

# POVERTY OVER

## Teachers' notes

For students aged 16 and over to explore different approaches to defining global poverty, how poverty is an issue of power as well as material hardship and how Christian Aid is working with communities to tackle poverty.

## Workshop Outline

### Objectives

- To increase understanding of what 'poverty' means
- To empower students to understand how poverty might be overcome.

### Outcomes

- Students will have explored different approaches to defining poverty
- Students will have understood that 'poverty' is not just material hardship, but the manifestation of a lack of freedom and power
- Students will have assessed causes of poverty in the real world
- Students will have begun to critique portrayals of wealth, poverty and global issues in the media
- Students will have started to envisage a world without poverty and will be able to express some of the steps needed to achieve this.

## Preparation/Materials

You will need to set up the PowerPoint presentation (downloadable from [www.christianaid.org.uk/learn](http://www.christianaid.org.uk/learn)).

More resources available at [www.christianaid.org.uk/learn](http://www.christianaid.org.uk/learn)

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[christianaid.org.uk/learn](http://christianaid.org.uk/learn)) and prepare materials for the following activities:

**Introduction:** 'Pushed out by poverty' and 'People in power' notes in envelopes, inflatable globe (or ball), flipchart, pens.

**Activity 1:** Case studies - people, power and poverty.

**Activity 2:** Magazines/Sunday supplements, scissors, glue, scrap paper.

**Activity 3:** Inflatable globe, string cut into 3-metre lengths, scrap paper, pens.

**Activity 4:** Case studies - people, power and poverty solutions.

**Activity 5:** The Poverty Over video, which is signposted from the PowerPoint presentation or available at <http://povertyover.christianaid.org.uk> Newspapers, scrap paper, glue, pens.

**Read through the Teachers' Notes.** Please note that allocated times for each activity are the minimum required. If you feel that your group will be pushed for time or would like more time for discussion, prioritise the activities you will focus on. Activity 2 can be dropped if time is short.

## Running the workshop

### Introduction

Have the PowerPoint presentation ready and displaying **slide 1**. As people enter, hand out the 'Pushed out by poverty' and 'People in power' notes hidden in envelopes (the majority should have notes that read 'Pushed out by poverty', the minority should have 'People in power'). Ask them to put the notes in their pocket and to avoid looking at them for the moment.

### Ice-breaker (4 minutes)

In a circle, students should throw an inflatable globe (or ball) between them – the person who catches it must shout out a word that they associate with poverty or 'being poor'. The facilitator can write these words down on a whiteboard/flipchart.

### Group discussion:

- are most of the words from the ice-breaker about things to do with lack of money or material goods?
- how many are to do with lack of opportunity?
- how many are to do with a lack of access to essential goods or services – like water, education, or healthcare?
- are any to do with a lack of power?

### Activity 1:

#### Defining poverty (12 minutes)

Christian Aid believes that although poverty is usually defined in economic terms, it is actually about more than just a lack of money or material goods. Whilst economic deprivation is often a feature of poverty, this is usually underpinned by other issues, many of which relate to power – or rather a lack of power.

#### Case studies: People, power and poverty

Split the group into three smaller groups and give each group one of the case studies featuring Sara's, Rui's and Ali's stories – **show slides 2, 3 and 4** to introduce these people.

**Show slide 5.** Christian Aid believes that 'poverty is not only material deprivation, but also and more importantly the deprivation of opportunities for a good life'.

In groups, make a list of the key points about each person and the main factors that are depriving Sara, Rui or Ali of opportunities for a good life.

Tell students to share this information between groups by role-playing the part of the person whose case study they have read. They have a few minutes to introduce themselves (in character) to a member of

each of the two other groups and explain who they are and what problems they face.

#### Group discussion:

- is the poverty that these people experience mainly due to material deprivation or lack of opportunity, or both?
- are there any causes for hope in these stories?

### Activity 2:

#### 'Good Life' collage (10 minutes)

Using magazines, ask the students in groups to create collages of what they think constitutes a good life – essential things that people everywhere need to lead a fulfilled and content existence. Tell them not just to focus on the material things that they and their peers might want, but to think about the things that the case studies above have illustrated – the universal things that human beings across the world need as basic components of a good life.

You could allow a few minutes for them to display their collages around the room and to view each other's work.

**Show slide 6.** Christian Aid groups the components of a good life under the following headings:

**Personal** – health, education, well-being, decent work and leisure conditions

**Economic** – income, freedom from inequality, economic security

**Political** – political freedom (choice to choose leadership), freedom from political violence

**Social** – community well-being, peace, environmental stability.

#### Group discussion:

- can students group the ideas in their collages under similar headings?
- was it easy to find pictures in magazines to illustrate these points, or were most of the images about material possessions?
- what might this say about our society?

### Activity 3:

#### Causes of poverty (12 minutes)

Now that students have thought about many different aspects of poverty and the components of a 'good life', they are going to explore once again words associated with poverty. But this time, they are going to look beyond the material effects of poverty, to some of the issues behind it: the causes.

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Get pupils to discuss these in small groups for a moment and brainstorm issues on bits of paper – one issue per page.

Place inflatable globe in the middle of the room. Now put the pieces of paper with issues on the floor around the globe. Issues that might be dotted around include: conflict, climate change, disease, politics, money/economics, trade, water, food, natural disasters.

Ask pupils if they think there are any important issues missing, and add these if necessary.

Ask pupils to vote with their feet by standing by the piece of paper that they feel represents the most pressing issue.

You could comment on the issues that are most 'popular' and ask people why they have chosen that particular issue. Hold up the paper which states the most 'popular' issue – the issue they consider to be the biggest contributor to poverty.

Ask people to look at the notes in their pockets. If their note says 'pushed out by poverty', explain that poverty prevents their voice from being heard, and ask them to sit down. The majority of the students will have to sit down, leaving only a few with the 'people in power' notes standing – these

students represent the rich and powerful and it is their voice that carries weight.

Which is the biggest contributing factor to poverty now – is it the issue with the most people still standing by it, or is it the fact that the majority of people in the room do not have the power to express themselves and join the discussion?

**Show slide 7.** 'Christian Aid believes that at poverty's core lies the misuse of power; by unequal power relations within and among countries, and within and among groups and individuals. Poverty is disempowerment, and the injustices that result.'

Finally, ask all the people who were 'pushed out by poverty' to stand in the middle of the room, next to the globe. Draw a new sign that says '**disempowerment**', and ask them to hold this. Give one person in this group a selection of strings and ask the others to each take hold of a string and walk to stand next to an issue that is made worse by the fact that they, the majority of the world's people, lack power. The room should be a tangle of strings!

### Group discussion:

- are there any issues that are not affected by inequalities of power?

- what exactly do we mean by 'power'? (You could again break this down by the components used to assess a 'good life' – personal, economic, political, social).
- why do people need power in these areas – and is there a point at which power becomes a negative force?
- what factors might be blocking the majority of people's power - and should these be added to the key poverty issues?
- if powerlessness drives poverty and poverty exacerbates powerlessness, does this constitute a vicious cycle?

### Activity 4:

#### Ways out of poverty (10 minutes)

**Show slide 8.** 'Empowerment – by allowing fundamental, effective choices about economic, social, personal and political aspects of a life – is freedom from poverty'.

Christian Aid's approach is empowering, supporting the work of partners, and helping those living in poverty to raise their concerns in forums where they might not otherwise be heard.

### People, power and poverty solutions

Divide students back into the groups they were in when they looked at the case

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studies and hand out the 'People, power and poverty solutions' sheets.

### Group discussion:

- how do the solutions in the case study sheets address the material hardships that these people face?
- how do they address the underlying issue of disempowerment?

**Show slides 9 and 10** (optional). If you have internet access, watch the Youtube films on tax and climate change campaigning:

### tax:

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=MxrsFo0vrj8&feature=channel](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MxrsFo0vrj8&feature=channel)

### climate:

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=InXPPdLTiQo&feature=channel](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=InXPPdLTiQo&feature=channel)

### Group discussion:

- how might the issues of climate change and tax affect Sara, Rui and Ali?
- how does campaigning on these issues help these people?
- how does the type of campaigning shown in the films address issues of power?

### Activity 5:

#### Towards Poverty Over (10 minutes)

**Show slide 11** (optional). Show students the Poverty Over animation: You can find it at [www.youtube.com/watch?v=kLBZl4FzOww](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kLBZl4FzOww) or at <http://povertyover.christianaid.org.uk>

Explain to the students that the future is theirs to write and that the issues of power that they have discussed also relate to them – are they going to empower themselves to make a difference to the issues that have been discussed?

Hand out newspapers and glue and scrap paper and challenge the students to spend the final five minutes drafting tomorrow's front page for a daily newspaper. They should fill this with the sort of news that they would like to read and create stories that reflect the change that they would like see in the world.

Give out prizes for the most original, thoughtful and funny front pages.

### Conclusion

(2 minutes)

To close the workshop, ask students to gather in a circle and sum up in three or four words something that they will do to help make their newspaper headlines a reality.

Poverty is an outrage against humanity. It robs people of dignity, freedom and hope, of power over their own lives.

Christian Aid has a vision – an end to poverty – and we believe that vision can become a reality. We urge you to join us.

**London** PO Box 100, SE1 7RT

**Belfast** PO Box 150, BT9 6AE

**Cardiff** PO Box 6055, CF15 5AA

**Edinburgh** PO Box 11, EH1 0BR

**Dublin** 17 Clanwilliam Terrace, Dublin 2

**Website** [www.christianaid.org.uk](http://www.christianaid.org.uk)



More resources available at  
[www.christianaid.org.uk/learn](http://www.christianaid.org.uk/learn)

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Activity sheets and case studies

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People in power	People in power
Pushed out by poverty	Pushed out by poverty
Pushed out by poverty	Pushed out by poverty
Pushed out by poverty	Pushed out by poverty
Pushed out by poverty	Pushed out by poverty
Pushed out by poverty	Pushed out by poverty
Pushed out by poverty	Pushed out by poverty
Pushed out by poverty	Pushed out by poverty
Pushed out by poverty	Pushed out by poverty



## CASE STUDY: SARA SOGHERI

### Sara Sogheri, Afghanistan

**Sara is 24 and comes from one of the poorest families in Housche village, which is in Gulran, one of the frontier districts of Herat province in Afghanistan. Most of the population here are employed in animal husbandry and agriculture. Women contribute to the animal husbandry and are also involved in making handicrafts, weaving carpets and other household activities.**



Read Sara's story:

'I am 24 and I have three children – two daughters aged ten and seven and a two year old son. I got married when I was no older than thirteen and I had my daughter when I was fourteen.

My daughter is ten and until now I haven't wanted to marry her to anyone. I want her to study. If someone is educated, people see she can become a doctor or a teacher, but if she gets married she has to give up school.

People are starting to like the idea of their daughters being 'somebody' one day. Before, we didn't think about this because of war. War didn't give us the chance to think about school or education because of the bombing. Now we have peace we are able to think of these things and concentrate on education.

Why have I only started going to literacy classes now, aged 24? I should at least be able to write my name.

Even now when I want to go to my literacy class people stop me in the street and say

"Sister, don't go, stay home and weave carpets for your children ..."

My own cousin said this to me the day before yesterday! I told her: "I wasn't able to be a person before. Now at least I want to be able to read the name on a medical prescription."

I've been thinking about the clinic for a month now because I want to get pills that will prevent pregnancy. I had three children who all died before they were born. It was in the seventh month of pregnancy and they died because we have no doctor.

When we are sick we just stay at home. For instance, my daughter is really ill tonight with a high fever. If I got a donkey and took her to the clinic she would get even sicker because of the long journey and the cold.

I cannot achieve any of the things I wish for because my wishes are too many. I cannot reach any of my goals because I am poor, with empty hands. I cannot reach anything.'

## CASE STUDY: RUI BARBOSA

### Rui Barbosa, Brazil

**Rui Barbosa, 62, and his wife spent eight years camped out under plastic sheeting by the roadside, waiting for the courts to decide on their claim for a piece of land of their own.**

**The couple were like millions of other poor Brazilians who have no land rights. Just 3% of Brazil's population owns two-thirds of all arable land, much of it lying empty and unused; while most Brazilians have nothing. This is the most unequal land division in the world.**

**Brazilian law allows farmland that is not being used to be claimed for redistribution by people who have none. Although Brazil is one of the world's largest and wealthiest economies, it is also one of the world's most unequal countries. Poverty here is all about power – or the lack of it.**



Christian Aid/Sian Curry

Read Rui's story:

'The camp was very difficult. We had no electricity or water. You'd have to wash yourself by candlelight, using water from a bucket. We lived in a tent made from plastic. We didn't even have a bed.

And people from the outside humiliated us, they'd call us names as they drove past, call us tramps.

It was a time of great suffering and humiliation... But you have to bear it. I bore it because I needed my own land.

It's important to have your own land - it's about having the power to make your own decisions.

Some people say it's illegal because they say you're stealing land. But it's not like that at all. It's not stealing other people's land, it's sharing land that no-one is using – land belonging to absentee landlords who aren't using the land at all.

I'd hope for a much better future for me, my community, my country and the whole world. I hope for more peace and more trust. I hope for more unity in our community. Without togetherness you have no strength, your community doesn't exist.'

## CASE STUDY: ALI TOGOLA

### Ali Togola, Mali

**Ali Togola, 16, is a keen footballer and plays most evenings with his friends in Tabakoro village in Mali in West Africa.**

**But life is tough for Ali and his community. For the last forty years the weather has been changing in this region. From the late 1960s to early 1980s a drought and subsequent famine killed more than 100,000, left 750,000 dependent on food aid and affected most of the region's 50 million people. More recently, the once predictable rainy seasons have been getting shorter, leaving river beds dry sooner than they should be and farmers without enough rain water to grow their crops.**

**As 80% of Mali's 13 million population relies on farming, the impact of the changing weather on families in this region is huge. Often farmers cannot grow enough food to last them through the dry season and hunger has become a way of life. Nutrition levels are extremely poor; a third of children under the age of five are chronically malnourished.**



Christian Aid/Rachel Stevens

Read Ali's story

'The weather has changed a lot since I was a child. When I was young my father would hunt in the bush. He would get wild rabbits and birds. But now those animals have disappeared.

He would also grow lots of bananas. We always had bananas to eat, but now we hardly have any.

The sunlight is too strong now and there is not enough rain. On top of that, there are fewer big trees now because the population is growing and people are cutting down more

trees to make firewood. As a result, we now have people to police the trees. They walk around and we inform them if we see anyone cutting trees down.

This problem is our fault. It has made things much more difficult.

If the bananas were still growing we would have enough money for food. Without this income we have gaps in our family income. I worry about it, but I can't do anything.

I have been here all my life. I cycle to school, which is about 7km away; my favourite subjects are history and geography.

But there is very little opportunity here. I don't want to remain here when I am older. I want to go somewhere else and look for work.'

## SOLUTIONS

Sara Sogheri

**Afghanistan**

**Christian Aid works with local partner organisations in the region where Sara lives in Afghanistan. One of these, AHDA, has chosen six villages in Gulran district in which to set up democratically-elected village organisations called 'shuras'. The goal is to increase the participation of the Afghan people in local decision-making and the mobilisation of resources to solve problems of common interest.**

Sara says:

'When there is peace women should take part in elections and improve their lives, like women do in other countries. Throughout my life I never heard of such a thing as a male or female shura but in the last two years I've heard of these things. Now we have a government and improvements are being made.'

The female shura held an election to decide what was the most important thing we needed – literacy classes, a clinic, a road or carpet thread. The highest vote was for the thread and the classes.'

Because she is from one of the poorest families, Sara was selected to be the carpet-weaving trainer appointed by the male shura in Housche – this will provide Sara and her three children with a much needed income.

'If a good government is present, every problem can be solved. The government is good for bringing peace.'

We would like the things other countries have, such as water, electricity, baths, good houses, water taps, flowers, roads, streets... But at least we have peace and women have freedom. We are not forced to cover our faces anymore or forced to stay in our husbands' homes.'

Before this government, our daughters were obliged to get married by force and were beaten. Now the government prevents this from happening.'

# SOLUTIONS

Rui Barbosa

**Brazil**

**After eight years camped by the roadside, Rui now has his own home, land and dairy farm, thanks to Christian Aid partner MST – the largest social movement in Latin America. MST (the Landless People’s Movement) organises protest camps on or near unused farmland in Brazil and, through the courts, makes legal claims for that land to be released for landless families.**

MST camps are generally set up on land just beside main highways. They aim to be as visible as possible to exercise maximum political pressure. Families remain camped out on the roadside until their legal claims are resolved. This can take months or even years.

Since their foundation in 1984, MST protest camps and legal actions have enabled more than 350,000 landless families – one and a half million people – to get land of their own.

Rui says:

‘Eight years in the camp, and it was a time of great suffering. But not anymore.

Here in the settlement we have everything. Here I’m alive. I work hard, I’ve always liked hard work, but now I’m in charge. I’m alive now. Life is very good. We have everything here.

Now I have peace and dignity.

*My paradise place*, that’s what I call my land, *my paradise place*. Paradise is a place of peace, and I have peace here.

We have water, not drinking water but water from the well that I dug. That’s the next step – to have drinking water on tap. It hasn’t happened yet but I hope it will. Except for drinking water, we have light, we have everything.’

# SOLUTIONS

Ali Togola

**Mali**

**Christian Aid’s partner, the Mali Folkecenter (MFC), works with local communities to help them adapt to the changing climate.**

Zoumana Togola, 57, who is from the same community as Ali, has been instrumental in bringing solar energy to their village, organising a village committee and then approaching the Mali Folkecenter to ask for their help. As a result, Tabakoro village now has solar panels that generate electricity for a health centre, and a school, and a water pump.

This means that the village has 24-hour access to healthcare, a fridge to store life saving vaccines, electricity at the local school in the evenings so that students can study for longer, and clean water all year round.

Zoumana says:

‘We had a health centre but it had no electricity and it was difficult for people to get

water. We had to use flash lights or local lamps in the health clinic if someone was ill at night. We were also unable to stock vaccines. So, we asked the MFC for water and light.

We have a fridge now and the public area has lights. The ladies are safer. At night students go and study in the school. And people don’t get sick from the water now. We are all much healthier now.

There is still a real shortage of water here. But we have a new dam nearby that will stock water for a long period underground. We are now looking for help to irrigate the land.

The challenge is to keep the trees that we have here already and to plant more. We started planting trees a few years ago. In the first year we planted 500 trees and 150 survived. In the second year we planted 2,000 and most of those have survived. In the third year we planted 1,000.

Every August we gather to plant the trees. This year we will start planting jatropha.’

As well as helping vulnerable communities adapt to climate change, Christian Aid is working across the world – in the UK, too – to ensure that global carbon emissions are reduced to help to stop climate change becoming worse.