Glossary of difficult words

**abuse** causing physical, mental, verbal or sexual harm to a person

**accusation** a statement that someone has done something wrong

**advocacy** seeking with, and on behalf of, poor people to address underlying causes of poverty, bring justice and support good development through influencing the policies and practices of the powerful

**allegation** an accusation, usually without evidence

**asylum** a place of refuge and safety from persecution

**atrocity** act of extreme wickedness, usually involving violence

**boycott** the refusal to have anything to do with a particular organisation or its products, as a means of protest against it and in order to persuade it to change its policies

**bribery** the deliberate giving of a sum of money or other gift to influence someone else’s behaviour

**caste** the social class and rank or position of somebody in a society, which is based on birth, or occupation

**citizen** a person who belongs to a country or state

**condemns** forces someone to experience something bad

**consequences** the results of an action

**constitution** a written statement outlining the basic laws or principles by which a country or organisation is governed

**corruption** dishonest practices, like offering or accepting bribes or altering records, usually for financial gain

**discrimination** to treat a particular group of people differently, usually for the worse, for example because of their race, sex or ethnic group

**enforced** put into practice, not given a choice

**entitled** having the right to something

**environment** natural world that surrounds us

**equivalent** something that is the same, or equal

**ethnic** (origin) belonging to a group in society with a shared identity, history, culture and

**traditional** home land

**exploit** to take unfair advantage of people or resources for personal gain

**female genital mutilation** a harmful traditional practice where flesh is cut away from the female sexual organs

**human rights** the basic rights and freedoms that all human beings should have

**independent** (court) not controlled by politics or money and able to decide freely

**indigenous** belonging to the local area, ethnic group

**inheritance** goods, money and property that a person receives from someone who has died

**injustice** unfair treatment, abuse of power

**interpretation** the way something is understood and used in practice

**jubilee** biblical tradition of cancelling debts every 50 years

**justice** fair treatment, good use of power

**lawyer** a person who is professionally trained in law, whose work is to speak on behalf of people in the law courts

**legal aid** legal help given free of charge to people who cannot afford to pay for lawyers

**oppression** harsh or cruel treatment of the powerless by the powerful

**orphans** children whose parent or parents have died

**participation** / participate involvement in something / to be involved actively

**prisoners of conscience** people who are sent to prison because of their political, religious or social views

**reconciliation** the bringing together of people or organisations that have been in conflict, and resolving that conflict

**redistribution** sharing out resources more fairly

**repercussions** negative results of an action

**righteousness** being in right relationship with God, other people and the creation

**rights-based approach** a participatory and empowering method of development, which seeks to hold institutions and powerful people accountable for their responsibilities to those with less power

**sexual exploitation** to take unfair advantage of someone for sexual purposes

**significance** the importance or meaning of something

**social justice** fair treatment for the community

**stewardship** the responsibility to look after something

**torture** deliberately and methodically causing pain to someone

**universal** applying to all people

**UN convention** a treaty that has been agreed and signed by member countries in the United Nations

**unwittingly** without realising

**vulnerable** at risk of harm

**widows** women whose husbands have died

**(legal) witness** someone who speaks in court about their experience of the person or event