



Arise Fund

2021 Impact Report

arise

Women leading
crisis response.

“

I am proud to be associated with an organisation such as ActionAid that puts the rights of women and girls central to its work.

Natasha Stott Despoja AO

From adversity, we rise

The United Nations Climate Summit (COP26) was held in Glasgow in November 2021. While some progress was made, there is a widespread sense of failure as the world looks set to reach 2.5 degrees of global warming by the end of the century. The impact for people living in climate-vulnerable countries will be catastrophic. Already in the countries where ActionAid works, we are seeing the devastating consequences of the climate crisis, from severe food insecurity affecting more than half the population in Afghanistan to more destructive cyclones and typhoons in the Philippines and the Pacific. There is little doubt that women are among those most affected due to their widespread exclusion from decision making and resources.

Amidst great despair, there is hope. And that hope lies in the stories captured in the Arise Impact Report. With vital resourcing from the Arise Fund, women are mobilising around the world to drive

locally-led solutions to climate change, disasters and health pandemics. From using mobile phone technology in Vanuatu and PNG to avert disaster, to leading the prevention of COVID19 in some of the most overcrowded and under serviced areas in Bangladesh, India and Nepal, the Arise Fund is making a timely contribution to communities in urgent need. It is placing women's leadership at the centre of response efforts with a ripple effect that builds the resilience of families and communities to cope in an increasingly insecure and unpredictable world.

Thank you for being part of the Arise movement. Together we are investing in women's leadership and transforming the world for good.

Michelle Higelin,
Executive Director,
ActionAid Australia

Since
2017

 **18**
countries

 **2,567,526**
people impacted

 **30,416**
women trained

 **\$4.8**
million raised so far...

“It’s difficult to keep distance in our camp which is very cramped and overpopulated. But we are trying our best so that we can stay healthy.

Anowara \ Bangladesh

COVID-19 response

Bangladesh

Cox’s Bazar, located in the southeast corner of Bangladesh near the border with Myanmar, is the world’s largest refugee settlement – home to 1 million Rohingya refugees. The high concentration of people in the camp and the low accessibility to water, sanitation and hygiene facilities has left the women and girls of Cox’s Bazar extremely vulnerable to COVID-19.

As part of their initial response to the refugee crisis, ActionAid Bangladesh (AAB) created nine women’s safe spaces, where women and girls could come together to receive psychosocial support, connect, and build a network among themselves. They wanted to uplift themselves and live in a dignified way, so with the help of AAB, women received training in stitching, sewing and embroidery to expand their livelihood options.

When COVID-19 hit, ActionAid supported 3700 Rohingya women to use the skills they’d developed at the women-friendly spaces to make masks for their families and sell to the United Nations agencies present in Cox’s Bazar.

AAB also went door-to-door providing 10,000 women with hygiene kits to promote COVID-19

preventative measures and help women maintain their dignity. These hygiene kits contained masks, soap, hand sanitiser, sanitary pads, laundry soap and washing detergent.

Anowara is one of the Rohingya women who made masks in response to COVID-19. She lives in the camp with her husband and five children.

“We are all well trained on how to keep ourselves safe during the time of coronavirus. It’s hard for us because for buying soap we need money. Also getting clean water is difficult. But every time we are coming in the women-friendly space, we are cleaning ourselves. I am wearing the mask I made and every one of my family is wearing masks that I made. Also, when I sell masks in my community, I realised I am helping them too. We are not safe if all of us do not maintain hygiene and distance. It’s difficult to keep distance in our camp which is very cramped and overpopulated. But we are trying our best so that we can stay healthy.”



India

India has been one of the worst affected countries by COVID-19. As of December 2021, over 34 million infections have been confirmed and more than 474,000 people have died, but experts claim the actual figures are likely much higher. Across India, women have been leading effective and inclusive responses to COVID-19 in their communities and providing lifesaving services that prevent and respond to gender-based violence.

This year, ActionAid's direct support has touched the lives of 1,116,656 people across the country, including through vaccine and COVID-19 awareness raising drives, by providing access to counselling and psychosocial support services, supplying public hospitals with oxygen concentrators and providing marginalised communities with food and hygiene kits. Arise has contributed to these outcomes, which included:

- Providing 100 oxygen concentrators to support government hospitals across the country, 60 of which were procured by ActionAid Australia in partnership with SmartAid
- Opening a Covid Care Centre in the remote province of Uttar Pradesh in Northern India and equipping the Centre with 10 oxygen concentrators, providing critical oxygen support to over 250 patients
- Establishing 81 helpdesks, as well as community-based protection systems to ensure the safety and security of women and children during the COVID-19 response. These helpdesks reached 29,869 people across 90 districts and provided information on availability of beds in hospitals, oxygen, and medicine availability, on quarantining, information on rapid test centres, and aftercare support
- Providing psychosocial counselling to 10,635 people
- Providing 1,200 vulnerable people with financial support in the form of cash transfers
- Supporting more than 54,000 people from marginalised communities to access the COVID-19 vaccine
- Providing 58,386 individuals in 12 districts with cooked meals and 32,489 families across districts with dry ration kits containing a month's supply of cereals, pulses, cooking oil and spices
- Ensuring economic stability for those impacted by the pandemic by introducing alternative livelihood options and securing access to work for 447,910 individuals under the National Rural Employment Scheme.

Papua New Guinea

COVID-19 is threatening the lives of Papua New Guinea (PNG) and Bougainville's population. With only 500 doctors and 5000 hospital beds for the country's 9 million people and high levels of community transmission, the pandemic has had a devastating impact on people's lives.

With the support of Arise and the Australian Government's Australian Humanitarian Partnership (AHP), a new project is supporting local women leaders to reduce community transmission of COVID-19 and help protect families against the threat of the pandemic.

The Meri Gat Infomesen, Meri Gat Pawa project (MGI) is a joint initiative of ActionAid and Shifting the Power Coalition (STPC), and is driving locally led and inclusive COVID-19 response across PNG and Bougainville. The project has enabled 15 local women leaders – including young women, women with disabilities and rural community members – to use their local knowledge and expertise to develop lifesaving

COVID-19 health messages. The messages, distributed in local languages via SMS through Digicel's mobile phone network, have focused on enhancing COVID-19 awareness and prevention and addressing vaccine hesitancy and violence against women.

More than 5.5 million SMS on COVID-19 prevention and human rights have reached more than 1.2 million Digicel subscribers in PNG's National Capital District and Bougainville, as well as nine other provinces.

“

We believe that women can lead, women can be part of the solution. When women are involved, we know for certain that many more people will get that information.

Agnes Titus, Advocacy Coordinator, Nazareth Centre for Rehabilitation and STPC focal point was the first women in Bougainville to receive the COVID-19 vaccine and is a driving force behind the MGI Hub





Anjana receiving an emergency package from ActionAid. © Sabin Shrestha/ActionAid.

Nepal

Nepal has a population of about 30 million people but with only 1,600 intensive care beds, fewer than 600 ventilators and only 0.7 doctors per thousand people, the country was extremely vulnerable to the impacts of the pandemic.

Lockdown restrictions left many families without an income. This increased the burden of unpaid care work borne by women, who not only had to look after their families around the clock with no reprieve, but also find ways to feed them with limited finances and resources. With support from Arise, ActionAid Nepal (AAN) coordinated with local partners to support COVID-19 relief efforts and offer support to local communities, including:

- Distributing food packages to 1,910 households in Kathmandu Valley, including 195 pregnant and lactating mothers and 340 households in Bajura, Palpa and Siraha
- Distributing COVID-19 prevention kits to 1,910 households in Kathmandu Valley, 524 households in Terhathum and Palpa
- Distributing 400 protection kits for health facilities and volunteers in Kathmandu and 14 kits for each of seven health posts in Palpa

- Producing and airing public service announcements on COVID prevention through local FM stations in Bardiya, Doti, Palpa and Bajura, and creating a short video, which was broadcasted through a local TV network in Palpa to raise awareness on COVID prevention
- Developing a school awareness program in coordination with adolescent groups in Bardiya, Doti, Palpa and Bajura before lockdown.

Anjana works as an agricultural labourer and has two children. Her husband is a labourer and, together, they earn about AUD 200 per month. "Our saving were almost over within first 2 weeks of lockdown. We received 10kg of rice from the local government that only lasted a couple of days. If ActionAid hadn't provided relief, I would not have any option to feed my children."

Rapid response

Afghanistan

Afghanistan is in the midst of a rapidly evolving humanitarian crisis, which has worsened since the Taliban came to power in late August. The most recent reports state that since the start of the year, 681,682 people have been internally displaced. Combined with the severe impacts of climate change half the population is facing increasing food insecurity and malnutrition.

ActionAid has worked in Afghanistan since 2002 to address poverty and inequality, and to improve the food and economic security of vulnerable communities'. ActionAid is currently working in 7 provinces and 44 districts in collaboration with local partners, where our ongoing programmes are being supplemented with the humanitarian response.

ActionAid's experience working under similar circumstances as well as our strong relationship with local partners and communities means that this important work can safely continue during times of crisis.

The response covered the following areas:

- Water, sanitation, and hygiene support for 1,050 families, including hygiene kits to meet the sanitary needs of women and girls

- COVID-19 safety kits for volunteers and health support staff which contained gloves, gowns, shoe covers, head covers, masks, respirators, eye protection, face shields, and goggles
- Food relief for one month, for families with an average of 7 people per family
- Identification and referral of gender-based violence cases to counselling centres
- Cash support to help families purchase food, kitchen utensils and non-food items such as blankets and clothes
- Psychosocial support for displaced people, to help address the stress and anxiety of the current context.

As of November 2021, almost 6000 people have been reached with cash assistance and hygiene kits as well as food assistance and blankets.

The next phase of the response is being planned and assessments are in-progress in Balkh, Herat, Kabul and Ghor.



Preparedness

Through training in disaster preparedness, conflict resolution and community-based protection which focuses on women's safety, Arise is preparing women to lead in times of crisis.

Vanuatu

Vanuatu is the world's most at-risk country for natural hazards. Since Cyclone Pam in 2015, ActionAid has had great success training and mobilising local women to lead disaster preparedness and response through the Women I Tok Tok Tugeta (WITTT) forums, a locally led women's initiative. WITTT was scaled up in 2021 to 5 islands including two new locations (Malo and Malekula) now reaching 54,000 people.

Women Wetem Weta (WWW), a program of WITTT, is a locally led SMS communication system that allows women to distribute and receive weather and crises updates.

With the support of Arise, both WWW and WITTT have continued to expand their work and reach in 2021 with:

- The establishment of WITTT Sunshine, a new platform within WITTT for women with disabilities – the aim is to create a safe space for these women to organise, mobilise and build collective leadership on humanitarian action and climate change
- WWW network has been scaled up from 12 to 41 trained women coordinators, with 5 of the new members from WITTT Sunshine.

- 77,000 people, a quarter of the country's population, were sent an SMS on COVID-19 prevention by the WWW network. From February 2021, WWW's corporate partnership with Digicel, enabled the team to send 2 to 3 bulk SMS texts every month reaching an average constituency of 130,000 people (over 42% of the entire population)
- All WWW leaders have been provided a handset as part of the phone tree network that now comprises 3,500 people
- WWW sent vital messages on food logistics in response to the Mount Yassur eruption and food stress caused by COVID-19.

Philippines

ActionAid started working in the Philippines in 2013 in response to Typhoon Haiyan. In the face of such devastation, ActionAid partnered with Pambansang Koalisyon ng Kababaihan sa Kanayunan (PKKK), also known as the National Rural Women Coalition, to mobilise and resource women-led emergency response. Building on the transformative impact of women's leadership in disaster response and knowing how prone the Philippines is to disaster, ActionAid and PKKK established the Women's Emergency Network (WENet) in 2015.

Thanks to the Arise Fund, ActionAid supported WENet to achieve the following:

- Train and support women leaders from 30 women's organisations to prepare for disasters, ensuring women are not only ready to provide relief and assistance when disasters hit but also that communities have increased resilience to disasters and the COVID-19 pandemic.
- A two day training for 38 women leaders from across the Philippines to learn how to facilitate Community Based Disaster Risk Reduction and Management (CBDRRM) and

Family Preparedness. This training increased the women leaders' knowledge and skills in disaster risk reduction and gave them the confidence to negotiate with their local government units on disaster response management.

- WENet member groups also organised training and dialogues for women leaders and community members affected by Typhoon Goni, including a focus group discussion attended by 19 rural women leaders from Camarines Norte and Camarines Sur provinces in the Bicol region of Southern Luzon.
- The rural women leaders who participated in the training were able to reach and mobilise local communities and carry out the COVID-19 prevention and response.
- 15 Psychosocial Support Sessions (PSS) for affected women and children were conducted in typhoon affected communities in Albay province in the Bicol region
- The sessions were attended by 108 women and participants learnt how to create an Action Plan for Disaster Risk Reduction.

The Pacific

Shifting the Power Coalition

In 2016, the Arise Fund provided seed funding to establish the Shifting the Power Coalition (StPC). This brought together 12 women-led organisations and the Pacific Disability Forum to form the only regional alliance focused on strengthening the collective power, influence and leadership of diverse Pacific women in response to climate change and disasters. Five years on, the Coalition is not only highly relevant in a context where climate and economic crises are intersecting with a global health pandemic but it is also changing the face of disaster response in the Pacific region.

A recent impact assessment has highlighted the critical role the Coalition has played in recognising the capability of Pacific women to lead and implement humanitarian response.

Through the Coalition, 189 women in six Pacific countries have developed the skills, knowledge and tools they need to influence and shape humanitarian response and are sharing this learning in their communities. This has seen the first ever women-led emergency

response efforts to Cyclone Harold in Vanuatu and Cyclone Yasa in Fiji, supported by rapid response grants that put resources in the hands of women within the first 48 hours of a disaster.

The Coalition has also fostered the development of innovative models for women-led early warning and communications in times of crisis such as the Meri Gat Infomasen, Meri Gat Pawa in PNG (see page 5).

In terms of advocacy, Coalition members have contributed to a growing commitment to addressing gender in climate change and disaster risk reduction plans by the region's governments. With its very targeted focus on strengthening the leadership of women with disabilities and young women, the Coalition is also leading the way in driving intersectional approaches that lift the voices of the most marginalized groups of women.



The Importance of Partnership in Crisis

ActionAid established the Arise Fund to scale up efforts to support women around the world to prepare for and respond to emergencies. The fund also strengthens women led efforts to ensure rights are protected in a crisis, and expands the opportunities for women's leadership in disasters and conflict from immediate response to the long-term recovery.

ActionAid is extremely fortunate to have the support of incredible partners who help ensure that women are empowered to lead on the frontline of crises around the world. We would like to extend a special thank you to the below individuals, foundations and organisations who mobilised quickly when multiple disasters hit and supported us to ensure women were able to turn crisis into opportunity.

Australian Aid Programme

Together the Australian Aid Programme and Arise are supporting multi-year programs in Papua New Guinea, the Philippines, Vanuatu, the Pacific, Bangladesh, Cambodia and Kenya to support women's leadership in responding to climate disasters and the COVID19 pandemic.

SmartAid/DHL

SmartAid's partnership with DHL means we've been able to get critical medical supplies to the remote areas where we operate, such as the Autonomous Region of Bougainville and Uttar Pradesh in Northern India.

With the support of our Arise donors, ActionAid together with SmartAid procured 60 oxygen concentrators and delivered them to four rural provinces in Northern India, providing a lifeline to those without access to this essential equipment..

Southern Cross

Southern Cross donated 9 pallets of masks, which were then shipped to Papua New Guinea, Bougainville and Fiji thanks to another SmartAid partnership, to assist in a women-led COVID-19 response.

Archie Rose

Archie Rose Distilling Co. created the Arise for Humanity Tailored Gin label in support of the Arise Fund. During 2021, every time someone purchases a Tailored Gin with the Arise label, 10% of proceeds from the sale will be donated directly to ActionAid's Arise Fund.

Intrepid Group

The Intrepid Foundation supported ActionAid by raising funds for the India COVID-19 response. Through the India COVID Emergency Appeal, the Foundation helped to support testing and vaccination centres, emergency food, medicine and sanitation kits, and protective supplies for vulnerable communities.

On behalf of all of us at ActionAid and the women we empower together, thank you so much for your support this year!

Thanks to your generous support, ActionAid was able to empower thousands more women to rise up and lead during times of crisis.

From Vanuatu to Nepal, India to the Philippines, and Bangladesh to Afghanistan, ActionAid has continued to advance women's rights in emergencies and resource women on the frontlines of crisis to prepare, response and build resilience.

COVID-19 has changed the face of disaster response over the past two years, but thanks to your support, ActionAid has been able to support more women around the world to turn crisis into opportunity.

We are so grateful for your incredible support, without which none of this would be possible.

THANK YOU!

Individuals

Anne Miller

Jenny Donald

Belinda Morrissey

Claire Van Heyningen

Jacquie Love and Colin Fabig

Julie McDonald

Kristen Lark

Kristina Stefanova and James Schultz

Lindley Edwards

Mitty Williams

Natasha Stott Despoja AO

Phillip Cornwell

Sarah Morton Ramwell

Tiffany Lodge

Trine Barter

Vicki Olsson

Foundations

English Family Foundation

JLDJS Foundation

Madden Sainsbury Foundation

Norman Family Foundation

Palm Avenue Foundation

Sky Foundation

The Capricorn Foundation

The Community Impact Foundation

The Horizon Foundation

The Roberts Pike Foundation

Organisations

Department of Premier and Cabinet
State of Tasmania

Ethical Jobs

GreenCollar

Liverpool Partners

New South Wales Nurses and
Midwives' Association Council

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

Janette O'Neill - Head of
Sustainability, QBE

Jo Norman, Norman Family
Foundation

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

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

Milissa Day, International Finance
Corporation, World Bank Group

Robyn Nixon, General Manager,
Intrepid Group



arise | act:onaid

📘 facebook.com/ActionAidAustralia
🐦 twitter.com/actionaid_au
📷 instagram.com/actionaidaustralia
🌐 www.actionaid.org.au/arisefund

ActionAid Australia
Locked Bag 5515
Camperdown NSW 1450
Phone: 02 9565 9111
Email: info.au@actionaid.org
Donations: 1300 66 66 72

Claire Pryce
Philanthropy & Partnerships Manager
Email: claire.pryce@actionaid.org