

Our humanitarian work



Christian Aid site-manages Jamtoli Camp in Bangladesh, helping to provide food, clean water, safe shelter and medical care.

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In 2017 the UN set at 140 million the number of people across the world needing humanitarian assistance due to conflicts, natural disasters, epidemics and displacement. Christian Aid and its partners have needed to find a response to unprecedented levels of humanitarian need.

Christian Aid approaches humanitarian crises in three ways.

- We look to provide life-saving assistance to those who need it most.
- We build the long-term resilience of vulnerable communities to cope with future threats.
- We advocate to those in power, urging them to tackle the causes and consequences of crises, so that vulnerable people can access humanitarian aid and are better protected.

We consider that our approach distinguishes us in two ways from much of the sector.

First, we believe that local organisations understand the needs of their communities better than outsiders, and that they deserve a stronger role in crisis response and recovery. We channel 85% of our humanitarian spending through local partner organisations.

Second, we believe that, as far as possible, we should let affected populations lead the design and implementation of crisis response and recovery. Our ambition is to empower survivors, maximising their agency and dignity.

In 2017/18, our partners delivered 150 humanitarian projects in 26 countries, reaching an estimated 1 million people in need.

Humanitarian responses in action

In August 2017 violence against the Rohingya people escalated in **Myanmar's** Rakhine State, forcing hundreds of thousands of people to flee for safety. The Inter Sector Coordination Group (ISCG) notes that more than 850,000 Rohingya are now in camps on the **Bangladesh** border.

Christian Aid acted quickly to meet the immediate needs of crisis-affected families. The initial response included the distribution of 15-day food rations in partnership with the UN World Food Programme; distribution of shelter kits with support from the International Organisation for Migration; and the provision of medical assistance through our local partner Dhaka Ahsanian Mission. For the first time, Christian Aid took on responsibility for site-managing a refugee camp - Jamtoli Camp, which

has a population of around 51,000 according to the ISCG. Meanwhile, a well-established local partner in Myanmar, MCC, reports providing food assistance to over 8,000 internally displaced people in Muagdaw and Budhitaung township in Northern Rakhine.

The UN estimates that over 40 million people across South Asia were affected by two months of persistent monsoon rains in 2017, causing flooding in **India, Nepal and Bangladesh**. Lives were lost, while survivors' homes and livelihoods were destroyed. Hundreds of thousands of people were evacuated to temporary shelters. Shelter, food and water were provided to around 45,000 in India, 15,000 in Nepal, and 3,000 in Bangladesh as noted by Christian Aid and partner monitoring reports.

In the siege of Eastern Ghouta, our partner still provided food to 12,000 people, showing the value of our localisation approach

In the Middle East, Christian Aid and partners continued to respond to crises in **Syria, Iraq and Gaza**. Last year, the conflict in Syria worsened. According to ACAPS, around 6.5 million Syrians have been displaced, and 5 million are now refugees; 4.5 million people found themselves trapped in besieged towns and hard-to-reach areas. We delivered essential services to vulnerable populations, including in areas where civilians are deliberately targeted. Our food kitchen in Eastern Ghouta was a major achievement. In March 2018, at the height of the siege, our partner was able to cook and distribute food to 12,000 people, when even the UN and the ICRC could not get food convoys into the area – an example of the value of our localisation approach.

In **Lebanon**, we work with our partner Association Najdeh to provide non-formal education and psycho-social support to Palestinian refugees, including from Syria. Mouvement Social ensures vulnerable children across Lebanon can continue their education and access psychological support. Lebanese organisation Kafa supports the most vulnerable female refugees who have experienced exploitation and domestic violence in the Bekaa Valley. In Iraq, our partner REACH has provided food and kerosene for winter to displaced and host communities, as well as vocational training to refugee communities living in northern Iraq.

In **Yemen**, Christian Aid supported Action Against Hunger's Moderately Acute Malnutrition project, reaching around 52,000 people including children under five, pregnant women and new mothers. Action Against Hunger responded to the cholera outbreak by running a diarrhoea treatment centre and 34 oral rehydration centres in two districts of Hodeidah governorate.

In the European refugee crisis, we continued to support partners in **Serbia** and **Greece**. Projects in both countries were grounded in the idea of wellbeing, protection and the need to foster community cohesion as a way to positively influence coping mechanisms and inclusion. In Serbia, our partner Philanthropy provided vocational training and social activities within the camps to help refugees regain a sense of purpose and familiarity, supporting wellbeing after a rise in mental health issues. In Greece, our partners provide food, clothing, psychosocial support, legal advice and housing to families and unaccompanied children in Athens and Thessaloniki.

Our work in Nigeria supports both displaced people and the families who shelter them. We have reached 240,000 people with food assistance

Famine affected parts of **South Sudan**, leaving 6 million people in urgent need of food, as noted by ReliefWeb. This followed more than three years of devastating conflict, which has forced millions to abandon their homes. The situation was also grave in **Somalia, Kenya** and **Ethiopia** where, as noted by ReliefWeb, 14 million people were affected by hunger, caught up in what the UN considers the region's worst drought in 50 years. In response, we scaled up emergency responses in Kenya, Ethiopia and South Sudan, including the provision of cash and animal feeds.

Armed conflict displaced at least 1.7 million people in **Nigeria**, according to Amnesty International. We are supporting people in north-east Nigeria, in Borno, Adamawa and Gombe states. ReliefWeb noted in 2015 that nearly 80% of displaced people live with families who offer them shelter. We are one of the few humanitarian organisations giving life-saving support to both displaced

people and these host families. As per information from our internal monitoring, post-distribution reports and partner field reports, we have reached 240,000 people with food assistance; provided 160,000 households with livelihood support to produce their own food; provided cash transfers to 21,000 people for their essential needs; and supported 22,000 children under five with nutrition.

In the **Democratic Republic of Congo**, we provided rapid response to internally displaced people in Kasai region, reaching 200,000 people – as per our partners' report - with food security, shelter, water, sanitation or protection between January and July 2018. We and our partners were among the first to intervene and provide a holistic response to affected populations in remote areas.

In **Haiti**, we provided assistance to the victims of Hurricane Irma. In Fort-Liberté, with the help of our local partner Haiti Survie, around 200 people have received support to repair their homes and make them more secure, 82 vulnerable families received seeds and tools so they can start farming again, and 100 vulnerable families managed to meet their basic needs through cash transfers.

Learning – finding what works locally

We believe that putting affected populations in the driving seat is the key to an appropriate, contextualised, dignified and sustainable response. We received a £1m three-year grant from the Department for International Development for our Linking Preparedness, Response and Resilience consortium programme (2015-2018), which worked with King's College London to explore how humanitarian responses can be designed and delivered in a way that most helps to strengthen community resilience to future events. The project developed an innovative survivor-led response approach, with DanChurchAid and the Church of Sweden, which was successfully field-tested by 10 local partners in Myanmar and Northern Kenya.

Innovation entailed new ways of putting people affected by crisis in the lead of their own response and recovery. For instance, we helped disaster survivors to identify their own needs; we then provided micro-grants so they could implement their own action plans. The pilots made a significant contribution to sector practice and we hope to continue learning, improving, replicating and scaling up such methodologies.

Also see case study on p42 for our work on digital cash transfers.