Oxfam works with others to overcome poverty and suffering

Children show their resilience, enjoying the snow despite the earthquake which devastated their village in northern Pakistan in October 2005. Oxfam was the first humanitarian organisation to reach their area, distributing blankets, plastic sheets, mats, hygiene kits and tents to help people survive the approaching winter. Photo: Dan Chung/Guardian Newspapers LTD
Foreword

Barbara Stocking, far left, with supporters at the regional Assembly of Oxfam’s WE CAN campaign to end violence against women in South Asia, Sri Lanka, March 2006
(see page 42)

2005-6 was a high-octane year for Oxfam. Starting with humanitarian crises, it is important to remember that when the media leave, Oxfam is still there. The relief and reconstruction following the Tsunami continued through the year and is still ongoing. During the year, we also responded to the South Asia earthquake, and food crises across Africa. Work on all these continues too.

While staff, volunteers and partners were delivering huge humanitarian responses, in the UK we were all working to Make Poverty History, with the high point in Edinburgh just before the G8 Summit. Not everything we wanted was achieved, but there were real commitments in aid and debt relief. We are now monitoring to make sure the promises are delivered. Debt relief in Zambia has had the immediate effect of getting more children into schools. International discussion on trade was depressing, as is the suspension of the WTO Doha round of talks.

A year of enormous energy, then, during which we also moved to a new, much more functional building. As 2006 began, we knew we needed to consolidate and deliver what we had started in 2005. Our biggest challenge is to inspire the people who expressed their concern about poverty to stay with us for the long term. Ending poverty is achievable but only if each of us makes the contribution that we can make. That’s what the new campaign I’m in is all about – being part of a global movement to end poverty in which each of us plays their part.

Barbara Stocking, Director, Oxfam GB, August 2006

“That’s what our new campaign I’m in is all about – being part of a global movement to end poverty in which each of us plays their part.”
2005: Poverty tops the agenda

This was the year when millions of people understood that the world has the money and the means to end the extreme poverty that takes a child’s life every three seconds. We saw that together we’re able to force the world’s most powerful leaders to act. The legacy of 2005 is that the mass anti-poverty movement is here to stay.

Politics tackles poverty

Global poverty was an issue in a British general election for the first time, with all three main political parties laying out plans for reducing poverty if they came to power.

G8 Summit, Gleneagles

Poverty also topped the G8 agenda for the first time. On the eve of the Summit, the first White Band Day was held and 250,000 people marched through Edinburgh demanding that world leaders tackle aid, trade and debt in order to overcome poverty. The Live 8 concerts were watched by billions. Politicians did respond – to a degree. At Gleneagles they agreed to cancel some of the debts of 42 countries, and to increase annual aid by $48 billion per year by 2010. If implemented, these changes will save lives. More children will receive an education; funds to fight HIV and AIDS, TB and malaria will be topped up every year. Yet despite these successes, this response was well short of what’s needed to end extreme poverty.

“I came to make a difference – to make our voices heard. This isn’t about charity – it’s about giving people their rightful dues. Poor people should be able to make their own food, to keep their dignity and we should give what we owe them.”

Mary McKee, from Scotland, at the Edinburgh Make Poverty History rally

“...that level of poverty was happening in the west, we wouldn’t tolerate it...”

Rachel Duckworth, from Yorkshire, at the Edinburgh Make Poverty History rally

Building a movement

Oxfam was part of Make Poverty History, a coalition of more than 500 organisations that called for world leaders to drop the debt, provide more and better aid, and deliver trade justice. Make Poverty History was the UK arm of the Global Call to Action against Poverty (GCAP), a worldwide campaign launched in Brazil in January 2005 to challenge world leaders to achieve a breakthrough on poverty. It became the world’s largest-ever anti-poverty alliance, representing more than 150 million people, with national campaigns in more than 80 countries. Over 40 million people took action during 2005, and eight million white bands (the worldwide symbol of the campaign) were worn in the UK alone.

Campaigners worldwide wore white bands in solidarity against poverty – for example, in El Salvador (above) and The Philippines (below)

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“...that level of poverty was happening in the west, we wouldn’t tolerate it...”

Rachel Duckworth, from Yorkshire, at the Edinburgh Make Poverty History rally

A 250,000-strong crowd marched against poverty in Edinburgh just before the G8 summit
Above: The Oxfam Make Trade Fair junk in Hong Kong during the WTO talks.

Rice farmers in Ghana whose income is threatened by cheap US imports.

WTO Hong Kong

White Band Day 3 marked the World Trade Organisation meeting in Hong Kong, where decisions taken would affect the lives of millions of poor farmers. Trade could be a powerful engine for poverty reduction – if international rules gave developing countries a fair chance to participate. Oxfam lobbied and campaigned internationally through Make Trade Fair, but yet again, the agreement reached reflected the interests of rich countries and didn’t deliver the reforms developing countries need. A powerful opportunity to make trade rules fair for poorer countries was missed.

UN Summit to review progress towards Millennium Development Goals

People in more than 80 countries took action on the second White Band Day, ahead of the UN summit to review progress towards the Millennium Development Goals. But although the UN agreed measures that could help to prevent future genocide – a historic decision for which Oxfam had long campaigned – there was a lack of action to meet the internationally agreed goals to halve poverty by 2015.

WTO pre-negotiations

Oxfam’s Make Trade Fair campaign continued to pressurise leaders to make decisions that will deliver trade justice for poor countries, ahead of WTO negotiations which resumed in summer 2006.

Launch of I’m in

Building on the foundations laid in 2005, Oxfam launched I’m in, a campaign that seeks to harness the energy generated in the UK during 2005 to make poverty history. Through TV, press and poster advertising, and online and email activity, I’m in aims to attract new supporters to our goal of overcoming poverty and suffering. It highlights the many ways people can support Oxfam and help to end poverty – for good. (See Annie Lennox, page 52)

2005: Poverty tops the agenda

2006: Keeping up the momentum

“One thing that gives me confidence that we can force the G8 to keep [its] promises is the strong social, cultural and political legacy of this year.”

Bob Geldof, writing in the Guardian, December 2005

Beyond 2006

We’re truly grateful for all the passion and commitment shown so far in the fight against poverty. Much has been achieved – but there’s still so much more much to do. Working with others, we will continue to exert pressure so that the G8 commitments and government promises will be met. And we’ll continue to help build the movement to overcome poverty. The end is still distant, but we believe that an irreversible journey has begun.

SEPTEMBER

DECEMBER

JANUARY

APRIL

BEYOND 2006

Above top: Campaigners in Indonesia spell out ‘Stop Poverty’

Above: At the UN Summit in New York, campaigners urge world leaders to wake up and help the world’s poorest people

Above: The Oxfam Make Trade Fair junk in Hong Kong during the WTO talks

Beninese singer songwriter Angelique Kidjo hands the Big Noise petition to Make Trade Fair to Pascal Lamy, head of the WTO

The TV ad that launched I’m in

Fair rules for trade will help coffee growers earn a decent living

Anti-poverty demonstrators outside the Manila Stock Exchange in the Philippines

The 18.7 million pounds raised by Oxfam and Save the Children is now being used to target the health, education and nutrition of the world’s poorest children

Beninese singer songwriter Angelique Kidjo hands the Big Noise petition to Make Trade Fair to Pascal Lamy, head of the WTO

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Conflict and natural disasters are major causes of poverty and suffering for millions of people. Oxfam is there, aiming to protect and save lives, and to help people who are forced to flee their homes. As well as responding to emergencies we are campaigning to bring about changes that will protect people, such as preventing arms deals that fuel conflict.

If people are able to produce or earn what they need for a secure life, they have the opportunity to work their way out of poverty. We believe that sustainable livelihoods help people to better cope with and recover from unforeseen situations, so that they can maintain their quality of life. Sustainable livelihoods also provide poor people with opportunities that they may not otherwise have. For example, by being able to help themselves out of poverty they can afford to send a child to school or to buy new equipment.

Every year millions of poor people die from treatable diseases and millions of children go without an education. Good health and the ability to read and write are crucial in the fight against poverty. Oxfam provides people with basic services such as clean water, and health education – especially in emergencies – and we support communities to set up schools. We are also campaigning nationally and internationally to secure health care and education for all.

Most people living in poverty are disempowered and have no say in decisions that affect their lives. Oxfam is working with marginalised communities to help them speak out about their concerns and needs, so that local authorities, national governments, and international bodies listen and act.

Inequality and discrimination based on gender, ethnicity and culture increases people’s vulnerability to poverty and suffering. And they often prevent a family or community from freeing itself from such hardship and unfairness. Oxfam is working with communities to address unequal power relations: we believe that ensuring equality and justice unlocks people’s potential, and benefits everyone.

Oxfam works to help people achieve their basic rights:

- **The right to life and security**
- **The right to a livelihood**
- **The right to basic services**
- **The right to be heard**
- **The right to equity**
A young girl washes plates in the remote village of Kuz Ganrshal, in northern Pakistan. Oxfam was the first humanitarian organisation to enter the area after the devastating earthquake in October 2005.
Earthquake response, Pakistan

Following the earthquake in Pakistan, Oxfam organised quizzes, games such as Snakes and Ladders, and songs in the camps to help children learn to use latrines and adopt the hygiene practices, such as hand-washing that would prevent disease. “I learnt to lift the lid of the latrines with my feet because this way I won’t get germs on my hands,” said six-year-old Hummar.

The South Asia earthquake devastated northern Pakistan and Indian-administered Kashmir in October 2005, leaving two million people homeless. The scale of the disaster, and its location in mountainous terrain posed huge challenges, but the initial relief effort was successful in saving lives.

Oxfam supported more than 900,000 people in northern Pakistan, racing against winter to ensure people had adequate protection. We distributed winter-proof tents and transitional shelter kits (based on traditional local housing). Thankfully the season was milder than predicted, which helped to avert a second humanitarian disaster.

We also provided people living in camps with clean water and sanitation facilities, including some latrines and bathhouses built specifically for women and children. Along with health promotion work and the distribution of hygiene kits, these helped to prevent major outbreaks of water-borne diseases.

“We have everything we need in the camp: Oxfam has given us clean water, latrines, places for us to wash in private... even the children have things to do during the day. The problem is what happens next: we can’t take all this with us,” said Iram, a resident in the camp.

Once the winter snows had melted, Oxfam tackled her concerns, helping thousands of displaced people to return home, and giving them livestock and agriculture support. We are also working with vulnerable communities (particularly women) to help them develop new skills so they can earn a better living and rebuild their lives.

Oxfam is helping to address people’s anxiety about how they would cope when they had to return to the sites of their former homes. Jamila and her sister Iram (above) have joined our cash-for-work scheme, knitting woolly jumpers for children in emergency camps. They receive good quality wool and needles and are paid on completion of each garment. (Oxfam then uses these sweaters as incentives for children taking part in health promotion activities.) With their earnings, they plan to buy food, and pay for transport and schooling.

“We want to work the fields, but we don’t have livestock. We want to sow seeds, but don’t have land, so anything that gives us a living will help us a long way,” Iram, left.

Having survived the winter, thousands of people are returning to their villages where Oxfam is helping them to start rebuilding their lives.
Africa’s food shortages

Three crises, one underlying cause...

In 2005-6, Oxfam responded to severe food shortages in three separate regions of Africa. Each built slowly over time and was triggered by local conditions, but underlying all three is the chronic poverty which makes communities especially vulnerable to environmental and social challenges. Oxfam provided immediate relief and is working with these communities to increase their resistance to food shortages in the long term.

West Africa

“I’m so happy. I’m going to take my goats home and take good care of them,” said Hadiza Dazao, a mother of four from Niger. “I can’t thank Oxfam enough for giving my family this chance.”

Hadiza was one of more than 1,500 people given support to recover from the food crisis which hit West Africa’s Sahel region in 2005. A locust invasion followed by rain failure left thousands of nomadic herders and farming families without adequate food. From May to November, we supported over 250,000 people in Niger, Mali, and Mauritania. Our response included innovative community projects where people worked in return for food vouchers exchangeable with local traders. We also bought livestock, too weak to be sold at market, at a fair price. The animals were slaughtered humanely and the meat distributed to the most needy families.

Southern Africa

Giving out cash may sound an unusual solution to a humanitarian crisis, but it’s been successful in our response to food shortages in southern Africa, where up to 12 million people don’t have enough to eat. Over the last decade, increasing poverty, lack of social welfare, economic decline and HIV/AIDS have made people in areas of Malawi, Mozambique, Zambia and Zimbabwe vulnerable to the crisis in 2005, which was triggered by disastrous rainfall.

“When Oxfam announced at a community meeting that the poorest people were going to receive cash, we were surprised because we usually receive food,” says Kelvin Katonda, who lost his maize crop during Zambia’s drought. “The money has turned out to be better than food; it gives us choice to buy what we need. Before, we ate wild fruits and unripe mangoes. Now, thanks to Oxfam, we can buy maize, dried fish, salt.”

As well as boosting local economies, cash prevents people from being passive recipients of relief. They have choice and can also pay for necessities such as seeds. Our monitoring showed that in every household, over 90 per cent of the $20 given was spent on food.

East Africa

Three failed rainy seasons in parts of Kenya, Somalia and Tanzania have left eleven million people facing a serious food crisis. Livestock are central to these pastoralist communities. As death rates among herds reached 95 per cent in some areas and local economies crumbled, people became increasingly destitute.

By spring 2006, we were preparing to launch the biggest appeal in our history, to enable us to provide food and water to approximately 700,000 people. By March, we were making twice-weekly water deliveries of 20,000 litres to 30 sites in northern Kenya. We were also running cash-for-work programmes, and purchasing weak animals for a decent price. As in West Africa, they were then slaughtered humanely, the meat shared among the community, and the skins taken by the owner to sell.

Long-term solutions

Alongside our emergency response, we’ve also increased our work improving people’s livelihoods. These long-term solutions are essential to help communities recover and to resist future crises. In northern Kenya, for example, we’re consulting energy experts so we can help people earn a living through sustainable charcoal production. In West Africa, we helped communities to develop cereal banks and we gave people vouchers to restock their herds at special livestock fairs. This enabled them to choose their own animals, while keeping profits within the community.

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Forgotten emergencies

Oxfam worked in emergency situations in more than 30 countries during this year. While many made the headlines, others went largely unreported or slipped from the front pages. But we respond to crises, regardless of media profile, anywhere in the world where we’re confident we can save and protect lives.

In northern Uganda and the Darfur region of Sudan, for example, long-running civil conflicts often fall from the headlines. But we are still there, working with people who have been forced by fighting to leave their homes and livelihoods in search of safety. As well as providing clean water, sanitation facilities and hygiene training to prevent widespread disease, we are also supporting programmes that help to increase personal security.

Worldwide, the needs of people caught in conflict or disasters are so great that we are determined to play a bigger role and to make our emergency responses even faster and more efficient. We have committed to increasing our ability to respond to emergencies – for example, expanding our capacity to provide water and sanitation over the next three years.

Reducing the risk, Darfur

“The stove has brought many changes to my daily life,” says Khadija, who lives with her family in a camp in Darfur. She’s one of 800,000 people who have fled their homes. “It has increased my children’s safety and I have more spare time to do things. The problems of violence have been reduced because we need to make fewer trips to collect firewood.”

Every day women like Khadija and their children have to venture beyond the relative safety of Darfur’s camps to collect firewood for cooking. Here they risk harassment, rape and even death at the hands of local militia. So Oxfam has taught thousands of women to make fuel-efficient stoves from natural materials – mud, clay, water, and donkey dung. The stoves reduce the amount of firewood needed for cooking, which means fewer trips outside the camps.

A group of women with their fuel-efficient stoves in Sudan

Making life easier, Uganda

“Before Oxfam came, there was a big, big problem with water in Amida,” says Geoffrey Omona, a resident of a camp in northern Uganda. “The place was dirty and unhygienic. The lack of water made cleanliness a problem. People didn’t have latrines, or didn’t know how to use them and keep them clean. Most of the children had diarrhoea. That’s why Oxfam was so badly needed.”

Now the camp is very different. Oxfam arrived in August 2005, installing 12 tapstands to help remedy the water shortage. Our public health teams are working to ensure people are protected from preventable diseases, and we are due to build latrines and give out mosquito nets. Filder Ayiko remembers queuing for hours just to fill one jerry can after she first arrived here. “Since Oxfam came, I can get three jerry cans without waiting and we have enough water,” she says as she collects the family’s 60-litre ration. “The tapstands have made a huge difference to everyone.”

Filder Ayiko collects water from the Oxfam tapstand close to her home in Amida camp for displaced people
From 1998 to 2001, the US, Britain and France earned more from arms sales to the developing world than they gave in aid.

 Control Arms

From 1998 to 2001, the US, Britain and France earned more from arms sales to the developing world than they gave in aid.

It was a crucial year for the Control Arms campaign, in the build-up to the first major UN review of the small arms trade in five years. Oxfam campaigners worked tirelessly to generate massive public pressure on governments to seize this opportunity for an international Arms Trade Treaty (ATT). Such a treaty would close the gaps and loopholes in existing national laws that are easy for unscrupulous dealers to exploit.

Thanks to intensive campaigning and lobbying work, more than 45 governments backed the call for a treaty – a big increase on last year. Campaigners around the world made sure their governments knew they would not tolerate arms falling into the wrong hands. Starting in March 2006, thousands of people took part in a ‘100 Days Countdown’ to the UN conference in June – a series of events and stunts to generate media coverage and win even more support for the Million Faces petition, ahead of its delivery to the conference.

“We’re determined to make sure that arms can no longer be used to fuel human rights abuses and undermine the fight against poverty.”
Anna Macdonald, Oxfam’s Conflict Campaign Manager.

The River Basin Programme

Being prepared for a natural disaster can help save millions of lives and livelihoods. Since the devastating floods of 2004, Oxfam has worked with communities in Bangladesh, India and Nepal to help them prepare for the severe flooding that occurs regularly in the vast basin formed by the Ganges and Brahmaputra rivers.

Our long-term disaster prevention measures include the construction of cluster villages, where households are raised at least seven feet above water level, and flood shelters – areas of raised land large enough for up to 300 households, their livestock, latrines, a community room and vegetable plots. We have also provided rescue boats and radios, and helped communities to establish committees to plan for the flooding.

“When the water started rising we were able to move the cattle to the flood shelter,” recalls Mozibur Rahman, whose home was threatened by the floods in Bangladesh. “When it was obvious that the house was in danger, we contacted a rescue boat and moved everything to the shelter. We can stay here for up to six months while we look for a new place to live.”

Climate change will increase the likelihood of natural disasters such as floods and droughts, with a disproportionate effect on poor people. We are adapting our development programmes to help poor communities prepare for such events, and have also joined the Stop Climate Chaos coalition, to campaign for action to tackle global warming.

The right to life and security

Preventing disaster

Villagers in Harhi, India, use their raised well, designed to withstand the regular flooding of the Ganges

Control Arms

Control Arms campaigners take to the streets of London with their message
Free trade agreements with North America have led to cheap cereals flooding into the country, which has been devastating for small farmers. The right to a sustainable livelihood.
After the unprecedented disaster of the Tsunami, Oxfam helped 1.7 million people across seven countries in one of our largest-ever emergency responses. Our immediate work focused on saving lives, providing survivors with shelter, clean water and sanitation. We brought essential supplies and installed temporary services and infrastructure. And we introduced cash-for-work projects as a means of giving people money for essential items, while engaging them in urgent recovery activities, such as rebuilding roads. These programmes injected significant cash into the local economy and involved people in the rehabilitation of their own environment and communities.

After a successful emergency response to the disaster, we are now working to restore homes and livelihoods in affected areas. We have moved from relief to reconstruction, through extensive public health and shelter projects, and by working to help create sustainable, improved livelihoods – for example, by providing grants to small businesses. We’ve committed to working with communities in the region in the coming years to enable them to rebuild their lives. But we don’t want simply to return people to the conditions in which they were living before the Tsunami. Our long-term programme aims to give them the chance of building something better for themselves.

After the Tsunami

“Now, I’m back on my feet, working in the factory and earning more than before” Zurinah, left, working in the brick factory

“Building the future

“The factory was totally destroyed. I couldn’t work for about four months,” remembers Zurinah, 25, who has returned to her job at a brick factory rebuilt by Oxfam in Aceh, Indonesia. “I feel really happy to come back to work here. And I’m joyful to hear that the bricks I am making are being used to rebuild the walls of people’s houses in other villages.” The Tsunami destroyed all 15 brick factories in the area; Oxfam has provided capital to rebuild six of them. We are also working to encourage good management and equitable profit-sharing in the region while people rebuild their lives. And we aim to ensure fair wages, for both men and women.

Before the Tsunami, Zurinah had worked at the factories for four years. Now that she has been re-hired, she is slowly piecing her life back together again. Although she lost all her money and belongings when the Tsunami hit, she is now even dreaming of owning her own factory one day.

By giving grants and loans, Oxfam has helped many thousands of people back to work after the Tsunami – whatever their business. We’re committed to working with communities in the region in the coming years to enable them to rebuild their lives. But we don’t want simply to return people to the conditions in which they were living before the Tsunami. Our long-term programme aims to give them the chance of building something better for themselves.

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From left to right: mussel farming, India; bicycle repairs, baking, and curd production, Sri Lanka

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Oxfam supports family farmers to improve their production and to organise marketing groups. These enable farmers to sell more directly to consumers in the cities so they are less reliant on middle-men and can get a fairer price for their produce.

In Sotara, for example, women are cultivating a co-operative market garden, growing produce such as pumpkins and beans to eat, and herbs and flowers to sell in nearby towns.

As a result of fighting between the army, and guerrilla and paramilitary groups, Colombia has the second largest displaced population in the world. Violence and the threat of conflict have pushed people from rural parts of the country into urban centres. Oxfam is working with the farming communities who remain, to help families become self-sufficient by growing a range of crops to eat and sell. The project provides households, many of which are headed by women, with more reliable sources of food and income.

Oxfam supports family farmers to improve their production and to organise marketing groups. These enable farmers to sell more directly to consumers in the cities so they are less reliant on middle-men and can get a fairer price for their produce.

In Sotara, for example, women are cultivating a co-operative market garden, growing produce such as pumpkins and beans to eat, and herbs and flowers to sell in nearby towns.

Arturo Lopez Avila hugs his grandsons, visiting from the US. Their parents have had to leave the family’s village to seek work abroad, because unfair trade rules mean they can no longer make a decent living from the land.

Pushing for fairer trade in Mexico

The North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) of 1994 gave producers and manufacturers in Mexico, the US and Canada the freedom to export and import their goods with very few restrictions. As a result, Mexican farmers have had their livelihoods destroyed by the arrival of cheap US-imported cereals. Many of these growers have gone out of business or moved to the US to find work, as their government is unable to provide them with any subsidies or concessions. Those who remain face a difficult struggle to make a small profit and meet the increasing cost of fertilisers and seeds.

Oxfam supports a number of local organisations that are lobbying for changes to the NAFTA and other unfair international trade agreements, to get a fairer deal for Mexico’s farming community.

We are also working with poor growers to help them become better informed about how they can make a more secure living. And we’re supporting micro-credit schemes so farmers like Javier Herrera Izguerra (above) can afford to buy essential items such as seeds and fertilisers. Because he belongs to one of these credit organisations, Javier has the funds that allow him to keep on growing rice, maize and beans.

Strengthening rural farmers, Colombia

As a result of fighting between the army, and guerrilla and paramilitary groups, Colombia has the second largest displaced population in the world. Violence and the threat of conflict have pushed people from rural parts of the country into urban centres. Oxfam is working with the farming communities who remain, to help families become self-sufficient by growing a range of crops to eat and sell. The project provides households, many of which are headed by women, with more reliable sources of food and income.

With funds and training from Oxfam, Elsa is able to grow vegetables which she sells in town.

Elvis, left, is among the few farmers who remain on the land despite Colombia’s conflict. He received a grant for livestock from Oxfam, and in turn supports the community by giving away piglets when his herd breeds.
Protecting fisheries, Cambodia

The livelihoods of rural communities depend heavily on natural resources. Oxfam partners are working with villagers in Cambodia to help strengthen their fisheries and protect stocks, which are threatened by illegal over-fishing and environmental degradation. They have organised training and support for local fisherfolk and groups to better understand fishery laws, and have taught them how to make other items, such as fish sauce and shrimp paste. These can be sold at local markets for a higher price, to help ensure Cambodia’s fisheries bring food and a secure income to those living in poverty.

Urban businesses, Russia

Oxfam is helping people in Russia to start up and expand small businesses and earn a sustainable living. Our Urban Livelihoods programme offers loans to small business owners, which they would normally have difficulty accessing. Entrepreneurs also receive training, legal aid and business support to strengthen their skills. More than 400 men and women have been trained in business development and marketing.

Oxfam Unwrapped, the online and catalogue gift service with a difference, had an incredible year, with a staggering 400,000 items being sold in the run-up to Christmas alone. In October, we launched our biggest ever Oxfam Unwrapped catalogue, featuring more than 50 ‘funusual’ present ideas. Quirky gifts – ranging from school dinners for 100 children to mango plantations – were bought for friends and family, and received by communities in poor countries, where they will have life-changing or even life-saving consequences. The items were chosen by the communities we work with around the world, based on their needs and the long-term benefits these gifts would bring.

Munyaradzi Hungwe from Zimbabwe received a voucher to purchase livestock. He said, “I am HIV-positive and had never dreamt of owning any ‘big’ livestock in my life. I hope to rear offspring as the goat is female, and get meat and money for medication from the sales. I just want to encourage you to continue supporting us. Don’t forget us, we are really struggling.”

To find out more go to oxfamunwrapped.com

“I learned that there was a chance of a loan from Oxfam for small business development so I came to the office. I started my shop for the sake of my daughter. And now the local people don’t have to go to Tver or Moscow for shopping. They can find all they need here.” Svetlana Merkurieva, Vyshniy Volochek, Russia

Alexey Gorbachenko, right, was given an Oxfam loan to set up a shoe repair business in the town of Selizharovo. As the only cobbler for 300km, his skills are in great demand

Alpaca, valued for their wool, are purchased as gifts through Oxfam Unwrapped and given to villagers in Peru

Life-changing gifts
the right to basic services

Girls having fun during playtime at Makangwese Open Community School, in Zambia. Oxfam works with such schools, providing equipment, teaching aids and new desks, and finances teacher training.
Goals (MDGs), a set of globally-agreed targets to halve world poverty by 2015. If met, they would improve the lives and chances of at least 500 million people living in poverty. The MDGs include universal primary education, improving maternal health and reducing child mortality.

Oxfam is part of the Global Call to Action against Poverty (GCAP), a global campaign of more than 80 national anti-poverty coalitions representing 150 million people. In 2005, Make Access to health care and education are key to enabling people to overcome poverty. Yet 100 million children – the majority girls – still can’t go to school, and 25 million people die from preventable diseases each year. So Oxfam is seeking to guarantee people’s basic right to a good education and essential health care. Through our development programmes and campaigning, we are working towards the achievement of the Millennium Development

Poverty History, together with other GCAP groups, called for world leaders to deliver trade rules that are fair, debt cancellation, and more and better aid. As a result more than 30 developing countries have had debts cancelled, rich countries have delivered more aid, and the lives of many people have improved. For example, free basic health care is now available to everyone living in rural Zambia – paid for by the $4 billion of debt relief agreed at the G8 Summit in Gleneagles – and the removal of education fees in Burundi has led to 300,000 more children going to school.

Yet despite the achievements of 2005, the MDGs are still well off track. There is a massive shortfall of four million health workers and two million teachers in developing countries. In 2005 alone, 500,000 women died either in pregnancy or childbirth and 11 million children died as a result of poverty, conflict, and disease. This is the equivalent of a woman every minute and a child every three seconds.

Oxfam will continue to campaign to ensure that user fees for vital health and education services are abolished, and that there is adequate money and resources for more nurses, doctors and teachers. We want long-term commitments from both donors and governments of developing countries to fund training, salaries, clinics, schools, drugs and textbooks. The provision of essential services to the world’s poorest people is crucial in the fight against poverty and suffering.

In 2005 alone, a woman died either in pregnancy or childbirth every minute. And a child died every three seconds as a result of poverty, conflict and disease.
Learning for life

100 million children are currently out of school, the majority of whom are girls. Oxfam is working at international, national and local levels so that all girls as well as boys have access to the education that will help them develop the skills they need to help them overcome poverty, to make positive changes in their lives, and to make their voices heard.

The Education For All Fast-Track Initiative

The Education For All Fast-Track Initiative (FTI) was set up by the international community in 2002 so that countries could give extra aid money in a more co-ordinated way. The FTI has already helped six countries to pay fully for their planned education for the next three years, and has provided another six with extra funds.

Despite this, 100 million children around the world receive no education at all, and aid for basic education remains incredibly low at $2.6 billion per year. The Global Campaign for Education (GCE) — of which Oxfam is a founding member — is calling for an additional $10 billion per year by 2010 to ensure that every child receives a quality primary education. We want the FTI to be at the centre of attempts to address this global crisis.

A boost came in April 2006 when the UK government announced $15 billion of funding over ten years to ensure free education for all. Despite this, the FTI is not getting enough money from richer governments.

“The G8 nations said at Gleneagles they would work to help the world’s poor people,” explains Kailash Satyarthi, head of the GCE. “Yet they contribute paltry amounts to education, one of the most effective routes out of poverty.”

Global Week of Action for Education

The Global Campaign for Education (GCE) estimates that at least 15 million more teachers will be needed worldwide if every child is to have the chance of a good quality education by 2015. So, as part of its Global Week of Action for Education, the campaign (in which Oxfam plays a key role) brought together millions of young people, teachers and activists in over 100 countries to press leaders to change the situation.

In West Africa, for example, Oxfam and our local partners used the week to highlight the need for four-times the existing number of trained teachers in the region, so that all children would have access to a quality primary education. In Burkina Faso, over 5,000 people marched in Ouagadougou to present their demands to politicians. Liberian education campaigners paraded through Monrovia while in Niger students made demands for a better quality education to their governor.

“In our village we have six classes but only two teachers,” says 15-year-old Fatoumata Abdourhamane, who lives in remote northern Mali. “I come to school every day but we don’t have any books and the teacher doesn’t have time to work with me when I have problems.”

Following the work of campaigners, the governor of Fatoumata’s region committed to improving the teacher-student ratio. As Fatoumata says, “I really want to learn to read and write but I need a good teacher to help me.”

In our village we have six classes but only two teachers, says 15-year-old Fatoumata Abdourhamane, who lives in remote northern Mali. “I come to school every day but we don’t have any books and the teacher doesn’t have time to work with me when I have problems.”

Pre-schooling in Tanzania

“Education is important for the development of the person and community,” says Lamba Lelo Loboini, a Maasai elder in the remote village of Malambo in northern Tanzania. “The world is now changing. If we do not know how to read and write we will get left behind.”

The Maasai are pastoralists, and their semi-nomadic way of life has made it difficult for them to access primary education. Fewer Maasai children at school has meant fewer Maasai teachers, health workers and other professionals.

Oxfam has worked with pastoralist communities in Malambo and other villages of the Ngorongoro District to set up and maintain 31 community nurseries and pre-schools. This helps to improve attendance rates at primary level. Tanzania is one of several African and South Asian countries where Oxfam is working with local partners to help develop national education policies and to monitor education budgets, to ensure that money reaches the communities to which it was allocated.

“Pre-school has brought solidarity to the village because we have to come together, plan together and we feel ownership”

Koipapi Parmet, school committee member, Tanzania

Maasai children attend class at a pre-school established by Oxfam in Malambo, Tanzania
Specific HIV and AIDS programmes

Oxfam also supports specific HIV and AIDS programmes. In East Asia, South Asia and southern Africa we work with partner organisations and AIDS-affected communities to deliver programmes that provide prevention, care and access to treatment. Community home-based care is central to our approach: we organise support within communities often on the brink of collapse because the disease has killed or weakened so many people of working and parenting age.

“After seeing the extent of the problem, I thought that one day I too may be sick,” explains Loveness Mankhanamba, a volunteer with an Oxfam-supported home-based care group in Malawi. “While I still have the energy, I should help, rather than discriminate.” Through the Nkombezi Village Development Committee, volunteers such as Loveness help people with HIV and AIDS and support households headed by orphans or grandparents. Some tend the communal maize field and the goat distribution scheme; others help with cooking and cleaning; all give moral support. Volunteers have been trained to offer basic medical care, to administer drugs and to know when someone needs to be sent to hospital. We provide a box of medical supplies and condoms every month.

We also work to raise awareness about HIV and AIDS. In Malawi, we’ve trained traditional initiators (who help teenagers prepare for adulthood) in how to reduce the spread of HIV. “We had a lot of training from Oxfam and we take this knowledge to the boys,” says John Adam, boys’ initiator in Mberenga village. “We recommend that they abstain, but in reality this is difficult, so we suggest using a condom. And we no longer conduct circumcision, but recommend boys go to the hospital if they want it done.”

Adapting existing projects

Wherever possible, we are adapting all our development and humanitarian work to take into account the effects of HIV and AIDS. For example, we are making projects more productive and less labour intensive, so that HIV-positive people with decreased levels of energy can participate. In Zimbabwe we have introduced drip-irrigation schemes to the village vegetable gardens, set up as part of our livelihoods work. This means people no longer have to make repeated trips to the river to fetch heavy cans of water for their plants. Parts of the gardens have also been given to children orphaned by AIDS; villagers work together to help the children tend their crops. And we have introduced a wider range of vegetables, to give HIV and AIDS sufferers the nutrients they so vitally need.

Tackling HIV and AIDS

Over 40 million people live with HIV and AIDS, and around 8,000 of them die every day as a result – mostly in the world’s poorest countries. The pandemic is fuelled by poverty, conflict, migration, and inequality between women and men. And it’s more than simply a health issue. In many parts of the world, it’s one of the biggest obstacles to development. So tackling the disease is central to Oxfam’s work. Our approach is three-pronged:

Campaigning

Oxfam’s campaigning around HIV and AIDS focuses on expanding access to essential medicines and lobbying for increased effectiveness of the Global Fund to fight HIV and AIDS, TB and malaria. Fourteen million people die every year from treatable diseases, many of them unable to afford the essential medicines that might have saved them. Our Make Trade Fair campaign aims to stop international trade rules restricting access to medicines in poor countries – including the drugs that keep HIV and AIDS patients alive.

Learning from our work

As the pandemic evolves, we need to ensure that our approach remains the best one. So that we can learn from our own and others’ experiences, we have established a Global Centre of Learning for HIV and AIDS, based in Pretoria, South Africa, at the hub of the world’s worst affected region. The Centre will play a crucial role in developing our future HIV and AIDS projects.
the right to
be heard

Bolivian women gather at a political rally in La Paz.
The Get Heard Project

Poverty leads to people being disempowered and having no say over decisions affecting their lives. Oxfam’s UK Poverty Programme aims to address this by providing an outlet for poor communities to voice their concerns and hopes.

The Get Heard project is a joint initiative supported by Oxfam, other non-governmental organisations, the European Commission and the UK government. Started in 2003, it aims to ensure the views of people with experience of poverty are fed into the development of the 2006 – 2008 National Action Plan on Social Inclusion. It gives poor people in Britain the opportunity to be heard by decision-makers and to influence policies.

Oxfam has been working with local groups and communities in disadvantaged parts of the country to encourage them to take part in this project, and have their say on issues that directly affect them.

With our partner organisations, we have held a number of local and regional workshops. These meetings have given poor people the opportunity to speak openly about their concerns and needs, and to work together to find solutions and overcome social exclusion.

“I now know for sure what my rights are. And I can tell others about their rights too.” Khatuna Jgerenaia, Inguri budget monitoring group

Budget monitoring in Georgia

With training and support from Oxfam, local people in Georgia are carefully watching how the state budget is spent in their villages. They are making sure that vital funds reach the people and places that need them most. And communities are seeing results already.

In Inguri village, a new kindergarten opened in 2005, thanks to the efforts of the local budget monitoring group. Parents had been demanding one for years, but they didn’t know how to solve the problem.

“Adefter the group was formed, we discussed this with the local governor. He asked for extra money in the village budget, which was used to renovate a building for the kindergarten,” explains Isolda Khalichava, one of the seven group members.

Corruption and a lack of information are a challenge when it comes to speaking up for your rights. Residents in Inguri village didn’t know how their taxes were spent, or how they could apply for extra money for school equipment, road repairs, or sports facilities.

Oxfam has trained groups of citizens in economics and budgetary processes.

“We feel like we have graduated with second degrees,” says Isolda. Her group meets regularly to examine the government budget for the village. If the figures don’t match up, they query them with the village governor.

Cooperation and trust has grown between the local authorities and residents. “We talk to people and ask them what they think should be done.

We act as an information source for the governor,” says Isolda. The group members feel confident to take their needs to village leaders. “Now people know how much money is available and what it is spent on,” says her colleague, Rubin Karchava.
the marginalised Chiquitano community can organise themselves, and identify their own rights and development needs. As their confidence grows they feel more able to address issues of poverty by defending their right to the territory where they live, accessing and controlling their natural resources, and exercising their civil and political rights.

Oxfam partners also organise and run leadership training workshops that aim to empower people by giving them the skills to stand for public office and perhaps be elected as representatives of their communities.

Senator Carlos Causase (above right), who represents people living in Bolivia’s lowlands region, and Justo Seanane (below), Mayor of Concepción and a member of Chiquitano community, both received leadership training provided by our partners before they were elected to office.

Bolivia is the poorest nation in South America and indigenous communities living in the country’s eastern lowlands are among the poorest and most marginalised members of society. Working through our partners, Oxfam was the first international development organisation to support people in this region.

Our partner organisations work alongside other agencies to create the conditions in which people like Jerónima Quiviquiví and her husband Felix Ribera, who live there with their six children, founded the settlement and fought a lengthy battle to reclaim the area as indigenous land.

For a long time Chiquitano people were used as indentured servants in the region, and endured appalling abuse. Although that injustice has now ended, the people of El Regreso still face numerous problems regarding identification and access to basic services.

Oxfam supported them and similar communities by providing help such as legal advice and two-way radios, so they could communicate with others in times of difficulty.

“The El Regreso settlement, located in a vast area of rainforest stretching towards the Brazilian border, is home to a Chiquitano community.

Jerónima Quiviquiví and her husband Félix Ribera, who live there with their six children, founded the settlement and fought a lengthy battle to reclaim the area as indigenous land.

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"I think the voices of the indigenous people are now being heard in Parliament, and it is important that our communities know we are here representing them and working to uphold their rights."

Carlos Causase is a Senator in La Paz, representing the indigenous people living in the lowlands.

“"We are organised and we have representatives to put pressure on the municipalities to act in our interests. If they don’t respond, we get together and decide what to do, including whether to march, protest and make stronger demands.”

Jerónima Quiviquiví (left)
Graffiti in northern Kenya acknowledges the importance of educating women in the fight against inequality and poverty.
We can end violence against women

The campaign
Launched in 2004, the WE CAN campaign challenges deep-seated attitudes and customs that endorse violence and discrimination against girls and women across South Asia. By 2011, the campaign plans to reach 50 million people in Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Nepal, India, Pakistan and Afghanistan. Through high-profile public events and education programmes, communities and individuals will be urged to make the changes needed to enable women to take control of their lives.

Change-makers
To change attitudes and behaviour, the campaign aims to enrol over five million ‘Change-makers’ – people who are willing to change themselves and will then work within their own communities. Each Change-maker will attempt to influence at least 10 people, by spreading the message that violence and discrimination against women and girls are unacceptable.

The Assembly
Under the theme ‘Small actions can make big changes’, the first South Asia Change-maker Assembly took place in Colombo, Sri Lanka, in March 2006. Over 1000 men and women met to learn from and encourage each other. Dance, drama, music, speeches and laughter helped to create a powerful sense of solidarity, strengthening everyone’s determination to change women’s and girls’ lives throughout the region.

“I was married at 13 and was determined that my daughters should have a good education so they wouldn’t suffer the same experience. I support WE CAN because powerful positions in government and society are almost always occupied by men, which is unjust.” Sachi Kumari, Change-maker, Jharkhand, India

“I realised that I had a serious problem at a WE CAN meeting. I have been married 22 years and used to beat my wife regularly. My father used to beat my mother and I unthinkingly adopted his culture of violence. Now I know I was wrong. I have stopped beating my wife. I talk to my neighbours and friends, asking them to stop beating their wives. I have spread this message to 50 families in my community, hoping for change.” Elias Mridha, mechanic, Bangladesh

“I was shocked to find that we have a 60 per cent figure of domestic violence in Sri Lanka. With WE CAN, we want to make people aware that women’s rights are human rights – that a woman is first a human. You can pour so much money into a poor district but it’s like pouring water through a sieve unless you tackle issues related to the family. You heal the family, then you heal society, then you can begin to solve issues related to poverty.” Sugee Kannangara, Oxfam programme officer, Sri Lanka

“Early marriage, divorce, and violence have been part of my life and I don’t want other women to face these problems. We organise sessions to make people aware of the issues, and I visit families. Illiteracy is high so we use posters and cartoon booklets from the Change-maker kits. When a couple says that they’ve made up and now understand each other, I feel optimistic and know I’ve made a positive difference.” Beauty Ara, Change-maker, Bangladesh

“I was married at 13 and was determined that my daughters should have a good education so they wouldn’t suffer the same experience. I support WE CAN because powerful positions in government and society are almost always occupied by men, which is unjust.” Sachi Kumari, Change-maker, Jharkhand, India
The majority of the world’s poor people are women…

... 70% in fact, and gender discrimination is a major cause of poverty. Oxfam is working with communities in West Africa to help them redefine gender roles and encourage the learning, development, and participation of women within society.

Women in Leadership, Sierra Leone
A project to empower women and promote their involvement in politics and civil society is being run by Oxfam in Sierra Leone. The Women in Leadership (WIL) scheme gives expert training to local women’s organisations to help them play a part in rebuilding the country after civil conflict.

Those taking part in workshops are shown how they can improve their group’s lobbying and campaigns work to benefit the lives of women, become more transparent and accountable in their actions, and plan for the greater involvement of women in society.

Women represent over half of the country’s population and Oxfam is seeking to address their poor representation in public life. We are also encouraging them to become advocates for the promotion of women’s participation and empowerment.

The success of the scheme can be seen in those women who underwent WIL training and were subsequently elected in the 2004 local council elections.

Oxfam is working to build on this achievement and to ensure that women in Sierra Leone are rightfully heard. And we’re running similar schemes to encourage women to participate in civil society in places such as the eastern Caribbean, Uganda and Mexico.

"I always had the dream of holding a position of trust in my community. I had the opportunity of attending training on leadership and campaigning, which was useful because it gave me confidence as a woman to compete in the local council elections. The process was challenging because men who saw themselves as leaders could not be easily persuaded to vote for female aspirants. I believe I won the elections because of the training."

Councillor Fatmata Sannoh

Encouraging communities to educate girls, Niger

The education of girls is crucial in the fight against poverty and suffering and we are helping to ensure they get the opportunity to go to school. Oxfam education officers, known locally as animatrices, are working to support and monitor young girls’ education and, in doing so, are helping communities to redefine gender roles.

The animatrices, all of whom are women, work with families to encourage daughters’ learning and development. In rural parts of Africa, families depend on their daughters to help run the household. In Niger, animatrices have made impressive inroads by raising local awareness of the importance of sending young girls to school – and by following up if any of them are absent or facing difficulties.

Our aim is to see girls and women making informed choices about their lives and finding a voice within their families and communities. Awa’s mother, Fadima, is the vice-president of the local parents’ association and is also being supported in her role by animatrice Mariam Moussa.

“Maybe one day Awa will become someone,” she says, “and she will come back to the village and help her family.”
If every country were proportional to its level of poverty, the world would look like this.

Spotted the missing countries yet? If the size of America were based on its poverty, it would be approximately the size of the Isle of Wight. The UK and western Europe have also vanished.

We live in a world full of distortions. Oxfam is working with people like you to reshape it.
The people who make it happen

Oxfam’s local partners

Wherever possible, Oxfam works with local partner organisations to implement our programme. We support hundreds of local partners worldwide, and work with them to monitor effectiveness. Working with partners enables us to learn from local knowledge and expertise, while channelling funds, training and resources to build up organisations in developing countries, so that eventually they can work without Oxfam’s support.

Meet just some of the many members of local organisations working in partnership with Oxfam.

Winnie Deline of the Federation of African Women Educationalists (FAWE), pictured with schoolgirls in Liberia. FAWE is a pan-African organisation dedicated to promoting girls’ education on a continent where millions of girls don’t have access to primary education.

Sathyavani Silva, of the Affected Women’s Forum runs a workshop in eastern Sri Lanka to raise awareness among both women and men of domestic violence in the camps and communities affected by the Tsunami. “It’s very helpful to work with Oxfam,” she says. “Oxfam provides us with training. We’ve expanded lots, and still want more training and to increase our staff.”

Karen Arakalyan is Director of Support to Communities, which grew out of the work of an Oxfam public health team in Armenia. STC implements a community-based health scheme. Members pay a small quarterly fee and receive health care when they need it.

Hawa Rafiou, of partner organisation Aren, signing and counting vouchers ahead of a public distribution as part of Oxfam’s response to the food crisis in Niger. The vouchers are exchangeable for food with local traders.

Our supporters in the UK

Hundreds of thousands of individuals and organisations support Oxfam in an infinite number of ways. We couldn’t do our work without them. Here are just some of the inspiring ways in which people have helped us this year.

Oxfam Shops

I’m 16 and I’ve been volunteering for a year. I love Oxfam’s motive. I’ve been trained so I can sell the wedding dresses. We have mostly brand new, donated by designers, which we sell for a third of the retail price!*

Linda Boakya, volunteer (below)

Individual donors

However big or small their contribution, the support of individual donors is vital to our work. Some of our supporters have gone to extraordinary lengths to help us overcome poverty and suffering. For example, a group of four donors who visited Oxfam’s work in the Shinyanga region of Tanzania were so inspired by the spirit, dignity and determination of everyone they met, they decided to pool their donations to start the Tanzania Fund. So far, the initiative has raised £250,000 that has mainly been used to help women, orphans and young people to set up small businesses by providing loans and business advice.

Campaigns

Jeremy Nelson and baby Esme were just two of the 250,000 Make Poverty History campaigners who marched through the streets of Edinburgh on the eve of the G8 summit in 2005. Oxfam campaigners support our work in numerous ways, from signing petitions and raising vital funds, to lobbying for change and increasing awareness about the issues we work on.

Corporate support

Many companies are helping us in lots of different ways. For example, Bathstore, a bathroom retailer, raised over £50,000 for our emergencies work by paying for one Oxfam toilet for every toilet purchased from their Libra range. And Co-operative Retail encouraged people to recycle their unwanted mobile phones through a promotion in their stores, raising £100,000 for us in the process.

eBay

Through eBay for Charity, sellers can donate a percentage of their sales to certified charities, including Oxfam. Some supporters donate all their profits. Six-year-old Rosalind Webb drew a colourful picture of Pakistan’s earthquake survivors receiving warm clothes from Oxfam (see photo above). She asked her Dad to sell it on eBay, which he did, raising an incredible £540 for us. Oxfam also sells donated items in the eBay marketplace. Oscar nominee Keira Knightley gave us the gown she wore to the 2006 ceremony. It was sold in a ten-day eBay auction, raising an impressive £4,301 for our work.
Where our funds came from, 2005/6

Total Income £310.5m

Trading & Fundraising Net Income £209.4m

Charitable Expenditure £220.8m

Special thanks to all our supporters. In particular we would like to publicly acknowledge the following:

Oxfam acknowledges funding from the Big Lottery Fund of £234,169 for The Million Cisterns Program in Brazil, £32,114 for the Gender and Regeneration Project in the UK Poverty Programme, £63,270 for the Zambieza Education Program in Southern Africa and £13,045 for the Social Inclusion Project in the UK Poverty Programme. Oxfam received funding from the Commonwealth Education Fund (CEF) for £117,441 for support to the Global Campaign for Education in southern Africa and £22,832 for the School Improvement Programme in India. Oxfam also acknowledges funding of £150,000 from The Vodafone Group Foundation for the emergency food crisis in East Africa.


Oxfam is grateful for the generous support of donors around the world including: Oxfam International affiliates and their back offices, the Public Fund, the Data Fund, the Million Cisterns Program, the Big Lottery Fund of £234,169 for The Million Cisterns Program in Brazil, £32,114 for the Gender and Regeneration Project in the UK Poverty Programme, £63,270 for the Zambieza Education Program in Southern Africa and £13,045 for the Social Inclusion Project in the UK Poverty Programme. Oxfam received funding from the Commonwealth Education Fund (CEF) for £117,441 for support to the Global Campaign for Education in southern Africa and £22,832 for the School Improvement Programme in India. Oxfam also acknowledges funding of £150,000 from The Vodafone Group Foundation for the emergency food crisis in East Africa.


Our thanks also for the generous support of donors around the world including: Oxfam America, Oxfam Australia, Oxfam Canada, Oxfam Germany, Oxfam Hong Kong, Oxfam Indonesia, Oxfam Ireland, Oxfam Japan, Oxfam New Zealand, Oxfam (Novib) Netherlands, Oxfam Québec, Oxfam Solidarité.
“Let’s be committed – for life”

“In March 2006, Annie Lennox launched a dramatic new stage of I’m in to help Oxfam continue the fight against poverty. For three weeks, people who joined us had the chance to see their name up in lights, via a giant laser projection on the side of Royal Scottish Academy in Edinburgh.

“2005 saw huge public support for ending global poverty. It’s time to continue that commitment by saying ‘I’m in’ and joining with Oxfam to end poverty and suffering. However, poverty won’t be ended overnight. So if, like me, you want to see it happen, you need to be in it for the long haul.

Poverty – chronic, endemic poverty – means that people’s lives are thwarted; children don’t get access to clean water, to food, to health care, to housing, to clothing, to all the things we take for granted. That’s what poverty means. And I’d like to see a groundswell of human outrage – our outrage. Cooperatively, so much can be done – it isn’t just a question of throwing money at these issues. If we link up, it’s very effective. Millions of people feel this kind of poverty is unacceptable, so let’s get on board and let’s be committed – for life. I don’t feel overwhelmed with the notion that nothing can happen – there’s so much that can be done. So this is a kind of celebration. And I’m in – completely!”

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