

Oxfam joins the tax justice debate in the UK

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Oxfam has joined the tax just debate in the UK. [In a new blog Chris Johnes, Director of its UK Poverty Programme has said:](#)

Against a backdrop of tax dodging companies who shirk the need to pay into society, the JRF's annual 'state of the nation' report looks particularly bleak. As the difficulties facing ordinary people increase, and pressure on Government funds rise, it is imperative we make our tax system as fair and efficient as possible.

He adds:

Not only does non-payment of tax make austerity worse and distort competition, it also underlines and reinforces wider social difference and inequality. The damage that extreme inequality does to both society and economic health has been [documented](#) extensively by the academics Richard Wilkinson and Kate Pickett, and it becomes even more pernicious as tax revenue is removed from society exactly at the moment it is most needed.

So far the Government doesn't seem to be treating the issue with the seriousness it demands. Apart from signing a derisory tax deal with Switzerland that does very little to prevent tax abuse and reducing staff numbers in HMRC, it denies the need for legislation promoting automatic exchange of information on individual and corporate tax matters. Without such transparency, it's hard to see how tax evasion and avoidance can be effectively tackled.

As the difficulties facing ordinary people mount, and the pressure on Government funds rise, it is imperative we make our tax system as fair and efficient as possible. The means to do this - greater transparency and greater resources for the Revenue - are well established. Policy makers must now use them to help lift the burden on millions of people on low incomes, and help to rebuild a society owned and paid for by all.

I warmly welcome Oxfam as a new campaigning partner.