PARTNERSHIP FOR CHANGE CHRISTIAN AID CENTRAL AMERICA

Strategy 2013–18







WHO WE ARE, WHAT WE DO

Christian Aid is an international organisation that insists the world can and must be swiftly changed to one where everyone can live a full life, free from poverty.

We work globally for profound change that eradicates the causes of poverty, striving to achieve equality, dignity and freedom for all, regardless of faith or nationality. We are part of a wider movement for social justice.

We have an integrated approach to poverty eradication, working worldwide on humanitarian relief, long-term development, specific advocacy issues and campaigns to expose the scandal of poverty by challenging and changing systems and institutions that favour the rich and powerful over the poor and marginalised.

From Afghanistan to Zimbabwe, Christian Aid works in some of the world's poorest communities, supporting projects on the basis of need, not religion, ethnicity or nationality.

We work with, and through, partners, including civil society organisations (CSOs), research institutions, churches, faith groups and social movements, as well as governments, the private sector and non-governmental organisations (NGOs).

In 2011/12, Christian Aid gave grants to 578 partner organisations across Africa, Asia and the Middle East, and Latin America and the Caribbean. Our total income was £95.5m (US\$145m), including £36.7m (US\$55.7m) in funding from governments and other institutions.

OUR GLOBAL STRATEGY

At Christian Aid, we believe human action is responsible for the underlying causes of poverty, and that when people work together, the world can be changed. This thinking has framed our new corporate strategy, *Partnership for Change*.

We believe that at the root of poverty is a lack of power – the power to have your say and be heard, or to know your rights and demand them. It is clear to us that poverty can be eradicated only through helping people secure power to help themselves. Christian Aid has identified five areas on which to focus our work:

1. Power to change institutions

We want to see all people having the power to influence institutions – so that the decisions affecting their lives are made responsibly and fairly.

2. The right to essential services

We want to see all people able to fulfil their right to access the services essential for a healthy, secure life.

3. Fair shares in a constrained world

We want to see all people have a fair and sustainable share of the world's resources.

4. Equality for all

We want to see a more inclusive world where identity – gender, ethnicity, caste, religion, class and sexual orientation – is no longer a barrier to equal treatment.

5. Tackling violence and building peace

We want to see vulnerable people protected from violence and living in peace.

Our new strategy for Central America is closely aligned with *Partnership for Change*.

A REGION CHALLENGED BY INEQUALITY

Twenty-five years on from the Central American Peace Accords, poverty, violence, environmental vulnerability and widespread inequality remain serious challenges for the region. This inequality is starkly shown by the high rates of malnutrition and poverty in the poorest communities across the region, particularly in rural areas. Women and young people are even more vulnerable because of gender-based violence and the exclusion of youth. Both groups face high levels of unemployment and reduced access to healthcare, education and culture.

Together with Haiti, Guatemala, Nicaragua, Honduras and El Salvador are the least developed countries in Latin America and the Caribbean. Current tax policies shed some light on the problem: the average tax revenue in the region is just 15.95 per cent, leaving Central American governments without sufficient resources to invest in social spending.

Against this backdrop, Central America has become the most violent region in Latin America and the Caribbean. 'Femicide' (the intentional killing of women because they are women) is prevalent and youth are stigmatised, because of a perception that they are involved in violent gangs, and denied their essential rights to education and employment.

Across the region, the closing of spaces within which civil society organisations and social movements can participate is worrying. This has created a very precarious situation for human rights in Central America.

International aid has reduced significantly in recent years because of the global financial crisis and the political decisions of major donors to withdraw their support for the region. In some cases, donors are reallocating their funds through private foundations and promoting corporate social responsibility (CSR), which prioritises entrepreneurial initiatives and reduces the opportunities for small farmers to access markets.

According to a recent UN report on climate change, Central America has three main challenges: to resolve the high levels of socio-economic and environmental vulnerability of the majority of the population, to promote climate change adaptation alternatives and to move towards sustainable low-carbon economies based on renewable sources. The region's climatic vulnerability is worsening, with recurrent droughts, flooding and hurricanes. These events always hit the poor hardest.

CHRISTIAN AID IN CENTRAL AMERICA

Christian Aid works in four countries in Central America – Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador and Nicaragua. We work with around 30 partner organisations, from community-based groups to larger organisations operating across the region and beyond. Our partners include indigenous communities, small farmers' associations, development organisations,





research institutions and faith-based organisations. Christian Aid has excellent knowledge of the region and the expertise and capacity to deliver complex projects on resilient livelihoods, tax justice, violence prevention and human rights.

Our regional approach works because of the close economic, social and political ties between the four countries and leads to coherent programming, synergy between partners and other allies across the region, and learning around key thematic areas. We will continue to develop multi-national projects.

Between 2010 and this new strategy, we focused on three key areas: secure livelihoods (prioritising disaster risk reduction (DRR) and climate change adaptation), economic justice (especially tax justice) and accountable governance (citizen participation and human rights). We prioritised the links between local, national and regional level actions to ensure policy work targeting wider change was rooted in community experiences. We also moved towards building our partners' capacity using thematic toolkits and participatory approaches. We strengthened links with sister ecumenical agencies DanChurchAid, Norwegian Church Aid, Finn Church Aid and Church World Service, and sought new alliances with government ministries and agencies, and the private sector.

We have developed climate change adaptation initiatives and DRR approaches through the UK government-funded Building Disaster Resilient Communities (BDRC) programme, combining local and scientific knowledge to improve skills and capacity. This work is of huge importance to one of the world's regions most at risk to natural disasters and climate change.

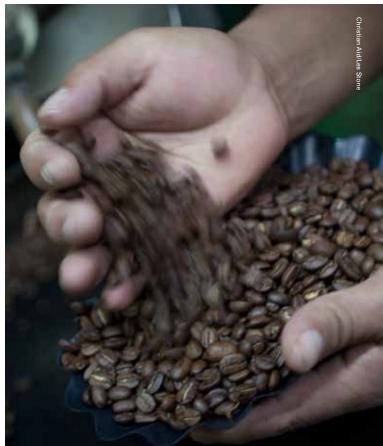
Our vision for Central America is a fair and equal society, free from violence, achieved through democratic and accountable institutions, and more resilient communities based on a fairer economic model that allows marginalised people, especially women and youth, to take advantage of development

Christian Aid was the first international NGO in Central America to champion tax justice, and we have gained great experience on the issue through our work with organisations with vast expertise. Our partners ICEFI were key advocates for progressive tax reform approved by the Guatemalan parliament in 2012. Similar work is now being developed in Nicaragua and El Salvador, using learning from the Guatemalan experience. Christian Aid believes existing economic models in Central America must be changed through political dialogue, more inclusive public policies and practices that favour the poor and marginalised, and by promoting accountability.

We have used our policy expertise to create resources such as a tax toolkit to support organisations working on tax.

Our holistic approach to resilience is already recognised by partners and some government officials as pioneering in the region. With our partners, we have developed and worked with tools and approaches including participatory vulnerability and capacity assessments (PVCAs), power analysis, market mapping, HAP (Humanitarian Accountability Partnership) and climate analysis for adaptation and risk management. The DFID General and Humanitarian Programme Partnership Agreements (PPAs) 2011-14 and Irish Aid Programme Funding (IAPF) 2012-15 for Guatemala and El Salvador provide a platform for future work on resilience and citizens' participation.





OUR THEORY OF CHANGE

Advocacy at all levels

- around private sector power and its impact on markets
- proposals to governments and private sector for pro-poor fiscal systems and public expenditure
- for reform promoting citizens' participation in decision making
 - for legal and institutional mechanisms to defend human rights and prevent violence.

Communities have acted to reduce climate and disaster risks and protect lives and livelihoods by using traditional knowledge, science and technology.

Monitoring

- of accountability in emergency response, climate change investment and application of HAP standards
- of municipal and national budgets, and social auditing of public policy formulation and implementation
 - of human rights and conflict resolution.

Marginalised people have participated in more equitable markets, accessing essential goods and services, creating wealth and prosperity, and have advocated for pro-poor public policies.

Effective and inclusive means of dialogue have been established between citizens, public and private institutions.

Legal and institutional frameworks on human rights and violence prevention have

been implemented at all levels, with special attention

to women and youth.

Democratic, accountable and pro-poor institutions, within both the state and the private sector.

Resilient communities

able to protect their

livelihoods and lives.

GOALS

Coordination, alliances

- with private sector, government and others, so communities understand climate risks and can anticipate disasters
 - develop joint violence prevention, security and human rights work with ACT/APRODEV agencies
- new alliances with private sector to provide new sources and forms of finance for pro-poor market development
 - regional alliances creating synergy between partners and relevant stakeholders.

Capacity building of grassroots groups

- on linking with national and regional platforms
- on fiscal issues, resilience and violence prevention
- on demanding transparency and accountability and dialogue with policy decision makers at all levels
 - technical support on market mapping, business plans and cash transfers.

Governments, private sector and CSOs have adopted policies and practices guaranteeing resilience, accountability and fair income distribution through a progressive fiscal system with a gender perspective.

OUTCOMES

STRATEGIES

OUR NEW STRATEGY FOR CENTRAL AMERICA

Christian Aid will work for more democratic, accountable and inclusive institutions that respond to citizens in relation to human rights, violence prevention, tax, the environment and food security. We want to see institutions fulfil their duties, citizens take on the responsibility of interacting with the state and other institutions, and women and young people included in political spaces.

We will support communities to become resilient and reduce the risks of people falling into poverty by anticipating, responding to and learning from risks and recovering quickly from shocks – climate, markets, threat of violence. We will also support marginalised people to take advantage of market opportunities to create wealth and prosperity, bringing about sustainable and lasting change.

The programme will adopt a rights-based approach, addressing the structural causes of vulnerability and exclusion, not just the symptoms. Priority will be placed on community-led advocacy processes that contribute to policy work at national and regional level.

We will build the capacity of partners and communities so they have a better understanding of fiscal, resilience and violence prevention issues and how they apply directly to people's lives. Our new strategy for Central America contributes directly to Christian Aid's global goals of 'Fair shares in a constrained world' and 'Tackling violence, building peace'. The programme also incorporates 'The power to change institutions' and 'Equality for all' as crosscutting objectives.

We will work with poor families in rural and semi-urban communities that are landless or living at subsistence level – prioritising women, youth and ethnic groups historically excluded from society and discriminated against. Our pro-poor market development (PPMD) work will prioritise small farmers through cooperatives or producer associations. We will work in areas prone to disasters, food shortage and environmental risk, mainly on the Pacific coast of the region, the Atlantic coast of Nicaragua and Honduras, and the 'dry corridor' running across Central America.

Christian Aid will seek stronger links with United Nations programmes, ECHO, national and regional systems for emergency prevention and response, ACT Alliance, government institutions, universities and research centres, human rights organisations and the private sector. We will work with partners engaged in advocacy and committed to developing gender analysis in their work, and actively including youth and women.



Objective 1 – Resilience.

To build the resilience of marginalised people, especially women and youth, by empowering them to reduce risks, take opportunities, and demand public and private sector policies and practices that promote equitable and sustainable development.

Objective 2 – Building up democratic institutions, inclusion and violence prevention.

To promote fair power relations by enabling vulnerable people to demand policies and accountability from states and the private sector to establish a progressive fiscal system, prevent violence and respect human rights, prioritising women and youth.

The changes we seek	How we will bring about change
Communities have taken practical actions and reduced climate and disaster risks by using traditional knowledge, scientific investigation and appropriate technology to protect lives and livelihoods.	 creating alliances with meteorological services, universities, research institutions and government institutions so communities can understand and anticipate climate risks and take action disseminating climate change adaptation approaches via national and regional platforms, scaling up initial efforts across the region and exploring new approaches to humanitarian work such as cash transfers capacity building of partners in humanitarian response monitoring accountability in emergency response and advocating for the application of HAPstandards coordinating humanitarian assistance with our partners.
Marginalised people participate actively in more equitable markets, accessing essential goods and services, generate new wealth and prosperity and advocate for pro-poor public policies.	 brokering and facilitation of technical and business development support to social enterprises and producer groups; scoping studies and market mapping; participatory market systems development (PMSD) establishing new alliances with the private sector to provide new forms of financial and non-financial support to develop inclusive markets in Central America providing affordable clean energy products and services to the most vulnerable people and in alliance with the private sector using advocacy processes that challenge private sector abuse of power and market distortion; this includes new alliances and sharing good practice within the sector becoming an agency that balances business viability with social impact.
Governments, private sector and CSOs adopt policies and practices guaranteeing resilience, accountability standards and income redistribution through a progressive fiscal system with a gender perspective.	 building up capacity of grassroots organisations to link to national and regional platforms using community-led advocacy to influence policy and social spending on food security and sovereignty, natural resource management, DRR, climate change, humanitarian assistance and inclusive markets building awareness and capacity on fiscal issues so partners can present strong and informed political positions and also demand transparency and accountability from local and national authorities and the private sector monitoring municipal and national long-term investment in critical areas for development such as climate change adaptation, nutrition, markets and disaster risk management improving advocacy skills so target groups can present proposals on fiscal systems and public expenditure that benefit the poor to parliaments, governments and the private sector.
Effective and inclusive dialogue mechanisms established between citizens, public and private institutions.	 building capacity of partners to participate in dialogue with policy decision-makers advocating for political reforms promoting citizens' participation in decision-making spaces establishing regional alliances creating synergy between partners and relevant stakeholders.
Adapted and implemented legal and institutional frameworks for human rights promotion and violence prevention, with special attention to women and youth.	 using legal and institutional mechanisms to defend human rights, resolve conflicts, and promote violence prevention promoting innovative initiatives to prevent violence, through alliances with human rights advocates, faith organisations and others with emphasis on women and youth establishing alliances with ACT/APRODEV agencies to develop joint violence prevention initiatives and reinforce the security and human rights monitoring across the region.

OUR PARTNERS IN CENTRAL AMERICA

Guatemala

Dispensario Betania

Colectiva para la defensa de los Derechos de las Mujeres en Guatemala (CODEFEM)

Asociación Civil Caja Lúdica

Colectivo Madre Selva

Instituto Centroamericano de Estudios Fiscales (ICEFI)

Coordinación de ONG y Cooperativas (CONGCOOP)

Centro Internacional para Investigaciones en Derechos Humanos (CIIDH)

Honduras

Organismo Cristiano de Desarrollo de Honduras (OCDIH)

Comisión de Acción Social Menonita (CASM)

Centro de Desarrollo Humano (CDH)

DanChurchAid (DCA)

El Salvador

Programa de Capacitación y Reconstrucción de El Salvador (PROCARES)

Confederación de Federaciones de la Reforma Agraria Salvadoreña (CONFRAS)

Unidad Ecológica Salvadoreña (UNES)

Acudesbal

Fundación Nacional para el Desarrollo (FUNDE)

Fundación de Estudios para la Aplicación del Derecho (FESPAD)

Iniciativa Social para la Democracia (ISD)

Aprodehni

Nicaragua

UCA Soppexcca

Cooperativa Hibiscus

Centro Humboldt

Asociación Nochari

Movimiento Comunal Nicaragüense de Matagalpa

Centro de Prevención de la Violencia (CEPREV)

Acción Médica Cristiana (AMC)

Centro Intereclesial de Estudios Teológicos y Sociales (CIEETS)

Instituto de Estudios Estratégicos y Políticas Públicas (IEEPP)

Coordinadora Civil (CC)

Regional Partners

ACT Alliance

Concertación Regional para la Gestión de Riesgo (CRGR)

Programa de Incidencia para América Central (PICA

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Front-cover photo: Gladys Herrera learnt to play the saxophone with support from Christian Aid partner Soppexcca. Soppexcca is an association of small-scale coffee cooperatives in the Nicaraguan highlands that also funds and organises community development initiatives such as schools, pharmacies, rubbish collection and tree planting schemes. Young people like Gladys receive art, music and environmental training.

Christian Aid/Tom Pilston

Christian Aid is a member of ACT – an alliance of more than 130 churches and related organisations that work together in humanitarian assistance, advocacy and development – giving us the ability to respond quickly and easily to emergencies the world over.



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