

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

ActionAid UK explains:  
**Period poverty**

## Who are we?

ActionAid is an international charity that works with women and girls living in poverty. Our dedicated local staff are changing the world with women and girls. We are ending violence and fighting poverty so that all women, everywhere, can create the future they want.

We work in 45 countries across Africa, Asia and Latin America. In each country, we have dedicated staff members and local partner organisations who support women and girls as they claim their rights and help lead their communities out of poverty.

## What do we do?

ActionAid puts the rights of women and girls at the heart of all we do, because we know the denial of these rights is one of the biggest causes of poverty worldwide, and a grave injustice.

Our three main areas of work are promoting women's economic empowerment; prioritising women's rights and leadership during humanitarian emergencies; and ending violence against women and girls.



Talat, a domestic violence survivor in India, trained to be one of her country's few female rickshaw drivers, thanks to an ActionAid initiative.



# How are we tackling period poverty?

Periods are a natural process and a part of nearly every girl's life. But without access to toilets or sanitary products at school, many girls are missing out on their education as they have little choice but to stay at home for a few days each month.



**One in 10 girls in Africa misses school because she doesn't have access to sanitary products, or because there aren't safe, private toilets for her to use.**

From our donor-supported work ending period shaming practices like 'chhaupadi' in western Nepal, to distributing sanitary products in Somaliland displacement camps, we are ensuring that **no woman or girl is held back because of her period.**

We recognise that access to sanitary products is not a 'nice-to-have.' That's why we work with women and girls, community leaders, men and boys, schools and governments to help end period poverty around the world.

- We train women and girls to make reusable sanitary pads so they always have access to affordable products.
- In our girls' clubs and safe spaces in schools, we provide information about periods, sex and pregnancy, so girls are better informed about their bodies.
- During humanitarian emergencies, we provide hygiene kits containing sanitary towels, soap and clean underwear, to help women and girls manage their periods.
- We're working with local communities to end the practice of chhaupadi, a period-shaming tradition in Nepal, for good.

**But there is still so much more to be done to end period poverty around the world.**

## Case study

# Ending period poverty in Rwanda

In Rwanda, many girls miss up to 50 days of school every year because of period poverty and stigma. Until recently, 14-year-old Jeanne (pictured left and on the cover) was one of these girls.

Along with many of her friends living in southern Rwanda, Jeanne didn't have access to sanitary protection and would use cloth to absorb the blood, often resulting in embarrassing leaks. Because of that, she would skip school for up to five days during her period.

But the lives of Jeanne and her schoolfriends have been transformed. Thanks to vital funds raised by ActionAid's supporters, we were able to build a safe room in Jeanne's school where girls can shower, change, lie down if they are in pain and access sanitary pads. They are also given support to manage their periods and advice on topics like sexual health, difficult relationships and preventing HIV.

Now, girls at Jeanne's school are no longer missing classes. They can simply ask for the key to the room, no questions asked. Teachers say that before the safe rooms were installed, girls were struggling with their work because they were missing school every month. They are now competing with the boys to take the top positions in class!



# Our amazing supporters

We want to change the lives of more girls like Jeanne, but we need your support to make our life-changing work possible.

Here are some of the ways you could make a real difference to women and girls living in poverty around the world:



**£3**

can help provide hygiene kits containing soap, clean underwear and sanitary pads



**£10**

can help build safe, clean toilets in schools so that girls can manage their periods in privacy



**£15**

can help educate girls – and boys – in menstrual hygiene and reproductive health



**£26**

could provide a pack of five reusable sanitary pads for 10 girls, to help them manage their periods



**£45**

could help build lockable toilets in schools to give girls the privacy they need during their periods



Geeta, 14, is banished from her home and forced to live in a remote hut when she has her period. This is part of an ancient tradition called chhaupadi, which ActionAid is working to end in western Nepal.

## Get in touch

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