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ANNUAL REPORT 2019



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Annual Report 2019

ActionAid Netherlands is part of the global ActionAid federation. ActionAid is a leading international human rights organisation working in over 45 countries with communities and local organisations, supporting them to claim their rights and build a life without poverty and injustice. With our grassroots experience, we demand progress from those in power at local, national and international levels to build lasting change.

ActionAid Netherlands Annual Report 2019

Published | April 2020

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Cover photo: Khosi Nomnqa from South Africa is a member of the Women from Mining-Affected Communities United in Action (WAMUA) group. ActionAid has supported this local partner organisation with training in gender equality and women's rights. Khosi has been helping the women in her community to be independent, while also working with young people to help them address issues such as climate change. "It is often hard to work with married women because their husbands believe that feminism teaches women to disrespect them," she says. "However, I don't give up as I believe in the liberation of women and gender equality." © Miora Rajaonary/ActionAid

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WELCOME

FROM OUR CHIEF EXECUTIVE



2019 was the year of powerful and appealing activism across the world. Because, despite great progress in our shared battle against poverty, inequality, hunger and diseases, many societies are still by far not as equal and just as they should be. People all over the world joined together in action to stand up for their human rights and for climate justice, calling for real and positive change. We are proud to be part of this global movement for a just and sustainable future, and we will continue to stand up for what is right, social justice!

ActionAid has been fighting inequality and injustice all over the world for many years. Our work tackles inequality based on gender, economic opportunity, geography, climate change, status and many other factors, because we truly believe that a just and equivalent future is possible - if we really put our minds, hearts and efforts to it! That's why we first and foremost focus on women; far too often they are still the ones who suffer the most.

But as we see in communities across the world, women can also be the brave bearers of change! In 2019, ActionAid continued to work together with changemaking women and their communities to enhance their capacity and networks to manage risks, to know and be able to stand up for their rights, to reduce their vulnerability and increase their opportunities. Change is possible, and it comes from the power in people!

We are proud of our results and impact in 2019, but despite these positive developments, we are still far from true equality. As the 2019 Gender Inequality Index shows, progress is actually slowing down, if you look at statistics on reproductive health, empowerment and paid work. That's why we will continue our work in the upcoming years, encouraging women's economic independence and a fair appreciation of unpaid work, fighting for social justice and an end to poverty.

The world needs change; now more than ever! As I am writing this welcome from my living room, we are in lock down because of COVID-19. And although the situation in our own country is alarming and somewhat frightening right now, we can trust our government to stay focused and take care of us all. But we are only as safe and healthy as the weakest among us.

Unfortunately, in many of the countries we work in, access to healthcare is limited for entire communities. And how will this crisis impact countries where most people work in the informal economy and therefore do not enjoy any government or economic backup? Countries where people live day by day and where most don't have any insurance? And countries where clean water is a privilege even without a crisis?

The current pandemic in those countries is putting pressure on systems that were already weak and in need of help. We have a challenging future ahead, but as ActionAid we believe that the future of our world deserves our fierce commitment to keep working towards an equitable, just, sustainable future. Based on valuable lessons, learned from the past and with renewed focus and energy!

Please read this annual report, be inspired by what ActionAid has done in 2019 (and before) and join us in building another, better future, with a focus on structural impact and system change as well.

To accomplish this, ActionAid not only works in Africa, Asia and Southern-America but also in the Global North. In 2019 we have focused our lobbying efforts on making sure companies, based in Europe, respect human rights worldwide. You can read all about that in this annual report.

ActionAid has also been a powerful voice in the Dutch debate on human rights abuses, for example in the mineral supply chain related to the energy transition. In 2019 we advocated for the energy transition to be

truly sustainable, taking into account both environmental as well as human rights impacts. This notion is now being echoed more widely in the Netherlands.

We cannot battle inequality and human rights abuse without focussing on climate change as well. Because climate change affects all of our work; it exacerbates inequality globally and is intrinsically linked to poverty, impacting the lives of the world's poorest people the most. ActionAid's focus is on tackling the root causes of this problem and joining forces with women as agents of change in the fight for climate justice.

CLIMATE CHANGE AFFECTS ALL OF OUR WORK - IMPACTING THE LIVES OF THE WORLD'S POOREST PEOPLE THE MOST.

In addition, we also work with individual farmers to strengthen their resilience today. For example, in Isiolo, one of the driest areas in Kenya, we jointly established a number of Farmer Field Schools and 23 farmer groups. This programme included training in lobbying for improved agricultural policies, the establishment of village savings and loans associations and a cooperative society and turned out to be a highly successful initiative!

Our work is not possible without the support of our loyal donors and supporters and we thank you for that! In 2019, we have welcomed many new partners and friends that participated in our Women's Rights Challenge, the Women's March, the Climate March and our Feminists Unite! campaign. We have also joined forces with Geraldine Kemper, TV presenter and ActionAid's new ambassador. We hope to build on these relationships and further expand our supporter base in 2020 and beyond.

As a new director for ActionAid I really look forward to this upcoming year and the years ahead. We hope this year's report will inspire you to join forces with us in changing the future. Together we will continue empowering communities to fight for equality and justice.

Jannelieke Aalstein
Executive Director

KEY HIGHLIGHTS

Resilience to drought in Kenya

- In 2019, ActionAid strengthened the resilience of 536 farmers (of whom 495 are women) in Isiolo, one of the driest areas in Kenya. This was done through the establishment of 23 farmer groups, Farmer Field Schools, village savings and loans associations, a cooperative society and training sessions on lobbying for improved agricultural policies. In addition, many farmers were reached through outreach mechanisms such as radio talk shows. The project successfully supported (female) farmers in claiming and consolidating their rights to land and in defending them against attempts to encroach on their land. >> [page 23-24](#)

Emergency response during Cyclone Idai

- In March, ActionAid quickly mobilised local teams to deliver life-saving supplies to the communities who were affected worst by Cyclone Idai in Mozambique, Malawi and Zimbabwe. With the help of supporters worldwide, we have been able to support more than 50,000 people with food, water and temporary shelter. >> [page 40-42](#)

Safety at work

- In June, a historic international law to end violence and harassment in the workplace was adopted by the International Labour Organisation (ILO) in Geneva. ActionAid had been campaigning in over 15 countries for this law, known as the Violence and Harassment Convention and Recommendation 2019. We continue to call on ILO member states to urgently ratify the convention. >> [page 27](#)

Campaigning to stop violence against women

- The Women's Rights Challenge 2019 was ActionAid's first public engagement campaign focussing on strengthening the position of women worldwide and reducing gender-based violence. In 35 days participants

were challenged to work towards 35 push-ups. We saw many enthusiastic supporters, ambassadors and fundraisers take up this challenge and raised awareness and funds. >> [page 27-43](#)

Ending human rights violations

- Thanks to joint lobbying efforts, the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs adopted stricter guidelines to make sure corporations going on trade missions or making use of government financial support, respect human rights abroad. A huge success after many years of continuous lobbying work. >> [page 31](#)

People power in Zambia

- After more than a decade fighting for compensation, a community in Chingola, Zambia, won the right to pursue justice against the mining conglomerate Vedanta in the English courts. Their lives have been devastated by toxic run-off from the nearby Nchanga copper mine, which has contaminated the local water supply and polluted farmland since 2004. ActionAid supports this case and reinforced the community voice and knowledge. >> [page 38](#)

Progress on tax justice

- At the end of this year, the Dutch government adopted a plan to end tax avoidance from the Netherlands by imposing tax on interest and royalty payments to tax havens. A step in the right direction as it contributes to our effort to dismantle the Dutch tax haven. >> [page 29](#)

Justice in Uganda

- In December, after nearly 20 years of struggle and resistance, four communities (around 4,000 people) finally reached agreement in principle with the Ugandan government so that they can get compensation for violently being evicted from their land to make space for a coffee plantation. Supported by ActionAid, they had filed a criminal complaint against Kweri Coffee Plantation and the Ugandan government, whose military officials mistreated them and burned down their houses back in 2001. >> [page 36](#)



1. OUR MISSION AND APPROACH

ActionAid believes in the power of people. Over the years we have taken sides with some of the poorest communities around the world, defending their right to food and access to basic services, and demanding government and corporate accountability. By working together, we are convinced we can make a lasting difference.



1.1 WHO WE ARE

ActionAid Netherlands is part of the global federation ActionAid International which envisages a just, equitable and sustainable world. A world in which every person enjoys the right to a life of dignity, and freedom from poverty and all forms of oppression. Within ActionAid International, we work together with 15 million people in 45 countries. Our Secretariat is based in Johannesburg. Each ActionAid member country has expertise and experience to contribute to the federation's strategy. Together we work in over 2,000 communities worldwide, partnering with local groups and social movements. We focus on the root causes of inequality and bring evidence from the ground to campaign for lasting change. When change is led by active, informed and organised people, we strongly believe it can transform power.

Strategy

In 2017 we launched as a federation a new ten-year strategy: *Change the rules for a just and sustainable world*. Our strategy is to build international momentum for social, economic and environmental justice, driven by people living in poverty and exclusion. In practice, this means working closely with people living in poverty and exclusion, civil society organisations, social movements and supporters. Together, we deliver grassroots programmes, provide emergency relief and campaign for causes such as women's economic rights, tax justice and climate justice.

Our work falls into four broad areas: women's rights, politics and economics, land and climate, and emergencies. We have a particular focus on women's rights because women face unequal treatment simply because of their gender. This is one of the reasons that we put the rights of women and girls at the heart of everything we do. Our four strategic priorities are as follows:

Our 4 strategic priorities to a just and sustainable world:

- 
Women's rights
Economic empowerment and justice, equal participation and addressing violence
- 
Good governance
Tax justice, quality public services and corporate accountability
- 
Sustainable earth
Strengthening resilient livelihoods and securing climate justice
- 
Emergencies
Advancing women-led emergency preparedness, prevention and response

Roughly, our work can be divided in three ways:

- 1. Supporting programmes in the Global South** by (1) mobilising resources – raising funds through investment and innovation; and (2) mutual capacity building – exchanging skills and knowledge by linking community organisations across borders from the local to international level.
- 2. Policy influencing and campaigning** through community-based action research and publishing reports. Also, through engaging in dialogue with corporate and political stakeholders in the Netherlands, Europe and internationally to address direct and indirect impacts of their decision-making on people's livelihoods and opportunities in the Global South.
- 3. Mobilising and uniting Dutch citizens** to speak out against poverty and inequality. By linking issues faced both in the Global South and the North, creating a common cause and clear calls-to-action, we build a movement of people that use their joint power as consumers, voters, campaigners and supporters to fight for a just and sustainable world.



1.2 HOW WE WORK

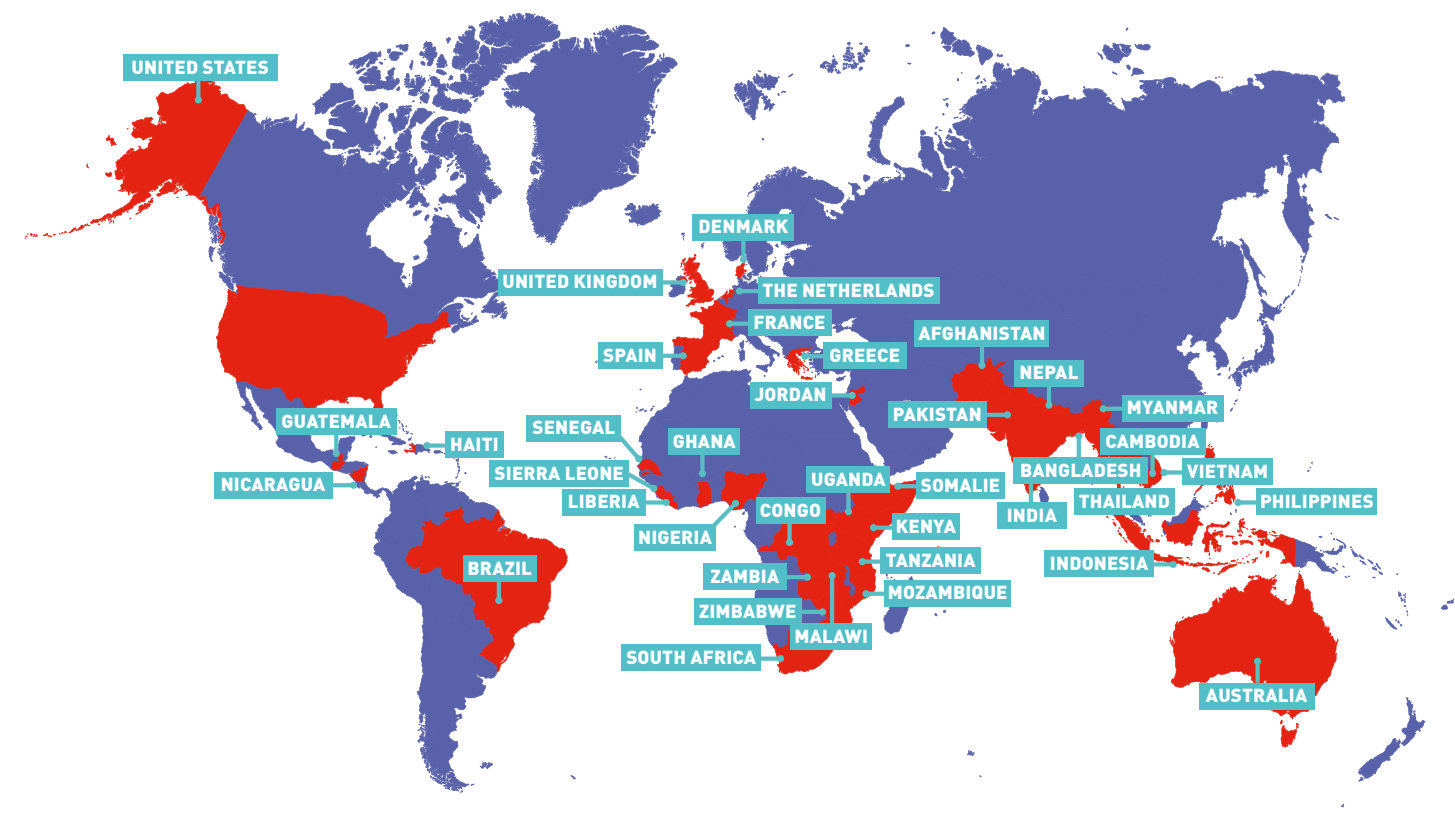
We put women at the heart of what we do because we believe we cannot end poverty and inequality when half the world's citizens are denied their rights.

Empowerment is at the heart of our programmes. Awareness raising is essential for people to be able to challenge unequal power relations at the local, national and global level. ActionAid uses a Human Rights Based Approach, which is developed from the understanding that poverty and inequality arise because of the marginalisation and discrimination associated with human rights violations. It requires a people-centred approach that supports those living in poverty to become aware of their rights, organise themselves to claim these rights, and hold authorities to account. We believe that people living in poverty and exclusion in the Global South must be central in driving social change.

All around the world women have less social, economic and political power. ActionAid will fight for social justice through the economic and political empowerment of women. We stand with the courageous women speaking out for change in their communities, as well as backing the grassroots organisations they lead.

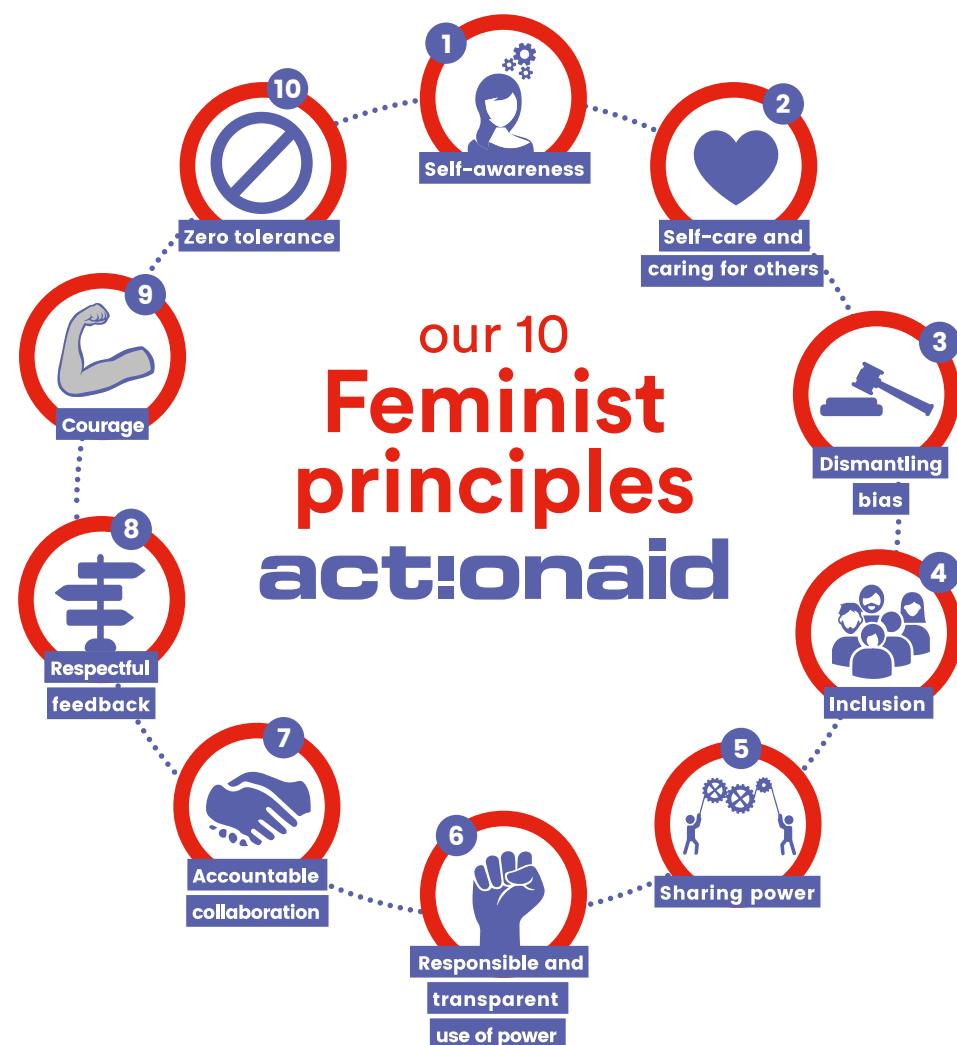
With a long-term presence in approximately 45 countries, ActionAid has strong relationships with communities and local organisations. Projects are coordinated by ActionAid country offices and implemented by local partners and community cooperatives. In this way we make use of local knowledge and experience. When issues need to be addressed on a regional or global level, we collect evidence and bring community voices to international arenas where decisions are made. We also create public pressure to hold our governments to account and to push for respect, protection and fulfilment of human rights. In 2019, ActionAid Netherlands worked directly with partners in Bangladesh, Brazil, Cambodia, Guatemala, Kenya, Liberia, Mozambique, South Africa, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

Where we work



FEMINIST PRINCIPLES

As part of our commitment to women's rights, we recognise, embody and champion 10 'feminist principles', not only in our work or what we do, but also in the way we work or how we do things. This includes how we work with our staff, supporters, partners, donors, suppliers and everyone else we come in contact with through our work and in our workplaces. These principles are applicable to people of all genders and at all levels from board members to new hires starting their first job with ActionAid. Intersectional feminist principles is not only consistent with what we do, but also vital to the success of our mission. It helps us building an organisation that is capable of changing the world.



At ActionAid, we define feminist principles in the workplace as positive and inclusive use of power to build an organisation that is capable of changing the world. We embody feminist principles through our behaviour at the workplace and the way we behave helps create our workplace culture. We appreciate that this is a journey of continual improvement instead of an expectation of perfection from our colleagues.



Innovation is a frame of mind. We want to innovate to expand our impact, scale up our reach, stay relevant and make the best use of scarce resources.

1.3 HOW WE THINK

This means we can change the lives of more people, more profoundly, sustainably and efficiently. An innovative mindset enables us to think differently about how to approach seemingly intractable problems. This ability to think in a positive, open, exploratory, unfettered manner is an essential spark for ideas and ActionAid stimulates this mindset. Our goal is to work with others for positive change at scale, through problem-focused resourcefulness.

Our international strategy calls for new thinking and the development of human rights based alternatives - innovative approaches that lead us towards a poverty free planet. This focus on innovation can be seen in our approach to governance and feminist leadership, and shines through our work around the world. Organisational learning is key to innovation - staff and partners within the ActionAid International family share best practices and learnings through Communities of Practice. That is one of the ways in which we try to ensure that our culture encourages learning and creativity.

We also attract eager and inquisitive interns to all our departments within ActionAid, to make sure we always have fresh minds and the newest ideas in house, and up to date knowledge available. The same goes for partners we choose to collaborate with. We are connected in focus, purpose and passion, but favorably different in our ways of working. We specifically look for partners that are different to us, so we can learn from working together and innovate together.

We also learn from failures within successful programmes, by acknowledging them, being transparent and rethinking how we can work the most effectively towards transformational change. To prevent poor financial management, we work with clear learning cycles in all programmes, we identify causes of confusion soon after they arise and act on them. Through working bottom up within ActionAid, we hear about challenges and bottlenecks before we even start working with partners – this also calls for our innovative mindset.



2. OUR WORK

Our work falls into four broad areas: women's rights, politics and economics, land and climate, and emergencies.



The image shows a collection of Indian newspapers and magazines. The top row features the mastheads of 'Dainik Bhaskar' and 'Dainik Jagran'. Below these are several copies of 'Dainik Bhaskar' and 'Dainik Jagran' with different covers. The bottom row shows the mastheads of 'Dainik Bhaskar' and 'Dainik Jagran' again, with some text in Hindi below them.

They are forced to live in poverty and denied access to resources and land that can significantly help them improve their livelihoods. At the same time, women are also powerful drivers of change. That's why we support women to join forces and claim their rights. Women's rights are at the centre of all our work and campaigns. Our three focus areas are: (1) economic empowerment, (2) equal participation in society and (3) ending violence against women and girls.

ActionAid campaigns with women worldwide for an economy that works for women, where there are equal opportunities for women and men, gender responsive public services and a fairer division of unpaid care work.

**Ensure
Living
Wages**

- **2019 was the final year of the *Lives in Semi-Arid Areas* project**, funded by the Dioraphte Foundation. It was implemented in Isiolo, one of the driest regions of Kenya that's heavily affected by climate change. In this area, long periods of drought are mixed with periods

of short but very intensive rainfall, leading to flooding. In order to cope with these difficulties, the project used various means to strengthen the resilience of 536 farmers (of which 495 women). This was done through the establishment of 23 Farmer Field Schools, village savings and loans associations, a cooperative society and training sessions on lobbying for improved agricultural policies. Through the Farmer Field Schools, farmers adopted new farming techniques, including micro-irrigation and water harvesting methods to increase their food production and raise their income, thus improving their livelihoods. The evaluation of the project in 2019 found that many of the innovations introduced through these schools, were widely implemented in the project. Through training, ActionAid strengthened farmer groups' capacity to lobby for improved agricultural policies and practices from government. In addition, many farmers were reached through outreach mechanisms such as radio talk shows. The project supported (women) farmers in claiming and consolidating their rights to land and in defending them against attempts to encroach on their land.

‘THE PROJECT HAS CHANGED MY LIFE’^{HER STORY}

Lilian Amina participated in ActionAid’s Lives in Semi-Arid Areas project in Isiolo, Kenya. She’s a farmer and has three children. Through the project, she joined the Naishuro Women Group. She has come a long way thanks to it.

‘My parents were farmers, and so am I. But I didn’t see farming as a business. I just farmed because everyone does it. I grew beans because everyone grows beans. My life started changing after joining ActionAid’s training sessions. I learned about commercial farming, permaculture and table banking.

Within the Naishuro Women Group, we all invest a small amount of our income, that allows us to make larger, joint investments or to get a loan, based on our savings. To ensure that there is transparency in the group, each member is given a passport with accurate records of savings and loans. We make sure that we all understand what is written in the passports. And during meetings, we sit in a circle so that every member gets to see what is going on. I see a lot of trust among us. We are neighbours and understand each other’s struggles. If I don’t have money to make a loan payment on time, I don’t hide it but just report to the group. They will allow me to pay in the coming month. Thanks to the loans, I now have a good house and all my children are in school. Their life is good. I have also learnt about good nutrition; I no longer cook ugali (maize) flour and tomatoes only. I now know that when I have eggs, I should not sell them. And I can produce food that’s free of chemicals, so my children eat fresh food from my farm.

Before joining the group, I was very timid. I didn’t dare to look anyone in the eye or share my thoughts. Also, I wasn’t aware of my rights. Now I can talk before people and take a leadership role. I know that no one should mistreat me, because I have rights. The project and the group have brought me far. It has changed my life.’



• **In November**, together with Both ENDS, Wide+ and WO=MEN, ActionAid published a report about women and international trade (Vrouwen in internationale handel; een koopje?). This publication examines the relationship between the Dutch international trade policy and efforts towards gender equality. The report shares what the government, businesses and civil society can do to guarantee gender equality in international trade. We use this report in our lobbying and advocacy work.

• **2019 was the final year of Building Better Futures**, a project funded by the Turing Foundation. The project enabled young people in Liberia to build resilient and sustainable livelihoods through ICT and agriculture. In the final year, **1,350 people from three counties were trained and mobilised to set up five social enterprises**. Through these enterprises, they have been able to improve their livelihoods. Also, they engaged with their communities on issues such as youth development, gender-based violence and access to quality education through sixteen Accountability Forums. Finally, the ongoing policy advocacy activities during the project have helped to anchor local food systems in the current government’s pro-poor development agenda.

Equal participation in society

From local households to national governments – too often women are not involved in decisions that affect their lives. As a result, policies and legislation do not properly address women’s specific needs. Securing women’s rights starts with their participation in decision making and enabling their leadership. ActionAid’s feminist principles and our vision on feminist leadership are guiding in the way we work together within the federation and with our partners.

• **In March**, prior to International Women’s Day, we conducted a poll to investigate the general opinion in the Netherlands regarding feminism. It showed that **one in three people in the Netherlands call themselves a feminist**. Four out of five respondents (80.7 percent) say that unequal treatment of men and women is unacceptable. More than 70 percent show concern for the position of women in developing countries and nearly 70 percent think that international companies have a big responsibility in protecting women’s rights, while 61 percent of the respondents feel that governments are also responsible. We used these outcomes in our lobby work.

• **2019 was the final year of the Urban 95++ project**, funded by Bernard van Leer Foundation and Oak Foundation. As a result, an active ‘Citizens Network’ was set up in Recife, Brazil, consisting of community members (including many women and youth), grassroots organisations, small businesses and professionals in the field of urban planning. Community members, especially women and young people, have become more aware of their rights. As a result of training sessions and workshops, they are now able to push for more investments in public services with local government. The project also created more attractive neighbourhoods for community members, especially for women, young people and children. Through a small grants fund, 17 projects that focused on improving public spaces and organising activities for the community were implemented by community members themselves.



16 DAYS OF ACTIVISM

against Gender- Based Violence

Gender-based violence in the world of work is an urgent global concern that disproportionately affects women and other excluded groups. It results in exploitative and insecure working conditions and the widespread violation of human rights. That's why ActionAid celebrated the International Labour Conference's adoption of a groundbreaking new global treaty, aimed at ending violence and harassment in the world of work. However, for the convention to be effective, it must be ratified or brought into force by ILO member states.

During the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence campaign, ActionAid and partner organisations called on governments to ratify ILO 190. This annual international campaign kicked off on 25 November, the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, and ran until 10 December, Human Rights Day. For our 190 Women, 190 Reasons to Ratify C190 campaign, we asked 190 women from around the world why it is essential that new international legislation is enshrined into law by their governments.



STORY

Ending violence against women and girls

One in three women experiences physical or sexual violence in her lifetime. ActionAid supports women and girls all over the world to tackle violence and stand up for their rights. We work alongside local women to provide services and demand justice for survivors of violence, and support programmes to empower women.

Ending violence against women and girls is a priority for the ActionAid Federation. In the Netherlands, we are supporting grassroots organisations, mainly in low income countries, and strengthening women's economic and political position worldwide to help put an end to violence against women and girls.

- **In June**, a historic international law to end violence and harassment in the world of work was adopted by the International Labour Organisation (ILO) in Geneva. ActionAid had been campaigning in over 15 countries for this law, known as the Violence and Harassment Convention and Recommendation 2019. Internationally, **we launched a petition that was signed over 30,000 times**. In the Netherlands we called on the Dutch government to support the law by signing a manifest initiated by unions CNV, FNV and Fairware. ActionAid continues to call on ILO member states to urgently ratify the convention so that the law can come into force and stamp out gender-based violence, harassment and abuse at work (see boxed text).

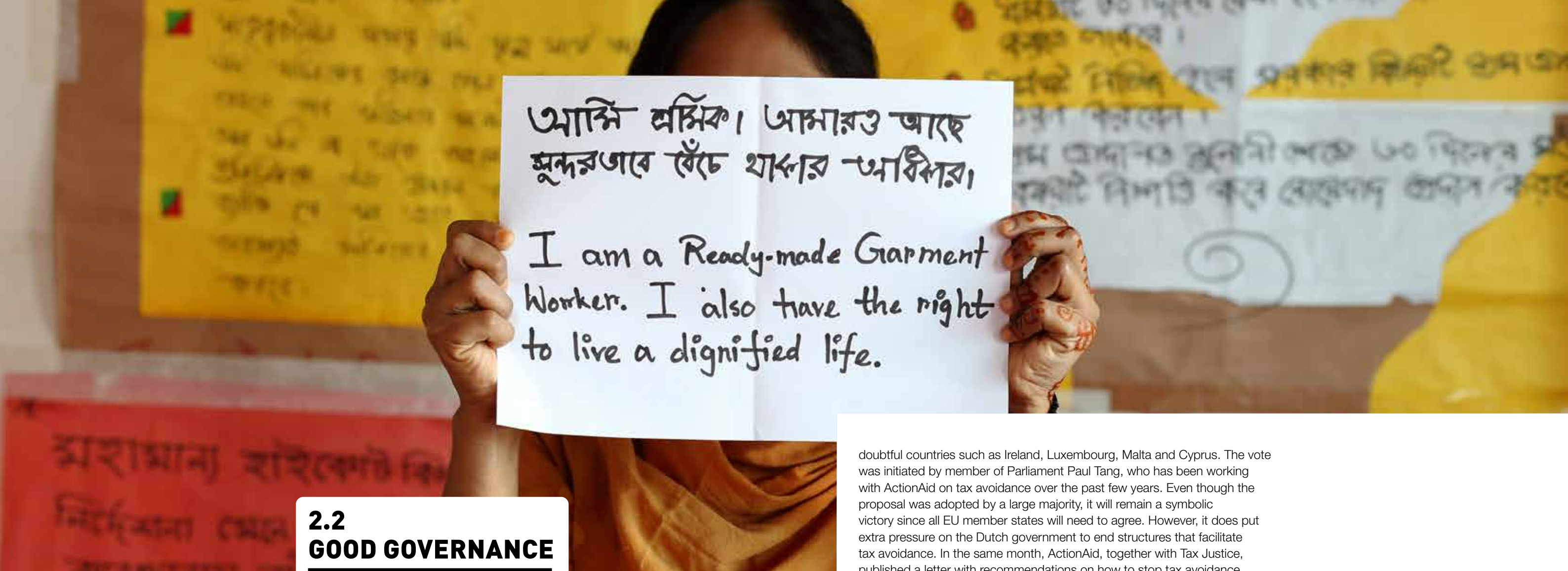
- **In 2019 we launched our first peer-to-peer awareness and fundraising campaign**, the Women's Rights Challenge. During this challenge, we raised more awareness for violence against women and girls. The campaign was supported by various ambassadors, including TV presenter Geraldine Kemper and actress Abbey Hoes. Read more at page 43.



Marie (28) is a member of the National Rural Women Structure (RW) in Liberia, supported by ActionAid. Marie heads a group that focuses on strengthening their capacity to challenge and reject all forms of gender-based violence, and lead advocacy campaigns at the sub-national level, for example for land rights for women. She was one of the faces of our Women's Rights Challenge this year.



Research by ActionAid in 2019 showed that 80 percent of garment workers in Bangladesh have experienced or witnessed sexual violence and harassment at work, with 90 percent saying their job is negatively impacting their health. Shockingly 10 percent of women surveyed said they were currently being subjected to sexual harassment, molestation and assault in the workplace. This led to the adoption of the first ever international law on ending violence and harassment in the world of work.



2.2 GOOD GOVERNANCE

Tax justice, quality public services and corporate accountability.

Tax avoidance and unfair trade and investments condemn millions of people to a life of poverty. ActionAid is committed to fair policy and regulations that protect the rights and promote the interests of people living in poverty.

We campaign worldwide to bring an end to tax avoidance by multinationals and ensure fair business and government policies in favour of equal rights and opportunities for women and men.

Tax justice

Tax is a powerful redistribution tool of global wealth. It funds schools, hospitals and infrastructure. We all pay taxes, but big companies are still not paying their fair share. Developing countries are hit hardest. These countries lose out on an estimated 200 billion dollars a year because of corporate tax avoidance. This huge loss means governments cannot provide vital public services to their citizens, resulting in further suffering for the world's poorest people.

• **Together with the Mutoko Youth Initiatives for Community Development**, ActionAid Zimbabwe – with support of our Fair Green and Global (FGG) programme – organised a youth-led tax justice campaign focusing on black granite mining companies in Mutoko. The campaign started with a three-day national radio programme and continued with an awareness march and a Youth Symposium.

• **In March**, the European Parliament adopted a proposal to put the Netherlands on the EU tax haven blacklist, together with other fiscally

doubtful countries such as Ireland, Luxembourg, Malta and Cyprus. The vote was initiated by member of Parliament Paul Tang, who has been working with ActionAid on tax avoidance over the past few years. Even though the proposal was adopted by a large majority, it will remain a symbolic victory since all EU member states will need to agree. However, it does put extra pressure on the Dutch government to end structures that facilitate tax avoidance. In the same month, ActionAid, together with Tax Justice, published a letter with recommendations on how to stop tax avoidance.

• **In December**, the Dutch government adopted a plan to end tax avoidance from the Netherlands by imposing tax on interest and royalty payments to tax havens. A step in the right direction as it contributes to our effort to dismantle the Dutch tax haven. However, since more and stronger measures are needed, we continue our campaign to end all Dutch harmful fiscal regulations.

Good governance and corporate accountability

A fair, accountable government is crucial to ending poverty and promoting human rights. Throughout the world, people's demand for democracy is growing as many suffer under oppressive regimes and leaders who are not held accountable. In our Fair, Green and Global (FGG) programme, we support people in holding their governments and corporates to account, in fighting for justice, ending discrimination and corruption, and taking control of the decisions that shape their lives.

• **In 2019**, ActionAid stressed the importance of the United Nations Binding Treaty on Business and Human Rights. Governments are currently negotiating this unique treaty, that will prevent corporate abuse worldwide, and ensures that victims of business-related human rights violations have adequate access to justice. To encourage the Dutch government to ambitiously support the treaty and make sure women's rights are a focus, we launched the Feminists Unite! Campaign. This included a petition, various events and a speaker tour (see boxed text). A group of voluntary campaigners have followed our Feminist Leadership and Organising Training, **that was based on the feminist principles**, and that will allow them to actively spread our message.

HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS

call on Dutch government

Before participating in the negotiations for the UN Binding Treaty on Business and Human Rights, ActionAid organised a Dutch speaker tour with human rights defenders from Guatemala and Zambia. In their day to day work, these defenders work with communities affected by corporate abuse. During their stay, they exchanged experiences and strategies with (former) mining communities in Groningen and Limburg and discussed how to address corporate abuse and protect women's rights. The tour ended in The Hague, where Juvience Chalwe (right) from Zambia convinced parliamentarians Mahir Alkaya (SP, left on picture), Isabelle Diks (GroenLinks) and Kirsten van den Hul (PvdA) to sign a letter to minister Kaag, urging the Netherlands to be ambitious during the negotiations and to make sure women's rights are included. The results were promising: during the negotiations, we saw more engagement from the European Union than in previous years, which was partly thanks to the efforts of the Netherlands in placing greater attention on women's rights.



STORY

• **Throughout 2019**, we urged members of Parliament and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to engage with this UN treaty. Together with WO=MEN, Mama Cash, AWID and others, we sent various letters to minister Kaag (Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation). And together with IUCN NL, Milieudefensie and SOMO, we organised stunts and events for members of Parliament. Also, we worked in partnership with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. This has led to minister Kaag pledging to constructively engage with the treaty at EU level. In parliament, a motion was adopted asking the ministry to employ diplomacy to further international support for the treaty. We will continue to put pressure on Dutch decision makers to ambitiously engage with this treaty, and to include the women's rights perspective, not just in Europe but also at the UN-level.

• **To make sure Dutch companies respect human rights abroad**, ActionAid also focused on other policy processes. Our lobby work, together with MVO Platform and SOMO, led to a government decision to revise the existing national action plan Business and Human Rights. We will continue urging the Ministry to include women's rights and gender issues in the new action plan.

• **In 2019**, ActionAid called on the Dutch government to introduce legislation to make sure corporations respect human and women's rights abroad, as currently there are only voluntary initiatives and standards. This year the government introduced an ambitious multi-stakeholder process called IMVO in Perspectief, which grants ActionAid the opportunity to continue to push for this legislation and the inclusion of women's rights.

• **ActionAid believes that all corporations must respect human rights abroad**, but this is especially true for corporations making use of financial support from the Dutch government. This year, thanks to our lobbying work in collaboration with other organisations such as MVO Platform, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs adopted stricter guidelines to make sure **corporations going on trade missions or making use of government financial support, respect human rights abroad**. A huge success after many years of continuous lobbying work.

• **ActionAid Mozambique**, with support of our FGG programme, conducted various activities on land rights. During the year, ten government officials and 50 members from smallholder farmers' associations, of whom 35 women, were trained on the human rights-based approach (HRBA) and Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC). In October, land governance issues, especially in relation to gender and women's rights, were discussed during a national Land Conference. It was organised by ActionAid and attended by 130 people, of whom 78 women. In October and November similar debates on land grabbing and land laws took place on national television and on two local radio stations. Last but not least, local partner Núcleo Académico para o Desenvolvimento das Comunidades (NADEC) trained 83 members, among them 53 women, from six different Farmers' Associations on Land and Investment policies. All have lost their access to and control over their land as a result of the investments of large-scale sugar companies. The training has enabled them to handle cases of land conflict. As a result, **three long-standing conflicts between communities and sugar companies are very close to being solved**.

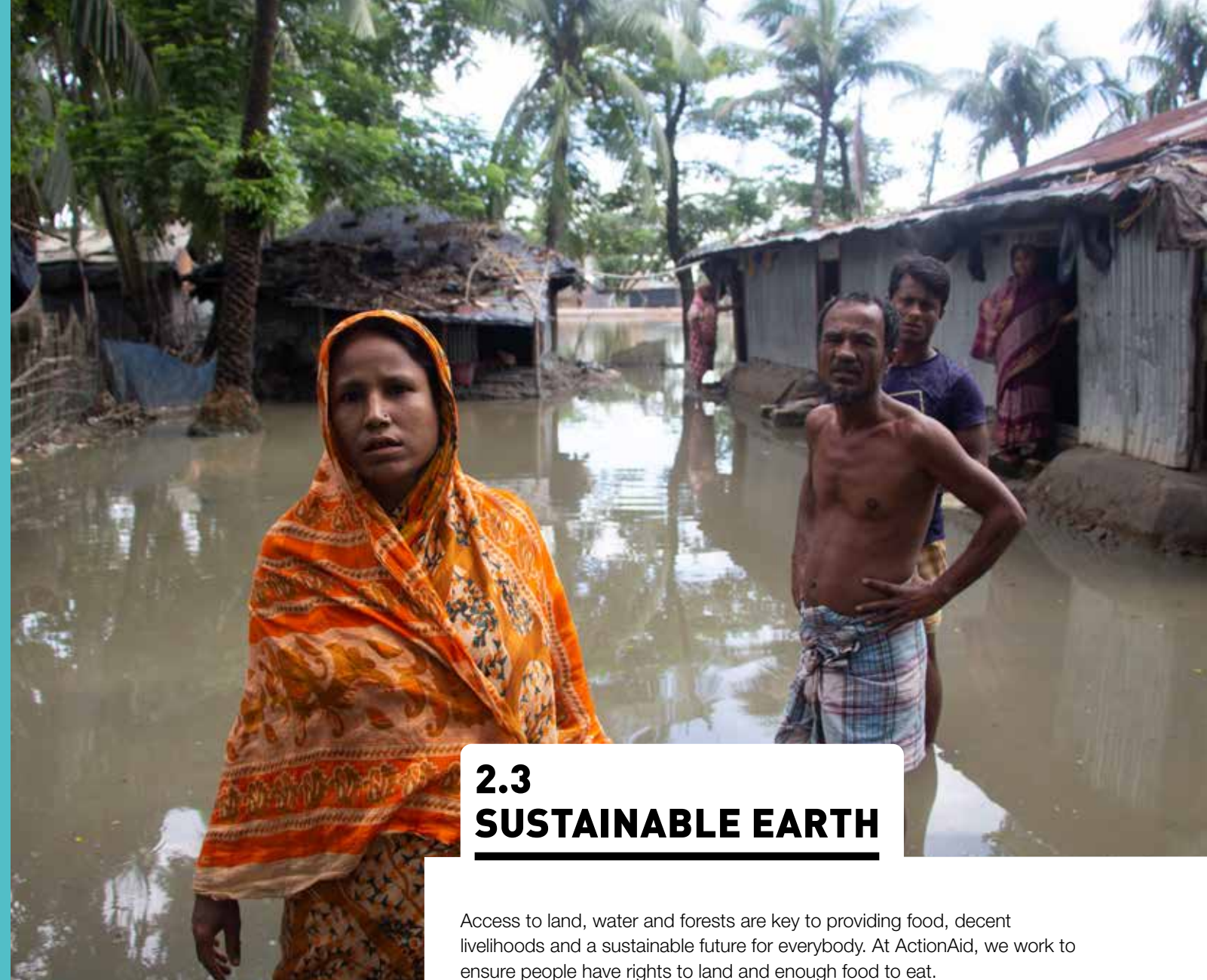


HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS

in Zambia

HER
STORY

Margaret Waya lives next to the Mopani copper mine in Kankoyo, just outside Mufulira (Zambia). The mining operations have caused many cracks in her house, which makes her fear that it will collapse, just as several houses of her neighbours have. Her community also suffers from pollution, loud explosions and health problems. Margaret is section leader of her neighborhood. She organises meetings for this district and regularly complains to mining company Glencore when sulphur emissions are too high. ActionAid supports women like Margaret by training them on human rights and leadership. The adoption of the UN binding Treaty on Business and Human Rights would prevent these women from corporate abuse and give them access to justice.



2.3 SUSTAINABLE EARTH

Access to land, water and forests are key to providing food, decent livelihoods and a sustainable future for everybody. At ActionAid, we work to ensure people have rights to land and enough food to eat.

Resilient livelihoods and securing climate justice.

Photo above:

A large coal-fired power plant in the Matarbari area (Bangladesh) continues to cause displacements and serious damage to the area's water management system. ActionAid supports communities in their struggle against mega-projects.
© ActionAid

Land rights

Rural communities all over the world are being forced off their land due to environmental pressure and competition for natural resources. ActionAid stands up for the rights of rural women and smallholder farmers by helping them to hold governments, international organisations and corporations to account. **In our Fair, Green and Global (FGG) programme we work with women and men with weak land rights, to help them secure control over their land so they can feed themselves, their families and their communities.**

- **In Bangladesh**, a large coal-fired power plant in the Matarbari area continues to cause displacements and serious damage to the area's water management system. ActionAid Bangladesh, as part of our FGG programme, continued supporting communities in several areas in their struggle against mega-projects.

- **Under the banner of the Life and Nature Safeguard Platform (LNSP)**, two fact-finding reports were presented to other NGO's and stakeholders in Bangladesh: one on Matarbari (see previous bullet) and one on the Payra Seaport and power station near Patuakhali (where 4,000 households have been evicted). These served as the basis for proposals for reforming the land laws. The hearing at which these reports were presented was widely reported on in the local media.

‘MY LAND WAS BULL-DOZED AND REPLACED WITH RUBBER TREES’

HER
STORY

Sak is a 55-year-old woman from Cambodia and has 6 children. Her family is part of the Buong indigenous community and relies on farming and selling their labour to other farmers to survive. She lost 5 plots of land to Socfin-KCD and was left with only a rice paddy and small plot for vegetables. Socfin-KCD offered Sak and her family \$100 for 5 large plots of land. She refused to accept their low offer, and her land was bulldozed and replaced with rubber trees. She has joined the complaint against Socfin-KCD's shareholders and is hopeful that she will eventually receive fair and adequate compensation. Before Socfin-KCD, Sak's family was able to live off of their land. They did not have access to markets, but they had enough food to survive. Now, a market has opened, but they do not have enough food for themselves, let alone to sell at the market. The loss of their land has devastated their livelihood and they struggle daily to support their growing family. ActionAid works with Sak's community to defend their rights.



• **Since 2008**, rubber company Socfin-KCD has been involved in a land dispute involving six villages in the North-East of Cambodia. More than 800 families have been affected, most from the Buong group, an indigenous community (see boxed text). Today, several hundred families are still involved in a land dispute resolution process. ActionAid in Cambodia, with support of our FGG programme, has produced a photo story showcasing the plight of families displaced. They used these photos in their advocacy work for better legislation. Local partner Cambodian Center for Human Rights (CCHR) together with affected communities, engaged in a dialogue with Socfin-KCD. This led to several actions to prevent pesticide pollution and avoid pollution of water sources in the area. Previously, Socfin-KCD refused to engage with CCHR, so these initial dialogues are a big step forward. Socfin-KCD actively participating in the dispute resolution process constitutes good practice, which will hopefully inspire other private actors.

• **With support of our FGG programme**, ActionAid in Kenya collected data that showed that women remain in the minority in land ownership. The findings were shared with policy makers, local leaders, custodians of culture and traditions, and the broader women's movement. This led to wide local participation at community forums in the counties Taita Taveta and Mombasa. The findings were also aired in local and mainstream media. It increased the visibility of the issue and bodes well for the greater involvement of women in land rights discussions. Later in the year, ActionAid Kenya organised training for human rights defenders on security and risk management. **This was critical because wives, mothers, daughters, sisters, and households headed by women are frequently under attack by family members for speaking out, power elites and custodians of patriarchy. In most of the cases, they are attacked simply because they are women.**

• **Three FGG Countries**, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe, successfully underwent training in advocacy with a focus on Human Rights and development of efficient advocacy strategies. The training, that commenced with Zambia, was replicated in Zimbabwe and Uganda, with the aim of strengthening the already existing skills to improve corporate conduct, trade and investment, and financial and tax systems among ActionAid staff and implementation partners. Most predominant in all countries was the absence of risk and response plans. All countries shared cases of intimidation, arrest, harassment and ambiguous policies and legislation that can thwart advocacy efforts. Since the training, information sharing between the countries and deliberate efforts to develop advocacy strategies has increased.



ActionAid Brazil is a member of the Brazilian Campaign for the Defense of Cerrado (Campanha Nacional em Defesa do Cerrado), along with more than 50 local, national and international organisations and social movements. The Cerrado covers 20 percent of Brazil and is heavily affected by land and water grabbing, deforestation, reduction of biodiversity and water pollution. ActionAid Netherlands organised for a Brazilian CSO representative to go on a mission to the USA, joining the lobby of a major pension fund investing in land in the area. He also took the opportunity to speak with the Dutch director at the World Bank that is supporting a land administration programme in the Cerrado.



In November, we published the report Human Rights in Wind Turbine Supply Chains. This report, a follow-up from 2018, describes the current risks of human rights violations in wind turbine supply chains, linked to the extraction of minerals such as copper, manganese, cobalt. The key finding was that, while some small steps have been taken, **wind turbine manufacturers are still not meeting the requirements to protect human rights and the environment as laid out by international guidelines.** It was picked up by national media, which led to discussions with members of Parliament and various civil servants on how to achieve responsible mineral supply chains.

• **In December 2019**, after 18 years of struggle and resistance, four communities in Uganda (around 4,000 people) finally reached agreement in principle with the Ugandan government so that they can get compensation for violently being evicted from their land to make space for a coffee plantation. They had filed a criminal complaint against the German-owned Kaweri Coffee Plantation and the Ugandan government, whose military officials mistreated them and burned down their houses back in 2001. The government has finally agreed in principle to compensate the affected communities for the full amount they had requested. ActionAid Uganda, with support of our FGG programme and together with the Food First Information and Action Network (FIAN) and others, supported the court case. We held many meetings with the community and helped to collect witness statements. And we will continue working with the communities until the compensation is in their hands.

Fair mining

Many developing countries are rich in raw materials such as gold, diamonds or cobalt – resources that are used in our smart phones, tablets, electric cars and wind turbines. Although potentially a considerable source of income, local communities too often do not reap the benefits. Instead, people living around mines are often driven from their land to make space for mining operations. ActionAid works in its FGG programme with affected communities to defend their rights and create policies and practices that do justice to people and environment.

• **In 2019**, following the adoption of the European Conflict Mineral Law in 2017, the Dutch implementation law on conflict minerals was finalised. The law will prevent minerals that are linked to conflict and human rights violations elsewhere in the world, to be imported into the EU. Thanks to ActionAid's lobby efforts, it included sanctions for companies that failed to respect human rights in developing countries. We also emphasised the importance of transparency, to ensure that the regulation has the desired impact for affected communities – and women in particular. In 2021 the law will come into force.

• **As part of the activities of the African Extractives Working Group (AEWG)**, delegates from ZELA, our local partner in Zimbabwe, and a community member visited South Africa. The AEWG is a group of eight ActionAid offices, funded by our FGG programme, that work together to influence African and international policies related to extractives. Three communities that were affected by mining in the Mpumalanga and Gauteng provinces were visited. In these areas, women are at the forefront of leading their communities to stand up for their rights. Together, the community members and the delegation from Zimbabwe conducted social audits, which is a tool used by the communities for corporate transparency.

• **In September**, ActionAid was present at the Zimbabwe Alternative Mining Indaba (ZAMI). This is an annual multi-stakeholder engagement platform on mineral resource governance, which brings together communities affected by mining activities, civil society organisations (CSOs), government officials and several other actors. Together with ActionAid Zimbabwe and local partner ZELA, ActionAid's roving adviser (funded by our FGG programme) hosted a session on community resistance to extraction and mobilisation of human rights defenders. At the end of the session, the participants developed an action plan to deal with some issues discussed. One of the attending mining companies refuted some findings and requested for future meetings to discuss their operations – a good opportunity to influence the company's Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) policy.

• **In October**, ActionAid contributed to a gender session in Geneva at the Intergovernmental Forum on Mining, Minerals, Metals and Sustainable Development (IGF). This voluntary initiative supports over 70 nations committed to leveraging mining for sustainable development, to ensure negative impacts are limited and financial benefits are shared. In the session we elaborated on the importance of gender responsive due diligence when addressing human rights risks. Around 120 people actively participated in the session. Our photo exhibition 'When your neighbour is a copper mine' was exhibited at the IGF as well. Also, we stressed the importance of women's rights in two different sessions at the OECD Forum on responsible mineral supply chains in April of this year.

• **In December**, two partners from Zimbabwe (and one from Bangladesh) visited a two-day workshop on strategic litigation, organised by our Fair, Green and Global programme in the Netherlands. This visit inspired Darlington Chidarara from ActionAid Zimbabwe (left) and Richard Ncube from partner organisation ZELA (right) to investigate possibilities for litigation on climate change in Zimbabwe.

• **At the end of the year**, as part of our FGG programme, ActionAid Zambia visited ActionAid Bangladesh to learn about community mobilisation. They visited several local partners and communities. Zambia's increased knowledge fed into their work on the development and promotion of a Women's Mining Charter in the process of the domestication of the Africa Mining Vision in Zambia.

• **Together with the Zimbabwe Diamonds Allied Workers Union and community-based organisations**, ActionAid in Zimbabwe (support by our FGG programme) organised the second annual Manicaland Women's Symposium. It was attended by more than 60 women from the Manicaland province. The theme for this year was 'Empowering women in the extractive industry to eradicate poverty, abuse and inequality'.

Climate change

ActionAid works with communities to help them deal with climate-related disasters and to strengthen climate resilience. We also support farmers across the world to cope with climate change by promoting new, sustainable farming methods based on agroecology, and urging worldwide climate action. Also, ActionAid campaigns to raise awareness about the fact that women in developing countries are hit harder by climate disasters and that it is imperative they are given proper representation at the climate negotiating table.

• **At the beginning of the year**, ActionAid joined Milieudefensie as co-plaintiff in the climate case against Shell for failing to align its growth plans with global climate goals. The hand-over of the summons was on 5th of April at the Shell Headquarters in the Hague. Key demand was that the company matches its business model to the Paris Agreement and sets out plans to achieve net-zero emissions by 2050. Shell's legal response was received on the 13th of November and our response will be formulated by June 2020.



Three countries that are participating in our Fair, Green and Global (FGG) programme, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe, have further strengthened their advocacy skills during advocacy training for human rights.



In February we gave a presentation on tackling human rights abuses in the mineral supply chain in the energy transition in Pakhuis de Zwijger. The reason was the expected increase in the demand for minerals. We stressed the importance of avoiding, mitigating and eliminating the human rights risks in the energy transition in front of a mixed crowd, including the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the World Bank, Triodos Bank and Alliander. We were pleased to hear that Stedin and Alliander stressed the importance of having mandatory due diligence measures to tackle risks to human rights and the environment.



VILLAGERS IN ZAMBIA WIN RIGHT

STORY

to take legal action
against mining
giant Vedanta

After more than a decade fighting for compensation, villagers from Chingola (Zambia) won the right to pursue justice against the mining conglomerate Vedanta in the English courts. Their lives had been devastated by toxic run-off from the nearby Nchanga copper mine, which has contaminated the local water supply and polluted farmland since 2004. Women and children were the most affected as they have been forced to look for alternative water sources, as the rivers they relied on for their livelihoods and day-to-day household activities have been continually polluted. They have had no choice but to use the same polluted water. ActionAid Zambia, supported by our FGG programme, works in the Chingola area through its partner, the Catholic Diocese of Ndola. This work focused on providing platforms and resources to support the community to claim its rights and advocate for regulation of corporate conduct through progressive policies and legislation. The work also involves promoting livelihood initiatives such as access to safe water and farmland with local authorities. Sandwell Sinyangwe, Chairperson of the Shimulala community says : 'We used to think that what was happening to our water and environment was normal, until **we started experiencing health challenges due to the contaminated water**. With the coming of ActionAid, we have been sensitised on our rights and how to claim them.' It is thought that the latest judgement handed down by the UK Supreme Court will open the door for other communities in developing countries to bring similar cases against large multinationals. ActionAid calls for effective laws to require companies and investors to take action to prevent human rights abuses, worker exploitation and environmental harm in their global operations, activities, products, services, investments and supply chains.



Esther Nalungwe (64) lives in Shimulala village, Chingola (Zambia). She shows the water that she drew from the polluted rivers, which families in the area are forced to use. © Abel Mambwe/ActionAid





2.4 EMERGENCIES

Advancing women-led emergency preparedness, prevention and response.

Natural disasters and violent conflicts are happening with increasing frequency, causing intense trauma and loss. Women and youth are particularly vulnerable. ActionAid raises funds for local staff to provide immediate relief, rebuild communities with a focus on equal rights and strengthen their resilience.

During emergencies, women face a greater struggle for survival, do the bulk of caring work and face increased risk of violence. Yet, they rarely have opportunities to lead humanitarian responses, leaving their voices ignored and needs overlooked. That is why ActionAid is supporting women on the frontlines of conflict and disaster from the Horn of Africa to Bangladesh to take the lead in humanitarian response. We are training women to be decision makers at all levels of humanitarian action and we are supporting women-led humanitarian innovation and protection efforts.

- **ActionAid Netherlands** has been promoting and supporting a global humanitarian response that is more inclusive, with women and affected communities much closer to the heart of decision making, enabling their voices and agency. In 2019 this was done via campaigning and fundraising. In 2020, we will continue stressing the importance of women's leadership in emergencies.

- **In March 2019**, cyclone Idai caused massive destruction, forced displacement and created disease outbreaks, affecting 3 million people

in Mozambique, Malawi and Zimbabwe, as well as causing further food insecurity in Zambia, Eswatini and Lesotho. ActionAid, in partnership with local organisations, quickly mobilised local teams to deliver life-saving supplies to the worst hit communities. With the help of supporters worldwide, ActionAid has been able to support more than 50,000 people – mostly women – with food, water and temporary shelter. Women and girls were supported by creating safe spaces where they feel physically and emotionally protected. In the longer term, ActionAid is building communities' resilience to climate disasters by training and supporting farmers to adopt climate-resilient farming techniques.

WOMEN-LED EMERGENCY RESPONSE

HER
STORY

**‘I train women
not to wait for
food handouts’**

Hilda Hlabiso (27) is one of the female leaders who empowered women affected by Cyclone Idai. She supports them with protection and leadership skills, enabling them to recover from the effects of the disaster and build their long-term resilience in the face of disasters. ‘I train women not to wait for food handouts. They can plant crops on the land that was not destroyed by Cyclone Idai. Now that roads have been cleared, they can engage in various income-generating activities such as buying stuff on demand in Mozambique, which is close by, and selling them in Chimanimani. This will ensure that they are not vulnerable to gender-based violence.’



2.5 COMMUNICATIONS & MEDIA

We are very grateful for the commitment of a growing group of ActionAid supporters in the Netherlands. We aim to build long-term relationships with our supporters to increase awareness, campaign together and to secure ongoing financial support for our programmes. In 2019 we saw a steady growth in supporters and income. At the end of 2019, we had a supporter base of 20.000 in the Netherlands.

Online presence

The online landscape is changing rapidly. With the ever-changing algorithms of Facebook, consumers shifting from Facebook to Instagram, and the emergence of video marketing and personalised content, we must constantly adapt if we are to get our content and stories out into the public arena via social media. In response to this trend, we have adapted our social media strategy to diversify our presence across different social channels. In 2020 we will continue our efforts to improve inspiring (video) content and conversion-focused campaigns.

Supporter engagement

Women's Rights Challenge

In 2019 we organised The Women's Rights Challenge 2019, a peer-to-peer campaign focussing on strengthening the position of women worldwide and counteracting gender-based violence. As 35% of all women face violence in their lives, we organised a 35 days sport challenge: 35 push-ups in 35 days. We worked together with seven ambassadors who voluntarily supported and promoted this challenge: Marije Boomsma, Cathelijne Blok, Awura Abena, Marloes Coenen, Milou Deelen, Abbey Hoes and Geraldine Kemper. Video marketing and personalised content were the main communication tool and

**Together we can
change the world
and have real
impact!**

Photo above:
ActionAid's first ever Women's Rights Challenge was supported by a group of campaign ambassadors and influencers who are all part of the new feminist generation in the Netherlands.
© Principles of Light/ ActionAid



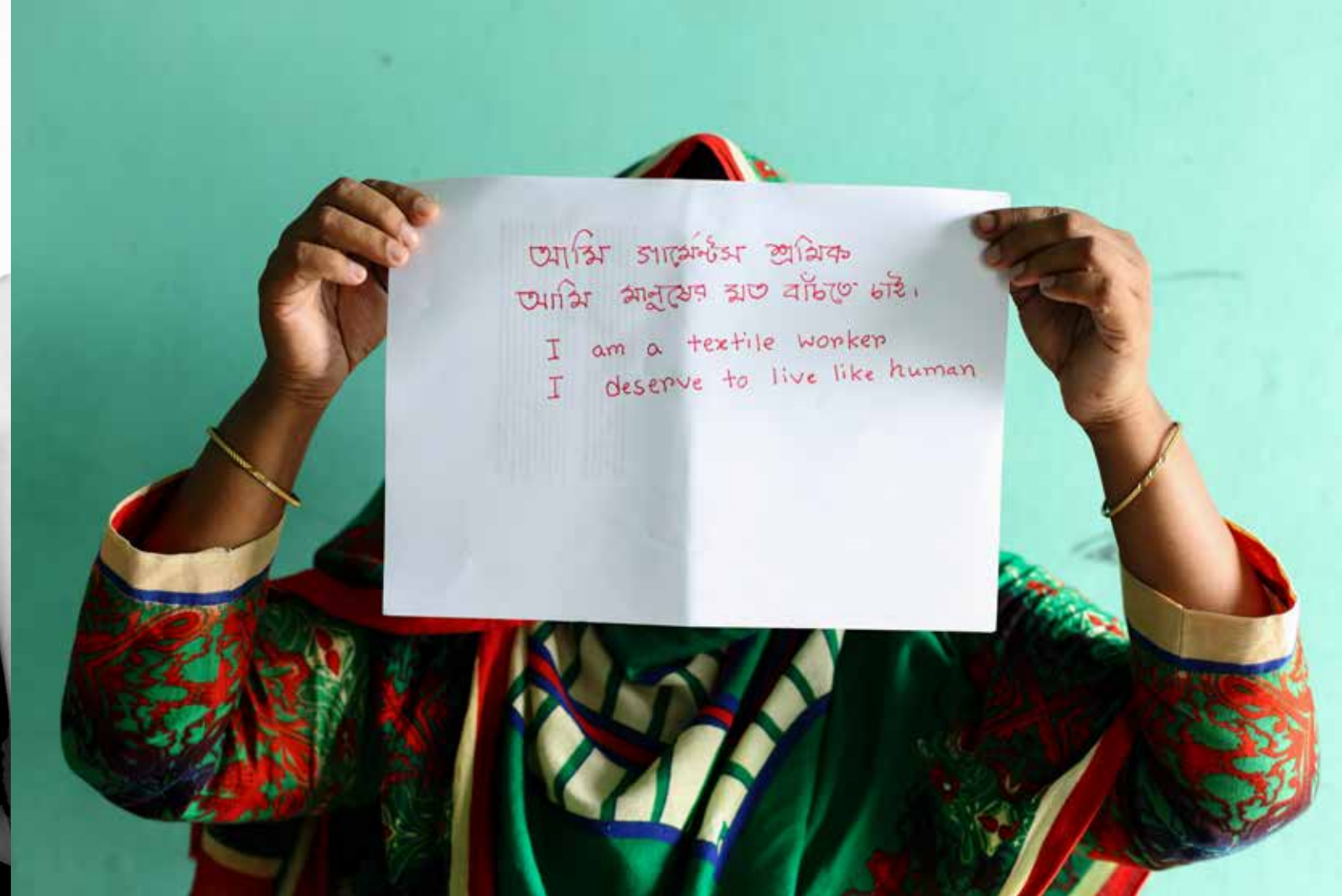
this led to great exposure on Facebook and Instagram. We invited people to participate in the challenge. Almost 700 people signed up and together they raised over EUR 30,000. It also led to an increase in our supporter base, online followers and traffic to our website. We are very grateful to all the participants, supporters and ambassadors who were involved in this challenge. We will continue and further develop the Women's Rights Challenge in 2020.

Ambassador

In March 2019 we welcomed Geraldine Kemper, who hosts several television programmes in the Netherlands, as ActionAid's ambassador. Her travels motivated her to commit herself to ActionAid: 'I have met women from all over the world, who often told me intense and impressive stories. I feel that women should support each other and share each other's stories. That's why I am proud and excited to be an advocate for women's rights as ActionAid's ambassador.' We think Geraldine is a great match with ActionAid and we are very happy that she is committed to support our work. In 2020 she will visit several ActionAid programmes focussing on gender-based violence and corporate accountability in South Africa.

Nelson Mandela Lecture

ActionAid invited a group of loyal supporters in March 2019 to the first Nelson Mandela lecture in the International Theater Amsterdam. It was organised by ZAM Magazine, that used to be published by NiZA – formerly ActionAid in the Netherlands. The lecture was hosted by Adriaan van Dis and had Sisonke Msimang as main speaker. She spoke about Mandela's legacy and the problems that South Africa is facing today.



Media presence

In 2019, we continued our media outreach to advocate for people living in poverty. ActionAid was regularly featured in the media, covering topics such as inequality, corporate accountability, climate justice and gender-based violence. Our ambassadors Geraldine Kemper and Abbey Hoes talked in newspapers and magazines about our work on women's rights, and we published several op-eds in national newspapers. One of our op-eds was a piece in national newspaper Trouw about the feminist economy which explained why a new economic system is needed to achieve gender equality. This piece struck a chord with many and was followed by a big response in the form of other op-eds in the same newspaper. The aim of our op-ed was to start a public conversation about the feminist economy which was successful given the response.

We will continue feeding into this conversation in 2020 to advocate for all people – and particularly women – living in poverty. Our report on human rights in the wind turbine supply chain got good coverage in the media with a big article in the Saturday Trouw newspaper as well as an op-ed published in Volkskrant shortly afterwards. Our primary aim was to continue the discussion with politicians, companies and civil servants about responsible mineral supply chains. We also wanted to reinforce the message in the broader public debate about just transition: that for a truly fair and just transition, it is important to look at human rights as well as the environmental impact in relation to sustainable energy.



We would like to thank all our supporters, donors and partners for their invaluable support in 2019. In 2020, we look forward to new exciting partnerships and increased visibility for our work.

3. OUR ORGANISATION

Our accountability is to people living in poverty and injustice, and also to our supporters here in the Netherlands, to ensure that they have confidence in how we use our resources. Learn how we are organised, evaluate and collaborate.

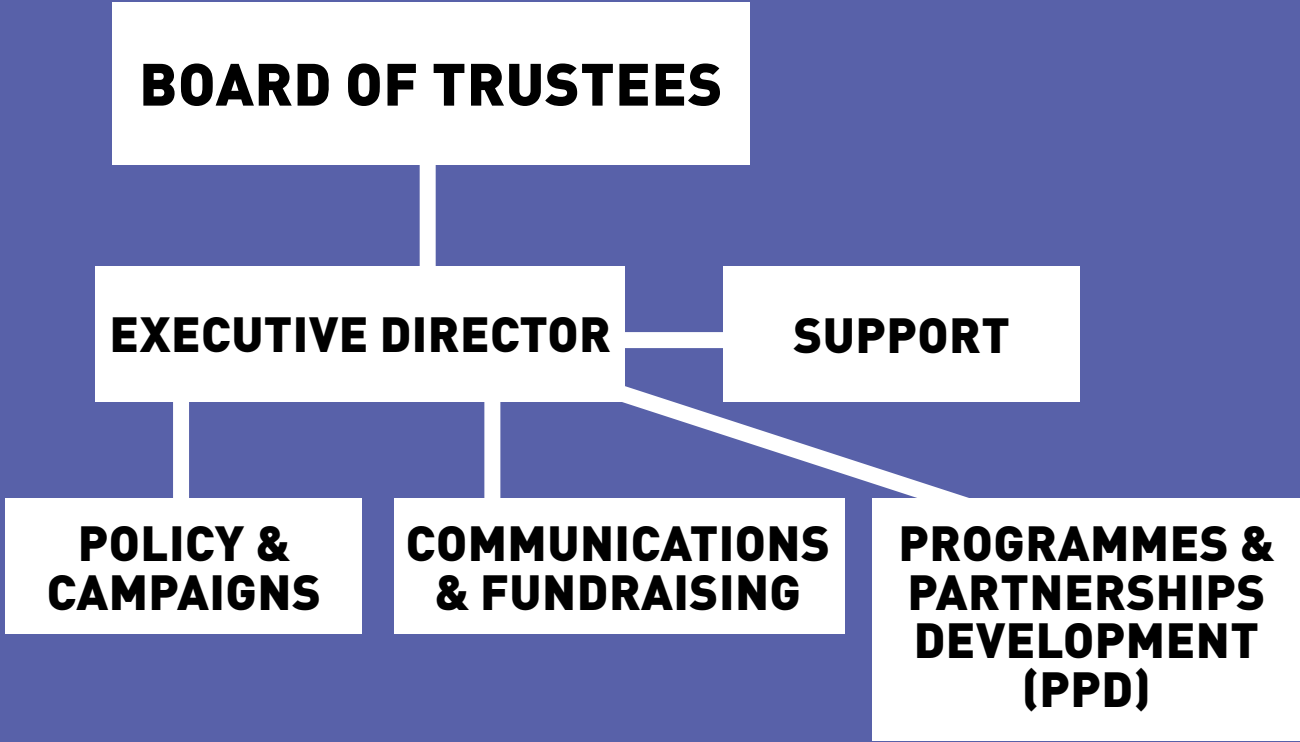


3.1
HOW WE ARE ORGANISED

ActionAid Netherlands has a one tier governance model. The highest authority is our board of Trustees. Members of the board are appointed for a three-year term, after which reappointment is possible for a maximum of an additional term. Members are selected based on pre-determined profiles and come from a wide range of different backgrounds, all adding to the knowledge and profile of ActionAid.

The board supervises the overall progress of the strategic plan, the annual action plan and the budget. In addition to its supervisory function, the board aspires to act as a sounding board and advisor to the executive director. The executive director is mandated with actual management of the organisation. Together with the management team, she drafts and proposes strategies, action plans and budgets and key policies for the board's approval. Once approved by the board, the executive director is responsible for implementing these plans and policies and gives a quarterly update to the board. The relationship between board and executive director is formally captured in the constitution, the board code and the management code policies. ActionAid Netherlands is organised in four departments: Programmes and Partnerships Development (PPD), Policy and Campaigns, Fundraising and Communications and Support (finance, IT and HR).

ORGANISATION



3.2 BOARD OF TRUSTEES REPORT

During 2019 our board consisted of eight members, five female and three male. The board is chaired by Anne-Marijke Podt and they met during six formal and several informal board meetings. The Board of Trustees is regularly informed and consulted on major changes and important strategic choices relating to various matters including organisational development, operations, finances, the strategic direction of ActionAid Netherlands. The finance and audit committee, consisting of two board members supported by the executive director and head of finance, also met quarterly to monitor financial health of the organisation as well as the internal administrative processes. The committee also makes recommendations to the board on appointing the external auditor and discusses annual management letters and annual reports with the external auditor.

The ActionAid International Board of Trustees holds at least one face-to-face meeting each year. The chair of ActionAid's board participates together with ActionAid's executive director in these meetings on behalf of the organisation. During this meeting strategic and operational plans, budget, and governance are reviewed. As our chair was unable to attend the June 2019 meeting in Ghana, Board of Trustee member Maarten van Heems attended this meeting in her place. An ActionAid International representative is part of the board team: Girish Menon (director of ActionAid UK). Conversely, our board chair takes up a seat as a full voting member of the International Assembly of the ActionAid International Federation.

Members of the Board of Trustees perform their duties unremunerated. They are reimbursed for expenses incurred in the performance of their duties. In reality, board members rarely claim these expenses.

The ActionAid board and management subscribe to the Code of Good Governance for Good Causes (Code Goed Bestuur). The Board of Trustees

Board of Trustees

| Name | Position | Member since | Field of expertise |
|-------------------------|-----------|--------------|------------------------------------|
| Anne-Marijke Podt | Chair* | 5 Jun 2018 | Governance, Politics |
| Luuk Hamer | Member | 2 Sept 2014 | International Law and Human Rights |
| Marianne van der Zijde | Treasurer | 24 Mar 2015 | Finance |
| Girish Menon | Member | 30 Sept 2016 | International Development, AAI rep |
| Maaïke Willemsen | Member | 5 Apr 2017 | Public Security |
| Emma Verheijke | Member | 5 Apr 2017 | Impact Management |
| Betteke de Gaay Fortman | Member | 5 Jun 2018 | International Development |
| Maarten van Heems | Member | 5 Jun 2018 | Campaigns and Communication |

* Chair since 4 September 2018

appoints, evaluates and dismisses the executive director, and determines the executive director's compensation in accordance to the Adviesregeling Beloning Directeuren van Goede Doelen. An interim director was recruited during the first quarter of 2019, to cover for the leave of the executive director Ruud van de Hurk. In August 2019, the executive director announced that he would be leaving the organisation by November 2019. He had led ActionAid for more than ten years, during which the organisation, as part of ActionAid International, has grown into a movement of people with world-wide influence – fighting poverty, inequality and injustice. The Board of Trustees started the process of recruiting a new executive director and appointed Jannelieke Aalstein from November 15th.

2020

"We have to change to stay the same". In order to increase our reach and long-term impact, learning and innovation will be further anchored in the way we work. In 2020, ActionAid will continue to critically reflect on existing practices and – led by our new director – develop a new three year strategy in order to adequately respond to worldwide challenges. 2020 will also be an exciting year in which we together with our partners will develop new programmes to be rolled out.

The Board of Trustees would like to take this opportunity to thank all ActionAid staff members for their outstanding work in the past year. We should not forget all the excellent work we accomplish, and that ActionAid has a positive impact on the lives of so many: power in people!



Jannelieke Aalstein (executive director, left) and Anne-Marijke Podt (chair) marching during the Women's March.



3.3 TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Thanks to our supporters and funding institutions we can run programmes in the Global South and make the biggest impact in partnership with local communities.

We want to be transparent in the way we work, what we do and how the money is spend. ActionAid Netherlands holds the Central Bureau on Fundraising (CBF) seal of approval, which is named Erkenningsregeling. Furthermore, it has had Dutch charitable status (ANBI) since 2008. **In 2019, we received the ISO 9001:2015 certificate**; the international standard for a quality management system. In addition, we abide by ActionAid International's strict requirements in the spheres of governance, monitoring and impact measurement.

Staff and integrity

Accountability is a core value of ActionAid. Being accountable means committing ourselves to the highest standards of integrity in all our actions. The ActionAid federation has a strict Code of Conduct. New staff members are required to sign the code before they start working at ActionAid. No violations of the code were reported in 2019. ActionAid International and the sector in the Netherlands (through Goede Doelen Nederland and Partos) have published several extra policies to prevent integrity related issues and new procedures have been developed to ensure safeguarding and integrity. In 2019 ActionAid has conformed to all new requirements including moral judgement training for board, management team and all staff. The staff is represented in a staff representation body and meets regularly with both executive director and HR advisor. The matters of setting up a staff climate survey and the hiring of a new occupational health and safety service were among the items discussed.

In 2019 the ActionAid office in Amsterdam on average employed 21 staff members (19 full time employees). The organisation has four departments: programmes and partnerships, policy and campaigns, fundraising and communications, and finance and support. ActionAid also regularly benefits from working with interns and volunteers who contribute to projects, research, events and writing and translating articles for our website and newsletters. In addition to that, we are growing a strong base of campaigners who join in our actions and campaigns. 75% of staff are women.

Complaints policy

We take complaints very seriously. When ActionAid receives a complaint we respond and follow up within five working days, in line with our policy.

Corporate social responsibility

We are as environmentally aware as possible in keeping with ActionAid's ideology and duty of care to the environment, the world and its inhabitants. We print as little and as efficiently as possible and all printing is done on FSC paper. Waste is separated before leaving the premises. Our savings are kept with ASN Bank and for our regular banking we engage with Triodos. Our pensions are administered by Zwitserleven. Donations from companies are assessed using our company fundraising policy to ensure that these businesses meet the conditions of corporate social responsibility. Finally, we monitor our travel behaviour to ensure efficient use of resources and awareness of our carbon footprint.



3.4

LEARNING AND EVALUATION

Ensuring the best use of resources

Our strategy, *Change the rules for a just and sustainable world*, covers the period 2017 till 2028. The strategic objectives are in sync with the overall objectives of the ActionAid International strategy. Within this long-term strategy, ActionAid develops updated three-year plans, the first being for the period 2018 – 2020. Progress of the strategic objectives is monitored using a monitoring framework that also feeds into the overall federation measuring of progress. Annual action plans based on the three-year plans are drawn up with SMART indicators. Learning from earlier experience and improving the effectiveness and efficiency of our operations is a constant concern.

The internal processes and procedures are described in a comprehensive Quality Manual that has been updated. The board approves long-term financial and strategic policies, along with annual action plans and associated budgets. Accompanying risk assessments are developed yearly and reviewed halfway through every year. The management team monitors actual income and expenditure against the budget and presents quarterly reports to the board.

Internal processes are regularly reviewed by the management team and external parties. Each year, an external auditor prepares a management letter. The Dutch Central Bureau of Fundraising (CBF) performs three-yearly evaluations before awarding a renewed seal of approval.

In all our programmes, a reflective approach is key to improving the effectiveness of our work.

We are committed to building people's capability to take innovative, rights-based action themselves. We can only do this if we listen to and learn from each other. We therefore host a Participatory Reflection and Review Process (PRRP) in all country programmes. This takes place on an annual basis and provides an opportunity for community members and stakeholders to reflect on progress made and challenges encountered, and to advise ActionAid on ongoing activities. In addition to ensuring downward accountability to stakeholders, the PRRP provides an excellent opportunity to share learning between ActionAid's communities, districts, countries and the wider ActionAid International Federation.

In the Netherlands we build knowledge in areas relevant to our work and learn from our own and other peers' experiences. With the training budget that is available, in 2019 we have done a management team building session, several HRBA (human rights-based approach) and feminist leadership workshops, safeguarding and integrity workshops and individual coaching.

We run programmes in the Netherlands – some with a European component – and in Africa, Asia and South America. Most of these programmes are funded by grants from institutions such as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and EU. Programmes are contractually agreed with partners and subject to stringent monitoring and evaluation rules, to which we conform. Progress is also constantly monitored through several consultations with our partners in the Global South. We have learning loops in all our projects, so we constantly evaluate and further develop as we go along.



3.5 PARTNERS AND STAKE- HOLDER ENGAGEMENT

We inform and seek an active dialogue with all our stakeholders: our local partners and activists, partners in the North, policy makers and politicians, journalists, donors, the ActionAid federation and last but certainly not least the public. On our website we explain ActionAid's open information policy, which is guided by our commitment to transparency and to sharing information on our policies and choices with our stakeholders.

• Local partners and local activists

Our interaction with colleagues in the Global South is vital to the quality of our work and forms a key ingredient for advocacy and communication in the North. Collaboration with these stakeholders requires mutual accountability, solidarity and transparency. In practice, interaction with our partners is realised through mutual visits and the planning and implementation of joint initiatives. Contact with local activists is usually by email, Skype and telephone. If an opportunity arises to influence policy or communicate with the media or the public, a local activist is often invited for a visit to the Netherlands.

• Donors – institutional and private

We are in regular contact with our institutional and private donors by telephone and email. They receive all our communications and our Annual Report. Via social media as well as printed newsletters we regularly inform our stakeholders. We realise that not every donor enjoys being overwhelmed with communications, so we offer the opportunity online and in our newsletter to request less mailings or no mailings at all.

For communications by telephone, we observe the requirements of the Dutch Do Not Call Register. Our complaints procedure ensures we react quickly and efficiently to any questions and complaints from donors.

• Partnerships with other ngo's

We realise that change will only come about if enough people demand it. There is great value in numbers. We therefore work closely with many organisations: our FGG partners, and our partners in other networks including Tax Justice Netherlands, IANRA, Wo=Men and Partos. Effective collaboration requires maximum mutual transparency. We meet regularly with our partners, sharing new information and developments, research results and views. Beyond our website we use social media such as Twitter, Facebook and Instagram.

• Policy makers and politicians

We are in regular contact with ministers, state secretaries, MPs, civil servants and other officials who deal with issues that relate to our change agenda. We engage in workshops, seminars, round tables and conferences to ensure that our voice and the voices of our local partners are heard.

• Media and press

Radio/TV as well as print journalists are important mediators between our organisation and the public at large, and between us and policy makers and politicians. Conversely, we are a trusted source of information for journalists because of our thematic expertise and our contacts with Southern constituencies and local activists. We build good relationships with journalists and will always share new perspectives and important developments.

• ActionAid International

Since 2012, we are a formal member of ActionAid International (AAI), a federation working in approximately 45 countries and based in South Africa. Our membership entails cooperation in programmes and campaigns as well as some shared strategies, procedures and processes, and mutual participation in each other's highest decision-making bodies. We award great importance to this cooperation, because it allows us to tap far more knowledge than we would otherwise be able to, and because it brings us so much closer to local communities and changemakers. Despite our membership of the federation, ActionAid Netherlands has a formal autonomy in decision making. The existing accountabilities within our national context have not changed, with our board remaining the prime authority in the organisation, to which the executive director remains accountable.



Collaboration
requires mutual
accountability,
solidarity and
transparency.

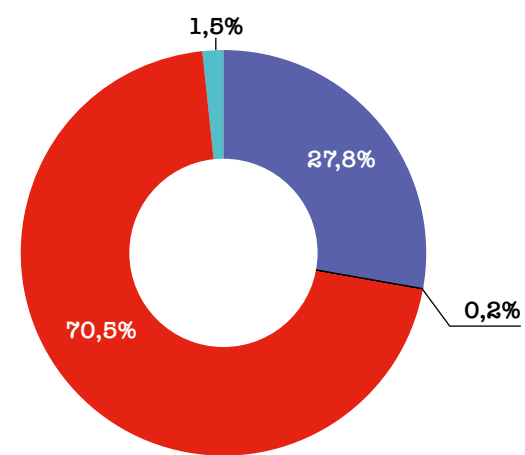


4. FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

The financial statements 2019 have been prepared in accordance with the Dutch Directive 650 Fundraising Institutions (updated in 2016). On 14 April 2020 the board approved the annual accounts after an audit by Dubois and Co. The auditor's report is included in this annual report.



Income (in €)



| | | |
|--|-------------|-------|
| Income from private individuals | € 924.064 | 27,8% |
| Income from companies | € 6.080 | 0,2% |
| Income from Government subsidies | € 2.348.370 | 70,5% |
| Income from other non-profit organisations | € 51.391 | 1,5% |

| | | |
|--------------|-------------|------|
| TOTAL INCOME | € 3.329.905 | 100% |
|--------------|-------------|------|

The table beneath provides an oversight of institutional and philanthropy funding sources in 2019 (and before).

| Programme | Donor | Total support | Contracted period | Final approval* |
|-----------------------------|---|---------------|-------------------|-----------------|
| Fair, Green and Global | Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Partnership Programme) | € 10,360,000 | 2016-2020 | 2021 |
| Urban 95++ | Bernard van Leer Foundation | € 254,600 | 2017-2019 | 2020 |
| Urban 95++ | Oak Foundation | € 234,900 | 2017-2019 | 2020 |
| Isiolo Water programme | Dioraphte Foundation | € 149,900 | 2017-2018 | 2019 |
| Vocational Training Liberia | Turing Foundation | € 65,413 | 2017-2018 | 2019 |
| NWO | NWO | €14,400 | 2019-2020 | 2020 |

*All subsidies will be approved at the end of the contracted period.



Expenditure

In 2019 ActionAid spent €3,044,616 or 87 percent of its total costs on mission objectives. The costs of fundraising amounted to €312,699 which is 10 percent of our total income. In 2019, we contributed to ActionAid International with a total of €184,000.

| ActionAid International contribution | |
|--|-----------------|
| Campaigning, advocacy and research | € 25.154 |
| Programme support to partners in South | € 26.855 |
| Fundraising | € 40.357 |
| Government subsidies (fundraising) | € 41.187 |
| Management and administration | € 50.447 |
| | €184.000 |

Continuity Reserve

The aim of our reserves policy is to safeguard solvency and maintain future activities. The ideal continuity reserve is defined by our reserves policy which advises a minimum of 10 percent of institutional income and a maximum of six months of total operational costs (defined as all staff costs, minus short term contracts, plus overhead costs, plus non-staff fundraising costs). Our free reserves (*continuiteitsreserve*) at year end will be at €470,489 in tune with our reserves policy.

Risks

Risk management is an important aspect of our governance. Standard procedure is to discuss the risks register twice a year in the board's finance and audit committee as well as in the full board: once at the time of the approval of the annual plan and once mid-year. The risk register is presented with ratings for probability and impact as well as with risk mitigation actions. Our immediate mitigation strategy is diversification in income streams through investing in voluntary and high value fundraising, piloting new channels of fundraising and enhancing our brand. ActionAid will strengthen its effort to generate new institutional and philanthropic income and will invest in specific expertise to source and apply to new opportunities. We will also submit two large funding proposals to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, under the Power of Voices programme. We have full trust in our team, but are also aware of the challenging times ahead. That's why board and management have an extra scenario/budget meeting planned in June 2020.



Another risk forms the shrinking political space in which we operate. This is both a medium risk for the wellbeing of our overseas colleagues as well as for our compliance with commitments to donors. Building good relationships with members of parliament, press and embassies and continuously emphasising the importance of protecting human rights and space for civil society is our key mitigation strategy.

A standard risk for organisations working in remote areas with complex project chains is fraud. The ActionAid federation has robust anti-fraud policies and stringent processes in place to prevent and deal with fraud. In that respect it is worth mentioning that regular internal audits from the overall secretariat are performed. Such an audit took place in the Netherlands in 2018.

Finally, the current media attention on sexual abuse cases involving INGOs has taught us to be vigilant and invest in robust safeguarding policies and practices to diminish any risks.

Future developments

Our programme focus in 2020 will remain on assisting partners and communities to lobby for proper corporate conduct and fight against human rights violations such as land grabs, unfair tax regimes and unfavourable investment policies. As always, working on equality, we will focus on strengthening the rights and voice of women. We will continue to work closely with our colleagues in the federation and seek to strengthen international campaigns where possible.

We will aim to be bolder and more visible. To that end we will continue to

engage in substantial campaigns work, further strengthening the ActionAid brand in the Dutch public landscape. This will support our fundraising, which itself will gradually shift from street fundraising to online fundraising and telemarketing. But we will also look beyond the Netherlands to find institutional and philanthropic partnerships.

Last but not least, the board will reflect on our current governance model.

A woman wearing a white headscarf and a patterned dress is herding a flock of goats on a dry, rocky hillside. She is holding a long stick and looking back at the goats. The goats are of various colors, including white, brown, and black. The background is a dry, hilly landscape with sparse vegetation.

5. ANNUAL ACCOUNTS 2019

5.1 BALANCE SHEET PER 31.12.2019 (IN €)

| ASSETS | 31 DECEMBER 2019 | 31 DECEMBER 2018 |
|------------------------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Fixed assets | 45,824 | 28,765 |
| Accounts receivable | 73,383 | 28,092 |
| Cash and cash equivalents | 1,393,153 | 1,887,252 |
| | 1,466,536 | 1,915,344 |
| Total Assets | 1,512,360 | 1,944,109 |
| | | |
| LIABILITIES | 31 DECEMBER 2019 | 31 DECEMBER 2018 |
| Reserves: | | |
| - Continuity reserves | 470,489 | 612,123 |
| - Designated fund | 7,950 | 23,498 |
| Provision for long-term sick leave | - | 53,000 |
| | | |
| Current liabilities | | |
| - Advances received from sponsors | 385,250 | 672,813 |
| - Short-term project liabilities | 375,228 | 229,612 |
| - Payables | 273,443 | 353,063 |
| | 1,033,921 | 1,255,488 |
| Total Liabilities | 1,512,360 | 1,944,109 |

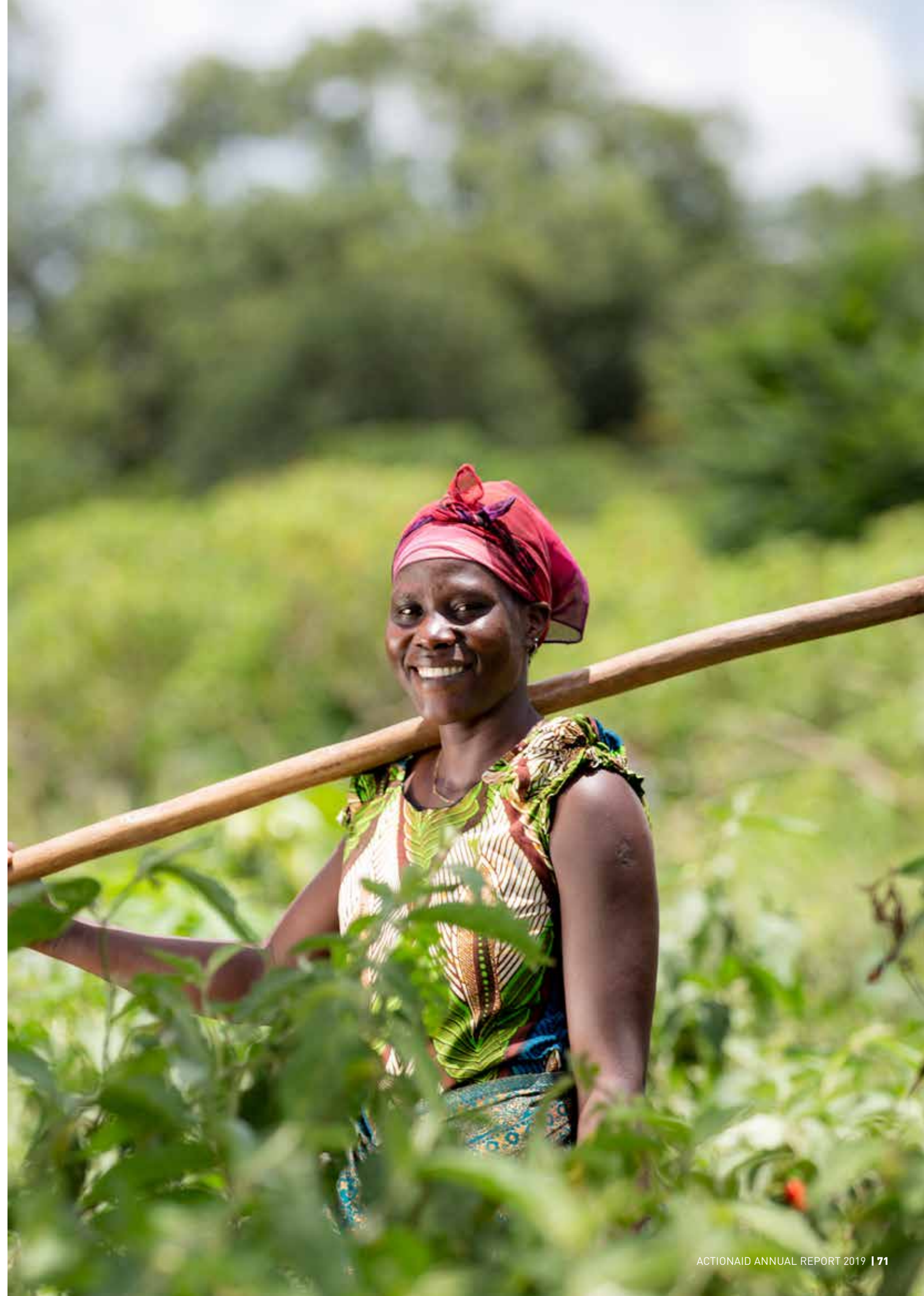
5.2 STATEMENT OF INCOME AND EXPENDITURE (IN €)

| INCOME | ACTUAL 2019 | PLAN 2019 | ACTUAL 2018 |
|---|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Income from private individuals | 924,064 | 879,610 | 834,956 |
| Income from companies | 6,080 | 10,000 | 5,159 |
| Income from government subsidies | 2,348,370 | 2,549,202 | 2,182,906 |
| Income from other non-profit organisations | 51,391 | 460,000 | 337,838 |
| Total Income | 3,329,905 | 3,898,812 | 337,838 |
| EXPENDITURE | ACTUAL 2019 | PLAN 2019 | ACTUAL 2018 |
| Related to mission objectives: | | | |
| - Campaigning, Advocacy & Research | 709,454 | 756,071 | 670,998 |
| - Communication & Public Information | 553,255 | 571,772 | 501,441 |
| - Programme support to partners in the Global South | 1,781,907 | 1,997,749 | 1,735,936 |
| | 3,044,616 | 3,325,592 | 2,908,375 |
| Acquisition of income: | | | |
| - Cost of fundraising | 358,315 | 450,150 | 393,092 |
| | 358,315 | 450,150 | 393,092 |
| Managemant and administration | 83,971 | 123,071 | 108,477 |
| Total Expenditure | 3,486,902 | 3,898,813 | 3,409,944 |
| Balance before financial income and expenses | -156,996 | - | -49,085 |
| Financial income/expenses | -187 | - | -3,516 |
| Surplus/deficit | -157,183 | - | -52,600 |
| Added to reserves: | | | |
| - Continuity reserves | -141,635 | - | -36,122 |
| - Reserve for Campaign & Fundraising | - | - | -100,00 |
| - Designated Fund | -15,548 | - | 11,278 |
| | -157,183 | | -52,600 |

5.3

CASH FLOW STATEMENT (IN €)

| OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES | 2019 | 2018 |
|---|------------------|------------------|
| Deficit | -157,183 | -52,600 |
| Adjustments for depreciation | -23,890 | 24,184 |
| | -181,073 | -28,416 |
| Changes in working capital: | | |
| - Trade receivables | -45,291 | 131,415 |
| - Trade payables | -221,566 | -30,281 |
| | -266,856 | 101,134 |
| - Provision | -53,000 | 53,000 |
| Total Operational cash flow | -500,929 | 125,718 |
| | | |
| INVESTMENT ACTIVITIES | | |
| Investments in tangible fixed assets | -34,433 | -9,264 |
| Disinvestments in tangible fixed assets | 41,263 | - |
| Total Investment cash flow | 6,830 | -9,264 |
| | | |
| FINANCING ACTIVITIES | 2019 | 2018 |
| From designated fund | - | - |
| Total Investment cash flow | - | - |
| Net cash flow | -494,099 | 116,454 |
| Decrease/increase in funds | -494,099 | 116,454 |
| | | |
| | 2019 | 2018 |
| Cash on January 1 | 1,887,252 | 1,770,797 |
| Cash on December 31 | 1,393,153 | 1,887,252 |
| Decrease/increase in funds | -494,099 | 116,455 |



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