

Arise Fund Impact Report 2024



Women leading
crisis response.



The Arise Fund wrapped up its seventh year facing some of the most challenging and rewarding work, from Gaza to Vanuatu, Kenya, Indonesia and the Philippines.

Looking back at my first visit to Vanuatu in 2020, when ActionAid helped local women start an early warning and information program called Women Wetem Weta (WWW), it's fantastic to see how far that work has come.

Responding to twin cyclones in the same week, the network of now nearly 9,000 women was able to **disseminate disaster preparedness information, assist vulnerable communities with women-led or disabled households, and provided fresh food to some 30,000 people.** So effective was their response that the Vanuatu government has asked the WWW to formally input and support disaster response in numerous islands from here on.

We have always known that **investment in disaster preparedness pays off.**

A report by the Australia Pacific Climate Partnership found that for every \$1 invested in disaster preparedness, Vanuatu reaps \$4.40 in economic benefit. Armed with this knowledge, we move to the next chapter, growing our work in Vanuatu and hoping to replicate this impact in other countries. We hope you will join us.

Kristina Stefanova
Chair, Arise Leadership Circle

Women like Hellen are protecting biodiversity through women's collectives in Kenya. *Moses Thurania / ActionAid*

SINCE 2017



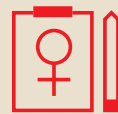
22

countries we've worked in



4.136m

people reached



38,200

women trained to prepare for and lead disaster response



\$12.9m

funds raised



"This area used to be in total darkness with no developments... When ActionAid came here and started trainings, **we have seen big changes in our community.**"
Sahara Ibrahim – Tiaty East, Kenya

Supporting women on the frontlines of the climate crisis

Together with the Australian Development Program, the Arise Fund supports multi-year programs in the Philippines, Vanuatu, the Pacific, Indonesia, and Kenya to advance women's leadership in responding to climate change and disasters and protect their rights in emergencies.

For every \$1 contributed by donors through the Arise Fund, the **Australian Government matches it with \$4** through the Australian NGO Cooperation Program.

Kenya

In Kenya, the climate crisis has caused more erratic rainfall and persistent drought, which poses a significant threat to the rights, livelihoods and safety of women and girls.

Through the Gender Responsive Alternatives to Climate Change program, the Arise Fund is **supporting women** to strengthen their participation in climate change decision-making and providing women's groups with resources to build climate-resilient livelihoods. Over the past year this has resulted in:

- **Five women elected for the first time** as members of their local county climate change planning committee and engaging in local decision making on climate change adaptation and funding.
- **164 women leaders and youth representatives** participating in climate rural assemblies and climate change fellowships, which enabled women to lift their voices and priorities with local and national media and target government officials attending the Africa Climate Summit.
- **Women with disabilities accessing training and assistive devices** including 20 wheelchairs and 30 walking sticks for those who are vision impaired, as well as 30 goats to boost economic inclusion and nutrition.
- **400 people – 75% of them women** – attended training sessions on pasture management, and have now set up two community groups working on pasture preservation and management, which is essential in drought-impacted communities.

Philippines

The Philippines is one of the countries at most risk of disasters in the world.

For women, particularly those living in rural areas, climate change and humanitarian disasters aggravate existing gender inequalities – leaving them without access to the resources they need to recover quickly from crisis.

Since 2016, ActionAid has worked in partnership with the National Rural Women's Coalition (PKKK) to establish the Women in Emergencies Network (WENet) – an **alliance of women's rights organisations** that supports women's leadership in humanitarian emergencies.

The network's approach to advancing women's rights in emergencies was recently recognised with an award for Best Practice on Gender Mainstreaming in the Environment Sector by the Philippines Commission on Women (PCW), National Anti-Poverty Commission (NAPC) and NAPC Women Sectoral Council. In the past year the program has:

- **Trained 140 people** from 25 organisations on how gender equality, disability and social inclusion are impacted in climate emergencies.
- Conducted **transformative leadership training** for 30 women from five organisations to support rural women leaders in challenging gender norms and advancing women's rights in crisis.
- Published a women-led humanitarian response manual and developed a website to promote WENet.

Vanuatu

Vanuatu experiences frequent disasters and faces rising sea levels. Every year, the country faces an average of 20 tropical storms, eight earthquakes, and frequent volcanic activity.

ActionAid has supported women to establish the Women I Tok Tok Tugeta (WITTT) network, a **locally led collective that brings together more than 9,000 women** from mostly rural communities, to advance their rights and drive locally led responses to climate change and disasters.

- ActionAid Vanuatu was **selected to join the Vanuatu Government's delegation to COP28** – the UN climate conference – in Dubai, to represent the voices of WITTT women and local indigenous women.

- The Epau chicken farm has been revived, after being destroyed by the twin cyclones in 2023, and it now has 245 chickens. Egg production has increased from 30 eggs to 120 eggs per day.
- WITTT Sunshine has **grown from 500 women with disabilities to over 1,000 members** over the past year, working across the five islands. The group focuses on the unique needs and priorities of women with disabilities and supports their efforts to ensure inclusive humanitarian response and protection of their rights.
- Women are reporting that WITTT's focus on building economic resilience has **reduced violence in the community**, as initiatives that allow women to earn money to support their family's food security have reduced violence and tensions in households.



Members of Women I Tok Tok Tugeta prepare dignity kits. ActionAid Vanuatu

Pacific region

In the Pacific, humanitarian action has traditionally been male dominated and has undermined and neglected women's rights, needs, and priorities.

Since 2016, ActionAid has partnered with women's rights organisations in the region through the Shifting the Power Coalition to **support diverse Pacific women to lead humanitarian and climate action.**

The Coalition, comprised of **12 partners** in Fiji, Tonga, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, and Papua New Guinea and Bougainville, is the first of its kind, and uplifts diverse Pacific women's leadership, particularly young women and women with disabilities. Since its establishment, the Coalition has **trained 421 diverse Pacific women** in humanitarian and climate change management, and has enabled the following:

- Coalition member, The Talitha Project established Tonga Women Information

Network for Disasters (Tonga WIND) in response to the Hunga Tonga-Hunga Ha'apai volcanic eruption and tsunami, to which the Arise Fund supported their humanitarian response. Tonga WIND includes a Youth Hub which is **engaging young women** in Lapaha, Tonga, to participate in and lead community-based disaster management.

- Following the eruption of Mount Bagana in July 2023, the Coalition's rapid response grant enabled the Bougainville Women's Federation to **provide humanitarian assistance to impacted groups**, including 1,000 women, girls, people with disabilities, the elderly, and children through the provision of dignity kits as well as protection and referral information and services.
- Following Tropical Cyclone Lola, the Vanuatu Disability Promotion and Advocacy Association received a rapid response grant from the Coalition to assess the needs of 75 households in South Malekula and South Ambae. These assessments focus on documenting the experiences of people with disabilities, with ongoing efforts to address long-term impacts, particularly ensuring access to clean and safe drinking water.



Vanuatu: Women participate in community-based protection training. ActionAid Vanuatu



"We got a lot of **useful knowledge**, such as how to live better in an area prone to disasters... **preparing disaster risk assessment documents**, then submitting them to district administrations."

Fika Natalia, Banten Province, Indonesia

Indonesia

Since 2019, the Arise Fund has supported Yappika-ActionAid Indonesia to work in disaster-affected villages in Banten and Central Sulawesi provinces, strengthening community resilience to disasters.

ActionAid's unique feminist approach builds on women's existing skills, knowledge and networks, supporting them drive their own safety and establish community-based support structures that **protect women's rights in times of crisis.**

This successful model **has made a number of gains:**

- Four village governments in Banten province have adopted ActionAid's Women and Child Friendly Protection Model, ensuring **women and vulnerable groups are consulted on protection needs during crises.** There are plans to scale the model nationally in partnership with the Ministry of Women Empowerment and Child Protection.

Over the past year the program:

- **210 residents** in two villages strengthened their understanding of gender inequality, patriarchy and women's rights.
- Established community paralegals to **assist gender-based violence survivors** access to health and legal services.
- Women community representatives were supported to engage in **advocacy with the district government** around their rights in emergencies.



ActionAid staff providing first aid and security training in Gaza. ActionAid

Since October 2023*



236,960

people reached directly with humanitarian relief



117,633

people have been reached through food distribution



3,900

people have received hygiene kits



27,458

people have been reached with WASH services, including water and toilets



70,000

people have accessed health services



WEFAQ is ActionAid's partner in Gaza, and they're responding to the crisis by **meeting basic needs** such as hot food, clothing, dignity

and hygiene kits as well as **psychosocial support to people experiencing trauma**.

In response to the deteriorating sanitary conditions, WEFAQ have **installed 60 water and sanitation units across 20 shelters** specifically for women and girls.

“There is a **need for psychological support** for women due to the [anxiety] and fear they experience as a result of the successive bombing of all areas of Gaza... Most pregnant women who attend group therapy fear going into labour and not being able to find a doctor. They fear they may need a caesarean section without anaesthetic. The anxiety overwhelms them... We are **grateful to ActionAid for its continued support** with response programmes.”

Buthania, Director of WEFAQ Association

The war on women's rights in Gaza

Since October 2023, the Arise Fund has supported urgent relief to women in Gaza, who are enduring catastrophic conditions amid Israeli bombardment from the air, land, and sea.

More than 5% of Gaza's population has been killed, injured or is missing since the Israeli military offensive in Gaza began, following the Hamas attack on October 7. **Nine in 10 people in Gaza have been displaced from their homes.**

Amid inhumane conditions, disease is spreading as a result of intense overcrowding and a lack of clean water, sanitation and health facilities. **Gaza's healthcare system is near collapse.** Only 16 of Gaza's 36 hospitals remain and are only partially functional. Israeli forces continue to target remaining health facilities.

Critical shortages of medical supplies, food, water, and hygiene products are now **compounded by a polio outbreak.**

Delivering the limited aid that enters Gaza is extremely challenging and dangerous due to damaged infrastructure – including roads and vehicles, limited fuel supplies, and the danger posed by airstrikes, drones and artillery fire from both land and sea.

ActionAid is reaching women on the ground.

Since October 2023, ActionAid has **supported women's leadership in the response effort** and distributed essential supplies to large numbers of displaced people, prioritising food, medical items, dignity, and hygiene kits, via the humanitarian corridor whenever accessible.

Thanks to the leadership of our local partners and staff, we have reached **236,960 people with humanitarian relief over the past year.**

ActionAid is still working with local partners to deliver food and cash assistance to families in Gaza where we can, but the needs continue to increase.

ActionAid's response continues to advocate for:

- Humanitarian assistance programs that **address the specific needs of women.**
- **Trauma counselling** for women and community support groups.
- **Formal inclusion** of Palestinian women in all decision-making bodies related to recovery and reconstruction.
- **Economic empowerment** programs for women.
- **Meaningful inclusion** of women in all peace negotiations and political dialogues.

Making change. Not waiting for it.

Members of Women I Tok Tok Tugeta distribute food packages after twin Severe Tropical Cyclones Judy and Kevin. ActionAid



Thank you...

On behalf of all of us at ActionAid, thank you for your incredible generosity this year!

Your support has empowered thousands of women across the globe to rise up and lead during crises. From Vanuatu to Kenya, Palestine to the Philippines, ActionAid's Arise Fund continues to drive women's rights forward, equipping those on the frontlines to prepare, respond, and build resilience in the face of growing crises.

We are deeply grateful for your ongoing commitment and the transformational impact you're helping to create. Together, we are ensuring that women can lead their communities toward a more resilient and equitable future.

Individuals

Drs Alan and Hilary Wallace
Herschell Family
Jenny Donald
Kristina Stefanova and James Schultz
Nicola Blackburn
Kate and Paul Saunders
Vicki Olsson

Foundations

Australian Ethical Foundation
Australian-Palestinian Partnerships in Education and Health
Stephen Stewart Fund
Graeme Wood Foundation
Judith Neilson Foundation
Key Foundation
Norman Family Foundation
The Roberts Pike Foundation

Organisations

Ashurst
MECCA M-POWER
The Sky Foundation

Arise Ambassadors

Natasha Stott Despoja AO

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 of Women's Agenda

Arielle Gamble, CEO and Co-founder of Groundswell Giving

Anna Demant, Principal at First Tier Media

Asha Kayla, Head of Sustainable Impact at Woolworths Group

Janette O'Neill, Partner and Chief Sustainability Officer at PwC

Jo Norman, Philanthropy Manager at Norman Family Foundation

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

Lauren Hicks, Head of Social Impact at QBE Insurance

Michelle Higelin, Executive Director of ActionAid Australia

Nicola Blackburn, Senior Advisor at Lumos

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

Tashi Wheeler, former Grant Manager for Planet Wheeler Foundation

Australian Aid program

Together the Australian Aid Program and the Arise Fund are supporting multi-year programs in the Philippines, Vanuatu, the Pacific, Indonesia, and Kenya to advance women's leadership in responding to climate change and disasters and to protect their rights in emergencies. Every dollar contributed by donors through the Arise Fund is matched by the Australian Government with four dollars through the Australian NGO Cooperation Program.



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Vivian is part of the Alternatives to
Climate Change project in Kenya.
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