

Do you know any tax superheroes?

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Christian Aid today launches its latest Alternative Tax Award — Tax Superhero of the Year — and invites nominations of suitably qualified firms and individuals.

The award has been introduced to highlight the tremendous potential accountants have to change the world for the better by helping developing countries collect more of the billions of dollars' tax that they are owed.

‘Do you know of an individual accountant, or perhaps a firm which deserves recognition for its outstanding contribution to the health of developing countries' tax administrations or revenues?’, asks Dr David McNair, Christian Aid's tax policy expert.

‘This could be, for instance, by seconding members of staff to work in poorer countries' tax authorities, or by working to strict ethical criteria about the type of accounting work a firm is prepared to do.’

Christian Aid estimates that at present, poor countries lose more than \$160bn each year through tax dodging by unscrupulous companies trading internationally.

If that money were available and allocated according to current spending practices, the lives of 350,000 children under the age of five could be saved in the developing world every year.

Abuses include ‘transfer mispricing’ where subsidiaries of multinational corporations sell goods and services to subsidiaries of the same concern at prices manipulated to lower the tax liability.

Another abuse, ‘false invoicing’, involves similar transactions taking place between unrelated companies.

Christian Aid introduced its Alternative Tax Awards in May this year. Categories included Tax Haven Enthusiast of the Year, Most Surprising Use of Tax Havens and a Low Tax Rate Achievement Award.

The Big 4 accounting firms and the International Accounting Standards Board won a joint award for having the Greatest Potential for Tax Reform.

Christian Aid is calling on them to take the lead in establishing a new accounting standard that would require companies to declare the profits they make and tax they pay in every country where they operate.

Such a measure would help the revenue authorities in developing countries quickly spot abuses. Christian Aid is also calling for the automatic exchange of information between tax jurisdictions to help remove the secrecy that tax havens offer.

Nominations for the Tax Superhero of the Year should be submitted to rbaird@christian-aid.org. The winner will be announced early next year.