



I would like to start by saying **Thank You** for all your support over the past year. Between the beginning of April 2019 and the end of March 2020 you helped us raise the wonderful sum of £9,500 locally which included £1,000 Gift Aid. Christian Aid currently works in 37 countries in Africa, Asia, the Middle East, Latin America and the Caribbean, and this presence and support is more important than ever given the triple challenges of Covid 19, displaced people and climate change. The money raised will help to meet these challenges..

More than half of the £9,500 raised last year came from Christian Aid Week 2019. Obviously Christian Aid Week 2020 was very different with no local activities but I do know that many of you have donated anyway, either locally or nationally. Our local committee is meeting shortly to see how we can resume activities for the autumn.

Do you remember **The Big Shift Campaign**, asking banks to stop funding fossil fuels? During Lent 2019 Christian Aid supporters contacted HSBC to point out that it was continuing to fund coal mining in Vietnam, Indonesia and Bangladesh in spite of having a policy to stop investing in coal. A year later we have had some **good news**. In the responses to questions received from shareholders at the AGM, there was an announcement that they had closed the loophole in their coal policy. There is still work to be done because this change only applies to coal *projects* and they are still financing coal *companies* but we can be encouraged in the knowledge that sustained campaigning can make a difference.



Outside the Poole branch



This leads me on to **Current Campaigns**. I mentioned earlier the challenges of Covid 19, displaced people and climate change. Christian Aid continues to support those most affected and is working to raise national and international awareness. A recent example was Super Cyclone Amphan

requiring millions of people in India and Bangladesh to be evacuated from their homes as winds of up to 120mph and 17 foot high waves battered and damaged thousands of homes made with mud, tin and thatched roof. But these life-saving efforts were being restricted because of the need to social distance. Christian Aid local partners assessed the needs of people most in danger so that we could give life-saving support such as safe water, hygiene kits, masks and sanitisers, the latter to avoid transmission of coronavirus. There are more details on the website at <https://www.christianaid.org.uk/get-involved/campaigns>

Finally, have you heard of the **merger of DFID (the Department of International Development) and the FCO (Foreign and Commonwealth Office)**? It was announced by Boris Johnson last week and this is an extract from the accompanying press release, available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/prime-minister-announces-merger-of-department-for-international-development-and-foreign-office>



The merger is an opportunity for the UK to have even greater impact and influence on the world stage as we recover from the coronavirus pandemic and prepare to hold the G7 presidency and host COP26 next year.

UK aid will be given new prominence within our ambitious international policy. The Foreign Secretary will be empowered to make decisions on aid spending in line with the UK's priorities overseas, harnessing the skills, expertise and evidence that have earned our reputation as a leader in the international development community.

The UK is the only G7 country to spend 0.7% of GNI on overseas development and the Government remains committed to this target, which is enshrined in law.

Announcing the new department, the Prime Minister said:

"This is exactly the moment when we must mobilise every one of our national assets, including our aid budget and expertise, to safeguard British interests and values overseas."

For me this rings alarm bells. Much of the current aid is humanitarian, improving people's lives and reducing suffering, and this is more than simply safeguarding British interests and values. In future, it will be vital for development agencies and the press to monitor spending on overseas development and to ensure it meets internationally accepted criteria. This may well be a topic for future campaigning.

Thank you once again for all your support for Christian Aid,
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