



Small WORLD

Issue 80 August 2023

Looking back

FACING FORWARDS

Evolving for an
ever-changing world

Practical
ACTION

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Big change starts small

EVOLVING WITH THE TIMES

I'm happy to welcome you to your new issue of *Small World* magazine. The 80th issue in fact! A double anniversary of sorts, as this year we're also celebrating the 50th anniversary of our founder E.F. Schumacher's radical book, *Small is Beautiful*.

In this issue, we'll be looking backwards and forwards in time. Where did Practical Action begin? What were the principles on which we were built, and have they, or our approach changed over time?

I started working for Practical Action back in 2000. Since then, I've seen so much change – the name of the organisation, the huge growth in the number of people we're working with, the scale of our ambitions, and, unfortunately, the scale of the challenges we're facing. And yet, so much has remained the same. We're still working towards the same goal of a more fair and equal world. We still

work directly with communities. And amazing supporters like you are still a driving force behind every success.

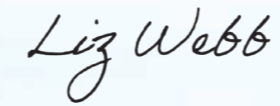
One of the most powerful forms of support we receive is gifts left by people in their Wills. As the Legacy Officer at Practical Action, it is my privilege to be involved in supporters' legacy bequests. Often I talk to families and friends at particularly difficult times, but I'm always so moved by the passion people have for Practical Action. If you're considering your legacy and would like to know more about how to support Practical Action in your Will, I'm always here to speak to.

In the Expert Opinion on pages 4–5, we look back at the innovative ideas that shaped us, and what has changed in our approach since then.

In the Special Feature on pages 6–11, we'll explore some of the ingenious solutions from past and present. We'll also take a peek forwards, asking some of the team what their hopes are for the future. I hope you enjoy the issue.

Thank you for all that you have done, are doing, and will do in the future to support communities around the world.

Warmest regards,



Liz Webb
Senior Legacy Officer



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Cover image

Clean energy gives people like Bisore opportunities to transform their lives (more on page 10).

Schumacher would have loved the ingenuity of solutions we're creating with communities today – like farming pumpkins on sandbanks in Bangladesh.

A PEOPLE-FIRST philosophy

In this issue's Expert Opinion, we look back at the first Practical Action expert – our founder, E.F. Schumacher. Who was he, what did he believe, and how do those beliefs continue to inspire our work today?



Our most important task is to get off our present collision course. And who is there to tackle such a task? I think every one of us, whether old or young, powerful or powerless, rich or poor, influential or uninfluential. To talk about the future is useful only if it leads to action now.”

Born in Germany in 1911, E.F. Schumacher was an economist and a philosopher. He dedicated himself to building a caring economy, one that puts people first.

From 1950 to 1970, he was economic advisor to the National Coal Board. During this time, he was seconded to Burma (now Myanmar) to work as economic adviser to the government. It was here that he first became interested in the challenges that people in developing countries face. His ideas for a radical new approach to supporting developing countries are crystallised in his influential book, *Small is Beautiful*, published in 1973.

Economics as if people mattered

Schumacher believed that economies should be built around people, not goods. In *Small is Beautiful*, he describes a new type of

economics: “economics as if people mattered”. He felt that solutions for developing countries should be bespoke for each community, taking their individual situation and challenges into account.

Living within our means

Schumacher believed economies that focussed on unlimited growth were bad for people and the planet. He thought that people should live and work in a way that doesn't deplete the world's natural resources. He wrote: “Infinite growth of material consumption in a finite world is an impossibility.”

Small is beautiful

Schumacher believed in small, simple and sustainable solutions. His innovative idea to support communities in developing countries was to “find out what people are doing and help them



do it better.” He recognised that people stuck in poverty were using tools and techniques that were not productive enough. With new skills and resources, they could boost their productivity and pull themselves out of poverty.

He also recognised that advanced technologies used in western countries might not be appropriate in developing countries. What was called for, was something that sat in between – an ‘intermediate technology’.

To reflect this, Practical Action was first called the ‘Intermediate Technology Development Group’, when it was established in 1966.

Small is still beautiful

Today, Practical Action's approach remains aligned. We still put people first. We still believe that sustainability is essential to everything we do. And we still believe that any technology, tool or technique introduced to communities should ideally use local resources and be simple to maintain. But we also believe in the power of using new technology, where appropriate, to transform lives. Solar power is a great example of this.

What's changed since Schumacher's time is the scope and scale of our

work. Today, we think beyond the immediate needs of the individual communities we work with to ensure long-lasting success. Our vision is that each piece of work we do is a seed that grows. A great example of this is our work with faecal waste management in Bangladesh...

Putting pride into poo

The job of emptying pit latrines and septic tanks in Bangladesh used to be carried out by informal waste workers using nothing but a bucket and their bare hands. It was dangerous, undignified work that was poorly paid. The foul nature of the work meant pit emptiers, and even their families, faced discrimination from the rest of their community.

Our solution was to think big. We looked at the whole system,

bringing together waste workers, communities, the private sector and local government. We helped pit emptiers become entrepreneurs.

Proper protective equipment and suction machines made the job of emptying pits quick, safe and dignified. Helping establish cooperatives ensured fair wages and working conditions. But this was just the beginning.

Thanks to the success of the solutions we developed with communities in Faridpur, the government of Bangladesh is now building them into national policies. This means the benefits will hugely scale up, reaching many other cities across Bangladesh.

Nuider Chad is one of the pit emptiers we worked with:

“Our working conditions have improved since we started working with Practical Action. Now that we have the pit-emptying equipment and protective clothing, we look more professional and our job is cleaner. There is less discrimination now.”

Big change starts small

While you might not call the faecal sludge management solution ‘small’, it did start small, working with individuals. Once we'd developed and tested the solution with a small group, we scaled it up to reach many more people. Practical Action's unique approach is to grow bespoke solutions so they work for many.

In our Special Feature on the next page, you can see examples of how the solutions we use have evolved over time, while remaining true to our founder's philosophy.



Gulper machines help workers to safely empty faecal sludge from pits in Bangladesh.



A past, present and future SHAPED BY INGENUITY

Practical Action's ethos has remained the same since the days of E.F. Schumacher's influential book. But our approach and our solutions are continually adapting to the ever-changing world.

When E.F. Schumacher imagined a world that works better for everyone, he created the concept of 'intermediate technologies'. These are tools that are practical for use in developing countries, often using local resources. They must be simple to maintain and repair to ensure they're used for years to come.

Over time, Practical Action and the communities we work with have evolved and adapted to the changing landscape within which we work. The technologies that we use have evolved too. If Schumacher were alive today, he would recognise these technologies

as being faithful to his original philosophy. And he would be reassured that his faith in human ingenuity is paying off.

Over the next few pages, let's take a look at some of the solutions from Practical Action's past and present. You'll see that the solutions of the past are still as helpful and practical as ever. In fact many of them are still in use today! But our new solutions create change on an even bigger scale. Who can imagine what the solutions of the future will enable...



Better hygiene for better health

Lack of clean water and washing facilities creates huge health problems for communities. Children are worst affected, as frequent illness impacts their development, ability to study, and therefore their future prospects.

THEN



Tippy Tap

The Tippy Tap is a simple and ingenious solution for hand-washing. It is made from affordable, locally available materials: wood, a jerry can, string and some soap.

The hand-washing station is operated using a foot lever. This means that the user only touches the soap, reducing the chances of spreading disease.

It's also very water efficient, using a tiny amount of water, so one bottle can wash many hands.

Clean water for all

Our Safe Pair of Hands project improved access to water for almost 20,000 people living in low-income communities in Kisumu, Kenya.

Water pipeline extensions provided a clean, dependable water supply for drinking and hand-washing. But this was just the beginning. We shared hygiene knowledge and skills, with an emphasis on improving health and nutrition for children under 5 years old. Josephine Muhonja is a mother of three who took part in the hygiene training:

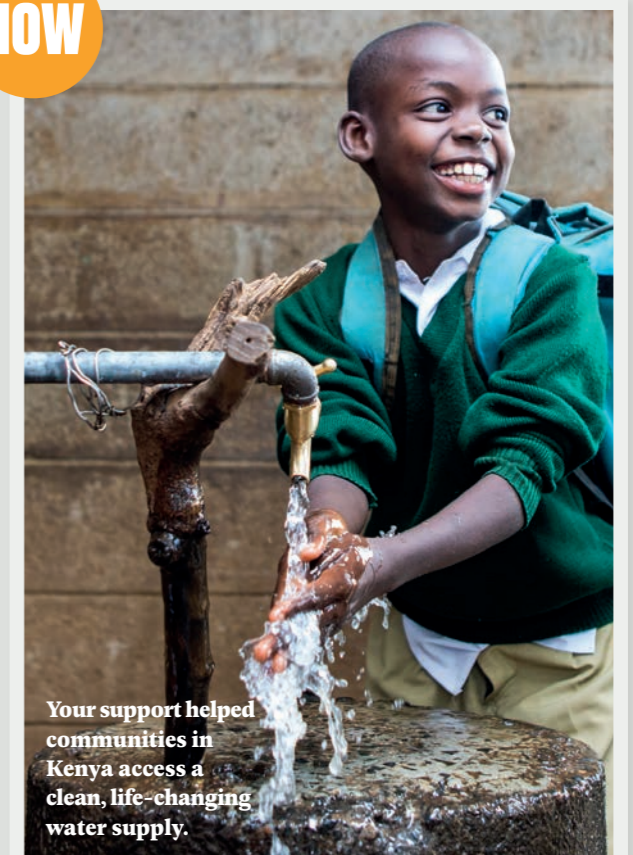
"The teachings have been so impactful, and I am glad to have received a hand-washing facility that has helped me exercise good hygienic practices. My child's weight has also significantly increased, and she has become a good feeder."

The community led the way throughout the project, from the design of the pipeline extensions, to the location of water access points and their maintenance.

This project was funded through an appeal in which every eligible donation was matched by the UK government.



NOW



Both these solutions use appropriate technology to solve the problem of providing access to water for washing. Training ensures that people can make the most of their new water supply, benefitting a whole generation.



The food preservation problem

Keeping food fresh is a huge challenge in hot countries like Sudan. Without refrigeration, crops can begin to spoil within a few days of harvest. In this way, produce and therefore profits are lost.

THEN



Zeer pots need no electricity to keep food cold.

Zeer pots

One of our earliest solutions to the refrigeration challenge was the simple but ingenious zeer pot. A zeer pot is made from one earthenware pot set inside a larger one. The space between them is filled with wet sand. As the moisture evaporates, it creates a significant cooling effect on its surroundings, turning the inner pot into a fridge.

This effective technology uses local materials and can hugely extend the life of fresh vegetables, from a few days to a few weeks. A zeer pot can keep 12kg of produce fresh, helping to prevent hunger.

NOW

Solar-powered refrigeration

In Malawi, we are solving the refrigeration challenge using solar power. Solar power makes much larger refrigeration units possible. The energy can also be used to power irrigation systems. Farmers can then grow and store much larger harvests. They can demand better prices for their higher quality produce, and move from subsistence to commercial farming.

Victoria manages sales for the farmers:

“Part of the reason why our customers buy our produce is because it is high quality, and the shelf life is good. We sell to shops, hotels, restaurants, the larger community, and the number of farmers’ markets we supply within the region is also growing. We’re currently supplying between 100kg to 1,000kg of tomatoes to our customers and we anticipate that the market demand will grow.”



Solar-powered refrigeration helps farmers grow their businesses.

Both refrigeration technologies are effective and appropriate for the situations they are used in. But modern solar technology allows farmers to increase the scale of their businesses dramatically.



Moving beyond subsistence

Farming has huge potential to reduce poverty, boost incomes and create food security for rural communities. Since the beginning of Practical Action, we’ve looked for ways to make farming work better for people and planet.

THEN



Donkey ploughs take the hard labour out of farming.

Donkey ploughs

In the 1990s, we worked with farmers in Sudan to improve their lives using donkey ploughs. The ploughs were manufactured by local blacksmiths, and the comfortable donkey harness we designed could be made using easily available materials. This simple solution spared women farmers the long, hard labour of working the land by hand, and boosted their crop yields by 500%.

NOW

Transforming rural economies

Our Transforming Rural Economies and Youth Livelihoods project is a great example of how our approach to working with farmers has evolved.

In partnership with the IKEA Foundation, we are supporting 6,000 young Kenyans in creating successful farming businesses. With training in planet-friendly, climate-resilient farming techniques, the young entrepreneurs are establishing farms where nothing goes to waste.

We also help farmers develop new business skills, build connections with each other and with local markets. Altogether, this creates a thriving, interconnected, local economy that benefits everyone, allows businesses to grow, and creates more employment opportunities.



Your support is helping young people create successful farming enterprises.

Martha Anyango is using her new skills to create a successful circular farm and poultry business:

“Before I worked with Practical Action, farming was just a pastime. Now it is an enterprise. Members of my family and neighbours come to me for knowledge.”

Both donkey ploughs and regenerative farming help individual families to feed themselves. Today, we’re supporting communities in moving from subsistence farming, to farming as a business. This creates huge potential that spreads far beyond the individuals we work with directly.

Powering lives

Electricity can power schools, hospitals, and local businesses, allowing people to escape poverty. But for people living in remote communities, who aren't connected to national grids, accessing energy is a huge challenge.

THEN



Turning natural water flow into energy.

Micro-hydro

Micro-hydro power systems are a great energy solution for some rural communities. Turbines are placed within a river and driven by the flowing water, producing electricity. We've worked with communities in places such as Peru and Zimbabwe's rocky eastern highlands to introduce micro-hydro systems.

Unlike solar power, micro-hydro generates electricity 24 hours a day. But of course, it only works in places with a dependable flow of water.

NOW

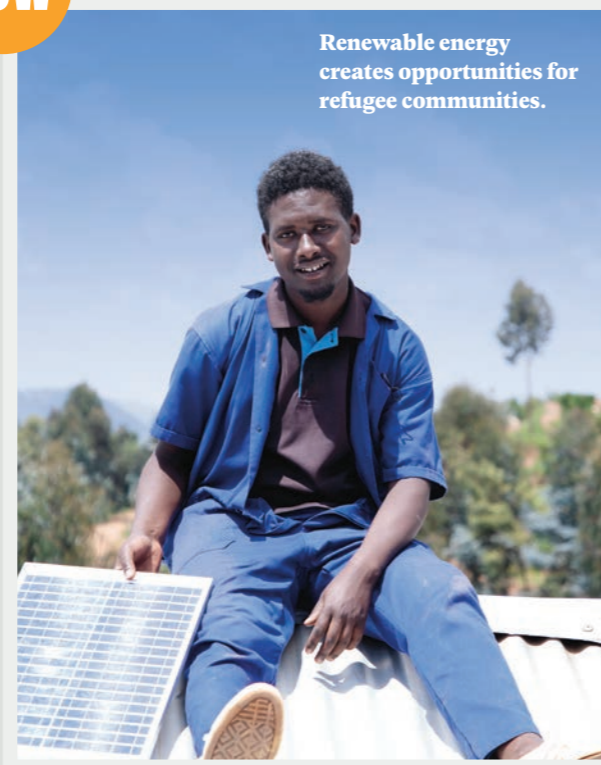
A complete clean energy solution

Our recent work with refugee communities in Rwanda and Jordan is an excellent demonstration of how energy access can transform lives. In partnership with the IKEA Foundation, we've been supplying clean energy and clean cooking to displaced communities.

It enables refugee communities to run businesses, schools, and health clinics. It creates a safe environment at night and allows business and leisure to continue after dark. Being able to make an income, or go to school, frees refugee communities from dependence on aid. They gain independence, possibility, and dignity.

Bienfait is a refugee camp resident who trained as a renewable energy technician as part of the project:

"I'm proud to be able to help people in my community get connected to power so they can move on with their lives."



Renewable energy creates opportunities for refugee communities.

Today, we combine renewable energy production with new business skills and market access. Together, these solutions create huge change in people's lives, allowing businesses to bloom, creating more opportunities and employment for more people.

Lucy Stevens Head of Urban Services



My wish for the next 20 years is for a transformation in how cities operate and a movement towards being more people-centred. Too often, visions for cities are about steel, glass and highways, not people. I'd like to see more slum and low-income residents helping shape responses to the changing climate – so that when a drought makes water scarce, or when floods are forecast, the impacts are minimal. Communities should be able to continue to thrive and grow, learning to live with climate change impacts.

Tom Stevenson Energy and Climate Officer



Sadly, a certain level of climate change is now locked-in by past emissions, and people face the grim reality of worsening impacts around the world. Therefore, I hope to see modern energy solutions that are climate resilient and increase people's resilience so that gains in health, incomes, and overall wellbeing can be sustained. I hope to see modern energy supporting natural ecosystems and long-term food security: for example, enabling regenerative agriculture that is also profitable for rural people.

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

We asked colleagues to share their hopes for the future.

Monica Cuba Knowledge and Communication Officer for Zurich Flood Resilience Alliance, in Bolivia



During the hard quarantine of COVID 19, we received calls from the communities in Bolivia we worked with. They were concerned about how people in the city were coping. They were actually more resilient than people in the city, partly because of the work we were doing with them.

This is what I want for the future. For the people we work with, and their children, to live in resilient spaces, adapting their livelihoods to any effects of climate change or other threats.

Naman Ondego Senior Project Officer, Transforming Rural Economies and Youth Livelihoods



Our work with young people in Kenya, introducing them to regenerative farming, has created a promising trend of increased food productivity and job creation at a minimal cost. I hope this continues. Young people have a vital role to play in the future of food production and environmental protection. They can bring fresh perspectives, energy, creativity, and passion to this field. They can also benefit from the skills, knowledge, income, and impact that a career in farming can offer. It's a practical way that youths can contribute to a more resilient and healthy food system for themselves and future generations.

You can help us start making these future visions a reality, today.
Make a gift at practicalaction.org/smallworld Thank you.

Together for farmers

We're excited to be starting a new partnership with the Mastercard Foundation to encourage young farmers to build businesses in Kenya.

Few young people in rural Kenya consider farming a viable livelihood option. Instead, they head to the cities to look for work. But there they find the jobs market overcrowded and low on opportunities. The lack of farmers in rural areas means there's a big food production shortage.

Farming can create meaningful livelihoods that support individuals and local economies. That's why we've partnered with the Mastercard Foundation to create the Resilient Agriculture that Works for Young People (RAY project).

Our aim is to work with more than 100,000 young people over the next five years. We'll share new skills and knowledge in agroecology: planet-friendly farming techniques that ensure successful, climate-resilient businesses.

We aim to remove the barriers holding these young entrepreneurs back. Mentors will help guide them through their learning. New financing options will help them start and grow their businesses. And we'll help them establish relationships with local suppliers, markets and landowners.

We've learned so much through our previous work with young people in Kenya (see page 9). We can't wait to build on that success. Of course, none of this would have happened without you: every £1 you donate helps us unlock on average another £2-3 in grants from foundations and funders so we can do even more.

Susan Maina, Practical Action Country Director for Kenya, said:

“

For years, farming has been perceived as employment of the last resort and the flow of young people from rural areas to cities has left our agricultural sector struggling to meet demand. This project intends to show how we can reverse this trend, not only for the 100,000 people we'll be working with, but for many thousands more around the country.”

More than 100,000 young people will learn farming and business skills.



Please help us create bright futures for low-income communities around the world by making a gift today at: practicalaction.org/smallworld

A boost for farmers facing the climate challenge

We were grateful to receive a £390,000 grant from the Prince of Wales Charitable Fund to support our work with smallholder farmers.



Robert uses homemade compost made from manure to grow vegetables at his home in Kisumu.

Over the next three years, this grant will make it possible for us to work with some of the communities that are most vulnerable to the climate crisis. We will support farmers in adapting to the new climate conditions using regenerative agriculture techniques.

Sarah Roberts, our Chief Executive said: *“This regenerative approach to agriculture increases soil carbon, biodiversity and climate resilience and improves livelihoods and food security for rural communities. But farmers, and the organisations that support them, need good evidence of what will work in their area to be*

confident in making the changes. We will use this grant to build the evidence that many more farmers can make the transition to regenerative agriculture.”

Practical Action was one of seven charities selected for awards by the Fund, which was set up by His Majesty King Charles III in 1979 to transform lives and build sustainable communities.

To learn more about our work with regenerative agriculture, visit practicalaction.org/smallworld

Thank you for your feedback

Your responses to our *Small World* survey were so helpful!

In the last issue of *Small World*, we asked for your feedback to help shape the future of the magazine. We really appreciate you taking the time to tell us what you think. The team are reviewing responses now, with the aim of making your supporter magazine even better.

A couple of people asked about how they could change how we communicate with them.

We want to ensure we're always communicating with you in the way that you want. You can change your preferences at any time by getting in touch:

Contact Supporter Services by emailing: supporter.services@practicalaction.org.uk or by calling 0800 389 1624.

Running for a better future

Thank you to supporters Carly Juneau and Naomi Paterson for taking on running challenges to raise funds for Practical Action.

In March this year, Carly ran the Cambridge Half Marathon, raising over £350. In the same month, Naomi ran a marathon in Rome, raising over £450. Naomi said:

“Having the opportunity to do just a tiny bit to help those far less fortunate than me is a privilege. I know the communities Practical Action work to support will put the donations to good use.”

They certainly will Naomi. Thank you both again.

People raise money for Practical Action in all kinds of amazing ways – running, walking, climbing, cycling, as well as birthday collections, wedding gift fundraisers and in-memory donations.

Do you have an idea for raising funds for Practical Action? Have you recently completed a fundraising challenge? Tell us about it! Email: supporter.services@practicalaction.org.uk



Carly (left) and Naomi (right).

Create your lasting tribute

Did you know that you can create a Practical Action tribute page in memory of a loved one?

Creating a tribute page is the perfect way to remember someone dear to you, and to raise money for something they cared about. It's an online space where you, your family and friends can keep and share all your cherished memories. A tribute page allows you to share stories, photos and news, and to celebrate important dates.

All donations collected through your tribute page go to help fund our work with vulnerable communities around the world. It's a personal and powerful way to create lasting change in your loved one's name.

Amy Hawkins set up a tribute page in memory of her dad, Nick:



Amy set up a tribute page in memory of her dad.

“My dad passed away in January. He was a committed environmentalist and I would like to make a donation to charity in his name as he left me some money. I would like to donate to Practical Action as your philosophy as an organisation seems very in keeping with his outlook. He was very interested in finding clean energy solutions, particularly to avert famine in poor countries.”

To find out more, and to set up a tribute page, visit: practicalaction.org/donate-in-memory

Welcome Ayan!

Ayan Banerjee has joined the Practical Action team as our new Asia Director, overseeing our work across the continent.



Ayan meets Yvonne, a farmer from Kisumu who mentors young farmers.

Based in Bangalore, India, Ayan brings a wealth of experience from his work in finance, agricultural supply chains, fair trade and, most recently, as the global lead on policy and fair labour at Solidaridad. We asked Ayan a couple of questions to get to know him:

What are your hopes, ambitions, or priorities for Practical Action's future in Asia?

Asia is full of paradoxes. On one end, Asia has big and burgeoning economies, so it is tempting to think about the bright side. But on the other end, Asia has deep-rooted social and economic issues. The approach to growth in Asia means inequalities

have been widening. For instance, India remains home to the largest number of poor people in the world. While India is spoken of as a technology giant, on the other hand, technology eludes the vast majority of people.

Our shared ambition for the next few years is to build on the extraordinary five decades of work inspired by the ideas enshrined in E.F. Schumacher's book, *Small is Beautiful*; Buddhist economics and collaborating with communities. On this journey, we will need to forge many partnerships. With the support of generous and thoughtful donors, such as yourself, we hope to meet the larger objective of alleviating poverty using appropriate technology.

What about Practical Action impresses you the most?

The fact that we actually work on the ground, with communities, creating solutions to poverty together, makes Practical Action special. Yet, the times around us are constantly changing. For us to continue to create more and better impact for people, we have to constantly look around to see how our world is changing. This culture of doing more and better is inspirational. I feel privileged to be part of this team.

Make a gift to support our work around the world, at practicalaction.org/smallworld

Save the date ...for Leyla Kazim's next fundraising supper club

This September, BBC presenter and Practical Action ambassador Leyla Kazim will be running another of her brilliant supper clubs in London.

The event will be hosted by Asma Khan, award-winning chef and owner of London's famed Darjeeling Express restaurant. You'll get to enjoy a four-course traditional Bengali Sunday lunch – a phenomenal feast, and the kind of home-cooking you don't usually find in restaurants!

This special event will take place at 1.30pm on Sunday 10 September 2023.



Leyla (left) and Asma (right)

Tickets on sale from Weds 2 August: check our social media channels from that date for more details and the booking link.

My gift to help transform lives

Giving online is quick, easy and secure at: practicalaction.org/smallworld

I would like to give a donation of: £ _____

I enclose a cheque / postal order / charity voucher made payable to **Practical Action**

OR please debit my: MasterCard / Visa / Charity Card

Card number: _____ Expiry date: _____ / _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

If we have your email address we will email you a thank you for this gift. Alternatively we will post a letter of thanks. **Tick here if you're happy to help us save on administration by NOT receiving an acknowledgement for this gift.**

Please tick here to receive information about how to leave a gift to Practical Action in your Will.

Your donation will help communities around the world tackle tough challenges like the impact of climate change.



Maximising the impact of my gift

giftaid it

If you are a UK taxpayer, the value of your donation will increase by 25% under the Gift Aid Scheme – at no extra cost to you!

Yes, I would like Practical Action to treat this donation and any donations I make in the future or have made in the past 4 years as Gift Aid donations. I am a UK taxpayer and I understand that if I pay less Income Tax and/or Capital Gains tax than the amount of Gift Aid claimed on all my charitable donations in the tax year it is my responsibility to pay the difference. Gift Aid will be used to fund all of Practical Action's work. **Date:** ____/____/____ Please note HMRC requires us to have your full name and address (below).

I am not currently a UK taxpayer.

Thank you

My personal contact details:

23/SB-CS002

Title: _____ First Name: _____ Surname: _____

Address: _____

Postcode: _____

We will post you information about our work, fundraising activities and ways to get involved. If you are happy for us to provide this information by phone or email please provide your details:

Email: _____ Telephone: _____

We take protecting your personal information seriously. We will never sell or swap your details with another organisation. We aim to provide you with a great experience of Practical Action and to communicate with every supporter in the best way possible. To do this, we may analyse your data and obtain further information about interests, preferences and level of potential donations using publicly available sources. We sometimes ask carefully selected companies to do this for us. You can find out more about how we collect and use your personal information by reading our privacy notice at practicalaction.org/privacy. To change how we manage your personal information or opt out of receiving communications from Practical Action call us on **0800 389 1624** or email myprivacy@practicalaction.org.uk

Please return in the envelope provided: Practical Action, The Robbins Building, 25 Albert Street, Rugby CV21 2SD
or give online at practicalaction.org/smallworld. You can also give by calling **0800 389 1624** (Mon-Fri, 9am-5pm)

A gift in your Will can help create brighter futures for communities.



Leaving a gift

FOR A LASTING CHANGE

When E.F. Schumacher wrote *Small is Beautiful*, he could never have imagined the huge impact it would make, for years to come.

By including a gift to Practical Action, you can make a huge and lasting impact too. You'll improve countless lives in the communities that most need your help.

Our free Wills guide explains why a gift in your Will is perhaps the most important gift you could make in your lifetime. For more information, or to request a Will Guide, get in touch:

Email: Liz.Webb@practicalaction.org.uk today,
or visit: practicalaction.org/leave-a-legacy