

OXFAM CLUB AT INDIANA UNIVERSITY BLOOMINGTON:

An Oxfam America Clubs Spotlight



CLUB OVERVIEW

History

The Oxfam Club at Indiana University Bloomington (IU Bloomington) was founded by Rahaf Safi, a 2011 Oxfam America CHANGE Leader. Her CHANGE experience inspired her to found a club, and with the guidance and support of others she worked diligently with university administration to establish the club, write the constitution, find an advisor, and recruit and create the first executive board.



The 2013-14 Executive Board were especially proud of the club after the "Syria: the Human Side of War" event.

In Their Own Words

Our club is committed to creating tangible connections between the vast global issues that Oxfam America addresses and the immediate personal experiences of our members and campus. Oxfam at IU Bloomington tries to relieve some of the difficulty of discussing the harsh realities of poverty, hunger, and injustice by providing students with practical skills for creating

CREATING [LASTING SOLUTIONS]
TO GLOBAL POVERTY,
HUNGER, AND SOCIAL
INJUSTICE.
OXFAM

join the oxfamily.
call out meeting mon. 9/16/13
ballantine 015 7:30 pm

change, and manageable actions to take in their daily lives that contribute to a better world. Not only do we attempt to educate students about the structures of global poverty, we also provide hands-on training and outlets for the personal development of our members as global citizens.

Interpersonal training and skill-building

One way that we carry out this mission is by providing a "Weekly Challenge" to our members at each meeting. The Weekly Challenge encourages members to undertake a simple task that may be outside of their normal routine, one that contributes to our goals as agents of change. Weekly Challenges are designed to give members a reason to explore new habits and attitudes throughout their daily lives.

Events that aim to increase student's awareness of global issues can often be heavy, so another way we try to make Oxfam's work personal is by ending each event with a focus on positive aspirations and personal responsibilities. After each event, we provide Oxfam petitions for attendees to sign, explain practical actions for them to take, and distribute relevant resources for students to keep. We try to focus on hopefulness for the future and to always offer solutions in which students can be involved.

Within our club structure, we try to encourage the holistic development of our members and teach skills related to leadership, community organizing, and personal growth. Our committee structure enables each member to play a more active role in club affairs. This semester we are organizing a panel to bring in professionals to speak to our club members about their career experiences, teach skills related to our efforts, and discuss opportunities that arise in our community for work, education, and volunteering.



Club members enjoy a hike in the nearby Yellowwood State Forest. Although most of our social events take place on campus or in a member's home, this explorative event was worth the extra planning by 2014-15 Community Outreach Director Jenny Huang.

Making local connections

Our work volunteering in the Bloomington community is also an important aspect of helping each member of the club have a measurable effect on the world around them. As a club, we want our members, and our campus, to feel that we have enhanced their ability to effect change, no matter what circumstances they may be in. Our commitment to this work brings a positive tone to our club work, maximizes the impact of our actions, and strengthens our sense of community.

Recruitment strategies and Oxfam America campaign focus

Our club focuses on three Oxfam America campaigns: [GROW](#), [Right to Know](#), [Right to Decide](#), and [Humanitarian Response](#). This past fall, we transitioned to a committee structure to better focus on each campaign and involve members. Each of our three committees is dedicated to one of these campaigns. We use a variety of strategies to recruit new members, including tabling, art projects, social events, and social media. We table at numerous student involvement



fairs, including both the campus-wide fair and smaller, niche fairs that are department or mission-specific. We use free art projects to catch students' interest while tabling during the first two weeks of school.

This semester, we invited passersby to decorate bandanas with potato stamps and fabric paint. We followed up with the students we met at tabling sessions by inviting them to a pizza and movie night to hang out and meet our club before the formal meetings began. All of our events are publicized on social media,

and our new Instagram account helps us better visually communicate the work we do. Our recruitment efforts are concluded with a call out meeting in which we clearly describe the mission and work of both Oxfam America and our club. We let members know our past achievements, future plans, how they can be involved, and what they can expect to gain from being in the club.

EVENT & MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS



Watch the video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=almduwSw9Wg>

Living the GROW Method at IU

The GROW Method is a perfect introduction to the food system and global inequalities because it begins with personal daily actions. To make the steps easily understood, 2014-15 President Emily Metallic created a video outlining how to live the Method. She enlisted the help of 2014-15 Vice President Anna Murphy to explain the significance behind each action and suggest actions specific to IU students.



Oxfam America Hunger Banquet

Each fall, our club plans and hosts an [Oxfam America Hunger Banquet](#). Although we have hosted four Oxfam America Hunger Banquets, it never feels tired. Attendees always amaze and humble us with their insights during the discussion, and we always feel the impact the event has on participants. It is an annual tradition we all look forward to. New lessons are learned each year, and the event continues to improve.



World Food Day Dinner

We celebrate World Food Day each fall with a group dinner. Club members purchase ingredients at the Bloomington farmer's market and cook the dishes together. After sharing a delicious meal, we discuss the importance of food in terms of culture, memory, community and inequality. It's a warm event that is always lots of fun.

3 YEARS / 10 MILLION LIVES

SYRIA

THE HUMAN SIDE OF WAR

AN INFORMATIVE PANEL FEATURING :

RAHAF SAFI SYRIAN-AMERICAN IU STUDENT

RAJENDRA ABHYANKAR FORMER INDIAN AMBASSADOR TO SYRIA & IU PROFESSOR

FOLLOWED BY :

A LIVE VIDEO CONFERENCE WITH SYRIAN REFUGEES LIVING IN JORDAN

 

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 12TH
6:30 PM / FRANGIPANI ROOM
HOSTED BY OXFAM AT IU & UNION BOARD

Syria: the Human Side of War

This event featured a speaker panel followed by a live video conference with experts in the field, including a Syrian refugee living in the US, a human rights worker on the Syrian National Council, and Noah Gottschalk, a senior policy advisor for Oxfam America's humanitarian response team. This event was one of our proudest moments as a club; the impact of the speakers' words and experiences on the audience was palpable. We came to understand the value of our relationship with Oxfam America and appreciate the support they provide us with. We also felt the enthusiasm of professors and institutions around campus in their willingness to be part of our efforts. The outpouring of support for Oxfam's work that followed the event demonstrates the real connection between education and action.



The Bangs, a Bloomington band, performed along with three other acts at the April 2014 benefit concert.

Oxfam Jam

We concluded our club's activities for the past two years with an [Oxfam Jam](#), a benefit concert showcasing local musicians. We raised over \$500 for the Sahel food crisis in 2013 and \$550 for the Syrian refugee crisis in 2014, and spread the word about Oxfam to a larger audience. This annual event is always something to look forward to, and it's a rewarding, fun way to end a year of hard work.

TIPS FOR SUCCESS

Reach out to others: Establishing a new club can be daunting and full of challenges, so it is important to create relationships with others who can provide encouragement, advice, and support to aid you in the journey. Research and reach out to other like-minded campus groups, departments, and professors. Let student leaders, administration, and professors know what you plan to do, and ask how you can support each other in your individual pursuits. This will help your group be known and better connected, and lead to helpful information about available resources.

Create a genuine and welcoming environment: A successful club is made of members who care about the mission of the club, as well as each other. Get to know your new members personally by finding out their interests and what drew them to the club. With knowledge of their skills and natural interests, you can craft opportunities that allow their unique talents to shine through. Openness, respect, and trust are vital to attract and retain members, and a successful club is one that works to advance its mission, and also attend to the holistic development of its supporters.

Ask for extra credit: Professors are often willing to offer extra credit to students who attend Oxfam events that are relevant to their classes. This has proven to be a realistic way to increase event attendance and reach a broader range of students.

Partner with local businesses: Holding off-campus events and fundraisers in the Bloomington community has strengthened the bond between the IU campus and the local economy.

Take advantage of Oxfam America resources: Oxfam America has an abundance of resources, including marketing materials, event planning tools, educational information, and people that are excited to share their work with students—use them!

Link local to global: Incorporating local and national issues relevant to Oxfam’s global work makes connections that allow people to better conceptualize and care about international human rights issues. A good way to involve members in Oxfam’s work is teaching them small actions they can take in their daily lives to promote a more equitable and responsible world. Once you can see how you are a part of Oxfam’s larger vision of a just world, your commitment to the work becomes much deeper.

Connect with the Oxfam Club at IU Bloomington:

