

# activist news

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The monthly newsletter for Oxfam activists  
June 2012

## Earth calling Rio: A recipe for sustainable development?

As the Rio+20 Sustainable Development Conference happens later this month (20-22 June), campaigners in the UK and around the world are pressing politicians to take seriously the need to move to the next level on sustainable development.

When Deputy Prime Minister Nick Clegg and Environment Minister Caroline Spelman head off to Rio, we want them to have heard loud and clear that we can't afford to fall back on the processes started twenty years ago. A fairer world is about sustainable development and a sustainable food production system, not just environmental protection. And this means investing in supporting the millions of small scale farmers who produce so much of the world's food. And who, if supported properly, could feed so many more of the world's nearly a billion hungry people.

If you are helping to get people to take our Rio action on or offline, or if you are joining up with a local Stop Climate Chaos event [www.stopclimatechaos.org/rio-connection](http://www.stopclimatechaos.org/rio-connection), thank you! Our action cards (produced in partnership with the Co-op) will be handed in to Nick Clegg on 13 June before he departs for Rio (and a new version of the action will be available for the remainder of the year).

Our mini-guide to campaigning on Rio and beyond <http://oxf.am/Rio20actionguide> explains how you can campaign on sustainability issues; see also the "how to" article on page 4 of this Activist News on linking with the wider food movement.

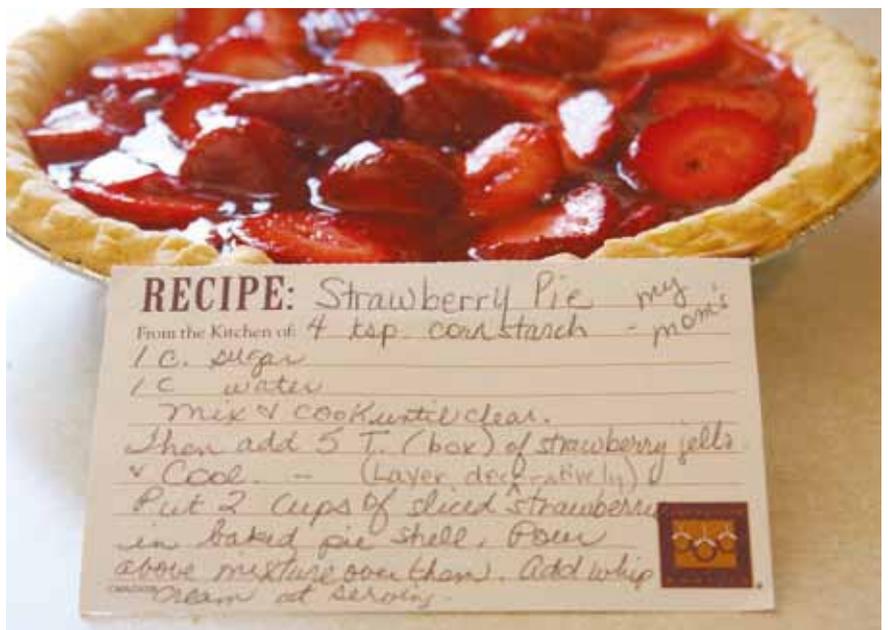


Photo: Carol VanHook/Flickr

### You might also like to know about:

A great Stop Climate Chaos animation explaining just how far we have come on sustainability in the last 20 years, and how important it is that Rio isn't a step backwards

[www.stopclimatechaos.org/rio-connection](http://www.stopclimatechaos.org/rio-connection)

This great video message from a young Oxfam activist Lauren Brown hoping Rio can help set humanity on the right path

<http://datewithhistory.com/en/vote/#!/media/qyqkri>

## News in brief

### May Activist News

Some copies of Activist News may not have been printed properly last month – many apologies if you didn't get a complete copy. Please ask your staff contact if you would like a replacement.

### Oxfam activist tweeting from Rio

Oxford-based activist Chris Garrard will be joining a youth delegation to Rio – and will be tweeting and blogging about his experiences from early June. If you're on Twitter, why not follow him, and help share his perceptions of what it's like to be part of crowd pushing leaders for a sustainable future. Chris is also a keen musician – listen out for his "Rio soundscapes"! @TheGarrard

### Rio Connection

You can check online to see if a "Rio Connection" event has been planned near you this summer: [www.stopclimatechaos.org/rio-connection](http://www.stopclimatechaos.org/rio-connection) to help show your MP/MSP/AM the local support for a sustainable future.

### Robin Hood Training

Robin Hood is offering training on how maintain momentum for the campaign and to deepen engagement with supporters.

It's about getting skilled up, building networks and motivating others to get involved, and how to link the Robin Hood tax to the issues you already care about. We know a better world is possible – this is how we pay for it.

Register now for London on 16 June here – <http://robinhoodtraining.eventbrite.co.uk>

Register now for Manchester on 23 June here – <http://robinhoodtrainingmanch.eventbrite.co.uk>

## Tomato jam, anyone?

**London-based campaigners will be at Spitalfields City Farm on 17 June from 2pm to 5pm for a 'stitch in' and some tasty tomato jam sandwiches! There will be live music, sweet treats, and crafts and stitching to keep their fingers busy.**

Campaigners will be putting their craft skills to work by decorating a jar of our tangy tomato jam. And why tomato jam, you may ask? Well, tomato jam has a story to tell - a story of community survival and people power. It's the story of Christine, a farmer in Kenya who makes and sells tomato jam to support her family. Those who can get along to Spitalfields will find out how they, like Christine, can play a part in giving local communities control over the way their food is produced. The event is also on Facebook.



We included a link to some "craftivism" in last month's Activist News. It's a great way to put your own interests and hobbies to work, expressing your beliefs and doing what you love doing at the same time. If you're interested in running your own tomato jam-style event, resources (including a recipe!) are available from your staff contact. And check out the other ideas for talking about food justice on page 4.

## Oxfam Festival Volunteer Training

**You may have heard that Oxfam goes to some of the biggest music festivals over the summer, and that over a hundred volunteer campaigners get involved to help raise awareness among festival goers. But maybe you didn't know that even before we go onsite, we get these campaigners together for a lovely bit of training and we've just come back from the third and final training day in Sheffield.**

This summer, we're taking the GROW campaign back to festivals. From last year, we've learned that what people really want to know is: "What can I do?". So instead of focusing on the problems, we're showcasing some ways of "doing food differently". To get everyone thinking about what a fair food system could look like, we asked each person to bring a little story of inspiration that would get festival goers excited.

These stories of what communities are doing here, and across the world, to make food fairer really came alive at the training. From growing your own tomatoes in your living room, to a community kitchen that serves up leftovers, to a community in Havana, Cuba that makes use of every bit of green to plant some vegetables, everyone brought a different and inspiring way of how small groups of people are not accepting the way we produce food at the moment, and are starting the change.

We're creating a booklet from these stories and sharing them with festival goers. So if you see us, come and get inspired, or share what you've seen that inspires you to do food differently. The booklet will also be available for local groups to share on stalls (hopefully available toward the end of June).



## Campaigners keep going bananas

When the phrase “bananas against the arms trade” appears on websites and newsletters, you know something is up! Last month, we shared a few of the imaginative ways that campaigners are pushing for an Arms Trade Treaty. In the run-up to the UN conference in July, we’re hearing of events from all around the country. Co-Chair of the Warwick Oxfam student group Pete McNally writes:

This month Warwick Oxfam-Outreach joined forces with Amnesty to tell Warwick students all about the ATT. Since it’s easier to trade in guns than in bananas, we had a creative session making giant-cardboard-bananas which we then put all over campus in the run up to our day of action. On the day of action, we donned our banana outfits and got campaigning! We told loads of people about the campaign and got a lot of signatures for our petition. We were



helped out by a group called 'Warwick ActorVists' who staged battles (with the use of bananas) throughout the day, and each one ended with them holding up

signs saying "This might look funny...but the arms trade isn't". All in all it was a really successful event, and we got a lot of people talking about the ATT.

## Birth rights making waves

**Birth Rights exhibitions are popping up all over the country, from shops, libraries, hospitals and theatres. The exhibition was also on display at an event held in Sutton Coldfields 'Good Hope' Hospital, with local MP and Secretary for State for International Development Andrew Mitchell invited to come along. He gave a speech along with other speakers talking about maternal health, and spent some time looking at the exhibition.**

Along with the exhibitions, campaigners have been asking the public to send their MPs a card, asking them to write to Andrew Mitchell, pressing him to increase the UK aid budget to 0.7% of national income, and for our aid money to support maternal health.

These action cards have sparked off a wave of letters from MPs (over 110 of them so far), covering a wide range of topics on maternal health, showing that

people are really engaging with the issues and complications around supplying good maternal healthcare. Your exhibitions have clearly been getting the message across, and Andrew Mitchell himself called it 'an amazing campaign'.

They are getting booked out quickly, so if you want to hold your own, please do get in touch with your local Oxfam staff member.

## Bristol gorillas believe in birth rights too

Holly Speed from the Bristol Oxfam Group writes for Activist News

On Saturday 21 April, Oxfam t-shirts were stuffed to bursting as the Bristol campaigns group took to the streets posing as heavily pregnant ladies to campaign on birthrights in Ghana! Bumps were created by blowing up “world change starts here” balloons to the desired stage of pregnancy and squeezed under tops to draw attention to maternal health! The group enjoyed a successful day's campaigning and received a very positive response from members of the public. Many postcards were willingly filled in and sent off to MPs, covering a total of 22 constituencies! The “expectant mothers” even managed

to engage a couple of gorillas who, although not a species famed for their political engagement, upon hearing the excellent work being done thanks to UK aid, were surprisingly dexterous and only too happy to write to their MPs and support the cause! The 'pregnant' bellies also sparked much media interest, including an interview on BBC local radio, giving a welcome platform to highlight the importance of international aid.

The event was followed by a month long birthrights exhibition held at the SouthBank Club in conjunction with the Bristol Festival of Photography to bring the campaign to the attention of yet more Bristolians.



# How to: Tell the story of a food justice

**When you join any campaign, you take the first step along a journey. The more people we can reach out to and connect with, the faster we will reach our destination together. Where are you in your Grow campaign journey? What fires you up the most in achieving food justice or that you have a particular knowledge or skills on?**

With such an ambitious, far reaching campaign, it's sometimes difficult to map out the next stage. We had been planning to launch another action around freezing land grabs in July, but this is now being delayed until September. You have told us that the people who you talk to about GROW want more practical, positive ways to take action. So, that's what we want to focus on together next.

## How can we do that?

There are a lot of inspirational communities of people across the world, who are already leading the way in taking practical action to promote and share ideas on how to enable everyone to have enough to eat. They aren't your traditional heroes dressed in masks and capes, or on a football field. But surely it's for us to decide who we respect?

- Groups like Foodcycle who are using waste food to create nutritious meals <http://foodcycle.org.uk>
- Designers who are creating simple energy efficient solutions like cooking bags from old mattresses to reduce stove use
- Communities eating more vegetarian meals which needs less land to produce than meat and dairy
- Campaigners who are speaking out for small scale farmers all over the world and showing world leaders that we need to invest in them.

It's about incredible people like the members of the Garstang Oxfam group who are planning a six day walk along 'The Fair Trade Way' in August this year. This is a walk to share and connect with even more groups of people to keep moving forwards the fact that fair trade should be at the heart of our food system.

Thank you for joining us on this journey – together we can ensure that these hidden food heroes are given the support and encouragement they need to keep building a fairer food system. If you have some time to share your skills and ideas in feeding back and developing some of the activities and resources around this please do get in touch:

[nsansom@oxfam.org.uk](mailto:nsansom@oxfam.org.uk)

## Some ways you might want to link with others

- Try linking GROW to local fair trade activity, as before
- Creative projects like making tomato jam (see page 2) – or whatever you love doing.
- Campaigning about GROW at Farmers' markets and other local food venues
- Gardening your thing? Then share your crops – and the messages behind them! See our GROW action guide <http://oxf.am/GROWactionguide> for ideas
- Foraging for wild food – look out for this project in autumn.



Bruce Crowther (founding member of Garstang Oxfam Group) and Pushpanath Krishnamurthy (Climate change campaigner) getting ready for their Fair Trade walk.

Please send us your letters, opinions and articles. Activist News is a forum for you to share your projects, events, creativity and successes with each other. The next publication deadline is 15 June. Your staff contacts are:

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# Activist calendar

Month	What's happening?
<b>June</b>	<p><b>11-17 June – Oxfam Water Week</b> (Scotland) – activity in schools  <a href="http://www.oxfam.org.uk/waterweek">www.oxfam.org.uk/waterweek</a></p> <p><b>16-22 June – Stop Climate Chaos ‘Rio Connection’</b>                      Local lobbying of MPs to help influence the UK government’s position on sustainable development at Rio+20: <a href="http://www.stopclimatechaos.org/rio-connection">www.stopclimatechaos.org/rio-connection</a></p> <p><b>20-22 June – ‘Rio+20’ UN Conference on Sustainable Development</b>  <a href="http://www.oxfam.org.uk/rio20">www.oxfam.org.uk/rio20</a></p> <p><b>Festival Campaigning starts</b>                      If you would like to get involved and be a festival campaigner visit  <a href="http://www.oxfam.org.uk/get-involved/festivals/campaigners">www.oxfam.org.uk/get-involved/festivals/campaigners</a></p>
<b>July</b>	<p><b>2-27 July – UN ‘Diplomatic Conference’, New York</b>                      International negotiations on an Arms Trade Treaty <a href="http://www.oxfam.org.uk/att">www.oxfam.org.uk/att</a></p> <p><b>2-6 July – Oxfam Water Week</b> (England and Wales) – activity in schools  <a href="http://www.oxfam.org.uk/waterweek">www.oxfam.org.uk/waterweek</a></p> <p><b>Festival Campaigning continues</b></p>
<b>August/ September</b>	<b>Festival Campaigning continues</b>
<b>October</b>	<p><b>16-25 October – GROW Week</b>                      Raising awareness of the need for a new food system, during the week of World Poverty Day (16 October) and World Food Day (17 October)</p> <p><b>UN ‘First Committee’ meeting</b>                      Further negotiations on a global Arms Trade Treaty</p>
<b>November/ December</b>	<p><b>26 Nov-6 Dec – UN Conference of Parties (COP)</b>                      Climate negotiations in Qatar</p>

## If you do two things this month:

- 1 If you haven't already done so, take and share our sustainable food action in the run-up to Rio+20: [www.oxfam.org.uk/rio20](http://www.oxfam.org.uk/rio20)
- 2 Collect signatures petitioning for an Arms Trade Treaty: [www.oxfam.org.uk/controlarms](http://www.oxfam.org.uk/controlarms)

## Resources

Most are available to download or you can order from your local staff contact: [www.oxfam.org.uk/campaigntools](http://www.oxfam.org.uk/campaigntools)

### Be Humankind – Banners and tablecloths

Green banners and blue tablecloths available on loan.

### Big Small Talk

Oxfam supporter toolkit

### GROW campaign materials – please order from your local activism contacts:

\*NEW\* “good food stories” booklet

Rio+20 action guide

Rio+20 action card

Rio+20 bookmark

GROW guide – How to do everything GROW

Grow posters with tear-off slips

Land Grabber hats

‘Keep Off’ placards

Police-style land grab tape – to cordon off areas you are land grabbing

Stop Land Grabs leaflets – to make the public aware of what you are doing

Land grabs guide – ‘How to’ campaign on Land grabs

Pop-ups

Banners

T-shirts

Stickers and badges

Leaflet

### Birth Rights

DVD booklet – all you need to know about Birth Rights in one book

Posters to advertise your exhibition

Exhibition

Please ask your local staff contact to book your exhibition and visit

[www.oxfam.org.uk/birthrights](http://www.oxfam.org.uk/birthrights) to view the images

### Sisters on the Planet – resources that highlight how women across the globe are coping with climate change:

DVD and booklet

DVD request cards (to hand out on stalls)

### Arms Trade Treaty – coming soon

Action Pack – providing an overview of the campaign and how to take action

Parliamentary briefing – a briefing to leave with MPs

Banners/stickers/placards

### How to guides

How to set up a new group or society

How to plan a campaign

How to promote your campaign

How to gain public support

How to influence the political process

How to spread your message in the media

How to campaign using video

How to campaign using blogs

How to build an effective local network

### Resources for schools

Visit [www.oxfam.org.uk/education](http://www.oxfam.org.uk/education) for ideas, resources and support.

Contact your local Youth and Schools campaigner, invite an Oxfam speaker into your school, and download our magazine for teachers, *The Big Picture*.

### Resources for young campaigners

We have an online space for young people to find out what others are doing to tackle poverty, with support for putting campaigning ideas into action, and information on events going on around the country and how to get involved: [www.oxfamblogs.org/youth](http://www.oxfamblogs.org/youth)

### Policy papers and reports

Downloadable from [www.oxfam.org.uk/resources/policy](http://www.oxfam.org.uk/resources/policy)

### Programme learning

Much of Oxfam’s reputation comes from our experience of working with partners and local people, and capturing and spreading the knowledge gained by having programmes in over 70 countries. This wealth of knowledge is being shared with others on the Oxfam website – visit [www.oxfam.org.uk/resources/learning](http://www.oxfam.org.uk/resources/learning)

### \*NEW\*

#### Be Outraged: There are alternatives

An international group of economists and social scientists argue in this book that austerity is bad economics, bad arithmetic, and ignores the lessons of history. They are outraged at the narrow range of austerity policies which are bringing so many people around the world to their knees, especially in Europe. ‘Be Outraged’ argues that austerity measures and cutbacks are reducing growth and worsening poverty and that there are alternatives – for Britain, Europe and all countries that currently imagine that government cutbacks are the only way out of debt. Read the full report here:

<http://policy-practice.oxfam.org.uk/publications/be-outraged-there-are-alternatives-224184>

### \*NEW\*

#### The Devil is in the Detail: The importance of comprehensive and legally binding criteria for arms transfers

According to new figures, more than \$2.2bn worth of arms and ammunition have been imported since 2000 to countries operating under arms embargoes. This figure shows the extent to which states have been flagrantly flouting the 26 UN, regional or multilateral arms embargoes in force during this period. Oxfam is calling on the international community to put an end to decades of irresponsible arms deals which devastate people’s lives by agreeing a set of legally binding laws when diplomats meet to draw up a new Arms Trade Treaty in July 2012. Read the full report here:

<http://policy-practice.oxfam.org.uk/publications/the-devil-is-in-the-detail-the-importance-of-comprehensive-and-legally-binding-221514>

### \*NEW\*

#### Stop a Bullet, Stop a War: Why ammunition must be included in the Arms Trade Treaty

Guns are useless without bullets. An Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) that does not control ammunition will not achieve its purposes. Ammunition is bigger business than weapons, with twelve billion bullets produced each year – nearly two bullets for every person in the world. The global trade in ammunition for small arms and light weapons is worth more than the trade in firearms and light weapons themselves: an estimated \$4.3bn a year. An ATT that does not cover ammunition will fail to achieve what it has set out to do – that is, to help prevent human suffering, armed conflict, and serious violations of international humanitarian law and human rights. Several countries are arguing that ammunition should be excluded from the ATT. This would be a colossal mistake. There are already several ways to track ammunition transfers. Inclusion in the ATT would significantly strengthen these mechanisms and the resolve to implement them. Failure would undermine what best practice already exists. Read the full report here:

<http://policy-practice.oxfam.org.uk/publications/stop-a-bullet-stop-a-war-why-ammunition-must-be-included-in-the-arms-trade-trea-226711>