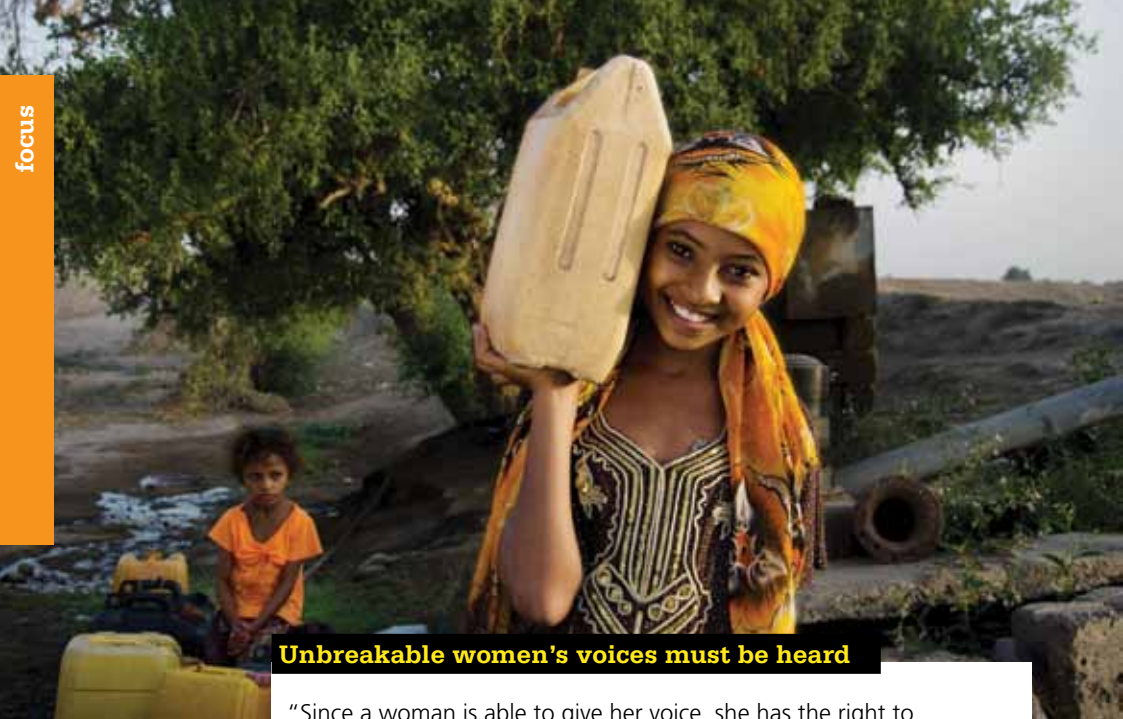


# PROGRESS!O

magazine 2014 issue one



**“She has the right  
in her voice”**



### Unbreakable women's voices must be heard

"Since a woman is able to give her voice, she has the right to participate," says Salima Issa in Yemen. "She has the right in her voice."

**But in many of the countries where we work, women are routinely denied a voice.**

It's a situation that women are determined to change – and Progressio is there to help them.

We're doing this by supporting women on the ground, such as through our projects in Yemen (see pages 6-9). As Fatima Al-Zabede says, "Progressio has given me the ability and courage to face challenges to get what I want."

Women's participation is so important because in many societies – and particularly in fragile and conflict-affected states – women hold the key to tackling poverty and improving lives. As our country representative in Somaliland, Suad Abdi, tells us on page 10, women are the ones driving social change to benefit all their community.

That's why we're also asking you to speak up for unbreakable women through our new **Unbreakable** campaign (see page 12). Please get involved, and add your voice to the voices of women from the poorest communities who are telling us: we will not be ignored; we will take a lead; we will make the change that matters.

**Thank you for your support – it's you who makes people powered development possible.**

## Cover photo

Our cover photo shows Saeeda Ashyeeb and her daughter Rogaya in Al-Zariba district near Al-Hodeida, Yemen. Their home is one of many in the remote rural village to have received a water filter kit under a WASH (Water and Sanitation for Health) project supported by Progressio. Each day Rogaya (age 11, pictured left), like all the village girls, carries six or seven water containers from the village well to their home. Despite the hard work, she has a smile on her face. The filter kits mean that the water is now safe to drink, leading to a drastic improvement in the villagers' health. Read more about how Progressio is supporting women and girls in Yemen in the 'insight' section starting on page 6. *Photos and story by Amira Al-Sharif*

Macpherson Photography/Progressio



**"I want to thank all those in the UK for supporting us and for funding projects like the HIV information project. I am now a better person because of this work."**

## A better future

Margaret Marungisi (above) lives in Epworth, Zimbabwe. She is a member of the Kushinga self-help group for blind and visually impaired people. With our partner organisations THAMASO and DHAT (the Disability and HIV and AIDS Trust), we are helping groups like Kushinga to break the cycle of poverty and discrimination for the poorest and most marginalised people.

**Thank you** to everyone who responded to our appeal so that 'forgotten' people like Margaret can get the information and support they need to empower themselves. Please go to **[progressio.org.uk](http://progressio.org.uk)** to find out more and to donate online.

## 109

## Progressio change-makers

On 31 January 2014 Progressio had in place  
52 development workers and 57 ICS volunteers  
in a total of 12 countries

### ➤ Dominican Republic and Haiti

The *Let's Be Part of the Solution!* campaign encouraged local people and local government authorities to find participative solutions to problems that affect both countries.

### ➤ Malawi

87 farmers adopted soil and water conservation techniques, while ICS volunteers worked with partner communities on conservation farming and seed saving processes.

### ➤ Nicaragua

10 small businesses were launched in Mozonte and Totogalpa to provide families with diversified sources of income that are respectful of local traditions.

### ➤ Somaliland

We worked with partner organisations on a strategy to advance women's political participation and helped provide counselling and support to 638 people living with HIV.

### ➤ Yemen

We used local radio to campaign against gender-based violence and our 'women champions' persuaded parents in target districts to resist early marriage and FGM (female genital mutilation) for their daughters.

### ➤ Zimbabwe

Our Action for Better Governance project led to an improved level of community participation in local governance in the districts of Gweru and Masvingo.

### Dominican Republic and Haiti

12 development workers

### El Salvador

11 ICS volunteers

### Honduras

1 development worker  
10 ICS volunteers

### Malawi

2 development workers  
14 ICS volunteers

### Nicaragua

1 development worker  
12 ICS volunteers

### Somaliland

9 development workers

### South Africa

1 development worker

### Timor-Leste

7 development workers

### Yemen

9 development workers

### Zambia

1 development worker

### Zimbabwe

9 development workers  
10 ICS volunteers

**Development workers** share skills, advice and support with local organisations and communities to help them bring lasting change.

**ICS volunteers** are young people aged 18-25 from the UK who work alongside local young volunteers on projects that make a difference in poor communities. ICS (International Citizen Service) is funded by the UK government.



**4521** signatures and photos handed in to minister for international development Lynne Featherstone under our 'fall in love with farmers' campaign highlighting the importance of water for agriculture.

**1002** signatures against the Lobbying Bill – "The voices of those who need our help should be heard," said Progressio supporter Dr Jan Waterson.

**2** policy briefings calling for an integrated approach to water for food and livelihoods.

**1** parliamentary delegation from Haiti sharing the deep-seated governance, social and economic challenges facing Haiti on a UK visit coordinated by Progressio advocacy officer Lizzette Robleto-Gonzalez.

**H1V** spoken word event in London on World AIDS Day, organised by Progressio Empower volunteers to highlight the voices of people like Fatima (not her real name) in Yemen, who said that with Progressio's support, "I have learned to live with dignity and without fear."

Fran Afonso/Progressio



Our **Food for a better future** project on the Haiti-Dominican border ended in December 2013 with benefits ranging from improved knowledge to increased income for small-holder farmers and their families. We will now be building on this work through a new project funded by the Big Lottery Fund. Development worker Gabriel Petit-Homme (above, with farmer Genard Phileon in Lamine, Haiti) said: "At the end what counts is that we are contributing to the improvement of the living conditions and the livelihoods of the most disadvantaged families of the region, while preserving natural resources and showing people how to use them in a sustainable way, guaranteeing a healthy and productive environment for future generations."

### Thank you for all your support for this project

– read the final reports from our development workers at [progressio.org.uk/food-for-a-better-future](http://progressio.org.uk/food-for-a-better-future)

## Women champions

Yemen ranks last out of 136 countries in the Global Gender Gap Index (which measures the gaps between men and women on economic, political, educational and health access and rights). But with Progressio's help, women in Yemen are fighting back. In Al-Hodeida governorate, our project trains 'women champions' to go out into the communities and help the poorest and most marginalised women to stand up for their rights.



**Salima Issa (pictured left, in black veil, talking to women in Al-Marawa district) is a divorced woman and mother of a nine-year-old son**

"The message I want to deliver is that every human being, either man or woman, can live free, with dignity, by knowing and carrying out their duties towards society, and by knowing their rights, and defending them. This is especially so for women. We have to know what we can do and where exactly we want to be.

"I believe a woman can change the whole world if she has willpower and determination, because women are not just 'half of society', but the ones who raise the next generation too."

**"Since a woman is able to give her voice, she has the right to participate. She has the right in her voice. And she has the right for other women's voices to be a shield for her."**

**Fatima Al-Zabede, age 32, is a single woman living in Al-Salam district**

"Most Yemenis believe that the only place for a woman is home. Changing that perception is really difficult. There is so little awareness about the importance of defending rights and holding on to them. In some areas, people are even afraid to demand their most basic rights.

"Progressio has taught me how to engage and deal with the community, identify important people, build relationships across the community, and have the ability and courage to face challenges to get what I want."

*continued overleaf...*





**Kvaiah Ebrahim, age 32, lives in Al-Salam and is studying law at Al-Hodeida University**

"With Progressio's help, we have had the opportunity to interact with people, identify the most important problems, and participate in the solutions. As women champions, we've urged girls and women to seek education and start learning – indeed this is what has been achieved, by opening literacy centres in the poorest areas. And we've contacted 'big shots' in the country, like the ministry of human rights and the ministry of local administration – we've achieved many things by communicating with the local council and businesses."

**"My message to Yemeni women is that you have the strength, the courage and the ability to confront injustice, so don't sit back, defend your rights!"**

**Photo above: Kvaiah (with pink bag) and Fatima talking to men in Al-Salam district. All photos by Amira Al-Sharif. Interviews with Salima, Fatima, Kvaiah and Latifah by Hayat Al-Sharif. Interview with Safia by Radwan Al-Sharif.**



**Latifah Mqbole, 40, is a 'women's champion' in Al-Marawa district**

"I've been following these steps. First, educate women and men about women's rights. Second, research the issues where women suffer from discrimination. Third, raise the issues. Discuss them with women and men, Imams, the Sheikh of the neighbourhood, local administration in the district, in workshops and in open talk. In this way we're finding solutions for issues like early marriage, education, and health (particularly reproductive health). I've been able to get the voice of rural women to decision-makers and let many people know about the issues of violence and discrimination that women are struggling with. I feel like I've achieved a lot."



**Above: Zahra Abdullah, Barka Dayood and Samira Daodd in Al-Zariba district**



Samira Daodd talks to Safia Al-Oseili (above right) in Al-Zariba district. "Rural women are marginalised entirely in various fields, political, economic, social and educational," says Safia, who formed the Al-Zariba Female Social Association to help women in Al-Zariba to meet their needs. "The Progressio project helped us to build support in the community for the work of our association," she says. "My hope is that every woman can get involved in these activities and have the determination to achieve her goals."



## Vocal women

**“My number one priority is women’s political representation. If women are not represented, who will raise and discuss social issues? What about maternal mortality? What about the problems with water, both rural and urban?”**

“These are the issues that women encounter in everyday life, but social issues are not considered important because those in power are not coming into contact with them and so they don’t get discussed,” says Suad Abdi (above), Progressio’s country representative in Somaliland. According to Suad, the lack of women’s political representation is having a detrimental effect on the country’s potential to tackle some of the toughest development challenges. It’s not that the men who have influence in decision-making don’t care about these issues, it’s more a problem of being out of touch.

“They go home, they get water, but they don’t know how their families have suffered to make it possible for them to drink and eat,” explains Suad. “They are

not aware of the way that women have to work to put meals on the table. Women provide for their families and are often the breadwinners. It’s women that are active and vocal on social issues. They have to have a share in decision-making.”

So why aren’t women being listened to? While democratisation has brought a great deal of stability, politics in Somaliland remains inseparable from traditional clan-based and male-dominated structures of power, making it hard for women to have a say.

“It’s an un-level playing field for a woman in politics,” explains Suad. “She’s kicking the ball upwards towards a place that it cannot reach, and the ball just rolls back to her again. Even if a woman does gain a position in politics, it doesn’t mean that she has influence.”

Suad is campaigning alongside others in Somaliland for a women’s quota to

be introduced so that at least 20% of representatives elected in the next election will be women. She believes this, together with a strong and lively civil society women's movement to support those in power and hold them to account, will help.

Once the quota is achieved, women's under-representation in Somaliland politics will start to be overcome, but Suad believes a much more significant cultural shift is also needed.

"Even at a family level women are very far away from the decision-making

processes. Somali girls are told that they are responsible for caring for the family whilst boys are told to be leaders and are given more opportunities," explains Suad.

"Change needs to start with families. We need to give both boys and girls the same responsibilities and opportunities."

**"It's women that are active and vocal on social issues. They have to have a share in decision-making."**



Joanna McMinn (above right, with her colleague Rahma) was a Progressio development worker with women's network NAGAAD in Somaliland. "The biggest change I witnessed is in the numbers of women coming forward as candidates in elections," she says. "In 2002, only 10 women stood for election in the whole country. In November 2012, over 140 women stood for election. There has been a great deal of awareness-raising carried out by NAGAAD and other civil society organisations about women's right to political participation, and it is having an impact."



### Unbreakable campaign

Against some of the worst odds in the world, women in 'fragile states' like Somaliland, Zimbabwe and Yemen are organising to improve women's lives by tackling the political, economic and social structures that keep them poor and marginalised.

At Progressio, we know that women must be at the heart of nation building. And as a new development agenda takes shape, these unbreakable women's voices must be heard. We must stand with them.

That's why we've launched **Unbreakable**: a campaign to raise the voices of women living in fragile states to the highest level.

In March, the world's governments and civil society meet together at the Commission on the Status of Women, CSW, in New York City. Justine Greening, the UK International Development Secretary, will be there. But will she show commitment to women's political and social participation in fragile states? That's up to you.

**"Women are looking to claim their own rights. We were being left behind in decision-making even though women are a driving force in society. We were doing everything, but lacked any power. We have to start the process of women's empowerment. It will take time, but I believe this is just the beginning."**

– Suad Abdi, Progressio's Country Representative in Somaliland



Photos: women  
campaigning in the 2012  
Somaliland elections  
© Kate Stanworth/  
Progressio

## How to get involved

It's easy to take the first step: raise the issues with Justine Greening. You can act online ([progressio.org.uk/unbreakable](http://progressio.org.uk/unbreakable)) or fill out a campaign postcard and send it to us (to order more postcards, please email: [campaigns@progressio.org.uk](mailto:campaigns@progressio.org.uk)). Once you've been in touch with Justine Greening, we'll ask you to write a note to your MP so that they can contact her too, just to double the pressure.

The first part of the campaign, in the build-up to the CSW, runs through Women's World Day of Prayer (Friday 7 March) and International Women's Day (Saturday 8 March) before the big hand-in in New York – so please sign online, or get your cards back to us, by the week beginning 10 March!

## Share the campaign

We're also asking everyone to share the campaign and raise much-needed funds for our work with women's groups in fragile states by holding a Progressio 'Wadahadal' – see the next page for more information.



Why not have your WADAHADAL on the 8th of March for International Women's Day?

### Have a Progressio WADAHADAL!

WADAHADAL is a Somali word for a get together and discussion... So why not join the *Unbreakable* conversation with Progressio and raise vital funds for our work supporting women in fragile states by holding your own WADAHADAL?

So what could a WADAHADAL be when at home?

Do tell us your plans – we will help in any way we can!

For more information and fundraising resources, go to [progressio.org.uk/wadahadal](http://progressio.org.uk/wadahadal) or email [catherine@progressio.org.uk](mailto:catherine@progressio.org.uk)

**Help raise the voices of women living in fragile states!**

- **A pub quiz?** (we can help with **questions**)
- **A coffee morning?** (quick Somali **cake** recipe available)
- **A Somali tea and cookies?** (we can provide the **recipes**)
- **A talk and collection?** (a **presentation** is available)
- Or anything else that will get people talking and donating. A cake **sale**? A **dinner** party?



Check our website [progressio.org.uk/LBTL](http://progressio.org.uk/LBTL) for more details, plus ideas, tips and recipes

## Take the challenge!

Last year, 44 of you took the **Live Below the Line** challenge – and raised over £5,000 to support Progressio's food security project in Haiti and the Dominican Republic.

## Can you help us do even better this year?

Live Below the Line week takes place 28 April to 2 May this year – will you take on the challenge to live on £1 a day for 5 days, and gain a glimpse into the lives of the 1.4 billion people living below the poverty line?

Here are a few ideas to help you fundraise:

- Create a fundraising page and ask your friends, family, colleagues and even neighbours for donations
- Donate the savings from your weekly shop
- Host a Come Dine Below the Line dinner party and ask guests for a donation

## Royal Parks Half Marathon

Team Progressio raised an amazing £5,000 at the Royal Parks Half Marathon in London last October. A huge thanks to all of you for taking part, and raising funds towards Progressio's work with the poorest and most marginalised around the world.

Why not be part of the team and join us for the Royal Parks Half Marathon 2014 – the most stunning run in the capital? We have 15 places and would love to welcome you on Team Progressio on Sunday 12 October this year!

To register please contact Catherine on 020 7326 2021 or email her at [catherine@progressio.org.uk](mailto:catherine@progressio.org.uk)



Jeremy Robson and Vicky Schutzer-Weissman from Team Progressio

**Help give people a brighter future, make a donation today**

Your gift means Progressio can help more people gain power over their lives and overcome the barriers that keep them poor.

**Thank you so much for supporting people powered development.**

- ☐ £10 could pay for an HIV awareness workshop in Zimbabwe
- ☐ £50 could train a Yemen 'woman champion' to be the voice of women in the community
- ☐ £25 could help a woman in the Dominican Republic set up a small family garden and an eco-kitchen
- ☐ Other £

I enclose a cheque made payable to Progressio or please debit my

- ☐ Visa / ☐ Visa Debit / ☐ Mastercard / ☐ Delta / ☐ CAF

Card no:  /  /  /

Expiry date:  /

Signature:  Date:  /  /

Name:

Address:

Email address (optional):

Make your gift worth even more. If you are a UK tax payer, every £1 you give could be worth an extra 25p, at no extra cost to you. All you need to do is tick this box:

☐ I would like Progressio to reclaim the tax on any donations that I have made in the last four years and any that I make in future.

*giftaid it*

We like to keep our supporters informed about the difference their donations are making. We will not pass on your details to any other organisation. If at any time you wish to stop receiving information from us, please let us know.

 **Please return this form to Progressio at the address below, or to give immediately, go to [progressio.org.uk/give](http://progressio.org.uk/give)**

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