

SMALL WORLD



Sixty years in, meet the people turning practical knowledge into a future they can count on – and see why we're already writing to you from 2030 with hope.

Big change starts with Practical Action

**Practical
ACTION**

SIXTY YEARS IN AND LOOKING FORWARD

Practical Action turns 60 this year. In this time, the world has changed dramatically, and yet many things remain constant. Like the power of practical knowledge shared between neighbours. And the determination of people to create better lives for themselves and their families.

These constants were true when E.F. Schumacher founded this organisation in 1966 and I have seen them every time I travel to meet the people we work with and the teams supporting them. After five years as Chief Executive, this is my last letter to you: I am leaving Practical Action in August. It feels right that it falls in this milestone edition. I feel privileged to have led Practical Action and been part of such transformational impact with people on the frontlines of the poverty and environmental crises.

The pressures on the world's most vulnerable people are intensifying. Climate change isn't an abstract threat for the farmers, families and communities I have met. They are already dealing with the flood that arrived with no warning, the harvest that failed in the heat and the forest fire that destroyed years of work overnight. And geo-political crises such as wars in Iran, Ukraine and Sudan are disrupting food, energy and fertiliser supply chains, pushing up costs for farmers and families already working with precious little.

And yet the overwhelming feeling I take away isn't despair. It is determination. The same spirit Schumacher recognised: given the right tools, knowledge and support, people find ways forward. Solutions exist. We need to keep working to help them expand, embed and become the norm.

I leave enormously proud of what we have achieved together, and confident in where Practical Action is headed. Your support makes it all possible. Thank you, from the bottom of my heart, for staying with us. This edition celebrates 60 years of our partnership. Over the next pages you'll find a letter written from 2030: a glimpse of the future we are working towards together.



Sarah Roberts,
Chief Executive

▶ Meeting the people we work with, and the teams who support them, has been one of the most inspiring parts of my time with Practical Action.



▲ (Cover Photo)
In Bangladesh, Roxana is using new farming skills and simple tools to grow vegetables for her family and boost her household's income.

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A letter from the future

Dear friend, It's 2030, and we're writing to you from the future.

When we look back at 2026, the year Practical Action turned 60, we remember a world that felt precarious in many ways. But our global community of supporters, experts and project staff – of which you are such an important part – had hope. And the reason we can write to you from 2030 with optimism is because of what happened next.

What changed in the years since 2026 was the scale of what became possible. And that change has your name on it. Your support, alongside that of thousands of people like you, sits at the heart of everything that followed.

The challenges facing the people we work with didn't get smaller. Extreme heat, environmental damage and the growing scramble for food and energy in an unstable world are all worsening. But we knew, from decades of experience working alongside people across Africa, Asia and Latin America, that solutions exist. Practical, affordable, locally rooted solutions that can spread from one family to a whole region when the conditions are right.

So we made three commitments:

- **Big change on food**, so people can grow it sustainably, sell it fairly, and feed their families through whatever the climate throws at them.
- **Big change on energy** – clean, accessible power that doesn't depend on a grid that may never arrive.
- **Big change on climate risk**, so a flood, a drought or a wildfire is something people can face and recover from, not something that wipes out everything they've built.

Because of your support, we were able to go further. Behind every commitment sits a deeper focus on two things that make sure change lasts: **secure livelihoods and the resilience to protect them**, meaning that when people have a reliable income and the means to weather whatever comes, **progress won't be lost**.

Our work has helped improve the lives of 10 million people since 2026. It wouldn't have been possible without you. Farmers, community leaders and young people building something from almost nothing achieved what they did because someone, somewhere, believed it was worth supporting.

That someone is you.

With thanks and hope from 2030, your friends at Practical Action.



All around the world communities, like this one in Burkina Faso, have had their lives transformed thanks to the work your support has made possible.

The future described in this letter isn't guaranteed. It depends on choices made today. But the vision is clear: a world where farmers can weather any harvest, families have clean energy, and no flood or wildfire has to mean starting from nothing. We know how to get there. Six decades of experience, locally led solutions and proven approaches that spread from one family to a whole region.

Your gift helps make it real. Donate at practicalaction.org/smallworld

BIG CHANGE ON FOOD



Produced sustainably and sold fairly

The way the world grows and sells food is under pressure. Industrial farming depletes the soils it depends on. Unpredictable weather wipes out harvests that took months to grow. And the people who feel this most are small-scale farmers, particularly women and young people. They work hard to build a living from the land but are often locked out of the training, markets and resources that could help them thrive.

We believe food systems can work differently. We know from our experience working with farmers around the world that it's possible for farming to actually put nutrients back into the soil and for supply chains to offer producers a fair return.

Anastanciah is 28, and runs her own farm in Kenya's Nyamira County. She grows tomatoes, spring onions and cabbages and raises poultry. She also now mentors eight other young farmers. But it almost didn't happen.

She had qualifications, but farming her family's barren half-acre plot felt like a poverty trap she couldn't escape. She grew mainly cabbages, relied on chemical

fertiliser, and made so little profit she could barely afford basic necessities. "To me, it was simply a way to feed my family. I never imagined farming could become a full-time business."

With your support, we've been working alongside young Kenyan farmers like Anastanciah, helping them build business skills and transition to regenerative methods. She switched to natural pesticides and fertiliser produced by black soldier fly larvae, and began selling produce to local schools and businesses. Her monthly income tripled. For the first time, she could see a way out of poverty and the possibility of thinking ahead beyond just the next harvest.

Now she mentors eight other farmers, five of them women, and actively challenges the cultural assumption that women shouldn't farm or own land. "I'm shaping my own path while helping others do the same," she says. "Start small and put in the effort. Your business will grow."

For Anastanciah, farming went from something she endured to something she's proud of. That shift in income, confidence and what she believes is possible is what your support makes real.

“I never imagined farming could become a full-time business.”

Anastanciah, farmer and mentor in Kenya



▲▲ Anastanciah's farm is now thriving and she is more financially secure. She's passing on her knowledge by mentoring six other young farmers.

▲ Anastanciah now farms water cabbage as a sustainable source of livestock feed.

BIG CHANGE ON ENERGY



Clean and accessible for everyone

In remote areas, miles from the national grid, families rely on wood, dung and other polluting fuels because cleaner alternatives have simply never reached them. The health consequences are serious, the costs add up, and women and girls carry most of the burden.

We work to change that, extending clean energy access to the people least served by existing systems by combining local knowledge with practical delivery. In this way, we're bringing different clean energy solutions to homes and businesses around the world, depending on local needs and product availability. The result is safer homes, stronger livelihoods and families better placed to weather whatever comes next.

Selina helps run the family's street food business in the heart of the Sundarbans, in Bangladesh, preparing snacks to sell alongside her husband. Cooking is at the centre of their working day, but for years it meant spending hours over a fire fuelled by smoky wood or homemade dung cakes, meaning each batch of snacks was

expensive, eating into their potential profit. The smoke, the expense and the time were a constant drain.

With your support, we've been working alongside families in this part of Bangladesh to bring clean energy solutions to some of the country's most ecologically fragile areas. Through that work, Selina's household was able to build a small biogas plant, turning organic waste into a clean, steady flame for cooking. It's faster, cheaper and far healthier.

The slurry produced by the biogas plant also feeds Selina's kitchen garden, where she grows vegetables for her family and sells the surplus locally. Next season she plans to sell the compost too.

"Before, I spent so much on fuel and the smoke made me ill. Now I cook cleanly, my garden is thriving, and I am planning what comes next," she says. "It feels like everything changed at once."

This is what a single well-placed solution can do for a family, and for the land they depend on, and millions more people need support finding solutions like these.

▲ Selina cooks on her stove powered by her home biogas plant. This solution brings both financial savings and health benefits.

“It feels like everything changed at once.”

Selina, business owner in Bangladesh



▲▲ Biogas plants are a cost effective, and sustainable solution to fuel insecurity.

▲ The slurry produced by these home systems acts as a valuable fertiliser for crops.

BIG CHANGE ON CLIMATE RISK



Safer lives, stronger livelihoods

Climate change isn't a future threat for the people we work with. It's already here, reshaping how they farm, how they stay safe and how they plan ahead. Rising temperatures, shifting rainfall and more frequent extremes are long-term pressures, not isolated events. And they fall hardest on those with the least resources to absorb them: women, children and people already facing poverty and exclusion.

Building resilience means having the knowledge, tools and support to anticipate what's coming, recover when extreme weather events hit, and keep building a secure life regardless.

In 2023, wildfire swept through Bajo Colorado, a remote indigenous community in Bolivia, without warning. Crops, homes and livelihoods were destroyed overnight. For Lorenzo, a farmer, the losses were total. He had just finished building a house for his family when the fire took it, along with his farmland and the tools he depended on for income. *"I felt sad, because who's going to give me anything, where am I going to get the money?"*

he says, remembering having to borrow tools just to start again.

Wildfires like this are becoming more frequent across Bolivia and the wider Amazon, as deforestation strips away the natural buffers that once slowed their spread. For indigenous peoples living closest to the forest, the consequences are felt hardest.

Working alongside Lorenzo and his neighbours, we've helped develop practical plans that weave traditional knowledge together with new techniques, from controlled burns and tree planting, to early warning systems and post-fire recovery. The goal is to manage it more safely and protect what matters most.

With our support, Lorenzo has rebuilt his fields, planting corn, rice, plantains and cacao. He now advises his grandchildren on fire prevention, passing on what he's learned. *"I want them to be ready,"* he says. *"So what happened to us doesn't happen to them."*

Passing knowledge from one generation to the next like this is how long-term resilience takes hold and why lasting, sustainable solutions are so important.

"I want them to be ready... So what happened to us doesn't happen to them."

Lorenzo, farmer in Bolivia



▲▲▲ Firefighters work to put out a wildfire in the Peruvian Andes. (Photo by Lukas Isaac)

▲▲ Lorenzo's new knowledge is helping ensure that future generations don't have to experience the devastation of fires as he did.

▲ Across the Amazon, wild fires are becoming increasingly common and endanger the lives and livelihoods of many communities living there. (Photo by Lukas Isaac)

Looking forwards together



The world Anastanciah, Selina and Lorenzo are building is possible because people with practical knowledge work alongside those with the most to gain, and because supporters like you make that work possible.

The pressures are real and growing. People who are one drought or flood away from losing everything, are up against systems that force them to face the fallout of problems they didn't create. They're not short on ideas or ambition. What they need is support, at scale, and urgently.

60 years ago, E.F. Schumacher argued that the most powerful solutions are the ones that fit the people and places they serve. That idea has never felt more relevant. The stakes are higher now, and so are our ambitions. Thanks to you, practical action is becoming big change – in fields in Kenya, kitchens in Bangladesh and forests in Bolivia and around the world.

The future isn't something that just happens to the people we work with. With your continued support, it's something they get to shape.

Will you give today so more people can grow food sustainably, access clean energy and face what comes next with confidence



Give online
practicalaction.org/smallworld



By post
Send us your donation



Or call us
0800 389 1624

Project update – July 2026

RESILIENT AGRICULTURE FOR YOUNG PEOPLE



Western Kenya has some of the most fertile agricultural land on the continent, yet for many young people here, farming has never felt like a profitable option. We're working to change that. Three years into this project, with more still to run, we're already seeing what's possible when a new generation gets the skills, market access and support to build enterprises that are good for people and good for the land.

Behind these numbers is a generation of young people, most of them women, who see farming as a real career. Who are earning more, making decisions about their own income, and passing what they know on to others. When that happens at scale, it strengthens rural economies and shapes what the next generation grows up believing is possible.

▲ Emily now farms a variety of vegetables, using intercropping to manage pests without chemicals.

“*I appreciate the opportunity to improve my life and impact others positively. I am hopeful about the future.*”

Emily, farmer and mentor in Kenya



97% of project participants adopted green farming practices



10K mentors have supported peers to start agribusinesses

Your gift helps turn potential into reality!

Thousands of young people are still waiting for the chance to break the cycle of poverty. With the right skills and support, they can build that future – but they need you with them. **Give today so more people can build the future they deserve:** practicalaction.org/smallworld

GET INVOLVED

Fundraising in memory of a friend

Joe Cooper and a group of friends summited Mount Toubkal in Morocco this May in memory of their friend Tom. At 4,167 metres, it's North Africa's highest peak, and no small undertaking. They've raised **£1,588** so far, and every pound will help fund the work you've been reading about in this issue.

Stories like Joe's remind us that support for this work comes in so many forms, and from people with so many different reasons to give. Thank you to Joe and his friends, and to everyone who finds their own way to make a difference. If you're inspired to fundraise for Practical Action, you'll find ideas and tips at practicalaction.org/fundraising



Derek's disc golf fundraiser

Derek Robins has supported Practical Action for around **40 years**, since our days as Intermediate Technology. This summer he found a new way to help.

Derek owns Quarry Park Disc Golf course near Leamington Spa, and as Tournament Director of the Quarry Park Open 2026, he waived his usual course fees so the green fees, **over £800**, could be donated to Practical Action instead.

We're so grateful to Derek for four decades of support and for such an inventive way of giving. If you're planning your own fundraising idea, however unusual, we'd love to hear about it.

A summer holiday activity with a difference

Looking to keep young minds busy this summer? Our free Floating Garden Challenge is perfect for children. They'll discover how farmers in Bangladesh grow crops on flooded land, then take on the challenge of building their own floating garden model to test.

It ties in perfectly with this edition's theme too. Real problems, practical solutions, and a bit of forward planning to get the best results. All the resources are free to download at: practicalaction.org/smallworld



A gift beyond your lifetime



Reading through this edition, I'm struck by how much the stories here are about the future. Young farmers building enterprises they'll pass on to their children. Families learning to protect what they've worked hard to create. Knowledge shared from one generation to the next.

A gift in your Will to Practical Action is part of that same story. It's a way of saying that the work matters, not just now but in the years ahead, as the world's most vulnerable people continue to face real challenges the need for practical solutions are just as urgent.

Leaving a gift in your Will provides vital long-term income, so we can work with communities long into the future with the confidence that we can see things through.

I'd love to talk it through with you. Get in touch at: Liz.Webb@practicalaction.org.uk or call 01926 634484.



Liz Webb,
Legacy Officer

Your questions answered

There's no such thing as a small question when the stakes are this high. Here's what's been on your fellow supporters' minds lately.

Q Are you becoming a campaigning organisation? I'm concerned Practical Action is moving away from its roots.

A E.F. Schumacher's belief in practical, locally led solutions is not a historical footnote for us. It's the reason we exist, and the stories in this magazine are evidence that it's still how we work, day in, day out.

And, sometimes changing the conditions that keep people poor means talking to governments or businesses as well as working with farmers. We don't see that as a departure from our roots. Schumacher understood that lasting change works at every level, and so do we.

Roxana Ramos,
Project Manager, Biodiverse Landscapes Fund

Q I noticed your latest appeal included suggested donation amounts linked to specific costs, like seeds or tools. Is this a new approach, and why?

A Linking a gift to something tangible like a solar lamp, a bag of seed or training helps bring to life what a donation could make possible or contribute towards. It's a technique we've used before and one many supporters find helpful.

These are illustrative examples, not a promise of exactly how your money will be spent. That's because every situation we work in is different, and the most effective use of your gift depends on where the greatest need lies. Your trust in giving us that flexibility means so much. It's what allows us to direct support where it will do the most good, and we never take that for granted.

Rachel Hudson,
Director of Fundraising

Q In the last magazine on page 11 it wrote about choosing coffee that works for farmers and didn't mention Fairtrade which seemed very strange. Do you not approve of Fairtrade? Surely it is a long established way of consumers recognising a decent supply chain?

A You're right that Fairtrade is an important and well-established way for consumers to support fairer supply chains, and we value its contribution. We also work with farmers who are Fairtrade certified. In the article, our aim was to reflect that there isn't one single solution that works everywhere. Alongside Fairtrade, there are many approaches – such as other certification schemes, direct trade, and sustainability premiums – that can improve farmers' livelihoods.

Certification can bring real benefits, but it can also involve significant costs and isn't always the right option for every farmer. Our focus is on supporting resilient livelihoods in ways that work best in each context, whether farmers are certified or not.

Simon Hotchkin,
Director of Impact



▲ Coffee drying at CENFROCAFE in the city of Jaén, Peru. CENFROCAFE is a coffee cooperative that brings together more than 2,800 families.

What would you like to ask our experts about Practical Action's work?

Send your questions to: supporter.services@practicalaction.org.uk

News in brief



▲ Fay with the Practical Action 50th anniversary quilt, to which she had contributed.

Remembering Fay Watson

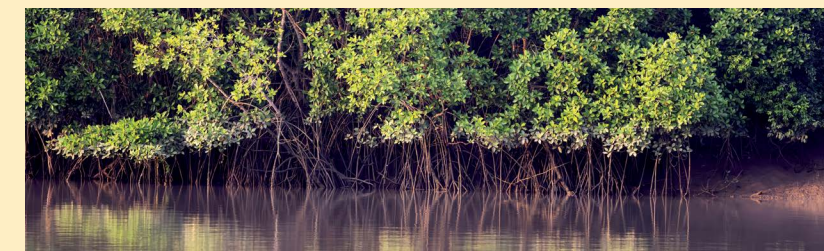
We were deeply saddened to hear of the passing of Fay Watson, a much-loved member of the South East London supporters' group and one of its founding members back in 1991, when Practical Action was still known as the Intermediate Technology Development Group.

Fay served as Chair of the group from 2001 to 2009, helping raise over £21,000 through concerts, events and countless hours of dedicated work. She received an award for services to our charity at the 2008 Supporters' Day. A trained graphic designer and wood engraver with a wonderful facility with words, she brought real skill and creativity to everything she did for the group.

Fay was 90 years old. She will be greatly missed by all who knew her, and we are grateful for everything she gave to this work over so many years. Fay is remembered on our memory wall, alongside other supporters whose loved ones have honoured them through gifts to Practical Action.

Visit practicalaction.org/smallworld to see the memory wall where you can leave a tribute or read others.

With thanks to Bruno Guillaume for sharing this tribute.



Women leading the way on India's climate frontline.

Along Odisha's coastline in north-eastern India, thousands of fishing families live with the growing reality of climate change. Cyclones, rising sea levels and saltwater intrusion are eroding both the land and the livelihoods that depend on it. Nearly 40% of the mangrove forests that once protected these communities from storms and flooding have degraded. Women are often hit hardest because they're more likely to depend on the land directly for food and income, less likely to own assets or access credit, and more likely to take on additional unpaid care work when a family is in crisis.

A new two-year project is working to change that. With your support, we're partnering with local organisations and women's collectives to restore mangrove ecosystems along the coast, starting with 50 hectares already agreed, with plans to expand further. Women are at the heart of the work, which is creating jobs while regenerating the environment.

The goal is resilience that works on every level. Healthier mangroves mean better natural protection from extreme weather. Women with new skills and income sources means families better placed to withstand the next shock.

▲ Mangrove Forest in Odisha, north-eastern India.



Breaking Down Barriers

In places we work, women and girls face the steepest barriers to land, income, education and voice. When those barriers come down, whole families and economies benefit. Progress on gender equality is often what makes the difference between a solution that lasts and one that doesn't.

This year we held an event bringing together our gender equality experts from around the world for a lively panel discussion. Thank you to those of you who joined us with your questions – the conversation didn't disappoint. If you'd like to watch or re-watch it, the full recording is available on our website at practicalaction.org/smallworld

▲ Community members problem solve together in Peru.

For more in-depth news and updates visit our website: practicalaction.org/smallworld

THANK YOU!

None of the changes you've just read about would have been possible without the generosity of supporters like you. 60 years in, that support means as much as it ever did. Thank you for being part of it.

**Big change starts
with simple actions**

Finished reading? Pass your copy of *Small World* on. Leave it in a café, give it to a friend, share what stayed with you.

The more people who read these stories, the further they travel.

If you believe in a better future, please make a donation today:



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