



**Oxfam America Hunger
Banquet[®] Event Toolkit:**
Tools for hosting a high-impact event



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Cover photo: In the aftermath of the devastating earthquake in January 2010, Oxfam's reconstruction effort in Haiti includes a range of projects designed to improve rural people's incomes. In Lacedras, Haiti, where these women and their families live, a new sugarcane mill will expand opportunities in a region where most people rely on farming for a living. *Ami Vitale / Oxfam America*

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Dear friends,

Oxfam America is an international relief and development organization that creates lasting solutions to poverty, hunger, and injustice. Together with individuals and local groups in more than 90 countries, Oxfam saves lives, helps people overcome poverty, and fights for social justice.

Oxfam supporters have a long history of working together for change. In 1970, a group of volunteers founded Oxfam America in response to the humanitarian crisis created by the fight for independence in Bangladesh. Then, on the Thursday before Thanksgiving 1974, something quite remarkable happened. Responding to Oxfam's call, 250,000 people nationwide participated in the first Oxfam America Fast for a World Harvest; they fasted for the day or for a meal, raising awareness about hunger and donating their food money to Oxfam. So began a national movement to alleviate hunger and poverty in our world.

Today, when you bring people together at an *Oxfam America Hunger Banquet* event, you're becoming part of this movement. It is not an overstatement to say that your efforts can change lives.

In this toolkit, you'll find a step-by-step planning guide, a script, character tickets, and other resources to help you host a successful event. But please email or call me if you need any help.

I've been working with supporters like you for more than 10 years. Your community has always been a source of inspiration; it is wonderful to be part of a movement to change the world. Thank you for all of your efforts.

Yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Celeste Bettencourt". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Celeste Bettencourt
actfast@oxfamamerica.org
(800) 77-OXFAM

What's an Oxfam America Hunger Banquet® event?

Few experiences bring to life the inequalities in our world more powerfully than an *Oxfam America Hunger Banquet* event. Unique and memorable, the *Oxfam America Hunger Banquet* event allows organizers and participants alike to experience firsthand how our decisions affect others in the world.

Here's how it works: Guests draw tickets at random that assign them each to either a high-, middle-, or low-income tier—based on the latest statistics about the number of people living in poverty. Each income level receives a corresponding meal: The 15 percent in the high-income tier are served a sumptuous meal; the 35 percent in the middle-income section eat a simple meal of rice and beans; and the 50 percent in the low-income tier help themselves to small portions of rice and water.

Guests can also assume characterizations that describe the situation of a specific person at the income level to which they've been assigned (see page 15 for character tickets to print and distribute). Finally, all guests are invited to share their thoughts after the meal and to take action to fight poverty.

After an *Oxfam America Hunger Banquet* event, few participants leave with full stomachs, but all possess a greater understanding of the problems of hunger and poverty and will feel motivated to do something about them.

More resources online

- Enhance your event by screening our new photo slideshow featuring faces and places from the stories in the *Oxfam America Hunger Banquet* script. The slideshow is two minutes long and can be viewed with or without sound. Download or stream it at oxfamamerica.org/hungerbanquet.
- Every fall, thousands of supporters around the country organize *Oxfam America Hunger Banquets* and other awareness-raising events. Join them, get inspired by new ideas, and find more ways to take action online and in your community at oxfamamerica.org/actfast.
- Go to oxfamamerica.org/hungerbanquet to watch *YOU can help fight hunger*, our inspiring short video featuring actress Charlyne Yi with music by Rogue Wave and Ra Ra Riot. Then share the video with friends via email or social networks to generate excitement about your upcoming event.
- Connect with others by adding your *Oxfam America Hunger Banquet* to our online event calendar at oxfamamerica.org/events.

Planning your Oxfam America Hunger Banquet® event

To help make your *Hunger Banquet* event a success, Oxfam has compiled some tips and techniques for planning your event from start to finish. We've included advice gleaned from staff and volunteers who have organized events all over the country.

STEP 1: FIND PEOPLE TO HELP YOU

Recruit volunteers immediately and divide them into three committees:

Publicity committee (PUB)

This group handles publicity and the media. The purpose of their publicity efforts is to get people to attend your *Oxfam America Hunger Banquet* event.

Your publicity should reflect the nature of the *Oxfam America Hunger Banquet* event, including the themes of social justice and education. Sometimes organizers keep their publicity purposefully vague to intrigue prospective guests and to add an element of surprise.

Organizing an *Oxfam America Hunger Banquet* event is a great opportunity to take your message about poverty and hunger issues to the general public through the media—newspaper, radio, and television. By contacting local media, you may receive coverage that will reach far beyond those who attend your *Oxfam America Hunger Banquet* event.

Logistics committee (LOG)

This team's responsibilities are threefold: fund-raising, soliciting donations of items needed for the event, and recruiting additional volunteers to prepare for and staff the event. This committee's ultimate goal is to ensure that the *Oxfam America Hunger Banquet* event runs as smoothly as possible.

Many organizations run *Oxfam America Hunger Banquet* events as fund raisers for Oxfam, so they try to spend as little as possible. Whether your event is a fund raiser or not, you will be working within a budget, so keeping expenses down will be important. Your budget will probably include allowances for food, publicity, a sound system, decorations, and possibly the cost of a venue and/or speaker(s).

It is a good idea to make up your own list before planning your fund-raising strategy. Once you have a list, you can begin brainstorming for ways to limit expenditures. Food can be your biggest expense—though through donations, it can often cost nothing at all! If you have a dining hall or cafeteria food service, begin by asking them to donate food. Or ask for donations from local restaurants and grocery stores.

Let potential donors know that they will receive publicity through your printed program, through press releases, and at the *Oxfam America Hunger Banquet* event itself. Seek out community stores, businesses, institutions, and individuals able to assist you.

When talking with potential sponsors, emphasize the positive nature of your *Oxfam America Hunger Banquet* event. Many businesses and organizations make it their policy to support social justice or public service efforts as a means of helping the community and maintaining a positive public image.

Tip: When seeking outside support, be sure to write a professional letter first and then follow up immediately thereafter with a call or a visit.

Planning committee (PLA)

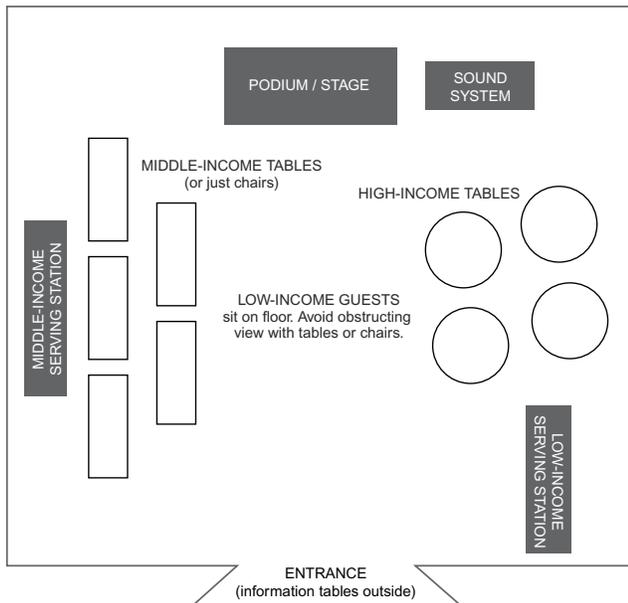
The planning committee oversees the structure and design of the program and makes sure that your *Oxfam America Hunger Banquet* event effectively conveys its message. This committee also plans the agenda and content of the program, including how much time is allocated to each part. It arranges for a master of ceremonies (MC), speakers, and VIP guests.

Create a dramatic, interactive event that enables participants to experience the extent of global poverty, the degree of inequality in the world, and the interconnectedness of the three income tiers. Our suggestions:

- Take into account the experiences, values, and environment of your specific audience, and plan an event that will resonate with them.
- Consider distributing information to your audience before the event. Will your audience members have a better reaction if they are well-informed? Or will the element of surprise be more effective?
- Ask local ROTC or student volunteers to dress up as guards for your high-income guests.
- As people line up for food, announce that the females must go to the end of the line so they will be served last. This will generate a lively discussion during the sharing period!
- If you want your event to have a lasting impact, people should leave not only with a greater understanding of poverty, but also knowing what they can specifically do to help. See our sample event script (page 8) for ideas.

STEP 2: GET ORGANIZED

This suggested sequence of events will assist you as you complete the tasks necessary to prepare for your *Oxfam America Hunger Banquet* event.



What's on the menu?

A typical *Oxfam America Hunger Banquet* event includes three different meals.

- High-income (15 percent of guests): pasta, sauce, salad, and juice
- Middle-income (35 percent of guests): rice, beans, and water
- Low-income (50 percent of guests): rice and water

Potential speakers

- Returned Peace Corps volunteers
- Professors
- Teachers
- University presidents
- Local elected officials
- Community leaders
- Directors of area food banks and shelters
- Leaders of faith groups
- Local celebrities or media personalities

Oxfam America Hunger Banquet® event timeline

Five to eight weeks before

- Set a date for the event. (LOG)
- Reserve a venue. (LOG)
- Select an MC and a speaker. (PLA)
- Create a list of local celebrities to invite. (PLA)
- Seek out food donations. (LOG)
- Print invitations, fliers. (PUB)

Four weeks before

- Send out invitations. (PUB)
- Post your event online. (PUB)
- Prepare press release. (PUB)
- Determine seating arrangements. (PLA)
- Decide on decorations. (PLA)
- Order free materials at oxfamamerica.org/hungerbanquet. (PLA)

Three weeks before

- Publicize. (PUB)
- Design menus. (PUB)
- Purchase or make decorations. (PLA)
- Put up posters. (PUB)
- Send out press releases and make follow-up calls. (PUB)
- Check all final details. (LOG)
- Review the suggested script. (PLA)
- Make follow-up calls to media. (PUB)

Three days before

- Make tickets for all income groups. (LOG)
- Buy food, pick up donated food, or review plans with chef. (LOG)
- Check on table settings for each group. (LOG)
- Make last-minute press calls. (PUB)

The big day

- Continue publicity. (PUB)
- Set up and decorate room. (PLA)
- Set up information table. (LOG)
- Orient volunteers. (LOG)
- Coordinate food for each income. (LOG)
- Greet guests and make sure everyone has a ticket. (PLA)
- Begin! (PLA)

STEP 3: RUN YOUR EVENT

The big day is here! To ensure that everything goes smoothly, assign the tasks at hand to four people or groups:

Master of ceremonies

This is the most demanding of all the responsibilities. The MC needs to have a commanding presence to hold the audience's attention for the duration of the *Oxfam America Hunger Banquet* event. It falls on the MC's shoulders to get the audience to participate in the sharing session, one of the most important parts of the event. Along with being an effective public speaker, the MC should have a good grasp of the *Oxfam America Hunger Banquet* concept and objectives. Use the sample *Oxfam America Hunger Banquet* event script on pages 8–12, or write your own. The MC should be briefed on what food will be provided and how it will be served, as he or she will be expected to give directions concerning the food.

Volunteer coordinator(s)

The volunteer coordinator assigns people to specific tasks and leads the orientation for all volunteers before the event. Some volunteers will put up the decorations, set up the room, and perhaps prepare the food. Others will greet the guests, have them add their names to the sign-in sheet and pick their tickets, serve the food, and clean up once the *Oxfam America Hunger Banquet* event is over.

The volunteers need to be fully versed in their roles. Volunteers not only serve a practical purpose, but they are also the first people to interact with participants as they arrive, so they set the tone for the banquet to come.

Sound system manager

The sound system is an essential feature of the *Oxfam America Hunger Banquet* event to keep the audience involved. An effective sound system that can be heard over the crowd, particularly while people are finding their way to their appointed areas, will help your MC maintain control of the event. Look into the quality of the acoustics when you select the site for your *Oxfam America Hunger Banquet* event, and arrange for at least two microphones (one for the MC and at least one cordless microphone for the audience during the sharing period).

VIP guest relations

Your VIP guest list may include celebrities, speakers, and sponsors.

Celebrities are invited to draw other people to your *Oxfam America Hunger Banquet* event, provide insight into social justice issues, or both.

Speakers need to be briefed on where to sit, as well as when they will speak during the program and for how long. They should be introduced to the MC and other speakers.

Sponsors, whether individuals or heads of corporations, should be shown how their support contributed to the event, and they should be thanked, both in person and by the MC as part of the program.

Tips

- Do not allow the event to go over the allotted time (ideally 90 minutes).
- Have the MC walk around in the audience and be a part of the banquet.
- To get participants to play their roles, have the MC and volunteers emphasize that the banquet is theater.
- Emphasize that the *Oxfam America Hunger Banquet* event is only meant to demonstrate the unequal distribution of global resources.
- If people in the low-income group do not eat their food, point this out. In reality, picky eating is not a reasonable choice for hungry people.
- Use audience comments to illustrate the point of the *Oxfam America Hunger Banquet* event.
- Consider ways to reduce the amount of waste from your event. Serve water from pitchers instead of plastic bottles, recycle silverware, and compost uneaten food.
- Do you need assistance in planning your banquet? Looking for more ideas about how you can make a difference? Let Oxfam help. Go to oxfamamerica.org/actfast or email us at actfast@oxfamamerica.org.

To order or download free materials for your event—including posters, stickers, and more—go to oxfamamerica.org/hungerbanquet.

SUPPLEMENTAL RESOURCES

Sample Oxfam America Hunger Banquet® event schedule

5:00 P.M.

5:00–6:00

Volunteers arrive.
Volunteer coordinator assigns volunteers to specific tasks.
Volunteers set up and decorate site, designating an area for sign-ins and information.

6:00–6:15

Volunteers greet guests and have them draw tickets.
Volunteers encourage guests to sign in and take information.
Volunteers direct guests to their income groups.

6:15–6:20

Host gives welcome address.
Host acknowledges sponsors and people who made the event possible.

6:20–6:35

MC reads *Oxfam America Hunger Banquet* event script and welcomes guests.

6:35–6:50

Attendees eat meal.
Play music or slideshow (optional).

6:50–7:00

MC asks for a moment of silence to reflect on the *Oxfam America Hunger Banquet* event.
MC leads sharing period.

7:15–7:30

MC concludes and invites attendees to take action.

7:30 P.M.

Sample Oxfam America Hunger Banquet® event script

Introduction

Welcome to the *Oxfam America Hunger Banquet*. We are here today because more than 2.5 billion people live in poverty.

II [PAUSE]

Over 925 million people suffer from chronic hunger.

II [PAUSE]

A child dies from hunger or a preventable disease every four seconds. That's 22,000 children a day.

II [PAUSE]

You may think hunger is about too many people and too little food. That is not the case. Our rich and bountiful planet produces enough food to feed every woman, man, and child on earth.

Hunger is about power. Its roots lie in inequalities in access to resources. The results are illiteracy, poverty, war, and the inability of families to grow or buy food.

Hunger affects everyone, in countries rich and poor. But some of us face greater challenges than others.

About 80 percent of the world's hungry people live in rural areas, where most work as farmers, fishers, herders, and laborers. Every day, looming constraints on resources—like fertile land and water—make it more difficult for food producers, especially women, to feed their families. Global shifts in weather are adding to the problem, making it harder for farmers to sow and harvest their crops.

Today, you join Oxfam in the fight against world hunger.

Oxfam believes that human rights are not contingent on our country of origin, our gender, our ethnicity, our sexual orientation, or the money we have or need. Rather, human rights are fundamental and nonnegotiable.

Over more than 40 years of Oxfam America's work, millions of dollars have been raised to support human rights and an end to poverty. Hundreds of thousands of people have participated in *Oxfam America Hunger Banquet* events or skipped meals to acknowledge the plight of the world's hungry.

While efforts like yours have helped to decrease the proportion of the world's population living in hunger, millions of people still don't have access to the food they need. Global food prices hit record highs in recent years, and remain volatile. For many, food that is within reach one day may not be affordable the next.

Your presence here today shows that you are concerned. You want to learn more. You want to make a difference.

Since 1970, Oxfam America has been making a difference. We continue to promote change "from the bottom up" through hundreds of grassroots organizations around the world. Oxfam doesn't impose solutions. We believe that people have the power, the right, and the understanding to create solutions for their own communities and to control their own futures.

Let me give you two examples.

Planting trees for tomorrow in Ethiopia

As Abarash Dongoro (Ah-bah-RAHSH Don-GORE-oh) walks to her home in Ethiopia's Siraro District, she pauses to scan the hillside ahead. What does she see? A plantation, she says, full of trees that will help not only her two children but the whole community.

It's a sight worth a second look—200,000 seedlings taking root on the once-barren hills, part of an emergency relief program launched by Oxfam and its local partner organization. The program aims to protect people from recurring droughts, which bring hardship and hunger to farmers trying to grow food and to herders searching for pasture for their animals.

More than 1,600 families planted the trees in pits that help to capture rainwater. In exchange for their work, they received a payment each month to put toward food or invest in other essentials.

It's an approach that not only helps people buy food today, but also makes their community more resilient. As the trees mature, they will regenerate the soil, encourage new growth, and provide food like avocados and bananas. Local women organized groups to care for the trees and ensure that the trees are sustainably harvested, making this a resource that will last for generations to come.

Building a sweeter future in rural Haiti

After the devastating earthquake struck near Port-au-Prince, Haiti, in January 2010, thousands of survivors fled the ruins of the capital to seek shelter with family and friends in the countryside. Many rural Haitian families saw their households double or even triple in size—straining their resources to the breaking point.

Today, Oxfam's reconstruction effort in Haiti includes a range of projects to improve the incomes of people in rural areas. In Lacedras, Haiti, for example, a new sugarcane mill will expand opportunities in a region where most people rely on farming for a living.

Oxfam also supports training farmers in new skills, like beekeeping, that will improve their earning power. For women farmers like Elcida Estinat (El-SEE-dah Ess-TEE-nah), who are caring for young relatives displaced by the quake, this knowledge is especially important.

Equipped with a modern hive, Elcida could potentially harvest six times more honey than she would using traditional methods. And every gallon of honey she harvests can fetch as much as \$24 at the market. Converted into school fees, that money will help buy a brighter future. As someone struggling to earn a living, Elcida wants more for her kids. “I know the value of a good education,” she says.

Oxfam also supports other groups, including the following:

- Indigenous people in Central and South America working to overcome discrimination;
- Rice farmers in East Asia teaching an innovative growing method, which yields more rice using fewer resources; and
- Women participating in savings groups and starting their own small businesses in West Africa and Central America.

Altogether, as part of the international confederation Oxfam, we work in more than 90 countries. While we are committed to our community-based work, we recognize that there are also larger barriers that keep people from thriving. Our policy and advocacy work allows us to challenge the national and international laws and policies that reinforce poverty. We also educate the US public on hunger and poverty issues, which is what this *Oxfam America Hunger Banquet* is all about.

This event is a metaphor for how food and other resources are inequitably distributed in the world. As such, an *Oxfam America Hunger Banquet* event can only touch upon the issues. We cannot recreate the many complex ways poverty manifests itself. We will not have time to go into all the problems associated with lack of access to health care, education, and employment opportunities, and the realities of the day-to-day struggle for survival.

The one thing I would like you to remember is this: Everyone on earth has the same basic needs; it is only our circumstances—where we live and the culture into which we are born—that differ. Some of us are born into relative prosperity and security, while millions—through no choice of our own—are born into poverty.

As each of us walked in the door here today, we drew our lot at random. Look around, and you can see that equality and balance don't exist here.

Please note: No one section of this room represents a single country. While the US is one of the wealthiest countries on earth, almost 44 million Americans live in poverty. Nearly 20 percent of children in the US—or about one in every five

American children—live below the poverty line. Stark inequalities prevail everywhere.

Now I would like to introduce you to the three segments of this world. But remember—it's too easy to measure this world purely in economic terms. It is really about each person's ability to achieve a sense of security and to access resources.

[MOVE NEAR HIGH-INCOME GROUP]

If you are sitting over here, you represent the 15 percent of the world's population with a per capita income of \$12,000 or more per year. You are fortunate enough to be able to afford a nutritious daily diet. Since many of you exceed your daily requirement of calories, you are likely to face health problems such as heart disease and diabetes.

But most of you have access to the best medical care in the world. It's a given that your children will attend school; the only uncertainty is how many years they will study after high school. Access to credit? You turn down more offers than you can count. You and your family live in a comfortable and secure home. You probably own at least one car and two televisions. When you take your annual vacation, you don't worry about your job disappearing in your absence. You have access to virtually everything you need and the security to enjoy it.

[MOVE NEAR MIDDLE-INCOME GROUP]

If you are sitting here, you represent roughly 35 percent of the world's population. You earn between \$987 and \$11,999 a year. The levels of access and security you enjoy vary greatly. You live on the edge. For many, it would take losing only one harvest to drought or a serious illness to throw you into poverty.

You probably own no land and may work as a day laborer, a job that pays a paltry amount—but it's better than nothing. Your small income allows for some use of electricity and a few years of schooling for your children—especially if they are boys. Alternatively, you may have left your family to go work in the city. You hope that the money you earn from your less-than-minimum-wage job as domestic help or sweatshop worker will eventually allow you to move back home and make a better life for your family.

Let me put a name to a person in this middle-income group: Pablo Fajardo (PAHB-low Fah-HAR-doh), from El Carmen, Ecuador. Pablo's parents could only afford to send him to school through eighth grade, so as a teenager he took a job at an oil company. There, Pablo witnessed the unfair treatment of many workers, as well as grave destruction of the environment. It was hard for him not to speak up about what he saw, but he knew that if he made trouble, he might lose his job, and his family was relying on him.



[MOVE NEAR LOW-INCOME GROUP]

If you are sitting on the floor, you represent the majority of the world's population—roughly 50 percent. Your average income is less than \$986 a year—about \$2.70 a day—although many of you earn much less.

Every day is a struggle to meet your family's basic needs. Finding food, water, and shelter can consume your entire day. For many of you women, it would not be uncommon to have to walk five to 10 miles every day to get water, spend several more hours working in the fields, and of course, take care of the children.

Many of you are frequently hungry. It is quite likely that you don't get the minimum number of calories your hardworking life requires. Many of you are homeless or living in structures so flimsy that a hard rain or strong wind could cause a major catastrophe.

Even though education is the single most powerful weapon against poverty, school is a luxury few of your children will ever experience. Most girls don't even bother to dream about school.

Adequate health care is out of the question. For most of you, early death is all too familiar, with many mothers expecting to lose one or two children before they turn 5.

If you are lucky enough to work, you are probably a tenant farmer who must give your landowner 75 percent of your harvest. Or you may get occasional work as a day laborer at a large plantation growing bananas, sugar, or coffee for export. You reap few benefits from these crops; you'd prefer to grow food your children could eat.

Let me introduce a real person from this group: Sarina (SAH-ree-nah), a young mother of two from Padma, Bangladesh. Sarina and her husband, a fisherman, built their small wooden house on a narrow strip of shore between a local river and the Bay of Bengal. They knew that this was a risky place to make their home, but it was the only land the struggling family could afford.

Then a major cyclone struck. Sarina managed to save one of their three cows, but she and her husband lost nearly everything else during the storm, including their house and the fishing boat that they relied on to earn a living.

[GESTURES TO THE WHOLE ROOM]

Take a moment to look around you now. Eighty-five percent of you are not seated at the table. Eighty-five percent of you do not share in the bounty of our planet.

Move up/down scenarios

Now, I have some news that will affect several of you.

As we've said, no one can choose the circumstances into which they are born. Some people have the good fortune to change their lives for the better, but for most, the circumstances of life are determined by factors outside of their control.



[ASK TWO PEOPLE FROM MIDDLE-INCOME GROUP TO STAND.]

Please meet Dianke Danfakha (Dee-AHN-kay Dan-FAH-kah) and Kerene Keita (Keh-RAY-neh KAY-tah), farmers from a small village in eastern Senegal. Dianke, you earned a good income from the 29 acres of land where you grew groundnuts and other crops. Your family had worked this land for generations, thanks to land tenure granted by the local chief.

Last year, though, the government gave this land to a Canadian company intending to build a gold mine. Because you—like many rural Africans—did not have a land title, you received no compensation.

Kerene, you were able to keep your smaller farm nearby. But you suffered a serious setback to your income when one of your cows and two calves died after drinking water polluted by the chemicals used at the mine.

With your future uncertain, I invite both of you to make a place for yourselves in the low-income group.



[ASK ANY SIX PEOPLE FROM LOW-INCOME GROUP TO STAND.]

Meet Maria Zelaya (Mah-REE-ah Zeh-LIE-ah), Érida Cerros (AY-lee-dah SAY-ros), and four other members of an Oxfam-supported community savings and lending group in Caserio Los Alas, El Salvador.

All of you are seamstresses by trade. So when you heard about the government's new education plan calling for thousands of school uniforms, you decided to transform your savings group into a sewing workshop. You successfully won a bid to make uniforms for eight schools in your district.

Members rotate different sewing tasks, and on average, each of you earns between \$200 and \$250 a month. Maria, this new income means that you now have the resources to pay for your son to go to college. Érida, your husband is a seasonal farmworker, and he had been thinking about emigrating to find more work. Thanks to this new opportunity, your family can stay together.

I invite the six of you to move to the middle-income group. But before you go ...

? [ASK FOUR PEOPLE FROM MIDDLE-INCOME GROUP TO STAND.]

Let me introduce Siriaco Mejia (See-ree-AH-koh May-HEE-ah), his wife, and his two teenage sons. Siriaco, you planted corn and beans as usual this year, carefully tending your field high on the slopes of Baja Verapaz, Guatemala. But when the rainy season came and went and very little rain fell, you started to worry.

You did everything you could short of making it rain, even fertilizing your field twice. But the harvest still failed. Most years, you can grow about 2,200 pounds of corn. This year, you got about a tenth of that.

Because your harvest is so much smaller this year, and because you spent so much money trying to fertilize your field, selling your crops won't be enough to provide for your family.

In order to earn money to buy the food you need to survive, your family will have to migrate temporarily to work as pickers on a coffee plantation. As you prepare to leave your home, the four of you can now take your places in the low-income group.

? [PEOPLE EXCHANGE PLACES AND SIT. NOW TURN TO HIGH-INCOME GROUP AND ASK ANY WOMAN TO STAND.]

Meet Melinda Williams, an employee at a US marketing firm who recently gave birth to her first child. Melinda, after graduating from college and paying off your student loans, you and your husband worked extra hours so you could put money aside for the future. Thanks to your savings and generous health care benefits, you were able to cut your working hours to part time to care for your daughter.

Recently, you started making her baby food yourself out of organic ingredients rather than buying processed baby food at the store. While it costs a little more, that way you know exactly what's in her food and can make sure it's healthy and nutritious.

Now, please remain standing while I introduce you to another mom whom you might not ordinarily get a chance to meet.

[ASK THREE PEOPLE IN LOW-INCOME GROUP TO STAND.]

This is Seng Phon (SENG PON), the widowed mother of a 10-year-old son and a 12-year-old daughter. Seng, you usually earn money for your family during central Cambodia's rice planting season. For each day spent in the rice paddies, you earn 3,000 riel, or about 73 cents.

Two years ago, one day's wages bought two kilograms of rice—enough to feed you and your kids for one day, with a little extra money left over. Today, though, the same amount now buys only one kilogram of rice, or just half of your family's daily food supply. If prices remain high, you'll have to pull your daughter out of school so she can work. For now, you sometimes find yourself making do with less on your plate, just so your kids can get enough to eat.

Seng, you and your children will each receive only a half portion of rice today.

? [ASK EVERYONE TO TAKE A SEAT. THEN TURN TO ADDRESS ENTIRE ROOM.]

These are just a few snapshots of life as it plays out each day around the globe. Now, we invite you to eat. Those of you in the high-income group will be served a nutritious meal [MAY MENTION MEAL]. Those in the middle-income group may proceed to the buffet tables, where rice and beans [IF THIS IS THE CASE] are available. People in the low-income group seated on the floor, help yourselves to rice and water. [YOU CAN ALSO SERVE RICE IN LARGE BOWLS PLACED ON THE FLOOR AND HAVE PEOPLE SERVE EACH OTHER.] Bon appétit!

[AFTER PEOPLE FINISH EATING, MC ADDRESSES THE ROOM AGAIN.]

Please join me in a moment of silence to reflect on our experience here today. [MOMENT OF SILENCE]

[SHARING PERIOD: MC WALKS AMONG AUDIENCE MEMBERS, ASKING HOW PEOPLE FEEL ABOUT BEING IN THE GROUP THEY ARE IN.]

Suggested discussion questions

Young audiences

- Do you think it's fair that the world is divided this way? Why or why not?
- Do you think that the people who got the big meal should help the others? Why or why not?
- Do you think people in the low-income group are there because they don't work hard? Or why do you think the people in the low-income group are there?

Older audiences

- Would anyone like to share any of the thoughts they have on what has taken place here?
- Has anyone witnessed poverty in the US or elsewhere that they would like to share?
- Does anyone have any ideas on how our personal choices as Americans affect the world's unequal distribution of resources?
- What might we all do to bring about a fairer distribution of resources?

If people are only focused on the dynamics of the banquet itself, remind participants that this is a simulation, not reality for most of us. Challenge the audience to discuss what this meal represents in the real world and ask what can be done to change things for the better.

Conclusion

There is still a lot of work to be done, yet there is also hope.

All of the stories you've heard today are those of real people.

[OPTIONAL: SCREEN OXFAM'S FREE SLIDESHOW (SEE PAGE 3), SAYING: "Let's take a look at some of the faces and places behind the stories we've just heard."]

Let me update you on some of the steps they've taken to change their situations.

At age 17, Pablo Fajardo decided to voice his concerns to his supervisor at the oil company. Soon after speaking up, he was fired—but the experience inspired him to become a lawyer and defend the rights of his fellow workers. He spent many years working odd jobs during the day and studying for

his degree at night. In 2003, he went to work for the Amazon Defense Front, an Oxfam partner and a tireless defender of communities and the environment. In 2008, Pablo's efforts to protect Ecuador's rural people and land earned him the Goldman Environmental Prize, a prestigious award honoring grassroots heroes worldwide.

As for Sarina from Bangladesh, her family decided to sell their cow and buy another, smaller piece of land near their former home. That choice enabled them to qualify for a disaster preparedness program led by Oxfam's local partner. Today, they are settled in one of 400 storm-proof houses built for the area's most vulnerable residents. "It is much better than our old house," says Sarina.

And in Senegal, Dianke and Kerene attended a training session run by Oxfam's partner La Lumière, an environmental and human rights organization that forms village-level groups to monitor problems related to mining. "We learned how to protect the water, to protect our animals, and we learned about our rights. We watch for rights violations," Dianke says.

Oxfam invites you to join Dianke, Pablo, Sarina, and many others in our fight against hunger and poverty.

By attending this *Oxfam America Hunger Banquet*, you have deepened your awareness of world hunger and poverty. The test is how you put this knowledge to use. Our *Hunger Banquet* ends here, but this is just the beginning for each of you. As I look around the room today, I can see that this experience has had an impact on many of you. If what you've learned or experienced has stirred something in you, take action now. Today. Before you leave.

As we conclude, make sure to add your name to our sign-up sheet. When you add your name, you'll join Oxfam's online community, and you will also receive regular updates on issues affecting millions around the world. You can get as involved as you like. The important thing is just getting involved—joining a community of people who are working together for change.

I want to leave you with the words of someone whom many have found inspiring, in large part because—despite what seemed insurmountable obstacles—he was able to bring about changes that few believed possible. I quote from a speech he made to a group of people like you at an event organized by Oxfam some years ago. I am honored to close with his words:

"Massive poverty and obscene inequality...rank alongside slavery and apartheid as social evils. In this new century, millions of people...remain imprisoned, enslaved, and in chains. They are trapped in the prison of poverty. It is time to set them free.

"Like slavery and apartheid, poverty is not natural. It is man-made and it can be overcome.... Overcoming poverty is not a gesture of charity. It is an act of justice. It is the protection of a fundamental human right, the right to dignity and a decent life.

"We thank you for coming here today. Sometimes it falls upon a generation to be great. You can be that great generation. Let your greatness blossom.

"Of course the task will not be easy. But not to do this would be a crime against humanity, against which I ask all humanity now to rise up." [PAUSE]

The speaker was Nelson Mandela.

Together, we can change the world. Rise up. Join Oxfam today and thank you for coming.

SUPPLEMENTAL RESOURCES

Sample event planning guide for 100 people

This planning guide is intended to augment our tips on planning an *Oxfam America Hunger Banquet* event. This list addresses many particulars at the actual event; see page 5 for the recommended organization of the event in the weeks leading up to it.

The following is based on 100 people attending the event. Please adjust as appropriate to your anticipated audience size. One hundred people translates into 15 in the high-income group, 35 in the middle-income group, and 50 in the low-income group. Base your planning on the minimum number of attendees that you can reasonably expect. Although this approach may seem counterintuitive, it will help you to avoid setting too many high-income seats and skewing the ratio of high- to lower-income participants. If your estimate proves to be too low, simply invite additional attendees to join the low-income group on the floor. For example, you may hope to have 150 people attend the banquet but feel certain that you'll get at least 100. Plan the setup, tickets, and food for 100. Everyone over and above 100 can sit on the floor and share with the others in the low-income section.

Food

The 50 people in the low-income group typically receive about one-half cup of rice in a small bowl or paper plate. Often a large tray of rice is sufficient for this number of people. Water and cups are provided but usually no fork or spoon.

The 35 people in the middle-income group usually receive about one-half cup of rice and a spoonful of beans in a small bowl or plate. They also get a fork or spoon, a napkin, water, and a cup. Cups are often filled with water ahead of time and placed on a buffet table close to where this group is served so they can take their water as they go through the line.

The 15 people in the high-income group are served a meal often consisting of pasta, salad, bread, and juice. As this meal can be virtually anything other than rice and beans, it is easiest to ask the dining service or restaurant that is donating or preparing the food to give you a tray with 15 portions of whatever they are making that day, as well as a bowl of salad and some rolls.

Be careful to emphasize the importance of ordering less rather than more food for this event. People often don't eat the small quantities given them, and having leftover food at an event that focuses on hunger can be very upsetting and frustrating.

In addition, when asking for food donations, keep in mind that dining services, restaurants, and others are far more likely to make a donation when you describe it as a pan of rice rather than dinner for 50! So be sure to emphasize how little you are actually asking for. A tray of pasta, a bowl of salad, or a bag of bread sounds so much easier and less costly than numerous dinners.

Food checklist

Low-income group

- 50 servings (i.e., one-half to three-quarters of a cup) of rice in a tray with one or two serving spoons
- 50 small paper plates or bowls
- 50 cups (do not offer plastic water bottles)
- Water in a bucket with a ladle or in pitchers

Middle-income group

- 35 servings (i.e., one-half to three-quarters of a cup) of rice and beans in trays with serving spoons
- 35 small paper plates or bowls
- 35 forks or spoons
- 35 napkins
- 35 cups
- Water in pitchers or another container

High-income group

- 15 dinner-size portions of pasta, salad, and rolls (or whatever is offered)
- 15 nice napkins
- 15 regular plates, glasses, forks, knives, and spoons
- Table linens for the tables
- Juice or soda for 15

Tips

Asking for donations to feed dozens—even hundreds—of people may seem daunting, but with just a little coordination, you can get all your food donated. Remember: You aren't asking for full meals for each person.

- Always approach your regular food service provider. They are often willing to supply most, if not all, of the food you will need.
- Ask local community restaurants to help by providing the rice, rice and beans, a large salad, etc.
- Spread the menu out among the organizers, asking each one to cook some rice or buy some rolls or juice, etc.

Program

- **Keep to 90 minutes or less**, as it's difficult to hold people's attention when they're seated on the floor for too long. Let people know either through a program or at the welcome what to expect in terms of speakers, video, etc. This will help you to avoid having people leave during or immediately following the meal portion of the banquet.
- **Be sure that any speakers have all the information they need**, including what the event is about; what their role is; and where they need to be, at what time, and for how long.
- **The role of MC is central to the success of the event** and must be assigned to someone who can assume this responsibility, including spending time preparing for the role by familiarizing him- or herself with the script and understanding the intended outcome of the event. The MC will often lead the all-important sharing portion of the event and must be able to create an atmosphere that encourages people to speak up.
- **Do a run-through on all audiovisual equipment**, including the DVD player, microphones, LCD projector, and sound system—to make sure that everything is in working order and that a knowledgeable person is taking responsibility for operating all. Give the AV person a script that indicates the various points at which each piece of equipment will be initiated and for how long.
- **Oxfam America Hunger Banquet® character tickets** should be printed in three distinct colors in the appropriate quantities (i.e., 15 high-income tickets, 35 middle-income tickets, and 50 low-income tickets—see page 15 for printable tickets). Distribute the tickets in at least two boxes, bags, or baskets.
- **Recruit eight to 10 volunteers for the event, and have them arrive 60–90 minutes beforehand**, depending on the amount of setup required. Develop a list of volunteer roles, instruct all volunteers on what is about to happen and the goals of the event, and assign roles to volunteers. Give specific instructions regarding the significance and timing of each task. For example, tell servers that their cue to begin serving food is when the MC says, “You are now invited to eat the way the world eats.”

Keep it going. After your event is over, go to oxfamamerica.org/actfast to join our community of volunteers and supporters. You'll find ways to connect with others, hear about events in your area, and take action to support Oxfam all year round.

Sample volunteer checklist

- Appoint one person to handle AV equipment.
- Appoint one person to greet and accompany the keynote speaker or other special guests. Make sure the greeter knows who these people are and what their roles will be during the banquet.
- Appoint two to four people to distribute tickets at the door (determined by number of entrances to the room).
- Appoint at least one person to staff the sign-in and information table.
- Appoint two to four people to answer questions and guide people to the area determined by their ticket. They should also ask people to shut off cell phones and refrain from speaking when they enter the room.

These same people or others can be given the following additional tasks:

- You'll need two people to serve and wait on the high-income group. This role may include actually putting the food on the plates in advance of the start of the banquet. Note: It can be very distracting to have people preparing plates of food during the opening of the banquet. But this should be weighed against the need to keep the food warm. It all depends on the particulars of the venue and the way the food is provided.
- You'll need two people to serve rice and beans from a buffet table to the 35 people in the middle-income group.
- You'll need two people to deliver the tray of rice with a serving spoon, plates/bowls, and the water and cups to the 50 people in the low-income group. Participants will have to determine for themselves how to split the rice from the communal bowl.
- You'll need four to five people to distribute materials, including pens, either before the event or at a specific time if you are organizing any type of action such as letter writing, postcard signing, or inviting people to join Oxfam's on-line community. (Again, it is often distracting to have people passing out materials while someone is speaking, so you may wish to set out materials throughout the room before the event begins.)
- The same four to five people who distribute the action materials can circulate through the room and stand by the exits to collect the sign-up sheets and petitions. Mail all of these materials back to Oxfam (see the contact information on page 22).
- Afterward, all stay to help clean up.

SUPPLEMENTAL RESOURCES

Character tickets

To make your Oxfam America *Hunger Banquet* event more interesting for your guests, we have developed Character Tickets. Print them out onto colored paper and have guests draw the Character Tickets randomly as they arrive. Use a different color for each income group.

HIGH-INCOME

My name is Ranjani.

I am a 40-year-old woman living in India with my husband and two children. I am a doctor and my husband is a businessman. We live in a very large house with many servants. My children attend one of India's best private schools. They study very hard and hope to attain entrance into universities in the United States.



HIGH-INCOME

My name is Shang.

I am a 35-year-old Chinese woman living in the United States. Ever since I was a young girl I have always wanted to come to America where there is political freedom and economic opportunity. In China I was fortunate enough to learn English fairly well, and when I came to the United States I got a job as a clerk in a bank. In my spare time I volunteer with a nonprofit organization that helps Chinese immigrants get settled here.



HIGH-INCOME

I am Simcha.

I own my own postcard business, selling to tourists who come to see the ancient city of Jerusalem. I stand on the sidewalk and sell my cards from 9 a.m. until midnight, when the last sightseers return to their hotels. When the economy in the United States and Europe is weak, tourism declines and I don't sell as much. I have had some difficult years, but I have always done well enough to feed myself. I am fortunate to own my own business.



HIGH-INCOME

My name is Korasi.

Although I was a successful auto mechanic in Slovenia, I am not able to practice that profession in France. Since I came here three years ago, I have been working as a chef in an Italian restaurant. I commute over an hour each way to work from my small room in the suburbs, where rent is more affordable. I have a minimal amount of furniture and a small kitchen, but it is a good life for me, as a single man.



HIGH-INCOME

My name is Claude.

I live in Botswana, heading the Ministry of Finance. For a few years, I worked at the World Bank in Washington, DC, but I came back home to put my skills to use to improve my country's economy. I don't make as much as I did when I was working at the World Bank, but compared to many of my fellow citizens, I lead a very good and prosperous life.



HIGH-INCOME

I am José.

I am from Mexico. I have gone to private schools all my life and both my parents are professionals. When I was in high school, my class did volunteer work in the shantytowns surrounding my city. Now I am in college studying economics. I often think back on my volunteer time. When I finish school, I want to find a way to help people in the shantytowns.



HIGH-INCOME

My name is John.

My parents emigrated from Italy and raised my brothers and me in a tenement in Chicago. I worked my way through college and law school, taking on a variety of odd jobs, and then started my own law practice. I am now able not only to live in a fine home and travel extensively, but I've also been able to "give back" by paying for college for high school graduates with exceptional promise who come from disadvantaged backgrounds.



MIDDLE-INCOME

My name is Dully.

I live with my family in India. Before my mother joined a women's group, we had no money to buy medicine when my brothers and I would get sick. My mother and her friends talked about problems with their husbands—they wouldn't help out at home, they would spend all their money on themselves, and sometimes they would beat them. But the women were very brave, and they formed the women's group to raise and sell fish. They earn their own income and the village men's group cooperates with them. Sometimes, my father even helps cook dinner.



MIDDLE-INCOME

I am Jorge.

I come from the highlands of Guatemala where there is still a lot of violence even though the civil war has officially ended. When the military suspected that communists lived in my village, they burned many homes, including mine. I fled to the city, but living conditions there were terrible. I slept in huts made of cardboard and rusted car doors or anything I could find. A few years ago, six of my neighbors and I received a loan to start a small carpentry workshop which has been very successful. Today we have more than 30 employees, and we are self-sufficient.



MIDDLE-INCOME

My name is Lourdes.

I live in Brazil in a town just outside of Sao Paulo and I have five young children. My husband left me when I became pregnant with my fifth child, leaving me to raise the children and take care of the house by myself. I took a job in a textile factory where I work long hours. I make just enough money to feed my children, but I don't get to spend as much time with them as I would like.



MIDDLE-INCOME

I am Bareded Bekele.

I am a farmer and I live in southern Ethiopia with my family. I never had an ox until I received a loan of 330 birr (\$160) from a local group funded by Oxfam America. Before, it took 7-8 days to prepare my land for planting using hand tools. Now, when I team up with a neighbor who also has an ox, I can cultivate the same amount of land in 4-5 hours. This year I will plant more land; I expect to grow enough food to feed my family and have a surplus so I can pay the first installment on my loan.



MIDDLE-INCOME

My Christian name is Lawrence.

I live in Hong Kong in a public housing project with my parents and eight brothers and sisters. We live in a 12' X 12' room, and we have a refrigerator and a hot plate on a small adjoining balcony. I am very fortunate to have received a scholarship to study law. I look forward to the day when I am earning a good salary and can move into an apartment of my own.



MIDDLE-INCOME

My name is Romeo.

I left Guatemala when I was 13 to find farm work. Two years later I moved to the United States because I heard there was more opportunity there. But working in the fields of Florida is very difficult. I have to pick 125 buckets of tomatoes, or nearly two tons, to make \$50 a day. My shelter is very expensive and I have no healthcare or benefits others in the United States have.



MIDDLE-INCOME

My name is Mercedes.

I am 20 years old and I live with my parents and siblings in a small town outside of Quito, Ecuador. My father is a street vendor who sells a variety of things, including jewelry and clothing, to tourists. I help my father and sometimes I go off on my own to sell in another town. When lots of tourists come, we make good money, but when tourism is low, life is very difficult.



MIDDLE-INCOME

My name is Teresa.

I live in Mozambique. Despite legal challenges and a 17-year civil war, I now own my first piece of land. I was able to do this with the help of the General Union of Cooperatives, an Oxfam America project partner.



MIDDLE-INCOME

My name is Siu.



I am 50 years old. I live in Vietnam where I have been a fisherman my whole life. I have always worked very hard. I get up before the sun rises, load my small boat and set off as daylight breaks. I am usually able to catch large amounts of fish to sell to villagers at the local fish market. I make just enough money to support my small family.

MIDDLE-INCOME

My name is Sophea.



I am 21 years old. I left Saigon to live with a sponsor in North America, but my dreams of a new life quickly turned into a nightmare as I realized that my sponsor had no intention of taking me in. Alone in a strange country, I got caught up with the wrong crowd. I began selling drugs because I needed money. I was arrested and sent to jail for six months. I learned English in prison and when I got out I went to a local shelter for counseling. I now have a full-time job, but I still have to sleep in a night shelter. Someday, I hope to have my own apartment.

MIDDLE-INCOME

My name is Juan.



I live in the Dominican Republic. I own a small sugar plantation that has been in my family for many years. Sugar farming is back-breaking work, but luckily I have hired hands. We are better off than many of my fellow countrymen.

MIDDLE-INCOME

My name is Francisco.



I am a 40-year-old man from Mexico. I own a small business selling flowers. I went to school through fifth grade and then dropped out because my family could not afford it. One of my childhood friends who was able to go to college joined the flower industry and began to grow his own flowers. He helped me start my business and I help him sell his flowers. Although we help each other out, life is difficult because our companies are small and there is a lot of competition out there.

MIDDLE-INCOME

My name is Andreis.



I am a farmer in Elandskloof, South Africa. Previously apartheid laws forced everyone in my community to leave their homes. With the help of the Surplus People's Project, we were able to reclaim our land and start rebuilding our community. We are dealing with many difficult challenges, but we look forward to a better future.

MIDDLE-INCOME

My name is Susan.



My family and I live in Campbell County, Tennessee. I never had the opportunity to attend high school and until recently was unable to read, get my license or apply for a job with any real future. Through the Mountain Women's Exchange, an Oxfam funded organization, I received education and job training. I now work as a home health aid, earning enough to support my family and for the first time I feel I have a new future.

LOW-INCOME

My name is Ismatullah.



I am 16-years old and work as a shopkeeper in the village of Qadis in Afghanistan. Prospects for my three-month old kiosk doesn't look good. Of the 300 shops that used to be open in the town, only twenty are still in business. It is hard to see how I'm going to sell the packs of pasta and bars of Raana soap.

LOW-INCOME

I am Sana,



a 40-year-old Bangladeshi woman. In this rural area, conservative religious laws and cultural prejudices limit opportunities for women. A few years ago, I joined a women's group. They helped us start small businesses, like rice-husking, brick making, raising dairy cows. They also worked with our community to promote women's rights. Now my children are much healthier and my husband helps me out at home.

LOW-INCOME

My name is Zabaar Gul.



I live in a cave in war-torn Afghanistan with my two sons and two daughters. Like over 100 families, I left our village and failed field and have made my home in a cave near the Oxfam food distribution center. I left my Kuzak village a year ago as we had nothing to eat, but life in the caves has been just as bleak. My husband left to earn money in Iran. He broke his arm and is now stuck there, unable to work and unable to return. My son Naseer now heads the family but he has been sick for two years and aches from head to foot. He coughs blood and doesn't have the strength to leave the cave to find firewood. I am worried that he might have TB. His angular body looks much older than 13. My seven-year-old daughter, Zebba goes to a near-by village to beg.

I am not sure how long we can last without food.

LOW-INCOME

I am Liang.



I live in northern Vietnam where the average income in the countryside is less than \$200 per year. I have no land, so I work as a day laborer and I earn a small income. We have barely enough to eat and I am able to provide only a rudimentary education for my son. I need my daughter to help me out at home.

LOW-INCOME

My name is Jean.



I belong to an Oxfam-funded peasant organization that works with poor farmers in Haiti. I am learning how to take care of the soil so it doesn't get washed away and learning how to grow better crops. It is not easy because we have very poor soil and few tools to work with, and fertilizer is too expensive. But I am grateful to be getting some help. Perhaps things will be better for my children.

LOW-INCOME

I am Pancho,



a young Filipino fisherman from a long line of fisherman. My family has always made a decent living in the fishing business, but my income has gone down as the fish stock has been overexploited. My family now gets barely enough to eat.

LOW-INCOME

I am Ravi.



I belong to an indigenous group in Gujarat, in western India. Like most people in this area, I work for the government, as a picker. I am guaranteed protected status by the government but the reality is that these laws are not being enforced and discrimination is rampant. Last year, I attended a rally to press the government for higher wages and benefits. We were successful and my wages were doubled.

LOW-INCOME

My name is Deng.



I live in Vietnam on a very small farm. During times of drought I must survive on loans from local moneylenders who charge 30 to 40 percent interest per month.

LOW-INCOME

I am Enrique,

a 40-year-old man. When the civil war ended in my home country, Guatemala, I returned with nearly 130 other families after living in Mexican refugee camps for many years. We received very little government assistance, but we got some help from an Oxfam-funded group to buy some cows so our children could have milk. It has been difficult, but we are determined to make a new start.



LOW-INCOME

My name is Ngongo.

I am a 30-year-old Senegalese woman. I have been seeking a divorce from my husband who beats me. Laws and customs discriminate against women in my country, so it is very hard to find work to support a family. I am getting help from APROFES, a local group supported by Oxfam America, which gives women credit to start small businesses and promotes fair treatment of women.



LOW-INCOME

My name is Luisa.

I live in Cashiriari, Peru. I am a member of the Machiguenga people who have hunted and fished around the Urubamba River for thousands of years. The land around my community is being exploited by an oil company, which has cut down trees and polluted the water. I live off of the river and the forest, and I cannot survive if they are destroyed.



LOW-INCOME

I am Maria.

I live in Zimbabwe, where it is very arid. I can remember many years when the rains did not come and our crops withered and died. Recently, a local group received a grant from Oxfam America to build a dam on the river so we will have clean water year-round. I look forward to the day when I can have confidence that our crops will grow and my family will eat well.



LOW-INCOME

I am Julia.

My family and I live in Nicaragua, where I am part of the 70 percent of the population that is unable to meet basic human needs. I make only \$430 per year, and my land, which I use to raise cattle and grow crops, now lays idle due to government policies which have decreased small farmers' access to resources necessary to work the land. My family now is barely surviving.



LOW-INCOME

I am Michelle,

a 50-year-old Haitian woman. My livelihood depends on sheep and goat rearing, which provides just enough for my family to survive. There are no jobs here, so my husband must seek work elsewhere; he is away most of the time. Even so, he makes very little money and my children and I miss him.



LOW-INCOME

My name is Chang.

I am a 50-year-old Cambodian man. I have had to move many times because of the civil war that has been going on in my country for years and years. I live on property that I have no official title to. The land around my house is riddled with land mines that prevent me from farming it.



LOW-INCOME

I am Julio,

a small farmer in El Salvador. For many years I grew coffee and sold it to a wealthy middleman who paid me low prices and then sold it for a handsome profit. Recently I joined a cooperative. The cooperative buys our beans at fair prices, processes them and sells them to buyers in the United States and Europe. By working together, we are not being exploited and we are doing much better.



LOW-INCOME

I am Anna Pedro.



I live in Mozambique. My village has suffered from both man-made and natural disasters: the recently ended civil war in my country and a cholera epidemic that has killed many people. My neighbors and I joined together to deal with the cholera problem by building a fence around a new well drilled by the new Mozambican provincial water service.

LOW-INCOME

My name is Apurba.



Being a girl in Bangladesh means that I cannot go to school; only my brother is allowed to go to school. I must stay at home and cook and help my mother take care of my brother. If my mother or I go out of the house, we cannot go without my father or my brother. I would give anything to be able to go to school.

LOW-INCOME

I am Elizabeth.



Years ago, my father grew corn, yams and mung beans on our land in the Philippines. I always thought that one day my children would do the same. Now our land is a part of a large sugar plantation, and we cut cane for 35 cents a day. My young son works in the field, but he is very weak because he doesn't get enough to eat. I just pray he'll survive.

LOW-INCOME

My name is Farida.



Our forests in India have nearly disappeared, and our people have become nomadic, wandering the earth in search of water. Our men are always on the lookout for jobs, which are scarce. Sometimes they must travel far to find them. The Oxfam America program here really helped us by building reservoirs that keep the rain water, so we can stay. We are now growing vegetables. You can't imagine what that means to us women, and to our community.

LOW-INCOME

My name is Lutfar.



I live on the coast of Bangladesh with my family. We often have floods and sometimes we have cyclones. One year thousands of people were killed by a tidal wave. After that, Oxfam America funded the construction of a cyclone shelter built by the Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee. The next time a cyclone hits, we have a safe place to go. For now, we use the cyclone shelter as a school and a community gathering place.

LOW-INCOME

I am Miguel



from the Dominican Republic. I am a sugar farmer working on a small plantation. Every day I work for 11 hours. I make very little money but the work is steady. My dream is to someday own my own farm, but I never seem to be able to save any money for my future.

LOW-INCOME

My name is Pierre.



I used to have rows of trees bordering my rented hillside plot in Haiti. Even when the land was parched, the trees helped stop the rains from washing away the topsoil. It is the dry season now; nothing will grow and my family has no food. Some of our neighbors have been trying to survive on "cookies" of sugar mixed with sandy soil. I'll have to cut the last trees from my land to make charcoal which I can sell for the price of a few day's food and save a bit to cook with. I don't know what I'll do for food after that.

LOW-INCOME

My name is Fauzia.



I live in Bangladesh. I work very hard in the fields, sometimes for as many as 14 hours a day and then I have to cook dinner for my husband and my son. I joined a revolving loan group and received a small loan to buy a cow. Now I have milk for my son and I sell the rest. It's only a little, but my son is healthier and soon I will be able to take out another loan.

LOW-INCOME

I am Cipriano.



I live in the Peruvian Andes where the climate is very harsh. At an altitude of 14,000 feet, the air is thin, the sun is strong and the wind is very powerful. I have five llamas and I grow potatoes on a terraced, hillside plot. My llamas are much healthier now because I got help from the Chuyma Aru Association, an Oxfam America partner. They gave me better tools to dig irrigation channels to water the pasture for my llamas. They also taught me traditional ways to make fabric from the llamas' wool and to sew my own clothes.

LOW-INCOME

My name is Ramon.



I live in the highlands of Bolivia. For years, we indigenous people were made to feel inferior to other people in Bolivia, but now, thanks to groups like ISALP, an Oxfam America partner, we are reviving our traditional culture and building pride in our heritage. ISALP is also helping us build irrigation channels so we can grow more food and our llamas and alpacas, which we rely on for food and wool, will be healthier.

LOW-INCOME

I am Rebecca.



Originally, my husband and children and I lived in Sudan. We grew our own food and everyone in our village had enough to eat. When the civil war forced us to flee to Ethiopia, we lived in a refugee camp. Our youngest baby died along the way. The camp fell apart when the Ethiopian government collapsed, so we went back to Sudan. Somehow we were able to avoid the bombs and survive by eating wild plants. Finally we came across a camp for displaced people. Life is not easy here, but it is safe. I pray for the day when the war is over so we can return home and live in peace.

LOW-INCOME

My name is Miguel.



I am a farmworker in Florida. I typically work 14 hours in the fields with only a half-hour break for below minimum wage. I live in company-owned housing, paying for a place to live that does not even have a stove or a bed. I am organizing with other farmworkers to try to improve work conditions and increase my meager salary but I fear losing my job since my employer does not want farmworkers to unionize.

LOW-INCOME

My name is Adis.



I live in the Rift Valley in Ethiopia. My husband died and I have seven children to care for. Because of the drought in this area it is very difficult to get water and food. My children are constantly ill. Recently I sold my last three goats. I hope things get better because I have nothing left to sell.

LOW-INCOME

My name is Roberto.



I am a 40-year-old Colombian man and I came to America because of the political oppression in my native country. When I came, I spoke very little English, and I had lost all of my important papers when I was forced to flee on foot. Someone on the street told me to come to Boston because of the great economic opportunities. Through a local shelter, I have been able to receive food, medical care and ESL (English as a Second Language) courses; all of these have helped me regain my strength and the will to live after years of living in poverty. I still do not have work, but every day I know I'm getting closer.

Contact Oxfam America

Got a good story to tell about your *Oxfam America Hunger Banquet*?
Have questions?

Email

actfast@oxfamamerica.org

Online

oxfamamerica.org/actfast

Mail

Oxfam America
Attention: ACT FAST
226 Causeway Street, 5th Floor
Boston, MA 02114-2206

Phone

(800) 77-OXFAM
or (617) 728-2573

Take action

There are two simple but critical steps that you can take to foster a global community and maximize the impact of your event:

1. On page 23, you'll find a "Tell us about your event" form. Please fill this out and send it back to us. We love to hear from you!
2. On page 24, you will find the "Get involved" sign-up sheet. All you have to do is make photocopies of this form and place them at the entrance/exit of your event. Encourage people to sign up and join Oxfam's community of concerned global citizens.

If you fill out both these forms and send them back to us, we'll send you a 100 percent organic cotton Oxfam T-shirt as thanks!

