

# VOICES

SPRING/SUMMER '26



Our community continues to rise.



Miriam is defending her country from the climate crisis.



## FREEDOM IN FOCUS

04



Ezequiel is transforming recyclable waste into income

08



Monica is rebuilding after severe flooding

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Christine is following her bookselling dream



OXFAM

## WELCOME TO VOICES

Welcome to the latest edition of VOICES, your supporter magazine connecting you with new stories of impact from our global community.

For this edition, we're exploring the theme of freedom around the world. In the UK and globally, living in poverty limits people's freedom to make choices about their lives. This restriction is made worse when people are also impacted by the effects of living on the frontline of conflict or the climate crisis.

But in VOICES, you'll find stories of people working alongside Oxfam and our partners to build up resilience, and dismantle the causes of inequality that hinder freedom.

Opposite, you can read about how activist Miriam is taking action to defend Kiribati from rising sea levels, so that people have the freedom to keep living in their home country. On page 6, Irene has started up a small business, and is using some of the profits to follow her dream of becoming a nurse. And on page 7, Ahmed is rebuilding his plant nursery and livelihood, while living through huge upheaval and conflict in Gaza.

As always with VOICES, each of these stories is written directly from our contributors, in their own words, as that is how they are told best.

In turbulent times, your support is vital in helping to protect the rights and freedoms of people everywhere. Thank you for your dedication to helping end poverty and inequality around the world: your actions now are more important than ever, and we are grateful to have you with us.

We hope you enjoy reading this edition of VOICES, and we welcome your feedback. If you would like to, please share your thoughts using the survey you can find detailed on the back page of your magazine.

Yours,  
Team VOICES

Cover image: Miriam, project officer for KiriCAN.  
Aimee Han/Oxfam

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## Kiribati's communities are DETERMINED.

People should be able to live free from the fear of the climate crisis. But for Kiribati, an island country in the Pacific Ocean, rising sea levels are a serious threat. Miriam is a project officer at KiriCAN, an Oxfam partner, and is raising awareness and helping to safeguard the coast with projects such as planting mangroves, whose root systems help prevent erosion and flooding.

Miriam used to go fishing with her brothers before rising sea levels made it too dangerous.  
Aimee Han/Oxfam



### Facing the climate crisis

I am 22 years old and I was born and raised in Kiribati, an island nation in the Pacific. The island sits just 1.5 metres above sea level, which makes us vulnerable to the climate crisis. Growing up, I witnessed the devastating impact of the crisis firsthand.

We've had cases where our fishermen go out fishing and don't return because of how unpredictable the ocean has become. The fish have also fled to deeper waters.

My experiences motivated me to work at the Kiribati Climate Action Network (KiriCAN), where I am able to amplify community voices, strengthen resilience and advocate for climate action.

**"We are working to protect our people, our islands and our future."**

### Strengthening communities

Our work focuses on the communities most vulnerable to climate change. This includes women who manage households. They often face serious health challenges when access to clean water is limited and local crops fail, leaving families reliant on imported food. Young people are also deeply affected as many schools cannot provide clean drinking water and freshly grown vegetables are often unavailable. This worsens during droughts.

### Overcoming challenges

With the support of Oxfam in the Pacific and other partners, KiriCAN has delivered powerful solutions. In 2025 alone, we installed 10,000-litre water tanks in high schools, built hydroponic systems to help grow fresh produce without soil and planted over 6,000 mangroves to protect our coastlines. We have also taught young women traditional methods of dry-preserving fish, and trained young people to preserve and convert coconut sap into sugar syrup.

### Funding our future

I don't think of funding to address climate change as 'charity': it's a responsibility. Without climate finance, there is no climate justice. In the face of climate challenges, Kiribati's communities are determined to act.

Through practical solutions, local knowledge and the support of partners, we are working to protect our people, our islands and our future. We have already done so much with just a few resources.



**6,000** mangroves planted to help protect the coast



**KIRICAN**  
Kiribati Climate Action Network (KiriCAN) is a collective of youth and women's groups based in Tarawa, Kiribati. They work closely with local government, as well as international organisations, to raise awareness of how the climate crisis is affecting the area. Together, they can put sustainable solutions into place to protect communities and the environment.





# This project has transformed our COMMUNITY.

Chókwè, a town in southern Mozambique, has been made vulnerable to natural disasters, especially floods, which can displace hundreds of thousands of people and claim lives.

This flooding is worsened by materials blocking the main drainage trench. To tackle this, the community, including Ezequiel and the municipal council, worked with Oxfam to clean out the trench and set up a recycling centre. By bringing recyclables to the centre, local people can earn money while protecting their town from disaster, including during serious flooding earlier this year.



As part of his role, Ezequiel raises awareness about the power of recycling.  
Jessica Dimande/Oxfam



Ezequiel is the coordinator of the solid waste centre and helped to found it.  
Jessica Dimande/Oxfam

## Flooding has deeply affected our lives

Chókwè suffers from floods and cyclones. These disasters have deeply affected my life: they destroyed my father's house, my house and many other things. We were left with nothing and had to start from scratch. What we have today is thanks to the effort of people who fought to rebuild after the floods.

## Founding the solid waste centre

Before the recycling centre was founded, there was no waste collection. People were burning rubbish or throwing it in the drainage trench. The result: water was not flowing properly, being blocked by solid waste, which increased the number of floods. That's where the idea of building the centres came from – and Oxfam could help us do this.

## Our work with Oxfam

Our community, together with the municipal council of Chókwè and Oxfam, has built two waste centres where people can bring collected waste to, that we can buy and sell on. Oxfam helped us clean the drainage channels so water could flow freely, and built a hydraulic passage. We also created an early warning system so our communities can stay informed about the risk of flooding.



Women make up 90% of the workforce at the waste centre.  
Jessica Dimande/Oxfam

"We have the materials, we have the knowledge, and the project gave us everything we needed."



**70,000** people live in Chókwè, a food production area which experiences frequent flooding

## How the waste centre works

A committee of us started as volunteers, and together we pooled our money gradually so we could buy recyclables from the community who dropped off their waste. We press these recyclables into bales, using a compressor. Once compacted, they are easier to transport to Maputo, Mozambique's capital, where we sell the bales on to cooperatives.

## Turning waste into income

We have seen such strong engagement from the community: on the first day, we bought around 500 kilos of PET bottles.

Since then, we've raised awareness about this business. We said, "Let's collect waste, because it's no longer waste, it's money." When people walk around, they're looking for recyclables. Everyone wants to bring them to the centre to earn a living.

90% of the people working at this centre are women. They know that anything is possible working here. There's nothing a man can do that a woman cannot. This knowledge isn't just in the centre, it's spread throughout the community. That's why women wake

up early, grab their bags and go out to collect waste or work on farms.

## Building our business

One of the biggest challenges is that we don't have enough funds as a collective. We have some savings, and we want to increase our income so that we can buy more recyclables from the community.

"In our community, trash is cash."

Sometimes, when we don't have money to buy recyclables, people keep these materials at home. We have to tell them to wait, and they get discouraged. That's why we hope to grow stronger: to have more resources and better capacity to work.

## Hopes for the future

One day, we'd like to do everything here. Instead of selling our materials in Maputo, we want to become a full recycling centre. We'd love to see that happen inside this centre.

Now we're ready to prevent disasters because we're aware. We feel safer now because we've been trained and educated. That's why we're grateful to the project.



**MUNICIPIO DE CHOKWE**  
Oxfam partnered with the municipal council of Chókwè city to implement this new project, and worked closely with the local community at every stage. The municipal council is responsible for overseeing and maintaining the drainage systems and coordinating community activities.

**IN CONVERSATION**



Selling food, drinks and other items is helping Irene support her family. Collin Nduna/Oxfam

**What are your hopes for the future?**

Through the business, I was able to pay my school fees and pass my exams. Now I am expanding into the poultry business. I currently have day-old chicks that I bought yesterday.

My wish is to keep moving forward because I want to do nursing. That is my goal.

**THE BETHANY PROJECT**

The Bethany Project was founded in 1995 and supports children and young people under 25 in Zimbabwe. It focuses on working with women and girls who may have experienced violence and discrimination, by offering skills training and employment to help them have more choices about their futures.



Irene is looking forward to growing her business. Collin Nduna/Oxfam

**We learned to manage a BUSINESS.**

In Zimbabwe, Irene is taking action to give herself the freedom to pursue her dreams. After leaving school because it was unaffordable, Irene got married. By working with Oxfam partner, the Bethany Project, she learned to run a small business. Irene is now working to fund her goal of becoming a nurse.

**What was life like before this project?**

I grew up facing poverty and had to drop out of school because we could not afford the school fees.

When I got married, that's when I got help. My father-in-law helped to pay for my school fees so I could restart my education, and after that I came across the Bethany Project, and was introduced to their work.

**What training did you take part in?**

With the Bethany Project, we learned about business: to be risk-takers and how to manage a business. I started off by selling drinks, biscuits, female sandals and then airtime for mobile phones. From there, I was able to pay my own school fees. I passed five subjects and from then on I have been able to look after my child and continue with my business.



**Agriculture is my LIFE-BREATH.**

Ahmed was once the owner of one of the largest plant nurseries in Gaza, before the Israeli army bulldozed them. Throughout the war, he rebuilt his nursery three times, and worked with Oxfam and partner the Economic and Social Development Centre of Palestine (ESDC) to do so. Even with the fragile ceasefire in place, Ahmed still lives with the threat of violence and displacement.

Ahmed standing in his plant nursery that was supported by Oxfam. Alef Multimedia/Oxfam



**My plant nursery**

I am the owner of Green Lands Nurseries, which was once one of the largest plant nurseries in Gaza. I have worked in agriculture since childhood. It is a job I inherited from my parents and ancestors. God willing, I will remain in it. I cannot leave it: agriculture is my life-breath.

Before the war, I had 45 dunams\* of nurseries. My nursery was unique as it had ornamental plants and we grew specially cultivated crops using innovative techniques.

**Life during the violence**

Previously, I distributed my produce to traders from Beit Lahia to Rafah. The Israeli occupation forces closed the roads. They bulldozed the plant nurseries.

We fled to the south of Gaza because of the war. When I returned, I found everything destroyed. Nothing was left.

**Rebuilding our nurseries**

Every day during the war, I was forced to move from one place to another. I swear I could not sleep. I didn't know how I could keep evacuating like that. Now, I am starting from scratch, with only half a dunam to work on. This is the third nursery I've built.

**Working with Oxfam**

Oxfam encouraged me to continue my work. They built me a roof, gave me fencing covers and about 200 empty trays. They brought me soil and seeds. My spirit improved when I returned to farming. I could finally sleep and I stopped overthinking.

**Violence is a constant threat**

Now, we are back to work. Farmers are happy I reopened my nursery. They benefit, and so do I. God willing, we will continue. We are in a dangerous area. We risk our lives just to work and feed our children. Constant displacement during the war has drained us. It costs us a lot and we cannot carry on. We want the war to stop for good.

\*A dunam is a measure of land, where one dunam is the equivalent of just under 1,000 square metres.



Ahmed irrigating the plants in his nursery. Alef Multimedia/Oxfam



**87%** of cropland in Gaza is now damaged



**ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT CENTRE OF PALESTINE**  
The Economic and Social Development Centre of Palestine (ESDC) was set up in 2003. It works across the occupied Palestinian territory, including the West Bank and Gaza. Alongside their human rights work, they are experts in helping cooperatives of people to improve food security and rebuild agriculture and farming practices.



## Now we are more **PREPARED.**

Monica is a small-scale farmer in rural Timor-Leste. In 2021, a three-metre flood destroyed her home, livestock and crops. She and her family barely escaped with their lives. By working with local Oxfam partner BIFANO, she has learned climate-adaptation skills to prepare for, and survive, future disasters.

Monica shows the water spinach (kangkong) she has been growing since the flood.  
Rachel Schaevitz/Oxfam

### My story

I live in Suco Bobocase in Timor-Leste. I was born and raised in this village. Since I was little until I grew up, got married and had children, I have never witnessed such a huge flood as in 2021.

The day before, we had a whole day of raining till night time, and I knew our village would be impacted. I could not sleep. I just sat there waiting for the rain to stop.

### The day of the flood

At 10 o'clock at night the flood reached our village. When it came into my house, it destroyed everything: nothing was spared.

I have seven children and I evacuated them all. But one was hit by a cupboard which injured one of his hips. All of us were soaked, so we felt cold because it was at night time. I had to carry my children on my back to rescue them. They were scared... I could feel their bodies shaking.

The flood covered my house. When I returned the following day, I barely recognised it because it was completely underwater and everything was buried. My heart broke and I couldn't hold my tears. I cried.

### Losing everything

The water level gradually dried off but left behind thick mud all over the house. We weren't able to save anything.

My corn that I kept inside our kitchen was washed away. I stored rice in a closed bucket, but those too were destroyed. I also lost my chicken and pigs.

I was deeply sad because my children's documents, and my own baptism certificate and birth certificate, were destroyed. My children lost their schoolbooks.

### Our family's recovery

This flooding severely impacted me and my family. We have a total of 43 households living in this village; we were all impacted by this flooding, strong wind and heavy rain.

We received support from a number of institutions including Oxfam and BIFANO. They visited me and helped to rebuild my house. Everyone assisted in cleaning up the area, and gave us food.

### Preparing for disasters

Since our village is now prone to flooding, BIFANO has offered us training. They taught us everything related to floods, for instance how to evacuate,



Monica has seven children – her older son was registering for university when the flood hit that town too, which meant he couldn't start his studies.  
Rachel Schaevitz/Oxfam

what to do during evacuation and what to prepare for when there is heavy rain.

Now we are more prepared to respond. We rely on the water gauge board that BIFANO put up. If we have heavy rain, we go to observe the sign which indicates the level of water. When the flood reaches the yellow line, we must secure our belongings in case we have to evacuate.

In addition, we learned how to set up emergency tents. After the training, Oxfam provided tents to our village so we can practice. We also built two toilets, two water tanks and storage to keep essential materials.

### Adapting our livelihoods

We have banana trees that survived the flood and bear fruit. Before, we sold bananas and used the money to buy corn and rice paddy seeds. However, the seeds cannot grow now because the soil is covered by thick mud from the flood. Now, we've learnt to plant the vegetable kangkong (water spinach), because it can still grow here.

We use the money from selling produce to buy chickens. If we sell one rooster, we can buy one piglet. This way we can raise both chickens and pigs.

**“Now we know where to go when a flood is coming.”**



Monica outside her pig pen.  
Rachel Schaevitz/Oxfam

**BIFANO**  
Binibu Faef Nome (BIFANO) is a community-based organisation in Timor-Leste and is dedicated to improving the wellbeing of people living in rural areas. As well as supporting economic empowerment and environmental conservation, BIFANO helps communities prepare for disasters and build resilience in the climate crisis.

# It's a question OF TRUST. 77



Barbara was just 16 when she first started fundraising for Oxfam. Over 70 years later, she's helped raise over half a million pounds for our global work – and made some incredible memories along the way. Now, she's choosing to stay in the fight by leaving a gift in her Will.

### My childhood

I was brought up in tight circumstances in Newhaven. My father died when I was young, and we had no money for the frills of life. It's why I have always been thankful to have enough money to pay the gas bill.

### A lifetime of fundraising

As a teenager I thought that everyone in the world was fine. That people had enough to eat and lived in a house. But I must have been 13 or 14 when I saw the famine in Bihar, India, on the news. I remember thinking, "When I grow up I will do something. I will raise money." The first thing I did was rattle a tin on the high street.

**"You have to do what you can, not spend your life fretting about what you can't do."**

### Oxfam reflects my values

I was 16 when I first started raising money for Oxfam, because I saw what they do to end poverty and inequality around the world. Since then, I have fundraised in many different ways.

I fasted every autumn for over 25 years, and I still host a coffee morning at my church each year and get a celebrity speaker. After my husband, Charles, died, I began donating and collecting hundreds of books for Oxfam to sell too. One of them was a first edition

*Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy* and Oxfam sold it for £800.

### Founding Oxfam's bridal boutique

The key for helping people, I think, is for everyone to do their bit. So I'm always looking for new opportunities to raise money. Years ago when one of my daughters got married, it occurred to me that wedding dresses were very expensive. I was sure that people could hire them instead. I wrote to some shops and some kindly let me have leftover stock. I piled my car full of dresses and set up Oxfam's first dress hiring boutique from a converted bedroom in my house. Now there are five shops around the country and they make thousands every year.

### Leaving a gift in my Will

I have faith that things can change. That's why I decided long ago to leave a gift in my Will to Oxfam. It's a question of trust and knowing they'll spend the money wisely. I would encourage others who can afford to leave a gift in their Will to do so, because it can't go with you. It's a nice thought that, even when you're no longer there yourself, you can still make a difference.

### LEAVE A LEGACY. STAY IN THE FIGHT.

To learn more about leaving a gift in your Will to Oxfam, or use our free Will writing service, please visit: [oxfam.org.uk/voicesgiftinwill](https://oxfam.org.uk/voicesgiftinwill)



A selection of photos of Barbara at home, including newspaper clippings of her fundraising over the years. Andy Oxley/Oxfam



Christine stands in front of the Oxfam shop where she volunteers every week. Colleen Shortt/Oxfam

# It feels a bit like spinning straw INTO GOLD. 77

Oxfam are experts in selling secondhand books! We've been selling literature in the UK since 1947, and have since become the largest chain of secondhand, high street booksellers in Europe. It's a huge feat, but none of it would be possible without our passionate volunteers, like booklover Christine.

### A job of joy

For the past four years, I've had the joy of working at Oxfam Books and Music in Market Harborough, and I can honestly say I love every minute of it.

I had no retail background when I started but I've learned so much from our brilliant manager, and from the customers themselves.

### Following a dream

I wanted to volunteer here because books have always meant a great deal to me. It fulfils my childhood dream of working in a bookshop – even if there's less reading involved than I once imagined!

### A treasure trove

We have two big windows in the shop that I get to create eye-catching displays for, like arranging quirky book themes with props or painting onto the glass. It's especially rewarding when customers tell us they always stop to look. I think there's something magical about seeing donations arrive – sometimes with a hesitant "I don't know if these are of any use to you?" – and watching those same books go on to raise money for Oxfam's vital work. It feels a bit like spinning straw into gold.

And when someone comes in and finds exactly the book they've been searching for, I get a special thrill. It's like discovering a small treasure.



### EXPLORE OUR RANGE OF SECONDHAND BOOKS

There's no such thing as a 'used' book, because stories can be read again and again. You can browse thousands of pre-owned, much-loved books in store or online. Visit [oxfam.org.uk/voicesshops](https://oxfam.org.uk/voicesshops)

or scan this QR code to find out more.



“ There’s a clear economic **IMPACT.** ”

**Pankrasius, a coconut farmer and father in Indonesia, has joined a collective to help boost sustainable production.**

Together, the collective was able to get fairer prices for their crops. To help increase their income, Pankrasius worked with local Oxfam partner YPPS to find sustainable farming techniques. He now uses solar-powered drying houses to turn coconut shells into eco-friendly charcoal and briquettes to sell. He’s using the income to support his family and children.

Pankrasius holding coconuts he has grown and will process, Bantala Village, East Flores.  
Kyo Umareta/Oxfam



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