Oxfam America supports the efforts of people in South Africa, Mozambique, and Zimbabwe to overcome poverty and marginalization. The inequitable distribution of resources, gender inequality, HIV/AIDS, climatic change, and political instability all contribute to poverty in the region. Except for South Africa, where 52 percent of the population lives in urban areas, 70 percent of the regional population lives in rural areas under poor social and economic conditions.

The four program priorities for Oxfam America in southern Africa are gender and legal reform, HIV/AIDS, agriculture and sustainable livelihoods, and humanitarian efforts. The poor, who are the primary focus of Oxfam’s programs, are vulnerable to economic shocks and instability arising from drought, floods and other natural disasters, illness (including HIV/AIDS), and violence. Customary practices and discriminatory laws further disadvantage women economically, socially, and politically and lead to their exclusion and powerlessness.

ADVANCING AND PROTECTING WOMEN’S RIGHTS

A key strategy in ending discrimination against women and girls has been to advance gender equality through legal reform. Oxfam America’s partner organizations have joined together in coalitions and played a key role in bringing about progressive laws in Mozambique (Family Law) and Zimbabwe (Domestic Violence Law). Both of these new laws significantly advance the legal protection of women’s rights. Oxfam partners are now supporting the implementation of the laws by traditional leaders and government, as well as broad outreach initiatives to bring the benefits of the new laws to women and girls in rural areas.

The 2004 Family Law in Mozambique provides for a wide range of women’s rights, recognizes the legitimacy of customary or common-law marriages, and protects spouses in the event of death or separation. The Women’s Coalition is now pushing to make domestic violence a criminal offense and for the revision of the country’s inheritance laws to secure the rights of widows.

“...You have to understand the problems of grassroots people to really help them. Many conflicts are fueled by traditional beliefs. By training people—particularly traditional leaders—we show that domestic problems can be resolved without violence, and people learn they have legal rights and protection.”

Rafa Machava, executive director of MULEIDE, a women’s rights organization and Oxfam partner in Mozambique
In Zimbabwe our partners have provided training for the judiciary, police, and traditional authorities, and continue to support implementing the new Domestic Violence Law. Oxfam America partners represent civil society on the Anti-Domestic Violence Council, which will review cases of domestic violence, disseminate information, and ensure the protection of women.

**STRENGTHENING COMMUNITY RESPONSE TO HIV/AIDS**

Southern Africa, with only two percent of the world’s population, accounts for 35 percent of all people living with HIV and almost one-third (32 percent) of all new HIV infections and AIDS deaths in 2007. Women remain particularly vulnerable to the impact of HIV/AIDS, making up over 60 percent of the people living with HIV/AIDS in the region.

In South Africa, our work focuses on the North West, a province with an HIV/AIDS prevalence rate of 20 percent and a strong traditional cultural background. Our partners work with traditional leaders to change cultural practices that increase the vulnerability of women to HIV/AIDS. Oxfam America helps local organizations provide care to families affected by the impact of the disease and assist people living with HIV in accessing treatment.

**Networks of Care and support**

Through a network of over 1,000 community-based AIDS service organizations and individuals addressing the AIDS pandemic in South Africa, we promote a nondiscriminatory response to the HIV and AIDS epidemic based on people’s basic human rights. Oxfam America’s partner, The AIDS Consortium (AC) is one of the largest umbrella organizations in South Africa. Members meet the needs of their communities through a wide variety of services including support groups for people living with HIV, job creation projects, home-based care, feeding programs and orphan support, to national advocacy campaigns and large-scale treatment services.

In Zimbabwe and Mozambique, our partners are strengthening the ability of local organizations to respond to HIV/AIDS through advocacy, capacity building, and community education aimed at reducing women’s vulnerability to HIV/AIDS.

**Local groups saving lives**

Pholo Modi Wa Sechaba, which means “health is the root of the nation” in Setswana, is just one of thousands of local community-based organizations helping the estimated 5.5 million people living with HIV/AIDS in South Africa. They are on the front line of the struggle and play an essential role in providing services. Pholo Modi Wa Sechaba helps patients get tested for HIV, and counsels them on their treatment options and how to “live positively.” In addition to a home-based care program, it provides day care for young children and an after-school program for orphans and others who need a place to do their homework and learn valuable life skills, including how to prevent HIV.

**ENHANCING RURAL LIVELIHOODS**

Peasant farmers constitute about 70 percent of the population in Mozambique, with the majority living on less than $1 a day. These small-scale farmers depend on agriculture, but crop yields are very low. Modern inputs and mechanization are almost nonexistent—rural villages lack access to transport, seeds and tools, and credit and markets.

Oxfam America’s agriculture and sustainable livelihoods (ASL) program in Mozambique is helping small-scale farmers with new and improved production resources, techniques, and technologies. The program supports cotton farmers in Nampula and small-scale farmers in Manica, and it helps them add value to their products, sell the products at a better price, and access new markets. Small farmers are forming organizations and collaborating with civil society advocacy networks at national, regional, and international levels to secure a fair deal for themselves.

**What is Oxfam?**

Oxfam America is an international relief and development organization that creates lasting solutions to poverty, hunger, and injustice. Together with individuals and local groups around the world, Oxfam saves lives, helps people overcome poverty, and fights for social justice. To join our efforts or learn more, go to www.oxfamamerica.org.
Growth for small-scale farmers
One part of Oxfam America's ASL work brings together a coalition of partners to pool resources and maximize the development of commercial poultry production efforts within Manica province. Rural communities are producing crops for chicken feed and raising chicks through community-level cooperatives. A plant for processing poultry was built to prepare chickens for resale in urban areas of Manica province, and to provide a steady income for local producers.

Cotton farmers get organized
Working with the Organic Agriculture, Biodiversity, and Sustainable Development Association (ABIODES), Oxfam helped set up the National Cotton Producers Forum (FONPA), which has mobilized over 30,000 small cotton farmers in Mozambique to become an equal partner with government and industry in securing farmers' livelihoods. The success of a pilot project to improve cotton production techniques and increase yields in Nampula has attracted the attention of the National Cotton Institute, which now intends to extend the methods nationally.

REDDUCING VULNERABILITY
In Zimbabwe, Oxfam America supports the Single Parents and Widows Support Network (SPWSN), which works with people in rural areas, meeting their immediate nutritional needs, helping them find sustainable means of earning a living, and enhancing community resilience. SPWSN supports women- and child-headed households, and those caring for orphans and the chronically ill, like those affected by HIV/AIDS.

Since 2002, Oxfam America has been responding to Zimbabwe's ongoing food crisis through an emergency livelihoods program in the Seke, Mudzi, and Chikomba districts of Mashonaland East province. The program provides seeds, fertilizers, primary health kits, and ongoing support to some 10,000 vulnerable households. The supply of summer grain and legume seeds ensures that communities are able to sustain food production and build seed reserves.

The program is now setting up seed banks to improve sustainability and helping communities develop strategies to reduce their vulnerability to disasters.

“Community-based care workers are the unsung heroes in the fight against AIDS and for community development. With very limited resources they are forging ahead and making a huge contribution to saving lives on the ground.”

Denise Hunt, executive director of the AIDS Consortium, an Oxfam partner organization in South Africa

Sources of funding
Oxfam America raises more than 90 percent of program funds from individuals and institutions, such as foundations.

To maintain our independence, Oxfam America does not accept funds from the US government or from corporations working in industries that are the subject of our advocacy and campaign programs.

For more detailed financial information, visit our Web site: www.oxfamamerica.org.
Working together to end poverty and injustice

How Oxfam works
Recognizing that the best solutions come from local communities, Oxfam invests in civil society and partners with community-based organizations. We identify the most promising local groups—those best positioned to create lasting solutions to poverty—and provide them with the support they need to thrive. In addition to funding, Oxfam provides technical advice and networking opportunities with like-minded organizations. And while we are a powerful voice for those we serve, we also empower people to advocate on their own behalf. In the end, our partners are more effective, more confident, and more capable of realizing their visions for a better future.

Community gardens fill crucial needs
Over 60 individual and community gardens have been established to grow vegetables during the winter. These gardens ensure appropriate nutrition for maintaining health, and surplus crops provide income.

Community gardens funded by Oxfam help families survive until they can plant, grow, and harvest their next summer crop.

Each garden member is allotted several rows to plant and given seeds for green beans, butternut squash, kale, cabbage, and carrots. Many of the participants face difficulties—they’re widowed; have sick children to care for; or are children themselves, taking care of orphaned siblings. One man’s parents died when he was young, leaving him in charge. “I used to be a child heading a family. Now as an adult, I look after seven orphans,” he said. “It’s tough to look after so many, and I mostly use this garden to support the children.” By the end of last winter, his beds were full of crops that he hoped to sell after they matured.

The garden members eat much of what they grow to supplement their staple food, sadza, ground maize. They are also able to sell some vegetables and use the income to pay for school fees, food, medical expenses, and the grinding of maize.

Cover: Cecilia Reis, a traditional healer near Maputo, Mozambique, teaches people in her community about the new Family Law. “Women have to open their eyes and claim their rights,” she says. Reis was trained by the coalition funded by Oxfam that is promoting the new law. Brett Eloff / Oxfam America

Page 3: Lebogang Molefi, 33, is a home-based care worker with the community organization Pholo Modi Wa Sechaba in South Africa’s North West province. Brett Eloff / Oxfam America

Above left: Muzi Kayise Mkhonza, 40, working at a community garden project in Pimville, South Africa. The vegetables he grows are for a neighboring orphanage and hospice. Brett Eloff / Oxfam America

Above right: Millions of orphans and vulnerable children in Southern Africa rely on community organizations for their daily care and support. Nabil / Oxfam America

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