

# INEQUALITY ACTION GUIDE



## INTRODUCTION

In 2017, the 8 richest people on the planet owned as much of the world's wealth as the poorest half of humanity. That's the same number of people who would fit in a golf buggy! Between 2013 and 2014, the wealth of the 80 richest people increased by \$668 million every day.

Economic inequality is increasing and is standing in the way of eliminating global poverty. However, it would take only 1.5% of the combined wealth of all the world's billionaires to fund the shortfall in the health and education services of the world's poorest countries. There is, therefore, a link between inequality and poverty.\*

## WHY IS THIS HAPPENING NOW?

Like poverty, rising inequality is not natural or accidental. Instead it is the result of deliberate policy choices made in the last few decades and therefore can be changed. Rising inequality has two main causes. The first is the belief that the best policy for governments to follow is to reduce their intervention in their countries' economies. This is called "market fundamentalism" and has weakened the rules and taxation needed to keep inequality under control, but is a policy followed by many of the world's countries. The second is that laws and decision-making have been influenced by the wealthy. Money buys political power, which the richest and most powerful have used to strengthen their unfair advantages.

## WHAT NEEDS TO CHANGE?

Rising inequality is eventually bad for everyone. Governments, supported by their people, can reject market fundamentalism, oppose the special influence of powerful elites, make rules and laws fairer for everyone and take action to level the playing field by introducing policies that redistribute money and power. Some governments, for example the previous one in Brazil, have already had some success with this.

## WHAT CAN YOU DO?

### 1. Inform

Teach others about inequality and support them to think critically about this issue.

### 2. Broadcast

Get creative and raise awareness in your school and community.

### 3. Influence

Persuade decision makers to play their part in challenging rising inequality.



Campaigners demand the UK government ends offshore tax havens by taking action in London's Trafalgar Square.

Photo: Andy Hall/Oxfam GB