misinformation at community level through awareness campaigns. Other approaches included providing direct cash assistance for women and supporting local women's organisations to lead response efforts.

For more information, read [Women on the Frontlines of COVID-19: ActionAid Response Update August 2020](#)

AFGHANISTAN





AFGHANISTAN

ActionAid's 7-year REALISE program, supported by the Australian Government's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), wrapped up in December 2020. The final evaluation shows it has contributed to significant improvements in women's rights and security in Bamiyan and Balkh provinces. Women now better understand their rights and have greater self-determination compared to five years ago. Women are experiencing fewer incidences of gender-based violence and child marriage overall and are more confident to take action against perpetrators.

Through literacy and livelihoods training, savings and support groups, women have managed to improve food and nutritional security, diversify their incomes, open new businesses and increase their financial independence. Economic empowerment has in turn helped women improve their social status, freedoms and decision-making power within their households and wider communities, paving the way for more women to claim their rights.

Hawa's story



“My brother was the only income earner in the family. He worked as a farmer [and] we were not in a good economic condition at all,” says Hawa Gul (pictured), a 22-year-old living with her family in a remote village in mountainous Bamiyan province.

“I was very ashamed that I was unable to support my family in these hard times. I started to look for a job, but could not get one because women were having less economic opportunities in our village and few women were providing services... I was unable to contribute, and this was really hurting me.”

Hawa trained in tailoring and opened her own business, with the skills, tools and equipment she needed to start up provided by ActionAid. “I started working as a tailor in my village in early 2020. With the help and support from REALISE, and encouragement by family members, I am now a successful businesswoman in my community and providing tailoring services to people in my village and communities around us.”

Locals are happy with the high quality of Hawa's services giving her a reliable income from around 20 orders each month. “Now my work is well known to people in this community. I receive many orders when there is a festival or a ceremony. In such a time I sew up to 40 pairs of clothes in a month.”

Being able to contribute to the household income has given her more freedom to make decisions about her future, Hawa says. She has trained her sister-in-law to take over her village business and plans to move to the provincial capital for university where she will open a second tailoring shop to support herself.

Swing Machine Distribution
to
Most Vulnerable Rohingya Women

BANGLADESH

actionaid



BANGLADESH

ActionAid provided critical protection services and livelihood support as part of the COVID-19 response in the Rohingya refugee camps of Cox's Bazar. ActionAid operates 13 community support centres within the camps, including nine centres designated as safe spaces specifically for women escaping violence.

With the onset of the pandemic these centres quickly became known as somewhere community members could get accurate information and health advice about COVID-19. From the centres, around 200 community volunteers carried out COVID-19 awareness raising activities to dispel misinformation, demonstrate good hygiene practices and distribute soap and masks to Rohingya families to prevent the virus spreading through the densely populated camps.



The nine women friendly centres continued to provide psychosocial counselling and support for Rohingya women who have experienced gender-based violence. 49 women were trained to sew face masks and were paid for their work. Women produced 30,000 masks which were distributed through the camps providing an income for the women and helping to protect the community. ActionAid also supported a local women's organisation with masks and hygiene supplies to support their COVID-19 response work in the community.

Anowara's story

Anowara (pictured), and her five children lives in the Rohingya camp at Cox's Bazar. She refers to the ActionAid women-friendly space as "shanti khana" which means a 'place of peace' in the local language.

"It is difficult to keep distance in our camp which is very cramped and overpopulated. We have 11 people in two rooms. But we are trying our best so that we can stay healthy. I fear coronavirus, but we have to fight against it and continue living here.

"I hear about cleanliness at the shanti khana. I teach my neighbours to do what I hear here: to stay clean, to wash hands, to stay three feet away, do not hug one another. Now we are all well trained how to keep ourselves safe during the time of coronavirus.

"Not being able to go out of the house causes quarrels. There is more unrest due to money. If there is any kind of conflict, we can come to the shanti khana and file a complaint here.

We don't have the money to buy a mask. In this situation, we came to the shanti khana and learned to sew masks. I am wearing the mask I made and everyone in my family is wearing masks that I made. We are living on the money we earned money by selling these masks.



CAMBODIA





CAMBODIA

Phase two of the Gender-Responsive Alternatives for Climate Change (GRACC) project is being implemented in two provinces in Cambodia to increase women's participation and leadership in decision making on disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation.

A network of "Women Champions" was founded to establish a sustainable model for self-organising, leadership, collective action and to expand women's networks for influencing at the national level. Women Champions took the lead to define their community needs, implement small grants to mobilise community members, conduct disaster risk assessments and gender-based violence awareness and training.

Women Champions are speaking out and speaking up when vital decisions are being made on climate change and disasters, both at community and government level. They are helping villages and farms protect themselves by setting up early warning systems, building defences and planting protective mangrove barriers. They are also helping to create floating schools, spreading knowledge of sustainable farming practices and educating the next generation in new livelihoods that are less likely to be impacted by climate change.

Two women champions

Pak's Story

"Whenever natural disasters occur, there are many negative impacts on women and children. For example, when the flood comes in, it is very difficult for pregnant women to travel, women lose their jobs and children are not able to go to school."

Pak (pictured) is a village chief and has been a Woman Champion for three years. A widow who has raised her children alone, she earns a living as a farmer and also works in a salt field. As a Woman Champion, she gives training sessions on farming, sharing seeds, preparing freshwater reservoirs for irrigation and replenishing local mangroves.

Pak says that the training she received from ActionAid helped her to become a village chief. "My goal is to expand the network of women and for them to become leaders in the community."

Hok's story

Hok is a farmer and her family's crop has been destroyed by prolonged droughts and subsequent flash flooding. Like most people in her village, Hok has taken out numerous loans to make ends meet. This year, she raised money alongside other Women Champions to rehabilitate an irrigation canal so that her community can continue growing rice during the dry season.

"What motivates me to do the work I am doing is the common interest. If we build irrigation canals, we can grow vegetables and raise animals – and it can feed us and the generation to come. As a Woman Champion, I am able to improve my community's knowledge about health, disasters and domestic violence. I am actually quite tired. However, I would do whatever it takes to help improve my community's living conditions as we are still struggling."



INDONESIA





INDONESIA

While national Covid-19 lockdowns forced substantial changes to planned activities in Indonesia, women in disaster-affected communities working with ActionAid Indonesia (YAPPIKA) continued to lead and advocate for better community protection measures. Women's groups drafted community disaster risk reduction action plans (including Covid-19) and presented them to village and sub-district heads to be adopted by village government.

Women leaders stepped up to participate in Covid-19 village task forces implementing health and social distancing protocols at village level while others liaised with the district education office and village government to ensure the safety of children at school, successfully advocating for masks for school children. Women's groups also diversified their income by learning to produce hand sanitiser which they distributed to the community with Covid-19 health information.

Lilis' story

Ibu Lilis (pictured) is a 35-year-old woman living in Sumberjaya, a small seaside village in Banten Province. She earns a living for herself and her two young daughters through sewing jobs and working for her neighbours' food production business.

In 2020, ActionAid supported five women's economic enterprise groups in Banten to improve food security in their communities. Lilis' local group makes crackers, fish-balls, gabin-tape cakes (cassava cream biscuits), cassava chips and rempeyek (peanut fritters). Keen to get experience managing a food production business, Lilis joined the group and soon became one of its more dynamic members encouraging other women to also take part.

Since getting involved Lilis says she has grown in confidence which empowered her to approach the village government with a proposal to allocate funds to support women's economic enterprises and integrate them with village-owned enterprises. In recognition of her leadership, Lilis was elected to represent her group and meet with national food, drug and cosmetic regulatory body to apply for halal certification for their food products.

Certification will help the group expand their market and increase consumers' trust in products. After winning the approval of the assessors Lilis said, "I am very happy and excited after receiving the MUI halal certificate, I am sure that the group's products will sell better as they will be more trusted by consumers."

But Lilis and her collaborators are not content to stop there, they have plans to capitalise on growing tourism in the area.

"We want to build a souvenir centre after this."



KENYA





KENYA

Women in Kenya are now better protected, more resilient to climate change and able to advocate for longer term solutions. 500 women were trained in climate-resilient sustainable agriculture practices and 200 women formed collectives to encourage peer learning. They used these new techniques to increase the yield from their kitchen gardens giving their families access to fresh organic vegetables which has improved their food and nutrition security. Women have also organised to strategically push for policies and legislation at the county level for long term and sustained efforts to address climate change.

100 women artisanal miners' and their households, who were going hungry when Covid-19 affected the market for minerals, have improved their food security with training, seeds and tools that enabled them to plant and manage their own kitchen gardens. The county government has adopted this practice and replicated it in other places.

10 village savings and loan associations (VSLAs), with 200 members, have provided safe spaces for women to learn, save and share experiences. Women have used loans to set up small businesses and generate their own income. These women say they now feel empowered to speak up to challenge violence against women and girls.

Everlyn's story

Everlyn Kiyeny (pictured) walked 100km to escape her abusive husband. Now, aged 28, she is part of a network of 2,800 women in Baringo County in Kenya's Rift Valley advocating for the protection of women and girls.

At just 11 years old, Everlyn was forced into an arranged marriage which soon became violent. She assumed physical abuse was normal and accepted it until one assault left her hospitalised, fighting for her life. She resolved to leave.

She walked for three days along deserted paths under scorching sun until, hungry and exhausted, she reached Tangulbei settlement where she was introduced to Tangulbei Women Network, a local partner supported by ActionAid.

During a rights training session at an ActionAid women's space, Everlyn (pictured left, with an ActionAid staff member) was surprised to learn that the gender-based violence she experienced was a violation of her human rights.

"My relatives and neighbours had made me believe that women are not supposed to raise a voice when they are subjected to violence."

Over the next two years, she continued learning about her human and economic rights and was inspired to campaign for women's rights with the Tangelbei Women Network.

Determined to change the cultural norms that subject women and girls to violence, Everlyn now encourages women to speak out and lobby the government for policies that protect women and girls from violence.

"At the women's network, we are pushing for the enforcement of the existing laws to protect the rights of these vulnerable groups."

Everlyn is also part of a savings group and has used a loan to grow her business.

"In the last two years, my life has been transformed tremendously. I now have a business in the market, and I managed to get all my children from my parents' home, and they are all now in school."



THE PACIFIC

THE PACIFIC

ActionAid is a co-founder of the Shifting the Power Coalition – a regional alliance of 12 women-led civil society organisations and the Pacific Disability Forum in seven Pacific Forum countries, with a combined reach of 100,000 women. It supports diverse Pacific women's leadership in responding to disasters and climate change through advocacy, training and research, as well as rapid response grants in times of crisis.

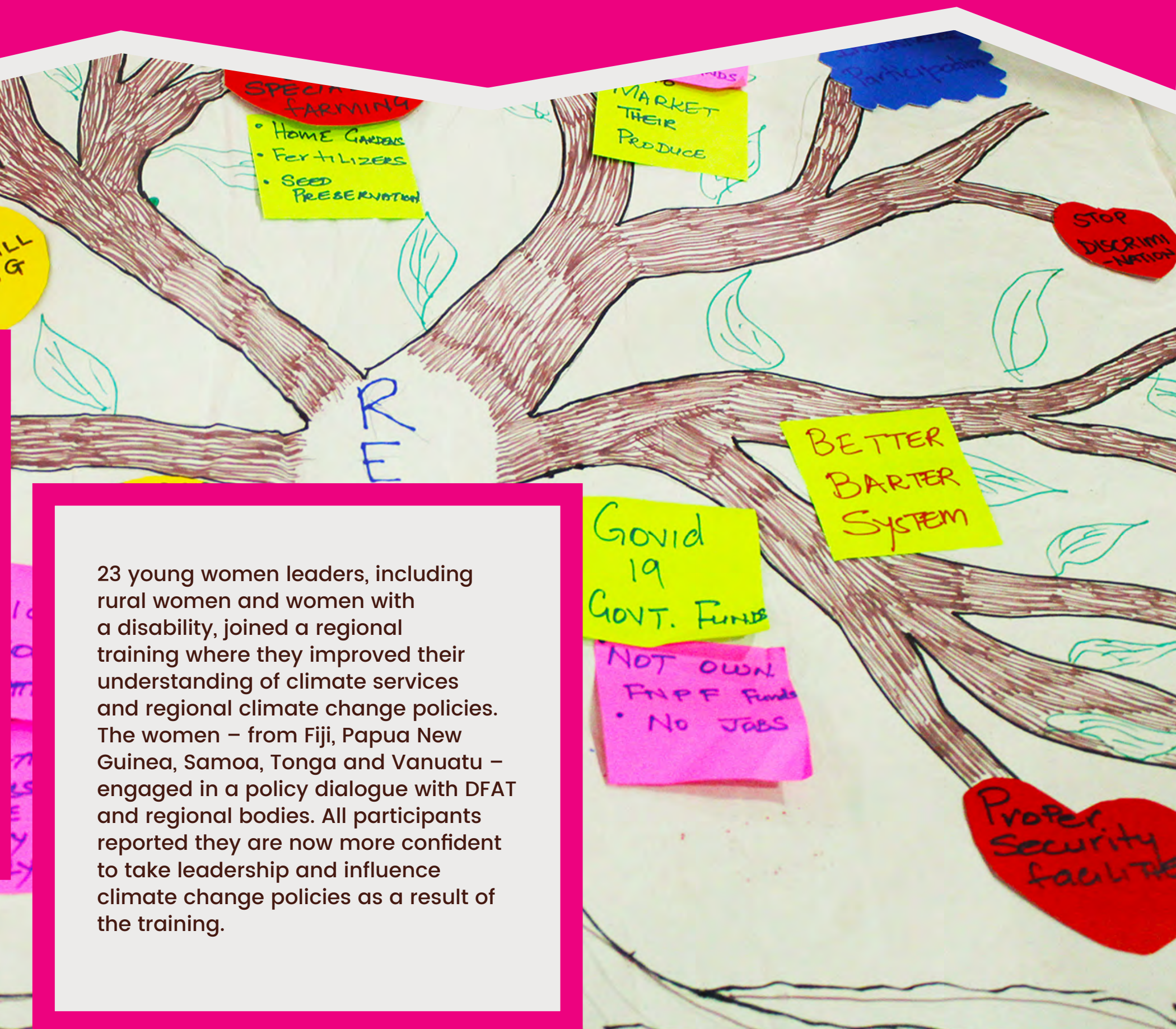




Shifting the Power Coalition

The Coalition resourced partners with grants to mobilise women-led responses to Tropical Cyclones Harold and Yasa in Vanuatu and Fiji, as well as COVID-19 across the region. Partners have demonstrated diverse women's capabilities and leadership reaching more than 6000 people with assistance. Grants were targeted to the specific needs of rural and remote, out of work, and young women; stronger communication systems for diverse rural young women; and care packs for rural women with disabilities.

23 young women leaders, including rural women and women with a disability, joined a regional training where they improved their understanding of climate services and regional climate change policies. The women – from Fiji, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Tonga and Vanuatu – engaged in a policy dialogue with DFAT and regional bodies. All participants reported they are now more confident to take leadership and influence climate change policies as a result of the training.



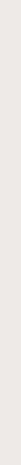
Unaisi's story



Fiji was rocked by successive massive cyclones at the end of 2020, exacerbating the upheaval caused by the Covid-19 pandemic. In December, as people were still recovering from the damage of Cyclone Harold, Cyclone Yasa swept through villages and towns, with winds of over 240 kph leaving homes destroyed, schools torn down, and farmlands ruined.

Unaisi Bakewa (pictured, right) is a rural community volunteer and Vice President of Tavua branch of the Fijian Disabled Peoples Federation, a member of the Shifting the Power Coalition. As Yasa bore down on Fiji, Unaisi contacted members of the Federation to alert them to the coming storm and help them prepare.

“I went to the community and the people I represent, particularly with disability; I told them to get ready to go to the evacuation centre. I told them that Cyclone Yasa is going to be bad like Cyclone Winston,” she said.



“Many people with disability don’t want to leave their homes, because that is their comfort zone. Because they worry about the transport from their home to the evacuation centre. It is hard. I raised this with the Emergency Operations Centre and government officials so they can arrange transport for these people to the centre.”

In the wake of the cyclone, Unaisi led a disability-inclusive emergency response, supported by Shifting the Power Coalition and ActionAid. Local women leaders were able to distribute lifesaving emergency relief kits containing food, water, hygiene and sanitary items to 225 households, including 50 emergency kits tailored to the specific needs of women living with disabilities.

“Women are the first responders. We need to be supported and work together to reach out to people in remote areas. Women leaders can go out and share preparedness with the community and the things they can do to prepare themselves during and after disaster.”



PALESTINE



PALESTINE

Five women's groups have become a reference point for rights-based action in their community. Women in these groups have taken collective action to increase women's protection through preventing and responding to the psychological and economic impacts of Covid-19, including violence against women which has increased during the pandemic. In a recent participatory review and reflection process, women reported that community attitudes to violence against women, and particularly early marriage, are changing. Violence is now less tolerated, and more girls are being supported to continue their education.

Women were also supported to diversify their livelihoods by developing new income streams. As women increased their earnings, they reported increased financial independence as well as enhanced voice and status in their household and community. They also reported improvements in their overall wellbeing, confidence and capacity to make independent personal decisions.



Khadija's story

"I have been greatly affected by Covid-19. The suspension of community activities caused psychological stress to me and my family due to lockdown. I was also unable to fulfill my basic needs as I lost my job, which exacerbated my suffering," said Khadija Abu Madi (pictured), a university student living in the old city of Hebron.

Poverty is widespread in Palestine and many families cannot afford to put substantial meals on the table. But thanks to her membership in a women's group established by ActionAid, Khadija used her 'downtime' during lockdowns to build her own business which now helps feed her family.

ActionAid supports women in Palestine to strengthen their resilience to crisis and climate change by establishing their own agricultural and commercial enterprises and promoting their presence in their local communities. Khadija decided to use a 400m plot of land she owns to establish a market garden.



“The land was unsuitable for agriculture before Covid-19. I used the time in health quarantine during Covid-19 to reform the land.”

With the training, equipment and materials she needed provided by ActionAid, Khadija started planting and growing vegetables. Before long she had harvested enough to feed her family and sell the surplus for a profit.

The project also helped her feel empowered, easing her depression and fears caused by the pandemic, and gave her the opportunity to work on her own terms, without exploitation by others.

“ActionAid offered me the opportunity to participate in women’s actions and receive life-training in leadership, entrepreneurship and human rights. I am now having my own project. The project will help me after the end of the Covid-19 crisis by increasing my economic independence and my social rights so I can participate in my community.”



THE PHILIPPINES





THE PHILIPPINES

Working through our local partner, the National Rural Women's Coalition (PKKK), ActionAid supported local women leaders and members of the Women in Emergencies Network (WENet) to strengthen women's leadership and protection in emergencies. Women leaders developed their skills on feminist leadership, goal setting, financial management, and emergency contingency planning.

This training was put into practice when three consecutive typhoons devastated provinces in the Bicol Region in late October and early November, compounding the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. PKKK conducted a women-led rapid gender assessment to inform disaster response efforts. Consultations with women leaders in affected areas identified the most urgent needs as shelter and hygiene supplies. With support from ActionAid and other donors, WENet led a humanitarian response and distributed personal protective equipment, hygiene kits and solar lamps to more than 500 households. Indigenous communities were also supported to rebuild their homes and access emergency shelter.

Marilou's story

“During the past few weeks, everything is so fresh – what we’ve gone through. We have been devastated by three typhoons.”

Marilou (pictured), leads a rural organisation in Bicol Province where she has spent the last few years working closely with local women’s collectives taking action to respond to extreme weather events and disasters.

When Super Typhoon Goni hit in October 2020 destroying homes and livelihoods, Marilou immediately mobilised a team and led a rapid needs assessment to understand the challenges her community was facing.

“For the emergency response, we are gathering data and checking in on our affected members. We are also collecting information about how many houses are damaged, and we have provided some relief goods such as rice, noodles, and canned goods,” she said.

When two more typhoons followed just weeks later, Marilou worked with ActionAid’s local partner, National Rural Women’s Coalition (PKKK), to support women leading recovery efforts so they could return to their livelihoods faster. COVID-19 complicated their work but Marilou and her team of volunteers were careful to follow health advice to prevent the spread of the virus.

“ActionAid provided hygiene kits and that is very important for us. We need those face masks and face shields when we go outside. When we do the distribution, we observe physical distancing and other safety protocols.”

Extreme weather events are becoming more frequent in the region – the Philippines are hit by about 26 typhoons each year – and the cyclone season is becoming longer and more extreme.

“I think this is happening because of climate change or global warming. It’s too bad that [rural communities] are the most affected.”

Marilou hopes that more women will step up to lead emergency responses in future. “We help one another to rise. We have this mantra: ‘all for one, and one for all’. That’s our motto in our community.”



VANUATU



The women-led Women I Tok Tok Tugeta (WITTT) network and the Women's Weather Watch (WWW) communication platform both played an important role in protecting Ni-Vanuatu women and their communities from Covid-19 and climate-related crises.

As the pandemic hit, women leaders used WWW to send the first national Covid-19 awareness message via bulk SMS. WITTT leaders were subsequently invited by the Ministry of Health to collaborate on developing and sending further health messages in the local language, reaching more than 100,000 people each time, and to conduct joint community awareness sessions.

WWW was used throughout the year to alert members to erratic weather patterns during the cyclone season and inform communities how to prepare themselves. After Cyclone Harold hit in April 2020, women coordinated Vanuatu's first ever women-led disaster response in the worst affected areas on Malo and Malekula. Women in the Southern islands prepared and distributed dignity kits to their sisters in the North, showing true solidarity and local leadership. Through this response effort, the WITTT network has now expanded to over 5000 women across the country.



Flora Vano explains Women's Weather Watch

VANUATU

“Some of our women are dealing with six crises concurrently – Covid-19, drought, scarcity of potable water, volcanic ash, acid rain and sulphur gas as we have several active volcanoes,” said Flora Vano, ActionAid Vanuatu’s Country Manager.

“Sharing of information isn’t always easy because of the remoteness of some communities and a lack of infrastructure. WWW is a two-way communication process which is enabling women to become leaders in disaster planning and adaptation through timely access to information and a platform to raise issues with government.

“Women in the community, we know what we need. But sometimes it’s a challenge to be heard. That’s why the WWW network is so valuable – women are able to share important information both ways and let government and humanitarian organisations know what the communities actually need.



“For example, women leaders will message the WWW hub about crops being damaged by a pest. We convey this information to the Department of Agriculture, who in turn informs us of what the community needs to do or they will send officials on the ground to ensure food security.

“Each woman leader looks after three to four villages and in each village, the women convene their own sister circles. They communicate weather alerts in local languages so women can understand and take appropriate action to protect themselves and their property.

“Women are told that we belong in the gardens, not in conferences or meeting places. But it is really important to have women in leadership roles because whatever decisions women make, they think not only of themselves, but they also think of others. By promoting localisation and shifting the power to women, we are making best use of the fingers we have in the soil to make a lasting impact.”



UGANDA





UGANDA

Community understanding of women's land rights has been strengthened by providing legal aid through mobile clinics and raising awareness on the Ugandan Transitional Justice policy for survivors of war. Women and community leaders have mobilised to call on political leaders to fund and implement the policy. The project has contributed to a significant reduction in violent land disputes and the speed of processing women's land-rights cases in lower courts, with court outcomes increasingly becoming acceptable to disputants.

People with disabilities have been proactively included in project activities and supported to participate in local government planning and budgeting processes. Their priorities and aspirations have been considered in government plans with a specific focus on inclusivity in Covid-19 response.

A two-day virtual conference was held on Women's Participation in Peace, Security and Transitional Justice in the African Great Lakes' region as part of the project. Women peace and security experts and representatives from civil society organisations and regional institutions identified collective actions to counter patriarchal practices and norms that impede women's participation in peace and justice processes including the impact of Covid-19.

Labreta's story

Labreta (pictured), was a widow with young children in 1998 when her mother died. Her father had died some years earlier and her parents had left their land in Amuru District, Northern Uganda, to be shared between Labreta and her brothers. But her brothers chose not to honour their parents' wishes instead using violence to drive Labreta away.

"Since my parents' departure, tensions persisted on the land they left for us in the village. My own brothers violently denied me access and use of the land claiming I didn't have any shares in the family land simply because of my gender," said Labreta.

Without access to her land Labreta found it difficult to make ends meet, falling deeper into poverty. Eventually she heard about ActionAid's work providing legal support to secure land rights for women like herself.

"I approached ActionAid on the advice of a friend who was supported through a similar challenge. ActionAid mediated the land conflict with my brothers and finally we managed to resolve the conflict and restore our family bond. As I talk now, we are at peace with one another, and we use the land in question with utmost harmony."

"As a widow, I feel this type of support is important for my rights to be upheld and respected. I appeal to our leaders and local authorities to observe the rights of all children equally irrespective of their gender when it comes to land matters."



PEOPLE POWER





PEOPLE POWER

From supporting women escaping violence throughout Covid-19 to distributing emergency relief to families in need, women around the world demonstrated incredible resilience stepping up to lead and keep their communities safe in a year of unprecedented crises.

And so too did our 35,000 supporters and committed activists – signing our petitions, spreading the word on social media, joining our online events, chipping in to fund critical work and being part of our community activist network. Despite the challenges posed by Covid-19, ActionAid supporters were steadfast in the face of challenging times. With your help we accomplished so much together in 2020.

Campaigning for systemic change

ActionAid Australia is committed to addressing the root causes of poverty, violence and injustices that women around the world face every day. We actively campaign to hold the Australian government and Australian companies to account to defend women's rights globally.

In February, following a sustained campaign by ActionAid supporters, the Australian Government agency Export Finance Australia (EFA) ruled out funding Woodside's billion-dollar oil and gas project in Senegal. EFA's decision is a win for people and our planet – especially Senegalese women who rely on the fishing industry to feed their families and communities.



In March, Australian mining company Resgen tried to quietly push ahead with their destructive Boikarabelo coal mine in South Africa while the world's attention was turned to the outbreak of Covid-19. But ActionAid delivered thousands of our supporters' names straight to Resgen, calling on the company to consult with women and community members living in nearby towns like Lephalale before proceeding. Thanks to ActionAid supporters, Francina Nkosi (pictured), – who lives in Lephalale – could attend Resgen's online investor meeting and raise her community's concerns about the environmental and human rights impacts of the proposed mine.

In the lead up to October's Federal Budget, ActionAid activists met their local MPs and Senators from across the political spectrum online, asking them to raise the aid budget by \$2 billion over the next four years so low-income countries can respond to COVID-19, save lives and advance women's rights.



More than 25,000 people – including 10,000 ActionAid supporters – signed the pledge to #EndCOVIDForAll. Thanks to an energetic public campaign that saw ActionAid Ambassador Judith Lucy (pictured below), join voices from across the aid and development, health and faith sectors, the Australian Government took important first steps to increase support for our Pacific neighbours to respond and recover from the health, social and economic impacts of COVID-19.



#ENDCOVIDFORALL

Bringing people together



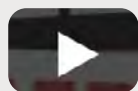




Stepping up against violence

STRONG WOMEN CHALLENGE

Press play



In November, the ActionAid community got active and joined the Strong Women Challenge to step up in solidarity with women all over the world to end gender-based violence. An incredible 630 people answered the call, completing 137 step-ups each day to represent the horrifying fact that 137 women are killed daily by a partner or family member.

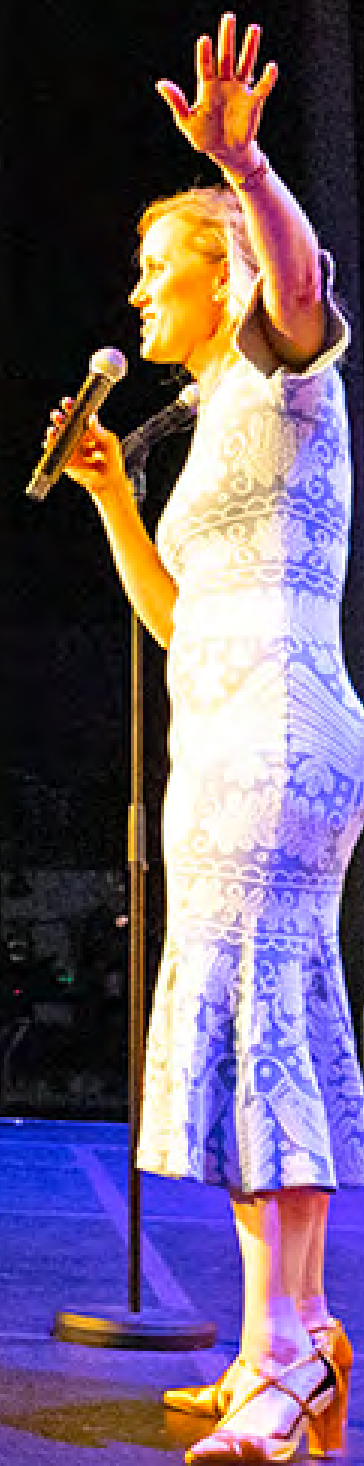
2020 was the challenge's best year yet – we raised a record \$67, 943 to support safe spaces for women in countries like Uganda and Bangladesh, where violence against women has been surging since the outbreak of Covid-19.

“Being part of the Strong Women Challenge was one of those accomplishments you can look back on forever and say, ‘I am so proud I did that’. The moment I saw a post on Instagram about the challenge I knew this was a way that I could give back and share my voice!” Brooke, Strong Women Challenge top fundraiser

Laughter for a cause

Just weeks before nationwide Covid-19 lockdowns took effect, ActionAid and the Brisbane Comedy Festival partnered up to produce our most successful Frocking Hilarious event in Brisbane yet. 600 people were treated to a line-up of fierce, funny and feminist comedians who took to the stage in the Brisbane Powerhouse to raise money for women's rights.

With the support of ActionAid Ambassador Claire Hooper (pictured on stage) as MC we managed to raise an additional \$10,000 from audience donations on the night to support women leading crisis response.



Together we rise



On 1 December 2020, ActionAid held its very first Giving Day, a program of online events to rally our community around a common purpose – to fund training for 400 women leaders on the frontlines of injustice around the world.



Press play



We were astounded by generosity of the hundreds of passionate people who united to help raise over \$120,000 in just 24 hours so that women leaders can rise up and take control of their future against all odds.

ARISE FUND SCALING UP WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP

Supporting women on the frontlines of crisis has never been more pressing. In 2020 we witnessed devastating famine, floods and fires, all while the Covid-19 pandemic swept across the globe. Women's leadership is one of our greatest resources in the response to crises.

ActionAid's Arise Fund turns traditional crisis response on its head by putting women at the heart of the response. Through support in emergency preparedness, conflict resolution training, and community-based protection programs, we are preparing women before disaster strikes. In times of crisis, we provide rapid response funding to ensure women and their organisations are resourced to lead when they need it most.

With your support we are getting closer to our goal of reaching one million women – so far we have raised over \$2.9 million, which has directly supported the leadership of 22,716 women in 15 countries. Together these inspiring women have impacted 174,731 lives affected by crisis – and we're only getting started.



Arise Leadership Circle

The Arise Leadership Circle is a group of incredible women leaders who are committed to transformational change for women across the world.

Angela Priestley Founding Editor,
Women's Agenda

Carole Brownlee
Chief Operating Officer, Roadshow Group of Companies

Evie Bruce Managing Partner,
King & Wood Mallesons

Kristina Stefanova (Chair)
Co-Founder, Bundaleer Sustainable Investments

Natasha Stott Despoja
AO Founding Chairperson, Our Watch

Sally Garis Consultant,
Social Ventures Australia

Sarah Morton-Ramwell
Partner and Global Head of Pro Bono and
Corporate Responsibility, Ashurst

Shivani Gopal
Founder and CEO, The Remarkable Woman

Tiffany Leece
Major Gifts Manager, Art Gallery of New South Wales

“I’ve witnessed the work of many good and on-the-ground organisations firsthand, through my roles as a senator, diplomat and civilian. ActionAid always impressed me as one of the best in the world. Genuinely changing and saving lives.”

Natasha Stott Despoja AO,
Arise Leadership Circle Member



OUR SUPPORTERS

The important work highlighted in this report would not be possible without the continued loyalty of our most generous supporters, activists and volunteers around the country. We sincerely thank each and every one for their important contribution to our work, collectively supporting women to challenge injustice and inequality and to claim their rights. We would especially like to acknowledge the following members of the ActionAid family for their ongoing and significant commitment to our work:

Individuals

Debby and Keith Badger
Paul W Bartlett
Nan Brown
Evie Bruce
Mary G Bush
Jenny Donald
Jaanette Eden
James Goth
Susan Maple-Brown
Anne Miller
Vicki Olsson
Rosemary Rajola
Greg Shalit and Miriam Faine
Kristina Stefanova
Susan Varga
Anne Coombs
Hilary Wallace

Ambassadors

Claire Hooper
Judith Lucy
Tracey Spicer

Institutions

The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT)

Organisations

Ashurst
The Beeren Foundation
Billeroy Farms Pty Ltd
Capricorn Foundation
Colin Biggers & Paisley
S&J Cook Family Foundation
Deloitte Private
Dick and Pip Smith Foundation
Douglas & Philip Young Charitable Trust
DLA Piper
Hall & Wilcox
The Horizon Foundation
The Intrepid Foundation
JLDJS Foundation
Kathmandu
King & Wood Mallesons
Lord Mayor's Charitable Foundation
The Madden Sainsbury Foundation
Minter Ellison
Mulnot Foundation
The Norman Family
The Sky Foundation
Sparke Helmore Lawyers



OUR BOARD

Executive Director

Michelle Higelin

BA Comms, MIR
Executive Director, ActionAid Australia. Over 25 years' experience working to advance women's rights in Australia and internationally. Former Deputy General Secretary of the World YWCA, and CEO, YWCA Australia. Board member of ACFID and Emergency Action Alliance. Executive Director since 1 August 2017.

Board Chair

Jeremy Hobbs

BA, B.SocWk
Director of Development Essentials. Former roles include: Executive Director and founding board member of Oxfam International; Executive Director of Oxfam Australia; Chair of INGO Accountability Charter; Board member of the International Civil Society Centre. Director since 15 August 2014. Appointed Chair 2 June 2018. Leave of absence 30 October 2020. Resigned 11 January 2021

Interim Board Chair

Nicci Dent

MFIA, HND BTEC in Art and Design Diploma
CEO, Heart Research Australia. Former roles include: Head of Fundraising, Mission Australia; National Fundraising Director, the Heart Foundation; Director of Fundraising, MSF. Various fundraising roles with Amnesty International and the Wilderness Society. Director since 30 January 2014. Appointed Interim Chair 30 October 2020.

Board Vice-Chair

Megs Alston

LLB (Melb) Dip ED (Melb)
Member Advisory Committee, Friends of Suai, City of Port Phillip. Former roles include: Consultant, St Vincent's Health Regional Advisory Council; Program Quality Advisor, Save the Children Australia; Business Development Consultant, RMIT International Projects; Program Director, Australian Volunteers International. Director since 16 June 2011. Appointed Vice-Chair 16 May 2012. Term ended 16 May 2020, remained ex-officio until 25 February 2021.

Board Director

Susan Brennan

SCBA/LLB (Hons), Barrister at Law
Barrister specialising in town planning and environmental law. Former President and Vice President, World YWCA. Director since 24 February 2011. Term ended 16 May 2020.

Board Treasurer

Carole Brownlee

B.CommFCPA
Chief Operating Officer, Roadshow Films Group. Former Senior Finance Executive, Village Roadshow Group and Finance Director Roadshow Films. Director since 16 December 2014. Appointed Treasurer 16 December 2014.

Board Director

Manzoor Hasan

BSc (Econ), Dip Law, Barrister at Law
Executive Director of the Centre for Peace and Justice of BRAC



From left;
Claire van Heyningen
Jeremy Hobbs
Belinda Morrissey
Megs Alston

University. Former roles include: Executive Director, BRAC Institute of Governance & Development; Deputy Executive Director, BRAC; founding Executive Director of Transparency International Bangladesh; Chair, United Nations Convention Against Corruption Coalition. Ex-officio Director since 7 December 2019.

Board Director

Claire van Heyningen

M Mgt&BusAdmin (UTS)
Managing Director for Mirum and Partner at Wunderman Thompson. Former roles include: Consultant for 1440, We are Social, Red Planet; Group Head and Group Head of Digital, M&C Saatchi Group Australia; Digital Client Service Director, One Green Bean; Head of Digital, Production Director and Senior Executive Producer, Host; Executive Producer, Holler. Director since 13 November 2018. Interim Board Vice-Chair

Board Director

Belinda Morrissey

B Ec (Adel), GradCert Philanthropy & Social Investment, GradDipAppFin. Chief Executive Officer, English Family Foundation. Former

roles include: Grantmaking and Evaluation Manager, Australian Philanthropic Services; Director Philanthropic Development and Executive Officer, Sydney Community Foundation; General Manager, goodcompany Foundation; Manager - Corporate Social Responsibility, ING Australia. Director since 29 November 2018. Appointed Interim Vice-Chair 5 December 2020.

Board Director

Jananie Janarthana

BPESS (USyd)
Centre for Australian Progress Fellow Alumni, Senior Project Officer, Sydney Policy Lab. Former roles include: Political, Community Campaigns Organiser at Community and Public Sector Union. Director since 25 September 2020.

Board Director

Nicole D'Souza

LLM (USyd), DALF (C1), Refugee Law & Practice, Grad Dip. Legal Practice, LLB, BA (USyd)
Solicitor and Barrister of the Supreme Court of New South Wales, Australia. Director since 5 December 2020

OUR FINANCES



During 2020, ActionAid Australia's operating revenue increased by 27% to \$6.7 million. The increase was largely due to higher government grants income received in 2020 compared to 2019 offset against significantly lower bequest income compared with the previous year. In addition, ActionAid Australia received \$0.71 million in JobKeeper and CashFlow Boost government subsidies.

Public funds raised totalled \$2.6 million and comprised 39% of operating revenue for the year, compared to 59% in the previous year. Public funds included donations and gifts received

from the Australian public as well as non-monetary income such as volunteer and pro bono services. In 2020 ActionAid Australia received funds from donors who left gifts in their wills, totalling \$171,361 which was a decrease of 82% compared to 2019. Grant income from DFAT contributed to 49% of operating revenue at \$3.3 million. Interest income received was \$45,060 and other income was \$750,842, which includes \$714,250 of government subsidies.

ActionAid Australia's total expenditure for 2020 remained steady at \$6.9 million compared with \$7.0 million in 2019. Our total program expenditure

was 68% of the total expenditure. Of this, program expenditure was \$4.7m and campaigning in Australia was \$0.7m.

Fundraising accounted for 19% of the total expenditure. ActionAid Australia continues to invest in fundraising activities that will lead to income

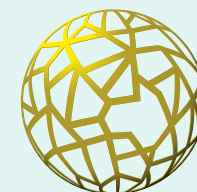
growth in future years. Accountability and administration costs represented 11% of total expenditure.

The full financial report for the year ended 31 December 2020 is available on request via the ActionAid Australia website at www.actionaid.org.au.

The Summary Financial Report has been prepared in accordance with the requirements set out in the Australian Council for International Development (ACFID) Code of Conduct. ActionAid Australia is committed to full adherence to this Code.

For further information on the Code please refer to the ACFID Code of Conduct Guidance Document available at www.acfid.asn.au.

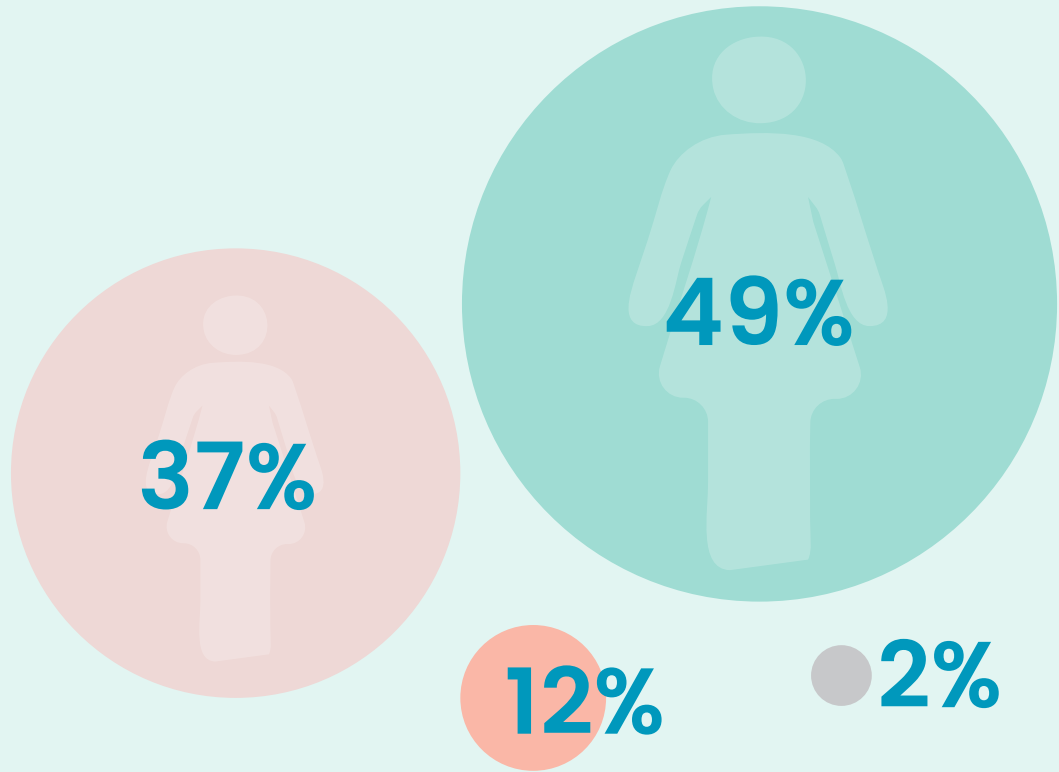
In order to lodge a complaint against ActionAid Australia please email complaints.au@actionaid.org. Where a breach of the ACFID Code of Conduct is considered to have occurred please see the ACFID website <http://www.acfid.asn.au/code-of-conduct/complaints> for contact details.



ACFID
MEMBER

OUR FINANCES

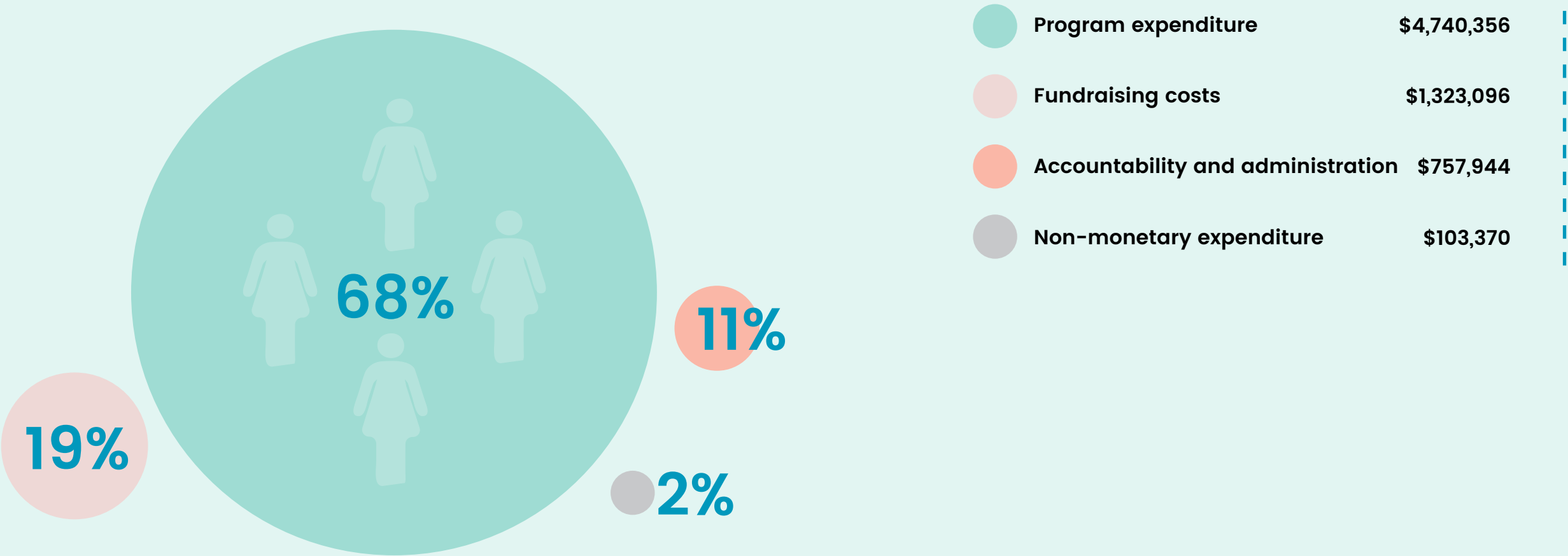
Income



DFAT Grants	\$3,284,092
Donations and gifts	\$2,449,833
Investment & other income	\$795,902
Bequests and legacies	\$171,361

OUR FINANCES

Expenditure



OUR FINANCES

Statement of Profit or Loss and Other Comprehensive Income

For the year ended 31 December 2020

	Year ended 31 December 2020	Year ended 31 December 2020	Year ended 31 December 2020	Year ended 31 December 2019
	Restricted	Unrestricted	Total	Total
	\$	\$	\$	\$
REVENUE				
OPERATING REVENUE				
Donations and gifts				
- Monetary	541,994	1,804,469	2,346,463	2,085,104
- Non-monetary	-	103,370	103,370	68,312
Bequests and legacies	-	171,361	171,361	941,494
Grants				
- DFAT ¹	3,284,092	-	3,284,092	1,868,608
- Other Australian	-	-	-	111,000
- Other overseas	-	-	-	21,000
Investment income	-	45,060	45,060	98,578
Other income	-	750,842	750,842	87,888
TOTAL REVENUE	3,826,086	2,875,102	6,701,188	5,281,984

1. DFAT Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

	Year ended 31 December 2020	Year ended 31 December 2020	Year ended 31 December 2020	Year ended 31 December 2019
	Restricted	Unrestricted	Total	Total
	\$	\$	\$	\$
EXPENDITURE				
International programs:				
- Funds to programmes	3,081,900	151,000	3,232,900	2,602,779
- Program support costs	769,246	-	769,246	896,951
Community education	-	738,211	738,211	889,739
Fundraising costs:				
- Public	217,971	1,105,125	1,323,096	1,411,507
Accountability and administration	-	757,944	757,944	1,178,896
Non-monetary expenditure	-	103,370	103,370	68,312
Total International Aid and Development Programs Expenditure	4,069,117	2,855,650	6,924,767	7,048,184
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	4,069,117	2,855,650	6,924,767	7,048,184
Operating excess/(shortfall) over expenditure	(243,031)	19,452	(223,579)	(1,766,200)
TOTAL EXCESS/(SHORTFALL) OF REVENUE OVER EXPENDITURE	(243,031)	19,452	(223,579)	(1,766,200)
TOTAL COMPREHENSIVE INCOME/(LOSS)	(243,031)	19,452	(223,579)	(1,766,200)

ActionAid Australia had a planned shortfall in 2019 and 2020 due to investment in income growth and programming of a large bequest received in 2016.

OUR FINANCES

Statement of Changes in Equity

For the year ended 31 December 2020

2019				
	Retained earnings	Restricted funds reserves	Unrestricted funds reserves	Total undistributed funds
	\$	\$	\$	\$
Opening balance at 1 January 2019	1,991,666	3,265,887	50,000	5,307,553
Deficit for the year	(1,766,200)	-	-	(1,766,200)
Total comprehensive income	(1,766,200)	-	-	(1,766,200)
Transfers to/(from) reserves:	566,417	(566,417)	-	-
Total Closing Balance at 31 December 2019	791,883	2,699,470	50,000	3,541,353

2020				
	Retained earnings	Restricted funds reserves	Unrestricted funds reserves	Total undistributed funds
	\$	\$	\$	\$
Opening balance at 1 January 2020	791,883	2,699,470	50,000	3,541,353
Deficit for the year	(223,579)	-	-	(223,579)
Total comprehensive income	(223,579)	-	-	(223,579)
Transfers to/(from) reserves:	243,031	(243,031)	-	-
Total Closing Balance at 31 December 2020	811,335	2,456,439	50,000	3,317,774
Restricted funds reserve comprised of:				
- Capital Reserve		2,054,858		
- Other Restricted Reserves		401,581		

For the year ended 31 December 2020 ActionAid Australia's retained earnings decreased by \$0.22m, its restricted funds reserve decreased by \$0.24m over the year and we ended 2020 with a total reserve of \$3.3m. ActionAid Australia does not utilise all funds immediately so that it can ensure that the funds are best used for long-term, sustainable outcomes.

OUR FINANCES

Statement of Financial Position

For the year ended 31 December 2020

	31 December 2020 \$	31 December 2019 \$
ASSETS		
Current assets		
Cash and cash equivalents	6,889,584	6,526,555
Trade and other assets	128,600	252,585
Total current assets	7,018,184	6,779,140
Non-current assets		
Right-of-use assets	251,861	-
Property, plant and equipment	4,368	13,218
Total non-current assets	256,229	13,218
Total assets	7,274,413	6,792,358
LIABILITIES		
Current liabilities		
Trade and other payables	1,152,715	1,072,983
Lease Liability	61,355	-
Provisions - employee benefits	190,745	201,068
Other - deferred revenue	2,288,342	1,918,548
Total current liabilities	3,693,157	3,192,599
Non-current liabilities		
Lease Liability	197,502	-
Provisions - employee benefits	65,980	58,406
Non-current liabilities	263,482	58,406
Total liabilities	3,956,639	3,251,005
Net assets	3,317,774	3,541,353
EQUITY		
Restricted funds capital reserve	2,054,858	2,272,829
Restricted funds other reserves	401,581	426,641
Unrestricted funds reserves	50,000	50,000
Retained earnings	811,335	791,883
Total equity	3,317,774	3,541,353

As at 31 December 2020 of ActionAid Australia's total assets of \$7.3m, \$6.9m was held as cash, with around 65% of this amount being held in short-term term deposits at banks. The organisation's largest liability, at \$2.3m, is deferred revenue. Deferred revenue is grant funds received in advance that are yet to be used for overseas projects and the management support costs of those projects.

Statement of Cash Flows

For the year ended 31 December 2020

	Year ended 31 December 2020 \$	Year ended 31 December 2019 \$
Cash flows from operating activities		
Cash receipts from appeals, donations & fundraising activities	2,517,823	3,026,598
Cash receipts from DFAT grants	4,019,275	2,972,402
Proceeds from other activities and government subsidies	869,329	53,307
Interest received	45,060	98,578
Interest paid	(1,099)	-
Cash payments to suppliers and employees	(2,339,184)	(2,633,827)
Cash payments for project expenditure	(4,740,356)	(4,664,725)
Net cash provided by / (used in) operating activities	370,848	(1,147,667)
Cash flows from investing activities		
Payments for property, plant and equipment	-	(8,100)
Net cash (used in) / provided by investing activities	-	(8,100)
Cash flows from financing activities		
Repayment of lease liabilities	(7,819)	-
Net cash (used in) / provided by financing activities	(7,819)	-
Net (decrease) in cash and cash equivalents	363,029	(1,155,767)
Cash and cash equivalents at beginning of year	6,526,555	7,682,322
Cash and cash equivalents at end of year	6,889,584	6,526,555

The cash position of ActionAid Australia during 2020 increased by \$0.4 million; this is mainly due to increased cash receipts from DFAT and government subsidies received during the year offset against reduced payments to suppliers and employees during the year.

AUDITORS REPORT

For the year ended 31 December 2020



Report of the Independent Auditor on the Summary Financial Statements to the Members of ActionAid Australia

Opinion

The summary financial statements, which comprises the statement of financial position as at 31 December 2020, the statement of profit or loss and other comprehensive income, the statement of cash flows and the statement of changes in equity for the year then ended, are derived from the audited financial report of ActionAid Australia for the year ended 31 December 2020.

We expressed an unmodified audit opinion on that financial report in our report dated 29th May 2021.

In our opinion, the accompanying summary financial statements are consistent, in all material respects, with the audited financial report, in accordance with Australian Accounting Standards Reduced Disclosures Requirements, the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012*, and the *ACFID Code of Conduct* and for compliance with the *Charitable Fundraising Act 1991*.

Summary Financial Statements

The Summary Financial Statement Report does not contain all the disclosures required by the Australian Accounting Standards for a general purpose financial report. Reading the Summary Financial Statement Report, therefore, is not a substitute for reading the audited financial report of ActionAid Australia.

Directors' Responsibility for the Summary Financial Statements

The Directors of the company are responsible for the preparation of the Summary Financial Statements in accordance with Australian Accounting Standards Reduced Disclosures Requirements, the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012* and the *ACFID Code of Conduct* and for compliance with the *Charitable Fundraising Act 1991*.

Auditor's Responsibility

Our responsibility is to express an opinion on the Summary Financial Statements based on our procedures, which were conducted in accordance with Auditing Standard *ASA 810 Engagements to Report on Summary Financial Statements*.

Nexia Sydney Audit Pty Ltd

Vishal Modi Director

ASIC Registered Company Auditor no.: 486119

Dated at Sydney, this 29th day of May 2021

Nexia Sydney Audit Pty Ltd

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Australia Square NSW 1215

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Email: info.au@actionaid.org

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