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ActionAid Ireland Strategy 2022 to 2027

A just and caring world for women and children

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Women gather at the Rebuild Women's Hope, non-profit coffee collective

Cover:

This image is taken from the Women by Women exhibition, used with permission from ActionAid UK, as part of our commitment to anti-racist storytelling.

For more on this, please see "Strategic enablers" on page 28.

(Credit: Pamela Tulizo/ActionAid)

Overview

This is ActionAid Ireland's strategy for 2022 to 2027. It builds on four decades of impact since the organisation was first established in Ireland in 1983, in addition to the collective work and impact of the global ActionAid federation.

We work with communities, people's organisations, women's groups and networks, social movements and other allies to overcome the structural causes and consequences of poverty and injustice. We connect the work we do at a community level with broader efforts and struggles for justice nationally and internationally to make the greatest contribution towards an equitable and sustainable world.

This strategy came about due to the following process with our partner Caplor Horizons:

Reflection and review of ActionAid Ireland's impact over the last five years

An inclusive consultation in partnership with the six ActionAid offices at the heart of our work in the Global South

Engagement with the wider ActionAid International federation

15 External stakeholder consultations were held with feminist thinkers and practitioners (the majority in the Global South)

12 external stakeholder consultations in Ireland

Strategy workshops on:

- ways to deliver transformative change in women's lives
- feminist leadership
- decolonisation and anti-racism
- effective fundraising approaches

Our Strategy

Vision

A just and caring world where women's and children's human rights are respected

Mission

To support the leadership and agency of women and children who are excluded and live in poverty

Strategic Priorities

- Address the systemic and structural causes of gender-based violence
- Promote women's leadership in humanitarian contexts
- Amplify feminist alternatives for economic and climate justice
- Pursue diverse sources of funding, inspire and engage all supporters

Strategic Enablers

- Uphold excellent standards of accountability and governance
- Commit to anti-racism, shifting power and decolonisation
- Ensure high quality programming, embed learning and evaluation
- Focus on safeguarding

Feminist leadership principles



Our Values

Mutual Respect

Requiring us to recognise the innate worth of all people and the value of diversity

Justice and equity

Requiring us to ensure the realisation of our vision for everyone, irrespective of gender, sexual orientation and gender identity, race, ethnicity, caste, class, age, HIV status, disability, location and religion

Integrity and accountability

Integrity and accountability: requiring us to be honest, transparent and accountable at all levels for the effectiveness of our actions and our use of resources and open in our judgements and communications with others

Solidarity with people living in poverty and exclusion

Will be the only bias in our commitment to the fight against poverty, injustice, and gender inequality

Courage of conviction

Requiring us to be creative and radical, bold and innovative - without fear of failure - in pursuit of making the greatest possible impact on the causes of poverty, injustice, and gender inequality

Independence from any religious or party-political affiliation

From any religious or party-political affiliation

Humility

Recognising that we are part of a wider alliance against poverty and injustice

Feminist leadership principles

- Self-awareness
- Self-care & caring for others
- Dismantling bias
- Inclusion
- Sharing power
- Responsible & transparent use of power
- Accountable collaboration
- Respectful feedback
- Courage
- Zero tolerance

Strategic direction

What we heard

In developing this strategy we asked 15 people working locally, nationally and globally on women's rights in Kenya, Ethiopia, Zimbabwe, Nepal, Malawi, Ireland (including women within the Direct Provision system in Ireland), and in Europe what they thought needs to happen to to deliver transformative change in women's lives.

This is a snapshot of what they said:

We need to have policies that promote equity. Our government needs to do its work better and this can only be possible if a country has strong laws and policies that are implemented and whose leaders are held accountable. I believe if it's not written it cannot be done.

Every household should be enjoying all meals despite the season or event.

All school-going children need to be in school despite their gender and transit to next level of learning.

Gender-based violence is non-existent and not tolerated or normalised.

A society that has realised all their basic needs and have surplus to celebrate social events like birthdays like other families in towns.

Giving women a sense of their own self-worth, we can't assume that women are coming with this, literally from the day you are born you are not celebrated as a female. Feminist transformative change is about challenging this negative power and having a clear and sharp understanding of these three elements of power: formal, visible, and invisible.

A world in which we are safe and can participate in and envisage our own and collective future. I don't think we as women see our collective future, we're not safe and can't fully participate yet. It's about change at all levels, macro and global and every level in-between.

We should believe in the agency of women. Not to remove agency from people in the Global South but to recognise people as active agents. People who work in the northern sector need to listen to the voices of those they are working "for". They should be leading!

Interviews conducted between October 2021 and November 2021.

Our strategic direction

The next five years will build on the foundations of ActionAid Ireland’s work to date, guided by the following commitments:



¹ This varies according to context but is understood to mean those women and children who face high degrees of poverty, exclusion, and marginalisation. This can be compounded by different identities such as class, age, faith, ethnic status, minority group, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity and social status.

SNAPSHOT OF OUR WORK



Unpaid care work as a human rights issue in Vietnam

Duong Van Pa, 34, and his wife, Vuong Thi Sung, 29, have three young children and are from the H'Mong ethnic minority group. Pa said: *"According to our H'mong tradition, women had to take good care of the housework so their husbands could go out to make a living for the family. I knew these traditions were outdated, but back then, I still thought that cooking, cleaning the house or taking care of the children were women's sole responsibilities. My wife Sung often complained about the heavy workload at home. She had to wake up at 4 am to feed the pigs and chickens, then cook breakfast. She cleaned the house, tended the vegetables and herbs in our small garden, cut some hay, washed dirty clothes, prepared meals and when the children were home, she bathed them and fed the smallest one while we all had dinner. I sometimes helped her with teaching the children, but that was it. She was extremely sad and exhausted, but I didn't realise the reason behind her distress and thought she pretended to get my attention."*

Pa is one of 5,670 people taking part in the Unpaid Care Work Programme implemented by ActionAid Vietnam, with support from ActionAid Ireland. The programme includes conducting time-diary surveys, community behaviour-change initiatives, policy analysis and advocacy. Our programme empowers communities to take action to change the situation for the better.

Pa continued: *"My wife and I and other people in my village were invited to join the Unpaid Care Work survey and then series of trainings and workshops organized by ActionAid. I thought it would be ridiculous, but the activities turned out to be quite amazing indeed. For the first time, I recognised the burden put on my wife's shoulders. She was suppressed of her right to participate in social and political activities because all her time was used for unpaid care work. She was silenced and had to endure mental and physical pressure to keep the family happy. Meanwhile, I was comfortably minding my*



Pa with his wife Sung

own business and never lent her a helping hand. Now I help my wife cook and wash the dishes, teach the children and join her in tending the garden. Hay cutting and livestock feeding are divided between us, and I always take the heavier work load."

Through training sessions, workshops, a communication campaign with the participation of over 8,000 people, and a series of reports/policy briefs, ActionAid Vietnam have increased awareness of the issue. They have made recommendations for alternative policy approaches to the Government of Vietnam to reduce and redistribute unpaid care work. As a result, the Vietnamese ministry responsible for gender equality has decided to include unpaid care work as one of the indicators to assess how much progress Vietnam has achieved in terms of equality.

The world we live in

The Covid-19 pandemic shook the world, changed our lives and led governments to take unprecedented actions. Global inequality was exacerbated, concentrating wealth into even fewer hands: today, the richest 1% of the global population owns 46% of the world's wealth.² Unjust trade rules – built on unequal colonial power relations that continue today – created a “vaccine apartheid” between the richest and poorest countries. In 2020, the global extreme poverty rate rose for the first time in over 20 years, pushing hundreds of millions of people deeper into poverty and chronic hunger.³

In 2021, 235 million people needed humanitarian assistance and protection – one in every 33 people worldwide. This figure has already increased significantly to 274 million people in 2022⁴, with an additional 12 million people in need in Ukraine, making one in 27 people worldwide. The Russian invasion of Ukraine is also having major implications for food security across the world.

The crisis of the pandemic intersects with multiple crises facing the world: economic inequality, climate crisis, patriarchy, racism and injustice, humanitarian crisis, violent conflict and displacement. These crises both exploit and exacerbate women's relative position of economic, social and political exclusion, with the poorest and most marginalised hit hardest.⁵

Decades of progress on women's rights were reversed, especially for women facing multiple forms of discrimination based on class, race, age, sexual orientation and gender identity, religion, ethnicity or citizenship status. Young women experienced more job losses than men and are at risk of long-term exclusion from labour markets.⁶



² Global Inequality - Inequality.org

³ The-Sustainable-Development-Goals-Report-2021.pdf (un.org)

⁴ Global Humanitarian Overview 2022 | Global Humanitarian Overview (unocha.org)

⁵ For example, see: Jain, D. Elson, D. Et al. (2011). Harvesting Feminist Knowledge for Public Policy. International Development Research Centre, ISBN: 978-81-321-0741-5 (HB). Available at: <https://idl-bnc-idrc.dspacedirect.org/bitstream/handle/10625/47212/IDL-47212.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>

⁶ <https://www.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/Headquarters/Attachments/Sections/Library/Publications/2021/Progress-on-the-Sustainable-Development-Goals-The-gender-snapshot-2021-en.pdf>

An economic system failing people and planet

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) promised renewed global efforts to combat poverty, which resulted in some progress. However, development efforts are hampered by an economic system that does not have human rights at its core, and is failing both people and planet. For the last 40 years, neoliberal policy has undermined the role of the state in providing public services and protecting human rights.⁷ Austerity measures⁸ pushed on countries by the International Monetary Fund (IMF), promote cuts to public services, like schools and hospitals, and to social protection.⁹ This leaves women to shoulder the burden through their unpaid care and domestic work.¹⁰

Mainstream economic thinking today looks narrowly at capital and markets, focusing on paid work, and ignoring environmental limits and the intrinsic value of care. This makes many women and their contribution largely invisible in the economy, ignoring much of the foundation of human survival, such as the care of our children.¹¹ The International Labour Organisation has valued women's unpaid care and domestic work as approximately US\$11 trillion per year or 9 per cent of total global gross domestic product (GDP)¹² - likely an underestimation.¹³ Feminist economists have long argued that care, rather than capital, should be at the centre of our concerns.¹⁴

There are clear obligations on all governments, agreed in international law, to respect, protect and fulfil human rights. The provision of quality public services is key to delivering on these obligations. This enables women to access paid work (including in public services) and to participate fully in their communities and society. Lack of early childcare and universal free public education means women spend hours caring for children. Inadequate access to health services means women are expected to care for the sick, elderly and incapacitated at home. The absence of clean water near to home means many women spend hours collecting water.

Violence against women and girls

Violence against women and girls is a fundamental human rights violation, affecting around one in three women and girls - the vast majority at the hands of an intimate partner.¹⁵ Covid-19 intensified all types of violence against women and girls, particularly domestic violence.¹⁶ Conflict and humanitarian crisis also fuel higher levels of gender-based violence (GBV).¹⁷

Women endure violence and discrimination in every society around the world simply because they are female. Social norms and racial, ethnic, caste and class discrimination often combine to make some women even more vulnerable to violence and maintain unjust patriarchal structures. Violence against women and girls is a symptom of structural inequalities that they face in their social, economic and political lives - it cannot be viewed in isolation. It is rooted in the unequal treatment of and discrimination against women and girls globally, and the denial of their human rights.

7 (Alfers 2016; The Care Collective et al. 2020).

8 Wage bill cuts and caps, social security and pension reductions, privatisation, labour deregulation, cuts to subsidies, regressive taxations.

9 The Public Versus Austerity: Why public sector wage bill constraints must end | ActionAid International

10 (Folbre 2018:30).

11 Who Cares - Summary Report - final revised.pdf (actionaid.org)

12 (Addati et al. 2018).

13 Care Framework

14 Bayas, B. Care Debt - Patriarchy and Capital on the Offensive - Feminist Economics as a Solution. 2017.

15 World Health Organisation (2016) Violence against women-Intimate partner and sexual violence against women, <http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs239/en/>.

16 The Shadow Pandemic: Violence against women during COVID-19 | UN Women

17 <https://odi.org/en/publications/disasters-and-violence-against-women-and-girls-can-disasters-shake-social-norms-and-power-relations/>

Climate, political and humanitarian crisis

The climate crisis facing the world is bound up in the failures of our economic system. The poorest communities that have done the least to cause climate change are experiencing its impacts first and worst. The impact on women is considerable, and women smallholder farmers face particular challenges and burdens.

Around the world, communities are dealing with the reality of the climate emergency. Erratic rainfall patterns, droughts, earthquakes, floods, landslides, cyclones, rising sea levels and wildfires are wreaking havoc and destroying lives, livelihoods and ecosystems. Disasters are hitting vulnerable communities harder and more often, causing crop losses, displacement and forced migration.

The combination of natural disasters, political and social violence and climate change impacts are reversing development gains like never before and increasing inequality. Between 2000 to 2019, disasters claimed approximately 1.23 million lives, affected more than 4.4 billion people, and resulted in economic losses and damages of approximately US\$ 2.97 trillion.¹⁸ Conflict drives 80% of all humanitarian need.¹⁹

Calls for fundamental shifts of power

The vast wealth of the rich countries in Europe and America was built on the exploited labour of enslaved Black people over a period of 300 years.²⁰ The climate crisis is a result of nearly two century's worth of pollution produced by wealthy countries, fuelled by colonisation and an economic system that extracts and exploits. These exploitative structures continue through global governance spaces (such as IMF and World Bank policies) and the global financial system including tax avoidance structures.

Following the Black Lives Matter protests that evolved into a global movement, particularly in the summer of 2020, those working in the aid sector have been forced to confront the reality that our own work is steeped in structural racism, something which

has been barely discussed or acknowledged until very recently. **Decolonising aid - the movement to address and dismantle racist and discriminatory structures within the aid system - is emerging as an urgent, vital and long overdue discussion which adds greater weight to existing calls to transform the system.**²¹ Decolonisation, more broadly, is a movement that connects changes needed within the aid sector with overhauling the economic systems that were built on colonialism.

Women are driving change

The pandemic highlighted the critical role of women, their organisations and networks at the forefront of the Covid-19 response.²² Despite the growth of the far-right, right wing governments, the closing of the space for civil society to operate and a backlash against the women's movement²³ - **women's organisations remain active, focused and are pushing for change.** Women, young people and their organisations have been inspired by recent global movements around democracy, (the Arab Spring), anti-austerity (anti-austerity alliances), eradication of gender-based violence and especially sexual violence (#MeToo), climate crisis (Fridays For Future), antiracism (#BlackLivesMatter), and are leading various struggles. The movements are at local and national levels and advocate for social, gender, economic and climate justice as well as taking action towards a feminist humanitarian system and human-rights based agenda.

¹⁸ (UNDRR, 2020).

¹⁹ Fragility, Conflict and Violence Overview (worldbank.org)

²⁰ Care Collective

²¹ PD-Decolonising-Aid-Report.pdf (peacedirect.org)

²² Feminist Humanitarian Network, 2021

²³ <https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/5050/tracking-the-backlash/>

Ireland

Ireland has a consistently strong record in development and human rights. The development policy *A Better World* sets out a commitment to reach the furthest behind first, aid is untied and is viewed as highly effective.²⁴ **As a donor Ireland is unique in its partnership approach, commitment to civil society and long-term engagement. Ireland has played a leading role internationally in the SDGs, civil society support and women, peace and security.** More broadly, Irish foreign policy is deeply committed to multilateralism and arguably punches well above its weight for a country its size. As a United Nations' Security Council member, Ireland has taken brave and principled positions on political and humanitarian crises.²⁵

This strong track record in aid comes with inconsistencies in broader government policy. The official development assistance (ODA) budget for 2021 was €868 million, an estimated 0.32% GNI – significantly below what is required by international commitments and those set out in the current programme for government of 0.7% by 2030.²⁶ Despite increasing the ODA budget by €140m for 2022, the climb to 0.7% by 2030 becoming steeper year on year. In addition, domestic tax policies in Ireland have long been criticised both nationally and internationally for facilitating tax avoidance in the poorest countries.²⁷

While Ireland has undoubtedly championed human rights, it has blocked issues with significant transformative potential at EU level, such as the proposed waiver for World Trade Organisation intellectual property rights that would enable poorer countries to speed up vaccine access.²⁸ And to capitalise on important recent progress on climate change, Ireland will now need to take action if it is to make these commitments a reality.²⁹

Despite our own experience of austerity and an IMF bailout, Ireland did not emerge from this period as an actor leading significant change in a broken economic system, either nationally or internationally. Rather domestic human rights issues such as the right to health and housing have deteriorated significantly.³⁰

Ireland has a troubled history in realising the human rights of women. Historically and recently, women faced severe restrictions on the right to employment, bodily integrity, autonomy and choice. While huge progress has been made, largely due to a strong women's movement, inequalities and discriminations persist, most particularly in the form of gender-based violence and economic inequality.³¹

Direct provision, where asylum seekers are held in detention, sometimes for over five years, has been described as a human rights scandal.³² Government moves to end this have been hugely welcomed, but concerns remain about the slow pace of implementation for the 7,000 people who remain trapped in this system.³³ Women in direct provision are among the most marginalised.³⁴

In 2019 Ireland was ranked as one of the worst places in the EU for workplace racism.³⁵ Young people, particularly from minority ethnic backgrounds, identified racism and exclusion as a “normal” feature of their lives.³⁶

Commentators have noted how the restrictive effects of the Covid-19 pandemic resulted in media discourse in Ireland turning inward and failing to recognise the impact on poorer countries. Despite this, we have noticed increased solidarity from the Irish public. This manifested in donations but also in solidarity actions against conflict in Palestine, addressing period poverty and FGM.

24 Ireland-2020-Main-Findings-and-Recommendations (oecd.org)

25 E.G: Ireland, US and Norway press for stay on Syria aid (rte.ie)

26 Aidwatch 2021 A Geopolitical Commission: Building Partnerships or Playing Politics, CONCORD: AidWatch-2021 (1).pdf

27 Irish tax policies are 'antisocial' to developing countries, says UN expert | Ireland | The Guardian

28 Irish Senate supports WTO TRIPS waiver, referencing the work of Dr Luke McDonagh (lse.ac.uk)

29 Climate Bill's passage last night is a product of a decade's campaigning by civil society and climate activists | Stop Climate Chaos

30 UN backs calls to make housing a constitutional right in Ireland (irishtimes.com)

31 The National Women's Council of Ireland (nwcs.ie)

32 Direct Provision: 20 years too long - Amnesty International Ireland

33 STAD - Coalition to End Direct Provision

34 Ireland-and-the-Convention-on-the-Elimination-of-All-Forms-of-Discrimination-Against-Women.pdf (ihrec.ie)

35 Ireland ranks among worst in EU-wide racism study (irishtimes.com)

36 Say No to Racism | Social Justice Ireland

Our Story

Women and children living in poverty and exclusion are central to ActionAid's work.

Our choices and actions are informed by an analysis of power and inequality; it recognises there are many inequalities at play (which include gender, and also poverty, disability, race, sexual orientation, gender identity among others).

This feminist lens drives us to better understand power and its many manifestations, enabling us to work towards more equitable redistribution of power and resources, as well as enhancing women's ability to claim and enjoy their human rights.

ActionAid was originally founded as a charity in 1972 in the UK. In 1983, a small independent group of people in Ireland who had been supporting ActionAid in the UK realised an opportunity to establish an independent Irish organisation: ActionAid Ireland.

Throughout its history ActionAid has innovated and evolved its approach to better address the structural causes of poverty and injustice. By the late 1990s ActionAid had adopted the Human Rights Based Approach (see box) as a guide to development. Rights remain central to ActionAid's approach to poverty eradication, humanitarian preparedness and response and social justice.

ActionAid brings together individuals and communities (rights holders) and duty bearers (for example local and national governments) alike, to facilitate analysis of problems, dialogue, awareness raising and lesson-sharing. Participation and empowerment lie at the heart of ActionAid's approach, and are critical to ensuring the long term sustainability of our work and its outcomes.

ActionAid Ireland was one of seven founding members of the ActionAid International Federation in 2003. The decision to internationalise was taken to enable the organisation to operate more effectively at a global level. As a direct consequence, **ActionAid was the first international NGO to shift its global headquarters to a country in the Global South and to be governed by its members.** Today the federation comprises 45 member countries across Africa, Asia, Europe and the Americas and is headquartered in Johannesburg, South Africa

31 The National Women's Council of Ireland (nwci.ie)

32 Direct Provision: 20 years too long - Amnesty International Ireland

33 STAD - Coalition to End Direct Provision

34 Ireland-and-the-Convention-on-the-Elimination-of-All-Forms-of-Discrimination-Against-Women.pdf (ihrec.ie)

35 Ireland ranks among worst in EU-wide racism study (irisheaminer.com)

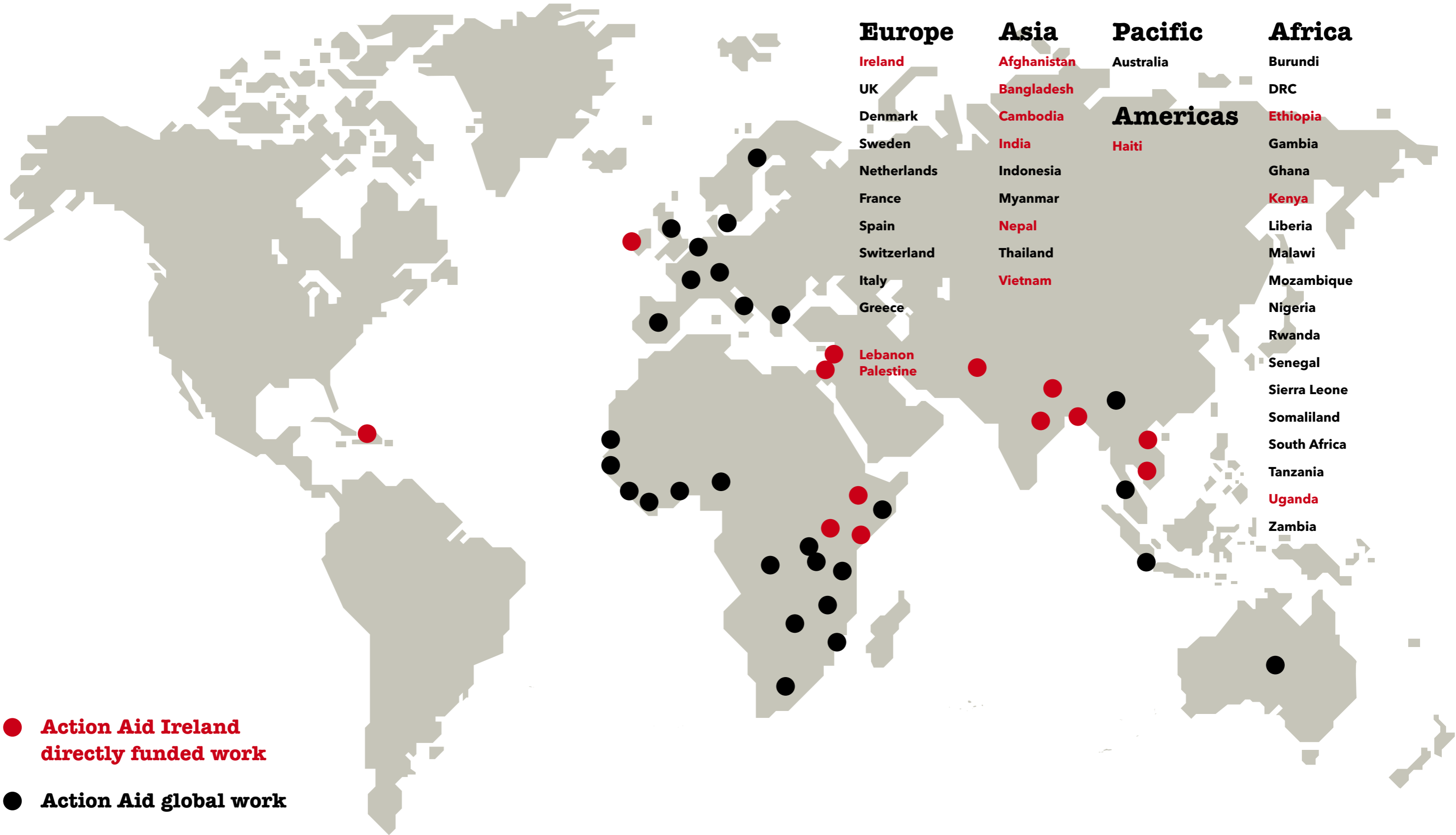
36 Say No to Racism | Social Justice Ireland

Our Human Rights Based Approach is built on international human rights law which recognises the role of the state in delivering human rights (dignity, housing, health, an adequate standard of living etc.) We also go beyond a legal or technical approach to rights.

We analyse and confront power imbalances and we take sides with people living in poverty, who are placed the centre of our human rights based approach. We support people living in poverty to understand that many of their most fundamental needs are actually enshrined in specific human rights frameworks.

Taken from: <https://actionaid.org/publications/2020/action-global-justice-practice>

Who we work with and where



Our supporters and funding partners

- In 2021, **thanks to the support of almost 5,000 committed givers from Ireland** – some of whom have given donations for decades – we supported over 4,000 children, their families and communities in Cambodia, Vietnam, Nepal, Uganda and Kenya. This support allows us to help empower communities with human rights approaches and deliver long-term change.
- We also **responded to humanitarian crises in India, Afghanistan, Occupied Palestinian Territories and Haiti** through the generosity of individual donors and Electric Aid.
- **Since 2016 we have supported hundreds of women in Ireland living in direct provision in Ireland's asylum system to challenge FGM.** This work was funded by ReThink Ireland, the St. Stephen's Green Trust and the European Union.
- **Irish Aid funds our work in Kenya, Nepal and Ethiopia** empowering 2,500 women, focusing on gender-based violence and economic empowerment.

RETHINK IRELAND

sstgt | **st.stephen's
green trust**



Irish Aid
Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland



SNAPSHOT OF OUR WORK



Changing lives

Since 2016 ActionAid has been working to prevent FGM in Ireland through empowerment and awareness-raising activities, using an ActionAid methodology that has been successful in our programmes in Africa. Supported by ReThink Ireland, in 2021 we will work with 32 women and 32 men across four direct provision centres in Ireland.

In 2020, a new project was made possible with support from the St Stephen's Green Trust. 'Amplify Our Voices' will support people with first-hand experience of the direct provision system to lead discussions around putting the recommendations in the white paper on ending direct Provision (March 2021) into practice in 2021/2022.

Changing systems

In 2013, ActionAid's Sweet Nothings report exposed that Zambia Sugar, part of the multinational corporation Associated British Foods, was using a tax treaty between Ireland and Zambia to avoid paying tax.

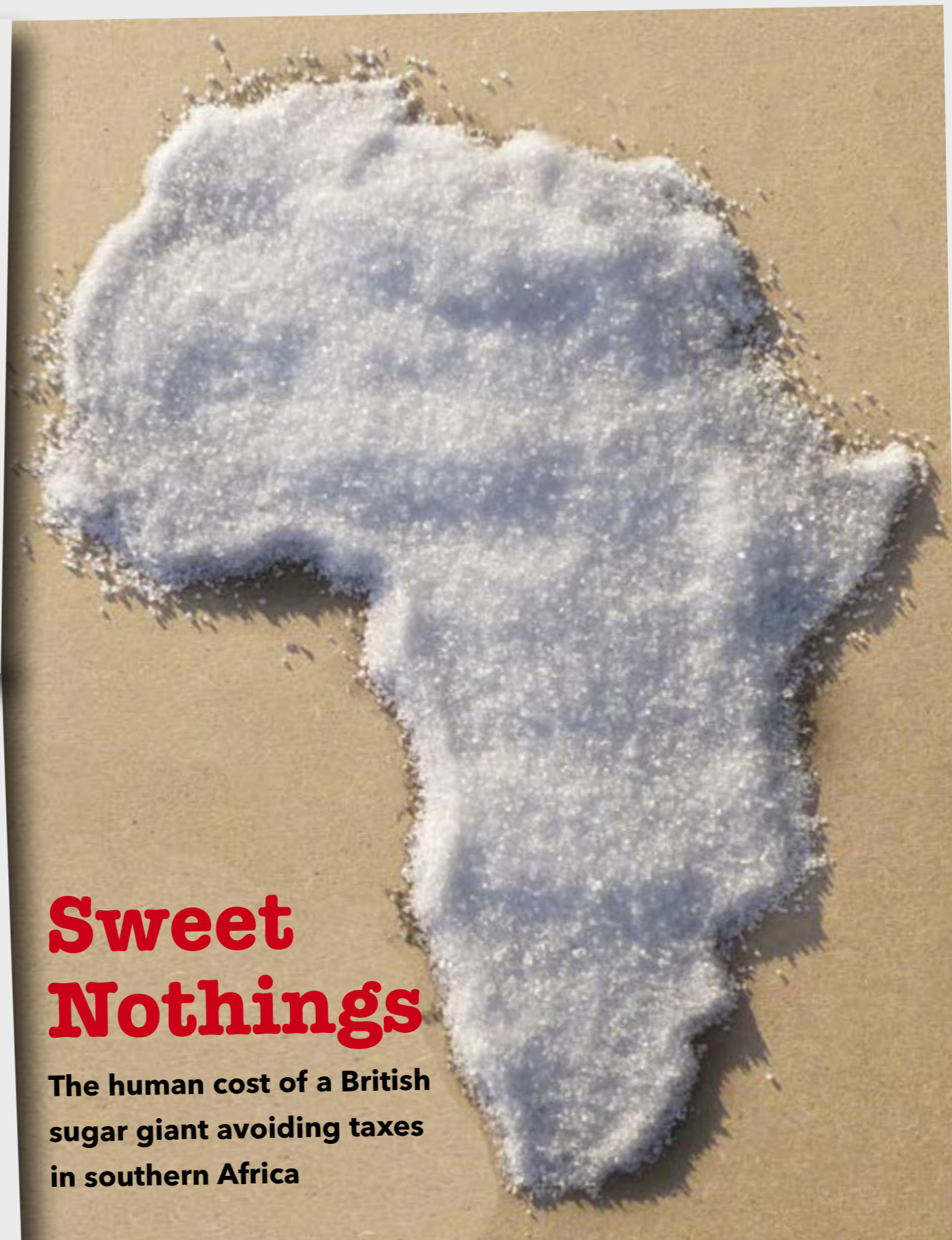
The report estimated that Zambia lost tax revenues of some US\$17.7 million (ZK78 billion) between 2007 and 2013, and that the money lost in a single year could likely cover the cost to end child malnourishment in Zambia.

<https://actionaid.ie/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/Sweet-Nothings.pdf>

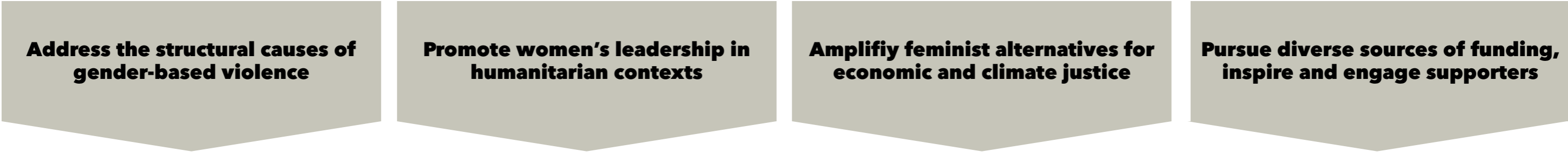
Since the report was published, the treaty was updated to avoid it being used in such a way again.

Sweet Nothings

The human cost of a British sugar giant avoiding taxes in southern Africa



Our Theory of Change



A just and caring world where women and children's human rights are respected

Our contribution to change

We will seek transformative changes in the lives of women. Our mission is to support their leadership and agency, their organisations and networks – and to improve their lives for the long-term.

As well as this work, which is deeply rooted in communities, we will work with women, civil society and in partnership with ActionAid offices in the Global South to deliver long-term, sustainable change by demanding state and international accountability both nationally and globally.

We will focus on rights, resilience and redistribution and integrate these in our programmatic work:



RIGHTS

The state, as an important guarantor of human rights, must be held accountable for its primary duty to protect rights and deliver justice. It is essential that people living in poverty and exclusion are supported to claim their rights and resist all forms of discrimination, particularly gender-based violence. Women's movements, civil society organisations and other self-mobilised groups should be resourced and strengthened to challenge negative social and cultural norms and practices which fuel discrimination and violation of rights. Violence against women and girls is a denial of their rights and is a barrier to their participation, agency and leadership.

RESILIENCE



As disasters, political tensions, conflicts and humanitarian emergencies all over the world increase, people living in poverty and exclusion must have the resilience to withstand, recover from and transform systems that increase their vulnerability. Power must also be shifted to first responders, especially women's and grassroots people's organisations at the frontline of emergency response, with increased accountability to these local communities. In both rural and urban locations, people who are most impacted by crisis must be supported to tackle these underlying drivers, including gender inequalities and gender-based violence.

REDISTRIBUTION



The world has sufficient resources to guarantee a life of dignity for everyone, but it will require systematic redistribution. The equitable sharing of power and resources is essential to achieving a just society. A progressive and gender-responsive tax system that ensures individuals and corporations pay their fair share of taxes is also important in advancing this agenda. States must recognise and reduce the burden of women's unpaid care work and redistribute financial resources to deliver quality gender-responsive public services for all, including healthcare and education.

SNAPSHOT OF OUR WORK



Empowering women leaders in Uganda

Florence was 18 when she joined the ActionAid-supported Tusitukirewamu Women's Network in Kampala, Uganda.

Tusitukirewamu means "Let's Rise Together". The network funds training for survivors of violence and teaches them how to run their own small businesses. Women learn skills like making reusable sanitary pads, schoolbooks for children, and liquid soap to sell.

When Florence first joined, there were only 10 women in the group. Today, she is the executive director of more than 470 members. She is determined that violence against women and girls must end.

"I am very proud of what I am doing, and I have passion for it, because when I see the women are smiling, I also smile," says Florence.



Florence in the neighbourhood surrounding Tusitukirewamu Women's network offices

Our Strategy

Vision

A just and caring world where women's and children's human rights are respected

Mission

To support the leadership and agency of women and children who are excluded and live in poverty

Strategic priorities: 1

Address the systemic and structural causes of gender-based violence

Violence against women is a fundamental human rights violation. Millions of women and girls **face many forms of violence throughout their lives**, including rape, female genital mutilation (FGM), sexual exploitation and child marriage. This violence is inextricably bound with patriarchal social norms, behaviours and economic inequality.

What we will do

Integrated programming on rights, resilience and redistribution:

- Work with the 'furthest behind' to realise their rights and to end gender-based violence.
- Seek systemic changes from the community level to the national and international level.
- Commit to survivor-centred approaches in our work.
- Use behaviour change methodologies as a tool of empowerment and a way to provide new solutions.
- Ensure state accountability (e.g. provision of adequate and appropriate services, gender-responsive public services, addressing unpaid care, gender-responsive tax system and budgeting) in order to realise women's human rights and address the structural causes of violence.
- Support women's leadership and agency in realising their human rights, particularly through supporting women's/ feminist organisations.

Collaboration, policy change and knowledge building:

- Support women asylum seekers, refugees and groups that face human rights violations in Ireland to challenge violence against women (FGM in particular).
- Play an active role in the Irish Consortium on Gender-Based Violence.
- Conduct feminist research and documentation, and share learning on findings, impact and approaches.
- Engage the Irish government and public on campaigning and solutions for change.

How we will measure success

- Number of women that report empowerment and positive changes in their lives.
- Evidence of reduction of violence and greater state accountability through better funded and more accountable public services to prevent and respond to gender-based violence.
- Number of times our research and story gathering work is accessed and shared.
- Number of women-led campaigning and policy changes.

SNAPSHOT OF OUR WORK



Ending violence against women

Our Irish Aid funded Women's Rights Programme (WRP) works with women in communities in Nepal, Kenya and Ethiopia to end gender-based violence and to support women's economic empowerment.

The WRP has built the capability of marginalised women to participate in decision making and to meaningfully engage with policy makers so that survivors of GBV can access justice. In Kenya, these discussions between local women, survivors of violence and government officials motivated decision-makers to bring 'mobile courts' to communities to cut down on travel costs for women who wanted to bring their cases to court.

ActionAid has also helped these women to organise themselves into a group and generate an income by making and selling soap. As access to justice for GBV survivors is expensive, this income created an opportunity to address these costs. The women's increased economic status also increased their confidence, and being part of a group meant they could stand together challenging GBV in their communities, rather than being vulnerable speaking out alone. As a result, increased confidence in the judicial system was reported as it operated more effectively under pressure from these women.



Promoting livelihoods for a group in Kenya that is inclusive of survivors of violence.

Strategic priorities: 2

Promote women's leadership in humanitarian contexts

Disasters, social and political violence and climate change are reversing development gains like never before, resulting in the deaths of millions of people each year. Disasters increase inequality, particularly for women, and affect ecosystems and the fabric of communities.

ActionAid promotes women-led, sustainable and transformative interventions, whilst focusing on addressing need and providing protection. Working closely with feminist movements and networks, ActionAid grounds its work in the lived experiences of women, girls and communities who bear the brunt of unequal power systems.

For ActionAid, localisation encompasses shifting the power from North to South, international to local and from a male-dominated system to one where women, their organisations and networks play a more central role. ActionAid is signatory to the Grand Bargain, Charter for Change, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (SFDRR) 2015-2030 and the Call to Action on Protection from Gender Based Violence in Emergencies. Other voluntary agreements include the IATI Standard, Sphere and the Inclusion Charter. ActionAid firmly believes that all stakeholders and actors must be accountable to crisis- and disaster-affected communities. ActionAid is proud member and co-founder of the Feminist Humanitarian Network (FHN) - an international collective of local and national women's rights and women-led organisations, academics, INGOs and individuals working in humanitarian contexts, committed to a transformed humanitarian system that promotes a feminist humanitarian agenda.

What we will do

Integrated programming that:

- Supports women-led humanitarian responses that address need and link with human rights to enhance the agency, leadership and decision making of women, their organisations and networks, in resource allocation and coordination at local, national and global levels.
- Shifts power, champion localisation and enhance our impact by supporting the Feminist Humanitarian Network and others.
- Enhances our own accountability internally and to the communities we work with through the Charter for Change, Core Humanitarian Standards.

Collaboration, policy change and knowledge building:

- Support local women's organisations and networks to meaningfully engage in policy dialogue on transformative and systems change within the humanitarian system.
- Demonstrate the link to climate justice and how poorer countries should not pay for chaos they did not create. As part of our work on climate justice we will advocate for increased finance for Loss and Damage associated with climate change.

How we will measure success

- Number of women-led responses that enhance women's leadership and agency and strengthens women's organisations and networks.
- Feminist research shows that at risk communities, women and young people are more resilient to, prepared for and able to respond to all crisis.
- Evidence of life-saving and long-term support provided to sudden, protracted and chronic crises.
- Evidence of advocacy and policy engagement on changing the humanitarian system.

SNAPSHOT OF OUR WORK



Training women leaders to respond to emergencies

Disasters, humanitarian crises and conflicts have a disproportionate effect on women and girls. Typically, more women than men are killed by rapid onset disasters like tsunamis and earthquakes. Violence against women and girls increases during all emergencies, especially in conflict. And women are often excluded from decision making and denied access to resources. That's why, when a crisis or disaster strikes, ActionAid focuses on women's leadership.

Tchessie is a women leader trained by ActionAid Haiti. ActionAid works with local women first responders and leaders to bring their voices to spaces of power and decision, from local coordination mechanisms to global humanitarian spaces. She said "The tools will be really useful as a guide to help us conduct work on community protection during an emergency. I learned a lot including what a safe space should look like and what kind of services it must provide to women."



Tchessie is one of the women leaders trained by ActionAid Haiti

Strategic priorities: 3

Amplify feminist alternatives for economic and climate justice

Women living in poverty and exclusion need more just economic policies and more equitable redistribution of resources to realise their rights. The failure of governments to fund adequate public services and recognise unpaid care perpetrates gender injustice.

To avert the climate crisis, the world needs urgent transformation away from its polluting energy, agriculture and economic systems. ActionAid fights for more equitable redistribution of the world's resources to achieve economic justice for women living in poverty and exclusion. This includes decent work and education, the recognition, revaluing and redistribution of unpaid work; women's increased access to and control over productive resources; and accessible gender-responsive public services funded through progressive and gender responsive taxation systems. ActionAid believes that climate transitions should be feminist, green and just.

What we will do

Programming, policy and advocacy work, rooted in the Global South:

- Support, develop and amplify feminist alternatives on economic and climate justice rooted in women's lives (particularly in our Local Rights Programming) and in care of people and planet, exploring how change happens and using feminist research methodologies.
- Seek state and international accountability on issues such as tax justice, redistribution, austerity, care, gender-responsive public services (including healthcare and education), access to rights and resources.
- Partner with allies in Ireland and globally to seek major changes in economic and climate systems and structures.
- Contribute to climate justice, i.e. advocate for redistributive climate finance to help countries recover from and deal with the consequences of climate-induced loss and damage and demand wealthy countries' "fair share" of climate finance based on equity, their historical responsibility for causing the climate crisis, and their capacity to pay.
- Seek connections between the North and South on feminist alternatives for economic and climate justice, connecting with shifting power and decolonisation.
- Supporting engagement and education that deepens understanding of sustainable development issues, the root causes of poverty and our global interconnectedness.

How we will measure success

- Policy makers and practitioners show increased awareness of the gendered impacts of economic policies, relating to both how revenue is raised and how it is spent, and increased support for feminist economic alternatives.
- Recognition, reduction and redistribution of the unpaid care and domestic work burden falling on women measured by reduction in women's hours spent on unpaid care and domestic work.
- Increases in the number of women able to access decent work in frontline public services and other roles (e.g. evidence by reduced gender pay gap).
- Increased access to quality and gender responsive public services by women, youth and excluded groups.

SNAPSHOT OF OUR WORK



Women on the frontlines of the climate crisis in Cambodia

For the past five years, ActionAid has been developing a pioneering Women's Champions programme in Cambodia, which supports women to become community leaders. The women receive training in advocacy, campaigning and organisational skills, which they use to build their community's resistance to climate change.

Hok, 35, pictured below with her daughter Sienglee, is a farmer and a Women's Champion living in Pursat province. Hok and her family have experienced a dramatic drop in their income due to prolonged droughts and subsequent flash flooding, which decimated her crops. Like most people in her village, Hok has taken out numerous loans to make ends meet.

As a Women's Champion, Hok has shared information in her community about how to save and store water. This year, she has raised money alongside other Women Champions to rehabilitate an irrigation canal. This has been crucial in helping her community to irrigate their fields and make ends meet.



Hok and Sienglee outside their home in Cambodia

Strategic priorities: 4

Pursue diverse sources of funding, inspire and engage all supporters

Our work is not possible without the generosity and long-term support of our supporters and funding partners and institutions.

Fundraising from Ireland supports women, their children and communities and the wider work across the ActionAid Federation – this is part of our added value as ActionAid Ireland. Our role is to share the experiences of poverty and injustice faced by women, children and their communities, but also to show their agency and power against the odds. The Irish public continues to be generous in its solidarity and support to address global poverty and demonstrate a shared humanity. Many of our supporters campaign and take action on Irish and global issues, in addition to giving money.

ActionAid Ireland will fundraise in a way that is effective, sustainable, engaging and transformative in its approach. Realising women's and children's rights is at the heart of our fundraising.

What we will do

In our fundraising we will:

- Mobilise diverse resources from supporters in Ireland, corporations, women business leaders, trusts, foundations and institutional donors for women and children's human rights. Our priorities will be to raise funds for programmatic work and ensure we are financially sustainable in Ireland to support this work in the long-term.
- Respond to humanitarian crisis and work with partners in Ireland such as the Irish Emergency Alliance to enhance our impact.
- Value and nurture a mutual engagement and partnership with our fundraising individual giving supporter base.
- Commit to anti-racist storytelling in our fundraising and examine our practice in the context of decolonisation. This will require a very intentional focus on anti-racism, training and a dedicated shift in mindset to hold ourselves to account for not, even inadvertently, feeding stereotypes or potential racist mindsets.

How we will measure success

- Increase of diverse range of funding resources.
- Evidence that AA Ireland is financially sustainable.
- Focus group evidence that supporters are valued and engaged in an ongoing way.
- Positive feedback that our fundraising does not stereotype people.

Strategic enablers

Deliver excellent standards of accountability and governance

- Continue to build on strong foundations of accountability and governance with our staff and board. ActionAid Ireland has achieved the “triple-lock” of good governance and reporting standards: the Board of Directors monitors compliance with the Charities Regulator Governance Code, the Statement of Guiding Principles for Fundraising and the Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP) under FRS102.
- Continue to strengthen the work of our Board of Directors and continue to diversify its membership, most particularly from the Global South.
- Commit to the highest possible standards of safeguarding.
- Commit to Integrity in the Workplace and other standards.
- Ensure we are accountable to the highest possible standards to those we work for and our supporters.

Commit to anti-racism, shifting power and decolonisation

- Learn and reflect on decolonisation debates in academic, activist and movement circles and most significantly within the ActionAid Federation in the Global South.
- Explore our own practice in order to ensure we do not compound unequal power dynamics in any way (e.g Board membership, programme approaches, fundraising, communications, research etc).
- Commit to being an anti-racist organisation - in our internal practice and public engagement. Connect the issue of decolonisation with our priorities on GBV, climate and economic justice and our vision of care for people and planet.
- Explore feminist research, policy and campaigning opportunities with Southern based movements.

Feminist Leadership principles and practice

- Nurture and embed in our internal culture on feminist practice and reflection.
- Commit to embedding feminist approaches in all our work.
- In our focus on women, ensure we are inclusive of people of all gender identities.