

2021 ANNUAL REPORT

ACTIONAID: RESPONDING TO TURBULENT TIMES





As world leaders met in Glasgow for the Climate Summit (COP26) the Coalition of Civil Society Organisations arranged a mass mobilisation across parts of the world, and in the UK, there were at least 35 coordinated marches taking place, all bringing together movements to build power for system change to demand climate justice.

CREDIT: DANIEL JUKES/ACTIONAID

Acknowledgements

Thank you to all staff who have sent data, analysis, text, partners' successes and learnings for this collaboratively generated report; for many, reflecting on 2021 has not been easy. What is written in this report is only the tip of the iceberg. There is a huge amount of work going on every day across the federation and across the globe. It is seen and appreciated.

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Cover photo: Nadège Pierre advocating in Haiti. ActionAid's feminist approach to protection aims to support the role, agency, and leadership of women in humanitarian action. It puts women and women's organisations in the driving seat in emergencies, supporting them to work together to ensure the safety, security, dignity and rights of women and girls in humanitarian crises.

CREDIT: ANDERSON PIERRE/ACTIONAID

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FOREWORD by the ActionAid Board

We are delighted to present to you our 2021 Federation Annual Report that highlights part of our collective work triumphs, missed opportunities and lessons for the future.

2021 was not an easy year for the world; we faced connected and ongoing crises of covid and climate as well as humanitarian crisis and conflict. We saw socio-economic and civic and political rights eroded, and women's rights severely restricted globally. ActionAid's work - and the work of human rights movements across the world, was severely compromised.

The context has also been personally challenging for many ActionAid staff and partners who - as well as often experiencing their own grief and trauma - have supported others with utmost dedication.

As a board, we recognise this achievement and take seriously our renewed vision of providing clear, decisive, and stable leadership to the Global Secretariat and deeper support to the federation.

The following report is just a snapshot of the federation's work in 2021, the stories and photos are just a small sample of the many times where ActionAid staff and partners have had impact despite internal and external instability. We thank Ms Julia Sanchez for her work as part of this process - initiating and steering the Global Secretariat through a change process and supporting the federation in Covid times. And we thank Dr Nyaradzayi Gumbonzvanda, the outgoing Board Chair, for her dedication to ActionAid - she continues to remain an active ActionAid ally as part of a Board Committee.

Whilst there have been achievements, as we look back, we reflect on the lessons we've learnt, both in terms of internal governance and in response to how we as a federation have adapted to survive and thrive in a challenging world. Despite some hopes to the contrary, we are returning - post pandemic - to an increasingly neoliberal patriarchal world. In this context, we recommit to strengthening our mobilisation and action around the systems changes the world urgently needs.

Our second global strategy implementation framework enjoins us to double our efforts to achieve climate and economic justice as part of the collective efforts to achieve social justice, gender equality and poverty eradication. With our presence across the world, in 45 countries, and with partners and allies, we will remain purposeful and resolute in the pursuit of this mission.

The journey ahead promises to be as challenging as it could be exciting. We will mobilise, we will organise and take the actions needed to contribute to the wider struggle to save the planet and humanity.



Some ActionAid Board and International Leadership Team members at the Arusha retreat Feb 2022.

INTRODUCTION

This report of ActionAid's work is set against a backdrop of ongoing global crises. This report tells of how ActionAid has operated within this context, in response to but also influenced by the external environment. ActionAid is made from the political vision upheld by the board, staff, partners, the social movements who work with us and the donors who support us in their many guises. This report offers a story of resilience in turbulent times. It shows the connection between people – people supporting ActionAid and people ActionAid seeks to support in solidarity, and how together in 2021 we co-created change.

External Context:

Covid

Covid cases climbed inexorably in 2021 with an increase of 206 million recorded cases over the year.¹ The pandemic continued to be deeply gendered,² and despite hopes that the impact of Covid would be less intense in light of a vaccine roll out, the inequalities experienced as a result of the pandemic intensified in 2021 – with health inequalities as well as inequalities in power and wealth compounding disadvantage experienced by women, indigenous and racialised communities, and other excluded marginalised groups as a result of patriarchy, and other replicating and exposing structures of colonialism and driving uneven mortality rates globally.

Inequalities were exacerbated since, after the brief surge of spending to respond to the immediate Covid spike, by late 2021 countries were coming under pressure from the IMF to return rapidly to austerity, cutting public spending and particularly public sector wage bills. The sense of hope that Covid might trigger a change in global economic policies and approaches was undermined and it became clear that neoliberalism would be re-imposed – just as it was after the 2007 financial crisis. Austerity measures look set to impact 85% of the world's population – and have a disproportionate impact on women and girls, who globally take on

higher amounts of unpaid care and domestic work to compensate where the state is failing.³

Climate

The extractive and patriarchal economic system continues to accelerate the global climate crisis. With greenhouse gas emissions continuing to rise, the world is not yet on track to meet the Paris Agreement goal of limiting warming to 1.5°C.⁴ Throughout 2021, climate disasters affected vulnerable communities across the ActionAid federation and the world, causing displacement, hunger and suffering, and escalating costs in damage.⁵

The impacts of a warming planet are already disproportionately affecting marginalised people and those that have done the least to cause the climate crisis. Women and girls, who tend to be most dependent on land and natural resources and who disproportionately have roles securing food and water for their families, are particularly at risk.⁶

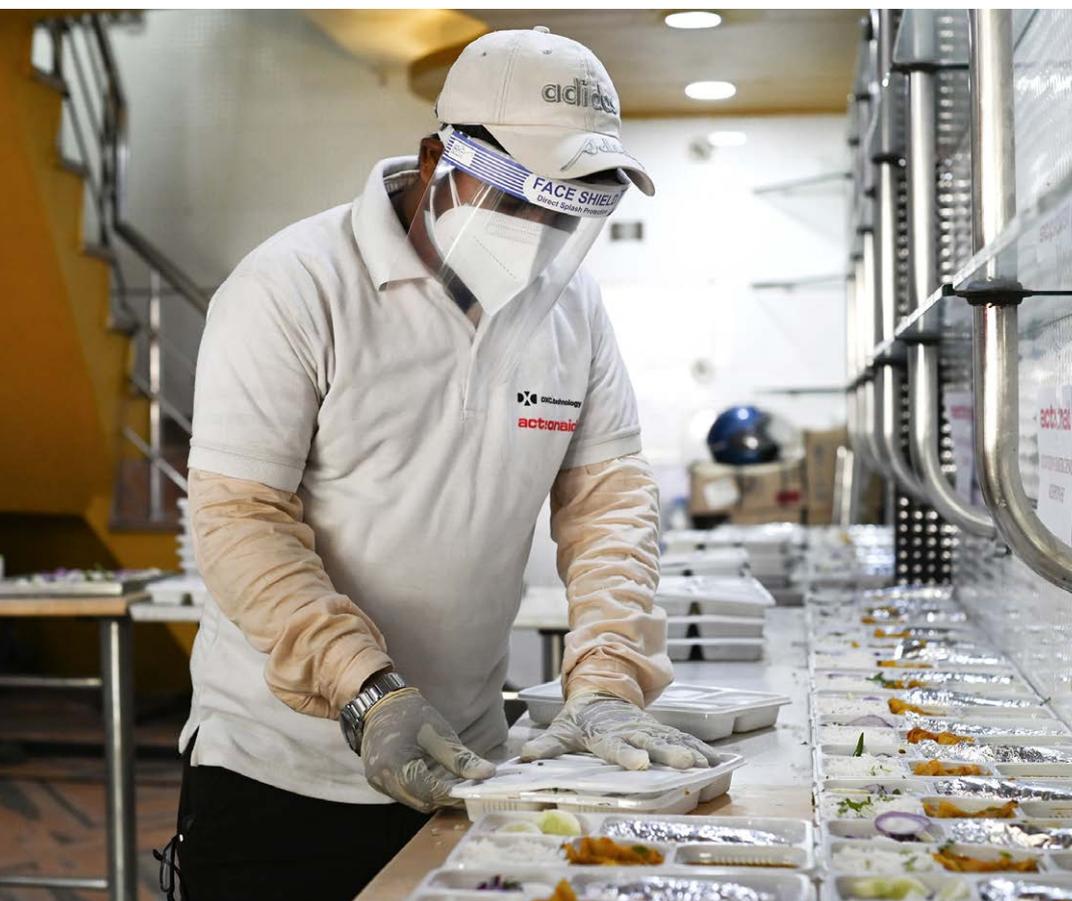
Meanwhile, funding to address climate impacts and to transform food and energy systems to be more feminist and sustainable, continued to fall far short of requirements. The most polluting governments and corporations parroted weak and insufficient pledges, using the fig leaf of future carbon offsetting promises to declare distant “net zero by 2050” climate targets while continuing to pollute business-as-usual, rather than taking immediate action to bring emissions down to real zero. COP26 in Glasgow in November 2021 provided a key opportunity for ActionAid to escalate pressure for climate action and finance to protect those on the front lines of the climate crisis. In addition, it was an opportunity for radical action to transition to greener pathways, amplifying calls for a just and feminist recovery to the Covid pandemic, and for large-scale investment to be directed towards the critical shifts needed for strengthening communities' resilience, and transforming away from polluting energy, agriculture, and economic systems.

Crisis, Conflict and our Humanitarian Response

There was an increased severity and frequency of sudden onset and climate-related emergencies in 2021. According to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's Oct 2021 assessment, the rate of surface temperature increase has generally been more rapid in Africa than the global average, with human-induced climate change being the dominant driver. This has resulted in an increase in the average tropical cyclone speed and associated heavy rainfall. As a result of the intensification of neo liberalism and capitalism and against the climate backdrop of food insecurity, conflict and poverty rose in 2021 with record numbers of displaced people – largely women and children. ActionAid's work showed that women and children are particularly vulnerable to climate-induced migration which puts them at risk of gender-based violence and exploitation.⁷ In addition, in each region where ActionAid works a significant number of places faced huge changes and challenges because of political upheaval. Afghanistan, Myanmar, Palestine, Ethiopia, Haiti, the

Sahel, Horn of Africa, Democratic Republic of Congo, northern Nigeria, and parts of Mali – among others – saw changes in their political contexts that resulted in humanitarian crisis or conflict.

This impacted vulnerable people living in these areas and prevented access to support as safety and security remained an issue, a disproportionate burden of care falling to women and girls. Country requests to rapidly respond to emergencies also increased in 2021. The federation-wide Disaster Preparedness and Response Fund supported 34 different humanitarian emergencies and country requests for strategic humanitarian investments in 2021, compared with 22 emergency response/strategic humanitarian investments 2020 and 20 in 2019. An Orange Alert was declared for Afghanistan, Ethiopia, and Haiti in 2021, and Myanmar was a modified Orange Alert (obtaining similar levels of support but without public facing work on the request of the country). The conflict and humanitarian crises of 2021 are predicted to result in a predicted 274 million people across the world requiring humanitarian assistance and protection in 2022.⁸



Kantha Prasad, a volunteer with ActionAid, packs food plates at a local restaurant kitchen in Gokulpuri neighbourhood of North East Delhi on 6th May, 2021. These food packages are distributed to beneficiaries of the Covid relief program by ActionAid in India.

PHOTO: SAHIBA CHAWDHARY/ACTIONAID

Shrinking Civic & Political Space

Whilst Covid restrictions eased in some countries mid-way through 2021, other regimes chose to continue restrict civic space in the name of Covid.⁹ In 2021 more than 88.5% of the world's population lived in countries rated as closed, repressed, or obstructed.¹⁰ The reality of this day-to-day restriction on women and girls' mental and physical health cannot be underestimated. Many women and girls experienced increased domestic violence during restrictions faced in 2021, and continue now to have their access to education, healthcare, and labour rights curtailed.^{11, 12} In countries such as Myanmar, Cambodia and Vietnam restrictions were imposed on every member of society. In others, organisations were also directly clamped down on. One example is the introduction of more stringent NGO laws such as the change in Foreign Contribution Regulation Act in India.¹³

Across countries, this restricted civil society potential to organise for change. ActionAid staff and partner safety was a particular challenge; 358 frontline human rights defenders being killed in 2021 as part of their peaceful activism,¹⁴ with a strong correlation between countries with high levels of corruption

and low levels of human rights assurances.¹⁵ Women and girls were most at risk, especially those in LGBTQI+ rights groups, labour rights groups, and environmental rights groups.¹⁶

At the same time, movements continued to have huge influence. The continuing work of the Black Lives Matter — a racial justice movement that energized more than 20 million people in the US and sparked a global response to contextualize it — created a new lens for some of our work, giving energy to a push for decolonisation of the NGO sector and exposing the unacceptable neo-colonial dynamics in international economic relations and the aid sector.¹⁷



Parveen and Swarupa, from Bishwambarpur, Bangladesh, are active members of the women's group of the Voluntary Association for Rural Development (VARD), and were elected as Union Parishad members in 2021. They are inspiring examples of women supporting women to become elected members of local government. ActionAid and partners create space for women in leadership and advocacy opportunities.

CREDIT: JAHANGIR HOSSAIN/ACTIONAID



As part of the ActionAid Ethiopia Girl Lead Research project, girls developed a poster explaining the issues they were facing in 2021.

CREDIT: MAITREE MUZUMDAR



Lizzie works for ActionAid in Kenya as a Community Development Facilitator. She leads the child sponsorship programme and supports ActionAid Kenya's local partner, the Sauti ya Wanawake women's movement. This is a community-based organisation which advocates for girls and women's rights in the region, including supporting cases of violence against women and girls in the courts, to help survivors gain access to justice. Lizzie helped set up a SMS hotline last year where cases of violence against girls and women – including child marriage – can be reported.

She also campaigns for girls' education. Before her campaigns, most local girls would drop out of school in grade 8 (around 13-15 years old) and get married. Now up to 70% of girls are staying in school and pursuing further education.

She shares the story of going into childbirth and looking up to see a former girls' forum girl assisting her at hospital – now a fully-fledged nurse.

Lizzie believes that when women are economically empowered, they can challenge men and achieve equality.

PHOTO: ESTHER SWEENEY/ACTIONAID

Women's rights

Across the crises outlined above, women's rights have been significantly eroded. While this has been exacerbated by Covid – for example; gender-based violence increased as a direct result of 'stay at home' mandates, girls' access to education and healthcare has reduced, and the gender gap has increased by a generation – the roots are deeply systematic.¹⁸ Women and girls are most marginalised when civic and political space shrinks – and in 2021, with conflict in Afghanistan, rolling back of access to sexual health and reproductive rights in the US and violence against women globally, the space for women has drastically reduced. It is ironic that whilst many states-imposed regulations on freedoms, the same neoliberal states advocated freedoms when it came to the economy. While initially some governments supported spending on Covid, this was done with the aim of maintaining rather than shifting the patriarchal economic paradigm and relied on women and girls adopting a larger percentage of caring and domestic work, as well as often working in precarious labour conditions in care roles, education and healthcare.¹⁹ This inequality had a global dimension, with women and girls in the Global South experiencing disadvantage as a result of the global power imbalances which privileged some countries over others. Despite the erosion of rights, women human rights defenders and activists have continued to push for changes, often at great personal risk.



As part of the Young Urban Women Project, Ivy was trained how to make soap and supplies her products to several laundries, shops and businesses. She continues to advocate for the ratification of ILO conventions to support her peers.

PHOTO: ACTIONAID



Aida Sarr (middle) with the women of Maya Island, Senegal, dedicates time to adapt to climate-induced rising sea levels which threaten their livelihoods and the education of their children.
PHOTO: ACTIONAID



Akongo Joyce, 26, is a resident of Labongo village in Amuru sub-county, Uganda. Her participation in Activista has led to increased income and increased ability for activism to support her community. She says, "I am a mother [...]. I am an activist, a young feminist, and I have actively supported my community through advocacy spaces arising from the training I got from ActionAid.

I have learned the art of speaking for myself and the community on pressing issues, especially during Barazas (public meeting spaces) and accountability dialogues at sub-county, district and national levels."

CREDIT: ACTIONAID

Internal Context & Approach

Ways of working

The Covid-related lockdowns around the world initially facilitated a higher level of international connectivity as Zoom and Microsoft Teams became normalised ways of working – sometimes enabling stronger participation from Global South colleagues in virtual international exchanges. Online and participatory methods of organising even proved to be an advantage in some cases, allowing federation-wide participation in the planning for ActionAid's climate justice campaign. A series of online workshops over the course of several months meant that up to 80 participants from 25 countries would join at a time, ensuring a range of perspectives were heard, and there was widespread buy-in and enthusiasm for the campaign direction and choices. Large online meetings such as the Directors' Forum and Assembly also proved to be effective. Online training stepped up, for example our Sexual Harassment, Exploitation and Abuse (SHEA) & Safeguarding Training – hosted on ActionAid's

Learning Management System, saw 20% of the organisation participate, and our Learning Ecosystem Model and the Integrated Learning Approach enabled us to streamline our ways of learning and embed learning in the flow of work to improve programme delivery, despite not being able to travel for programme quality audits or face-to-face training.

Whilst we showed adaptability and effectiveness in these online communications, and we will not return to the pre-Covid travel dynamics for reasons of carbon and cost, there is no substitute for the dynamic participatory space created in face-to-face workshops, engaging in on-the-ground dialogue with colleagues, and seeing our transformative work in practice – not to mention the powerful motivation this creates. In addition, in championing the benefits of virtual communications we must be mindful that they can replicate forms of power where those who have best connectivity can control the space and who speaks – which excludes marginalised women and girls.²⁰ This is particularly relevant in terms of advocacy, where sometimes informal spaces can be where change is consolidated or planned.

Advocacy in Covid – exclusion and challenges at COP26

The lack of access to vaccines for many Global South activists, and the particularly high costs and complexities of travel, meant that COP26 excluded key voices from the Global South. In addition, it was more difficult than ever for activists with badges to enter the rooms where negotiations were taking place. During the Leaders' Summit on opening days, negotiation rooms were almost entirely closed off to observers. As a result, civil society had less opportunity to observe negotiations and closely follow developments. Far from achieving the promise made by the UK government that this would be the 'most inclusive COP ever', COP26 was the most challenging and exclusionary most COP activists have ever experienced.



Young activists Safa Almomani, Ally Mwanzola and Monicah Kamadau.
PHOTO: MARISA PRIVITERA MURDOCH

Global Secretariat Reimagining

2021 was the beginning of a deep process of change and reflection for the ActionAid Global Secretariat (GS), mirroring the wider context in which INGOs and other non-state actors are considering how best to deliver meaningful impact in alignment with their values. In accordance with our resolve to shift power and resources to the Global South, a new structure has been designed for the Global Secretariat (GS), which will see it become smaller and more tightly focused on supporting country programmes where most value can be added.²² This will free up more resources for programmatic work and delivery.

The process is ongoing and has been both challenging and intensive. Work is continuing to support this new structure with refined ways of working and a culture that is focused on inclusion, respect and mutual accountability. While the new structure will help the federation achieve its goals, and while we have been maintaining focus on the deliverables, there have been some temporary impacts on delivery and decision-making in this interim period.

The change process has also led to some changes within the Global Secretariat (GS) leadership team. Arthur Larok is acting as the interim Secretary

General as we seek a substantive replacement for previous incumbent, Julia Sanchez, who moved on at the end of the year.

We must acknowledge the impact the change process has had on staff energy, particularly on the back of Covid, and give energy to rebuilding our sense of trust and organisation. At the same time, we also look forward to better prioritising our external agenda, ensuring that our internal processes do not drain time and energy away. We have a very important and influential role to play in supporting the global movements for economic justice and public services, feminist alternatives and climate justice by convening and connecting different people, and we need to sustain and continually deepen this work. We cannot allow ourselves to become self-indulgent or caught up in internal territorial struggles when there is so much to be done externally. We have built strong trusting partnerships with trade union movements, tax and fiscal justice movements, public services and anti-privatisation movements, feminist movements and human rights alliances. Our priority should be to connect these different struggles and movements, linking them also to progressive movements for climate justice. The sections below outline our successes and learning in that struggle.



Sister Lin, a farmer in Cambodia has been part of a women's group accessing support against a backdrop of Covid, climate change and a lack of access to markets. As a result of interventions by ActionAid and local partners, she says, 'I have received many useful and practical trainings on farming techniques including making natural pesticides and fertiliser, climate-resilient agriculture and animal-raising practices, growing plants and saving the seeds. I've also learned how to make a growing plan based on market needs, thanks to support from local farmers' support facilitators and women market agents'. She has saved enough to ensure her children can access secondary education.

PHOTO: TITH SENG AND NAVY KAEUT/
ACTIONAID

ACTIONAID IN NUMBERS

Our global federation exists to harness individual and collective work to achieve social justice and gender equality and eradicate poverty. Central in our drive to achieve our mission in 2021 were **2350 staff** (1,202 women and 1,148 men) in **45 countries** in Africa, Asia, Europe and The Americas, and a **Global Secretariat of 156** (109 women and 47 men).²³ We also hosted **7,388 volunteers** (3,865 women and 3523 men) and worked with over **702 local partners, 171 social movements** and **374 networks/coalitions**. In 2021, across countries, **women held 50% of senior leadership roles**, steady from 2020.²⁴

Countries reported reaching **77,655,507 people** in our campaigns, including over 9 million women, 6 million men and nearly 800,000 children.²⁵

Our humanitarian work reached **3,334,416 people**, including over 900,000 women, almost one million men and over 500,000 children.²⁶

25

AFFILIATES

Full members, legally registered as national organisations, autonomous and self-governed

There are 25 Affiliate Members: Australia, Bangladesh, Brazil, Denmark, France, Ghana, Greece, Guatemala, India, Ireland, Italy, Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique, Nepal, The Netherlands, Nigeria, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Sweden, Tanzania, The Gambia, Uganda, UK, and USA.

5

ASSOCIATES

Members in transition to Affiliates

There are currently five associate members: Indonesia, Zambia, Spain, Thailand, and Vietnam.

15

COUNTRY PROGRAMMES

Programmes with managerial oversight provided by the Global Secretariat while governance oversight is provided by the International Board

There are currently 15 country programmes: Afghanistan, Burundi, Cambodia, Colombia, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, Haiti, Liberia, Myanmar, Palestine (Occupied Palestinian Territories), Senegal, Somaliland, South Africa, Zimbabwe, and the ActionAid Arab Region (AAAR) based in Jordan with outreaches in Lebanon and Syria.

TIPPING POINTS IN POWER IN TURBULENT TIMES

Amid an extensive internal restructuring and against the backdrop of a turbulent world process, it can be easy to overlook many remarkable successes we recorded in the past year and celebrate the flexibility demonstrated by existing projects, programs, and contracts which adapted to respond to the context and the evolving needs of the various stakeholders.

Programmatic impact & reach

This section outlines our impact as it relates to our key organisational strategic objectives; system change for climate justice, system change for economic justice and humanitarian and resilience work. Throughout, our vision is a feminist, just and green transition.

System Change for Climate justice

We were a part of a historic winning lawsuit against Shell in the Netherlands, demanding that they reduce their emissions in line with the Paris Agreement. This action targeted their greenwashing practices and continued extraction of fossil fuels, with ActionAid providing analysis of the human impact on communities in the Global South.²⁷ Our

publications in 2021 advanced practical policy solutions to help those on the front lines of the climate crisis, highlighting the growing plight of those forced to migrate due to climate impacts, and the need to provide social protection support.²⁸

Building on our programme work, and the evidence and voices of the communities we work with, we led climate advocacy on national and regional policies around the world relating to climate, adaptation, climate finance and agriculture. We worked with our allies in organisations, networks and movements to shape and amplify policy demands, and we made a particular contribution to transforming civil society and media narratives about “net zero” climate targets, exposing greenwashing, holding governments to greater scrutiny, and increasing pressure for real climate action. We also joined EU-wide campaign coalition calling for a ban on fossil fuel advertising in Europe.

In the build-up to COP26 our Earth Walk mobilised over 7,000 people across 44 countries to walk over 46,000 kilometres – more than the planet’s circumference – to demand climate justice.

Just three of the many examples of activism:



In **Brazil**, EarthWalk supported the mobilisation of traditional communities of the north of Minas Gerais state, where they challenged the takeover of timber production in the region. In addition, thousands of people were reached through social media, with the support of two influencers. EarthWalk was also a good opportunity to bring media attention to the inequalities of access to climate debates during COP.

PHOTO: ACTIONAID



In **Bangladesh**, ActionAid marched with 3314 people in communities impacted by climate-induced draught. In total, participants walked 12,000 km.

PHOTO: ACTIONAID



In **Rwanda**, the group planted 15,000 trees in response to erosion and landslide and over 450 people participated in the march, walking 405 kms to raise awareness on climate crisis, calling for action for real climate solutions and standing in solidarity with communities, especially women that suffer the worst impacts of climate crisis. Elizabeth Nyirasafari, leader of the women's group, said that what they want from world leaders is to put more investment in forest conservation and play an active role in reducing air pollution.

PHOTO: ACTIONAID

Inside the COP26 negotiations, we led the calls for a new funding facility on loss and damage, creating unprecedented pressure, momentum, and media coverage that we hope will finally bear fruit at COP27 in 2022. We steadily advanced our UN climate policy goals in areas including climate finance and agriculture. And we coordinated rapid-response analysis of corporate climate “net zero” announcements during COP, sharing these with civil society allies, media and social media to expose greenwashing and increase scrutiny and pressure for real climate action.

At COP26 we gained our highest-ever media coverage, with more than 1,600 print articles relating to the event (including the Financial Times, New York Times, Guardian, and Bloomberg) and landed major TV and radio coverage (including CNN, BBC TV and radio, Sky News, and Al Jazeera). Greta Thunberg even joined the action that we co-organised with Greenpeace against carbon offsets and greenwashing.



At COP26 messages from activists were projected onto a building in Glasgow to show world leaders they must take action. A collaboration between ActionAid UK and ActionAid Denmark resulted in innovative petition posters in bus stops around the city of Glasgow calling for climate finance and climate justice, with thousands of supporters' names embedded into the posters.

PHOTO: ACTIONAID

The Southern Africa Food Crisis response

When climate-change-induced flooding hit Mozambique, Malawi, Zambia and Zimbabwe, ActionAid's crisis response involved training smallholder farmers in agroecological farming methods and social protection measures to reduce climate induced migration. These included soil and water harvesting to retain moisture in soil, producing alternatives to chemical fertiliser from natural materials such as manure, integrated pest management, crop diversity and creation of water reservoirs. This enabled farmers to develop sustainable practices and farm a wider variety of climate resilient crops which helped increase yields – saving lives and strengthening livelihoods.

ActionAid worked with small-scale farmers (70% of them women) to improve their yields and access to markets. In Zimbabwe, small-scale farmers more than doubled their yields. In Mozambique, farmers' areas of cultivation went up by almost two thirds because of the new technologies and techniques learned. In Zambia, women smallholder farmers set up seed banks and saving schemes. Stronger yields and more sustainable farming methodologies meant they could increase sales. Not only did this improve their own financial stability, it ensured more readily-available food sources for the wider community.

Working with women-led organisations such as the Rural Women's Assembly enabled the intervention to tackle gender inequality and poverty whilst embedding more resilient agroecological farming methods better able to cope with changing weather patterns. This led to increasing information sharing on improved farming techniques and markets across the women's networks, freeing up some portion of household income to be spent in other areas such as children's education and healthcare, with increased financial independence leading to improving relationships between men and women at household level. The local women's groups meetings also provided safe spaces to discuss topical issues affecting women such as gender-based violence (GBV) and women involved reported feeling better able to report and discuss GBV.

Through these projects, women farmers were supported to become confident in their analysis of the challenges and opportunities they face and reported that they feel empowered to articulate their needs to policy makers. Through multi-country projects such as the Partnership for Social Accountability (PSA) and Scaling up Public Investment in Agriculture, (SUPIA) women farmers' groups analysed policies and government budget expenditure and presented their demands to policy makers, helping to shape policy at local, national and regional level in Africa and ensure social protection and support in light of a globally generated climate crisis.²⁹



A woman farmer from Zimbabwe at work, part of interventions connected to the Southern Africa food crisis.

PHOTO: ACTIONAID

System change for economic and gender justice

In terms of movements, we are proud to have formed a new strategic alliance between the tax justice and education justice movements – to create and convene a Tax and Education Alliance. This includes the Global Alliance for Tax Justice and the Tax Justice network and regional tax justice platforms which work with the global federation of teacher unions (Education International), the Global Campaign for Education and regional education platforms. We are working together nationally (e.g., in Senegal, Zambia, Nepal, Uganda, Ghana) as well as regionally and internationally.

ActionAid has also contributed significantly to the development of a new manifesto on public services ([Future is Public: Global manifesto for public services](#)) which was created in alliance with other key organisations and with anti-privatisation movements across diverse sectors (education, water, health, transport, energy etc). This manifesto has generated widespread interest and will shape a major global gathering of anti-privatisation and pro-public movements in Chile in 2022.³⁰ We were also part of the core group of a growing global movement on rebuilding the social organisation of care. The movement has produced a Care Manifesto calling for the recognition, rewarding, reduction and redistribution of care work and the reclaiming of its public nature.

A major highlight of 2021 was the publication of our report with Education International and Public Services International: [The Public Versus Austerity: Why public sector wage bill constraints must end](#). This text is based on national-level research reports in ten countries, a critical review of 69 IMF documents, the collection of testimonies from frontline public sector workers and a series of exchanges with senior economists. The report discredits the use of wage bill constraints that are a central plank of austerity programmes, showing how they undermine education and health and exposing the lack of rationale or evidence behind their use – laying bare the ideology and unconscious biases of the IMF and many Ministries of Finance. The report gained attention around the world and within the IMF itself, opening space for alternative economic

approaches and particularly for ambitious and progressive tax reforms. This has contributed to a powerful niche for ActionAid, based on coordinated critical analysis of dominant economic policies across the global South, strategic partnerships with unions and movements and the promotion of feminist alternatives.

The launch of the report was a wonderful collaboration involving a rolling ten-hour online event hosted each hour by a different country (Vietnam, Nepal, Tanzania, Malawi, Zimbabwe, Ghana, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Senegal, and Brazil), with speakers from ActionAid, public sector unions and national coalitions. Through the year, there were regular webinars involving all the countries, sharing their experiences, and helping countries learn from each other about effective strategies and tactics for framing economic alternatives, influencing Ministries of Finance and parliamentarians, integrating feminist analysis, and connecting diverse movements.



Mary, from a village in northern Ghana, became a nurse, in part after her father got a loan from an ActionAid funded women's network to pay for her studies.

PHOTO: RUTH MCDOWALL/ACTIONAID

A combination of direct action and tax reforms supports girls' retention and academic success in Malawi

Some 50km outside Malawi's Capital City Lilongwe, Makunje Primary School in Ndaola Zone is beginning to show hope on girls' education.

Since the school was established in 2003 it has faced a series of challenges, many of which specifically affected girls. According to 38-year-old Idah Kagwere, a dedicated member of Makunje Primary School Mother Group, until recently parents and the wider community took little interest in the school, or their children's education.

"The communities here never valued education," says Idah. "Most children, especially girls, enrolled at the school simply as way of passing time as they prepared themselves to get married, mainly with the help of their parents. Boys would also drop out of school at some point to concentrate on farming or become active members of Gule wa Mkulu."³¹

Of course, the challenges facing girls are not unique to Makunje Primary School. ActionAid Malawi recently estimated that a total of 154,000 girls of school-going age are out of school, due to several factors, including those noted by Idah Kagwere.³² Overall, despite relatively high enrolment rates (around 90%) at primary level, Malawi continues to record extremely low transition rates from primary to secondary school (38%), which has serious macro-economic consequences for the country, and of course for individuals, as education is a fundamental right and evidence shows that children who complete secondary school are more likely to participate in formal and paid employment in the future.³³

According to deputy head teacher Solomon Thom, however, the situation at Makunje Primary began to change when, in 2018, ActionAid Malawi started working with the school as part of the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD)-funded "Breaking Barriers: Tax justice for gender responsive public services" project.

Thom says the project helped the school take a more inclusive and transparent approach in running the affairs and school-related funding such as School Improvement Grants and Constituency Development Fund.

Thom, who has been at the school for six years, explains that a lot changed following the school's implementation of the project through a series of awareness campaigns, orientations, and interaction with members of parliament on Education, Budget and Finance organised by ActionAid Malawi. This work helped the school to realise the need to advance the tax justice culture at the school by ensuring that funding is used to advance the right to education for marginalised children, especially girls, the disabled and those coming from poor family backgrounds.

"The project has particularly helped us to pay attention to the plight of girl education at the school by ensuring that the funds we receive address some of their needs such as construction of a washroom and purchasing of sanitary pads. We have also been working with the mother groups, learners' council, and school management committee to challenges some cultural factors that stand in girls' right to education," says Solomon.

Idah agrees with Solomon, saying since the project came at the school in 2018, the ten members of the Mother Group have conducted several sensitisation campaigns with the parents to ensure they send and support their children to remain in school.

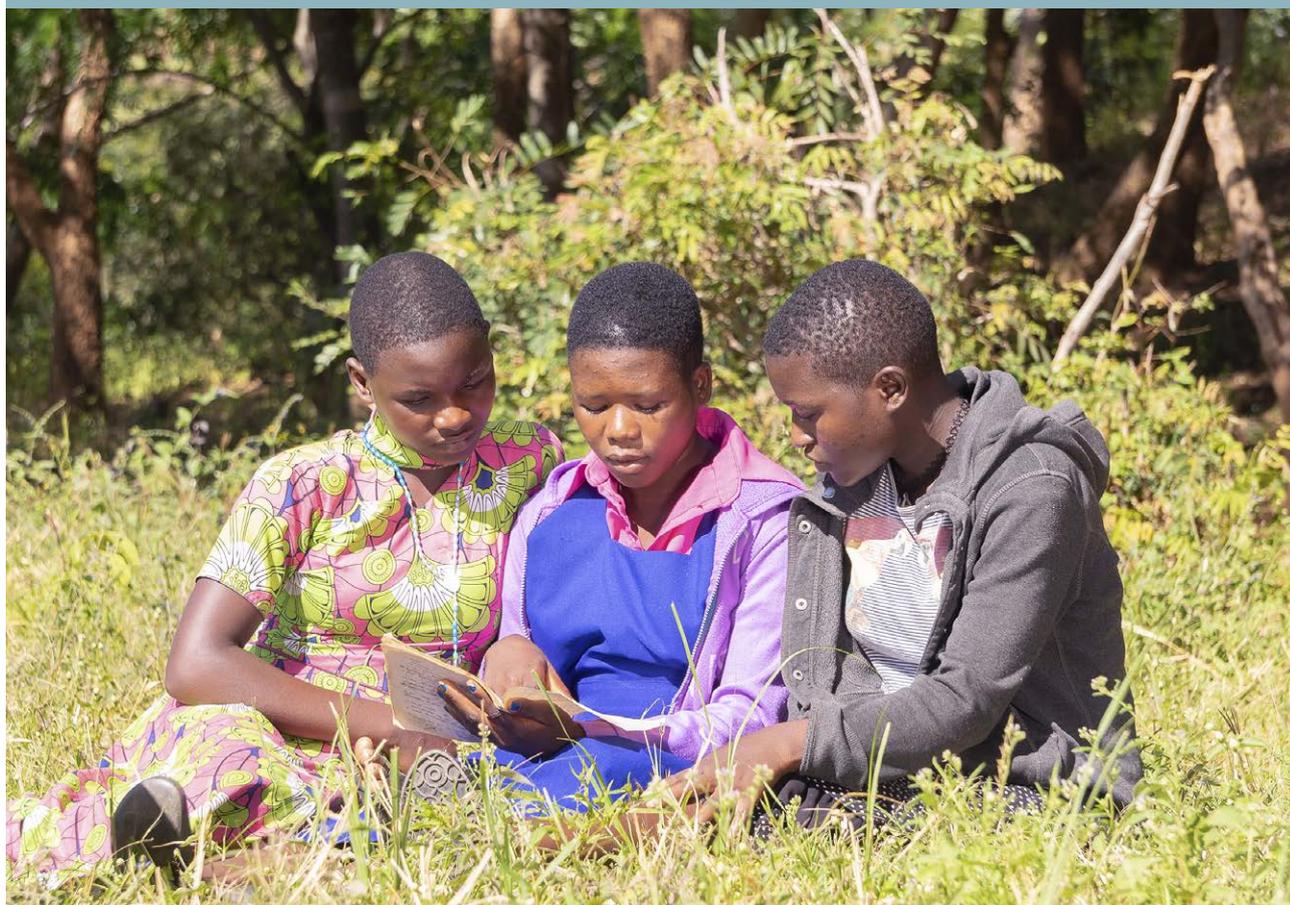
"We have brought back to school 27 girls who dropped out due to early marriages, teenage pregnancies or poverty and we continue to offer counselling and mentorship to them and other girls at the school to inculcate the value of education in them," says Idah.

In 2021 Primary School Leaving Certificate of Education, a total of six out of 11 girls who sat for examinations got selected to secondary schools, which is a massive improvement from just one girl in 2018. The total number of those selected to secondary school was 10, out of a total of 26 learners who sat for the examinations.

For 16-year-old Lizinet Chatambalala, a student at the school, the support from teachers as well as Mother Group members is helping her realise her dream of becoming a nurse.

“The sanitary pads that we have been receiving have helped us concentrate on education rather than missing classes during menstruation periods. If this support came years back, most girls would not have dropped out of school,” she says.

Products like sanitary pads have long been an unaffordable ‘luxury’ to millions of women and girls in Malawi, as in a country where an estimated [50% of the population](#) lives below the poverty line buying a single package of sanitary pads is equivalent to spending the salary of a whole day’s work.³⁴ Fortunately, thanks to the ongoing advocacy efforts of ActionAid Malawi and Her Liberty Network Civil Society Education Coalition, and key influential allies such as a former parliamentarian, Jessie Kabwila, in 2022 the Government finally took steps to reduce the 16.5% tax on the pads, a measure that will improve accessibility and affordability of sanitary products for girls like Lizinet.



16-year-old Lizinet Chatambalala is a student at Makunje Primary School in Malawi. With support from her teachers and the Mother Group members at the school, Lizinet is on the way to realising her dream of becoming a nurse.

PHOTO: FLETCHER SIMWAKA/ACTIONAID

Born into Fire: A holistic Humanitarian Response Occupied Palestinian Territory (oPt), Gaza:

The often-volatile situation in Gaza and Palestine escalated with civil unrest increasing with the start of Ramadan on 13 April, 2021. Palestinians were initially blocked from a public area via barriers that were erected outside Damascus Gate. Following the eviction of four Palestinian refugee families in Sheikh Jarrah, and raids on the Al-Aqsa compound which wounded hundreds of Palestinian worshippers, widespread protests took place as well as clashes in East Jerusalem on 7-10 May. Part of ActionAid's response included support to women-led protection committees and preparedness and response committees who led needs assessments, as well as the direct response in communities, including but not limited to verifying lists of people to receive help. The response team worked in cooperation with the ministry of social development, monitoring feedback mechanisms, whilst taking into consideration SHEA and safeguarding principles.

ActionAid and partners worked with the knowledge, skills and leadership of women and young women in local communities, with a specific focus on the response on women's needs such as dignity kits. The Disaster Preparedness and Response Fund helped ActionAid oPt and local partners to reach 2,617 people (including 1,527 women) in four different locations, in terms of providing food security and protection.

As part of the humanitarian response, ActionAid Palestine with the Union of Health Workers Committee (UHC) had a particular focus on groups most impacted by the conflict, giving psychosocial support in communities to women – including pregnant women and new mothers – and children.

Helana Mesleh works as a psychologist at the Al-Awda Hospital in northern Gaza. During the attacks, she supported women in the hospital and, once they had been discharged, by providing counselling in person and remotely via social messaging apps, like WhatsApp and Facebook Messenger.

Ms Mesleh also worked with children whose mental health was affected by the attacks, to help them deal with the trauma and stress. She says their symptoms and behaviours include fear, anxiety, bed-wetting, introversion, social isolation and aggression.

Working with local partners ActionAid plans to reach nearly 2,000 people, mostly women and children, with individual and group counselling in the coming year.



Mervat Al-Buhtaimi, 25, who received psychosocial support from ActionAid and partner – the Union of Health Workers Committee (UHC), explains how it felt to be heavily pregnant during the attacks. "While the bombing and shelling were happening, I thought that we are all going to die," she says.

PHOTO: ACTIONAID

ActionAid Afghanistan Respond to the Taliban Takeover

An escalating humanitarian crisis, severe drought and the Covid pandemic left nearly 23 million people – more than half the population of Afghanistan – without enough food to eat at the end of December 2021. Conflict and the climate crisis displaced families to urban centres, including Kabul, and camps where women and girls, older and disabled people were at increased risk of violence, exploitation, and extreme poverty.

Sara*, 57, lived in Ghor province where most of the population is dependent on farming for their livelihoods. Her family lost 90% of their wheat crop in 2021 to drought and were forced to sell off their livestock to survive. They left their home village and travelled to the province capital, Firozkoh city, in search of work.

Sara, her daughter-in-law, son and four grandchildren, stayed with relatives. Her son struggled to find work to support the family. They often went to sleep hungry and worried about a winter without food, blankets, and fuel to heat their home.

ActionAid provided emergency support to communities in four provinces of Afghanistan including Herat, Kabul, Ghor and Balkh. Emergency teams provided cash support and hygiene kits for women and girls, reaching approximately 10,000 families in total.

Sara explained: *“With the support from ActionAid, I can manage to buy flour, oil, basic food and heating items with the cash support from ActionAid. This will prevent my family facing hunger and coldness.”*



Sara* talks to ActionAid staff about the issues facing her community in Ghor province, Afghanistan.

PHOTO: ACTIONAID

*not her real name.

ActionAid Haiti Earthquake response

On 14 August 2021, at 08:30 local time, a powerful 7.2 magnitude earthquake impacted the south-western area of Haiti, killing 2,248 people, injuring more than 12,700, affecting 800,000 people including 340,000 children. The epicentre was recorded approximately 125 km west of the Capital, Port-au-Prince. The earthquake compounded existing issues such as the ongoing political instability of the country and the economic impact of Covid. Food insecurity was also a concern, with 4 million people facing highly acute food insecurity and in need of urgent support.³⁹ As of September 20, 2021, an estimated 38,777 displaced people had been identified in 89 displacement locations across the three most affected departments – Grand’Anse, Nippes and South – with more than half of these people located in 44 locations in the South Department.⁴⁰ Assessments shared by the Directorate of Civil Protection revealed that least 650,000 people needed humanitarian assistance in the South, Grand’Anse and Nippes, which represents 40% of the population of these three departments of 1.6 million people. ActionAid Haiti was amongst the first NGOs that responded to the earthquake by supporting the victims, the institution was the first to reach some remote areas thanks to key contacts. The main objective of the response was to provide a strong response, managed by women leaders, to strengthen the resilience and livelihood of affected communities while respecting the needs and the dignity of the population. ActionAid drew a response plan after assessment made by Women Leaders, local authorities, animators, field workers and agricultural technicians. 10,000 people were reached through ActionAid Haiti’s response.



Tchessie Louis, 26 is one of the women leaders trained by ActionAid Haiti. She greatly contributed in the pilot by participating in the training and designing a beautiful safe space for women. An achievement was to ensure that service provision timings corresponded with women’s care and domestic work, so women could better access support.

PHOTO: ANDERSON PIERRE/ACTIONAID

Alternative feminist futures

Dinh Thi Yen, 44, leads the Garment Cooperative for People with Disabilities in Cuc Phuong commune, Nho Quan district, Ninh Binh province, Vietnam.

Before this project to support disabled women was launched, Nho Quan district was known for its high levels of poverty among rural and minority ethnic groups and the frequent and severe impact of natural disasters and climate change, such as floods and storms, resulting in casualties, loss, as well as destruction of homes and infrastructure. Women with disabilities and their families faced particular difficulties in earning a living under the combined effects of poor health and resources. Previous livelihood models were fragmented and failed as people were not closely connected and organised.

Ms Yen says: *“I strongly believe that people with disabilities have full rights, potentials, abilities, capacities as many other people to participate and contribute to family and society [...] However, many of them do not know how to realise their rights, dreams and ambitions. Many of the people with disabilities those I have spoken told me they have been discouraged by discrimination and plenty of cases where the potentials and contributions of people with disabilities are undercounted. In the implementation of local and national targets on sustainable development goals, people with disabilities are mainly considered as passive recipients of humanitarian and charity support. This misperception is not acceptable and so should be changed.”*

The cooperative supports women with disabilities to secure their livelihoods. Yen reports that *“On average, each member can earn from 150,000 - 180,000 VND (\$6-\$8) a day, enough to buy food and send their children to school. Garment production is more resilient to natural disaster and climate change than farming production.”* The cooperative has signed an agreement to produce clothes for the local and export market and is planning to bring in new members going forward.



Ms Dinh Thi Yen, Director of the Garment Cooperative for People with Disabilities, with a member of the cooperative.

PHOTO: ACTIONAID

Whilst fundraising is covered later in this document, it's worth noting here that we had a few significant breakthroughs in raising strategic funds for this programme work, including a NORAD Combatting Modern Slavery project, a series of significant grants from the Open Society Foundation for our economic justice and public services work and the largest

ever grant for anti-racist public education work in Brazil. The collaboration with black, indigenous and quilombola movements in Brazil and the global mapping of anti-racist education initiatives has opened very exciting new threads of work which can inspire and strengthen similar actions and efforts in other ActionAid's countries and regions.



SETA, which stands for 'Anti-racist Transformation of Education Systems', is a coalition of black, indigenous, anti-poverty and quilombola movements in Brazil. Quilombos are Afro-Brazilian settlements first established by escaped slaves and communities which continue to experience disproportionate levels of poverty even today. African and indigenous histories, cultures and religions are just some of the topics SETA intends to revive in the curriculum of Brazil's state education system through its new anti-racist approach to education. The SETA project is one of the finalists in the Kellogg Foundation's global action to promote racial equity (Racial Equity 2030).

PHOTO: ACTIONAID

Institutionally Focused Achievements

The shifts in power externally cannot be achieved without the fundamental work internally to ensure that the processes we set up work for our staff.

Country Model Review (CMR)

The Country Models Review (CMR) was initiated based on an explicit mandate in our International Strategy. CMR findings from Phase I and II of the project recommended that in order to deepen our impact, we need to adopt different forms of presence that are appropriate to the scale and nature of our work in each country context and four models were proposed: Full Presence, Light Presence, Satellite, Virtual/Digital and Centres of Support. Phase I also recommended that countries rationalise their operation costs to ensure they remain financially sustainable. Other recommendations from Phase II which were approved for implementation by the 2019 Assembly included the need to put in place minimum performance standards and metrics for all the new models, as well as the rationalisation of our child sponsorship footprint, to improve the impact and accountability of our Child Sponsorship funds.

By the end of 2021 we had rolled out CMR to 23 countries in total, all in various stages of transition planning and implementation. Fourteen countries have completed transition planning and have started to implement important changes to align to the new operating models. We have also completed the design of the performance framework and the Service Sharing framework, pending further consultations with countries and the new GS Functions.

Assurance

The Annual Federation Assurance Report revealed that in 2021, the overall full compliance improved by 4%, from 55% in 2020 to 59% in 2021. The full compliance count was 687 (2021) and 639 (2020). Similarly, partial compliance improved by 4% and

many countries which were partially compliant in 2020 achieved full compliance in 2021 (402 partial compliances in 2020 to 348 in 2021). Non-compliance also improved from 38 in 2020 to 18 in 2021, a decrease of 47%.

While there has been notable progress with several countries, the overall progress has been slow due to challenges faced in 2021. These challenges included a prolonged GS re-imagination process that affected the pace of changes in countries, inability to travel to countries due to Covid-19 and the viability of our Child Sponsorship business model in several countries.

Audit

For the second year running, and in a particularly difficult one, we celebrate a successful completion of Annual Financial Statements for the GS and connected entities such as Country Programmes. Considering the time pressures and the attention required for the GS change process, this is testimony to improving the quality of financial reporting by the Global Secretariat and support to country programmes that we take responsibility for.

CMS

Our new global Contract Management System (CMS), which allows us to collectively and transparently document, share and manage our funding contracts, was embedded a year ahead of schedule and £2m under the projected budget. Using the CMS and embedding better grant management practices has already led to a strong increase in compliance, and sharing best-practice grant management has helped improve both our financial sustainability and our impact.

Cost recovery

Under-budgeting and under-funding the work that we deliver remain key concerns for our country teams and many actors in our sector. We have been working together across the federation to address the very real issue of the 'funding starvation cycle'

where countries operate at a loss and are unable to invest in organisational development. In 2021, our cost recovery annual survey showed us that this important work has now begun to have a significant impact with average recovery of core costs increasing by 3% across the federation. In some countries, such as Somaliland, there was an increase in total country reserves by 189% in a year and a half (£141,000 GBP Jan. 2020 to £407,000 GBP mid-2021) as a result of following the cost recovery policy and championing the concept. This means ActionAid Somaliland is able to thrive without child sponsorship money. Replicating this success will allow our country teams to invest in core systems, processes and people which in turn and most importantly, will improve the impact quality, standards and safety of the important work that they carry out.

Child sponsorship

During a challenging year there were still some successes. For example, despite the challenges posed by Covid, child sponsorship links in Italy grew by 16%, continuing a positive trend from 2016. Most of the growth was led by revamped digital channels - which more than balanced the hard times that face to face recruitment witnessed during the pandemic - and by increased telemarketing on the donor base. In terms of systems we rolled out the new digital platform for child sponsorship, called SK (short for Sakahom, a Khmer word for 'community'), bringing our systems up to date and improving information security with updated data protection policies. Over 300,000 children, 250,000 links and 500,000 supporters were successfully migrated to SK. To date, SK processed over 50,000 new profiles ready to be linked and successfully allowed uninterrupted child sponsorship processes.

The solidarity impacts of child sponsorship

While the Covid pandemic continued to affect the world throughout 2021, our dedicated partners and colleagues kept up the vital work and programmes to support our child sponsorship communities. For example; programmes for fighting patriarchal norms in Bangladesh through girls' football, illuminating houses in The Gambia to allow children to study at night, working with cultural entertainers in Guatemala to engage young people and demand respect for their rights, helping children in Ethiopia return to school safely by providing more hand washing points, and sharing messages of solidarity and support with the children of Palestine from sponsors across the globe.



A selection of photos from communities where children are sponsored, Nepal, Bangladesh and Palestine.

PHOTO: ACTIONAID

Impact through communications

We achieved increases in reach, engagement and coverage across social and traditional media. The majority of our content (95% - against a 75% KPI) was shot by local women photographers and filmmakers. Highlights included:

2021 ANNUAL SOCIAL PERFORMANCE: (Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and Instagram)

Impressions:	Video views:	Link clicks:	Engagements:	New followers:
9,173,753	1,073,802	138,894	89,060	22,844

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATOR HIGHLIGHTS:

25%

increase in overall video views (900,000)

Exceeded annual KPI (119% achieved)

20%

increase in overall impressions (7,920,000)

Exceeded annual KPI (116% achieved)

25%

increase in post link clicks (95,200)

Exceeded annual KPI (146% achieved)

BEST PERFORMERS:



#NetZero Tweet:

400,000

 impressions

<https://twitter.com/ActionAid/status/1377245415838466051?s=20&t=7cC5mRVJT0xe6sH5sYM0jA>



#BanFossilFuels: Marth's Story (Niger Delta Re-use)

105,000

 video views -

188,000

 impressions

<https://twitter.com/ActionAid/status/1377245415838466051?s=20&t=7cC5mRVJT0xe6sH5sYM0jA>



#COP26 Reactive Tweet:

38,000

 video views -

183,000

 impressions

<https://twitter.com/ActionAid/status/1459135670618832932?s=20&t=9YDB-b4QlvJdqoSfeiluAg>



Born in Fire - #FreePalestine

60,000

 video views -

123,000

 impressions

<https://twitter.com/ActionAid/status/1459135670618832932?s=20&t=9YDB-b4QlvJdqoSfeiluAg>



Janna Jihad - #FreePalestine

48,000

 video views -

93,000

 impressions

<https://www.facebook.com/ActionAid/videos/4472067519512082>

2021 Annual media performance

- Increased global media coverage by more than 80% (5,323 hits secured).
- Exceeded Annual KPI.
- Secured at least one international broadcast hit per quarter.
- Exceeded Annual KPI – ActionAid spokespeople pitched to broadcasters at least twice per quarter, with broadcast at COP26 far exceeding expectations with 49 hits on TV and Radio news outlets.

CLICK TO VIEW

COP26: FRANCE24 (AFP)

Green groups decry COP26 ‘shambles’ as observers locked out

*Teresa Anderson, climate policy coordinator at ActionAid International, said that out of the thousands of environmental organisations who had sent representatives to Glasgow for COP26, just four people had been granted access to monitor talks. **This was syndicated by AFP 40 times***

CLICK TO VIEW

CLIMATE (COP26 PRE-MEETING): REUTERS

UK-hosted summit seeks solutions for ‘searing injustice’ of climate change

Ahead of the meeting, Harjeet Singh, ActionAid’s global lead on climate change, said governments could “no longer ignore the soaring costs of the climate crisis in the global south”.

CLICK TO VIEW

TAX (TECH GIANTS TAX REPORT): AL JAZEERA

Tech giants must pay their fair share of tax to help tackle COVID (Opinion) By Julia Sánchez

G20 countries may be losing as much as \$32bn annually in taxes from just five of the world’s largest tech companies. Leaders of the wealthiest countries will be attending the G7 Summit in Cornwall, UK, on June 11-13 in the first “in-person” world leaders’ summit since the pandemic started.

CLICK TO VIEW

CLIMATE (THE PEOPLE VS. SHELL): DEUTSCHE WELLE

Shell ordered to reduce CO2 emissions in watershed ruling

“Shell’s carbon offset plans are putting communities in the Global South, particularly indigenous peoples and women farmers, at risk of devastating land grabs and rights abuses,” wrote Marit Maij, executive director of ActionAid Netherlands, one of the co-plaintiffs.

CLICK TO VIEW

HUMANITARIAN CRISES: REUTERS

Aid workers warn on COVID-19 in camps for Mozambique cyclone victims

“Each tent I saw had at least 10 people packed into it and families are lacking access to safe water and essential items like soap and face masks,” said Marcia Penicela, roject manager at ActionAid Mozambique following a visit to sites. She said ActionAid was concerned that COVID-19 would spread rapidly in the overcrowded centres, and that urgent needs included a variety of basics from food and water to shelter.

FUNDRAISING & FINANCE OVERVIEW

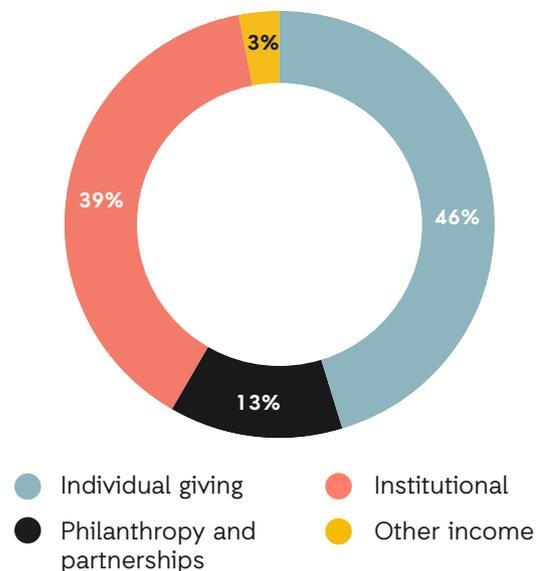
Income

ActionAid's total income in 2021 was €224 million (2020: €232 million), a decrease of 4% compared to 2020. The decrease is primarily the result of an expected decrease in institutional income of 14% (due to Covid, decline in aid by some donors, some large grants coming to an end, and gaps in funding cycles) and a decrease in Other Income (such as trading income) of 32%. These decreases are partially offset by an increase in Individual Giving of 2% (when measured in £ this has declined slightly but not significantly) and an increase in Philanthropy and Partnerships of 29%. Total unrestricted income declined by 5% to €72 million in 2021 compared to €76 million in 2020.⁴¹

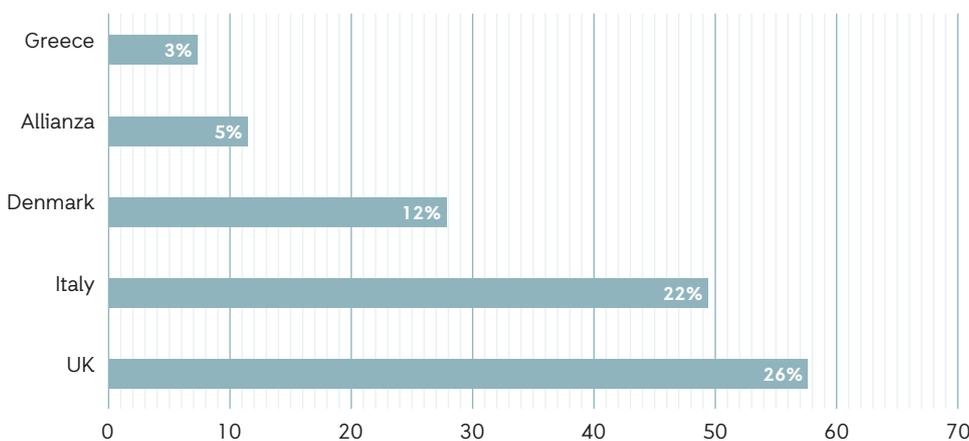
Bringing income back on track in 2022/23 will be a challenge, with internal capacity gaps compounded by economic downturns in many countries. The Federation will need to work to develop more prioritised and joined up investments for fundraising for 2023, exploring growth areas such as locally raised P&P income. In addition, to maintain our

unrestricted income base, we will need to develop new strategies in our fundraising model for countries to increase their market share while continuing to work on reducing their cost base and to develop a better grounding for financial sustainability.

ActionAid Income Split by Major Category

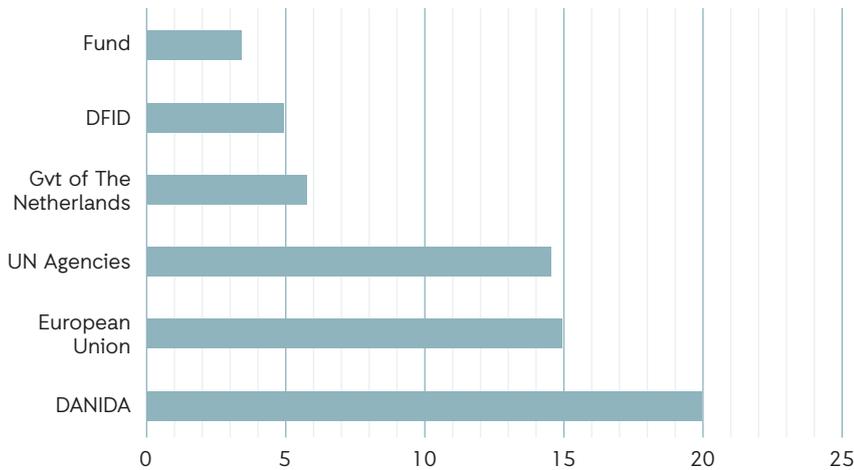


Largest country incomes (€ millions and % of total)



69% of the Federation's total external income is generated by the five countries set out here. Denmark and Allianza's incomes are predominantly Institutionally funded. Italy, Greece and the UK mostly receive Individual Giving.

Largest donors (€ millions)

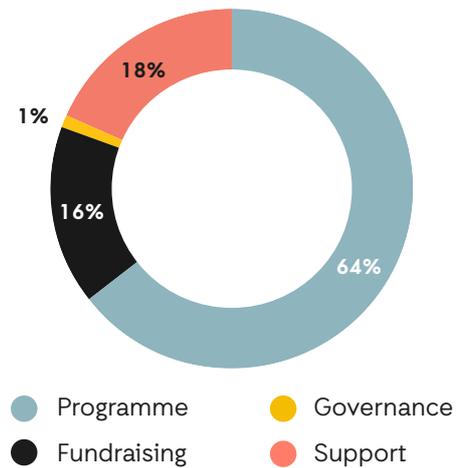


DANIDA (Danish International Development Agency) was our largest institutional donor in 2021 and 2020, contributing approximately €20 million (2020: €21 million). The majority of funding from the Global Fund was to Malawi.

Expenditure

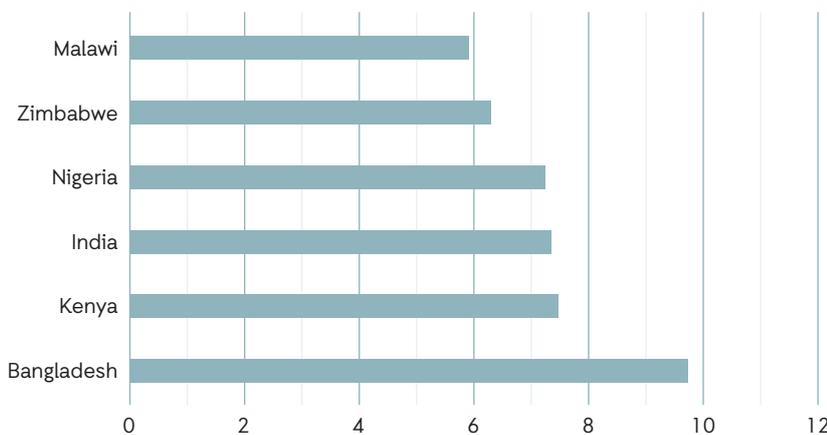
ActionAid's total expenditure in 2021 was €218 million (2020 €219 million). The decrease of 0.4% compared to 2020 is mainly due to a decline in Programme expenditure of 4% because of Covid restrictions. Fundraising and Governance Expenditure increased 1% and 2% respectively, perhaps an indication of more confidence after the first disruptive year of Covid in 2020. Fundraising and Governance costs increased in monetary value by €230K and €94K respectively. The decrease in Programme expenditure in monetary terms was €7.8m. The decline in expenditure is in line with the decline in Federation Income. The split of costs in 2021 is as follows:

ActionAid expenditure split by major category



Largest expenditure (Euro) millions

The countries implementing programmes with the largest expenditures are as follows:



Reserves

The reserves position remains strong, and there are strong cash balances across the Federation:

	2021 (€m)	2021 (€m)
Restricted	58,3	45,4
Unrestricted	43,0	43,1
Total	101,3	88,5

Restricted reserves are those that must be spent in strict accordance with the wishes of the respective donors, whereas unrestricted reserves may be spent at the discretion of ActionAid.

Governance in Turbulence

We acknowledge the new challenges in delivering our mission and the personal circumstances, often defined by new stresses and grief, that so many were and continue to be in. The Covid-19 pandemic has magnified deep-seated inequalities, while also presenting opportunities to advance the systems change agenda.

ActionAid Governance Review

An external review of ActionAid's governance, commissioned in 2020, completed its second phase in 2021. The ensuing report outlines the overarching themes and findings that have emerged during the review and presents a set of conclusions and associated recommendations.

ActionAid Ethiopia Governance

There are currently several Country Programmes that because of legal or political reasons in their countries are unable to start the journey towards membership. This means that they have no prospects of participating in Governance spaces. Their access to these spaces is limited to representation through the Global Secretariat and Board. ActionAid Ethiopia has been registered as an international organisation in Ethiopia since

1989. ActionAid Ethiopia intends to become an Ethiopian National Organisation in the medium term, exploring the avenues that exist. The legal provision is not clear for an international organisation to change its entity with a dual citizenship role of the Federation, despite the revised CSOs legislation. In the meantime, it has started the process of establishing an Advisory Council until the board with the executive powers is set. This is in line with the International Board approved workable structure as Advisors or Councils that will represent the Country Programme as observer in the Assembly.

Approval of the Global Secretariat Structure:

Following approval of the Motion on the GS Mandate and function by the Assembly on 29th November 2021, the International Board reviewed and approved the Final Global Secretariat structure. The Board is confident that despite the significant changes in the Head Count, the new GS will focus on essential value-adding support services to the federation as countries and members progressively take full charge of the affairs at country level in mutually accountable ways. The International Leadership and other GS Management Teams are now completing all transition implications and will be sharing updates with the federation as the process evolves and concludes.

Outcome of Elections at Assembly

Jummai Umar – Ajjola, from Nigeria, was elected 2022 Assembly Convener. Dolphine Opembe, from Kenya, was elected unopposed to the Assembly Organising Committee (AOC). The Assembly adopted that one member of the Board of the 2022 AGM host country will also be appointed to the AOC.

Newly elected ActionAid Board members

	Candidate name	Country
1	Steen Folke	Denmark
2	Hellen Akwii-Wangusa	Uganda
3	Poonam Muttreja	India
4	Gino Govender	South Africa

Change of Board Chair



Nyaradzayi Gumbonzvanda

We bid farewell and thanks to Nyaradzayi

Gumbonzvanda, who served two terms as Board Chair from 2015 to 2021 to fight against poverty and injustice. And we welcome the election of Hellen Grace Akwii-Wangusa as the new Board Chair. Hellen Grace,

whose incredible leadership and management skills were built upwards from grassroots activism says, "I am keenly aware of geo-political dynamics that drive polarisation and exploitation. As the coordinator of the African Women's Economic Policy Network, I actively engaged in addressing injustice and inequity by developing value-based and people centred alternatives for development. I served in complex international contexts and served as the Civil Society representative at the World Bank/IMF meetings, The World Social Forum, World Economic Forum, The Commonwealth Foundation, The Anglican Observer at the United Nations and the Africa Union Technical Task Force. That exposure has equipped me sufficiently to provide strategic leadership, to steer and frame executive decisions in ActionAid."

ActionAid acknowledges and thanks two those Board Members who rotated off the Board in 2021 – Chennaiah Poguri from India and David Kios from

Kenya. They have been wonderful colleagues on the Board and will surely remain true ambassadors of this great social justice organisation.

Key documents approved at 2021 AGM:

- ActionAid's Data Protection Policies
- The revised Global Secretariat mandate and re-Imagined GS proposal
- The Country Model Review Progress Report, including a re-affirmation of the commitment for National Boards to advance the transformation at country level
- The Principles, Criteria and Process for ActionAid's Geographic Footprint review exercise

In addition, the Governance Review Report and International Board recommendations were noted.



New ActionAid Board Chair Hellen Grace Akwii-Wangusa.

Endnotes

1. See: WHO weekly report <https://www.who.int/publications/m/item/weekly-epidemiological-update-on-covid-19---28-december-2021> minus <https://www.who.int/publications/m/item/weekly-epidemiological-update---22-december-2020>
2. See: Pandemics and Crisis: Gender Equality, Peace and Security in a Covid-19 World and Beyond.
3. See: <https://www.cadtm.org/Global-Austerity-Alert-Looming-Budget-Cuts-in-2021-25-and-Alternatives>
4. See: <https://climateactiontracker.org/global/cat-thermometer/>
5. See: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/science-environment-59761839>
6. See here for more details: https://www.actionaid.org.uk/our-work/emergencies-disasters-humanitarian-response/climate-change-and-gender#footnote6_zlkkjxj
7. See: <https://actionaid.org/publications/2021/invisible-women-gender-analysis-climate-induced-migration-south-asia>
8. See: <https://gho.unocha.org/>
9. See: <https://actionaid.org/publications/2022/impact-covid-19-measures-civil-and-political-rights-nine-countries>
10. See: <https://findings2021.monitor.civicus.org/in-numbers.html>
11. See: <https://www.actionaid.org.uk/publications/building-power-together-girl-led-research-project>
12. See: <https://actionaid.org/publications/2020/covid-19-women-led-response>
13. For more see: https://actionaid.org/sites/default/files/publications/Unseen%2C%20unheard_full%20report.pdf
14. See: https://www.frontlinedefenders.org/sites/default/files/2021_global_analysis_-_final.pdf
15. See: <https://www.transparency.org/en/news/cpi-2021-highlights-insights>
16. See: <https://findings2021.monitor.civicus.org/uneven-crisis.html>
17. See for example: <https://actionaid.org/opinions/2021/funding-global-education-must-move-away-neo-colonial-aid>
18. See: <https://www.unwomen.org/en/news/in-focus/in-focus-gender-equality-in-covid-19-response/violence-against-women-during-covid-19>
19. See: <https://www.weforum.org/reports/global-gender-gap-report-2021/>
20. See: <https://www.itu.int/en/mediacentre/backgrounders/Pages/bridging-the-gender-divide.aspx>
21. See: <https://actionaid.org/publications/2020/feminist-research-guidelines>
22. In November 2021, there were 156 staff in the Global Secretariat. In 2022 the vision is for 127 staff.
23. The GS total was taken in November 2021.
24. These are minimum figures with exclusions from countries where the data was gathered in a different way (Australia, Denmark, GS, Haiti, Malawi, South Africa, Spain, and Thailand).
25. Ibid, not all campaign figures were disaggregated at country level.
26. Ibid, not all humanitarian figures were disaggregated at country level.
27. See: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6Mxlo6dgXFc>
28. Social Protection to avoid climate-induced loss & damage; Roadmap to a framework for the protection of climate migrants and a gender analysis of climate induced migration in South Asia: Invisible women. <https://actionaid.org/publications/2021/avoiding-climate-poverty-spiral-social-protection-avoid-climate-induced-loss> <https://actionaid.org/publications/2021/roadmap-framework-protection-climate-migrants> <https://actionaid.org/publications/2021/invisible-women-gender-analysis-climate-induced-migration-south-asia>
29. For information on the PSA project, see: <https://psa.copsam.com/>
30. Other important resources focusing on global governance include Democratizing global governance and multilateralism and Reclaiming and Transforming Multilateralism: Towards a People's Multilateralism.
31. Gule wa Mkulu is a secret cult, long practiced by the Chewa people of Malawi, Mozambique and Zambia and included on UNESCO's 'intangible cultural heritage' list: <https://ich.unesco.org/en/RL/gule-wamkulu-00142>
32. Make it Count for Girls: Why Malawi should re-invest amounts lost to tax incentives in girls' education. A policy brief. https://actionaid.org/sites/default/files/publications/malawi_policy_brief-4.pdf
33. See: <https://www.unicef.org/esa/media/9001/file/UNICEF-Malawi-2020-2021-Education-Budget-Brief.pdf>
34. See: <https://www.actionaid.ch/en/informati/notizie/a-forgotten-right/>
35. We also responded to 14 other emergencies: Kenya – Drought ; Zimbabwe – Cyclone Chalane ; Liberia – Ebola outbreak; Indonesia – Cyclone Seroja; Sierra Leone – Fire/Explosion; Greater Horn of Africa Food Insecurity – Ethiopia, Somaliland and Uganda; Malawi – SA Food Crisis; Malawi – Hailstorms; Mozambique – Cabo Delgado conflict; Mozambique – Cyclones Eloise & Chalane; Nigeria – Kebbi floods; Rwanda and DRC – Displacement due to Nyiragongo Eruption; Tanzania – Floods; Zimbabwe – Cyclone Chalane.
36. See: Pandemics and Crisis: Gender Equality, Peace and Security in a Covid-19 World and Beyond.
37. See: <https://actionaid.org/publications/2022/safety-dignity>
38. ActionAid India alone reached 8.5 million people across 25 states through direct response and campaigns related to their Covid response [2021 Annual Report IHART].
39. See: <https://www.ipcinfo.org/ipc-country-analysis/details-map/en/c/1152816/?iso3=HTI>
40. See: <https://reliefweb.int/report/haiti/dtm-haiti-earthquake-14-august-2021-sitrep-4>
41. Figures in this report are in Euros, the reporting currency for the ActionAid finance team. The fundraising team report is presented in GBP. This means that, as a result of exchange rate shifts there are some comparative performance variations between the two years in separate fundraising and finance reports. For example, when figures are presented in Euros, Individual Giving income shows a small, but positive increase in 2021, whereas in GBP, this displays a small negative decline. Similar percentage shifts occur for the other fundraising streams. For example, the fundraising team include Institutional income of around £2.7m raised in 2020 as deferred income, whereas Finance excluded it from their reporting. This results in a further variance in the comparative performance between 2020 and 2021 in separate fundraising and finance reports.

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