

Exchange

CHALLENGING INJUSTICE

- HEALTH CRISIS SPURS CAMPAIGN FOR ENVIRONMENT IN PERU
- COFFEE FARMERS DEMAND ROLE IN INTERNATIONAL COFFEE ORGANIZATION
- CONTROVERSY SURROUNDING GOLD MINING GROWS AS JEWELERS SPEAK OUT
- CITIZENS WORK FOR PEACE IN AFRICA





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DIANE SHOHE
Managing Editor

CHRIS HUFSTADER
COCO McCABE
ANDREA PERERA
Writers

STEPHEN GREENE
Copy Editor

JEFF DEUTSCH
Graphic Designer

MAIN OFFICE
26 West Street
Boston, MA 02111-1206 USA
800/77-OXFAM
info@oxfamamerica.org

WASHINGTON OFFICE
1112 16th St. NW
Washington, DC 20036 USA
oxfamdc@oxfamamerica.org

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Announcing a New Organization:



Advocacy Fund

We are pleased to announce the Oxfam America Advocacy Fund.

The Oxfam America Advocacy Fund is a new nonprofit organization that was founded by Oxfam America to support advocacy efforts that are essential to our efforts to overcome poverty, hunger and injustice.

The Oxfam America Advocacy Fund is a 501c(4) organization that does not have any dollar restrictions on lobbying, so it will enable Oxfam to carry out all of the advocacy and lobbying actions that we feel are necessary to achieve our mission.

To find out more about the Oxfam America Advocacy Fund, visit the Web site at **www.oaaf.org**.

Write to us!

We welcome readers' comments and ideas. Please include your name and address and mail to: Editor, Oxfam Exchange, Oxfam America, 26 West Street, Boston, MA 02111-1206

Send email to editor@oxfamamerica.org or fax to 617-728-2596. We will print as many letters as possible, but reserve the right to edit for space and clarity.

COVER: Participants in a Make Trade Fair campaign event in Florida. It is only when people stand up and call for change that poverty can be defeated. Photo by Jeff Deutsch/Oxfam America

Amplifying a Global Voice

The Role of Advocacy and Lobbying at Oxfam.

by John Ambler

Oxfam America is well-known for community-level work in the fight against global poverty. But laws at the national or even international level can also obstruct the path to positive social change. Along with our extensive fieldwork, it's essential that we work to put in place—and implement—policies and laws that reduce poverty and social injustice.

We refer to our efforts to change policies as “advocacy” and to change laws as “lobbying.” In Washington, DC, Oxfam America, local partners, and allies are advocating for Gulf Coast hurricane survivors to receive sufficient US government funds to rebuild their homes and jobs. In Africa, our regional office and partners were instrumental in the drafting and passage of the Mozambique Family Law—a landmark piece of legislation granting women many social and economic rights previously denied them.

Reforming local and national laws often has an impact on a broader audience. For example, we work to ensure fair prices and access to marketplaces for small-scale coffee farmers in Central America and Ethiopia. Our advocacy efforts must reach out not only to local merchants controlling the markets but also to transnational organizations setting the rules for the coffee trade. With a more level playing field, coffee-growing families as far away as Asia benefit from receiving a fair price for their produce.



John Ambler is Senior Vice President for Programs at Oxfam America.

Real change requires more than just recognizing what needs to be different. People need to get involved, to make their voices heard, and to ask government decision makers to change unjust laws. Their voices need to be heard in many different forums—national and international, global and local. And Oxfam helps amplify these voices.

We also use advocacy to press for change on a global scale. At the recent World Trade Organization negotiations in Hong Kong, we joined our international allies in speaking up for more favorable trade arrangements for developing countries.

As our lobbying and advocacy grow in scope, we recognize that these are specialized activities with particular legal and resource needs. We are excited to launch a separate institution—the Oxfam America Advocacy Fund—that will work specifically on lobbying for legal changes that benefit the poor at home and across the world. With enhanced capability, and the involvement of more supporters than ever, we believe there are few limits to the positive changes we can achieve.

Failing to be Fair

World Trade Organization fails to reform farm policies.

The World Trade Organization (WTO) meeting last December could have been something to celebrate. Gathered together in Hong Kong, world leaders had a huge opportunity: They could have lifted millions out of poverty by reforming farm programs that reward industrial farms and punish small-scale farmers.

Oxfam America called for elimination of programs that prevent small farmers and those in developing countries from getting a fair price for their products, among other reforms. Right now, the US doles out billions in agriculture subsidies, which disproportionately go to mega-farms. These farms then overproduce their crops and flood international markets, causing prices to drop and making it impossible for family farmers in the US and places like Mali, Benin, and Senegal to compete.

Changing trade rules could have reduced the inequities in US farm policy. But WTO ministers didn't go for it. They didn't agree to reform agriculture subsidies in a meaningful way, or open their markets to developing countries.

"This is profoundly disappointing and a betrayal of development promises by rich countries, whose interests have prevailed yet again," said Oxfam's Phil Bloomer, Head of the International Make Trade Fair campaign.



DAVID VINJULES/INTERMON OXFAM

Activists outside WTO meeting called for an end to poverty.

WHAT'S NEXT

There is some good news. Oxfam has several other opportunities to Make Trade Fair in the coming year. We will continue to influence lawmakers to shift farm payments that go to huge operations to more sustainable agriculture programs that benefit smaller farmers in the US and don't harm developing country farmers. We will also look at these and other issues of importance to poor people, such as easy access to cheap medicines, in the handful of regional free trade agreements currently being negotiated in places like the Andes, southeast Asia, and southern Africa.

"Oxfam delivered the Big Noise petition to the Director General of the WTO and the US Trade Representative with almost 18 million signatures. Together, we showed world leaders there is growing support for fair trade policies that will lift people out of poverty. While we are not there yet, we are getting closer by the day," said Vicky Rateau, Trade Campaign Manager. "With some help, we can make sure world leaders agree to a meaningful plan toward reducing global poverty."

ACT NOW: SIGN UP TO THE BIG NOISE

Join millions of people around the world who are calling for decision makers to make trade fair. Go to www.maketradefair.com to sign the petition!





ROYA WOLVERSON/OXFAM AMERICA

CHALLENGING INJUSTICE

Together, we can end poverty. We share this vision with the many partners we work with, providing them with funding and support. But, we can't end poverty by treating its most visible symptoms. Simple relief is not enough.

Oxfam America knows that real change requires more than recognizing what needs to be different. National or international laws and policies can obstruct the path to positive social change. People need to get involved, to make their voices heard, and to ask government decision makers to change unjust laws that keep many in poverty.

The stories that follow show how citizen action can change unjust policies and laws. Your voice can stop corporate environmental abuses and destructive mining practices. Your voice can influence reform of farm programs that reward industrial-sized farms and punish small-scale farmers.

Together, we have the chance to make change happen. Together, we can challenge injustice. Read more to find out how.

Above: A flyer distributed at the annual People's Social Forum in Mali, an annual event promoting citizen involvement in social policy, government accountability, and fighting poverty.

CONTROVERSY SURROUNDING GOLD MINING GROWS AS JEWELERS, INDIGENOUS COMMUNITY LEADERS SPEAK OUT

By Andrea Perera

The ad was pretty hard to miss. A heart-shaped gold locket dangled from the top of the page. Within it were two images that symbolize the environmental and human toll of gold mining: a “Danger: Cyanide” sign posted in front of a Nevada mine and a child toiling outside a Congo mine.

The No Dirty Gold campaign, a joint effort between Oxfam America and Earthworks, a nonprofit environmental organization, purchased the *New York Times* ad this February to publicize both the jewelry “leaders,” who have made in-principle commitments to source more responsibly produced gold and the “laggard” companies that have yet to do so.

The ads culminated an amazing second year for the campaign, which is working to end destructive mining practices, educate consumers about gold mining’s impacts, and build consumer support for industry reform. During the past several months, indigenous community representatives have spoken out, supporters have sent thousands of encouraging e-mails, and major news outlets have published in-depth reports about the negative effects of gold mining.

“This year was a major milestone for our efforts to reform the global mining industry,” said Keith Slack, campaign manager and senior policy advisor at Oxfam America. “The public has become increasingly aware of the impacts of mining, and responsible jewelry companies now realize that they need to take action to help make gold mining less harmful to communities and the environment.”

JEWELERS TAKE A STAND AGAINST ‘DIRTY’ GOLD

The “Leaders and Laggards” ads marked the first time eight of the world’s top jewelry retailers pledged to move away from “dirty” gold sales and call on mining corporations to reform their practices.

The leading jewelers endorsed principles that include respect for human rights; free, prior, and informed consent of affected communities; respect for workers’ rights; and protection of parks and waterways from mining waste. Jewelers such as Zale Corporation, Tiffany & Company, and Helzberg Diamonds represent influential voices because they are some of mining corporations’ biggest customers. Most of the gold produced worldwide—80 percent—is used to make jewelry.

“Some of the leading jewelry retailers are recognizing that they have a responsibility not only to their customers but also to communities affected by gold mining,” said Carrie Dann of the Western Shoshone Defense Project, an Oxfam America partner organization based in Nevada.

INDIGENOUS LEADERS SPEAK TO CEO, TOP OFFICIAL

Mining corporations and jewelry retailers began to recognize their

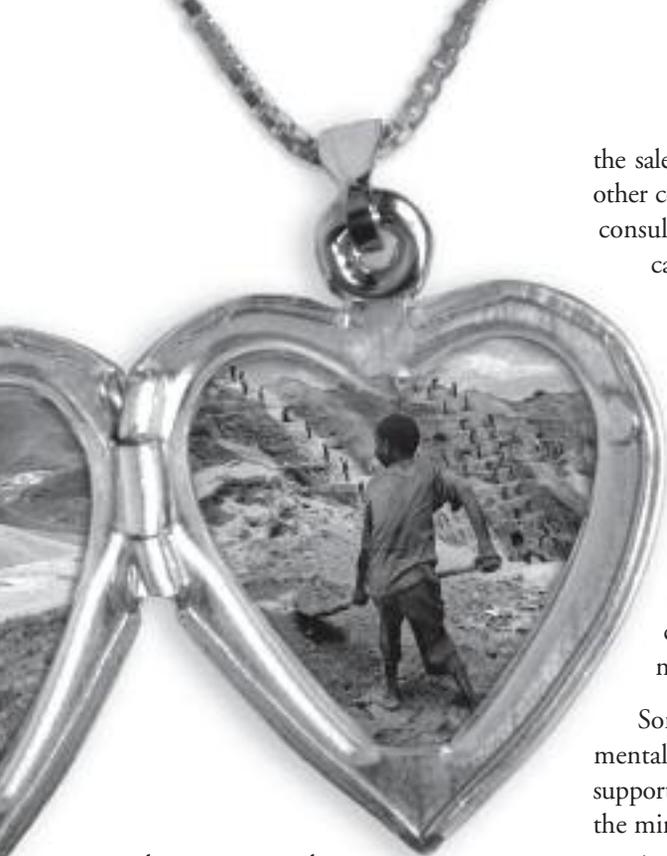
responsibilities in part because the people who live near mines traveled the globe to share their concerns.

Last spring, community leaders from five countries attended a shareholders meeting of the Newmont Mining Corporation in Colorado and spoke directly to the CEO about the social and environmental costs of mines. Last fall, community leaders from three countries visited US mining colleges to talk about the mining industry’s impact on their communities. And last winter, a Guatemalan contingent met with Paul Wolfowitz, president of the World Bank, to talk about the future of an open pit mine.

The visits had real and lasting results. Newmont agreed to have regular meetings with the Western Shoshone and to support the establishment of an independent monitoring mechanism for one of its new projects in Ghana. And as a result of a presentation at the Colorado School of Mines, professors developed a groundbreaking course for mining students that will analyze the social and community issues related to mining.

Speaking of the campus mining tour, Mario Tema, an indigenous community leader from Sipacapa, Guatemala, said: “This was a very important initiative





the sale of public lands to mining and other commercial interests without the consultation of local communities, campaign supporters sent more than 13,000 e-mails and made hundreds of phone calls. Congressional leaders eventually withdrew the legislation.

Meanwhile, since the No Dirty Gold campaign was launched two years ago, more than 30,000 consumers have signed a petition urging mining corporations to produce gold more responsibly.

Some identified with the environmental messages. Others wanted to support the communities living near the mines, who want a say in developments on their own land.

“What we’re talking about is the life of future generations,” said Dann. “Not just Indian children, but all children.”

because we spoke to people who are the next generation of the mining industry. They need to know the impacts of the industry they are preparing to enter. And they need to learn how to operate with respect for indigenous peoples.”

CAMPAIGN SUPPORTERS CONTACT CORPORATIONS AND ELECTED OFFICIALS

As representatives from affected communities spoke out, No Dirty Gold campaign supporters used their consumer power to help.

Last October, during the runup to the “Leaders and Laggards” ads, the campaign’s online community sent Zale Corporation and other jewelers approximately 30,000 faxes asking them to clean up dirty gold sales. About 100 activists made personal phone calls to several stores. That response helped move Zales from the Laggard to Leader category in the *New York Times* ad.

Then, in December, when US Rep. Richard W. Pombo, a Republican from California, introduced an amendment to a budget bill that would have allowed

What is Free, Prior, and Informed Consent?

The No Dirty Gold campaign calls on the mining industry to recognize the rights of communities and to respect the environment. The right of free, prior, and informed consent gives indigenous peoples and local communities the ability to decide if, when, and how mining projects proceed on their land. International conventions and national laws support this right.

Daniel Owusu-Koranteng of Ghana was among representatives from five countries who attended a shareholders meeting of Newmont Mining Corporation in Colorado. “We ask that the company stop polluting our oceans and freshwater with mining waste, stay out of our protected forests, and only mine with the informed consent of communities,” said Owusu-Koranteng.



ACT NOW: SUPPORT THE NO DIRTY GOLD CAMPAIGN

Visit www.nodirtygold.org and sign the No Dirty Gold pledge to end destructive gold mining practices.





JULIA CHENG/OXFAM AMERICA

Carol Schieffler of Lafitte, Louisiana, earns his living by making nets for shrimp fishermen. His shop got flooded in the storms. But worse than that, his business has dried up since the hurricanes damaged many of the fishermen's boats, putting them out of work.

FROM ONE VOICE TO A CHORUS: RESIDENTS ORGANIZE IN THE GULF COAST

by Coco McCabe

David Finger's little rental car had bounced along so many bayou roads and zipped down countless swamp overpasses that when she turned it in at the end of the month, the agent did a double take: 4,000 miles? In the six weeks since Finger joined Oxfam America as a state coordinator, she has been crisscrossing the parishes of southern Louisiana, weaving a web of connections between working folks hit hard by hurricanes Katrina and Rita and the nonprofit groups and governmental agencies that can help them recover.

Since the string of hurricanes tore across the Gulf Coast last year, Oxfam America has joined together with a growing number of local organizations to marshal support for the region's poorest people and seek a greater investment of federal dollars in their futures. The aim is to ensure that their voices—their needs, their dreams—are heard as reconstruction funds get stretched thin across Louisiana, Mississippi, and Florida.

“We saw what happened early on in New Orleans and East Biloxi when marginalized communities aren't taken into account,” said Ashley Tsongas, Oxfam policy adviser. “That neglect will happen again in the rebuilding phase unless people have a chance to influence the process.”

And that's where Finger comes in. Darting out of her car and through the pelting rain, she ducks into the house

of Gene Adam, a fifth-generation shrimp fisherman in Lafitte, La. Nearly two hours later she emerges into the dark night, her notebook packed with facts about the devastation the hurricanes have brought to this little fishing community in Jefferson Parish. Adam's boat sank during Katrina. He was able to salvage it, but repairs are going to cost him \$50,000.

Down the road a piece, she hears from Carol Schieffler, a net maker who lost two-thirds of his business when the storms hit. From Butchie Caulfield, Finger learns that Rita was the final blow, on top of his poor health and spiraling fishing costs, that convinced him to sell his shrimp boat. And through all these conversations runs a common theme: Louisiana's marshes are disappearing.

“There’s no more marsh to protect us,” said Adam. “There’s no place for the water to go but up.”

Coastal erosion and the effect it is having on rural Louisianan’s homes and jobs is just one of a host of issues Finger is piecing together into a mosaic of community concerns for which she hopes to mobilize broad support with the help of Sharie Blanton, a field humanitarian coordinator for Oxfam.

“I’m trying to bring people together who are working on similar issues so they can speak with one voice,” said Finger.

MIRA MAKES A MARK IN MISSISSIPPI

While the effort to unite these voices in Louisiana is just getting underway, similar advocacy efforts in Mississippi are already producing results. With Oxfam’s help, the Mississippi Immigrants Rights Alliance (MIRA)—once a tiny organization with a budget of \$2,500—has become a leading advocate for immigrants who are helping to rebuild the coast. Immigrants have faced a host of unfair practices, including evictions from their living quarters and non-payment of wages.

“Our advocacy is not spearheaded by ideology or opinion. It’s spearheaded by fact,” said Alejandro Rosales, an Oxfam America rights specialist on loan to MIRA. “When MIRA talks about inhumane living and working conditions, we’ve witnessed these things firsthand.” And the agency has fought to correct them.

Many of the workers MIRA has encountered have been cheated out of their pay, said Bill Chandler, the alliance president, adding that MIRA has pursued a number of avenues to address the problem and has successfully recovered more than \$200,000 in pay owed to workers.

A FIGHT FOR FEDERAL DOLLARS

On a broader scale, Oxfam has also been working to influence affairs at the state and federal levels. Addressing the challenge Biloxi City Councilman Bill Stallworth faced in trying to get assistance from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) for a poor section of the city severely damaged by Katrina, Oxfam arranged for him to make a trip to Washington.

He made sure the Mississippi delegation in Congress knew just how bad things were in his flooded and flattened neighborhood, and shortly afterwards FEMA set up an emergency relief center in East Biloxi.

As the federal government got ready to allocate \$5.1 billion in community development block grants to help the state recover, Mississippi legislators began to convene for their annual

adviser, spent the day before the notification deadline hammering out their ideas with the help of three computers and one testy printer. Their biggest concern was the block grants—and how to ensure that the legislature had a chance to influence their allocation.

“The amount of money coming in is about the same as the annual budget for Mississippi,” said Tsongas. “At the same time, given the magnitude of the disaster and reconstruction needs, those funds will need to be dispensed wisely and fairly so that people who need it most get the help they desperately need. Representatives of the impacted communities should oversee that process.” The oversight bill the team provided ideas for that day was still alive and working its way through the system as of mid-February—a testament to its value.

“A big part of what we’re doing is empowering people to make their voices heard.”

—Safiya Daniels, Community Development Specialist, Oxfam America

three-month session. How would those billions of dollars be spent? At the urging of several legislators, the state chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and Oxfam offered ideas for bills the lawmakers filed that would ensure that a fair portion of the money was directed toward housing for the people who need it most.

Huddled with a small group in the Jackson office of NAACP State President Derrick Johnson, Oxfam’s Mississippi program coordinator Deborah Bey, and Tsongas, the policy

Meanwhile, down on the coast, Safiya Daniels, a community development specialist for Oxfam, was putting together a flyer alerting folks to what was at stake with the block grants, and urging residents to call for a fair distribution of the funds. About 1,000 people sent letters to their legislators.

“A big part of what we’re doing is empowering people to make their voices heard,” said Daniels. “This is challenging work, given the historical context, and I don’t know that many other groups are doing it.”

HEALTH CRISIS SPURS CAMPAIGN FOR ENVIRONMENT IN PERU

Heavy pollution in a highland city prompts citizen action in Peru—and North America

by Chris Hufstader

The smoke from the metal smelter in La Oroya, Peru, rolls down the street and drifts off into the hills, spreading sulfur dioxide fumes and lead dust everywhere. “I come here every day,” said a taxi driver delivering visitors to the city from Lima, four hours away on the coast. “My eyes burn and my throat hurts. The air is very polluted in La Oroya.”

Since the metal-processing plant was established in 1922 to melt down ore and produce copper, gold, lead, and silver, pollution has spread up and down the highland valley and city of La Oroya, where 30,000 people live at 12,200 feet above sea level.

The people of La Oroya are in a challenging situation: The very plant that supports them and the entire region’s economy is also polluting their city. Recent studies by the US Centers for Disease Control, the University of St. Louis, and Peru’s Ministry of Health have similar conclusions: Blood lead levels of children near the plant are as much as 10 times higher than those permitted by the World Health Organization. Air pollution is also exposing people to sulfur dioxide, cadmium, and arsenic, all known to cause respiratory diseases and cancer. Lead poisoning among children near the plant is particularly severe: Nearly 99 percent of them have elevated blood lead levels.

The metal-smelting plant was acquired by Doe Run Corporation of Missouri in 1997 from the government of Peru. The company has repeatedly postponed full compliance with an environmental management plan included in the terms of the sale. By 2006 the company



The aging metal smelter in La Oroya, Peru, is the primary source of lead dust and sulfur dioxide emissions contributing to the public health crisis in the city.

was supposed to be reducing lead and sulfur dioxide emissions as well as improving wastewater treatment. Despite some small improvements, severe pollution continues, and many fear that the company will continue to postpone efforts to clean up the operations.

LETTERS SUPPORT CAMPAIGN

So how can citizens push a powerful, foreign-owned company to respect their right to live in a clean environment? The La Oroya Movement for Health (known by its Spanish initials MOSAO) is waging a campaign calling on the government to hold Doe Run to its original environmental agreement. Oxfam America is funding a five-member technical committee in La Oroya that is advising MOSAO.

MOSAO has support in Peru’s congress, where 13 senators have filed a motion to declare the area near

La Oroya in a state of emergency. MOSAO also called for letters from citizens to show widespread support for their campaign. By the end of February, it had gathered more than 16,000 letters.

Oxfam has also helped build interest for MOSAO’s campaign in North America. When Oxfam asked 190,000 of its online activists to join the letter-writing campaign, more than 7,600 people responded.

Oxfam is also calling on Doe Run’s customers for help. Johnson Controls, the largest producer of car batteries, buys most of its lead from Doe Run. Many of these batteries are sold to the Ford Motor Company and other car manufacturers. Oxfam is in discussions with both these companies about ways they can help urge Doe Run to meet its commitments to a clean environment in Peru.

COLDPLAY CAMPAIGNS TO MAKE TRADE FAIR

Coldplay and Oxfam America promote awareness of trade rules that keep farmers in poverty

by Andrea Perera

Coldplay championed the Make Trade Fair campaign during the second leg of its “Twisted Logic” tour, January through April. The concerts featured music from the band’s Grammy-nominated “X&Y” album and a call to sign Oxfam’s Big Noise petition to Make Trade Fair. This petition calls on world leaders to change trade rules that keep millions of farmers from making a decent living.

Coldplay has established a deep commitment to Oxfam America and its causes. In 2003, Oxfam volunteers gathered 10,000 Big Noise signatures during Coldplay’s 14-date US tour. In 2005, Oxfam gathered 63,600 signatures.

Worldwide, the Big Noise petition has gathered about 18 million signatures, many of them from poor people living in developing countries such as Bangladesh, Ethiopia, and Zambia. Oxfam delivered the Big Noise to world trade ministers in December at the WTO Ministerial Conference in Hong Kong.

Coldplay front man Chris Martin has seen firsthand the crippling effects of bad trade rules on small farmers after traveling to both Ghana and Haiti with Oxfam.

“How on earth could anybody stand in a field with these people and say that it’s the right thing to do to dump their excess produce cheaply on a third world country?” Martin said. “It’s beyond me. But the truth is, the people responsible haven’t talked to the farmers in the areas affected.”

Many of the world’s biggest stars, including Coldplay’s Chris Martin, have been “dumped on” in support of Oxfam’s campaign to Make Trade Fair. The images tell the story about how countries like the US give farm subsidies to industrial-sized farms, leading them to overproduce crops like cotton, corn, and rice, which are then dumped at rock-bottom prices on global markets, driving poor farmers out of business.





SETH PETCHERS/OXFAM AMERICA

COFFEE FARMERS DEMAND ROLE IN INTERNATIONAL COFFEE ORGANIZATION

by Andrea Perera

The farmers squinted into the cameras, their mouths bound by gags, their hands cupping coffee beans. They stood in silence, demonstrating what it feels like to be cut out of the debate.

Last September, coffee farmers from seven countries traveled to Salvador, Brazil, to add their voices to the World Coffee Conference, a special meeting of the International Coffee Organization. The ICO is an intergovernmental organization that brings together coffee-producing and coffee-consuming countries.

The World Coffee Conference kicked off Oxfam America's campaign to influence the next International Coffee Agreement which will be negotiated this year. Oxfam is working to make the agreement better reflect the needs and concerns of small-scale farmers

who are struggling with the changing face of the coffee crisis.

"I wonder if the participants at the World Coffee Conference know what the coffee crisis has truly meant for producers," said Pradeep Nandipur of the Karnataka Growers Federation in India. "In my region, farmers committed suicide because they could see no way out of their mounting debt. They had no way to repay it because their income was gone."

To survive these challenges, farmers and farmworkers said they require some stability, the kind that only

comes through long-term capital investment, access to markets, and political representation.

COOPERATIVES IN CRISIS

When the international price of coffee dropped to historic lows in 2001, family farmers in places like Guatemala and Ethiopia fell into crisis. With a glut of coffee on the market, many couldn't find buyers for their crops. Others couldn't pull in enough profits to pay off their farming expenses and feed their children.

Many farmers who survived the price drop were members of fair trade



Facing: Fair trade cooperatives are one of few reliable options for small-scale coffee farmers. “We tell [farmers] that they need to think about the future,” said Guillermo Campa, President of the IJATZ cooperative. “Think about the price dropping like it did in the past. If they work with fair trade, they can have a stable price.”

Above: With the help of funding and technical assistance from Oxfam, farmers who joined fair trade cooperatives in Ethiopia built elementary schools and water tanks.

Outside the World Coffee Conference in Brazil, volunteers showed how small-scale coffee farmers feel when they are cut out of the debate over their own livelihoods. Inside the conference, Oxfam and its partners called for members of the International Coffee Organization to include small-scale farmer and farmworker issues in the next International Coffee Agreement, to be negotiated in 2006.

cooperatives. By agreeing to certain principles, such as transparency with members, democratic elections, and setting aside a percentage of profits for the community, cooperative members received a guaranteed minimum price for their crop.

“When the prices were low, fair trade was the best market we had,” said Moise Coz, administrator of the IJATZ coop in Guatemala.

Farmers who were part of fair trade cooperatives said they made enough money to buy food, clothe and educate their children, and buy more farmland. Some coops even had enough money to buy mills to process their own coffee or to help local schools buy chalkboards and desks.

“I wonder if the participants at the World Coffee Conference know what the coffee crisis has truly meant for producers. In my region, farmers committed suicide because they could see no way out of their mounting debt. They had no way to repay it because their income was gone.”

—Pradeep Nandipur, Karnataka Growers Federation in India

But even as farmers were counting the benefits of their fair trade premium, the crisis was changing. The price of coffee began to recover, creating competition between the coops and local middlemen representing importers or mega-roasters. Some farmers now find themselves in an awkward position. They can sell their coffee to their

cooperative for less and wait a few months for payment. Or they can sell to middlemen, called coyotes, willing to pay a higher up-front price.

The cooperatives try to remain competitive by using some of their savings to pay the difference between their price and the coyotes’ price. But many



Cooperatives protect their members when the unexpected happens such as last year's Hurricane Stan. In Guatemala, individual farmers said they lost between 25 and 100 percent of their coffee production, as well as some livestock and vegetables. Oxfam America has provided a \$100,000 grant to help farmers recover.

fall short. They need to use their savings to pay the administrative staff or electricity bill. In the end, the best thing cooperatives can do is try to remind farmers that what goes up must come down. When the international price drops, the cooperatives will be the only ones offering a price safety net and specialized training.

“We explain why they aren’t receiving the money up front. We have costs to pay off,” states Guillermo Campa, President of the IJATZ cooperative. “We tell them that they need to think about the future. Think about the price dropping like it did in the past. If they work with fair trade, they can have a stable price.”

But that argument doesn’t always work. “People who live day to day can’t just

depend on what happened in the past,” said Carlos Reynoso, manager of Manos Campesinas cooperative in Guatemala.

WHAT CAN BE DONE?

So how do coffee cooperatives respond? How do they get their members to sell them enough coffee so they can fulfill their contracts with importers and roasters? And how does the International Coffee Organization help?

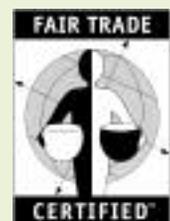
Stronger cooperatives are more competitive in a fluctuating market. In order to get there, cooperatives need access to debt refinancing, low-interest loans for working capital, long-term capital investment, information, and markets. With a voice at the ICO, small-scale farmers and their cooperatives can advocate for these interests.

At the World Coffee Conference, Oxfam America and its partners presented coffee producing and consuming countries with a declaration articulating the needs of small-scale farmers and their cooperatives. The declaration calls for these issues to be addressed in the next International Coffee Agreement.

This is just one component of a strategy to give the world’s 25 million coffee farmers a real chance to do what they’ve done for generations—and turn a profit that makes it all worthwhile. “We need to take advantage of this historic opportunity,” said Seth Petchers, Coffee Program Manager at Oxfam America. “We can use these negotiations to put measures in place that better address what these farmers face.”

ACT NOW: BUY FAIR TRADE CERTIFIED™ PRODUCTS

Oxfam America, working with partners and allies around the world, is calling on consumers to put pressure on their local supermarkets—to guarantee that they stock Fair Trade Certified™ products, display them on prominent shelves, and market them to their shoppers. Visit www.transfairusa.org/do/wheretobuy to find a retailer near you that carries Fair Trade Certified™ products.



CITIZENS WORK FOR PEACE AND JUSTICE IN AFRICA

by Chris Hufstader

West Africa: A Campaign to Stop the Illegal Arms Trade

Some of West Africa's most famous writers, actors, and pop stars are leading a campaign to stop the trade in illegal arms. They are part of the Control Arms campaign organized by Oxfam International, Amnesty International, and the Action Network on Small Arms. A new media campaign featuring nine prominent artists was launched during the World Social Forum and the African Reggae Festival, both held the same weekend in January in Bamako, Mali. During these events, 27,000 people signed the Million Faces petition, the Control Arms campaign's call to stop the illegal trade in weapons.

The Control Arms campaign in West Africa, a region awash in small arms and plagued by conflict, is calling for members of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) to transform their arms trade moratorium into a binding international treaty that will end the trafficking of weapons and help build peace and security. The global Control Arms campaign is amassing 1 million signatures on the Million Faces petition in time for the next UN conference on small arms this July in New York.



Nix, one of the better-known rap stars in Senegal, lent his image to a media push for the Control Arms campaign in West Africa. The poster reads: "Each year, two bullets are produced for every man, woman, and child on the planet."

Better Laws Respect Rights for Women

In some southern African countries, women are considered legal minors: They cannot own, buy, or inherit property, or make many basic decisions about their lives without the permission of a male relative. Women who must depend on men for financial security are more vulnerable to poverty, violence, and infection by HIV and AIDS.

Oxfam America has supported efforts to pass laws that increase women's rights in southern Africa, including:

→ In Mozambique, a new land law that allows illiterate women farmers to file claims for land ownership based on oral testimony from traditional leaders

- Also in Mozambique, a new Family Law that establishes rights for women to inherit property, stay in school until 18, and file for divorce in cases of abuse
- In South Africa, a new program that organizes women's rights groups advocating for better violence prevention laws and policies
- In Zimbabwe, a coalition of rights organizations that is urging the legislature to pass a new domestic violence bill and that is cultivating a national women's rights movement.

In all three countries, Oxfam has supported research, public education campaigns for grassroots communities, and training for groups pushing for changes that will help create laws and policies that protect women's rights.



Sheila Mahere is a member of Zimbabwe's legislature and a proponent of a new domestic violence law.

ACT NOW: STOP THE SPREAD OF ARMS

The Control Arms campaign is asking governments to toughen up controls on the arms trade. The Million Faces is a visual petition—a way for you to show your concern about the spread of arms. The aim is to collect one million photos and self-portraits of people from around the world. Visit www.controlarms.org and sign the Million Faces petition.

control arms



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Please contact Cyndy Viveiros at 1-800-776-9326 x494 or cviveiros@oxfamamerica.org about your planned gift and learn more about the benefits of joining the Oxfam Legacy Circle.



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