



# Arise Fund 2022 Impact Report

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**arise**

Women leading  
crisis response.



**“Women should be leaders  
because they have the right to  
lead. We are aware of our rights,  
and we also have talents and  
skills that men do not have.”**

**Natividad Rosales**

President of Villa Enaje Farmers and  
Fisherfolks Women’s Association

**SINCE  
2017**



**20**

countries we’ve worked in



**3,441,423**

people impacted



**32,169**

women and girls trained to prepare  
for and lead disaster response



**\$6.99m**

funds raised



Gender Responsive Alternatives to Climate Change,  
Women leading peace, security and justice and the  
Shifting the Power Coalition projects are supported  
by the Australian Government and the Arise Fund.



# Making change, not waiting for it

The United Nations has declared that we are at a tipping point for women's rights globally and without significant investment, gender equality will take over 300 years at current rates of progress. Gender inequalities are deepening due to the impacts of climate change and cascading global crises.

The Arise Fund has never been more relevant with its recognition that disaster can be a catalyst for longer term gains in gender equality by scaling up investment in women's leadership in preparing for and responding to crisis.

In 2018 we made our first Arise grant to Vanuatu and 5 years later we are seeing the impact this investment has made. Women have gone from being ignored when alerting their communities to disaster to driving early warning information and communication to 40% of the population.

They have gone from being passive recipients of disaster relief to leading the first women-led response to Cyclone Harold and holding humanitarian actors accountable for more inclusive relief. As the women shared on a recent visit, they have gone 'from being nothing to something'. They have earned the respect of their communities and are driving humanitarian action with many abilities they have.

This year Ni-Vanuatu women took another leap forward with Flora Vano's participation in global negotiations at the UN climate conference, COP27 in Egypt. Lifting the voices of women on the frontlines of the climate crisis, Flora was part of the team calling for compensation for countries that are experiencing loss and damage as a result of climate change, yet have done little to cause the problem.

This collective advocacy effort resulted in the historic establishment of a global loss and damage fund after more than four decades of civil society pressure.

Vanuatu is just one example of the Arise impact. To date, we have trained 32,169 women, which has enabled us to reach 3,441,423 people in 20 countries. Thank you for making these achievements possible. Together we are empowering women and changing the world!

**Michelle Higelin, Executive  
Director, ActionAid Australia**





# Rapid response

## Tonga

On the 15th of January 2022, the powerful eruption of the Hunga Tonga-Hunga Ha'apai volcano caused an enormous ripple effect across the region, spreading major ashfall and triggering a devastating tsunami which polluted clean water sources. This was the biggest eruption the world had seen in 30 years.

According to the UN, 84,000 people – more than 80% of the population – were affected by the disaster, which destroyed homes and infrastructure right across Tonga.

The Arise Fund ensured that the Talitha Project – ActionAid's local partner in Tonga – alongside the Shifting the Power Coalition, could respond promptly and effectively to address the impacts of the volcano eruption, focusing on groups of people who were most vulnerable.

### **The initial emergency response included:**

- Reaching a total of 2,437 people from 429 households with emergency kits which consisted of food items, sanitary items, and water.
- Providing 20 frontline workers with wash kits and tarpaulins and 30 community police officers with tarpaulins.
- Establishing a radio program to raise awareness among the local population about the situation that was unfolding in the aftermath of the eruption, which included coping strategies that young people could utilise. It is estimated that half of the young population of Tonga tuned into the program, as the internet was not functioning due to the tsunami.

A creative program supported 130 children and young people from the two islands worst affected by the eruption – Atatā Island and Mango Island. The program helped children acknowledge their experiences of the disaster and having to relocate from their hometowns to the main island of Tonga. Creative activities such as drawing, games and music gave them outlets to ease their minds and bond with one another.



**According to the UN, 84,000 people – more than 80% of the population – were affected by the eruption of the Hunga Tonga-Hunga Ha'apai volcano in January 2022.**





## Ukraine

Intense hostilities since Russian armed forces entered Ukraine on the 24th of February have left 17 million people in need of humanitarian aid. In that time, Ukrainian families have been forced to flee their homes, leaving behind loved ones, livelihoods and almost everything they own.

14.6 million people are currently displaced inside Ukraine and around Europe, and the vast majority are women and children. Having already fled from violence in their hometowns, displaced women have continued to be confronted with new risks while seeking refuge.

The main threats to women's safety are human trafficking, food insecurity and a lack of access to health care – including the full range of reproductive health services, care for survivors of gender-based violence and mental health support.

To date, ActionAid has worked with 40 partners to provide support to more than 600,000 displaced people in Poland, Romania, Moldova, and Ukraine. ActionAid, along with our partner, Polish Humanitarian Action, supported refugees arriving in Poland at border crossing points with access to information services, hot food, basic hygiene items, temporary accommodation and protection assistance to women and children against exploitation.

One of ActionAid's partners eLiberare, a women-led organisation based in Romania, implemented a protection model to address the risks of human trafficking on Ukrainian refugees in their journeys across Romania and Europe. The organisation assisted 500 families by designing individualised safety plans, raising awareness about the warning signs of exploitation, and distributing dignity kits.



In June, ActionAid Australia's Deputy Head of Programs, Carol Angir, visited Romania and Moldova and had the opportunity to consult with humanitarian actors and women's rights organisations about their protection strategies and crisis responses.

Carol also offered her support to Ukrainian women refugees, hearing heart-breaking firsthand accounts about their journeys and concerns around safety, security, and dignity.

**"When people talk about resolving conflict, they talk about arms, they talk about military, they talk about power, and they talk about money. The women's agenda gets brought very late to the table. We have the capability to link those women and organisations to the right structures and raise funding to support them – and that's exactly what we did."**



**14.6 million Ukrainians are currently displaced, the vast majority being women and children.**



## East Africa

The East Africa Food Crisis evolved out of an unprecedented multi-season drought – punctuated by one of the worst March–May rainy seasons the region has seen in 70 years. The already dire situation was further exacerbated by the detrimental impacts that the war in Ukraine has had on global food and fuel accessibility.

The crisis is significantly affecting people in Ethiopia, Kenya, and Somalia, where more than 23 million people are in acute food insecurity.

Focus areas of the response have included establishing protection services for women, Women-Led Community-Based Adaptation programs and implementing and strengthening safe spaces. These responses integrate psychological support and counselling for gender-based violence survivors and referrals to medical and legal services.

The drought and food crisis disproportionately impacts women and children, leaving them vulnerable to threats against their safety. The risks of FGM and child marriage have increased since the drought, as girls can be sold for marriage as a solution to losses in income.

Women and girls are also having to walk longer distances to access water, exposing them to a heightened risk of gender-based violence and dehydration.

### **In Somaliland, ActionAid's response included:**

- 185,196 people reached through drought support
- 30,866 female headed households reached
- Distributing 850 dignity kits to women and girls
- Conducting Female Genital Mutilation awareness raising sessions for 15,000 people

### **In Kenya, our response included :**

- Reaching 540 households with two transactions of cash transfers for food baskets
- Establishing new boreholes and procuring and distributing 6 water storage tanks of 10,000 litres to six communities, serving 12,000 households.
- Distributing hygiene kits–bar soap and menstrual packs to 1,092 girls

### **In Ethiopia, activities included :**

- Providing food support for 20,000 people for four months
- Providing counselling for 2,000 Gender-Based Violence survivors as well as providing dignity kits to 5,000 individuals and Gender-Based Violence survivors



**23 million people across Ethiopia, Kenya and Somalia are in acute food insecurity.**





## Afghanistan

ActionAid has worked in Afghanistan since 2002 to address poverty and inequality. With the help of the Arise Fund, ActionAid was able to maintain its presence in Afghanistan over the past year, rapidly scaling up its response to the widespread economic and food insecurity being experienced throughout the country. It is estimated that 20 million people, almost half the population, are still facing acute hunger.

After the Taliban came into power in August 2021, thousands of desperate people fled to urban centres of Afghanistan with little more than the clothes on their back – arriving in cities like Kabul, Mazar and Herat.

Now, along with extreme hunger, families are facing severe drought, soaring inflation, overwhelmed health services and unemployment. Since August 2021, ActionAid has provided lifesaving assistance to approximately 313,850 people across twelve provinces of Afghanistan.

The response has largely focused on helping women stay safe and resurrect their livelihoods. Cash transfers have been critical in this unstable situation to support families with the flexibility to purchase necessities according to their individual needs, including medicine, clothing, water, or sanitation items. Winterisation kits have also been essential for families to combat the harsh winter, providing them with winter clothing, quilts, and gas.

With the aim to strengthen the protection of women, ActionAid has been working with other humanitarian actors and local volunteers to address trauma and to identify cases of gender-based violence, providing referrals to counselling centres and protection clusters when needed.

### **ActionAid's response has included reaching:**

- 50,258 people through multipurpose cash
- 17,150 people through cash assistance for food
- 5,194 people through winterisation cash
- 23,415 people through the distribution of hygiene kits
- 28,650 farmers through the distribution of seed kits



**It is estimated that 20 million people in Afghanistan, almost half the population, are still facing acute hunger.**



# 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

Since 2015, ActionAid has supported Ni-Vanuatu women to establish Women I TokTok Tugeta (WITTT), a locally led women's forum responding to climate change and disasters.

Vanuatu is one of the most disaster-prone countries globally, and mobilising local women to lead in disaster preparedness has been critical for implementing early warning systems and ensuring inclusive humanitarian responses.

This year, Vanuatu underwent a widespread outbreak of COVID-19 which instigated a lockdown between March and June. Backed by the Arise Fund, the Gender Responsive Alternatives for Climate Change (GRACC) program could continue to increase the capacity of local women to work on climate resilience, especially through increasing food security and monitoring weather and climate.

The Women's Weather Watch (WWW) SMS communication platform proved to be a leading innovation during this time. Though

originally designed to monitor weather, it has since been used for COVID-19 awareness and as a feedback loop.

Food insecurity has also become a major issue, instigated by the COVID-19 lockdowns and community transmissions. WITTT farmers responded by utilising tools from their Climate Resilient Sustainable Agriculture training, bridging it with traditional knowledge to boost vegetable farming in their communities.

A total of 100 WITTT Sunshine members in the islands of Efate, Tanna and Malo have received small grants to enhance their livelihoods and improve their food security, primarily by creating vegetable gardens and selling goods. The platform WITTT Sunshine is a safe space that was launched in 2019 for women with disabilities to organise and mobilise, aiming to support their collective efforts to protect their rights and respond to their needs during climate change and recurrent disasters.

ActionAid Vanuatu's work on climate change has been recognised at the national level, including their influence on climate change discussions and their contribution to COP26 country consultations. This year, Flora Vano, the ActionAid Vanuatu Country Manager, attended COP27 where she had the opportunity to bring forward the voices of Ni-Vanuatu women, who are some of the worst affected by climate change, to an international stage.

Earlier in the year, women also took collective action through a convening of 30 members, made up of WITTT forum leaders and the WWW network, to identify priorities for engaging government stakeholders in inclusive Disaster Risk Reduction. An additional forum was held with 50 women leaders from WITTT to share learnings on their application of climate science and engagement with Climate Services.



**Vanuatu is one of the most disaster-prone countries globally, and mobilising local women to lead in disaster preparedness has been critical.**





## Cambodia

The second phase of the Gender Responsive Alternatives for Climate Change (GRACC II) project is one of ActionAid Cambodia's initiatives that focuses on empowering women and addressing the challenges they face in a world shaped by disasters and climate change.

The project involves the establishment of Women Champion Networks (WCNs). These networks consist of individual Women Champions who advocate for and influence the Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) and Climate Change Adaptation (CCA) agenda of government stakeholders, particularly at district and community levels.

Areas of improvement for the agenda include addressing women's gendered needs, increasing women's participation and leadership in decision-making and intertwining women's everyday and local knowledge into policy planning.

With the help of the Arise Fund, two WCNs were established in Pursat province and Kampot province. The members of both networks were able to conduct research with local women and other special needs groups to develop an overarching action plan, the Women's Charter of Demand, which advocates for gender-sensitive disaster preparedness and adaptation plans with local authorities.



Noun Sophy is a Women Champion, local council member and mother of eight in Pursat province. Her province is considered one of the worst-affected by floods, often resulting in the destruction of houses, infrastructure, and paddy fields.

Sophy noticed that when extreme weather occurred, it especially impacted women in the community, as they were one of the more vulnerable groups and were offered little knowledge on disaster preparedness.

Throughout her work as a Women Champion, Sophy has been committed to improving the resilience of local communities when it comes to disasters. She implemented community reach meetings to promote awareness on disaster, hygiene, and gender-based violence, allowing a space where residents could dare to voice their concerns and needs.

She also proposed a development plan which resulted in the building of a new sewerage system and the improvement of existing water canals, as well as the installation of billboards to remind people about correct and incorrect actions during flooding.





**Kenya is in the midst of a severe drought, with over 4 million people currently facing acute food insecurity**

## Kenya

Kenya is in the midst of a severe drought, with over 4 million people currently facing acute food insecurity. Consecutive failed rainy seasons have caused a significant drop in crop yield, while water availability is well below normal. The numbers of healthy livestock have also been jeopardised by the lack of crops and water supply.


ActionAid Kenya, through its Tangelbei Local Rights Programme, implemented the second phase of the Gender Responsive Alternatives to Climate Change (GRACC). The project works alongside women's organisations to deepen their understanding on the laws and policies of climate change adaptation, empowering women they work with to lead change in their communities.

**GRACC has harnessed women's existing skills and knowledge as homemakers and strengthened their role as women in leadership who are advancing climate action, through:**

- Championing the adoption of agroecology and livelihood diversification to improve women's resilience to drought and conflict. Livelihood diversification can incorporate kitchen gardens, indigenous poultry, small ruminants, and nutrient-rich and drought-tolerant crop species. Despite below average rainfall in their communities, 1,500 women reported that embracing agroecological practices and diversifying their livelihoods had ensured that they were able to provide for their families.
- Promoting women's economic participation, including establishing Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLA) with women organisations and championing for its adoption in county policies in the aim to build resilient livelihoods. 40 VSLA groups were newly established, comprising of 1,000 members: an extension to the 23 groups and 650 members already in existence.





A woman, Martha James, is shown in a rural setting, bending over to water her vegetable garden. She is wearing a red headscarf with a white pattern, a beige short-sleeved top with lace detailing on the sleeves, and a yellow and red patterned skirt. She is holding a clear plastic bottle with a blue cap, which she is using to water the plants. The garden is filled with green leafy vegetables, and several other similar plastic bottles are visible in the ground, indicating a drip irrigation system. In the background, there is a rustic fence made of dry sticks and branches.

**“The ActionAid trip was very informative in teaching us how to use animal manure. I was very excited that when I came back, I taught 25 members of our Village Savings and Loans Association how to farm like I had seen.”**

Martha James

Martha James used to rely solely on livestock as a source of income. Since attending a learning visit to a food forest along with other women from her locality, the mother of 8 has gradually expanded her livelihood sources to include more food crops.

Martha's shamba (cultivated plot of ground) has a constant supply of green vegetables that she enjoys with her family. Since the family has access to a limited water supply – only a few jerrycans each day – Martha has innovatively transformed used water bottles into a drip irrigation system which slowly deposits water directly to the roots of the crops.

More women in Martha's community have incorporated her sustainable farming techniques into their kitchen gardens, helping them cope with the extreme water shortages that they are dealing with.

The trip was organised by GRACC to showcase an example of a farm that was self-sufficient, despite existing in an area that was as arid as Martha's home in Tangelbei. It included information on how organic fertilisers could be just as effective for increasing crop yields as chemical fertilisers, without causing harm to their health.





## Indonesia

ActionAid's project, Women-Led Community Based Protection, is located in Indonesia's provinces of Central Sulawesi and Banten. It is supported by two of Indonesia's local NGOs – Yappika ActionAid (YAA) and PATTIRO Banten.

The project works alongside local women to strengthen their capacity, recruiting Women Focal Points (WFPs) and training them in Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR), gender-based violence referral mechanisms and sustainable livelihood activities.

**Thanks to the Arise Fund, the project led to inclusive community-based protection initiatives, run by women and within rural communities, including:**

- The management of regular village women's forums. The forums are a point of contact where cases of gender-based violence can be reported and assistance can be provided. The forums are also a space where people with disability and other vulnerable groups are consulted, and where data and feedback can be compiled and submitted to village governments, advocating for strengthened accessibility and social protection programs in the communities.
- Community action. In Serang Regency, WFPs proposed that the local government install information boards on evacuation routes throughout disaster-prone villages. WFPs also monitored the conditions of local river water, suspected to be polluted from industrial activity. They demanded compensation from the company responsible for the pollution.
- The preparation of disaster risk assessments and disaster risk maps in Pandeglang Regency and Serang Regency, which were disseminated to 199 WFPs and other village focal points.



31-year-old Ade, a mother to two children, is a member of a Women Focal Point, and works with her husband on their farm.

Ade's village of Tamanjaya is located in a tsunami red zone. When disaster struck in 2018, the village did not have an evacuation plan in place. A heavily pregnant Ade was terrified as she was separated from her husband during the chaos. In the years following the tsunami, she was determined to create change so that this would not happen again.

Together with women from her community, she consulted with the local government to help them understand the importance of evacuation routes for faster evacuations and fewer injuries. A proposal for construction was accepted in 2020. The women also took on the responsibility of preparing the people in the village with an evacuation procedure and standby bags with essential items.







Natividad Rosales is President of villa Enaje Farmers and Fisherfolks Women's Association. As a farming community, an increase in climate-related disasters is presenting them with increased challenges.

**"You can easily see the impacts of climate change, looking at the surroundings – even the pineapples; the harvest is too small and poor quality... Despite these shortcomings, we are trying our best to improve our livelihoods by making handicrafts, baskets, bags."**

## The Philippines

ActionAid Philippines and their local partner National Rural Women Coalition (PKKK) work together across three regions of the Philippines to build the resilience of the most vulnerable women and ensure that women's rights are upheld during and after emergencies.

In 2015, building upon the transformative impact of women's leadership in disaster preparedness and response, ActionAid established the Women's Emergency Network (WENet), which focuses on strengthening Disaster Risk Reduction and Management (DRRM) in 30 women's organisations in the Philippines.

Thanks to the Arise Fund, ActionAid was able to support WENet in their aim to mobilise women in emergency situations by leading accountability, claiming their rights, and strengthening their capacity.

### **WENet reached many women leaders and actors during this time, by:**

- Organising an assessment and learning session with its member organisations regarding the COVID-19 and Typhoon Goni response. The session provided a space for 21 women leaders, who actively led the responses in their respective communities, to share their experiences and challenges.
- Developing Gender and DRRM modules through consultations, Training Needs Analysis (TNA) and additional assessment and learning sessions with member organisations. A total of 183 women, youth and barangay officials participated in the modules.
- Organising online forums, where 147 participants were able to discuss issues on representation and engagement of women in DRRM and Climate Change Adaptation work. The forums were organised by women leaders, offering a platform where they developed their self-esteem and public leadership skills.



# Shifting the Power Coalition

The Shifting the Power Coalition (StPC) was established in 2016 with seed funding provided by the Arise Fund, after Tropical Cyclone Winston tore through Fiji and caused significant damage and dozens of deaths. Supported by ActionAid Australia, there are currently 12 feminist organisations across 8 Pacific Island nations who are members of the Coalition.

StPC recognises that simply treating women as victims is not suitable for disaster prevention and response. Instead, it asserts that women have the knowledge, skills, and capacity to lead Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) planning and to articulate their needs and the needs of women in their communities.

The capacity of women leaders, including young women and women with disabilities, has been fostered, encouraging them to organise national disaster coordination mechanisms and influence policy and decision-making.

189 women in six countries have participated in national-level trainings to lead gender-transformative disaster responses. The women were then able to take the learnings and strategies for humanitarian action back to their communities and apply them there.

One participant in Fiji noted that the national-level training translated into tangible changes when they led disaster responses on the ground, "With [Tropical Cyclone] Winston, when they mentioned category 1, 2, 3 – all that type of jargon was not really understandable at the community level. They didn't understand how powerful it was... An explanation guided the community-based members to understand and then be able to respond."

With the support of the Arise Fund, a greater influence from diverse Pacific women has also been present in key regional meetings, including the first and second Pacific Resilience Meetings and the Pacific Triennial – both key forums for regional-level policy making and strategy setting on DRR.

One StPC member noted the importance of bringing the perspectives and experience of women on the ground into the decision-making process:

**"The engagement of women has created a movement which means that humanitarian action does not work effectively unless there are genuine co-working relationships and partnerships. Instead of lip service to women and young people's engagement, it has become a 'non-negotiable'."**



**189 women in six countries have participated in national-level trainings to lead gender-transformative disaster responses.**



# 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.

From Vanuatu to Kenya, Cambodia to the Philippines, and Indonesia 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.

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.

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.

## 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 COVID-19 pandemic.

### Thankyou...

#### Individuals

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#### Foundations

English Family Foundation  
JLDJS Foundation  
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QBE Foundation  
The Madden Sainsbury Foundation  
The Roberts Pike Foundation  
Sky Foundation

#### Organisations

Ashurst  
Archie Rose  
GreenCollar  
Macquarie Group Foundation

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## 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

**Evie Bruce**, Group General Council, Macquarie

**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

**Robyn Nixon**, General Manager Special Projects, Intrepid Travel

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