

actionaid



ActionAid Ireland 2025

ANNUAL REPORT



Finegirl is a 59-year-old farmer, mother and grandmother from the Niger Delta, where companies have been mining oil for over 10 years. The rivers are now so polluted with oil and even when they try to harvest rainwater, it turns black from the fumes. In addition to a lack of clean drinking water, there is no longer any fish in the rivers, depriving the community of a vital source of food. Photo: Etinosa Yvonne/ ActionAid

WHO WE ARE

ActionAid was first established in the UK in 1972. In 1983, a small group of Irish people formed ActionAid Ireland to support ActionAid's work to end poverty and further human rights. As an affiliate member of the ActionAid federation, ActionAid Ireland is governed by its own voluntary Irish board but works closely with ActionAid International and other members to advance the shared mission to create a just, equitable and sustainable world.

The ActionAid International federation was founded in 2003 with its head office in Johannesburg, South Africa. The federation operates in over 71 countries today, with hubs in Asia, the Americas and Europe. The federation coordinates ActionAid's emergency responses worldwide through its International Humanitarian Action & Resilience Team and gives communications, campaigns, policy and IT support to federation members. ActionAid International's strategy, [Action for Global Justice](#), provides the overarching strategy for all work. [ActionAid Ireland's strategy](#) contributes to this work with our core focus on women's rights and climate and economic justice.

Women and girls: Unstoppable leaders for a fairer world

ActionAid Ireland stands proudly, confidently and with unapolo

OUR COMMITMENT TO FEMINIST LEADERSHIP

We believe in a just world free from poverty, oppression and patriarchy. This requires transformative feminist leaders: leaders who enable others to lead, building power with them instead of over them. To develop this approach, we have adopted a set of feminist leadership principles.

1. Self-awareness

We will **keep our egos in check, so that we can lead with empathy and open minds**. In order to do this, we will work towards accepting our vulnerabilities, as well as recognising and valuing our strengths and those of others.

2. Self-care and caring for others

We will take care of our **emotional and physical well-being**, in order to renew our inner sources of inspiration and compassion so we can continue to give our best. We encourage and support others to do the same, actively working towards a more flexible and supportive work environment, particularly for those with caring responsibilities.

3. Dismantling bias

We recognise that society gives us (and others) certain advantages that are not asked for or earned (for example, based on gender, class, race, caste, ability, sexual orientation, education or other factors). We will help to **uncover and challenge these forms of discrimination** in our day-to-day workplace practices and policies. We will be aware of how our own privileges can make others feel disempowered or inferior, as well as how we react to others' privilege, and deliberately change our behaviour to treat everyone as equals.

4. Inclusion

We will create ways for **everyone to be equally heard, respected and successful**. We will challenge ourselves to build diverse and inclusive teams and to recognize and respond to different barriers to participation.

5. Sharing power

ActionAid Ireland's strategy: A just and caring world for women and children

ActionAid Ireland's strategy A just and caring world for women and children serves as our roadmap for 2022 to 2027. This is our contribution in Ireland to the wider work of the ActionAid federation. Our strategy links with this global work, by focusing on women's rights, climate and economic justice.

We focus on supporting women and girls in their individual lives and within their communities, while seeking for transformative changes at national and international levels. Our mission is to support women's leadership and agency, strengthen their organisations and networks, and improve their lives for the long-term. Rooted deeply in communities, our work extends to collaborating with civil society and partnering with ActionAid offices in the Global South to deliver sustainable, long-term change. We hold states and international bodies accountable, demanding their commitment to human rights and justice for all.

Strategic priorities



Address the systemic and structural causes of **gender-based violence**



Promote women's leadership in humanitarian contexts



Amplify feminist alternatives for **economic and climate justice**



Pursue diverse sources of funding, inspire and engage all supporters

Strategic enablers



Uphold excellent standards of **accountability and governance**

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

2025 was my first full year as Chair of ActionAid Ireland. It was a privilege to see the extraordinary impact of our collective efforts to advance women's rights globally, and the good governance that underpins it. Women and girls are the heart of our work, and with the right support, we have seen them rise as unstoppable leaders for a fairer world, in their communities and beyond.

I'm very grateful to the Board of ActionAid Ireland, who volunteer their time to ensure the very highest standards of accountability and governance are met. ActionAid Ireland again achieved the Triple Lock standard from the Charities Institute of Ireland, a mark of the highest levels of transparency and accountability in our operations. We also reconfirmed our adherence to the Charities Regulator Governance Code and demonstrated our ongoing commitment to excellence in governance.

ActionAid was the first global organisation to have its approach to emergencies independently verified by the Core Humanitarian Standard on Quality and Accountability. This accreditation reflects our commitment to putting communities affected by crises at the centre of our response and ensuring that they are aware of their rights and involved at all levels. With growing crises around the world, this work has never been more important.

In a world where women's rights continue to be challenged, our supporters' solidarity is more crucial than ever. Thanks to the ongoing commitment from our supporters, we can stand alongside women and girls as they lead the charge for lasting change in their communities. We prioritise the hardest-to-reach people and support them, against huge odds, to campaign for their rights so they can transform their own lives, their own way.

As I look to the year ahead, I see immense challenges globally, and yet I am filled with determination and hope because of the unstoppable women and girls we work with across the globe, and the steadfast support we receive in Ireland. ActionAid will continue to support movements of young people and women who are demanding accountability and advancing their rights.



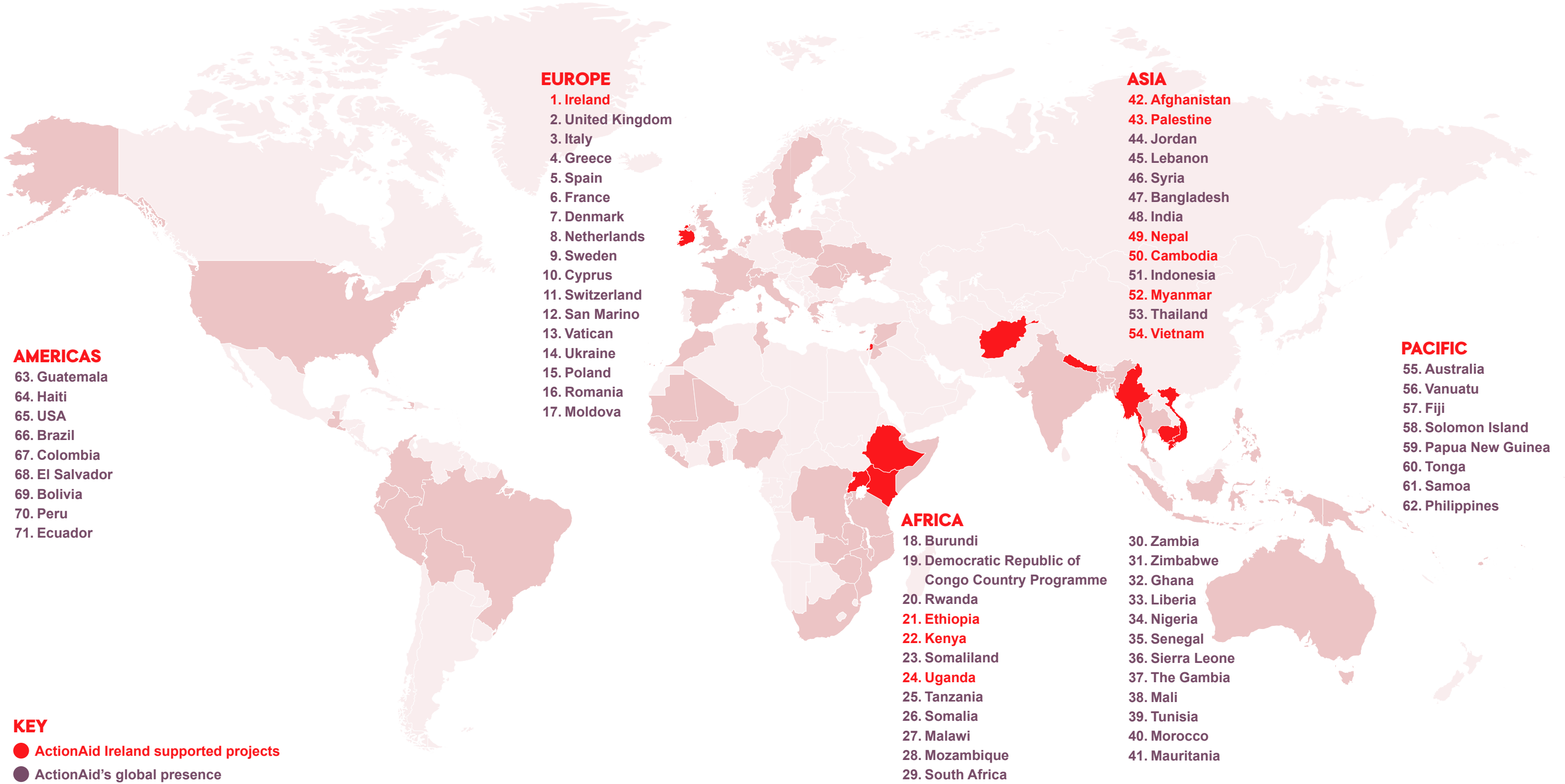
Renée Clifford Dempsey
Chairperson, ActionAid Ireland

WHERE WE WORK

Impact multiplied by 71

ActionAid Ireland is an Irish NGO with a global reach through the ActionAid federation of 71 member countries across Africa, Asia, Europe and the Americas. This means greater influence, greater expertise, greater sharing of resources, and greater impact. All ActionAid offices in the Global South have local leadership and are deeply rooted in those countries.

In 2025 ActionAid Ireland funded programmes in nine of the 71 countries within the federation: Afghanistan, Cambodia, Ethiopia, Kenya, Myanmar, Nepal, the occupied Palestinian territory, Uganda and Vietnam.



ACTIONAID IRELAND'S IMPACT

Around the globe we support women and girls who are unstoppable leaders for a fairer world.



8,195 donors gave €3.2 million to empower women to change the world.



9,144 women and girls reached through the Irish Aid funded women's rights programme.



Seven communities in five countries supported women and children to alleviate violence, access education and work opportunities and increase resilience to climate change, through funds from child sponsorship.



Over 23,475 Irish people took action to demand a fairer, more equitable world because of campaigns that we led.



18 politicians were engaged on women's rights, climate justice and economic justice.



81,991 people in Palestine were reached with humanitarian support.

Our programmes

The Directors' Report

The Directors (also referred to as Trustees) present their annual report together with the audited financial statements of ActionAid Ireland for the year ending 31st December 2025.

In 2025, the ActionAid federation worked in 71 countries around the world. ActionAid Ireland's work was made possible because of generous support of people in Ireland. ActionAid Ireland directly supported work in Cambodia, Ethiopia, Kenya, Nepal, Uganda, Vietnam, and Palestine. We continue to implement our Equitable Partnership Policy. Equitable partnership is a collaborative relationship that shares power, responsibilities and benefits. It means shifting power for the empowerment of local civil society, particularly in the Global South, so they are autonomous in resource allocation,

decision-making, and strategic focus, while also advancing transnational solidarity to tackle poverty and injustice.

ActionAid Ireland is a registered charity, established as a company limited by guarantee and governed by a voluntary Board of Directors whose principal responsibilities are the setting and monitoring of the strategic direction of the organisation, monitoring compliance and ensuring the efficient and effective use of resources towards achieving our mission.

Governance structure, roles and responsibilities

The Governance Handbook was revised in 2025, setting out the guiding principles for the overall governance of the organisation and clear distinctions between the functions of the Board, the CEO and the staff team to whom day-to-day management is delegated. This means that matters such as policy, programme, fundraising, planning, and budgets are prepared by the management team for discussion with, and approval by, the Board. Management report to the Board under each strategic priority and its corresponding key result.

	Board Meetings	Finance & Audit Committee	Governance & Board Development Committee
Board of Directors	Attended (Eligible)	Attended (Eligible)	Attended (Eligible)
Ms Renée Dempsey Clifford	6/6	6/6	5/5
Ms Bríd O’Flaherty	6/6	-	5/5
Ms Moira Leydon	5/6	-	-
Mr Ben Burton (UK)	3/6	4/6	-
Mr Graham Roe	6/6	-	-
Ms Sadhbh O’Neill	3/6	-	-
Ms Gillian Barrett	4/5	5/5	-
Ms Zemdena Abebe Areru (Ethiopia)	1/1	-	-
Ms Makena Mwobobia (Kenya)	2/4	-	3/3
Mr James Foley	0/0	0/1	-
Ms Everjoice J. Win (Zimbabwe) (RIP)	0/1	-	-
Governance & Board Development Committee Member			
Ms Sorcha Brady	-	-	4/4

The Finance and Audit Committee:

The

TEAM PAGE

Staff who served the organisation in 2025

Leadership, finance and support

Karol Balfe
CEO

The CEO oversees all of the organisation’s work, represents the organisation in public and policy forums, and line manages the Head of Finance & Governance, the Head of Programmes, Head of Fundraising, the Communications & Campaigns Manager and the Executive Assistant.

Sarah Marshall
Executive Assistant

Olive Corbett
Head of Finance & Governance

The Head of Finance and Governance ensures ActionAid Ireland meets the highest standards of financial management and governance, including through preparing management accounts that are overseen by the independent and voluntary Board of Directors and ensuring our key polices are up to date. This role also line manages the Finance Coordinator.

Kate Carroll
Finance Coordinator

Programmes

Grainne Kilcullen
Head of Programmes
(Maternity leave)

Finola Finan
Head of Programmes
(Maternity leave contract)

The Head of Programmes manages ActionAid Ireland’s

