

TALKING ACTION

Together we empower women and change the world

We are so grateful to kind people like you who contributed an incredible \$163,000 to support women facing exploitation in Bangladesh's garment industry.

Your collective generosity will support Women's Cafes, and provide a safe space for garment workers to receive counselling, learning opportunities to develop new livelihoods and information about their rights at work.



Creating change for Bangladesh's garment workers

In June, almost 1000 generous supporters dug deep to ensure Women's Cafes continue to provide a sanctuary for women who are experiencing exploitation and violence at work.

For women experiencing exploitative conditions, Women's Cafes are a lifeline to safety, self-determination and respect.

Every day, countless women are working in ready-made garment factories across Bangladesh. They suffer from long hours, poor pay, sexist-policies and fear and harassment.

Whether you gave \$5 or \$5000, your generosity will mean women like Mousumi have a place to turn to, and access to facilities such as daycare, legal aid, counselling, and medical care.

Even more than that, it will provide a place for women like her to meet in safety, build their collective strength and support each other to stand up for their rights – creating lasting change for millions of garment workers in Bangladesh's largest industry.

Thank you for continuing to empower women to change the world! Your impact truly cannot be over-estimated!



Mousumi, Bangladesh



Even the biggest brands respond to public pressure and will put the safety of women garment workers before profit when we raise our voices together.

A big win for the garment industry

The power of collective action!

In April, we marked the 10-year anniversary of the Rana Plaza factory collapse in Dhaka, Bangladesh. The disaster was one of the deadliest catastrophes in the history of the clothing manufacturing industry, taking the lives of 1138 workers and injuring 2600 more.

ActionAid supporters like you stood in solidarity with Rana Plaza survivors and demanded Australian fashion brands put the safety of the women who make our clothes first by signing the acclaimed global safety agreement: **The International Accord for Health and Safety in the Textile and Garment Industry**.

The accord, introduced after the Rana Plaza disaster, ensures workers' safety through independent inspections, establishment of workplace safety programs, and by ensuring fashion brands cease business with factories that fail to operate safely. Since the introduction of the Accord in 2013, independent inspections have uncovered 170,000 safety violations and resolved over 90% of these safety hazards. Millions of workers in over a thousand factories in Bangladesh are now safer at work. But there is still a long way to go for an industry rife with exploitation.

In the weeks leading up to the anniversary, thousands of you signed our petition demanding THE ICONIC and Best&Less sign the International Accord. Our activist network in Sydney and Melbourne held panel events attended by almost 200 people to raise the profile of the campaign and provide a platform through which to amplify the demands of women garment workers in Bangladesh.

Thanks to the efforts of people around the country, we succeeded in pushing Mosaic Brands – owners of Rivers, Millers and Katies – and THE ICONIC to sign The International Accord.

Garment workers who produce clothes for THE ICONIC and Mosaic Brands in Bangladesh will now be safer at work. This victory would not have been possible without the support and dedication of the ActionAid community.



A long road to recovery

On 6th February 2023, a magnitude 7.8 earthquake devastated central Türkiye and northwest Syria, killing more than 58,000 people, and leaving millions more displaced. Six months on, ActionAid Australia Executive Director Michelle visited Türkiye to bear witness to the incredible recovery efforts taking place.

It's been six months since the devastating earthquake that hit Türkiye and Syria on 6 February 2023. I recently visited Gaziantep, near the epicenter of the earthquake in Türkiye, where I witnessed firsthand both the enormous destruction caused by the disaster and the tremendous courage and determination of ActionAid's local partners who have been responding to the urgent needs of survivors.

All of them share a powerful reminder that 'this is a crisis within a crisis' with 4.1 million people displaced from conflict in North West Syria, one of the areas most impacted by the earthquake. Yasmina from Syrian women's rights organization, Freedom Jasmine, shared with me that *'even before the earthquake the situation was bad. Now it has become so bad. Many women have lost their job, their homes, their family. In the beginning of the earthquake, they needed dignity kits and food baskets. Now they need psychological support.'*

There is an alarming rise in suicide among young women in Syria, in a context where talking about gender-based violence is taboo and multiple

families are crammed into single tents. Women report no privacy to wash, no toilet facilities and feeling highly insecure.

With your support, ActionAid has been working with six impressive Syrian-led organisations, mostly headed by women and young people. All have put protection of women's rights at the top of their agenda, alongside safe shelter and building the long-term resilience of communities that have been ripped apart by a decade of conflict, and now one of the deadliest earthquakes in the region's history.

ActionAid's partner, Violet, who we have been working with prior to the earthquake to train more than 200 volunteers in emergency preparedness, played a lead role in rescuing people and moving them to hospitals from the first day of the crisis. They were the first on the ground in some of the hard-to-reach communities in North West Syria within hours of the earthquake, and they shared that the flexible support provided by ActionAid enabled them to get fuel for their mobile health clinics and equipment to remove rubble and save people who were trapped under collapsed buildings. This support saved so many lives in an environment where you can see entire apartment blocks levelled to the ground, piles of rubble lined up along the streets alongside thousands of tents housing survivors.

I want to thank you personally for supporting this massive response effort, which has elevated women's leadership in the earthquake response and protection of some of the most vulnerable women and girls. In an environment where women are shut out of public life, child marriage is rife and rates of gender-based violence are high, this focus is critical.



Destruction caused by the earthquake in Northwest Syria



Safaa, mother of three lives in a camp for internally displaced people. Her son underwent surgery at an ActionAid funded hospital

Rina's Story: Farming her way out of crisis

In a world facing an unprecedented cost of living crisis, it is women and girls from the world's most marginalised communities who are bearing the brunt of skyrocketing prices for food, fuel, and fertiliser.

ActionAid's recent research revealed the dire situation facing women and girls in 14 countries across Africa, Asia, and the Caribbean as families are forced to spend up to ten times what they paid on essential items 16 months ago.

Rising cost of living coupled with an intensifying climate crisis has severely impacted people's ability to sustain their livelihoods. This has led to soaring child marriage and school dropout rates as families are forced to make desperate decisions to survive. As food becomes scarcer, it is women who eat last and least sacrificing their health and wellbeing for their families.

"The rich may get away with price hikes, but the poor will struggle. Something has to be done, or society will suffer a lot." – Meem, a student from a remote village in southern Bangladesh.

Thanks to support from people like you, ActionAid is empowering women farmers to find innovative solutions to increase their resilience to intersecting economic and climate crises.

Rina, a mother and farmer from Manjupara, Bangladesh, was struggling with plummeting crop harvests because of climate change that would have left her unable to cope with the rising cost of living.

"Before, everything would be submerged in water. We were falling behind because of salt water. We tried to cultivate rice but couldn't. I couldn't even grow peanuts as they would rot."

After attending ActionAid training on agroecology, Rina began to use freshwater for irrigation, which helped her to manage the impacts of saltwater intrusion and grow more crops like rice, peanuts, and sweet potatoes.

"But now, by the sustainable farming trainings of ActionAid, I've learned many things. I've learned how to collect fresh water. We use the fresh water for our crops. I've grown 74kg of Peanuts. I've also grown a lot of sweet potatoes."

Now Rina has enough food to feed her family and make an income. She has been able to keep her daughter, who loves learning, in school despite the skyrocketing prices of essential items.

When women farmers have greater access and control over resources, increased decision-making power and are supported to become leaders in their community, their families alongside the whole community benefit.

Thanks to your support, women farmers like Rina can access the training and resources they need to provide for their families and build sustainable livelihoods in the face of multiple economic and climate crises.

None of this work would be possible without the generosity of people like you – thank you. If you would like to support more women like Rina to change their future, please scan the QR code here:





Rina's crops now provide food and income for her family

Your gifts in action

Last year, the support of generous people like you empowered almost 300,000 women in 16 countries to claim their rights and stand up against injustice. Together, we strengthened women's access to the resources, trainings, and technology they need to push forward their own priorities and build community resilience to multiple crises.



299,644 women and girls were directly supported by ActionAid's community of supporters



2,620,210 people received support from ActionAid's global emergency responses



1.1 million people accessed humanitarian relief, including essential supplies like food assistance, hygiene and dignity kits, and medicines in Ukraine.

Here are just a few examples of ActionAid programs that are supporting women to establish sustainable livelihoods and build their resilience to multiple crises:



In **Indonesia**, 12 women-led economic groups have been established to support women to cope with the rising cost of essential items and build their own sustainable businesses.



In **Kenya**, 1500 women were trained in agroecological practices and supported to diversify their livelihoods to improve their resilience to climate-induced drought and ongoing conflict.



In **Vanuatu**, 80 leaders of the 'Women I Tok Tok Tugeta' network were trained on climate resilient sustainable agriculture to become WITTT Green Champions. These women have returned to their communities and shared their newly acquired knowledge with other women farmers.

The most important gift you'll ever give

Mrs AK*, along with her late husband has supported ActionAid's work for an incredible 36 years! At age 81, she was happy to share her story and tell us why it was important to her to include a Gift in her Will.

Q: Tell me about your background.

A: I was born in New Zealand in 1941 to working class parents. I was the first person in my family to go to university where I did French and German. After that I did a Masters in German, met my husband Douglas and had 2 children. We lived in Cambridge for several years while Douglas did his PhD and then taught at the university. After that I worked for 25 years in the law. Now I'm retired, I still volunteer in prisons teaching literacy.

Douglas and I travelled extensively – mostly for his work and I think (even more than education) that this has allowed us to see life from others' perspectives. I am proud to have included ActionAid in my will.

Q: Why did you first give to ActionAid

A: My husband Douglas and I lead a very simple life and didn't spend excessively. My father was a generous person even though he was not as fortunate as we have been. He supported many organisations but we have always wanted to support the very poorest in the world – not necessarily those causes that get most attention. I like to support in emergency situations which of course is a part of ActionAid's work. I also like that ActionAid's work includes long-term programs which work to help the whole community. I can see how this sort of gift will lead to long-term real and lasting change!

Q: What are the values that caused you to include ActionAid in your will?

A: To me, helping others when you can is simply a part of life and I don't see it as any great virtue. We were never attracted to material possessions and would much rather leave a legacy which can help others to lead a better life.

**Mrs AK is extremely modest and preferred that we not use her full name.*

Create your own lasting legacy gift

Leaving just 1% of your estate in your will could empower women to create lasting change for themselves and their communities for many generations.

To find out more about how to include a gift in your will visit actionaid.org.au/gift-in-will

Alternatively, call our Special Donor Manger, David Taylor on **0415 776 410** for a confidential chat.



Thank you, your support continues to change the world!

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