

## Climate Change, Displacement Christian Aid's key campaigns for 2018



*This is a note of a presentation by Sarah Rowe, Campaigns Strategy Lead for Christian Aid, given to the January 2018 meeting of the Chester World Development Forum. Note prepared by Ann McCarthy.*

Christian Aid is an international development organisation that insists the world can and must be changed to one where everyone can live a full life, free from poverty and inequality. For more than 70 years Christian Aid has worked with partners overseas to make the world a better place. It aims, through campaigning, to challenge the systems which keep people in poverty. Apartheid was one such system. It tackles unfair trade and has campaigned for many years to bring about tax justice. Corporate tax dodging is unfair: it keeps people trapped in poverty.

The two main campaigns at present focus on climate justice and the plight of refugees and displaced peoples.

### **Climate Justice**

Sarah visited the Philippines in 2017 and experienced firsthand the effects of climate change on communities. She met many families who had lost loved ones as a result of typhoons which now occur more frequently and with increasing severity. Some of the islands are so remote that it is very difficult to get emergency help there.

She visited the area called "Costa Brava" which sits outside Tacloban city in the Philippines, on a small patch of land between the road and the sea. Bearing the brunt of Typhoon Haiyan in November 2013, many people were killed here and all the houses destroyed.

After seeing children go out to sit under a streetlamp on a busy road in order to study, community member Randy volunteered to be a 'Solar Scholar' so that Costa Brava would have its own light. Along with Hazel, another member of the community, they trained to use a basic solar kit that can provide light and power, particularly in emergencies. The solar kit gives enough power to charge phones, lamps, water pumps and breathing apparatus. They also helped individual households to install solar packs so that everyone has their own light. This has made such a difference to communities – people can stay up and talk and children can still play.

Christian Aid also supports an organisation within the Philippines that is campaigning against coal investments. Coal-fired power stations are still being built here and the resulting pollution is terrible. One of Sarah's slides showed the photo of a lady with a coal fired power station almost in her back yard! The CA campaign for climate justice is called *The Big Shift*.

At the moment, money from government subsidies, investments of churches and pension funds, and our own bank accounts support the fossil fuel industry and continue to fuel climate change. We need to make the "Big Shift" away from fossil fuels and into renewable energy so that we can build a cleaner, safer world. And money is key!

The campaign has run in 3 phases: Phase 1 has targeted coal - banks must stop financing coal power plants. HSBC, for instance, is still investing in the expansion of coal fired power stations in the Philippines. The UK government has already promised to phase out coal by 2025 – banks must follow suit. Phase 2 has targeted churches to switch to renewable energy and so far, more than 3,500 churches have either switched to clean electricity or pledged to do so.

Phase 3 is targeting the banks to clean up our cash - our money must be used for the common good. Latest research by Christian Aid suggests that the world is still investing £3.24 on fossil fuels for every £1 spent on renewables. So Christian Aid is asking all banks to publish a transition plan for their organisation in order to meet the commitments of the Paris Agreement and in addition asking them to publish the carbon emissions resulting from their investments and loans. People are being advised to write to their banks now and make sure that they have a plan to make the Big Shift away from damaging fossil fuels and into clean energy.

Members of the Christian Aid Committee in Chester were joined by members of Chester World Development Forum in September 2017 to deliver letters to the 4 major banks urging them to make "The Big Shift".

The next stage of the campaign will be to target The World Bank. The World Bank manages and invests huge amounts of public money in development projects. We need them to get all their money out of dirty fossil fuels and into affordable renewable energy to reach and benefit even the most vulnerable and remote communities. The World Bank agrees that climate change is affecting the poorest people on the planet. Its goal is to end extreme poverty globally within a generation. However, it still supports many projects that contribute to climate change. Christian Aid is calling for much greater transparency about the impact of their investments in energy on the lives of ordinary women, men and children.

**Change the Story – The plight of refugees and displaced peoples** is the title of the second key campaign.

Today, more than 65 million people are displaced globally, of whom more than 43 million are internally displaced and their plight is almost totally overlooked by the global community. These are amongst the most impoverished and vulnerable people on earth. Forced from their homes by violence, fear or desperation, each is deserving of safety, freedom and hope. Christian Aid wants to make sure their stories are heard - to tell a story that upholds those escaping injustice and war, and that celebrates those who offer a welcome.

Take the case of Nigeria where, as a result of the civil war, there are 2 million displaced people. Nearly 80% of displaced people are living with other members of family. Worse still they have no communication with past communities so they don't know whether they can return.

In September 2016, the UN General Assembly gathered in New York City to endorse a **Global Compact** on Responsibility-Sharing for Refugees, and to agree a process to develop a **Global Compact** on Safe, Regular and Orderly Migration, to be in place by 2018. This was followed by a Summit led by US President Barack Obama that same month, at which world leaders were urged to make concrete commitments to share responsibility for refugee populations. Christian Aid is campaigning with UN organisations to ensure that internally displaced people (IDPs) are included in the Compact's principles.

*To find out more about Christian Aid's campaigns visit [www.christianaid.org.uk](http://www.christianaid.org.uk)*