

When is a promise not a promise?



Did you wear a white wristband in 2005?

Did you watch the Live 8 Concert last summer?

Did you support Make Poverty History at school?

If you did any of those things, you helped to save millions of lives! By showing that you care about people all over the world you made a real difference and you played your part in helping to make poverty history.

In the summer of 2005 - when Live 8 and Make Poverty History were in the news - the leaders of the richest eight countries in the world (known as the G8) met in Scotland to try to make life better for poorer countries.

What exactly did the G8 leaders promise?

- They promised to cancel the debt (money) that poorer countries owed to richer countries.
- They promised to give more money to poorer countries to help them build a better future for themselves.
- They promised to make much stricter rules about buying and selling weapons.
- They promised to make it easier for poorer countries to buy and sell goods to make money.
- They promised to take some steps to tackle global warming.

These were very important promises that could actually change the world.

One year on, have the G8 leaders made anything better?

The G8 leaders made two promises about money to poorer countries: the first promise was to cancel the debts that poorer countries owed to richer countries. The second promise was to give them more money so they could build a better future for themselves.

Zambia was one of the countries that had its debts cancelled last year. The extra money has already made life so much better for the people who live there. It has paid for thousands more doctors, nurses and teachers.

Twice as many pupils are now able to go to this school in Uganda. This is because the Ugandan government doesn't have to pay debts to richer countries any more. They have spent the money on giving every child the chance to go to primary school instead.



Pupils at Kinyamaseke school, Uganda

This is great news because we can see that even the small things we do, like wearing a white wristband, can really help to save lives.



Sadly it's not all good news because the G8 leaders haven't kept *both* of their money promises. They have kept the first part (cancelling the debts)

but they haven't kept the second part (giving money so the poorer countries can build a better future). They've actually only paid out half of the money they promised. Do you think that this is fair?

What does this mean for people in poorer countries?

It means that a lot of the projects that the G8 leaders said they would pay for haven't got enough money to do their work properly. For example, the G8 leaders promised to give medical care by 2010 to everyone who has HIV/AIDS. Last year, they paid for medical care for 630,000 people with HIV/AIDS, which is brilliant! However, because the G8 leaders haven't given all of the money they said they would, another six million people with HIV/AIDS still can't afford the medicines that they desperately need.

What difference would it make if the G8 leaders paid it all?

 <p>Brenda Mwila is a nurse in Zambia.</p>	<p>If the G8 leaders paid all of the money they promised to, it could pay for four million health care workers and two million teachers, just like Brenda and Tobias in Zambia.</p>	 <p>Tobias Mwandila is a teacher in Zambia.</p>
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This would give everyone free medical care, and every child would have the chance of going to school.

So have the G8 leaders kept their promises?

They have kept some of their promises and not others. In 2005, they gave poorer countries an extra 5 billion dollars, which sounds really good. But this is about half the amount they said they would give.

- Do you think this is fair?
- What happens to you if you don't keep a promise?

What can you do to help?

There are lots of things you can do to help to make poverty history. Just see our [Take Action](#) on Cool Planet for Children for more ideas.