

## **BANGLADESH**

Christian Aid's advocacy work in Bangladesh has focused on global issues such as loss and damage from a gender perspective. At the national level, issues such as energy security, climate finance, climate justice and resilient livelihoods have been focused on. Christian Aid Bangladesh is an active member of many advocacy networks in Bangladesh. Through various national level events organized by these agencies, Christian Aid is linking its local level work with the advocacy initiatives at the national level. The Bangladesh programme is also well connected with global advocacy initiatives on climate change.

Christian Aid has adopted the Participatory Market System Development (PMSD) approach in its inclusive market development programming over the last year or so. It has reinforced the focus of its market work on various value chains like milk, chilli, maize, tea, and vegetables with 5,000 smallholder farmers/producers, 60% of whom are women.. Since 2015, Christian Aid Bangladesh has been the chair of Market Development Forum (MDF) - a group of market development-practitioner organizations. Christian Aid has organized a number of sharing advocacy events at the national level in collaboration with MDF.

Christian Aid Bangladesh believes that women are the key to end poverty and therefore it places a focus on empowering women and girls. To this end, it has focused its gender work on gender mainstreaming over the last year. It has invested time in building the capacity of programme staff, and has continued to provide formal and informal access to justice to women and men through engagement with BLAST (Bangladesh Legal Aid and Services Trust) and local human rights organisation Nagorik Uddyog.

Through partnership with Research Development Collective (RDC), Christian Aid has continued its work with the plain land indigenous communities. It is still supporting the secretariat of Parliamentary Caucus on Indigenous People's Rights in Bangladesh which is a platform that advocates for the rights of indigenous people. Through this support they have built linkages

with policy makers in Bangladesh. Work on social inclusion has also broadened with the implementation of various programmes on Dalit rights. Alongside Nagorik Uddyog, Christian Aid has trained Human Rights Defenders to ensure that the Dalit communities in Bangladesh have access to their rights and entitlements. The DHRDs are also ensuring that the victims of any kind of violence, based on caste and gender, are provided with legal aid and counselling thus ensuring access to justice for these communities.

Christian Aid Bangladesh achieved several milestones in 2016 in the implementation of humanitarian response work. For the first time it has mobilized local funding from UNDP to implement the Flood Recovery Resilient project. Christian Aid Bangladesh has successfully implemented two European funded emergency response and recovery projects in Northwest and Southeast Bangladesh, benefiting a total of 3,800 flood affected households. The project provided support for food security, water, sanitation and health, shelter, livelihoods and early recovery to affected communities to enable them to return as quickly as possible to their normal lives.

## **ZIMBABWE**

Current statistics show that over 4 million people in Zimbabwe are food insecure as a result of the El Nino induced drought, especially as the peak of the hunger season sets in. Food is therefore the major priority for rural households at the moment, at the expense of some longer term programme work geared towards building long term resilience. This means projects such as gardening projects are being neglected due to both water shortages and households spending. Much time is spent looking for food.

The majority of crops planted during 2015/16 season were a complete write off. In Binga, where the programme is focussing on formal and informal education, drops in school attendances are being reported where there are no complimentary school feeding programmes. Unfortunately, the programme has not managed to get sufficient funding to integrate food assistance in all its areas of operation. The

current emergency funding has been raised through the ACT Appeal process and is available up to the end of December 2016. So far only Insiza and Lupane districts are receiving assistance, reaching out to just over 8,000 individuals.

Christian Aid has noted that communities are resorting to negative and asset depleting coping strategies in the face of the ongoing food crisis. For example, where emergency interventions are providing cash for the purchase of both food and seeds, communities are tending only to buy food, and not think ahead to the importance of planting seeds for the next season.

## CENTRAL AMERICA

In **El Salvador**, the increase in violence and insecurity, mainly associated with gangs and organized crime, reached the highest homicide rate in the world for a country not in armed conflict. In the first three months of 2016, national authorities recorded almost one murder every hour. Violent and criminal gangs act with impunity, and justice and security institutions are unable to fulfil their role. Entire neighbourhoods in cities and communities in the countryside have fallen under informal control of gangs and extortion, which directly affects the economy and livelihoods of families and businesses. The youth population is the sector most affected by the gang phenomenon, both as victims and perpetrators.

This is the very real and dangerous space in which partners must negotiate on a daily basis. Christian Aid partner, FESPAD, is at the forefront of this work. It works in some of the country's most marginalized communities to set-up and support violence prevention councils which encourage community members to lobby municipal government for public services and action that the State is failing to provide.

Meanwhile, in **Nicaragua**, the government continued to reduce participatory spaces for civil society organisations by using repressive mechanisms against peasants who oppose specific projects, and systematic attacks against political adversaries.

All four countries continue to face similar challenges in terms of violence and insecurity due to gangs and

criminal organization activity, weak political systems and environmental deterioration. In light of this, Christian Aid has identified partner organisations capable of leading regional processes and sustaining dialogue with Christian Aid. Similarly, it has engaged key organisations in its global advocacy processes, such as Centro Humboldt (Nicaragua), UNES (El Salvador) in the climate change campaign, Congcoop (Guatemala) in the international debate on Sustainable Development Goals, ICEFI (Guatemala) is used as a think tank, challenging the tax system.

All this is testament to Christian Aid shifting its focus towards a more regional approach in Central America.

## CAMPAIGNS



The next phase of Christian Aid's Big Shift campaign launched in early November. Phase one focused on coal: after 3 months of campaigning with over 50,000 signatures on the petition, stunts outside parliament and local lobbyist meetings, the government announced the complete phase out of coal by 2025. Phase two is the Big Church Switch that will continue through church networks.

This phase wants to engage with the biggest banks in the UK who are fuelling climate change with their investments and loans to fossil fuel companies. To meet climate commitments, we must break our dependence on fossil fuels and power our economy through low carbon solutions. We know that we need to do it as quickly as possible.

The pledges made by countries in Paris last December as part of the global climate agreement, when added together, put us on track for a temperature rise of 2.7 degrees Celsius. To limit it to 1.5 degrees – which is what the world's most vulnerable communities require of us - we can't wait; we need to start acting now. Resources for the next part of the campaign are now available. Face to face training for campaigners and congregations will happen in early 2017. See your local regional office for more details. To read more go to [www.christian-aid.org](http://www.christian-aid.org)

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