



**Women's Leadership
for Climate Justice**

**STRATEGIC
DIRECTIONS
2024–2028**

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Amidst a rapidly escalating climate crisis and the growing reversal of women's rights worldwide, social movements led by those at the forefront of injustice are rising to challenge threats to women's rights and climate inaction.

ActionAid Australia is both a catalyst and a contributor to these global efforts, working to mobilise a movement of Australians that stand for gender equality and global justice.

OVER THE NEXT FIVE YEARS, OUR GOAL IS TO SHIFT POWER TO ENABLE WOMEN ON THE FRONTLINES OF THE CLIMATE CRISIS TO DRIVE LOCALLY-LED SOLUTIONS & SYSTEMS CHANGE.

WHO WE ARE

ActionAid is a global women's rights organisation working in over 70 countries to advance gender equality and global justice. We empower women on the frontlines of injustice to lead change in their communities, while campaigning to dismantle unjust systems in Australia and abroad. We work with partners to shift power, resources, and technology into the hands of women for the benefit of entire communities, putting their voices and priorities at the forefront of the movement for global justice.

Our vision



A just, equitable and sustainable world where everyone lives a life of dignity

Our purpose



To advance women's rights and end poverty and injustice

Our values



Mutual respect, equity and justice, integrity, solidarity with people living in poverty and exclusion, courage of conviction, independence, humility.

Our culture



Intersectional feminist & inclusive – we are unashamedly feminist and fierce in our commitment to women's rights, driving an inclusive, intergenerational movement, grounded in the voices of women most impacted by injustice.

Innovative & agile – we are bold and dare to take risks without fear of failure, driving a culture of learning and collaboration that brings together the right people at the right time.

Interconnected – we are one team united by shared vision and common goals and through co-design, collective ownership, and collaboration we are unstoppable.

Impact-oriented – committed to accountability and transparency, we measure our results, are data-driven and engage in ongoing learning and reflection for greatest impact.

Distributing emergency food kits after the earthquake in Morocco, 2023. ActionAid



OUR APPROACH

ActionAid works from human rights-based approach (HRBA), which supports the people most affected by poverty and injustice to be at the centre of efforts to drive social change.

Widespread gender discrimination and inequality means that women make up the majority of people living in poverty, facing hunger and insecurity, and those who are displaced or killed during conflict and disasters. As a result, ActionAid actively support women to understand, mobilise and claim their rights and hold governments and other decision makers to account. Investing in women's leadership not only transforms their status in society but brings broader benefits to families and communities.

Our approach is grounded in power analysis and intersectional feminism, which recognises that gender inequality intersects with other forms of discrimination and injustice such as racism, homophobia, ableism and ageism. ActionAid actively supports the leadership of women facing poverty and injustice, including women with disabilities, indigenous women, and women from LGBTQI+ communities. Intergenerational leadership is part of our practice and actively supporting the leadership of young women.



Sultana, farmer and President of women farmers group, Bangladesh. ActionAid



Anggie, member of the Women's Association in her community, Philippines. ActionAid

Our rights-based approach brings together four principles:

- 1 Empowerment:** We empower women to understand their rights and barriers to achieving these so they can collectively challenge the forces that keep them trapped in poverty and injustice
- 2 Solidarity:** We work to build the collective power of women, alongside allies, partners and movements for change, resourcing these efforts and connecting struggles against injustice
- 3 Campaigning:** We campaign to shift government policy and corporate practice that undermines the rights of the women we work with
- 4 Alternatives:** When we challenge systems of injustice, we offer tangible alternatives, rooted in credible evidence and the priorities of the women most impacted.

At the heart of ActionAid's approach is supporting the self determination of women and campaigning for systems change.

We are the only Australian NGO working in the development space that works at these dual levels to drive change through our programs and campaigns.

We are committed to decolonising development, dismantling unjust systems and driving accountability to communities facing injustice.



Deeqa, 45, milks her goats at the IDP camp where she now lives, Somaliland. Khadija Farah/ActionAid



Rima, a Reproductive Health Awareness Worker, during an awareness session for expectant mothers, North-west Syria. Sonya Al Ali Maara/ActionAid

CONTEXT

After decades of progress on women’s rights, the world is witnessing the largest setback to gender equality in history.

The number of women living in extreme poverty is rising and by 2030, one in four women will face food insecurity. The backlash on women’s sexual and reproductive rights is growing and violence against women remains unacceptably high. The gender gap in decision making remains entrenched and 178 countries maintain legal barriers to women’s full economic participation.

The climate crisis, which is fueling increased disasters and conflict, is a major driver of these setbacks, exacerbating existing gender inequalities. Women’s exclusion from decision making has resulted in policies and plans that are gender blind and fail to respond to the needs of diverse women and girls. Women’s unequal access to resources and over representation in informal and precarious employment continues to hamper their resilience in times of crisis. Climate related disasters and conflict are fuelling increased violence against women and girls and threats to their safety, dignity and rights.

At the same time, the window is closing to limit global heating to 1.5 degrees Celsius at which point extreme flooding, drought, wildfires and food shortages increase dramatically. This will have a profound impact around the world, with women living in poverty disproportionately affected.

World leaders have failed to take urgent climate action and heed the warning that there must be no new investment in fossil fuels if we are to avert catastrophic climate change. Australia is among the worst offenders with both government and big banks continuing to finance fossil fuels, which are the leading contributor to global heating with devastating consequences for the women we work with.

Countries that have done the least to cause the problem are experiencing irrecoverable loss and damage to their culture, livelihoods, infrastructure, and ecosystems. Their demands for increased financing to adapt to climate change and address the widespread damage it has caused have not been met. Yet these resources are vital if communities with women at the helm are to stand a chance in preparing for the future.

The climate crisis is undermining women’s rights at every level. Addressing the structural drivers of this crisis, which lie in an unjust extractive economic model, alongside supporting women to withstand the growing impacts is essential if we are to stop the backsliding on women’s rights.

We can change the course of this trajectory. ActionAid has a proven track record that can make a difference if brought to scale. At the heart of this agenda is supporting women to lead us out of this crisis and building a people-powered movement to dismantle unjust systems. We cannot do this alone and will intentionally collaborate for the greatest possible impact on justice for women globally.

STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS 2024–2028

Overview

Over the next five years, we will work with the global ActionAid federation, partners, donors, allies and movements towards an ambitious agenda that responds to the growing impacts of the climate crisis on women's rights.

This builds on more than 15 years of experience and learning to advance women's leadership on the frontlines of the climate crisis while tackling unjust systems that continue to drive poverty and injustice.

Investing in women-led solutions

Backing the leadership of women most impacted by the climate crisis and building their economic resilience are vital in responding to the gendered impacts of the climate crisis. Women's indigenous knowledge, which has been undervalued by societies, can play a powerful role in protecting our environment if unleashed.

As climate change is fuelling increased conflict and disasters, our efforts to protect women's rights must ensure women are ready when emergencies strike, building on ActionAid's expertise as a feminist humanitarian organisation. In a world where new technologies are opening possibilities to prevent and respond to climate impacts, increasing women's access to and control over technology can ensure communities are better prepared while accelerating gender equality gains.

Driving systems change

Current social, economic and political systems trap women from marginalised communities in poverty and injustice. If we are to deliver sustainable change, our efforts must work at the level of systems change. Bold feminist agendas are urgently needed in movements pushing for just climate transitions that put the voices and priorities of women from affected communities at the centre. Rapid mobilisations are also needed as women's rights come under attack globally.

ActionAid will campaign to challenge the structural causes of injustice and shift power to women, mobilising Australians in these efforts and working partners, allies and social movements for impact. We will build evidence and use advocacy, media and people power to shift government policy and corporate practice and seek to balance our long term change agenda with urgent solidarity efforts when they are most needed.

Collaborating for impact

The scale of the climate crisis and its impact on women's rights requires us to think beyond our own organisation and capability. ActionAid has a proven track record and through collaboration with values-aligned partners, we can enhance our capability to achieve greater impact and scale.

Through partnerships with companies in the technology space and funders, we can support women to be at the forefront of using new technologies to adapt to climate change. This five-year strategy seeks to build innovative and impactful partnerships and compelling evidence that will drive bold action to reverse the growing impacts of climate change on women's rights at the scale that's needed.

Organisational shifts

For ActionAid to deliver impact with the women we work with, we require a well-resourced, sustainable organisation, a high performing team and enhanced digital capability.

Change starts with us so ActionAid will continue to strengthen our commitment to and practice of feminist leadership, First Nations justice, anti-racism, inclusion and safeguarding the environment. As part of a global federation, we are committed to being a dual citizen and contributing to an accountable and transparent federation that practices good governance and management.



(L to R) Selina, Susan, Joyce, Janet, members of the WITTT Tanna Executive Team – Focus Group Discussion, Vanuatu. ActionAid

STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

! THE PROBLEM

The failure of governments and corporations to limit global warming has created a climate crisis that is disproportionately impacting women and deepening existing inequalities due to unequal power relations.

✓ THE GOAL

Shift power to enable women on the frontlines of the climate crisis to drive locally-led solutions and systems change.



STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 1:

Scale up women-led and indigenous solutions to climate change and disasters



STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 2:

Mobilise ambitious partnerships and evidence to catalyse system-wide impact



STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 3:

Advance feminist systems change on women's rights and climate justice



ORGANISATIONAL OBJECTIVE

Optimise ActionAid's ways of work and internal capability to deliver on our strategy

OUTCOMES

- Women have increased leadership roles and take collective action to influence climate decision making
- Women's have increased access to new technologies to respond to climate change and disasters
- Women have increased access to resources and economic resilience to withstand crisis
- Women have increased capacity to protect their rights in emergencies, including conflict and disasters

- Evidence and profile of gender transformative solutions to climate change is increased and amplifies the voices and leadership of diverse women
- Thought leadership and policy advice influences governments and companies working to address gender equality and climate change
- Collaborative partnerships are expanded bringing together institutional and philanthropic donors, the private sector and communities to drive game changing locally-led solutions

DESIRED IMPACT

One million diverse women have increased resilience to climate change and disasters including increased leadership roles, access to resources and use of technology.

DESIRED IMPACT

Change is accelerated with women on the frontlines of crisis through partnerships and evidenced based policy influence.

OUTCOMES

- A global solidarity platform established that enables Australians to learn, donate, and take rapid campaign actions on women's rights
- Targeted, evidenced-based campaigns use new and proven strategies to shift government policy and corporate practice in support of women's demands for global justice and climate action
- Spaces for feminist movement building, partnerships and alliances are created to strengthen collective efforts to drive systems change

DESIRED IMPACT

A growing movement of Australians drives change in Australian government policy and corporate practice to deliver global justice for women and ambitious climate action.

- Resource growth through existing funding channels and new revenue streams increases our capacity to deliver on the strategy and support partners
- Digital capability and strong systems are embedded across the organisation
- A skilled and values-aligned team of staff and volunteers promotes feminist leadership, First Nations justice, anti-racism, inclusion and care for the environment
- The organisation is financially sustainability, transparent and accountable

DESIRED IMPACT

ActionAid is an effective, values-driven, sustainable and inclusive organisation that has the resources and capacity to drive impact with women globally.



(Top to bottom)

ActionAid Staff at a reception centre for displaced people after the Russian invasion of Ukraine, Poland.

Simona Supino/ActionAid

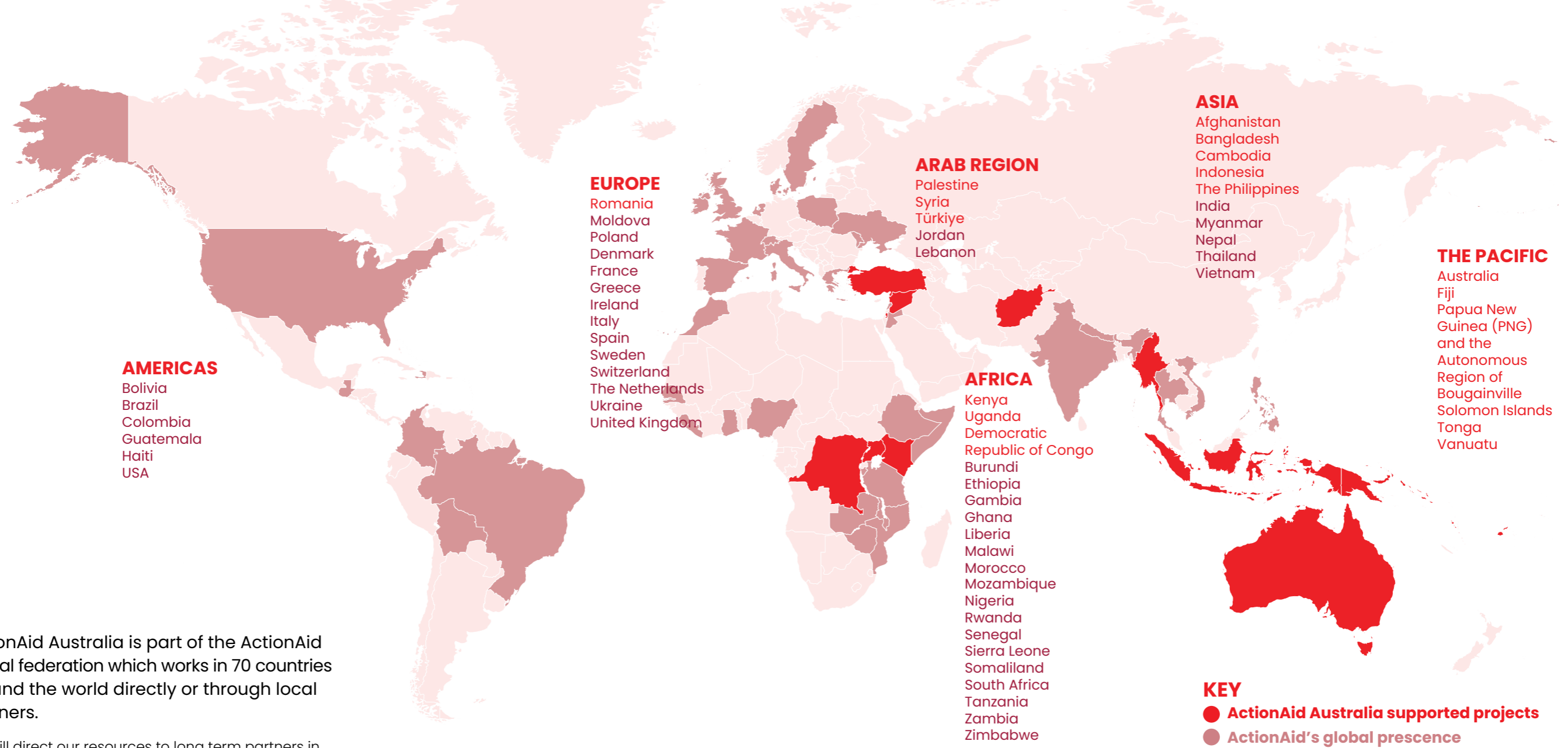
Members of the ActionAid delegation taking part in an action demonstrating how banks are pouring finance into fossil fuel production, on Finance Day at COP28. Jess Midwinter/ActionAid

Yappika ActionAid Staff Richa Syapitri interviews adult woman for Rapid Gender Assessment after the Indonesian earthquake, West Java. Felix Jody/ActionAid



Betty Bob, Secretary of WITT Malekula, Vanuatu. ActionAid

WHERE WE WILL WORK



ActionAid Australia is part of the ActionAid global federation which works in 70 countries around the world directly or through local partners.

We will direct our resources to long term partners in countries facing the greatest risk of climate-disasters and where gender inequality and human rights violations persist.

This includes supporting women's rights organisations and networks in the Pacific, who are on the frontlines of the climate crisis and where women are often excluded from public life and face unacceptably high levels of violence.

As a feminist humanitarian organisation, we will always mobilise support for women's leadership and the protection of their rights wherever crisis and conflict hit, and we have existing partnerships. This is where our support is needed the most and this investment can catalyse a more inclusive response and be a catalyst for longer term change in women's rights.

In the countries where we work, women are collectively mobilising to challenge patriarchy and attacks on their rights. We believe change is possible when it is rooted in the individual and collective power of women on the frontlines of injustice.

BUILDING ON 15 YEARS OF IMPACT

In 2009, ActionAid Australia joined the ActionAid federation, bringing four decades of experience in protecting the rights of the world's most vulnerable people as the NGO Austcare. ActionAid is globally known for leading efforts to shift power to communities and challenge unjust systems that keep people trapped in poverty and injustice. In the 15 years since joining the federation, ActionAid Australia has deepened its expertise in gender equality and global injustice, and is a leading global women's rights organisation in Australia.

Over the past 15 years ActionAid has had tremendous impact that provides a firm foundation for advancing women's rights and climate justice globally.

2013

Gender Transformative Emergency Response

ActionAid pioneered women-led emergency response in Bangladesh which has been globally recognised for driving more inclusive response and long-term gains in gender equality.

2014

Understanding Gender Barriers to Resilience

our groundbreaking South Asia Women's Resilience Index showed a correlation between persistent gender inequality and resilience to disasters, providing governments with critical actions to shift the dial.

2015

Grassroots Women's Organising on Disasters

Following Cyclone Pam in Vanuatu, ActionAid established the Women I Tok Tok Tugeta (WITTT) network, which brings together 9,000 women on 5 islands. Women have gone from being ignored in crisis to being at the centre of emergency operations and recognised for driving inclusive response.

2016

Women's Leadership in Humanitarian Action

ActionAid's report exposed a male dominated and gender-blind humanitarian system and set an ambitious agenda for empowering women in humanitarian action. Many recommendations have now been acted on by governments.

2016

Feminist Movement Building

ActionAid cofounded the Shifting the Power Coalition, which promotes diverse Pacific women's leadership in climate and humanitarian action. It has led to policy changes at regional and national level as well as the establishment of Pacific alliances on climate justice and peace building.

2017

Arise Fund established

As the first ever global fund supporting women-led disaster response with a long-term transformative vision, the fund has trained 30,000 women to prepare for and respond to disasters in over 22 countries reaching more than 3.5 million people.

2017

Women-Led Community Based Protection

ActionAid's pioneering women-led community-based protection approach supports women from to identify and drive locally-led responses to threats to their safety, dignity and rights in crisis. It has been piloted in five countries and challenges a top-down colonial model of humanitarian protection.

2018

Gender Responsive Solutions to Climate Change

This world-first framework to drive gender transformative responses to climate change and disasters prioritises women's leadership, indigenous and local knowledge, resourcing women's networks, and challenging harmful norms.

2019

Women-Led Early Warning

The Women Wetem Weta initiative in Vanuatu has been a game changer for early warning and anticipatory action reaching over 40% of the population and putting women in the driving seat of information and technology. It was adapted in PNG to respond to the COVID crisis with a reach of over 3.5 million people and is being expanded across the Pacific.

2020

Intersectional Feminism in Action

Working at the intersection of gender and disability, ActionAid supported the establishment of WITTT Sunshine which now brings together over 800 women with disability leading resilience and response efforts with the abilities they have. It was globally recognised as a best practice in the Climate Adaptation Awards in 2023.

Alongside these efforts, ActionAid has had many climate campaign wins in Australia.

2017

Resgen Mining

Community-led evidence and a coalition of allies resulted in the Australian government's export finance agency withdrawing funding for expansion of Resgen's dirty coal mine in South Africa.

2018

South 32 Mining

Shareholder advocacy and media exposure forced mining company South 32 to meet with the women from Phola in South Africa who had documented environmental and human rights impacts of their mine.

2022

Loss and Damage Fund

The Australian government finally supported a Loss and Damage Fund at the UN Climate Conference (COP), which ActionAid had campaigned on for more than a decade and was formally established in 2023.

2023

Clean Energy Transition Partnership

Our campaigning efforts with partners resulted in the Australian government signing the Clean Energy Transition Partnership to rule out public financing of fossil fuels overseas as well as committing to deliver \$3 billion in climate finance by 2020-2025, an increase of \$1 billion from its original target.

With evidence, partnerships and resources, we can shift power and drive gender equality, climate action and global justice.

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