

## How Princess Diana's Humanitarian Causes Have Fared, 20 Years On

The extraordinary life of Diana, Princess of Wales, not only humanized the British monarchy, but captured the world's attention. And she harnessed that media frenzy to raise awareness of a number of progressive philanthropic causes.

Diana was known as a prodigious fundraiser and at one point was linked to more than 100 charities. Although she chose to cut ties with the bulk of them in 1996 to lead more of a private life after her divorce from Prince Charles, she remained the patron of six charities until her death on Aug 31, 1997. Now 20 years later, here is what has happened to some of her biggest humanitarian causes:

### Landmines

Perhaps the cause most often linked to Diana is advocacy against landmines. Shortly before her death in 1997, Diana visited Bosnia and Angola, where she was pictured picking her way through a minefield in the Southern African country while wearing a visor and bomb-proof breastplate. "I'd read the statistics that Angola has the highest percentage of amputees anywhere in the world...that one person in every 333 had lost a limb, most of them through land mine explosions" Diana told the press in Angola, "But that hadn't prepared me for reality."

James Cowan, CEO of the mine-removal charity the Halo Trust, credits the Princess with the success of the Ottawa Mine Ban Treaty, which opened for signatures months after her death in Dec. 1997. The international treaty, which has been signed by 122 countries, prohibits the use, stockpiling, production and transfer of landmines. The world is far from free of landmines, however.

### HIV/Aids

The world was terrified by the Aids epidemic in the mid-80s. Fed by ignorance and misinformation, people did not touch sufferers due to the mistaken belief that HIV could be transmitted through contact. In 1987, Diana opened Britain's first Aids ward in London, which only cared for patients with the virus. It was there that she shook hands with an Aids patient without gloves. She became the first high-profile celebrity to do so in order to challenge the stigma that the virus could be passed by touch.

### Homelessness

Diana was an advocate of Centrepoin, a charity that helped young and homeless people off the streets, by becoming its patron in 1992. Her work at the charity involved helping youth between the ages of 16-25 find shelter, food and a job. She also took her sons, Prince William and Prince Harry, to the charity's shelters. In 2005, William became the patron of Centrepoin. He even slept rough in 2009 on the streets of London telling the [Telegraph](#) at the time: "My mother introduced that sort of area to me a long time ago. It was a real eye-opener and I am very glad she did. It has been something I have held close to me for a long time."

By Tara John, *ime.com* August 25, 2017