Poverty statistics

- About 2.7 billion people, over a third of the world's population, live on less than US$2 a day.
- Poverty and related causes such as preventable disease cause the deaths of around 21,000 children every day.
- Because of poverty, one child dies every four seconds, 15 every minute, 7.6 million every year.
- Each year in Europe, we spend $10 billion more on cigarettes than it would cost to provide all developing countries with education, clean water, sanitation and basic health and nutrition for all their people.
- In 2011/12, 13 million people in the UK (nearly one in five of the population) were estimated to be living in poverty (defined as having a net income less than 60 per cent of the national median). The figure includes 3.5 million children.

An adaptation of *The Star Thrower* by Loren Eiseley

A man was walking along the beach when he saw a boy picking something up and throwing it into the ocean. Approaching the boy, he asked, 'What are you doing?'

'Throwing starfish back into the ocean,' he said. 'The surf is up and the tide is going out. If I don't throw them back, they'll die.'

'Son,' the man said, 'don't you realise there are miles and miles of beach and hundreds of starfish? You can't make a difference!'

After listening politely, the boy bent down, picked up another starfish, and threw it back into the surf. Then, smiling at the man, he said, 'I made a difference for that one.'

Extracts from a Mail Online article by David Derbyshire, 19 March 2008

Starmageddon: As thousands of starfish wash up on our beaches, what is to blame for destroying one of nature's little marvels?
They lay in their thousands, covering the beach in a carpet of pink and orange. Some were curled up, their spiny feet pointing towards the sky. Others lay flat where they had been washed up by the tide. All were dead.

If the collective noun for a normal group of starfish is a constellation, then this pitiful sight on the Kent coastline was more like a galaxy. The scale of death visited upon the beaches of southern England in the past few weeks has stunned conservationists and prompted a major investigation into what could be killing so many marine animals.

It had been assumed, hoped even, that the deaths were the result of freak weather or unusual tides outside the control of people. Some of the deaths undoubtedly were. But experts now believe the slaughter, which has blighted Kent and Sussex, is also the result of human activity, and more particularly, the intensive fishing for mussels.

Starmageddon cont.

The Environment Agency now believes that dredgers, the kind used to scrape the sea floor for mussels, were almost certainly to blame. The dredging may have killed the starfish in two ways. It may have dislodged them, and the currents carried them to the shore before they then had a chance to grip on any solid object. Or the dredging may have thrown up mud and sand that covered the starfish, effectively suffocating them and killing thousands in one go.
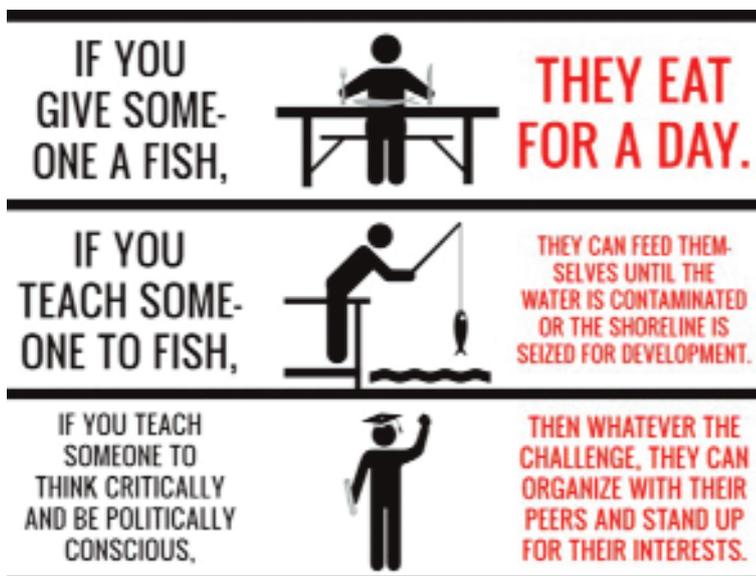
Dr Jean-Luc Solandt, of the Marine Conservation Society, said the mass deaths are yet another example of the dangers of overfishing. The society is lobbying the Government to dramatically extend its protection of the seas when it publishes the long-awaited Marine Bill next month.

'Dredging is scraping the bottom of the sea and it causes huge collateral damage,' he said. 'This dredging should be going on where it doesn't damage the seabed and the ecosystem, places where there's just mud, gravel and sand. They shouldn't be doing it where it causes so much destruction.'

'We desperately need to get more of our coastal waters protected. Currently just one per cent of British waters are protected – it should be 30 per cent. Common starfish are not rare or endangered, but it's not about whether species are rare. It's about protecting the whole ecosystem.'

For the full story see **http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-540137/Starmageddon-As-thousands-starfish-wash-beaches-blame-destroying-natures-little-marvels.html**

Figure 1

Climate change

Industrialisation and the burning of fossil fuels have meant a rise in the amount of carbon dioxide in the air we breathe (now at its highest level for 800,000 years). As a result our planet is warming (a fact evidenced with over 95 per cent scientific certainty), leading in turn to more extreme climate events, rising sea levels, more floods in some places and droughts in others.

Climate change is a global justice issue. Although it does, or will, affect us all, those who will bear the brunt of predicted changes are the poorest people in the world and those least responsible for the changes. They are the ones who are, even now, losing their land to the sea, whose low-lying islands are disappearing below the waves, whose crops are not growing well and who are more vulnerable to diseases like malaria.

It is in the low islands of the Pacific and in the coastal areas of Bangladesh that rising sea levels are becoming most evident and already having an impact on people's lives.

It is among the farmers of Malawi and Ethiopia that changing weather patterns are already affecting crop production and the stability of communities.

It is among the rural communities of Bolivia that the erosion of glaciers already causes dangerous water shortages, and among those living in poverty in the Philippines that Typhoon Haiyan, the strongest recorded storm ever to fall on land, wreaked the most damage.

Campaigning resources

The Christian Aid General Election Manifesto
http://www.christianaid.org.uk/Images/Party-manifesto-leaflet-September-2014.pdf

Global Theology of Climate Change
http://www.christianaid.org.uk/images/song-of-the-prophets-a-global-theology-of-climate-change-november-2014.pdf

Local Lobbyist Scheme
http://www.christianaid.org.uk/ActNow/find-out-more/local-lobbyist/index.aspx