

AFRICA

A Chance for Real Change in

Bono, activist & global rock star, is on a journey to help save millions in Africa.

I'm here as part of a journey that began in 1984-85.

That summer, my wife Ali and I went to Ethiopia, on the quiet, to see for ourselves what was going on. We lived there for a month, working at an orphanage.

Africa is a magical place. Anybody who ever gave anything there got a lot more back.

Ethiopia not just blew my mind, it opened my mind. On our last day at the orphanage a man handed me his baby and said: take him with you. He knew in Ireland his son would live; in Ethiopia his son would die. I turned him down. In that moment, I started this journey.

In that moment, I became the worst thing of all: a rock star with a cause.

Except this isn't a cause. 6,500 Africans dying a day of treatable, preventable disease — dying for want of medicines you and I can get at our local chemist. That's not a cause, that's an emergency.

You know, I could make the soft argument for action — or I could make the more muscular one. The soft argument you've all heard before. People are dying over there, needlessly dying, at a ridiculous rate and for the stupidest of reasons: money. They're dying because they don't have a pound a day to pay for the drugs that could save their lives. There are hard facts that make up the soft argument.

Let me make another, more muscular argument. Let's be clear about what this problem is and what this problem isn't. Firstly, this is not about charity, it's about justice.

Justice is a tougher standard. Africa makes a fool of our idea of justice; it makes a farce of our idea of equality. It mocks our pieties, it doubts our concern, it questions our commitment.

CAUSE CELEB



Celebrities take action on the world's biggest problems.

Once the province of the large relief agencies such as Red Cross, Oxfam and the UN, aid has now gone Hollywood. Today, stars are just as likely to be seen in Ethiopia as in Cannes, facing our planet's toughest issues. Aids. Hunger. Poverty.

These hard-hitting concerns first became main-streamed over 20 years ago with the release of the pop music single "Do they Know Its Christmas/Feed the World" by the group Band Aid. Written by Bob Geldof and Midge Ure, the song was recorded in 1984 by a group consisting of 40 of the UK and Ireland's best-known pop stars of the time. Originally Geldof hoped to raise £72,000 for charities from sales of the single, but that estimate was exceeded almost immediately and went on to sell over three million copies in the UK, becoming the best-selling record ever, and raising over £8 million worldwide. The power of celebrities to make a difference — at least a financial difference — was off the charts.

A year later, Live Aid, like Band Aid before it, was held to raise money for victims of the famine in Ethiopia. Several other countries and organisations followed suit (the best-known being USA for Africa with "We Are The World"), until in early 1985 the idea of a concert to raise money for the cause was suggested. The Live Aid concert raised over \$100 million.

While the music world opened the door to fundraising, soon after movie stars, sports stars, classical musicians — anyone with face recognition — jumped on the bandwagon. Today, there are many organizations, projects, campaigns — some founded by stars others promoted by stars — which direct the world's attention, and wallets, to the most pressing causes of our times. Some of these are:

DATA

DATA (Debt AIDS Trade Africa) aims to raise awareness about, and spark response to the crises swamping Africa: unpayable Debts, uncontrolled spread of AIDS, and unfair

Trade rules which keep Africans poor. The organization was founded in 2002 by Bono, the lead singer of U2, along with Bobby Shriver and activists from the Jubilee 2000 Drop the Debt campaign. At the core of DATA's mission is a view that these issues are not about charity, but about equality and justice.

MAKE POVERTY HISTORY

Make Poverty History is a collection of nearly a hundred UK charities, celebrities, faith groups and trade unions who are united in an effort to end world poverty. The symbol of the campaign is a white armband which is available from several charities' websites or shops. The campaign officially began on New Year's Day 2005 when it was discussed by the characters of the British television sitcom "The Vicar of Dibley."

THE ONE CAMPAIGN

ONE is a new effort by Americans to rally Americans — ONE by ONE — to fight the emergency of global AIDS and extreme poverty. The ONE Campaign is engaging Americans through a diverse coalition of faith-based and anti-poverty organizers to show the steps people can take, ONE by ONE, to fight global AIDS and poverty.

Celebrity Faces (L-R): Actress Angelina Jolie travels throughout the world as UNHCR's Goodwill Ambassador, assisting in work with refugees and displaced people.

Michael Stipe, lead singer for the US rock band R.E.M. is a vocal supporter for the ONE campaign.

Actress Susan Sarandon has supported efforts to relieve hunger, promote women's issues and help children in need and people with HIV/AIDS around the world. In 1999 she received the Amnesty International USA Media Spotlight Award for Leadership and the same year was appointed a UNICEF Goodwill Ambassador.

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we have the drugs
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but do we have
the will?

We could all do more to put the fire out. We've got watering cans; when what we really need are the fire brigades. That's the first tough truth.

The second is that to fight AIDS, and its root cause, the extreme poverty in which it thrives, it's not just development policy. It's a security strategy.

The war against terror is bound up in the war against poverty. I didn't say that, Colin Powell said that. When a military man from the right starts talking like that maybe we should listen! Because maybe, today, these are one and the same wars.

In these distressing and disturbing times, surely it's cheaper, and smarter, to make friends out of potential enemies than it is to defend yourself against them.

Africa is not the frontline on the war against terror. But it could be soon. Justice is the surest way to get to peace.

So how are we doing, on this other war, that will affect so many many more lives than the war I read about every day?

I know progress when I see it. And I know forward momentum when I feel it. And I do feel it.

This is a real moment coming up, this could be real history. The problems facing the developing world afford us in the developed world a chance to redescribe ourselves in very dangerous times. This is not just heart — it's smart.

There is progress, but it's incremental. History never notices that, and the lives that are depending on it don't deserve the wait.

You know we made a promise to halve poverty by the year 2015 — a big millennium promise.

But this is the big year, 2005. All of you have to double aid, double it's effectiveness, and double trouble for corrupt leaders.

The Group of Eight (G-8) rich countries regularly get together. People look at these meetings and wonder whether they ever achieve anything. I stood at the meeting in Cologne in 1999, with how many thousands of people. We got that announcement on debt cancellation which now means that three times as many children in Uganda are going to school. We need to finish what was started in Cologne.

We can't fix every problem, but the ones we can we must. But it's going to cost. Justice, equality, these ideas aren't cheap. They're expensive — I know that.

But ending extreme poverty, disease and despair — this is one thing everybody can agree on. These efforts can be a force not only for progress but for unity around the world.

Earlier I described the deaths of 6,500 Africans a day from a preventable treatable disease like AIDS: I watched people queuing up to die, three in a bed in Malawi. That's Africa's crisis. But the fact that we in Europe or America are not treating it like an emergency — and the fact that its not every day on the news, well that is our crisis.



U2's Bono and Sir Paul McCartney at the Live 8 concert on 2 July 2005, Hyde Park, London.

If I could ask you to think a hundred years ahead, to imagine what we, and our times, will be remembered for, I would venture three things: the Internet, the war on terror, and the fate of the continent of Africa.

We are the first generation that can look extreme and stupid poverty in the eye, look across the water to Africa and elsewhere and say this and mean it: we have the cash, we have the drugs, we have the science — but do we have the will?



G8 Doubles Aid

Leaders of the Group of 8 leading industrialized countries (G8) agreed on a range of issues affecting the state of the world's human security. G8 countries include Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the Russian Federation, United Kingdom, and the United States. The European Union also participates in the summit.

The 2005 Summit was hosted by British Prime Minister Tony Blair, who outlined results in a statement to the UK Parliament. The doubling of aid to Africa is a "mighty achievement" by the G8, he said.

World leaders agreed to increase aid to the continent by \$25 billion a year by 2010. They also agreed measures to save 600,000 children's lives a year by 2015 by combating malaria. The Prime Minister said it was the most detailed and ambitious package for Africa ever agreed by the G8. But significant improvements in standards of governance, transparency and accountability were necessary.

"In the end, only Africans can lead and shape Africa," he said. "We can help but every government in Africa

that betrays the principles of good governance betrays Africa."

He said the plan was a partnership, "not an act of charity".

Other main Summit issues included climate change, and non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

In a communique on climate change, G8 nations issued an action plan to tackle global warming, incorporating new approaches to international cooperation on clean energy technology between the developed and the developing world.

In a statement on non-proliferation, the G8 endorsed IAEA efforts in the fields of nuclear non-proliferation and measures to improve the security of nuclear material and the safety and security of radioactive sources worldwide.

For more information on the G8, visit the web site at www.g8.gov.uk

Do we have the will to make poverty history? Some say we can't afford to. I say we can't afford not to.

This spirit, that everything is possible, is what I'd really like to pick out. We are the first generation that can actually eliminate absolute poverty from the planet. This is the first generation that can afford it, because of the wealth of the wealthy countries. We can afford it.

We can actually transform the real lives of people living in absolute poverty. That's just an extraordinary thing, to be around at this time, and I for one am not going to let it pass.

This essay is adapted from Bono's speech at the Labour Party Annual Conference, Brighton Centre, September 2004.

Since 1999 Bono has become increasingly involved in campaigning for Third-World debt relief and the plight of

Africa. In 2002 Bono set up "DATA," an organisation which raises awareness about Africa's debts, spread of AIDS and unfair trade rules. In July 2005, Bono helped to organize "Live 8," a series of ten concerts around the world aimed at encouraging the representatives of the world's industrialized countries at the Group of Eight Summit to write off Africa's debt, reform trade policy, and grant more aid for crises such as the AIDS epidemic.

*A long-time "student" of economist Jeffrey Sachs, Bono wrote the forward to Sachs' 2005 book, **The End of Poverty** in which he says, "History will be our judge, but what's written is up to us... We can't say our generation didn't know how to do it. We can't say our generation couldn't afford to do it. And we can't say our generation didn't have reason to do it. It's up to us, we can choose to shift the responsibility, or as the professor proposes here, we can choose to shift the paradigm."*