

Objective:

Power to change institutions



The UK Big Shift campaign calls on the four biggest high-street banks to move their investments from dirty fossil fuels to clean, renewable energy.

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.

What we want to achieve:

- Reduced inequality within international institutions, and reforms that strengthen the position of developing countries in setting policies that affect their futures.
- Private and public institutions to base their decision making on long-term thinking, aiming for a rebalancing of power, accountable governance, and environmental and social sustainability that builds secure, thriving communities.
- Poor and marginalised women and men to be included in decision making at all levels, within a strong and independent civil society.

Highlights

We supported poor communities and civil society organisations to influence decision makers, including local and national governments and private companies. Our work in South Africa, Sierra Leone and Ghana included advocating for minimum wage legislation, public services and action against illegal mining. Across the globe we campaigned for change on fiscal transparency at different levels of government and made progress on climate change demands through national, regional and global advocacy and policy work.

Tackling climate change

The **Big Shift campaign** is an advocacy coalition of 40 organisations driven by Christian Aid and CAN-International. It made a significant contribution to the World Bank's promise, in 2017, to demonstrate how it is meeting its commitments to shift from fossil fuels to renewable energy. The bank will report on its emissions over its whole portfolio as a first step to aligning with the global climate goals. At the One Planet Summit, the World Bank Group also announced that it will not finance upstream oil and gas after 2019.

Our very successful Clean Energy Now campaign in Kenya is part of the Big Shift. An innovative social media

campaign built a following of 33,000 mostly young Kenyans on Facebook and Twitter within just six months. It helped to make clean energy access an electoral issue in the 2017 presidential elections through national and local campaigning, an opinion poll and targeted media and parliamentary work.

Our work played a significant role in persuading the World Bank not to fund upstream oil and gas projects

Since 2016, the UK Big Shift campaign has focused on the country's largest high-street banks: Barclays, HSBC, Lloyds and RBS. In 2017, we stepped up our actions with visits by Christian Aid supporters to local bank branches all over the UK, alongside e-actions and postcards. These helped to open doors for us with senior executives in HSBC, RBS and Barclays. 2018 has seen further restrictions by all four banks on coal finance in particular.

Achieving just economic systems

A key focus area for us is **financial transparency**, as part of the Financial Transparency Coalition (a group of 12 organisations from the global North and global South). The coalition seeks to curtail illicit financial flows through the promotion of a transparent, accountable and sustainable financial system that works for everyone. In the last financial year we saw some important progress in a number of key areas.

Our high-level advocacy laid the groundwork for a recent major policy success when, in May 2018, the UK Parliament enacted to ensure that all its Overseas Territories must publish public registers.

In another area of transparency, Vodafone, a target of early Christian Aid tax campaigns, has announced that it will provide a full public breakdown of its businesses and tax affairs in every country in which it operates. This sets a critically important precedent and comes after

dialogues with a group of private sector actors that we initiated after our 2015 'Getting to Good' report with Oxfam and Action Aid.

We also gained extensive media coverage for our response to the 'Paradise Papers' exposure of the size and nature of the offshore system, which concentrates wealth and power inequality across the globe.

Enabling citizen engagement and change through state institutions

South Africa's Parliament passed the country's first-ever national minimum wage legislation in 2018. The Studies in Poverty and Inequality Institute (SPII), a Christian Aid South Africa partner, directed the minimum wage negotiations as Community Constituency chief negotiator through discussions with the government, business and organised labour, achieving a higher rate than initially tabled. SPII will continue to advocate for a decent living wage, but the agreed wage of R20 (US\$1.40) per hour is an essential first step. SPII has used the process to leverage political commitment to adopt a comprehensive social security system; this would provide income security for all people living in the country, as guaranteed in the constitution.

Our partner was influential in South Africa's Parliament passing the country's first-ever national minimum wage legislation

Through large governance programmes we have been supporting new spaces for dialogue between citizens and the state, and mobilising citizens and civil society to demand accountability from decision makers.

The UK aid-funded five-year £23m **Strengthening Transparency, Accountability and Responsiveness programme** (STAR-Ghana) is led by Christian Aid. Now in its third year, more than half of the organisations we supported have engaged with and influenced official decision-making bodies. For example, civil society groups developed a national campaign to address illegal mining and its economic and environmental effects: this contributed to changes in the law on small-scale mining and improved water quality for communities.

In Sierra Leone, our **Strengthening Accountability Building Inclusion** (SABI) programme has fostered positive relationships between citizens and the state. Data collected by our consortium partner Restless Development shows that the programme has directly engaged over 44,000 people as change agents for improvements to service provision in their communities.

Midway through implementation, the four-year £7.5m programme, funded by UK aid, shows evidence of citizens' increased awareness of their rights and entitlements, increased uptake of services, and increased engagement with government representatives, alongside a greater responsiveness on the part of government agencies. We have seen tangible results from community and ward-level action plans - from the allocation of additional health and education staff, to renovated schools and clinics, and the introduction of school feeding programmes. SABI has become a catalyst for community collaboration and self-mobilisation to undertake development actions.

Challenges and learning - holding governments to account

The Power to Change Institutions is an objective that cuts across most of our work. It relies on citizens being able to challenge powerful institutions, such as governments, and hold them to account. This is easier in some countries where democratic spaces or platforms exist, or can be created, for citizen-state engagement. However, we are in an era of tighter regulation and increasingly restricted space for civil society in many countries, including the UK. This makes it difficult for our partners to work, and requires continuous development of appropriate strategies.

In our economic justice work, we need to focus more on the opportunities and problems of using private sector finance to deliver the Sustainable Development Goals. Developing countries are sometimes encouraged to attract investment by offering tax incentives. However, poor management and a lack of transparency can undermine good governance and provide opportunities for corruption. We have developed a scorecard for civil society organisations to assess their own government's use of tax incentives. We worked with a partner in Central America, ICEFI, to create scorecards for three countries in the region; these will be used to inform research and advocacy in Latin America and globally.