

How to fix the System.

An Activist's Guide to Oxfam's
new food justice campaign – **GROW.**

GROW



Oxfam

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Introducing GROW

Oxfam's new campaign to fix the System

Around the world today, nearly one billion people don't have enough to eat.

That's not simply because of drought. Or famine. Or a bad harvest. It's because the system's bust.

The current ways of producing food and consuming resources are no longer feasible.

A whole host of interlinked factors are stopping nearly one billion more people worldwide from having enough to eat every day. Factors like deep imbalances in the control of resources. Extreme weather. Rising prices. Failing harvests.

The world is at a turning point. And it's time to change the big picture. That's why Oxfam has launched GROW, our most ambitious campaign ever.

It's time to fix the system. A system which is organised by vested interests and which is failing the rest of us.

To meet humankind's needs and take the pressure off the planet, we need to grow more fairly and sustainably, and to choose co-operation over division.

And to make this vision come alive, we need to build a truly global movement of people, joining with others right across

the world to speak out for 'food justice'. Oxfam activists and community groups are an essential part of building this movement here in the UK.

This action guide gives you a summary of Oxfam's analysis and aims, and some ideas for taking action over the next year and beyond, to help you play your part in this new movement. As always, it is the concerned citizens of this planet who will make change happen. So thank you for taking part in this most ambitious campaign!

The Oxfam Activism Team
May 2011



FOOD. LIFE. PLANET.

The System's bust

Oxfam was created in 1942 in response to a food crisis caused by the Second World War. Seventy years on, the world faces another crisis – this time one that threatens us all. Today's crisis is the product of a grotesque global injustice. Nearly one billion people face hunger every day, while the unsustainable patterns of consumption and production in the rich world have placed us all on a collision course with our planet's ecological limits.

The warning signs are clear. We have entered an age of crisis: of food price spikes and oil price hikes; of scrambles for land and water; of creeping, insidious climate change. The 2008 spike in food prices pushed some 100 million people into poverty. Price rises so far in 2011 have done the same to 44 million more. These statistics mask millions of individual stories of suffering and heartbreak as families struggle to cope with deepening poverty.

Despite huge increases in productivity and incomes over recent decades, global hunger is on the rise. Despite an overwhelming scientific consensus on the need to tackle climate change, we continue pumping out more and more greenhouse gases. And despite advances in women's rights and widespread acknowledgement of the vital role women play in ensuring that families have enough to eat, women are routinely denied resources, and their talents ignored.

A powerful minority profits from the status quo: self-serving elites that amass wealth at the expense of impoverished rural populations; bloated biofuel lobbies, hooked on subsidies that divert food from mouths to cars; dirty industries that block action on emissions; shipping companies that overcharge

for freighting emergency food aid, robbing both taxpayers and the very people for whom the aid is intended; and huge agribusinesses making enormous profits without any public accountability for their actions.

- Worldwide subsidies for renewable energy are \$57bn compared with \$312bn for fossil fuels.
- Worldwide support for biofuels costs \$20bn a year.
- It is estimated that three agribusiness firms – Cargill, Bunge and ADM – control nearly 90% of grain trading between them.
- Only 40 cents of every US taxpayer dollar spent on food aid actually goes to buying food.

Governments have largely failed to stop the plunder of public resources, or to regulate powerful companies. And they have neglected the needs of poor and vulnerable people, especially women, demonstrating an alarming lack of will to address the causes of hunger, inequality and ecological collapse.

- Between 1983 and 2006, support to agriculture from international aid fell from 20.4% to 3.7% of the total given. During this time, rich countries' support to their own agricultural sectors spiralled to over \$250bn a year – 79 times their agricultural aid.

- The world-leading group of agricultural research centres for developing countries (CGIAR) has an annual budget of \$500m, less than half the \$1.2bn spent on research and development by just one multinational company, Monsanto.
- India more than doubled the size of its economy between 1990 and 2005, but the number of hungry people in the country increased by more than the population of France.

We now risk a wholesale reversal in human development. New research commissioned by Oxfam for the report 'Growing a Better Future: Food justice in a resource-constrained world' forecasts price rises for staple grains of 120-180 per cent within the next two decades, as pressures on resources mount and climate change takes hold.

So Oxfam's GROW campaign has a simple message: another future is possible, and we can build it together. Over the coming years, decisive action across the globe could enable hundreds of millions more people to feed their families and prevent catastrophic climate change from destroying all of our futures. But only if we collectively stop our sleepwalk towards ecological disaster.

It's time to grow

In order to create a world in which everyone always has enough to eat, there are three challenges we must meet:

The sustainable production challenge

The food system must be transformed. By 2050, there will be nine billion people on the planet and demand for food will have increased by 70 per cent. This demand must be met despite the slowing of growth in crop yields, increasing water scarcity and growing competition over land. And agriculture must rapidly adapt to a changing climate and slash its carbon footprint.

- The amount of arable land per head has almost halved since 1960.
- Demand for water will increase by 30% by 2030.
- Agriculture accounts for up to 30% of worldwide greenhouse gas emissions.

The equity challenge

The appalling inequities which plague the food system from farm to fork must be addressed. We produce more food than we need. But in the rich world, we throw much of it away. In the developing world, nearly one billion people go without.

- Consumers in rich countries may waste as much as a quarter of the food they buy.
- In more than half of industrialized countries, 50% or more of the population is overweight.

Hunger and poverty are concentrated in rural areas. So unlocking the potential of smallholder agriculture – the backbone of the food system – represents our single biggest opportunity to increase food production, boost food security and reduce vulnerability. Yet farmers are routinely deprived of the resources they need to thrive: of water, technology, investment and credit. Huge swathes of land in Africa and elsewhere are being handed over to investors at rock bottom prices, in land grab deals that offer little to local communities.

- 80% of recent land investments remain undeveloped.
- Providing women farmers with the same access to resources as men could increase their yields by 20–30%.

The resilience challenge

Our increasingly fragile food system must be fixed. Oil price rises affect food prices through increased fertiliser and transport costs. Weather events are disrupting supply. Speculation by unscrupulous investors is destabilising commodity markets. Governments are triggering, rather than averting, food price crises. And policies of narrow self-interest such as biofuel programmes and export bans make a bad situation much, much worse.

- 40% of the US corn crop ends up in petrol tanks instead of stomachs.

We must dramatically improve our ability to collectively protect poor people from the risk of food price crises. But the institutions needed to protect the most vulnerable are often inadequate or missing.

- Four people in every five lack access to social protection of any kind.
- In 2010, only 63% of UN emergency appeals were funded.



Why it's time to fix the System...

Rising food prices in Lucknow, India – caused by the cumulative impact of our broken system – have hit the poorest people hardest. Tanuja Dhanuk has recently had to ask her employers for leftovers to feed her family – a source of deep embarrassment.

“Food prices are rising. Flour is rising, rice and pulses and oil and all so expensive,” she says. “Even soap is expensive. The children use mud to clean when they take a bath, and I use mud to wash clothes with drain water.”



...and how change is possible

A big part of fixing the system involves increasing support for small-scale farmers. And four hundred farming families in Malawi are now growing a bigger variety of crops all year round, following support from an Oxfam irrigation project.

“When I was growing up agriculture was not as advanced as it is now,” says Leyla Kayere. “We didn’t know anything about irrigation. We only used to grow cassava and millet – to eat, not to sell. I couldn’t live without tomatoes now. When you cook without them the food tastes awful.”

The System sussed

We need better ways to grow, share and live together.

A groundswell of change is already under way, led by individuals, organisations and movements who have challenged the system and taken the future into their own hands .

In Brazil, 20 years of activism from civil society and social movements has challenged elites, expanded political horizons, and helped to elect politicians with vision and moral purpose. Vietnam has achieved comparable results through land reform and an ambitious programme of investment in small-scale farmers.

Consumers also increasingly demand products that are sourced ethically and sustainably. And campaigns on climate change in developed and developing countries have helped galvanize politicians and responsible businesses, increasing the pressure on companies that would block ambitious action.

- Hunger fell by one-third in Brazil between 2005 and 2009.
- Vietnam achieved the first Millennium Development Goal – to halve hunger – five years ahead of schedule.
- In 2009, global investments in renewables overtook fossil fuel spending for the first time.
- In 2009, Apple and Nike publicly left the US Chamber of Commerce in protest against its refusal to back US climate legislation.

By joining GROW, you'll help to expose the threats we face, limit the power of vested interests and help create a movement for a better food future. And that means pushing for big shifts in how we grow, share, and live together on the planet:

1. Build a new agricultural future

The vast imbalance in public and private investment in agriculture must be righted, redirecting the billions now being ploughed into unsustainable industrial farming in rich countries towards meeting the needs of small-scale food producers in developing countries – where the major gains in productivity, poverty reduction and resilience can be achieved.

2. Build a new global governance system to avert food crises

Governments must focus on tackling hunger and preventing food crises. That means creating jobs, helping people adapt to climate change, investing in disaster risk reduction and extending social protection programmes. Export rules also need to change, and subsidies and speculation need to be tackled.

3. Build a new ecological future

The race to a sustainable future is on, and there will be huge opportunities for those who get there first. National governments must intervene to speed up and direct the transition, which means investing in research and development in clean energy, creating incentives to guide private capital to where it is needed, and penalising greenhouse gas emitters.

Ultimately, our success or failure in building a new ecological future will depend on political leaders agreeing a fair and ambitious global deal on climate change.

Can we fix it?

To achieve the changes the world needs, GROW has to be Oxfam's biggest campaign ever.

Movements for a better future are already growing all around the planet. We will join with them. We will target governments, well-known and powerful companies, and global forums like the G20

summit. We will name and shame those who are failing, support those who are building a new vision and help to create space for leaders to be bold.

Together, we will press governments for urgent action to prevent crises, reform policies, preserve scarce resources

and ensure equal rights. We will demand responsibility from companies, and expose the multinational interests grabbing precious land or profiting from volatility. And we will promote policies that help the billion men and women who grow food.

Yes, we can – with your help

From picnics to political actions, there's a lot planned for GROW.

We've got a lot of ideas about how we can all start putting the system back on track. And we also can't wait to hear what you think needs to happen.

These are big problems, after all – so the more ideas we have, the better. And there's nothing stronger than the power of people, all over the world, pushing in the same direction.

The future starts now

2011 provides crucial opportunities to start to fix the system.

When the G20 leaders meet in November, they must decide how to manage food prices

and govern markets in order to protect against future food crises. They must increase transparency in commodities and futures markets, increase food reserves, regulate financial speculators and agree new mechanisms to raise climate finance.

Then when the United Nations' Committee on World Food Security meets in October, it must agree to regulate large-scale land acquisitions to ensure that people living in poverty have secure access to natural resources.

And when the world's climate negotiators reconvene in Durban, South Africa at the end of 2011, they must get the global climate fund that was agreed in 2010 up and running,

put women on its board, and ensure that it has enough cash to spend, either from new forms of finance or as direct contributions from governments.

In addition, there are actions that all governments must take today to begin the transition towards a new agricultural future. In particular, governments should reduce hunger by providing women with equal access to resources – by promoting sustainable agricultural development, job creation and inclusive growth, and by tackling vulnerability via climate adaptation, social protection and disaster risk reduction.

Timeline for action

This year, we need you to help as many people as possible to join the GROW campaign – and to make as much as possible around these key dates.

1 June

Launch of the GROW campaign.

July-August

Campaign focus on land grabs, with the release of a new report.

23 September

International Monetary Fund/World Bank meetings.

16/17 October

World Food Day/World Poverty Day – a great time to be talking to the public about sustainable food and agriculture.

18-22 October

Committee on World Food Security (Part of the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation) – focus on food crises (TBC).

3-4 November

G20 Summit.

26 November- 9 December

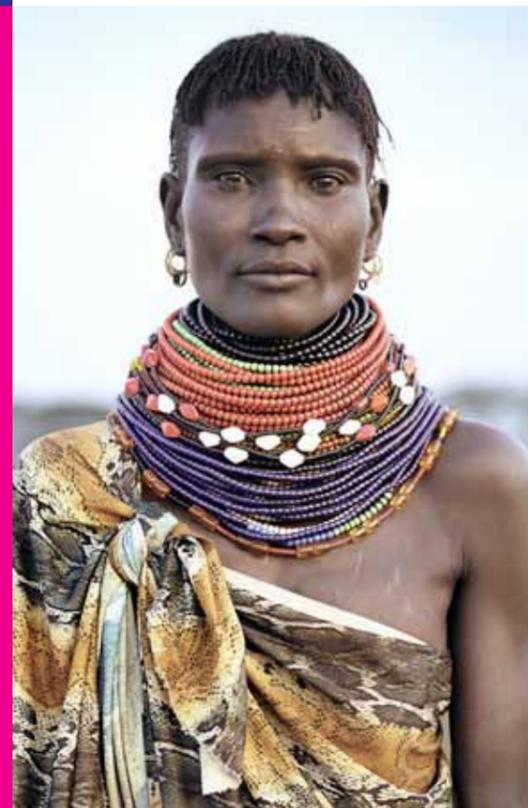
'COP 17' climate negotiations in Durban, South Africa. We'll be focusing on funding climate adaptation in the run-up to this crucial meeting.

Introducing Akiru

Akiru, shown here and on the back cover of this guide, lives in Turkana, Kenya. She was one of the people photographed by Rankin to help illustrate the huge difficulties people in this region are facing to find enough food, after seven years of repeated drought.

You'll be seeing Akiru in Oxfam's communications as we launch GROW in the UK – to help people understand that 'The System's bust' and that, by joining GROW, together we can help fix it.

Photo: Rankin



What you can do

These first year priorities should tell you roughly what we'll be asking you to campaign about, and as always, we'll be giving more details at each stage, in Activist News, online and via your Oxfam staff contact.

Getting engaged with these complex issues isn't just about giving people information and expecting them to act on it. People need to be helped to feel an emotional connection, and to see how their support can make a difference.

Tips on engaging people in the GROW campaign:

- Specific campaign actions such as letter-writing or petitions are crucial building blocks of a campaign, but think what people will learn as they take action – and how they might share that learning with others.
- It's not always the facts alone that make people take action; it's also how people feel about the stories they hear. If we can stir an emotion, it's more likely that they will take action than if we only supply them with dry facts.
- People are more likely to get involved if the campaign seems relevant to them – and that can mean being involved in the design of their own activities.
- Think of campaigning as a series of conversations, rather than us telling people what we want them to do.

IMPORTANT: Talking about food and Oxfam with the public could just conjure up images of famine relief and starvation – but GROW is about more than that: it's about the broken system, and finding ways to fix it.

Try some of these conversation starters:

What is your favourite food?

Simple and easy – everybody has a favourite food. And by asking this question you are getting people to relate to their own lives.

What concerns you most about the food you and your family eat?

This gets people thinking more broadly. Most people are concerned about the people closest to them, and some people will think about the cost and availability of food.

What do you think affects the world's food system?

By moving people on from their own food to the how the world's food is produced, you can help them start to think about things remote from their own lives. There could be many different responses to this – but all of them will help kick off a conversation.

Get growing

Ideas for taking action

If you can plan in advance and share the work around, the chances are that you can organise something which will reach out to a significant number of people. For further details, see the Activist Centre at www.oxfam.org.uk/activist.

Our 'Enabler' tool will help you share, plan and create resources for your project: <http://enabler.org.uk>. And whatever you produce, link to our online resources, so people can continue the conversation after your event (*live link 1 June*): www.oxfam.org.uk/system

A. Ideas that take a little bit of planning

Picnics for food justice

Aim: A great way to get people involved in the campaign over the summer. As well as being good fun, picnics provide a great chance to start new conversations in a relaxed atmosphere. Why not use this friendly way of sharing food as a chance to talk with people about fixing the broken system?

You could:

- Share messages/questions on a cocktail stick flag, paper plates, etc (pre-made or make them with people on the day).
- Invite people to contribute their ideas for a recipe for justice.
- Invite people to swap their food, label their contribution with a message or a question to pass on to someone else.
- Have a craft-based activity so that people can come over and get involved in making something too.

Campaigning using food crops

Aim: Late summer and autumn are great times to talk about food and agriculture, with harvest festivals and horticultural events in the UK, and World Food Day in October raising the issue internationally.

You could:

- Grow vegetables which you can then use to reach audiences who might never have filled in an action card or signed a petition, but who might be interested in gardening and food growing.
- If it's a bit late in the season to get started, why not plant something that grows really quickly like mustard or cress?
- When the plants or crops are ready, you could take a stall at a local event – perhaps one of the many horticultural or harvest-time events that happen around the UK. Use what you've grown as talking points to start off conversations with people about the issues that keep small-scale farmers in poverty.

Attending food events

Aim: Even if you haven't got green fingers, you can still get the messages out there through campaigning at food-related events. Like picnics in the summer, the aim is to get people interested in wider aspects of food, especially during the week of World Food Day in October.

You could:

- Check out the events that are happening locally to celebrate locally produced food, or Fair Trade, for example.
- Think about some of the creative ideas above, to tap into people's interest in food and recipes. Can you get people thinking about where their exotic – and basic – foodstuffs come from?
- Think alliances – do you know any local food producers who might be able to include some information about this campaign with their products? Or might be able to display something in their shop? Remember to speak to your local Oxfam shop if there's one nearby to see if they would like to get involved, too.

B. Activities that can be prepared more easily

Why not do dinner?

Aim: To get people involved in the GROW campaign in a friendly and relaxed environment, by inviting friends around and chatting about food justice over dinner. After all, not everyone likes visiting a campaign stall!

You could:

- Arrange a rich-poor meal – where everyone pays the same but the food they eat is up to chance, the majority of people getting a very simple plain meal and a small few getting something lavish. Get the conversation going and ask how people feel after the experience.
- In the context of the GROW campaign, the emphasis isn't on the money you can raise, but on the conversations you can have around the table.

Host a land grab

Aim: To highlight the injustice of land grabs – our campaign focus for July and August. Many people won't be familiar with this issue and so an immediate and visual way of explaining it is a great idea.

You could:

- Choose a visible spot locally to simulate grabbing land or water. Take over the area with people, plants and maybe even a deck chair or two? Then get chatting to people about why you are there.
- This kind of action can be perfect for gaining media interest. Advice on writing a media release is at www.oxfam.org.uk/activist.

Start conversations online

Aim: To get people involved in discussions about food, so they can start to see the wider implications of the way their food is produced. Going online can help you bring the debate to people, rather than the other way around.

You could:

- Host a debate online – what does food justice mean to you? You could do it using Facebook or Twitter, or whatever spaces you're involved in. You may also want to research spaces where conversations about food and growing will be likely to have resonance.
- If you have a website or blog, we'll be producing embeddable tools to share so people can sign up to the campaign and start taking part in conversations.

C. If you only have a few minutes to spare

Join the campaign

Sign up to www.oxfam.org.uk/system to get updates on the GROW campaign and to take part in conversations about food. From mid-June 2011, we'll publish the results of a global poll about people's experiences of food. The site will also contain stories and videos which should be really thought-provoking conversation-starters.

Share your food photos

Write your message for food justice with words made from food, or on food. Then take a photo and spread it through your online networks and get the debate started. For example, you could write the words 'food justice' in rice. Or you could just share pictures of food you like, as long as you make it obvious why you're doing it.

Get talking

Simply speak to friends/family/neighbours/everyone you know about a few of the things that most inspire you about this campaign. You can use the resources on our website to help you get a conversation started: www.oxfam.org.uk/system.

Other useful stuff: Jargon buster

The issues around food production are complex, and can be hard to explain simply, especially if you have only a short while to talk to someone. It's easy to assume that others will understand the development terminology we use regularly, but sometimes explanations are necessary.

Agribusiness

Big multinational companies, making huge profits from trading agricultural products and agricultural inputs such as fertilisers.

Biofuels

Crops such as grains grown for turning into fuels rather than for food.

Civil society

Ordinary people and social organisations. Often used to refer to the groups which work for changes which benefit communities rather than powerful corporations or political elites.

Disaster risk reduction

Programmes designed to reduce the chances of being affected by environmental shocks such as floods and droughts.

Ecological limits

The planet only has so much land, water, forests and other resources to go round. The ways we live now will very soon use up all these resources and we are already seeing the signs of crisis.

Export bans

These prevent goods from being sent to other countries. Some countries have stopped their grain from being exported, reducing supply and raising global food prices.

Food security

Having enough to eat on a regular basis. You might have enough to eat one month but not the next – making your situation uncertain. This could be caused by environmental, economic or political factors.

Food system

The way we collectively grow and distribute food. While some people in the world still only grow food for their own families ('subsistence farming') or herd animals, most people are at least partly dependent on buying food, making them subject to the effects of global price changes.

G20

The regular meetings of the 20 richest countries in the world.

Greenhouse gases

Gases such as carbon dioxide which increase the overall temperature of the atmosphere, contributing to climate change. Emissions can be from transport, agriculture, and industry.

Industrialised countries

The richest countries, which have built their wealth on industry, technology and finance. Countries such as India and China are joining the club, though they still have millions of poor people. The world's poorest countries typically remain dependent on agriculture, and often on substantial amounts of international aid.

Land grabs

International companies buying large pieces of land from poor countries, often at low cost, and displacing the existing farmers with little or no compensation, or taking resources like water away from communities.

Land reform

Political changes affecting the ownership of land to allow more people to benefit, usually by breaking up large land holdings and transferring it to communities.

Resilience

The ability to deal with sudden changes such as natural disasters or economic crises, leading to events like crop failures, price rises or scarcity of vital goods.

Smallholder agriculture

The way most producers in the world still farm. Small in size and often family-run, this form of farming is crucial to feeding the planet, yet has not received anything like the support from governments that it needs.

Social protection

Programmes providing welfare to citizens who cannot support themselves.

Subsidies

Payments made to farmers in rich countries allowing them to sell at a reduced cost, undercutting producers in poor countries.

Sustainability

Being able to continue to live and produce food in a way which can be carried on into the future, without using up limited resources or damaging the environment.

Vulnerability

Being at risk through not having the resources, skills or power to deal with sudden shocks or longer-term problems such as climate change.

Other useful stuff: Resources and contacts

From June, we'll have:

Information leaflets
Stickers
Badges
T-shirts

And from late summer:

Posters
Banners
Land grabs barrier tape

While online, you'll find:

Stories, pictures and conversation starters at www.oxfam.org.uk/system
Share your projects with others at <http://enabler.org.uk>

Any questions? Talk to your Oxfam staff contact:

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