In an economic climate in which businesses are “going back to basics” and retrenching, Oxfam America finds itself in a unique position. We’re optimistic.
Those of us in the relief and development business know that good times are often followed by bad, rainy seasons by drought, peace by war. It’s fair to say that we adapt readily in crises.

These are difficult times, but we have a vision of what’s possible. During the past several years, we’ve been scaling up. We continue to invest in individual projects—drilling wells, planting mangroves—but increasingly we weigh the value of our efforts in terms of how they contribute to long-term systemic changes.

On the following pages, we offer you the opportunity to look at a handful of our individual projects and the people behind them, because talking in the abstract about scale can’t capture what makes us optimistic in these troubled times. And that is? Potential—the potential of millions of poor men and women to overcome poverty and our own potential to foster sweeping change over the long haul.
A letter from the president

Dear friends,

Over the past 12 months, we have hurtled from a food price crisis to a financial markets crisis to an economic crisis and now on to what is likely to be a serious unemployment crisis. I don’t know about you, but I have a hard time tuning into the news every day. Everywhere you turn, there is high drama and mounting uncertainty.

With crises, however, come opportunities. Oxfam has always focused on the root causes of poverty—those systemic issues that can be difficult to identify and address. Confronted by multiple and interlocking crises, the public is pressuring decision makers to answer hard questions, to look deeply, and to take whatever steps are necessary to ensure that we will not soon face challenges of this magnitude again. In a sense, Oxfam has been preparing for this kind of opportunity for some time. Our historic work on agriculture, trade, economic security, and environmental protections has positioned us ideally to shape the current vital debates on food security, economic justice, and climate change.

We are grateful that the new US administration appears to be moving quickly to take on global poverty and injustice. Few could fail to be inspired by President Obama’s inaugural speech, in which he said, “To the people of poor nations, we pledge to work alongside you to make your farms flourish and let clean waters flow; to nourish starved bodies and feed hungry minds.”

At moments like these, our leaders need to be challenged to realize such grand ambitions—to answer to the experience and on-the-ground perspective that Oxfam delivers. With ever greater numbers of families falling into poverty every day, our mission has never been more relevant and more urgent.

We know that the kind of social change we seek does not come easily. It requires passion, will, sacrifice, courage, persistence, and organization—and lots of all of these things. Yet we are not daunted by today’s challenges. Sometimes you have to bet on the seemingly impossible. We have done this before and won. We feel that our mission, our voice, our ideas—and your support—are critical.

Thank you for the confidence you have shown us. We hope that you will continue to stand with us in these difficult times.

With respect and regards,

Raymond C. Offenheiser
President
A letter from the chair

Dear friends,

When Oxfam America’s fiscal year drew to a close last October, it was already clear that life on “Main Street” was fundamentally changing—and not for the better. Our friends and families are all experiencing the strains and the stress of lost savings, lost jobs, and an uncertain future in an increasingly precarious world. But in the face of all this, your incredibly generous support of our work has continued. I cannot thank you enough.

Last year I shared with you the need for a predictable funding stream that would allow Oxfam’s staff and local partner organizations to execute a well-thought-out, multiyear business plan. I could never have imagined just how important the successful completion of the Campaign for Oxfam America would be. This funding—along with the reserves our board wisely accumulated over the past 10 years—are now enabling us to move forward on our highest priorities, despite the likelihood that we will experience a meaningful shortfall in unrestricted donations during the next several years as the financial crisis takes its toll.

We have had to make some painful choices to position ourselves with fewer, stronger programs. But thanks to the progress we’ve made in assessing impact, we can approach these strategic cutbacks intelligently. And thanks to our conservative investment strategy going into this market downturn, we are able to make the transition in a fair and orderly way for our colleagues and our partners.

It’s sobering to think about what the deepening economic crisis means in the lives of the poorest people on this earth. The richest countries are called upon to address climate change, food shortages, and other global strains at a time when none of them are feeling very rich. All of us will have to work harder and smarter than ever before.

As we partner with you to help vulnerable families build a more secure future for themselves, we want you to know that we’re taking great care to put your investment in Oxfam America to its highest use.

We are deeply grateful for the confidence you have placed in us.

Sincerely,

Janet A. McKinley
Chair, Board of Directors and the Campaign for Oxfam America
Food

By late 2008, the ranks of the hungry numbered nearly one billion. The roots of the global food crisis are tangled in decades of underinvestment in agriculture; failed trade and food aid policies; and systemic inequalities, including limited access to natural resources and the disproportionate impact of climate change on poor people.

Problem: Harvests from traditional rice farming often failed to support families in Cambodia.

Response: When Mey Som relied on conventional rice-farming methods, he barely grew enough to feed his family. He depended on his daughters’ incomes; they worked at a garment factory in Phnom Penh, a two-hour drive from their village. Now, Som’s farm is so productive that his daughters were able to quit the factory to run the day-to-day operations back home. Their father no longer depends on their incomes. Instead, he’s teaching them how to use the System of Rice Intensification (SRI). This innovative agricultural technique, funded by Oxfam America through our local partner, the Cambodian Center for Study and Development in Agriculture, or CEDAC, continues to improve dramatically the lives of more than 80,000 farmers in Cambodia. With fewer seeds, new generations of farmers like So Sophal (pictured opposite)—one of Som’s daughters—are producing twice the rice they once did. Farmers grow enough to feed their families and sell the surplus. They save money buying fewer seeds.

And the plants are bigger, hardier, and better able to withstand some pests, dry spells, and storms.

Oxfam is now working with national agricultural extension agencies in Cambodia to expand this initiative on an even larger scale.

Problem: Loss of Vietnam’s coastal forests threatened fish habitats.

Response: Thriving in a swirl of fresh and salty water, mangroves weave their roots together above the surface, creating what is both a protective barrier during typhoons and floods as well as the perfect breeding ground for a variety of fish, shrimp, and crab.

These hardy trees once dominated Vietnam’s coastline, but population growth, illegal logging, aggressive fishing, and shrimp farming have devastated the mangroves. Many never recovered from the US military’s use of Agent Orange during the Vietnam War. So more than three years ago, Oxfam America’s local partner, Can Tho University (CTU), set out to restore the forests. CTU made a pact
with about 1,000 villagers in Long Hoa: if they would replant the mangroves and hold off on fishing, shrimping, and felling trees, CTU would train them to use the resulting enhanced biodiversity to their advantage. Rather than fish from coastal waters, they would learn the best ways to use spillover water from replenished forests to raise more fish, shrimp, and crab in ponds in their backyards.

The Vietnamese fish farmers (photo strip above) were initially skeptical. Tran Huu Tri, for one, wasn’t convinced that the new methods held promise. But he soon discovered that the tidal water from the mangroves was rich. “Now I don’t stock the shrimp. I get [them] from the natural environment,” he says. Last June, Tri estimated that he had doubled both his shrimp harvest and his income over the two previous years. And like any successful businessman, he reinvested in his operation by improving and expanding his fish pond. In this way, fish farmers like Tri earn a decent living and can protect and expand local food sources.

Response: More than six million Ethiopians were swept into the global food crisis in 2008, bringing the total number of Ethiopians relying on aid for survival to over 13.5 million. Driven by drought and the high price of staples, these people joined seven million others who are so poor that they already relied on assistance from the Ethiopian government. Oxfam America and its local partner organizations are working to help people who are vulnerable to crises build resilience.

Inside a corral crowded with livestock, a young mother named Jibo keeps an eye on her sheep, her baby slung on her back. Drought destroyed the corn and beans her family planted and has killed some of the animals on which they depend for food and income. And that’s why Jibo is here: to do what she can to protect her family’s remaining assets. She has brought her sheep for veterinary care to a program organized by Oxfam and its local partner, the Gayo Pastoralist Development Initiative. Veterinary treatments, like health care for humans, are preventive. Strong animals stand a better chance of survival in a harsh climate, and this flock is Jibo’s buffer against acute hunger.

Oxfam has begun work with regional officials to stimulate more government investment in livestock systems in southern Ethiopia. By working with people like Jibo to build their assets—their herds, their harvests (like the corn pictured opposite)—and influencing government policy, Oxfam hopes to break patterns of chronic hunger.

2008 INVESTMENTS
System of Rice Intensification and related agricultural programs: $187,000
Mekong River Basin management: $759,000
Ethiopian drought relief: $1.23 million
Water

Currently, more than one billion people lack access to water and over 2.4 billion lack access to basic sanitation. Almost two million children die each year for want of clean water and sanitation. And without water, people cannot nourish crops to feed their families. It is a cycle of need, and as with most resources, poverty, power, and inequality compound issues of access.

Problem: Mining in Central America threatened farmland and water sources.
Response: Rising prices for gold and other metals have sparked interest in mining in Central America. Many people, however, question whether this approach to economic development will benefit society broadly. Farmers, for example, are concerned about protecting their land and water sources from large-scale industrial mining.

Environmentalists and indigenous people near Guatemala’s Lake Izabal are particularly concerned about concessions for nickel mining on the shore of the lake. Izabal is a jewel; rimmed by forests and farms, it provides a habitat for tropical fish and birds, and manatees. Eloyda Mejia, a founder of the Association of Friends of Lake Izabal (ASALI)—an environmental and development organization funded in part by Oxfam since 2006—says Lake Izabal is at risk. “When they talk about the tremendous amounts of minerals they propose to take out of here, how can you believe it won’t affect this place?”

ASALI runs workshops for local farmers so that they can develop strategies to protect their farms and their families.

Freddie Mo Qub, leader of La Paz’s indigenous Q’eq’chi community, pinpoints the necessity of public education: “If it weren’t for these workshops, we would not have any clear information about the effects of mining in our communities.”

Oxfam’s efforts to ensure that oil, gas, and mining profits do not come at the expense of local people range from work in small communities in Peru and Guatemala to efforts in Washington, DC, and West Africa to pass legislation that will protect basic rights and ensure transparency about payments from oil and mining companies to governments.

Problem: Recurrent floods contaminated drinking water in El Salvador.
Response: After an emergency response to severe floods following a tropical storm in late 2007, Oxfam and its local partner, the Salvadoran Association for Humanitarian Assistance (PROVIDA), saw an opportunity to protect the basic needs of nine rural communities over the long term in Zacatecoluca, El Salvador. PROVIDA created reinforced “healthy wells” (pictured opposite)—tightly sealed and purified—to replace old, hand-dug wells that left drinking water vulnerable to contamination. PROVIDA also built composting latrines for homes surrounding the wells to protect community health during times of flood. With training, local people now know what steps to take in the event of a major flood and how to monitor their wells regularly to ensure that water remains clean. “The new water system has been a huge benefit for our community,” says Lucia Amaya, a mother of five.

Problem: Ethiopian farmers needed adequate water to grow crops.
Response: For Dedef Dalacha and others in the Rift Valley, scarce water made farming a challenge. Dalacha used to cultivate sugar cane to bring in money, but limited water meant that his efforts were not very profitable. When Oxfam America’s Ethiopian partner Center for Development Initiatives helped him and 65 other families build an irrigation channel, he switched to growing vegetables. Dalacha now makes more money, and water is the key.
“We used to have to wait for rain, but now we use water whenever we want, and there is no difference between the rainy and dry season,” Dalacha says. He has built a new house and says he can support his eight children. “Before, I had a shortage of income. Now it is no trouble to keep them in school with everything they need.” His wife, Safaye Bediya, says they now eat more and better vegetables, and the health of the children has improved. “They are healthy and happy,” she says. Woya Shakule, head of the village water users’ committee, sums up the impact of the irrigation channel simply: “We see big changes here, and they are really life-changing.”

At the national level, Oxfam is working with the Ethiopian government to ensure that small-scale irrigation development is a higher priority in the nation’s agricultural strategy.

**Problem:** A tsunami-affected village lacked an irrigation system.

**Response:** For generations, the farmers of Gonnoruwa, Sri Lanka, had been losing their crops to drought—sometimes four seasons out of five. Forced to turn to moneylenders to make up their endless shortfalls, they were nearly destitute. The tsunami of 2004, which swept away the villagers who had traveled to a nearby coastal town for market day, was a terrible blow. But when aid providers offered assistance, Gonnoruwans were ready to take charge: they asked for help to build an irrigation system. Oxfam agreed, and encouraged a women’s self-help group (pictured opposite) to manage the project. A local artist captured their work (drawing above).

Now, Gonnoruwa’s farmers are growing 200 acres of rice. They have pulled themselves out of debt, they are eating three meals a day, and they are helping their children get a better education. But the gains are not only material: where once women’s leadership was resisted, it is now embraced. Asked how it feels to be a respected community leader, a member of the women’s group replies, “It’s unbearable happiness.”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2008 INVESTMENTS</th>
<th>Central American humanitarian program: $831,000</th>
<th>Central American mining communities program: $319,000</th>
<th>Ethiopian water program: $575,000</th>
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<td></td>
<td>DEVELOPMENT &amp; HUMANITARIAN RELIEF</td>
<td>DEVELOPMENT &amp; HUMANITARIAN RELIEF</td>
<td>DEVELOPMENT &amp; HUMANITARIAN RELIEF</td>
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<td>Oil, gas, and mining work: $2.84 million</td>
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<td>Tsunami rehabilitation: $1.18 million</td>
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<td>DEVELOPMENT &amp; HUMANITARIAN RELIEF</td>
<td>PUBLIC EDUCATION</td>
<td>POLICY &amp; ADVOCACY</td>
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Safety

Shelter. Freedom from violence. A means of protecting oneself from preventable diseases. These are all aspects of what we mean by safety. Ensuring that people are safe means supporting their efforts to protect their basic human rights and ensure that their families, their homes, and their livelihoods will not be destroyed.

Problem: Poor communities are left vulnerable to future disasters.

Response: For many in East Biloxi, MS, three years seems like an eternity. That’s how long it’s been since Hurricane Katrina struck this close-knit, mostly low- and middle-income neighborhood.

People here still face a shortage of affordable homes and jobs, and many essential services still haven’t been restored. Locals like Sharon Hanshaw (pictured opposite), however, aren’t giving up. Hanshaw leads the Oxfam-supported grassroots group Coastal Women for Change (CWC) and trains residents—especially women and people of color—to speak out about the Gulf Coast recovery process. CWC members serve on the mayor’s planning commission and have traveled to Washington, DC, as spokespeople for what Hanshaw calls “a left-behind community.” As their work evolved, members of CWC realized that, in addition to advocating for solutions, they had to create some of their own. Among other activities, they founded an in-home child care program to address the shortage of affordable care, and they are helping local people protect themselves in the event of future storms.

Despite her own losses—her house, car, and business—Hanshaw says she’s never thought of leaving her hometown. “That’s what we’re about here: family, community,” she says simply. “We help each other out.”

Problem: Climate change hurts poor people first and worst.

Response: Jumpa Datta drew her fears in vibrant blues, greens, and reds. People row through a flooded village. Homes are waterlogged. Animals marooned. Oxfam displayed Datta’s drawing (pictured on top of following page)—and those of other children from Bangladesh to Uganda—at a UN conference on climate change. The exhibit was part of Oxfam’s effort to elevate the voices of poor communities grappling with the consequences of a warming planet. Through public education and engagement with governments, Oxfam is calling for national legislation—and an international agreement—that goes beyond curbing emissions. Policies must set aside funding and other assistance to help poor people adapt. Policy makers call this
“adaptation,” but it really means helping vulnerable communities become more resilient in the face of climate change.

With this support, communities like Datta’s can invest in coastal tree barriers and emergency alarm systems during floods, drought-resistant seeds and food banks in times of shortage, and mosquito nets and health surveillance to prevent diseases that are worsened by global warming. As one Mozambiquan farmer said: “We don’t have much school education, but all of us understand that many problems we face today are because of climate change. It is a serious risk to our existence as workers of the land.”

**Problem:** Congo’s people suffered violence as a result of years of conflict.

**Response:** Barza—a system of communal forgiveness—is what some families finally turn to when the law fails to deliver justice. And advocacy, at all levels of government, is what Oxfam turns to in its effort to make sure that the rights of people in the Democratic Republic of Congo are not forgotten.

There are many stories of unbearable loss. One father (pictured opposite) lives in the eastern provinces of Congo where conflict has stolen countless lives—including that of his son. Child soldiers—his neighbors—tied his son up and tossed him into the Congo River. It’s just one of innumerable acts of violence in a country where rape has become a weapon of war and 5.4 million people have died since 1998 as a consequence of fighting and the hardship it spawns.

Through advocacy at local, national, and international levels, Oxfam is working to support Congo’s efforts to reintegrate former soldiers into communities, prepare the country’s security services to protect civilians, and ensure effective peace agreements that focus on the needs of Congo’s people.

Marie Kanyobayo knows well how violence can erode one’s sense of well-being. Kanyobayo used to travel alone on a small motorbike—until lawlessness made that bit of independence too risky. Now she must ride with her husband or aid workers when she travels. Kanyobayo heads an organization supported by Oxfam that educates the Congolese about their rights. It’s her kind of work that Oxfam’s advocacy aims to support. The messages she carries with her—about the peaceful pursuit of democracy—are essential for the future of Congo.

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**2008 INVESTMENTS**

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<tr>
<th>Category</th>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Climate Change campaign</td>
<td>$1.27 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Humanitarian policy, advocacy &amp; campaigns</td>
<td>$509,000</td>
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Making a living

With a global financial crisis devastating even the world’s wealthiest nations, there has never been a moment when earning a living seemed more critical to survival. Whatever their circumstances, people need to be able to provide for their families. And the price of earning a living must not be dignity.

Problem: The world’s poorest people didn’t have a safe way to save money or access credit.

Response: Most investors won’t loan money to someone they think cannot repay. This means that poor people can rarely access credit to start a business, pay for education, or buy seeds. So Oxfam launched Saving for Change in 2005, a program that trains community groups to save and lend small amounts of money. This savings-led approach to microfinance helps the world’s poorest people—and keeps their money circulating in their communities.

What’s more, this model is self-replicating; participants spontaneously start new groups using their own resources. Saving for Change started in Mali and has expanded to Senegal, Cambodia, and El Salvador. There are now more than 11,000 groups with 223,000 individual members. Participants—mostly women—have collectively saved more than $2.7 million.

Saving for Change marked a milestone in 2008. The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation granted Oxfam America $11.8 million to help expand Saving for Change to reach more than half a million participants and to research the potential for the program in additional countries in Latin America.

Problem: Traditional cotton farmers in Mali struggled to make ends meet.

Response: Fanta Sinayogo (pictured opposite), a mother of nine, belongs to an organic cotton growers cooperative in Mali, which Oxfam helps to support. Organic cotton fetches a higher price, and growing organically reduces costs: Sinayogo uses no pesticides and produces her own organic fertilizer. On just 1.25 acres, she grew 880 pounds of cotton in 2008. Since she started growing cotton as a cash crop four years ago, Sinayogo is more financially independent. “Last year I used my savings from growing organic cotton to buy more food,” she explains. That cash allowed her to feed her family through the growing season when others in West Africa struggled to survive the 2008 spike in food prices.

Working from a different angle, Oxfam and its partners are also coordinating with cotton companies to ensure that farmers receive the marketing services they need to sell their cotton.

Problem: Despite long hours and hard work, Florida tomato pickers earned low wages.

Response: Typically, field hands picking tomatoes in Florida earned an average of 45 cents per bucket—meaning a worker had to pick nearly two and a half tons of tomatoes a day, even in bad weather, in order to earn minimum wage. Oxfam’s local partner, the Coalition of Immokalee Workers, led a public campaign to improve wages and working conditions for Florida’s estimated 33,000 migrant farmworkers. The campaign inspired more than 37,000 people to sign Oxfam’s online petition aimed at Burger King. In response, the fast food giant announced in May that it would agree to pay field hands in its supply chain a penny more per pound of tomatoes. The money is not yet in their pockets because of resistance from the Florida Tomato Growers Exchange, which represents the state’s tomato farmers. But if the plan moves ahead, that penny could mean a near doubling of workers’ wages—and would prove that consumer pressure can bring positive change.
Problem: In the midst of conflict, people in Darfur had no way to earn a living.

Response: Short and knobby-kneed, a donkey may not look like the answer to one of Darfur’s more pressing problems: earning a living in a war-torn region. But this humble beast is the lynchpin in two projects that are helping people do just that. Through local organizations, Oxfam America is distributing 280 donkeys and 100 carts to families who’ve been trying to survive despite six years of conflict in Darfur.

“The donkey is a very essential asset in rural Darfur; it’s a means of transport and a source of income,” says Oxfam’s Malik A. Idris. In a region with few opportunities to earn money, donkeys can support entrepreneurial enterprise: people can use them not only to transport their own goods and water, but can hire them out to others. Many who receive the donkeys are farmers and will use them to help plow fields located on clay-clogged land—an activity for which the animals are well suited. Other beneficiaries live in the camps that now stretch beyond El Fasher, North Darfur. Those who also receive carts can use them to haul the firewood and grass they must collect far from the camps.

Problem: Indigenous farmers in Peru needed a lucrative cash crop.

Response: Carlos Eduardo Fernandez (pictured opposite) processes Sacha Inchi nuts on the edge of Peru’s Amazon Basin. Using a machine provided by Oxfam, he processes more than 325 pounds in an hour, a task that would take several days to do by hand. These nuts are rich in omega-3 and omega-6 oils and a potential source of income for indigenous Ashaninka farmers, who hope to generate cash by meeting the increasing global demand for omega oils.

Oxfam is helping indigenous farmers identify native varieties of Sacha Inchi that flourish in their climate and the best ways to cultivate and sell it to the Fair Trade market. In the coming years, these farmers hope that Sacha Inchi will supplement the crops they grow for their own consumption. With a lucrative cash crop like Sacha Inchi, indigenous communities can earn money for education and health care—and save for the future.

2008 INVESTMENTS

<table>
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<td>Sudan humanitarian crisis</td>
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<td>West African cotton farmers program</td>
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<td>Fair Food in Florida Fields campaign</td>
<td>$136,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sustainable livelihoods in South America</td>
<td>$628,000</td>
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</table>
Oxfam’s reach

Oxfam America maintains offices around the world, staffed by experienced people who often come from the regions in which we work and who know the local realities. Oxfam International is an alliance of 13 Oxfams working in more than 100 countries with more than 3,000 local organizations. As part of this coalition, we can help more people because the confederation extends our collective reach. Oxfam International’s total program expenditures exceeded $828 million in 2007–08. Together, we’re able to campaign globally, uniting around some of the world’s biggest problems to achieve far-reaching solutions. Since Oxfam is already working in communities around the world, when disaster strikes, we can be first responders—channeling funds, aid workers, and relief supplies to where they are needed in a matter of hours.
Oxfam’s impact

Oxfam America is committed to a long-term impact, but creating effective systems for evaluation is an enormous undertaking. We are pleased to report that in 2008 we broke important new ground: Oxfam launched three pilot research projects to provide a baseline against which we can assess our impact—assessments that will allow us to correct course as necessary.

Each baseline project requires a decade-long commitment by Oxfam to examine the effect of our program efforts on an identified goal. Our pilot projects were designed to provide analyses of (1) our work with communities affected by oil and gas mining in Peru, (2) our work with communities affected by gold mining in West Africa, and (3) our gender violence prevention campaign in El Salvador. The initial research was completed in partnership with local institutions that will monitor key indicators over the coming decade.

Oxfam plays a convening role: we pull together people locally, nationally, and internationally to address the systems in which poor people are constrained, and we empower people to define and create their own future. With this first baseline research in place, we are prepared to evaluate our impact in these three areas regularly, looking for both positive and negative changes in people’s well-being.

Baseline findings in Peru and West Africa were based on the following variables:

- Extent to which people can access information about their rights and can monitor mining activities
- Percentage of mine profits that go to local communities
- Quality of policies adopted by Peru on transparency and governance in the mining sector
- Degree of harmonization of the policies of West African countries to comply with a proposed regional mining code
- Power and capacity of local and national actors to influence key decisions
- Fairness of compensation paid by mines to affected households in West Africa

Baseline findings in El Salvador were based on the following variables:

- Availability of gender violence statistics and rates of reporting
- Women and youth leaders’ influence on decision makers regarding gender violence prevention
- Resources available to women and youth leaders to address and prevent violence
- Women and youth leaders’ knowledge of the law and their rights regarding gender violence
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  - Oxfam America
  - (Staff-elected board member)
2008 was an important year for Oxfam America in financial terms. We strengthened and expanded our fund-raising efforts. In anticipation of a more difficult future for unrestricted revenues, we focused our activities to reduce costs and invest in our most promising programs. Thanks to these efforts and our conservative investment policy, we enter 2009 in strong financial condition, prepared to support Oxfam’s important work through troubled economic times.

Total contributions increased 11 percent last year to $71.5 million. 2008 marked the end of our extraordinarily successful campaign for Oxfam America, with overall commitments of over $63 million for current and future programming. In 2008 alone, we recorded over $22.5 million in campaign contributions—including an $11.8 million multiyear grant to support our Saving for Change programs. Unrestricted contributions grew by 3 percent this year, although contributions weakened in late 2008 as the economic crisis deepened.

As our programs grew in scope, 2008 expenses increased by $7.4 million (13 percent) over 2007. Most of the increase was in program services expenses, which increased $5.9 million, primarily related to development and humanitarian relief programs, largely in Africa. Public education expenditures rose by $1.4 million, primarily because of our efforts to campaign about the effects of climate change on the world’s poorest communities. Policy and advocacy expenses decreased by $900,000, owing to the completion of our Farm Bill campaign. Support services-related expenses grew by $1.4 million (12 percent) as we continued to make key investments to provide the infrastructure and revenue sustainability to support our expanding programs. We have invested in improved systems for constituent relationship management, human resources, communications, and financial management.

Total net assets grew by $7.3 million (10 percent), primarily as the result of campaign contributions. These increases were offset in part by the drawdown of funds received in prior years for our US Gulf Coast and tsunami programs. Despite an unprecedented market downturn in 2008, Oxfam managed a positive—albeit modest—gain on our conservatively invested assets.

Our strategy of investing first in programs and second in critical support areas, while ensuring financial stability, continues to receive the endorsement of rating agencies. More important, our growing number of supporters represents our most important endorsement.

In spite of our 2008 revenue growth and conservative investments, Oxfam America is not immune to the current economic downturn. We have planned for a multiyear impact. We must be ever more prudent in our spending and focused in our approach. We will no doubt face difficult decisions about how, where, and when to invest our resources. We are, however, fortunate to have accumulated reserves that will allow us to continue to seek lasting solutions to poverty and injustice.

Financial information
(November 1, 2007, to October 31, 2008)

Oxfam America is rated highly by a number of leading independent charity evaluators, including the American Institute of Philanthropy. In 2008, Oxfam America again received the Better Business Bureau’s highest rating for charitable organizations by meeting all 20 of its “Standards for Charity Accountability.”

Oxfam received its third annual four-star rating from the nation’s largest charity evaluator: Charity Navigator. This places Oxfam among 11 percent of charitable organizations nationally.

“A four-star rating indicates that your organization excels, as compared to other charities in America, in successfully managing the finances of your organization in an efficient and effective manner. This consistency in your rating is an exceptional feat, especially given the economic challenges many charities have had to face in the last year.”

Charity Navigator

Joe H. Hamilton
Treasurer & secretary
### Statement of activities
(Oxfam America and Oxfam America Advocacy Fund | Years ending October 31)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2007</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>REVENUE, GAINS, AND OTHER SUPPORT</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contributions</td>
<td>$71,480,000</td>
<td>$64,291,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Investment Income</td>
<td>1,350,000</td>
<td>3,744,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>307,000</td>
<td>268,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total revenue gains and other support</td>
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<td>$68,303,000</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2007</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>EXPENSES</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program services</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development and humanitarian relief programs</td>
<td>39,732,000</td>
<td>34,233,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Public education</td>
<td>8,515,000</td>
<td>7,132,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policy and advocacy</td>
<td>4,305,000</td>
<td>5,243,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total program services</td>
<td>52,552,000</td>
<td>46,608,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support services</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Management and general</td>
<td>4,171,000</td>
<td>3,444,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fund-raising</td>
<td>9,099,000</td>
<td>8,391,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total support services</td>
<td>13,270,000</td>
<td>11,835,000</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total expenses</strong></td>
<td>$65,822,000</td>
<td>$58,443,000</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2007</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Change in net assets</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change related to unrestricted funds</td>
<td>906,000</td>
<td>4,296,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change related to temporarily restricted funds</td>
<td>6,409,000</td>
<td>5,564,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total change in net assets</strong></td>
<td>7,315,000</td>
<td>9,860,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Net assets at the beginning of the year</strong></td>
<td>81,746,000</td>
<td>71,886,000</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2007</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Net assets at the end of the year</strong></td>
<td>$89,061,000</td>
<td>$81,746,000</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### Statement of financial position
(Oxfam America and Oxfam America Advocacy Fund | As of October 31)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2007</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>ASSETS</strong></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cash</td>
<td>$2,458,000</td>
<td>$2,651,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Investments</td>
<td>72,865,000</td>
<td>71,975,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pledges receivable</td>
<td>19,518,000</td>
<td>13,317,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other assets</td>
<td>2,875,000</td>
<td>3,106,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Net fixed assets</td>
<td>2,694,000</td>
<td>1,869,000</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total assets</strong></td>
<td>$100,410,000</td>
<td>$92,918,000</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2007</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>LIABILITIES &amp; NET ASSETS</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liabilities</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accounts payable and accrued expenses</td>
<td>3,573,000</td>
<td>3,589,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grants payable</td>
<td>3,181,000</td>
<td>3,706,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other liabilities</td>
<td>4,595,000</td>
<td>3,877,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total liabilities</strong></td>
<td>11,349,000</td>
<td>11,172,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Net assets</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Unrestricted</td>
<td>34,027,000</td>
<td>33,121,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Temporarily restricted</td>
<td>53,466,000</td>
<td>47,057,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Permanently restricted</td>
<td>1,568,000</td>
<td>1,568,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total net assets</strong></td>
<td>89,061,000</td>
<td>81,746,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2007</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total liabilities and net assets</strong></td>
<td>$100,410,000</td>
<td>$92,918,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Sources of funds
- Individuals: 58.8%
- Foundations & Oxfams: 27.0%
- Corporations: 7.6%
- Bequests & legacies: 3.8%
- Interest & other: 2.2%
- Special events: 0.6%

Uses of funds
- Program services: 79.9%
- Fund-raising: 13.8%
- Management & general: 6.3%

Program services
- Development & humanitarian relief programs: 75.6%
- Public education: 16.2%
- Policy & advocacy: 8.2%

Development & humanitarian relief programs
- Africa: 36.5%
- Latin America: 19.2%
- Asia: 13.5%
- North America: 13.5%
- Cross-regional programs: 10.2%
- Program management: 7.1%

Revenue growth (in millions US$)
- $7,000
- $5.6 million
- $13.8 million
- $29.2 million
- $73.1 million

Annual expenses and investment in program services (in millions US$)
- 2008
- Investment in program services
- Investment in support services
Your donations

The Campaign for Oxfam America

In October 2008, Oxfam America completed a $50 million campaign to expand programs over a multiyear period. We are extremely grateful to the more than 850 donors, who collectively made commitments of just over $63 million—well beyond the goal. The great success of Oxfam America’s first fund-raising campaign would not have been possible without support from our loyal friends. Commitments of $20,000 and more made between 2006 and 2008 are recognized here. Campaign gifts received in 2008 also appear in the donor list that begins on the following page.

Campaign commitments have transformed our organization, as they provide extra support for strategic programs that invest in women and families, create economic opportunity, save lives, and ensure impact and effectiveness through 2012. We are incredibly grateful to all our donors who contributed to this transformation. We also want to thank the members of the Campaign Executive Committee, who volunteered their time, efforts, ideas, and enthusiasm.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Campaign Executive Committee</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Janet A. McKinley, Chair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Karen Keating Ansara</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barbara Fiorito</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barry D. Gaberman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stephen B. Land</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shigeki Makino</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paul A. Moses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dana Quitslund</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roger Widmann</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kim Williams</td>
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<tr>
<th>$500,000–$999,999</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mary Catherine Bunting</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Capital Group Companies Charitable Foundation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grousbeck Family Foundation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hershey Family Foundation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stephen B. and Jane Land</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Rockefeller Foundation Visa, Inc.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>$100,000–$499,999</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anonymous (7)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Louis and Anne Abrons Foundation Edith Allen</td>
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<td>The Ambinder Family Foundation</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Ansara Family Fund at the Boston Foundation</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Cameron Baird Foundation Araceli and David Barclay</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bridgeway Charitable Foundation Marjorie T. and William R. Coleman</td>
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<tr>
<td>Crane Creek Family Fund of The Oregon Community Foundation Ian and Ruth Crowe</td>
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<tr>
<td>David D. Doniger and Lisa Jorgenson James W. and Donna E. Down</td>
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<tr>
<td>Anne Marie Duffy and John O’Callaghan eBay Foundation</td>
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<tr>
<td>The FJC Foundation Bob and Pat Flynn</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Lloyd A. Fry Foundation E. Marianne Gabel and Donald Lateiner Nina Galen</td>
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<tr>
<td>William C. and Jean M. Graustein Heather and Paul Haaga</td>
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<tr>
<td>Otto Haas Charitable Trust #2 Stephen Hays and Valerie Hughes Kapil and Sunita Jain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Kofco Foundation Jim and Anahila Lovelace MacDonald Family Charitable Trust Paul A. Moses and Barbara N. Lubash</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charles Stewart Mott Foundation Oxfam Novib The Philanthropic Collaborative, Inc. Richard Pozen, M.D., and Ann Silver Pozen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Steven A. Reiss and Mary Mattingly Bruce Rosenblum and Lori Laitman Rosenblum James and Anne Rothenberg The Schaffner Family Foundation Peter A. and Renate Singer John H. and Cynthia Lee Smet Foundation Michael E. Soloff and Sue L. Himmelreich Wallace Global Fund Ward Family Foundation Weil, Gotshal &amp; Manges LLP WHH Foundation Roger and Judith Widmann Kim Williams and Trevor Miller</td>
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<tr>
<th>$20,000–$99,999</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anonymous (15)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Susan W. Almy Charles and Karlene Boxenbaum Fund Peter C. Canelos Celerant Consulting, Inc. Susan Clare and Peter D. Parker</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Oxfam America is extremely grateful to have received the support of 253,000 individuals, foundations, and corporations. We are particularly pleased to have earned the confidence of 41,000 new supporters. With this report, we gratefully acknowledge those who gave $5,000 or more.

We offer our heartfelt thanks to the tens of thousands of supporters we don’t have space to list here, including the many employers that provide gifts through workplace campaigns and matching grants.

(Contributions to Oxfam America and the Oxfam America Advocacy Fund received between November 1, 2007, and October 31, 2008)
Roger and Judith Widmann
Josephine C. Wilkinson Charitable Lead Trust
Margaret and Matt Winkler

$10,000–$24,999
Anonymous (42)
Walter and Alice Abrams Family Fund
AHS Foundation
Alchemy Foundation
Eugenie Allen and Jeremy Feigelson
Ann Alpern, M.D., and John E. Laird
Robert Amory
Jeffry S. Amthor and Margaret G. Goodbody
M. Jean Anderson
Jeff Antebi
Eric and Cindy Arbanovella
Patricia Artigas and Lucas Etchegaray
Warwick P. Atkins
Auxillo, Inc.
Edith Baldinger Charitable Lead Annuity Trust
Richard A. Barna and Eileen Maisel
Estate of Carl Baslier
Bay Branch Foundation
Marie Benedix
Alan Berro
Jodi L. Biskup and Carlos Blanco
Dorothy B. Black
Serine and Claudia Bonnist
John Borders Jr.
Bridgemill Foundation
James Burrell
Sherman B. and Patricia G. Carl
Sharon Carter
John C. Cawley and Christine Marshall
Fay Chandler
Susan Clare and Peter D. Parker
Steven F. Cohn
Marjorie T. and William R. Coleman
Collegiate Reformed Protestant Dutch Church
Columbia Foundation
Communication Automation Corporation
Anne B. Corcos
Christine Cronin and Mark H. Hurst
Adah R. Davis
George W. Divine
James W. and Donna E. Down
Renna Draynel
David B. Dubard and Deidre M. Giblin
Anne Marie Duffy and John O'Callaghan
Philip and Deborah Edmundson
Todd Evans
Foundation M
Francis Family Foundation
David Fraser and Jo Ann Alber
Bennett and Kate Freeman
Fullerton Family Foundation
Philip and Donna Furse

Chuck Goldman Family Supporting Foundation
Stephen Gordon
Fred M. Grafton
John and Kathryn Greenberg
Bradley J. Greenwald and Rachel C. Hoffman
Patricia B. and John C. Hall
Harrington Family Foundation
Nancy and Hendrik Hartog
Health Magazine
Estate of Mary B. Helner
Edward S. and Mary W. Herman
Barbara M. and Aaron J. Heyerdahl
Robert S. and Cynthia Honn Hills
Benjamin and Francine Hiller
Gary Hirschkron
Michael Hirschorn
Nancy Hoagland
Christine W. Hobbie and Neil F. Brander
Deanna and Edward Hong
Sister Julia Huiskamp
Anne Humes
The Roy A. Hunt Foundation
M. David and Nancy Hyman
II Do Foundation
Islamic Society of North America
Jaffe Family Foundation
William and Amy Jahn
Jaquith Family Foundation
Peter Jennings Foundation
James H. Julien
Mildred June Fund
Michael Kass and Kate Hartley
Carl Kawaaja and Gwendolyn Holcombe Foundation
Avinash Kaza
Sylvia Keane, In memory of George and Elsie Reeves
Charles and Angeliki V. Keil
Nannerl Q. and Robert O. Keohane
Susan Kinzie
John and Cornelia Kittredge
Dr. Ray B. Knapp
Lisa and Victor Kohn
Ann V. Kramer
Alex Kramer and Patricia Hallstein
Emily H. Kurrethuer
Jack and Dorothy Kupferberg Family Foundation
Stephanie and Peter Kurzina
Tracy Lamblin
Karen Lantz
Lou Lee
Sandra and Joseph Lee
Thomas A. Lehrer
Law and Laura Leibowitz
Ruth Lespin
Dora Freedman Levit Fund for People
Allison R. Levy
Lon D. and Nancy L. Lewis
Lightworker Foundation

Steven Lin
Joseph M. Lobozzo
Lored Foundation
Lowe-Marshall Trust
Nancy and Thomas Lurie
MacDonald Family Charitable Trust
Marquis George MacDonald Foundation
Jonathan Marshall
Elizabeth L. Martin
Peter Mayer and Robin Bierstedt
Eleanor McCleary-Sellstrom and A. D. Sellstrom
Sahyin Mehta
Frank and Alan Melville
Adele Mendelson
Steven Merel
Lisa and Yayon Minsky-Primus
Edward D. and Anna Mitchell
Family Foundation
Marianne Mitsorina
Alice Claire S. Montgomery Trust
Randy and Norma Moore
William F. and Mary Sue Morrill
Terri Murray
Robert A. and Mary O. Naftzger
Samuel C. Newbury and Janice L. Myers-Newbury
The Nielsen Company
NRG Systems
Martha Nussbaum
Eugene M. Ohr and Catherine Kim
Vivian and Paul Oum Foundation
Mark F. and Robin Opel
Oxfam Australia
Aoxm Hong Kong
Wayne Pagliero and Elizabeth Clarke
Peter and Alison Palmer
Virginia Patterson
Sunil Paul
Christine Pendzich and Sam Behrends
Pezeshki-Bryer Fund
Kate Phillips and Mike Ross
Allen Pierce
Welling T. Pope
Putnam Investments Foundation
John Queralt
Bob Raab
The Rands Foundation
Gertrude and Daryl Reagan
Reidler Foundation
Steven A. Reiss and Mary Mattingly
Margaret Renzi
Ann Craig Rice
Eleanor Richards
Charles Rizzo
William B. and Sandra B. Rogers
Hugh R. and Katherine D. Roome
Andra Rose and Joshua Goldstein
Corey M. Rosen
Max Rosenfeld Foundation
Jim and Peg Runnels
Sage Publications, Inc.

John M. Sawyer Memorial Trust
Michael and Helen Schaffer Foundation
Benjamin and Sophie Scher Charitable Foundation
Gail and Patrick Schoenfelder
John and Barbara Schubert
Margaret Seely
Robert and Gloria Sherman Family Foundation
Wendy R. Sherman and Bruce Stokes
Jerrry Silbert
Jami Simon
David P. and Erika Simons
Patricia J. S. Simpson
Lucian Snow and Elizabeth Wilcox
John G. Sommer
Peggy and Gene Somoza
Martin J. Spalding
Charles Spear Charitable Trust
Everett and Gladys Spector
Richard K. and Harriet M. Squire
The Stack Foundation
Eugene and Marilyn Stein
Antonia Stolper and Robert Fertik
Patsi and Eric Summer
Carol R. Sundberg
Frances Sweeney
Alan J. Talbert
Ernest Ten Eyck and Dorothy E. Walker
Bernd Thalmann
Caroline Blanton Thayer Charitable Trust
Michelle Thomson
Todd Tibeitls
Yonina Tova
Michael E. Tubs
Gene R. Ulrich
Elise P. van Buren
Anne and Mark Veldman
Philippe and Katherine Villers
Paul E. and Betsy A. Von Kuster
Charles Walsh
Estate of Elizabeth M. Wenger
David Wengert
Peter and Linda Werner
Whitman Family Foundation
World Resources Institute
Pater and Mary Wright
Youths' Friends Association, Inc.
Karl and Dian Zeille

$5,000–$9,999
Anonymous (47)
The A.M. Fund
Tim Abbott
Philip J. and Rachel E. Abercrombie
Dr. S. James and Mary T. Adelstein
May Affleck
Michael and Pamela Albert
Margaret L. Anderson
Kenneth S. Ansins
Brian Arbogast and Valerie Tarico
Oxfam Legacy Circle

Members of the Legacy Circle ensure the continuation of Oxfam’s work by naming Oxfam as a beneficiary in their will, retirement plan, and life insurance policies, or by planning a life-income gift.

Anonymous (411)
Helen Ackerson
Scott C. Alden
Mark and Michele Aldrich
Eric Hall Anderson
Margaret L. Anderson
Hope and Arnold Asrelska
Elizabeth Atkins
Lyndon and Betty Babcock
George and Harriet Baldwin
Richard and Marian Baldy
Stephanie Barko
Dick and Gretchen Barsness
Virginia Baumgartner
Alice Benson and Kirk Fisher
Lorna Bentley
Kurt and Catherine Bergel
Sanford Berman
Jeff and Ann Berner
Lucille E. Bernier
Jud Berzon
Mary Frances Best
David Blot
Mike and Cathy Blumenfeld
Dorothy Bobolin
Marjorie Boetler
Surya Bolom
Daniel Bradford
Phil C. Branch
Frieda Brock
Heather Brodhead
Richard and Helen Bulinski
Frederick P. and Alice E. Bunnell
Charles and Marion Burger
John and Susan Burns
Kenneth H. Burrows
Wallace F. and Therese T. Burton
Daniel Butler
Grace W. Buzaljko
Mary Lou Callahan
Isabel McNeill Carley
Stephanie A. Chalmers, D.V.M.
Shannon H. Chamberlin
Malcolm H. Wiener Foundation
Edward J. and Barbara A. Wilson
Timothy S. Wilson
Estate of Ada Wing
Ernest and Roswilda M. Winsor
Julia Wise and Jeff Kaufman
Iriss Witkowsky
Judith Wolfsy, M.D.
Robin Wright Fund
Gail C. Bates Yessne and Peter Yessne
Barbara Young and Eric Weber

Janet Fitch Parker
Kimberly J. Parker
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Allen E. Perrel
Catherine Peshkin
Elizabeth I. Peters
Nicholas and Rita H. Petraglia
Hermine and Leo Phillippe
John W. and Patricia R. Pickard
John G. Pitcairn Fund
Peggy Goldberg Pitt and Michael Pitt
Timothy Porthouse
Bonnie Potter
John T. Potts, M.D., and Susanne Potts
James R. and Margaret G. Power
Mary S. Prince
Princeton University
Proudfoot Consulting
Estate of Margaret Purvine
Pzena Family Foundation
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The Renaissance Foundation
Ritz-Carlton Hotel
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Claire J. Rocco
Stuart Roe
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S. K. Saks
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John A. Santos
Alvin Sargent
Kitt and Heather Sawitsky
Deb Sawyer and Wayne Martinson
Rita Schaefer
Edward Schmidt
Jennifer Schneck
Howard L. Schreier
Schreier Family Foundation
David Schroeder
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Philip Sears
Igbal Shamsul
Susan H. Shane
William L. Shanks
Darian and Allen Shapiro
Todd and Kathleen Shapley-Quinn
James Shaw
Jamie Shaw
Dorinda Shiel
Winthrop A. Short
Marian and Arthur Shulman
Daniel Sieberg
David E. Simon and Lynn Gordon
Sisters of Charity of Nazareth
Murali and Gouri Sivarajan
Ellin Smalley
Jeffery A. Smisek and Diana L. Strassmann
Estate of Jeannette F. Smith
Joanne Linda Smith
Marion B. Smith
Linda and Steve Soge
Mary L. Solecki and Timothy Wendt
Carolyn and Andrew Spangler
William C. Spears and Robin Maclntyre
Tom and Elizabeth M. Sperr
Scott D. St. Marie and Theresa Lang
Rosalie Stage
Cecilia E. Stanfield
Anne Steele
Judy Steigernwald
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Little things add up

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We can cut costs further by reducing print quantities in future years. If you’d prefer to receive an electronic version of the annual report rather than the print version, please email us at donorinfo@oxfamamerica.org.
Working together to end poverty and injustice

Forty percent of the people on our planet—more than 2.5 billion—now live in poverty, struggling to survive on less than $2 a day. Oxfam America is an international relief and development organization working to change that. Together with individuals and local groups in more than 100 countries, Oxfam saves lives, helps people overcome poverty, and fights for social justice. To join our efforts or learn more, go to www.oxfamamerica.org.

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Local fishermen tend to their nets as twilight deepens on a beach in Tamil Nadu, India. What is now a peaceful shore was once a scene of terrible destruction, when the Indian Ocean tsunami made landfall in December 2004. Poor people living in vulnerable coastal areas like Tamil Nadu were hardest hit. Oxfam helped more than two million survivors recover from the disaster. It was our biggest humanitarian effort ever—a response that took four years to complete, drawing to a close in 2008.

As we worked, we asked questions: What kinds of aid programs are most empowering to women? How can we help survivors take steps out of poverty? What would help these communities become safer and more resilient to future shocks? Local researchers fanned out across coastal India and Sri Lanka in search of ways we could make aid programs more effective, more sustainable, more responsive to community needs.

The research had a host of practical outcomes, like helping Sri Lankan women once considered among the poorest of the poor double their incomes, and bringing about the release of more than a million dollars in government funds for shelter repairs in India. At its heart was a commitment to strengthening and empowering local communities and partner organizations.

“At the end of the day, this is their home, their disaster, their rights, their future,” says Russell Miles, tsunami program director. “As humanitarian agencies, we need to take care that the ownership of the recovery process is theirs as well.”