

Changing the world
with **women and girls**
act:onaid

ActionAid in Asia

Partnering for Impact

Pak, 45, pictured right, is a Women's Champion and a village chief in Cambodia's coastal Kampot province. She helps her community cope with increases in extreme weather.

ActionAid in Asia

ActionAid operates as a global federation made up of 45 national organisations. We deliver programmes in 12 countries in Asia, harnessing our local presence, partner networks and years of experience:

- Afghanistan
- Bangladesh
- Cambodia
- India
- Indonesia
- Jordan
- Lebanon
- Myanmar
- Nepal
- Occupied Palestinian Territory
- Thailand
- Vietnam

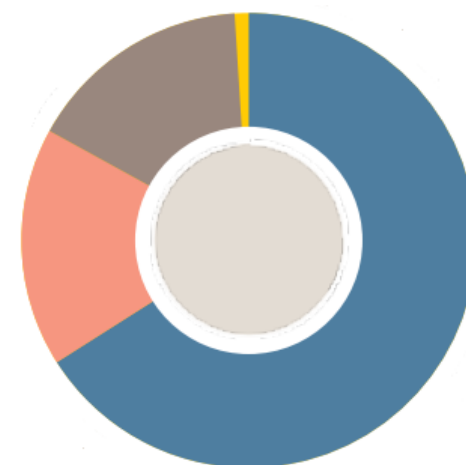


We planned to reach
5,247,586
people across Asia in
2020, more than a third
of our global impact*

*excludes Covid-19 response.

ActionAid expenditure split by major category

- Programme (66%)
- Fundraising (17%)
- Support (16%)
- Governance (1%)



Figures are taken from [ActionAid International's 2020 Annual Report](#).

ActionAid's approach

ActionAid's human rights-based approach (HRBA) enables communities we work with to drive their own change by claiming the rights they are entitled to. We empower people to understand their rights and hold duty bearers to account for protecting and fulfilling these rights. We think and act globally and locally, ensuring communities participate in key decisions that impact their lives and meaningfully engage in policy action.

Eight core principles provide the foundation for our work:

1. We put people living in poverty first and enable their active agency as rights activists
2. We analyse and confront unjust and unequal power
3. We advance women's rights, taking a feminist approach
4. We work in partnership
5. We are accountable and transparent
6. We rigorously monitor and evaluate to evidence our impact and we critically reflect and learn to improve our work
7. We ensure links across levels to address the structural causes of poverty and injustice
8. We are innovative, solutions-oriented and promote feminist alternatives

Monitoring, evaluation, accountability & learning (MEAL)

We rigorously monitor, evaluate and document our work to reflect and learn so that we can be more effective in the future. Doing this regularly enables us to learn more about challenging power and how change happens, leading to new insights to take forward in our work to support new, stronger action for change. Rigorous evaluation deepens our accountability to donors, tests innovations and builds the evidence base for alternatives. Our approach to MEAL privileges the voices, perspectives and analysis of people living in poverty and exclusion, particularly women. Their knowledge is used throughout the programme cycle, strengthening our own learning and knowledge generation.

Our programmes work to **reduce the risk of violence against women and girls**, fighting for **women's equal rights to economic opportunities**, and prioritising **women and girls' rights and their leadership in humanitarian crises**.



Thu, 35, is a member of a women's group in the Mekong Delta region of Vietnam. Salty sea water is increasingly intruding into the freshwater delta and rice fields, forcing her community to find alternative livelihoods. Thu worked with other women's group members to grow and collect water lilies twice a week to further their income.

Working in partnership

At ActionAid, everything we do is driven by the communities we work with. Our decades of experience, knowledge and relationships with community members and partners mean that we are well placed to respond to community needs in the hardest to reach places.

Sustainable change can only happen if we work together, building partnerships and connecting our work locally, nationally and internationally. We work with women's rights organisations, activists, and youth movements to root our work in communities and to build legitimacy and pressure for change. Working in coalitions and alliances also help us to campaign more effectively, and partnerships with academic and research institutions deepens the evidence base for our work.



PHOTO: Savorn Sum, Sophorn Sorm, Rithy Hun/ActionAid

Chandoeurn, 55, with her granddaughter in Kampot, Cambodia. She is a Women's Champion and model farmer for an agroecology project, where she supports families to better understand and prepare for future disasters.



PHOTO: ActionAid

Fellows who delivered collective action training in Myanmar.

Changemakers Fellowship in Kayah State, Myanmar

Since 2008, ActionAid has been developing young leaders across Myanmar to enact participatory and empowering change processes within their communities. Alongside our partner, Local Development Network, between 2018 and 2021 we worked with communities in 268 villages to improve the lives of 107,980 of the poorest and most vulnerable people in Kayah State. Youth leaders supported communities to develop collective action plans, working directly with civil society organisations, village leaders and authorities to make improvements in the line with community priorities.

“I have learnt a lot about disasters and gender-based violence through various meetings and trainings. I have joined the regional meeting with other Women's Champions from other provinces. I am so happy that I and other Women's Champions in our area have enough capacity to work with the local authority and successfully advocated with them to prioritise responding to the real needs of women and children.”

Education

Around the world, 129 million girls are out of school. Gender-based discrimination places girls at higher risk of abuse and harassment. Unpaid care work, such as caring for siblings, collecting food and water and household upkeep, often falls on girls. In disasters, girls are more likely to be taken out of school, putting them at risk of child marriage. The Covid-19 pandemic has deepened these injustices and urgent action is needed.

At ActionAid, we believe that good quality, publicly funded education should be available to all children. Our work is designed to bring about sustainable change by developing long-lasting solutions in partnership with local organisations and communities living in poverty. We do this by:

- Raising awareness of the importance of inclusive education
- Advocating for and implementing 'active learning' approaches which prioritise academic performance, creativity, self-esteem, life skills and active citizenship
- Engaging children, parents, teachers and wider communities to do collaborative research and develop rights-based school improvement plans
- Working with teacher unions to promote sustainable financing and defend the central role of professional teachers in providing quality, inclusive education
- Building strategic alliances - from grassroots to global level - to prevent the privatisation of services and secure domestic education financing.

Improving delivery and access to education in Thailand

In 2013, the Thai government announced a policy to merge small schools with fewer than 120 students with larger schools. This will affect more than one million children and will have a significant impact on access to education for those living in rural and marginalised communities. Working with the Education Council Association, Thai Baan Association and the European Commission, we are improving the quality of 400 schools through 'active learning' approaches to enable 20,000 students to access safe, equitable and responsive public education.



Student at a small school in Supanburi, province, Thailand.

PHOTO: Keswari Yensudjai/ActionAid



ActionAid Ambassador Reza Rahadian with school children in Cipinang, West Java, Indonesia.

PHOTO: ActionAid

Endorsement from Reza Rahadian, award-winning actor and ActionAid Ambassador:

"ActionAid listen intently to communities and work with them to create meaningful and inclusive change. They also raise awareness and mobilise public support to ensure that their efforts are sustainable.

I am personally interested in the equity of women and education. I can't imagine the dignity of human beings in the world without those two important things. I feel humbled to have been involved in ActionAid's work first-hand and have no doubt that by supporting ActionAid you are investing in transformative change."

Women's economic empowerment

Asia is the fastest growing economic region in the world, accounting for nearly two thirds of global economic growth, yet women are not benefiting from this equitably. Globally, women take on three times as much unpaid care work as men, and women living in poverty face the largest burden of unpaid work. This leaves many women financially dependent on male partners or family members and narrows their choice of job, forcing them into informal or low-paid employment. Unpaid care work also impacts young girls, who are often pulled out of school to do household chores.

When women are paid for a job, they are more likely than men to be in sectors where pay and conditions are the lowest. Many women have no basic protection or rights at work, exposing them to high rates of human rights abuses. Where labour laws are in place, many remain at a high risk of exploitation because these laws are often limited and not implemented. **Women must be paid living wages that are equal to men's, enjoy social protections such as paid maternity leave, and the burden of unpaid domestic work that falls to women must be reduced.** This is vital in enabling women to have control over their own lives. Increased economic independence also reduces women's exposure to violence as they are less financially dependent on male family members.

ActionAid supports women in Asia to access secure jobs in safe working environments, free from all forms of violence. We help women to understand their rights and how to claim them, and work with local workers' rights groups to campaign for fairer pay and safer, more humane working conditions.



PHOTO: ActionAid

Ranjana, 23, is a member of her local collective group in Delhi. She was supported to access more work during the Covid-19 pandemic.



Across the globe, women get paid

24%

less than men



75%

of global unpaid care work is carried out by women

Securing a living wage and decent work for female garment workers in Delhi and Chennai, India

Between 2018 and 2021, ActionAid worked with partner Empowerment for Rehabilitation, Academic and Health (EFRAH) to empower 2,942 garment workers across Delhi and Chennai. We formed 77 women's worker collectives, delivering 262 workshops in factories to help workers understand their rights and entitlements. As a result, 126 actions were taken by management in factories, including pay rises, pension payments and provision of food during the Covid-19 pandemic. 1,222 garment workers were also linked to social welfare support schemes.

Climate justice

Average temperatures in Southeast Asia have risen every decade since 1960 and some countries in the region, including Vietnam, Thailand and Myanmar, are amongst the most vulnerable to unpredictable weather caused by climate change globally. [ActionAid research](#) shows that climate migration in South Asia is set to treble by 2050 due to political inaction on global warming.

Communities who rely on agriculture are particularly affected as yields become irregular or are destroyed completely by floods and droughts. Women and girls living in the poorest communities have done the least to cause this crisis, yet are most likely to suffer the consequences. They are often excluded from their communities' plans to adapt and respond. **But when women and girls are equipped to lead the fight against climate change, whole communities benefit.**



1 billion

rural women depend on natural resources and agriculture for their livelihoods



20 million

women are currently displaced by climate change

ActionAid empowers women, young people and vulnerable communities to analyse the impacts of climate change and develop and implement alternatives to become more resilient, prepared and able to respond. We support communities to develop climate-resilient, sustainable livelihoods, training women farmers in resilient farming and fishing techniques, including soil conservation, crop diversity, seed banks and water management. We also support women to access land rights, particularly through women's groups, where women learn about their legal rights and how to assert them.

We run cooperative farming schemes, supporting women to access livestock, seeds and tools. We work with social movements to challenge industrial and corporate agriculture, support women's access to markets, and advocate for public financing for sustainable alternatives. **In doing so, we place value on the people who produce our food and care for our environment.**

Women-led alternatives to climate change in Cambodia

With support from the UK Government, our partners and the public, **in December 2021 we launched a four-year project to support Women Champions to build resilience to climate change in Kampot, Koh Kong, Kampong Thom and Pursat provinces in Cambodia.** We will harness women's potential to effect change, build community resilience and ability to manage climate risks. In collaboration with the Cash and Learning Partnership, ActionAid have developed guidelines for a group cash approach, where cash is distributed to women's groups instead of the more traditional approach of providing smaller cash grants to individual households. This will empower women to make their own decisions on how to use the cash to reduce disaster risks and build resilient livelihoods.

PHOTO: Cindy Liu/ActionAid



Hok, 35, is a farmer and Women's Champion in Pursat province, Cambodia. She says the rains and floods are increasingly extreme, affecting the water canals and roads, which in turn impacts people's health and livelihoods. Hok helped her community by raising money to rehabilitate an irrigation canal, which has been essential to helping people make ends meet. She is also sharing information about how to grow vegetables with limited water.

Humanitarian response

ActionAid's internationally recognised approach to emergency response is transforming humanitarian aid. We have been responding to immediate-onset and protracted crises across Asia for over 40 years, having pioneered the first women-led emergency response. In 2021, we responded to the Rohingya crisis in Bangladesh, conflict in Myanmar, floods in Nepal and India, earthquake in Indonesia, and Typhoon Rai (Odette) in the Philippines.

We support women and communities to overcome disasters, claim their rights and remain in positions of leadership long after the emergency has passed. We provide rapid immediate emergency relief when disaster strikes, help communities to prepare for disasters, and lobby governments and institutions to protect rights violated during emergencies.

Three core principles underpin our approach to emergencies: supporting and promoting women's leadership, enabling and empowering locally-led responses, and ensuring strong accountability to affected populations. We do this by:

- Providing immediate relief and essential support items. We set up women and youth-led relief committees to distribute items fairly, based on their knowledge of the needs in their community
- Protecting women's and girls' rights and ensuring that we do not overlook their specific needs and vulnerabilities in emergency situations
- Establishing women's safe spaces to provide a place for women to access information, counselling, psychosocial support and referrals for clinical services
- Setting up women-led task forces which report violence against women and girls
- Making sure women, youth and their communities take part in decision-making during disasters, as they are often overlooked.

Improving water, sanitation and hygiene for Rohingya refugees in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh

Between 2017 and 2018, violence in Myanmar's Rakhine state forced over 690,000 Rohingya people to flee their homes and cross the border into Cox's Bazar in Bangladesh. The speed and scale of new arrivals overwhelmed the Bangladeshi government. Makeshift camps and emergency facilities were in urgent need of water, sanitation and hygiene facilities. ActionAid is supporting 28,350 Rohingya refugees by improving facilities, promoting women's rights, and training women and young people to learn new skills through 'cash for work' and forestry management schemes.



Tayaba, 30, uses a newly-installed water point in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh. ActionAid worked with the community and local government to install the water point, to prevent overcrowding and water contamination. We also distributed toolboxes and trained the community to maintain the water point so that it is functional for years to come.

“In the past, I had to fight for water when the queue was broken by other people. It was so undignified, and I used to feel so down the whole day [...] The days of struggles for water are over. I feel less tired now. My respect and dignity have been restored.”

PHOTO: Than Thi Ngoc Bich/ActionAid

Together, we have
the power to change
the world with
women and girls.

Will you join us?

Email: asia.hub@actionaid.org
Facebook.com/actionaid
Twitter.com/actionaid
www.actionaid.org

ActionAid is an international charity that works with women and girls living in poverty.



Thach Thi Sinh lives in Tra Vinh province, Vietnam. She was supported by ActionAid to grow vegetables in net houses to mitigate the impacts of climate change.