

# Small WORLD

Welcome Issue



Practical  
**ACTION**

Big change starts small



**Hello,**

I'm so happy to welcome you to the Practical Action community – thank you for joining us.

I'm Paul, Practical Action's Chief Executive. I've been using my mechanical engineering skills to benefit poor communities across the world for most of my life. Since I joined Practical Action, I've had the privilege to visit many of our projects, and I'm always so inspired by the passion of everyone involved in our work. From supporters and staff, to partners and communities: there's a shared enthusiasm for our unique, innovative approach.

**Together we're putting ingenious ideas to work so people in poverty can change their world.**

I hope you enjoy reading this welcome edition of *Small World*: our supporter magazine. This is where you get to see how we're helping to create a world that works better for everyone. You'll meet smallholder farmers in Kenya using their new skills to thrive, refugees in Rwanda and Jordan transforming their lives with sustainable energy, and communities in Nepal making a living despite the annual floods.

Enjoy the read!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'P. Lomas'.

Paul Smith Lomas MBE  
Chief Executive

P.S. There's a postcard enclosed with this magazine for you to send to family and friends.

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**Practical  
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**Cover image**

In Turkana, Kenya this family now have access to clean water two hundred metres from home.





Jute production is helping farmers in Bangladesh to transform their lives

*“The priceless resources which are possessed by all human beings, their clever brains and skilful hands.”*

E F Schumacher,  
founder of Practical Action.

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These stories are just a small selection – discover more on our website and social media.



# Big ambitions for a **BETTER WORLD**

We're working to help people living in poverty  
rise to the challenges of our changing climate.

Climate change poses enormous challenges for us all. But, ironically, it's the people and countries who pollute the least – generally the world's poorest – who are suffering the greatest effects of climate change. Several cyclones of unprecedented power have already left a million children homeless in Mozambique and Malawi, and devastated many coastal communities in India and Bangladesh.

Across all developing countries, droughts are forcing many farmers to leave their families to find work in the city. As a result, city populations are growing by 10% every year, and current water supplies and waste management services simply can't cope.

**So how can we work with the people worst hit by climate change so they can adapt to, and flourish within, their changing environment?**

At Practical Action, we believe people living in poverty already have the ability to change their worlds. They just need the right knowledge, tools and knowhow.

That's why we bring people together in bold collaborations, combining knowledge and innovation to bring about lasting change. We work hand in hand with local communities to understand their needs, and develop solutions together. In this way, communities can build resilience to climate change, and transform their lives for good.

By sharing our solutions widely, we encourage governments and other organisations to adopt them. This means our work has an impact way beyond the communities we work with directly. We call it **the power of small to change the big picture.**

Our work is divided into four bold ambitions: farming that works, cities fit for people, resilience that protects, and energy that transforms.





## FARMING THAT WORKS

**For struggling smallholder farmers who make up three-quarters of the world's poorest people.**

We're promoting the use of agroecology – farming techniques that transform the lives of millions of farming families while helping protect the health of the planet.

For an example, check out the story on pages 6–7 about our work with small-scale farmers.

## CITIES FIT FOR PEOPLE

**For the millions of people living in urban slums and settlements without proper sanitation, clean water and waste services.**

We're helping to make cities in developing countries cleaner, healthier, and fairer places to live and work.

You can read about how we're helping communities in Bangladesh access better water and waste management on page 9.

## RESILIENCE THAT PROTECTS

**For vulnerable people whose lives and livelihoods are threatened by climate-related and natural hazards.**

We're working to help communities become resilient to the effects of climate change and natural disasters.

See page 10 to learn about how communities in Nepal are gaining new skills so they can make an income despite the annual floods.

## ENERGY THAT TRANSFORMS

**For the one billion people without access to electricity, and the three billion people without clean, safe cooking stoves.**

We're bringing together rural communities, refugees, energy providers and governments to find sustainable, clean energy solutions.

On page 8 you'll find a story about a new partnership to help refugee communities harness solar power, providing energy for all.

To see more examples of how we help communities create change, visit [practicalaction.org/smallworldwelcome](http://practicalaction.org/smallworldwelcome)



A community in Darfur, Sudan, works together to manage their solar water pump.



# Smallholder farmers can help **SAVE THE PLANET**

Three-quarters of the world's poorest people are farmers.  
Our new partnership aims to help farmers, and the planet, to thrive.

For generations, communities in the Lake Victoria basin of Kenya have made a living through farming. But today, smallholder farmers face tough challenges. The changing climate is creating longer dry seasons. When it does rain, there is flooding. Their soil is degraded. And they don't have the money to invest in quality seeds.

As a result, farming is becoming impractical as a livelihood for young Kenyans. They are instead moving into towns to find other ways to support themselves and their families.

Our new partnership with the IKEA Foundation aims to work with communities to make farming a profitable livelihood option once more and help rural communities to transform their lives.

We'll be sharing new skills and training in agroecology. Agroecology is a method of crop production that allows farmers to make a decent income and maximise their harvests, while protecting the natural environment they depend on.

Our partnership will initially train 6,000 young farmers in Kisumu and Homa Bay in Kenya with farming and business skills. But the benefits of this partnership will spread much further. It will provide valuable learning and evidence to encourage others around the world to invest in this approach and help transform rural economies.

We've already seen how agroecology can benefit rural communities through our work with coffee farmers in the cloud forests of Peru.







Manuel Silva Águila comes from a long line of coffee farmers and is dedicated to reviving coffee production in Peru. Manuel was trained by Practical Action in agroecology practices and now works to share his knowledge with neighbouring farmers.



*“I give advice on growing techniques such as composting, using natural fertilisers, and pruning. By improving production, they can have a more profitable farm.”*



## What is agroecology?

Agroecology is an approach to farming and food production that values people and planet as much as profit. It offers a sustainable alternative to intensive agriculture, with the potential to transform the lives and livelihoods of millions of struggling smallholder farmers in developing countries.

It builds farming systems that connect nature (climate, land, water, plants and animals) with people (culture, economics and society). Agroecology could enable smallholder farmers to achieve a decent standard of living, whilst protecting the environment and building on natural resources they already have.

Practical Action is working with smallholder farmers around the world using an agroecology approach. In Bangladesh, we’re helping communities grow nutritious pumpkins in barren, sandy soil left behind by floods. In Zimbabwe, we’re helping communities access solar-powered irrigation and drought-resistant seeds to grow vegetables. And in Sudan, we are helping pastoralist communities improve the health of their livestock and increase their profits.

To see more examples of how we’re helping smallholder farmers around the world to thrive, visit: [practicalaction.org/smallworldwelcome](https://practicalaction.org/smallworldwelcome)



# Clean energy POWERING LIVES

We're working with the IKEA Foundation and UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency, to provide sustainable energy for refugees in Rwanda and Jordan.

Kiracunda (15) and her family fled the Democratic Republic of Congo to escape the conflict. Now living in a Rwandan refugee camp, she still faces enormous daily challenges.

Kiracunda lives without electricity – a disadvantage she shares with most refugees. Only 11% of displaced people have access to a reliable energy source.

Without electricity, Kiracunda, her siblings and her grandmother have no heating or lighting. Once night falls, they rely on candlelight, and don't go out, as the unlit camp isn't safe – especially for women and girls. The family cooks on open fires, which comes with health risks. 20,000 refugees die every year from inhaling the toxic smoke from cooking over open fires.

Kiracunda has dreams and ambitions for her future, but lack of electricity has a big impact on her ability to pursue them.

*"When I grow up I would like to be a doctor. If there was electricity, I would get up very early in the morning to study, and also late in the night when I finish my chores. And maybe we could use the safe energy for cooking."*

Over 60% of refugees spend more than five years in camps. For young people like Kiracunda, this period of time can form a big part of their childhoods. That's why we're so excited to be working with UNHCR supported by the IKEA Foundation, to help 60,000 refugees in Jordan and Rwanda access clean energy.

Through the project, families will be able to cook their food safely, power essential appliances such as lights in their homes and mobile phones, and feel safer walking around at night.

The benefits of the energy will extend beyond the homes of refugees. It will power health clinics, schools, and income-making businesses – helping the community move away from reliance on aid, and live with dignity and hope.

Discover more communities around the world transforming their lives with clean energy at: [practicalaction.org/powering-lives](https://practicalaction.org/powering-lives)

Kiracunda dreams of the better life that clean energy could make possible.



# Making a dangerous job **SAFE AND DIGNIFIED**

We're collaborating with communities to make the slums of Bangladesh safer, cleaner places to live and work.

No one likes to talk about poo, but in Bangladesh, it's the key to improving lives and the environment. While almost everyone in the country now has access to a basic toilet, there is no sewage system to deal with the waste.

Every day, 'sweepers' risk their lives emptying septic tanks and pit latrines using nothing but buckets and their bare hands. They have nowhere to dispose of the hazardous waste but local rivers. This poses serious health risks to the whole community.

We've been working with communities in Faridpur, Bangladesh, to create a safe, clean faecal sludge management system.

We've helped the sweepers set up a formal business where they work together, with proper safety gear,

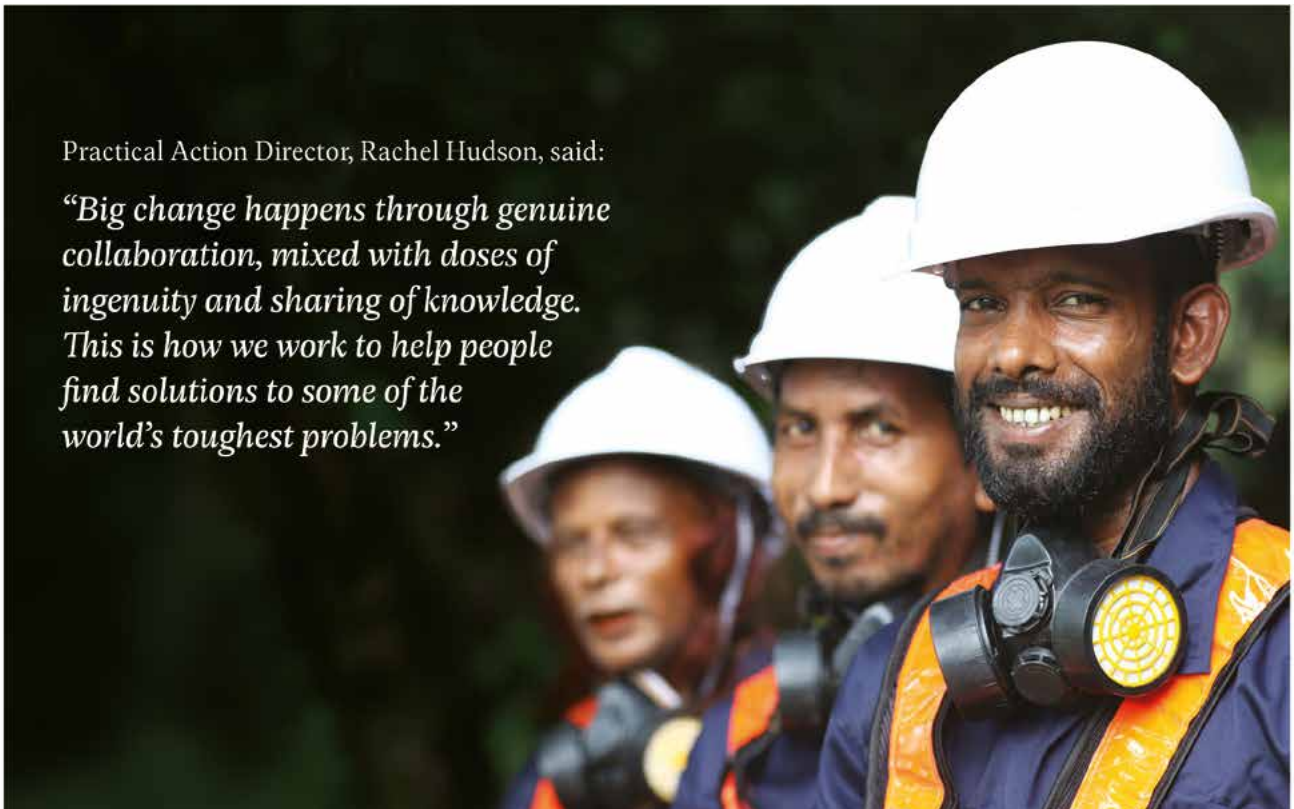
pumps to empty the waste, and trucks to transport it to a new faecal sludge treatment plant. Dried sludge is now processed into cheap organic compost that's sold to local farmers. And the sweepers are now treated with dignity and respect in their communities. The transformation is incredible. And it has spread much further than Faridpur.

As part of this work, we created a guide book, sharing our learnings from the project. It's now being read in more than 90 countries, changing the lives of more communities than we could ever work with alone. This is the power of small to change the big picture.

We're thrilled that this work in Bangladesh has been recognised with a Collaboration Award.

Practical Action Director, Rachel Hudson, said:

*"Big change happens through genuine collaboration, mixed with doses of ingenuity and sharing of knowledge. This is how we work to help people find solutions to some of the world's toughest problems."*





# Keeping FAMILIES AFLOAT

We are helping families in Nepal gain new income-making skills so they can thrive, despite the annual floods.

The people of the Karnali River Basin in Western Nepal face a devastating series of floods every monsoon season. The floods destroy homes, livelihoods and lives. With many farming families living in poverty, a destroyed crop can put them in truly desperate situations.

We've worked with more than 1,400 people in the region, helping them gain new skills so they can make a living, even if their crops are destroyed.

Kopila Chaudhary used to farm rice and wheat with her family. But too often, the summer rice crop was destroyed when the local river burst its banks during the monsoon.

After taking part in a Practical Action farmers' field school, Kopila's family grows a range of vegetables in land previously used only for rice cultivation. This enables them to grow food all year round.

*"With my new knowledge I produce more from the same land with similar effort."*

Kopila's new approach has increased her income, enabling her to purchase solar water pumps. These boost the yield of her crops even more.

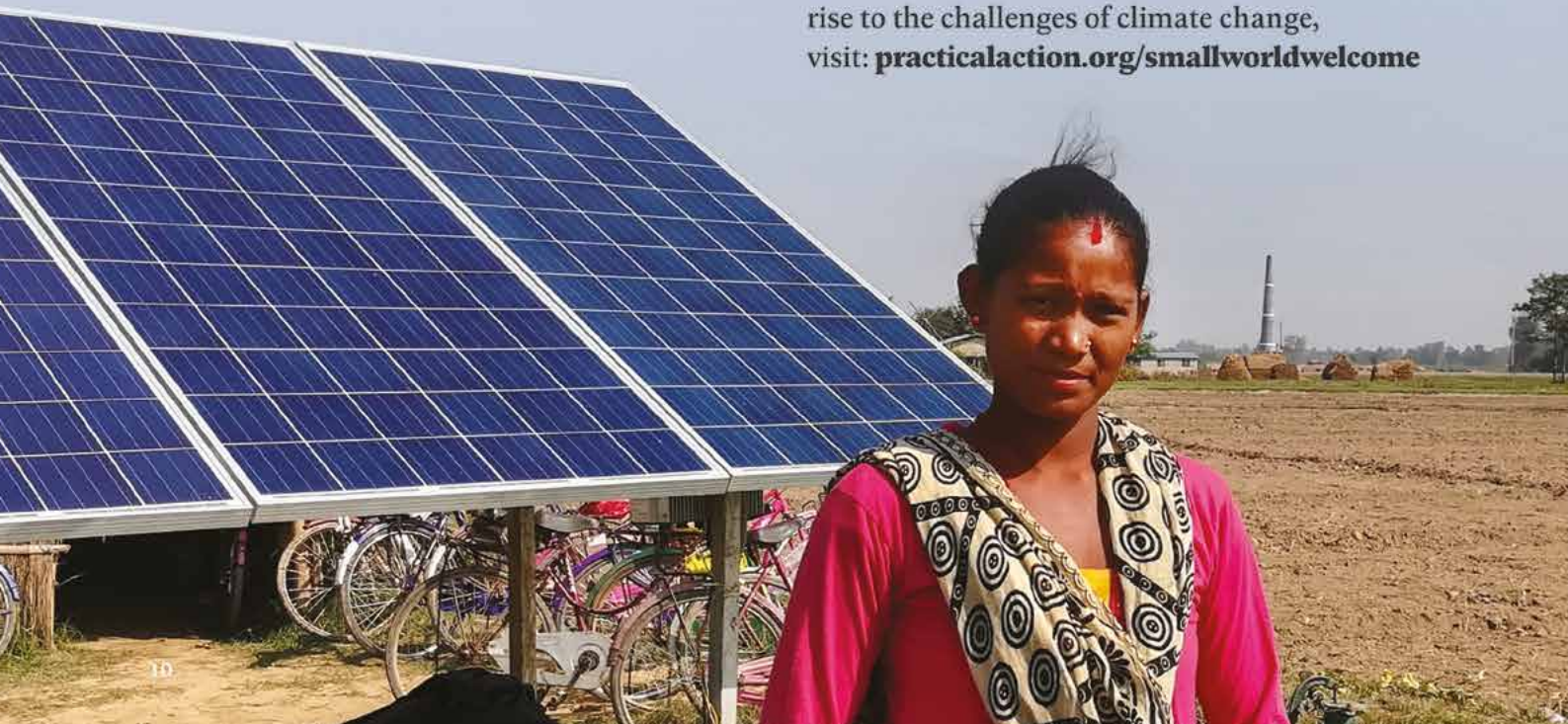
We also worked with Ramavatar Tharu, whose property has been damaged by years of floods, pushing him deeper into poverty. Ramavatar received training in furniture making and has become a local expert. Using cane from a nearby forest, he makes furniture for his community, and beyond.

*"I have started getting orders from nearby cities like Dang and Dhangadhi as well."*

Ramavatar's income is now enough to allow him to save a little to guard against future flood emergencies.

For many communities, flooding is an inevitable part of life – and climate change is making these floods more frequent and severe. But with our support, more communities can gain skills to diversify their income and thrive, despite the challenging conditions.

To see more of our work to help communities rise to the challenges of climate change, visit: [practicalaction.org/smallworldwelcome](https://practicalaction.org/smallworldwelcome)





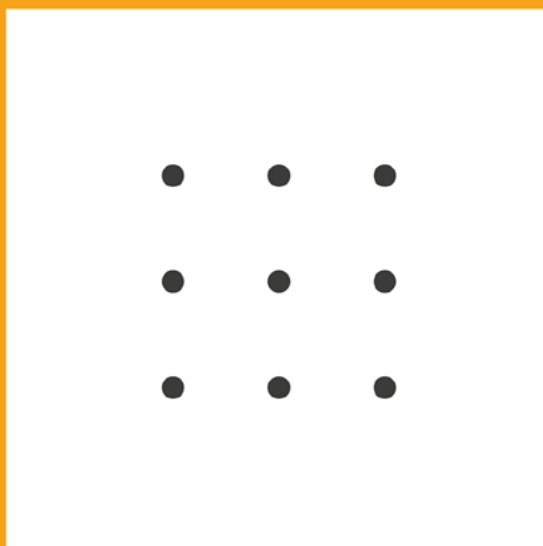
# Think outside the box

With ingenuity, small actions have the power to change the big picture.

When we work with communities to solve the biggest problems they face, we have to think innovatively. Here's an opportunity for you to think outside of the box: can you use your ingenuity to solve this puzzle?

**This is the challenge:** draw four straight lines without taking your pen off the paper (ie the lines are continuous, not separate) to pass through all nine of the dots.

You can find the solution at [practicalaction.org/smallworldwelcome](http://practicalaction.org/smallworldwelcome)



## Take part and change the world

What activity could you do to help raise funds for Practical Action?

We're so grateful to everyone who takes on a personal challenge to raise funds for us. Any activity that you enjoy could be an opportunity for you to make a big difference to communities living in poverty.

Charlotte took part in the Great Stirling Run for Practical Action:

*"I'd never ran a half-marathon before – it was fantastic, and I will be running another event in the future for sure!"*

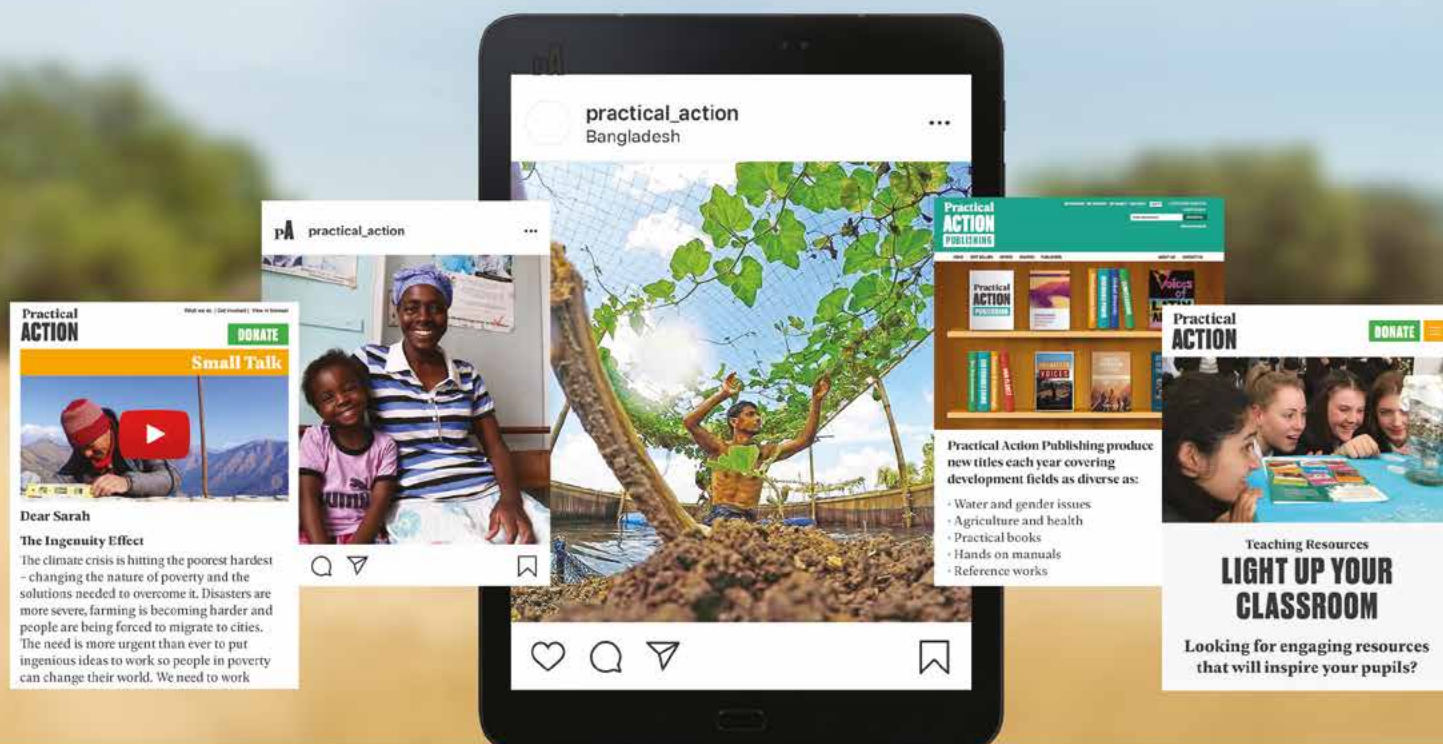
To raise funds for Practical Action, visit: [practicalaction.org/fundraise](http://practicalaction.org/fundraise)



# Your Practical Action

If you want to dive deeper into our innovative projects around the world, here are the best places to start.

# Practical ACTION



## Follow the story

Subscribe to Small Talk, our email newsletter, to stay updated on the big issues and how our innovative work is helping people to tackle some of the world's toughest challenges. We'll also keep you updated on our supporter events, fundraising activities and the many ways you can get involved in our work.

Sign up for our e-newsletter at:

**[practicalaction.org/smalltalk](http://practicalaction.org/smalltalk)**

Check out our latest news at:

**[practicalaction.org/news-media](http://practicalaction.org/news-media)**

## Join the community

Social media is a brilliant place for our supporters to share ideas and have meaningful conversations on life-transforming topics. We'll be sharing inspiring stories from our work, latest news on the world's most pressing issues and unique examples of how ingenuity can help people change their worlds. Join our community today!



## Enjoy a good read

Practical Action Publishing partners with the brightest minds to publish the latest development perspectives. Explore our collection of thought-provoking books on global issues, including a collection of children's books about diversity, sustainability, and the environment. We all share the planet, so let's share the answers!

Browse our titles at:

**[practicalaction.org/publishing/the-bookshop](http://practicalaction.org/publishing/the-bookshop)**

## Inspire young people

If you know a student or a school please share our **free activities** which engage young people in global issues. Our award winning activities which include *Beat the flood* and *the Squashed tomato challenge* are fun and educational.

Find out more at: **[practicalaction.org/schools](http://practicalaction.org/schools)**