



PROGRESSIO 75  
1940-2015

Annual Review 2015

75 years promoting human rights and development

# Welcome

**Carolyn Williams**  
is a Trustee of  
Progressio and  
former Peru country  
representative



**Vision:** A world in which marginalised people take into their own hands the power to transform their own lives.

**Mission:** We equip some of the poorest and most marginalised people, especially women, to claim their rights and overcome the causes of poverty, injustice or exploitation. We do this by listening closely to our community partners, sharing skills and strengthening voices so that people can transform unjust power structures.

**T**his is a very exciting time for Progressio and our supporters. Not only are we currently celebrating 75 years of groundbreaking work in developing countries around the world, but we are also embarking on our new strategy.

You'll find out more about that new strategy inside these pages. For me, the most exciting part is that Progressio is being even more intentional about its work with women. **We know that development can't be achieved in its fullness unless gender and other forms of social inequality are addressed, and Progressio's commitment to tackling the marginalisation of women in fragile states is one of the reasons I continue to support the organisation.**

**"as ever, the difficulties of working in the Global South come hand in hand with stories of amazing strength and courage."**

As you will see, it has been a thrilling year for Progressio, with excellent work being carried out by our development workers alongside local partner organisations in Zimbabwe, Malawi, Somaliland and many other countries. The ICS programme has also continued to go from strength to strength and, this year alone, we are proud to have given 609 young adult volunteers from Central America, Africa and the UK the chance to join Progressio's mission.

It has also been a year of challenges, particularly in Yemen. But, as ever, the difficulties of working in the Global South come hand in hand with stories of amazing strength and courage. I hope you'll enjoy the read.

On behalf of everyone involved with Progressio, thank you for your continued support, and please keep on supporting us.



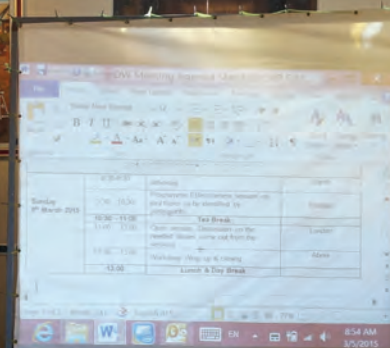
## A history of influential women

From 1940 to today, Progressio has also been known as the Sword of the Spirit and the Catholic Institute for International Relations. It is through the hard work of thousands of individuals that we have carved out our mission in fragile states, supporting poor and marginalised people to gain power over their own lives.



One of our most influential people in our history has been Barbara Ward, an economist and peer who was part of the group of young Catholics who took a stand for progressive

values. She helped to start a campaign of prayer, study and action to unite the citizens of this country in support of future peace. Using a name taken from Cardinal Hinsley's wartime broadcast, Barbara and her group started the Sword of the Spirit, which has gone on to become today's Progressio, always working ecumenically and nowadays across faiths.



75 years later and Progressio is still blessed to be filled with inspiring women. Progressio Country Representative Abeer Al Absi is working alongside communities in Yemen as the country is wrecked by civil war. You can hear more from Abeer on page 13.



## Participation and effective governance

Last year, Progressio's work on Participation & Effective Governance alongside our incredible local partner organisations directly benefitted 4,341 people.

This work will also form the first steps towards of our new interlinked goals – Participatory & Accountable Governance and Women's Rights. We recognise the significance of combating gender inequality in fragile states. Highlights from this year's work include:

- Working with staff at the Reach out Foundation for Human Development in Yemen on their gender-based violence programme to enable them to promote rights and seek change to deep seated discriminatory attitudes with key stakeholders and the community.
- Building the governance and management capacity of the Somaliland National Human Rights Commission.
- Strengthening the capacities of the coordinating body of municipalities of Elías Piña, Dominican Republic (DR), and the Haiti/ DR cross-border committee of municipalities to develop, implement, monitor and evaluate local economic development plans to meet the needs of the poorest, especially women.

**We recognise the significance  
of combating gender  
inequality in fragile states.**



Amira Al-Sharif

Women and children in Yemen, where Progressio has taken key steps to prevent gender-based violence against women, training women champions.



## Sustainable environment and livelihoods

Our work focusing on Sustainable Environment and livelihoods had a huge impact in the last 12 months. 5,321 people benefited from our projects, an increase of more than 70% compared to the previous year.

With our increased ability to work with local organisations and communities, we will focus on Sustainable & Resilient Livelihoods in the coming years.

Our work in this area has included supporting agro-pastoralists in Somaliland whose livelihoods are under threat; working with faith leaders in Africa on concepts of environmental stewardship; and helping local groups to promote community forest management in Honduras, and establishing better protection and use of scarce water resources in poor communities in Yemen.

**5,321 people benefited from our projects last year, an increase of more than 70%**

One huge achievement in the past year has been training 4,000 farmers in Malawi and Zimbabwe in conservation agriculture, fish farming, agro-forestry and savings. This training has allowed whole communities to diversify their income, creating a significantly more stable livelihood for them and their families. This is a dramatic progress in countries where over 70% of people subsist on £1 per day in extreme poverty. Please help to support more poor farmers to boost their incomes.





Development worker Karina Cuba with farmer Elena Tusen where Progressio works on the border of the Dominican Republic and Haiti, training in farming methods.



## Yemen in crisis

**Due to the conflict and high levels of insecurity, all Progressio's projects in Yemen have been suspended since March 2015.**

Progressio's country director in Yemen, Abeer Al Absi, and her team is monitoring the situation very closely and are in close contact with partner organisations, international NGOs and UN departments. UN advisory alerts are also monitored constantly to try and ensure the safety of our Yemen staff.

At this tragic time for the Yemeni people, Abeer is exploring how we adapt our work on advocating for women's rights in conflict. Gender-based violence increases in conflict situations, and Yemen already has one of the lowest levels of gender equality in the world. Progressio has been working with women in Yemen to realise their rights for many years now and we currently continue doing so. Please support our work in solidarity with the Yemeni people at this terrible time – see our website for the latest.



Amira Al-Sharif

Children involved in a hygiene programme in Yemen, where the unstable political situation is putting Progressio's work at risk



## Our new strategy 2015-18



Volunteer Kelly Marie Saul planting a tree alongside a local volunteer in one of several ICS projects in Zimbabwe.

Dear friend,

In the 15 years since the Millennium, the global community has achieved some notable successes lifting millions out of poverty. However, there are special challenges facing fragile and conflict affected states like Yemen, Somaliland and Zimbabwe where progress has stalled or even gone into reverse. In these countries, there are major problems with gender inequality and violence against women and girls.

A new strategy is needed for progress to be made in fragile states, focused on what people living in 'fragile states' want to achieve. It must address the complex root causes of poverty and injustice, be tailored to each country's specific needs and have a special focus on women's rights and equality.



Mark at a village tree-planting ceremony in Malawi, where Progressio has been training 4,000 farmers

**Progressio has a longstanding specialist experience in support of civil society organisations. We have pursued solutions to help local people transform unfair power structures in the face of some of the most challenging obstacles in the world. This means Progressio is well positioned to make a substantial contribution in the fragile states where we work, and beyond.** Our skill-sharing, young adult volunteering and international policy approach builds on local people's, especially women's, capacity and strengthens their voices so they can achieve lasting change for themselves and their whole community.

These are crucial years for women living in fragile states to begin to turn the corner. Progressio works alongside some of the world's poorest and most marginalised women who are seeking to transform their own lives.

**They are resilient, courageous, resourceful and innovative, often making remarkable progress in the face of formidable odds. But they are unlikely to achieve the turnaround on the scale that is needed without your help. Thank you for your continuing support.**

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Mark Lister'.

Mark Lister  
Chief Executive, Progressio




## Why focus on fragile countries?

- Fragile states: 14% of global population, but: 35% of the world's extreme poor
- Zimbabwe: 72% in extreme poverty(UNDP)
- 'The cost of one failing state: est. \$100bn' (Paul Collier the Bottom Billion)

## The states we work in:

- Somalia: One mother dies in every 100 births (WHO 2013 fourth worst in the world. 50x worse than developed world average of two per 10,000)
- Yemen: bottom of global gender gap index
- Est. One out of 30 of Zimbabwean women were 2008 pre-election raped (Research Advocacy Unit)

A photograph of a man, identified as a local volunteer in Malawi, working in a field. He is wearing a grey t-shirt with a logo and dark trousers. He is using a long-handled hoe to clear dry brush and soil. The background shows a dry, hilly landscape with some green vegetation. The image is part of a report page with an orange footer.

A local volunteer in Malawi, one of five countries where Progressio sends dozens of young volunteers a year as part of the ICS programme.





## Our new strategy 2015-18

**2015** is an exciting and challenging time for Progressio for many reasons. Not only are we celebrating 75 years working alongside poor and marginalised communities, but we are also refocusing our primary objectives. After listening to the people we work with, we have decided to focus our efforts to support partner organisations on three key themes; marking a reinforced commitment to working in fragile states like Zimbabwe and Somaliland.

Our three new themes are:

- Participatory and accountable governance
- Women's rights and
- Sustainable and resilient livelihoods.

**We know that, if we are going to see people escape from poverty and marginalisation, we need to combat gender inequality in a radical way.** Progressio has been a leading figure in the fight for global gender justice for decades, but we are proud to be putting women's rights front and centre of our identity today and in the future.


These goals feature in the coming pages. These are hugely significant times for us and the people we work alongside, so this renewed focus is an exciting update to a mission that has been going for 75 years. We need your support more than ever.

**If we are going to see people escape from poverty and marginalisation, we need to combat gender inequality in a radical way.**

## Why we focus on women

- **Women make up 50% of the world's population, but 60% of the world's extreme poor.<sup>1</sup>**
- **More than a third of women suffer physical/sexual abuse.<sup>2</sup>**
- **Only around 20% of politicians are women.<sup>3</sup>**
- **70% of small-holder farmers are women, producing 90% of the world's food. Closing the gender gap in agricultural yields will shift 150 million people out of hunger.<sup>4</sup>**
- **Women do 66% of global work but earn 10% of income and own 1% of property.**

<sup>1</sup> UNDP Gender Equality and UND; <sup>2</sup> UN Women; <sup>3</sup> Voice and Agency Empowering women and girls for shared prosperity World Bank 2014 p7; <sup>4</sup> (A.Aid & FAO 2011).

A portrait of Amira Al-Sharif, a woman wearing a leopard-print hijab and a light-colored top, smiling at the camera. The background is a blurred green foliage.

“Yemen has one of the lowest levels of gender equality in the world. As an organisation focusing on supporting women's rights, Progressio has been working with women in Yemen to realise their rights for many years now and we currently continue doing so.” – Abeer Ali



## Our new strategy 2015-18

### Goal 1: Participatory and accountable governance

**W**e want to support poor and marginalised people to participate in and influence decision-making processes, locally, nationally and internationally. We want to support them to challenge unfair power relations and structures to reduce injustice and poverty and to enjoy their human rights fully. We know that to make this happen, we must also prioritise gender justice and women's rights.

#### What is the good governance we are working towards?

We will know good governance has been achieved when political, legal and social power structures are participatory, transparent, accountable, responsive and inclusive.

**Social power structures  
[should be] participatory,  
transparent, accountable,  
responsive and inclusive.**

Only when these formal and informal institutions respect the dignity of every human being and give priority to the needs of those with least power and least wealth will this goal have been met.

Our role is to help ensure poor and marginalised people have a say in local, national and international decisions that affect their lives.



## Stronger voices

Our Action for Better Governance pilot project resulted in local government decisions that made a lasting difference to poor communities.

For example, women shouldered the responsibilities of fetching water and had to walk long distances as boreholes in their communities were not functioning. After advocacy training, local women fought for 120 boreholes to be rehabilitated, freeing them from the hardship of long walks to retrieve water.

As well as the initial achievements, the impact continues thanks to new locally-run advocacy committees. We aim to build on the pilot project so that more Zimbabwean women and men can now influence change to improve their lives.

One of the Zimbabwean women who benefitted from the action for better governance project, which aimed to give poor and marginalised people, especially women, greater influence on the decision and policies which affect their lives.



## Our new strategy 2015-18

### Goal 2: Women's rights

**W**omen's rights are human rights, and Progressio believes that the dignity of every human being must be respected. We have a commitment to gender justice which is central to all our work.

#### What is Gender Justice?

Gender Justice means ending the inequalities between women and men that are produced and reproduced in the family, the community, and the state.

We believe that gender differences between human beings are socially constructed and can change. These gender differences are often defined culturally, socially, economically and historically, and can be further affected by race, class, religion, ethnicity and sexual orientation.

**Our programmes and projects will support women and girls to empower themselves**

Women and girls are disproportionately affected by poverty and oppression. Progressio supports civil society partner organisations in tackling gender inequality. Our approach to gender recognises women and men as agents of change. Our programmes and projects will support women and girls to empower themselves as much as possible, for example achieving sexual and reproductive health or rights and ending violence against women and girls.



Kvaiah Mohammed (pink bag) is one of Progressio's 'women champions' challenging a group of men about gender issues in Al-Hali district, Yemen.





## Our new strategy 2015-18

### Goal 3: Sustainable and resilient livelihoods

**W**e want to support poor and marginalised people to forge resilient livelihoods. We want these livelihoods to support fair outcomes for women and men as well as achieving sustainable natural resources management.

#### Sustainable Farming

Our development workers and young volunteers will support women and men to practise sustainable and fair equitable farming approaches that will achieve increased income, food security and resilient livelihoods while caring for the environment.

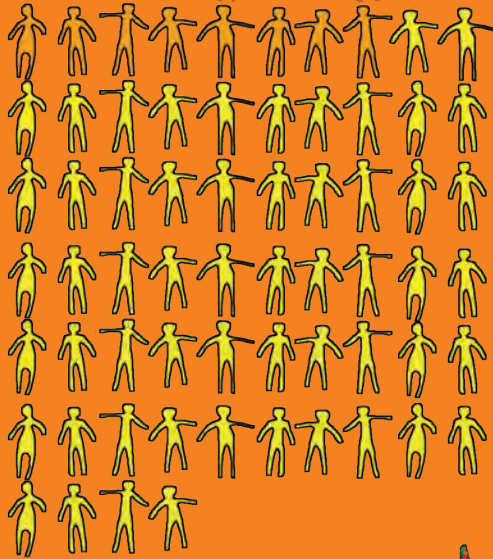
**We want to support poor and marginalised people to forge resilient livelihoods**

We will also incorporate and strengthen poor and marginalised communities in Disaster Risk Recovery in agricultural work. That means making sure they are equipped and trained to handle the hazards and vulnerability which can plague rural farmers such as drought and floods.



In Somaliland, Faria Yousef's family abandoned her when she was tested positive for HIV. Progressio's partner Talowadag gave her money to buy some chickens and support herself by selling the eggs.

## The Progressio multiplier



64

### development workers

- 8 from the Global North
- 56 from the Global South
- 21 nationalities

2,563

people took a **campaign action** or went to an event



42



International policy influencing activities targeting high-level UK, EU or UN decision-makers

609

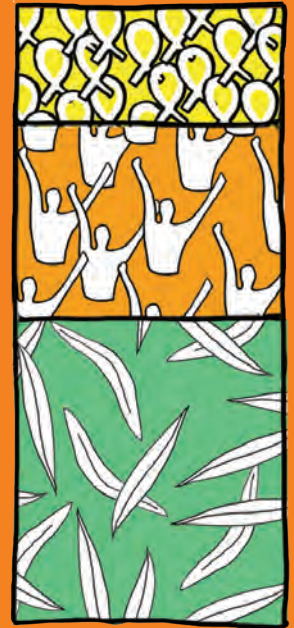
### young adult ICS volunteers

- 279 UK volunteers
- 330 Central American and African volunteers



15,364

people in partner organisations or communities received training







# 5,321

Progressio's work on **sustainable environment and livelihoods** has directly benefited 5,321 people who Progressio have trained in sustainable farming, resource management and how to generate more income for themselves and their families.



# 4,341

Progressio's work building **participation and effective governance** has directly benefited 4,341 people. This includes those within partner organisations who we supported with specialised training, and people from communities who participated in training workshops.



# 10,477

Progressio's work on **HIV and AIDS** has directly benefited 10,477 people through prevention, support, awareness raising and the reduction of stigma.

# 1,130,000

And well over **one million people** have indirectly benefited from our work. That's because the people we have trained have gone on to...

- Train others to help their local communities
- Improve income or livelihoods for their families
- Challenge unfair political systems that hold people back
- Encourage their peers to have a say in decision making
- Work with our policy team and campaigners to give people power over their own lives

**Note:** Direct and indirect beneficiaries figures do not include ICS. We do not consolidate data on all ICS projects. Three ICS projects in Malawi were externally evaluated and reached:

- Over 10,000 direct beneficiaries
- Over 300,000 indirect beneficiaries

Across our five ICS countries, hundreds of thousands of community members have benefited.





## Women & Fragility

**Progressio's Policy team has very ambitious plans for the next five years. Its International Policy & Advocacy plan is entitled: "Women & Fragility: Challenging and changing institutions for a fairer world for women". The team has created specific advocacy portfolios that will focus on sexual health and economic justice.**

This policy work will ensure Progressio delivers creative, bold and effective advocacy activities as we work increasingly to strengthen the voices of those in the Global South. For that purpose, we are developing alliances with civil society organisations. In 2014-15 we delivered 42 policy interventions in spite of being such a small team, exceeding our target milestone of 40.

A few highlights include:

1. Presented at a roundtable entitled "A Matter of Faith, A Question of Dignity" organised by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), as part of a conference entitled: "Building a faith-inspired momentum to support SRHR in the Post 2015 Development Agenda"; and at another conference entitled: "Celebrating

Achievements of Faith-Based Organisations", which led to a delegation of faith leaders issuing a call to world leaders for action on sexual and reproductive health and rights.

2. Supported the organisation of an official delegation to Haiti led by Lord Leslie Griffiths of Burry Port and funded by the British Group Inter-Parliamentary Union in June 2014; and the Haiti Flag Day celebrations organised by United Haitians in the UK.
3. The Policy team attended the NGO CSW Forum ECE regional review of Beijing +20 in Geneva. They made verbal and written submissions to the forum on Sustainable Environment and Political Participation.
4. Progressio attended Foreign & Commonwealth Office Department for Business, Innovation & Skills meeting on the UK's National Action Plan on Business and Human Rights and made an intervention on the importance of taking into account the negative impact of business on women.
5. A written statement on "Faith & Social Norms, Women's Rights, Natural Resource Management and the Role of the Private Sector as a Development Player" that Progressio submitted to the UN 58 Commission on Status of Women (CSW) was accepted and distributed to policy makers.



Participants in Progressio-led gender and politics focus group in Somaliland, where Progressio is beginning research into women's involvement in politics.



# How change happens



We listen to what poor and marginalised people, especially women, tell us needs to change. working alongside people of all faiths and none



Development workers share skills, expertise and knowledge to help people gain power over their lives



Young local volunteers work alongside those from the UK, supporting communities to act



Working with international decision makers, our international policy experts prioritise the needs of those with least power and wealth



By amplifying the voices of poor and marginalised communities, those in power locally, nationally and internationally are urged to respond



Participatory and accountable governance



Women's rights



Sustainable and resilient livelihoods




All this supports people to gain control of their lives and overcome the barriers that keep them poor

## ICS in action

In Malawi, Progressio ICS volunteers revolutionised the impact made by one partner organisation, Ungweru. Ungweru was held back by limited staff, but the volunteers' arrival changed that.

"We are small and have minimal reach," Dominic Nyirongo, Ungweru's Executive Director, said. "ICS volunteers helped us overcome this challenge and gave us a presence in communities."

These young volunteers developed and implemented a new project where Getrude Soko was trained to breed livestock. She was given two pigs and 50 chicks, with the offspring going to another family. This will be repeated until the animals are a resource for the whole village.



Getrude Soko with her husband Bellines Luuanga. The couple, pictured with their new pig pen, have eight children.



## HIV and AIDS

Progressio's work on HIV and AIDS directly benefited 10,477 people in 2014-15. Seeing so many people educated, supported and set free from stigma this past year, and for 15 years before this, has been a real testament to our development workers' expert guidance and training alongside local partner organisations.

Over the next season, Progressio will begin a gradual transition away from HIV and AIDS work. It will however remain a key part of our ICS and development worker programmes on the ground while we finish supporting local partners to lead this work in the future.

For example, in Somaliland the national AIDS strategy is now rolling forward across five regions, with local Somalilander medical, nursing and volunteer community support leaders taking on future training in care and prevention with increasing independence from the Progressio team.

This year, our work on HIV and AIDS in Somaliland has brought us into contact with some incredibly inspiring people, such as Mohamed, who has been taking antiretroviral (ARV) drugs since 2007. **His family abandoned him when they found out he was HIV positive. Now he works at the hospital where he counsels patients, tells them about his own experiences, and follows up with them.**

**Progressio's work on HIV and AIDS directly benefited 10,477 people in 2014-15.**





Mohamed, who himself is HIV positive, counselling HIV and AIDS patients in Somaliland.



## Review of 2014-15: Campaigning

### A year of high impact on Gender Equality and Climate Change

**We've had an incredible year of campaigning successes! There are so many moments to celebrate.**

Back in the autumn of 2014, we campaigned to get MPs to Turn up and Save Lives by voting for the International Development Bill that secured the 0.7% aid commitment in to law. After months of action and support from Progressio campaigners across the country, the Bill passed in December.

In January, we joined in the launch of the Action 2015 campaign. Hundreds of campaigners wrote to David Cameron and told him about the importance of this pivotal year. Over 200 people told him they wanted to see the UK leading the way on the huge development decisions being made.

**As Valentine's Day approached,  
we asked you to Show the Love  
and speak up for the things  
you care about**

As Valentine's Day approached, we asked you to Show the Love and speak up for the things you care about that will be affected by climate change. Beautiful images were shared online as people got their friends, families and colleagues thinking about climate change.

In the build up to the Commission of Status of Women in March, you made sure our MPs knew why it mattered. Hundreds of you took action to tell our political representatives that we wanted them get to grips with the conference.



## Keeping up the pressure on overseas aid

Back in the autumn of 2014, we campaigned to get MPs to Turn up and Save Lives by voting for the International Development Bill that secured the 0.7% aid commitment in to law. After months of action and support from Progressio campaigners across the country, the Bill passed in December.

Content Officer Katy Oglethorpe (second left) and Campaigns Officer Jenny Vaughan (far right) with MP Michael Moore at the Turn Up Save Lives lobbying event outside Parliament in December.



# 5,757,985

**Our income for 2014/15 was £5,757,985**

Funding source	Percentage of total
Department for International Development	35%
Voluntary Service Overseas (VSO)	39%
United Nations office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UCHA)	1%
The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria	3%
International Citizen Service (ICS) fundraising	4%
Big Lottery Fund	5%
British Embassy Small Grants Scheme	1%
Membership, subscriptions, donations, sales, legacies and sundry receipts	3%
Others	6%
Multi-partner trust fund	1%
European Union	2%

## Thank you

**We are extremely grateful to the many individuals who have supported us this year, as well as the agencies, trusts and other organisations whose donations make our work possible. Thank you.**

**Major funders include:**



**Progressio wishes to thank the individuals and organisations that made donations to its work in 2014/2015.**

**The following agencies and individuals donated more than £1,000 in the year 2014/2015:**

Acnur Alto Comisionado; Ayuntamiento De Comendador; Beigebell; Catholic Fund for Overseas Development (CAFOD); Comic Relief; Daughters of Jesus; Our Lady of Dolours Servite Church; Fedomu; Franciscan Friary; David Garman; Prof Mary Grey; Kevin T Kelly; Kulika Charitable Trust; Oxfam; Save the Children Somaliland; United Nations Development Programme ART; GOLD; Wild Rose Trust; Margaret Williams; World Vision; Andrew F Welford

**The following agencies donated more than £20,000 in the year 2014/2015:**

Big Lottery Fund; British Embassy Small Grants Scheme (BESGS); Christian Aid; Department For International Development (DFID); European Union; The Global Fund to fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria; Global Witness; Multi Partner Trust Fund; Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA); United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA); United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA); Voluntary Services Overseas (VSO)

# 6,108,404

**Our expenditure for 2014/15 was £6,108,404**

## Expenditure by activity

Programmes, ICS and policy .....	92%
Fundraising and publicity .....	5%
Public engagement .....	2%
Governance .....	1%

## Expenditure on programmes

<b>Africa</b> .....	40%
Malawi, Somaliland, Zimbabwe	
<b>Middle East</b> .....	32%
Yemen	
<b>Central America</b> .....	5%
El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua	
<b>Asia</b> .....	2%
Timor-Leste	
<b>Caribbean</b> .....	21%
Dominican Republic, Haiti	

## Expenditure by theme

Participation and effective governance .....	39%
HIV and AIDS .....	16%
Sustainable environment & livelihoods .....	45%



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The cover image was taken by Marcus Perkins

# Stand alongside people living in poverty...

- ✚ £10 could pay for a community vegetable garden in Malawi
- ✚ £25 could provide a care package of drugs and food for a person living with HIV in Somaliland
- ✚ £70 could educate someone on their rights and teach them how to hold their local government to account in Zimbabwe

Please return this form to:

- ✚ Freepost RSUZ-TGXR-XXYE  
Units 9-12, The Stableyard,  
Broomgrove Road,  
London SW9 9TL  
**www.progressio.org.uk**

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## I would like to make a donation to Progressio's work of

☐ £10 ☐ £25 ☐ £70 ☐ £ Other

Please make cheques payable to Progressio donate by phone on  
020 7326 2046 or by card by filling out the form below

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Security code:    (last 3 digits on back of card) Expiry date:   /

Signature:  Date:   /   /

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*giftaid it*

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- ☐ Please send me information about becoming a member of Progressio
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