

OXFAM TOOLKITS

HOW TO GET STARTED

A MENU OF IDEAS



OXFAM
America

OXFAM TOOLKITS

In keeping with Oxfam's belief that everyone has a part to play in the fight against poverty and injustice, Oxfam Toolkits are designed for individuals and groups looking for a hands-on way to join the effort. These practical how-to guides collect ideas and advice from Oxfam's experts as well as supporters around the country. Oxfam Toolkits represent an entry point into the world of activism—building a grass-roots movement for change, one person at a time.

TOOLKITS AVAILABLE:

HOW TO GET STARTED

A MENU OF IDEAS

HOW TO HOST AN OXFAM AMERICA HUNGER BANQUET®

DIRECTIONS AND TOOLS

HOW TO FUNDRAISE FOR OXFAM

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

HOW TO HOST A HOUSE PARTY

HOW TO TAKE ACTION

ORGANIZING IN YOUR COMMUNITY

HOW TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE ON CAMPUS

WANT TO DO SOMETHING TO FIGHT POVERTY AND HUNGER, BUT DON'T KNOW WHERE TO START?

We've put together this menu of time-tested suggestions from Oxfam supporters around the country. You'll also find a step-by-step event planning checklist on page 4.

IDEAS FOR ONE

- ❑ **Skip a meal for Oxfam.** As Oxfam's supporters have done since 1974, organize friends to skip a meal in solidarity with those around the world living in hunger. Donate the money you would have spent on food to Oxfam. Traditionally, thousands skip a meal on the Thursday before Thanksgiving, or choose another day.
- ❑ **Work out for a good cause.** Get friends and family to pledge money for every mile you walk, lap you swim, or mile you bike, and donate the money raised to Oxfam America. Create your own fund-raising page to collect pledges at www.oxfamamerica.org/myoxfam.
- ❑ **Raise money via recyclables.** Collect recyclable soda cans and bottles and donate the deposits to Oxfam.
- ❑ **Write to your local newspaper.** Write a letter to the editor or an op-ed piece in your local newspaper about global poverty and hunger. Highlight any events in your community that are raising awareness or funds.
- ❑ **Host or attend an *Oxfam America Hunger Banquet* event.** Unique and memorable, our signature event allows organizers and participants alike to experience firsthand how our decisions affect others in the world. Go to www.oxfamamerica.org/hungerbanquet to learn more.
- ❑ **Use your own initiative.** Think of unique ways to raise funds or educate others about hunger and poverty. Be creative.

IDEAS FOR YOUR COMMUNITY

- ❑ **Work together.** Consider approaching your community, civic, professional, or religious organizations about participating in or hosting an Oxfam event. Chances are these like-minded groups share your concern and willingness to help. These organizations also have the people and programs in place to more easily plan and conduct fund-raising and educational events.
- ❑ **Get active.** Build your event around activities that your organization's members have in common. Friends and family members pledge money for every mile walked, mile biked, karate kick "kicked"—be creative! Create your own fund-raising page to collect pledges at www.oxfamamerica.org/myoxfam.
- ❑ **Hold a special collection.** During your church or synagogue's services, hold an appeal and special collection to benefit Oxfam's work.

- ❑ **Collect donations.** Add a discussion of global hunger to the agenda at your organization's next meeting, and collect donations from interested members.
- ❑ **Add fliers to your membership mailing.** Go to www.oxfamamerica.org/actfast to find free educational materials about hunger and poverty that you can send to your organization's mailing list.
- ❑ **Organize an *Oxfam America Hunger Banquet* event.** Unique and memorable, our signature event allows organizers and participants alike to experience firsthand how our decisions affect others in the world. Go to www.oxfamamerica.org/hungerbanquet to learn more.
- ❑ **Join forces!** Belong to more than one social or religious group? Have the two organizations join forces in a co-sponsored fund-raising event in your local community.

IDEAS FOR YOUR GRADE SCHOOL, JUNIOR HIGH, OR HIGH SCHOOL

- ❑ **Organize a benefit event.** Collaborate with a school athletic team to designate one game as a benefit for Oxfam America. Or sell student artwork at a benefit auction.
- ❑ **Hold a "Special Dress Day."** To raise money for Oxfam, have students pay to dress outside your school's dress code.
- ❑ **Create a penny map.** Outline a map of the world on your gymnasium floor, athletic field, or school grounds. Collect enough pennies to fill in the countries, and donate the money to Oxfam.
- ❑ **Collect dues from your school library.** Ask your library to donate the fines it collects on the day or week of your event to Oxfam.

IDEAS FOR YOUR COLLEGE OR UNIVERSITY CAMPUS

- ❑ **Stage a Dining Hall Fast.** The quintessential event for college campuses. See the next page for more details.
- ❑ **Declare a Hunger Week.** Organize a weeklong series of events to raise awareness and funds to fight hunger. Plan a different event for each day of the week. Successful Hunger Weeks have included benefit and services auctions, concerts, Dining Hall Fasts, speakers' panels, athletic events, and *Oxfam America Hunger Banquet* events.

- ❑ **Hold a bake sale in the university commons.** With every baked item sold, include information about Oxfam’s work to beat global poverty and hunger.
- ❑ **Show an Oxfam video.** Go to www.oxfamamerica.org to find short, compelling videos that you can screen at your event.
- ❑ **Challenge students to an intra-dorm competition.** Think of fun ways to have students use their school spirit in competitions that raise money and awareness about hunger in our world.
- ❑ **Organize an *Oxfam America Hunger Banquet* event.** Unique and memorable, our signature event allows organizers and participants alike to experience firsthand how our decisions affect others in the world. Go to www.oxfamamerica.org/hungerbanquet to learn more.

“An Oxfam America Hunger Banquet is a great introduction for friends and family to understand, even at the most basic level, what the hunger landscape of the globe looks like.”

—Doug, Oxfam supporter

IDEAS FOR THE WORKPLACE

- ❑ **Skip a meal for Oxfam.** Turn your lunch hour into a company-wide event! Ask your co-workers to skip their lunch for one day and contribute the money they would have spent to Oxfam.
- ❑ **Match your donation with company funds.** Check with your company’s human resources manager or department and see if they provide matching funds to your charitable donation to Oxfam.
- ❑ **Pledge a percentage of revenues for a day.** Ask your company, business, or local civic association to donate a percentage of revenues for one business day to support Oxfam’s work.
- ❑ **Organize “Lunch and Learns” at your company.** Invite the director of an area food bank or shelter, or a returned Peace Corps volunteer, to speak during the lunch hour at your cafeteria.
- ❑ **Challenge co-workers to an intra-office competition.** Organize a series of games to raise money for Oxfam. Pit business units against each other, or managers against subordinates, in a fun, interactive competition. You can also start team or group fund-raising pages at www.oxfamamerica.org/myoxfam.
- ❑ **Host an *Oxfam America Hunger Banquet* event.** Share this unique learning experience with your co-workers in your company’s cafeteria. Or speak to your human resources manager about donating items for your event. Go to www.oxfamamerica.org/hungerbanquet to learn more.

THE DINING HALL FAST

Are you a student looking for a way to help? If your high school or university offers prepaid meal plans, consider holding an Oxfam America Dining Hall Fast. It’s an easy way to reach lots of students and raise funds to benefit Oxfam America’s work.

Dining halls on most campuses are operated by a food service company that contracts with the school to prepare and serve students’ meals. On the day of your Dining Hall Fast, students agree to give up one meal, and the food service company agrees to donate a percentage of the cost of that meal to Oxfam. In most cases, the company cannot donate the full cost, because it needs to cover its normal overhead expenses, including paying dining hall staff. Some students have successfully arranged to collect the unused portions of student meal plans at the end of each semester and donate those funds to Oxfam.

- ❑ **Start early.** Some dining services plan menus up to two months in advance, so begin your planning four to eight weeks ahead.
- ❑ **Contact your school’s dining service.** Present your idea to the food service director. Explain your interest in raising money for Oxfam, and find out what the food service needs from you to begin planning your Dining Hall Fast. Given enough lead time and help from you, the food service will be excited to take part.
- ❑ **Get help.** Gather volunteers to help recruit fasters, staff information tables, and handle publicity.
- ❑ **Choose a date.** We recommend holding your Dining Hall Fast in the fall around Thanksgiving. Choose a date when students are most likely to get involved. Check your campus calendar for competing events, and avoid exam times and any special meals or events put on by your dining facility.
- ❑ **Publicize.** Put up posters, hand out brochures, and set up information tables. Oxfam can provide the materials you need. Send a press release to campus and local media or place an ad in your school newspaper. Get the president of your school or a prominent guest to join your Dining Hall Fast.
- ❑ **Educate.** Help participants understand why their involvement is essential. Visit www.oxfamamerica.org/actfast to learn about the issues and download free materials to hand out.
- ❑ **Follow up.** Send a thank-you note to the food service director and any others who were helpful. Ask food services to send the monies raised to Oxfam America, and keep a photocopy of the check for your records. Finally, evaluate your efforts and make a list of suggestions for next year’s organizers.

EVENT PLANNING CHECKLIST

The key to any successful event is organization. Oxfam has created this checklist to help you and your group of volunteers keep track of all the details of your event. The items are listed in chronological order. We recommend that you check off each task as you complete it. It's a great feeling!

- Identify your audience members and their interests.** Who will attend your event? Who do you want to attend? Knowing your intended participants will help you tailor your event to their interests and will increase the likelihood of their attending.
- Determine your purpose and goals.** Is the purpose of your event educational? To raise funds? Both? Clarify what you want to achieve so you can prioritize where your money and efforts are best spent.
- Choose the type of event.** Completing the two steps above should help you with this choice.
- Set a date.** Consider these factors:
 - Conflicting events in your target audience's schedule
 - Available venues that meet your event's needs
 - Ample time for you and your volunteers to plan
- Determine your budget.** Ultimately, your decisions will be based on what you can afford. Consider what you will have to purchase versus what local merchants or organizations may donate. It is possible to host a successful event with little to no money.
- Reserve a venue and file for any related permits.** Schedule well in advance of your event to ensure availability. To be safe, consider having a backup venue.
- Get commitments from volunteers.** Delegate event responsibilities to willing volunteers. Set deadlines and keep the lines of communication open to ensure questions are answered and tasks are completed.
- Be creative!** Your audience won't be excited about your event unless you are, so make it interesting and fun. Unique themes and activities will attract more media interest as well.
- Promote your event.** Promote your event. Promote your event! Once you determine the specifics (what, when, where, who, why), tell the world! Make your publicity as exciting as the event itself. Consider using invitations, press releases, fliers, email announcements, newsletters, and postcards.
- Prepare for the worst.** Bad weather, supplies running low, poor audience attendance—anything can happen, so take the time to create contingency plans.
- Do a run-through.** Think about the event from the participants' perspective. Consider your goals and make sure they are being met.
- Enjoy your event!** You've worked hard to get to this point, so enjoy yourself. Relax, but make sure volunteers are on task and participants are engaged.
- Evaluate your event after it is over.** Think about what worked and what didn't. Talk to attendees, volunteers, special guests, and others involved. Capture the information and file it for next year's event planning.
- Show your appreciation.** Send thank-you notes to those who volunteered or donated items for your event.
- Let Oxfam know about your event.** Send any stories, anecdotes, photos, and fliers to actfast@oxfamamerica.org. Donations and sign-up sheets can be mailed to:

“Hosting a potluck dinner is really fun, and takes the pressure off you as a host. You can show videos or talk about your message while people are eating. And sharing different types of food brings people together in ways that you wouldn't expect.”

—Amy, Oxfam volunteer

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