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THE CHURCH
OF ENGLAND

Monday 16th May, 2016

Dear Parents,

Christian Aid Week: Bangladesh Appeal



In our worship today we looked at the plight of many people in Bangladesh who live with the constant fear of flooding. The children understood the dangers this poses to lives and livelihoods. They were able to relate to the awful threats to women and children posed by extensive and frequent flooding.

Christian Aid is the biggest Christian Charity there is. Each year it leads a fundraising drive in schools, churches and the community to help an international cause. The school would like to be part of this and try to raise some funds and some awareness for families in Bangladesh.

Rather than simply asking for a donation, as we have done in the past, I am suggesting that the children run their own toy and book sale, so that they raise the funds themselves. We suggested that children bring in an unused toy or book – something they may have grown bored with but which is still in acceptable condition, up to Wednesday this week. Then we will have a toy sale, organised by the older children, at break time on Friday. I suggest children bring in a small amount of money (£1) to snap up the bargains! All proceeds will go to Christian Aid.

I hope parents will support this initiative. I have copied a section from the Christian Aid website overleaf so that you can see the plight of so many in that country.

Yours sincerely,

Headteacher

The People's Republic of Bangladesh is one of the most densely populated and disaster-prone countries in the world. The country has a population of over 160 million people, of which 80 percent in rural areas and depend largely on agriculture for their livelihoods.

According to the World Bank's 2010 data, approximately 43% of people still live under the poverty line (less than \$1.25 a day). Women are amongst the most marginalised and subjugated in all spheres of society.

Tackling poverty

Bangladesh has made considerable progress in reducing poverty. However, many challenges remain due to corruption, poor governance and an over-dependency on natural resources, the status of women in Bangladeshi society and the impact of climate change.

Extreme **temperatures**, erratic **rainfall**, and an increasing number of **floods, cyclones and droughts** pose considerable challenges. Especially because the country is already highly vulnerable to natural hazards due to its geographical location, land characteristics, many rivers and monsoon climate.

Natural disasters are invariably accompanied by a heavy loss of life, property, income and household belongings. These events serve only to push vulnerable groups and communities further into a cycle of poverty.

Power

It is a small group of elites with vested interests who hold power in Bangladesh – a trend that is evident even at the local level. Often people lack any meaningful opportunity to contribute to the governance process and in rural areas citizens' participation in democracy has been further narrowed by traditional power structures.

Among the marginalised groups in Bangladesh, **women** are the most vulnerable and lack most forms of power: political, social or economic. Even though the government is committed to protecting the rights of minorities, discrimination against some groups is often shown by their low involvement in the decision making that ultimately affects their lives.

Marginalised and vulnerable groups

Accessing **resources, rights and having your voice heard** is difficult for poor people in Bangladesh.

There are some groups that are even more vulnerable and marginalised due to their gender, religious or ethnic identities: these groups struggle hard to meet their basic needs, face discrimination, and in many cases have no awareness of their service entitlements from relevant government departments and local institutions.

Making **government** and public institutions more **accountable** to communities for the services they provide is vital.

Improving lives

Christian Aid partners in Bangladesh are committed to improving the lives and livelihoods of marginalised people and communities. Whether that is, for example, supporting dairy farmers to improve their yields, training communities on growing crops in areas affected by climate change or ensuring women participate fully in vital decisions that shape their lives.