

NEWSLETTER



Dear Reader,

Thank you for your continued support and for being such a cherished member of our amazing community

We are proud to present to you the 1st edition of our Quarterly Newsletter for 2026, showcasing our latest milestones and ongoing efforts in advancing social justice.

We reflect with pride on the dedication and commitment of our team and partners in driving AASA's mission forward. Your ongoing commitment strengthens our ability to respond to the urgent realities faced by women, girls, and young people across South Africa.

This edition captures significant highlights of our work including the humanitarian response conducted for the flood affected families in Mpumalanga and Limpopo, our participation in the Alternative Mining Indaba, and our exciting announcement of the launch of our 2026-2029 Country Strategic Plan.

We also share insights from the Young Urban Women Movement and other key engagements that strengthen our advocacy across the region.

Enjoy the read!

FILLING THE GAP IN HUMANITARIAN SUPPORT FOR AFFECTED FAMILIES OF THE JANUARY 2026 FLOODS IN MPUMALANGA AND LIMPOPO



A week of heavy rain, driven by a low-pressure system that began in Mozambique on January 12, 2026, quickly progressed into the neighboring South African provinces of Limpopo and Mpumalanga. The resulting floods, triggered by days of intense rainfall, destroyed and damaged thousands of homes across both provinces. In response to the scale of the destruction, the government declared the severe flooding a national disaster shortly thereafter. According to the latest reports, a total of

1 942 households were damaged in Limpopo, while 1 808 households were affected in Mpumalanga. The floods also caused more than R4-billion in infrastructure damage from hospitals, households, roads, bridges and schools.

Despite budget constraints and the unprecedented scale of the crisis, ActionAid South Africa (AASA), with support from the International Humanitarian Action and Resilience Team (IHART), conducted one rapid needs assessment in each province.

"Having gone door to door conducting a needs assessment and engaging with families directly, we found that many households lack the essential resources to cover their livelihoods and are in need of basic supplies and financial assistance to continue rebuilding their lives."

~ Sakhile Zungu, ActionAid South Africa Country Program Manager



The data collected allowed AASA to facilitate an effective response targeting:

- 120 households in Venda, Limpopo Province.
- 188 households in Malelane, Mpumalanga Province.

The affected households identified a critical need for WASH Kits, Non-Food Items (NFIs), and Food Items to provide relief during the initial response and the months following.

successfully delivered adequate supplies to all targeted households, reaching a total of 1,468 people in both Limpopo and Mpumalanga.

The communities expressed gratitude for the timely humanitarian assistance, leading to a successful project closure following the relief efforts.

To see the full scale of the relief efforts and hear directly from the families in Venda and Malelane, click below to watch our field report



<p>1 468</p> <p>Total people reached including people with disabilities, female headed households and children</p>	<p>58</p> <p>People living with disabilities reached</p>	<p>6</p> <p>women trained to become leaders in disaster preparedness and delivering support during the response</p>
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Living beyond the flood: Lindiwe's Story



In Malelane, Lindiwe, an elderly woman, cares for her partner and their primary-school grandchild while managing the daily demands of household life in a community still recovering from flooding. When asked about her experience during the flood she responded:

"On that day I was badly hurt, because we tried to use mealie meal sacks filled with sand to stop the water from coming inside the house, but it was useless. I even have a scar on my foot from the bottle that cut me when the water was pushing in."

She was at home with her husband and their 10-year-old grandchild when the water rose.

"The water reached my knees. Our wardrobe got destroyed and our bed got water as well. That's how bad it was. I am just grateful that all of this happened during the day when we could all see and not at night. Even now, we have the sacks prepared just in case the flooding comes back."

Although her house remains standing, the flood left behind thick mud inside the home and around the outside toilet. For two months since the flooding took place, she and the rest of her community have been experiencing a prolonged water outage.

"It's been two months without water. We have to walk all the way to the municipal office to carry water back because access to the nearby river has been closed off since the flooding took place. Now when it rains, we place our water buckets outside to catch the rainwater."

Electricity interruptions have added another layer of difficulty.

"I've been cooking outside on an open fire for 5 days now. I cook under that tree because it gets really hot here" she says pointing out.

"But It's raining now. How do I cook when it's raining?" she shares with frustration.

Lindiwe's story reflects the daily life she and many women in her community face when having to provide care for the household whilst simultaneously navigating climate pressures and poor service delivery.

Whilst humanitarian support including WASH kits, food items and non-food items have provided immediate relief, Lindiwe's daily life remains a testament to the urgent need for restored services.



SECUNDA AND ERMELO TOXIC TOUR:

Witnessing the Impact of Pollution, Climate Change and Extractivism



On 22–23 January, ActionAid South Africa, in partnership with Highveld Environmental Development Network Alliance and Khuthala Environmental Care Group, hosted a Toxic Tour in Secunda and Ermelo in Mpumalanga.

The purpose of the tour was to witness firsthand the realities of pollution, extractive industries, and climate change impacts in coal- and petrochemical-affected communities.

What emerged was not only a picture of environmental degradation, but also the daily human cost of these systems communities struggling to breathe clean air, to stay healthy, and to sustain their livelihoods in the face of long-standing environmental injustice and rising climate vulnerability.

We met women, men, and community leaders who, despite years of hardship, continue to hold on to hope for a better future. Their stories reflect decades of industrial activity, limited accountability, and growing climate risks.

The purpose of the visit was to document and amplify the lived realities of affected communities and ensure these voices are heard beyond their local context.

It also aimed to provide first-hand insight into the human costs of South Africa's extractive economy and the accelerating impacts of climate change through direct community engagement.

At its core, the tour was about visibility making sure that what is often unseen or ignored is brought into public attention.

ActionAid calls for justice, accountability, and a truly people-centred approach to mining at the Alternative Mining Indaba 2026

The Alternative Mining Indaba (AMI), held from 9–11 February 2026, offered a strong counterpoint to the mainstream Africa Mining Indaba in Cape Town. ActionAid South Africa (AASA) took part as part of a wider delegation from across the ActionAid federation, joining civil society groups and social movements to keep community justice front and center in conversations about mining.

One of the most powerful aspects of the AMI was the sense of pan-African solidarity. AASA worked alongside colleagues from ActionAid Zambia, Zimbabwe, Nigeria, Liberia, Kenya, and Denmark, coming together to align on the key issues facing the continent.



A key moment came during a Day 3 roundtable, where these representatives met with government officials and other civil society actors to shape a shared African position ahead of #COP30.

The discussion focused on:

- Generating domestic funding for public services and climate justice
- Improving accountability and transparency within the extractive industry
- Ensuring women, youth, and communities impacted by mining lead just transition strategies

Beyond the discussions, ActionAid also stood in solidarity with social movements, faith-based groups, and mining-affected communities during a march through Cape Town. The march ended at the International Conference Centre, where a joint memorandum of demands was handed over to the Mining Indaba organisers.

The memorandum called on governments, investors, and mining companies to:

- Uphold human rights by protecting the environment and respecting the lived realities of affected communities
- Put people first by ensuring that mineral wealth benefits communities, not just corporations
- Act with urgency by listening to community voices and committing to more accountable and equitable mining practices

Although the AMI officially ended on 11 February, the energy and connections built during those days haven't faded. The collective efforts of the ActionAid federation and its partners continue to drive this work forward pushing for a just transition rooted in fairness, accountability, and the power of communities on the ground.

ActionAid South Africa launches 2026-2029 Country Strategic Plan



3rd March 2026 marked the unveiling of the new Country Strategic Plan, marking an ambitious new chapter in the journey towards eco-social and economic justice.

Grounded in a Human Rights-Based and intersectional feminist approach, the strategy seeks to shift power to women, youth and marginalized communities through collective action and movement building.

Read full strategy here

<https://www.actionaid.org.za/assets/documents/publications/AASA%20Country%20Strategic%20Programme%20%20%28CSP%29%202026%202029%20%282%29.pdf>



IN YOUNG URBAN WOMEN NEWS

The first quarter of 2026 has been a powerful period of mobilisation, advocacy, and community-rooted action for the Young Urban Women (YUW) Movement. Across regions, young women have led critical conversations, influenced policy spaces, strengthened community care systems, and advanced feminist alternatives grounded in justice, dignity, and collective wellbeing.

Back-to-School Campaign at Shirinda Primary School (Mamelodi)

→ Distribution of school supplies, uniforms, and hygiene kits

→ Promoted solidarity economy, holistic development, and intergenerational mentorship

16 JAN 2026

19 JAN 2026

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Mantsha Tlala Initiative

→ distribution of meals and clothing to children and adolescents

→ Focus on sisterhood, mutual aid, and feminist wellbeing economy

24 JAN 2026

02 FEB 2026

Skills Development Milestone
→ Dineo (YUW Mokopane) obtained accredited Health & Safety Certificate

Policy Dialogue on Basic Income Grant (BIG)

→ Asia Mogale participated in Nelson Mandela Foundation dialogue

→ Advocacy for social protection, dignity, and economic justice

03 FEB 2026

03 FEB 2026

Media Engagement (Mokopane FM)
→ Public discussion on neoliberalism and its local impacts

Marginalised Affected Communities Summit (Johannesburg)

→ Rebecca Selomo represented YUW

→ Focus: People-led just energy transition & climate justice

09 FEB 2026

20 FEB 2026

National Climate Justice & Care Economy Roundtable
→ Discussions on gendered climate impacts, unpaid care work, and feminist economies

Public Hearings on Public Service Commission (PSC) Bill (Modimolle)

→ Kamogelo Phokela represented YUW Mokopane

→ Advocacy for gender equity, youth inclusion, and accountable governance

23 FEB 2026

“Political Thursday” Dialogue (Mokopane)

→ Political education, leadership development, and collective organising

26 FEB 2026

05 MAR 2026

Mogalakwena Water Crisis Response

→ Community-led water testing initiative (with WaterCAN)

→ Focus on accountability, health risks, and water justice

Continued Mantsha Tlala Outreach Planning

→ Preparation for further support in informal settlements

MARCH

Reflection on State of the Province Address

→ Critique of economic inequality, environmental harm, and governance gaps

21 MAR 2026

Human Rights Day Commemoration (Bakenberg Stadium)

→ Advocacy for service delivery, equality, and constitutional rights

Leadership Milestone

→ Lerato Maloka appointed to South African Youth Parliament for Water

→ Recognition of youth leadership in climate and water governance

01 APR 2026

On Human Rights Day we asked our Young Urban Women what #HumanRightsMonth means to them and here’s what they had to say ↓↓↓

“As a survivor, Human Rights Month is not just history to me—it’s personal. It reminds me that safety, dignity, and respect are not privileges, they are rights that should never be taken away.”

Paballo Mohlamme



“Human Rights Month to me means honoring the courage of those who came before us while recognizing the work that still remains. While our Constitution is progressive, the reality is that access to justice, GBV, corruption, and inequality remain major hurdles. Through YUW, youth voices are increasingly active in voicing out for society. In the future, I hope to see a South Africa where access to justice is not a privilege but a guarantee for every woman.

#StandUpForHumanity #YoungUrbanWomen #HumanRightsMonth”

Zithobile Thabethe_YUWM Eastrand



From grassroots care initiatives to national policy platforms, the Young Urban Women Movement continues to demonstrate that young women are not only participants in change, they are leading it.

Across all activities, one message remains clear, Justice, dignity, and equality must be realised through collective action, feminist alternatives, and sustained advocacy.

OUR PLACE IS IN THE REVOLUTION!

Women's Economic Justice is a Human Right: A Call to Act This Human Rights Month

More Than a Celebration. A Reflection.

Every year on Human Rights Day, South Africans remember the sacrifices made for freedom, dignity, and equality. But in 2026, we must ask a difficult question, whose rights are still not fully realised? For many women and young people in South Africa, the promise of human rights remains incomplete, especially when it comes to economic justice.

South Africa continues to face one of the highest unemployment rates in the world, sitting at around 31% in 2025. But this crisis is not equal. Women carry a heavier burden, with unemployment rates higher than men, and young people face even deeper exclusion, with youth unemployment reaching as high as over 60% for those aged 15–24. Many young women are also not in employment, education, or training, further limiting their opportunities. These are not just statistics. They represent millions of lives shaped by limited choices, economic dependency, and vulnerability.

Why Economic Justice is a Human Right

Economic justice means more than having a job. It means having fair access to opportunities, resources, and dignity.

When women cannot access decent work, when unpaid care work limits their economic participation, and when young people cannot enter the economy, their basic human rights are affected. The right to dignity, equality, and freedom becomes harder to achieve. In South Africa, gender inequality continues to show up in the labour market, where women are more likely to be unemployed or in low-paying, insecure work. This is not just an economic issue, it is a justice issue.

The Political Moment We Are In

South Africa is in a period of political transition, with coalition governance and growing public frustration around unemployment, inequality, and service delivery.

At the same time, new policies and debates around employment equity and economic reform are shaping the future of inclusion. These discussions highlight a critical truth: economic justice is central to the country's stability and democracy. Without meaningful inclusion of women and youth in the economy, inequality will continue to deepen, and social cohesion will remain fragile.

Young Women at the Centre of Change

Despite these challenges, there is hope. Across the country, young women are organizing, leading, and demanding change. They are challenging systems that exclude them and creating new pathways for economic empowerment and participation. But they cannot do this alone. We need stronger investment in youth, better support for women's economic participation, and policies that recognise the value of unpaid care work and informal labour.

From Awareness to Action

Human Rights Month should not only be a time to remember the past, but also a moment to shape the future. It calls on all of us to move beyond reflection and begin taking meaningful action toward building a more just society. In this way, Human Rights Month becomes more than a commemoration. It becomes a call to action, reminding us that building a fair and equal society is a shared responsibility that requires commitment, participation, and courage.

For women and young people, economic justice will not happen on its own. It requires active participation in civic and political life, where voices are not only heard but taken seriously in decision making spaces. It also depends on holding leaders accountable for policies that truly promote inclusion and create real opportunities for those who are often left behind.

At the same time, change must be rooted in communities. Supporting grassroots movements and community-led solutions allows for responses that are grounded in lived realities and driven by the people most affected. This must be matched with sustained investment in education, skills development, and opportunities that enable young people, especially young women, to participate fully in the economy.

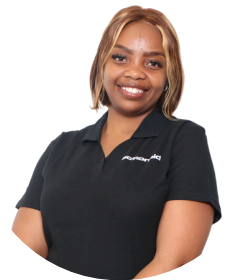
A Collective Responsibility

The struggle for human rights did not end in 1994. It continues today, in classrooms, communities, workplaces, and policy spaces.

Women's economic justice is not a "women's issue." It is a national issue, a development issue, and most importantly, a human rights issue.

This Human Rights Month, let us move beyond awareness and into action, because a just South Africa is only possible when everyone has the opportunity to live with dignity, equality, and economic freedom.

By:



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YOU HELP MOVE JUSTICE FORWARD



Thank you for choosing to stand with AASA not just once, but consistently.

Your ongoing commitment strengthens our ability to respond to the urgent realities faced by women, girls, and young people across South Africa. In communities where poverty and inequality remain deeply entrenched, many families face daily challenges related to food insecurity, economic exclusion, and limited access to opportunity.

Your generosity directly supports this work on the ground - from mobilising communities against gender-based violence, to advancing feminist economic alternatives, to strengthening democratic participation and youth leadership.

Every programme implemented, every voice amplified, and every step toward accountability is made possible because of supporters like you.

With your support, we continue advancing gender justice by confronting violence and discrimination, challenging patriarchal norms, and creating safer spaces for women and girls.

Thank you for investing in justice. Thank you for standing for equality. And thank you for walking this journey with us toward a more just, inclusive, and accountable South Africa

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