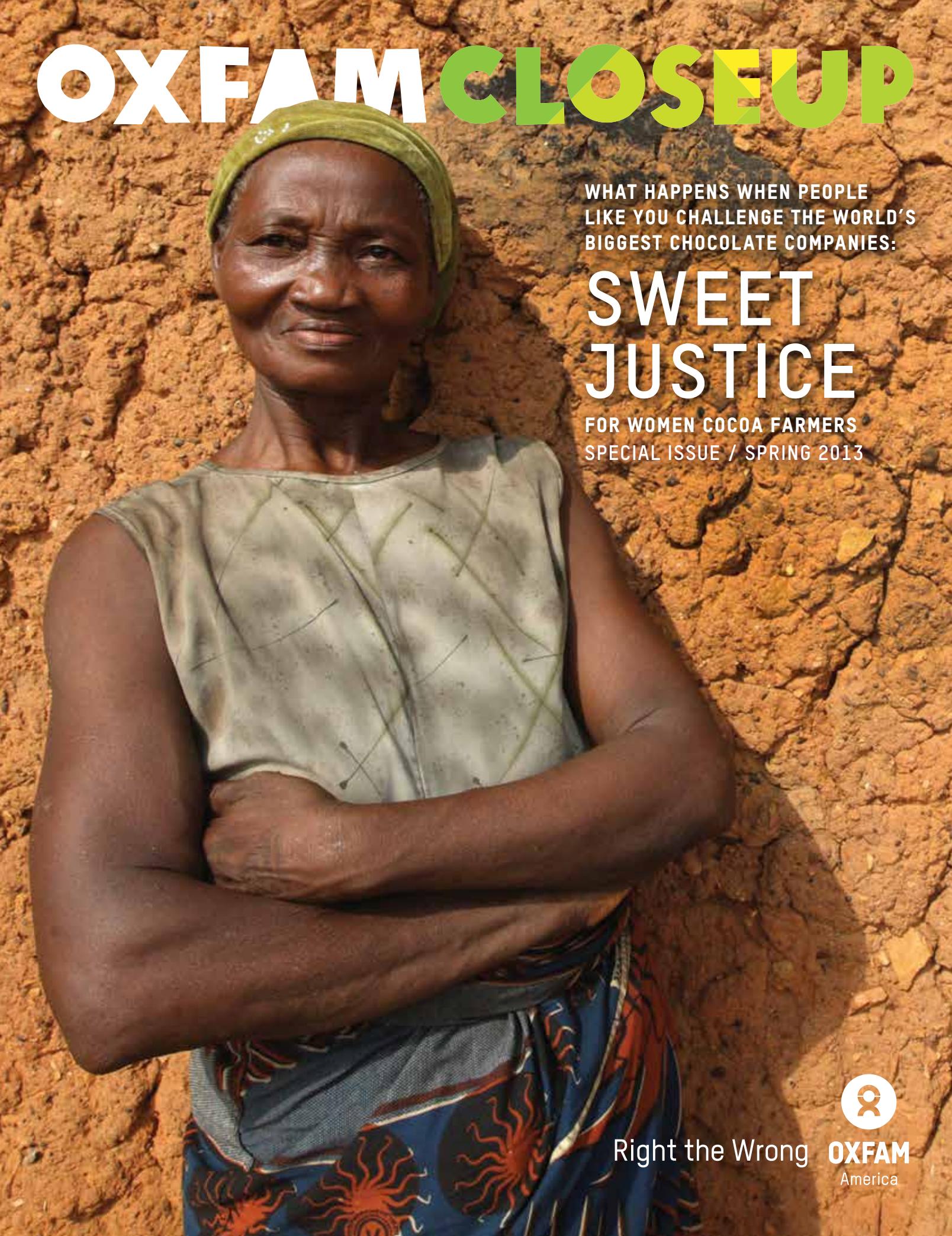


OXFAM CLOSEUP

A close-up photograph of a woman with dark skin, wearing a green headwrap and a blue and red patterned skirt. She is standing against a rough, reddish-brown textured wall, possibly made of mud or clay. She has her arms crossed and is looking slightly to the left of the camera with a neutral expression.

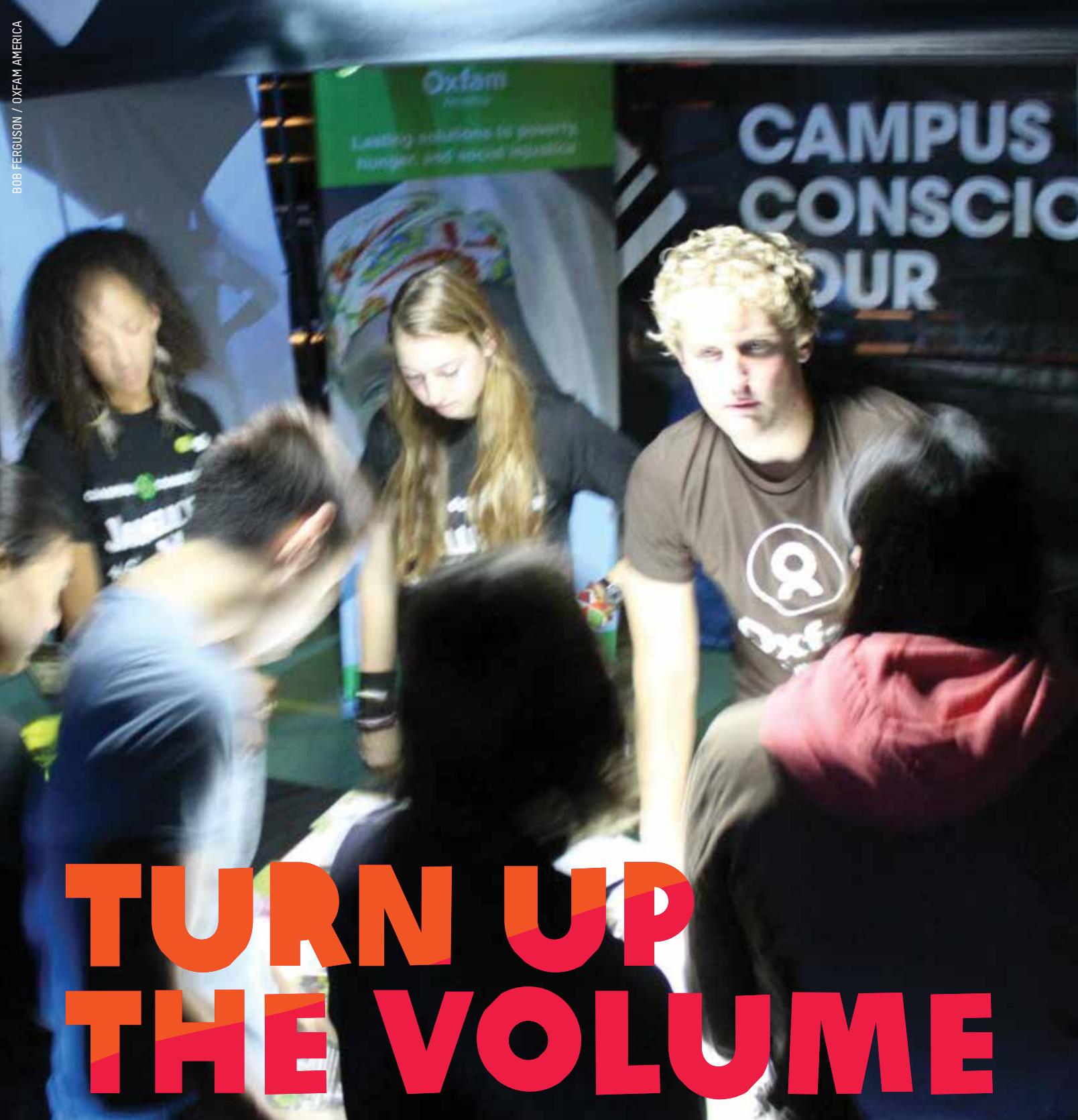
WHAT HAPPENS WHEN PEOPLE
LIKE YOU CHALLENGE THE WORLD'S
BIGGEST CHOCOLATE COMPANIES:

SWEET JUSTICE

FOR WOMEN COCOA FARMERS
SPECIAL ISSUE / SPRING 2013



Right the Wrong **OXFAM**
America



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VOLUNTEER WITH OXFAM AMERICA AT A CONCERT, FOOD FESTIVAL, OR OTHER LOCAL EVENT, AND RAISE THE PROFILE OF OUR EFFORTS TO RIGHT THE WRONGS OF POVERTY.

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DEAR FRIENDS,

I have exciting news to share with you on two Oxfam America initiatives that, over time, will have a profound impact on the lives of millions of poor people in countries around the world.

On April 2, after more than a decade of campaigning by Oxfam and other rights organizations, the UN General Assembly approved the first-ever international Arms Trade Treaty (ATT), a pact that will help regulate the world's deadliest business: the global weapons trade. For countless families caught in the armed conflicts the trade feeds, this day is long overdue. They have suffered more than any of us can imagine.

UN adoption of the ATT is a historic win; efforts to control the global arms trade date back almost 100 years when nations tried to develop an agreement that would restrict the flow of arms that had led to widespread destruction in the First World War.

Now, at last, we have such an agreement. I am incredibly proud of Oxfam America's contribution. We played a major role in winning US government support for it, but we could not have done that without your steadfast commitment to the belief that, together, we can right what's wrong. That's what campaigning is all about: steadily, collectively striving to turn a shared vision into reality.

The second piece of news I want to share is that Oxfam America achieved a major victory when three of the world's largest food companies made public commitments to begin to tackle the poverty and inequality facing women cocoa farmers. You'll read about that campaign in the pages ahead.

With both initiatives, long-term and meaningful change is, of course, not guaranteed. Not yet. For that, we need your continued support—to ensure that the treaty gets signed, that companies follow through with their promises, and that people around the world can live safe and productive lives.

I know we can count on you to stand with us.

Sincerely,



Raymond C. Offenheiser
President, Oxfam America

OXFAM CLOSEUP

OXFAM AMERICA'S MEMBER MAGAZINE

VOLUME 13, ISSUE 2

MEDIA MASHUP

Local heroes in Washington, DC, NFL superstars in Senegal, a glimpse of what's on dinner tables around the world, and more.

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WE SPOKE. COMPANIES LISTENED.

How Oxfam and supporters successfully convinced three food giants to do more to fight poverty.

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THE 'BIG 10' ANSWER TO YOU

Learn more about the giant food and beverage companies behind your favorite brands, and find out how you can help change their policies.

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TO MAKE COCOA SWEET, ADD JUSTICE

In Nigeria's remote cocoa groves, can there be a new destiny for women farmers struggling to feed their families and send their children to school?

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FROM COCOA POD TO COOKING POT

Understanding where your chocolate comes from is the first step in helping women cocoa farmers get a better deal.

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OXFAMCloseup SPRING 2013

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COVER: Cocoa farmer Adelaju Olaleye leans against the wall of her house in Oke-Agbede Isale, a village in Nigeria's southwestern cocoa-growing region. *George Osodi / Panos for Oxfam America*
We welcome your feedback. Please direct letters to editor@oxfamamerica.org.

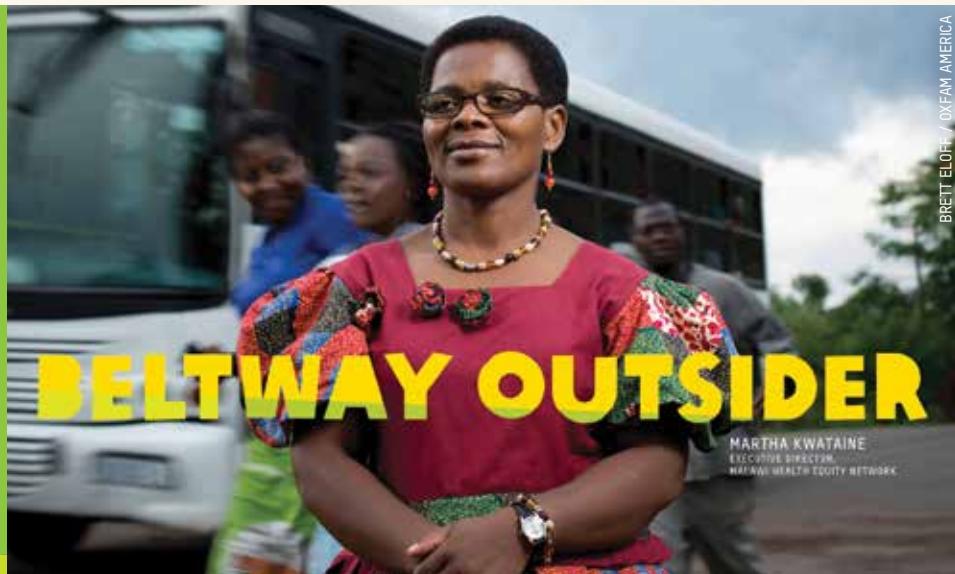
MEDIA MASHUP

LOOK. WATCH. LISTEN. JOIN THE CONVERSATION.

LOCAL HEROES

If you've flown into Washington, DC, lately, you may have run into Martha Kwataine (right), Manuel Dominguez, or Kojo Kondua IV at baggage claim. Oxfam America's Aid Effectiveness Team launched a series of ads featuring stories of change-makers from around the world who are holding their governments accountable, seeing results, and using US poverty-reducing aid to get it done.

oxfamamerica.org/aidworks



WATCH

WHAT ARE BIG OIL COMPANIES HIDING?

MARCH 13, 2013

Boakye Dankwa Boadi of Ghana has a simple question for big oil companies: "Are you bedfellows in corruption, or what?" He's featured in a video Oxfam released calling on the American Petroleum Institute to halt its legal case intended to block the payment transparency provisions in the Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act. The legislation is intended to shine a light on payments made by oil, gas, and mining companies to governments, and help civil society groups in Ghana and other countries to track the flow of money into national budgets.

You can help stop these secret payments and help people in resource-rich countries find out where their oil wealth is going.

Take an online action at
oxfamamerica.org/rules.



IN THE NEWS

NFL ATHLETES IN SENEGAL

From ESPN.com, March 21, 2013

"From March 10 to 14, NFL wide receivers Larry Fitzgerald, Anquan Boldin and Roddy White accompanied Oxfam America, a non-profit organization, on a 5-day trip to Senegal, in Africa. The players helped with humanitarian efforts and raised awareness for the region by actively participating in rehabilitating farm land and visiting decimated mining villages."

"According to Oxfam, land equivalent to eight times the size of Britain was sold or leased worldwide in the last 10 years ... The commoditization of global agriculture has aggravated the destabilizing effects of these large-scale land grabs."

Michael Kugelman, a senior program associate at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, in a New York Times op-ed titled "The Global Farmland Rush," Feb. 5, 2013

FROM THE BLOGS

7 PHOTOS THAT REVEAL WHAT FAMILIES EAT IN ONE WEEK

"How much food does your household go through in a week?" This simple question begins Anna Kramer's Jan. 23 Oxfam America blog post, which features seven images of families from around the globe with one week's food supply.

Commissioned by Oxfam and building on an idea from Peter Menzel's 2005 *Hungry Planet: What the World Eats*, the photos—including portraits of families from Sri Lanka (top), Armenia (lower left), and Ethiopia (lower right)—illustrate the wide variety in global food choices and diets. Linked to a recent news report revealing that about half of the world's food goes to waste, the images struck a chord in the US and beyond. The blog post has been shared more than 38,000 times, including 4,000 tweets and 6,000 Facebook likes. Dozens of organizations and media outlets also shared it with their audiences, including ONE, the Gates Foundation, GOOD, Al Jazeera English, and the CBC.

Equally powerful were the responses from readers, many of whom said the series made them rethink their own approach to food. "We need to have these photos posted in every grocery store and restaurant," one commenter wrote.

See the images and join the discussion at oxfamamerica.org/sevenphotos.

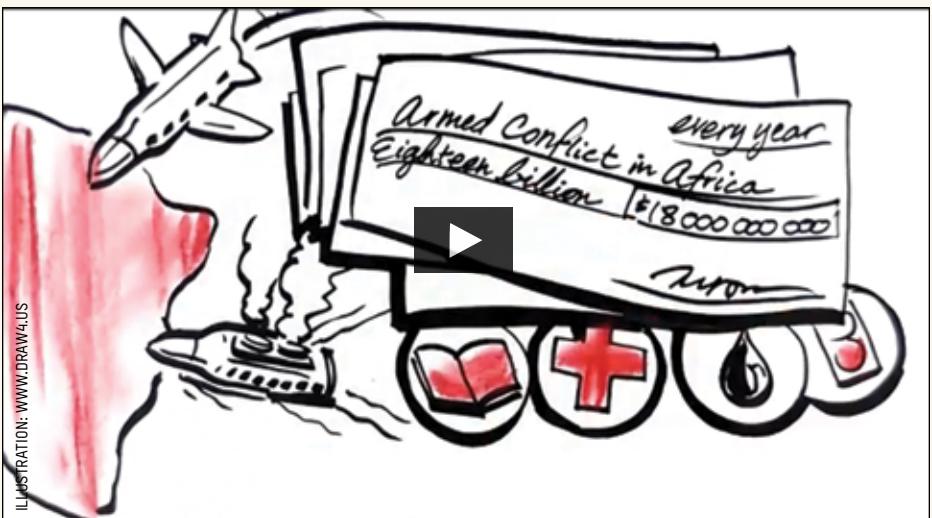


WATCH

ARMS TRADE TREATY

In a resounding vote for a safer world, the UN General Assembly made history in early April when 154 member nations voted to approve a global treaty that will bring the international arms trade under control. The vote came after more than a decade of campaigning by a host of organizations, including Oxfam, determined to stem the flow of weapons that threaten the security and rights of millions of people around the world. In the days leading to the final negotiations, Oxfam released a video that explained, sketch by sketch, the urgency behind the groundbreaking vote. The animation quickly became one of Oxfam's most-watched videos with more than 63,000 views.

Watch the video at
oxfamamerica.org/takealook.





WE SPOKE. COMPANIES LISTENED.

AS A CONSUMER, YOU'RE MORE POWERFUL THAN YOU MIGHT THINK. IN FACT, 100,000 OXFAM SUPPORTERS LIKE YOU JUST CONVINCED THREE FOOD GIANTS TO DO MORE TO FIGHT POVERTY.

ANNA KRAMER REPORTS ON EIGHT WEEKS OF ACTION.

Just eight weeks: that's how long it took to get three of the world's biggest chocolate companies to respond to consumer pressure. In March and April, Mars, Mondelez International, and Nestlé agreed to put policies in place to help the women who grow and pick cocoa—the key ingredient in chocolate—get a fair deal.

WHY COCOA?

This small bean has global importance. Many farmers in the developing world grow food for local markets, but an increasing number cultivate crops to sell to multi-national companies. Ninety percent of the

world's cocoa is now grown by some 5.5 million smallholder farmers in countries from the Ivory Coast to Indonesia.

While worldwide chocolate sales are more profitable than ever, cocoa farmers and workers are struggling. Although chocolate is a \$100 billion industry, most cocoa growers live on less than \$2 a day. Many cocoa-growing areas have high rates of hunger and malnutrition. Women growers and workers, in particular, are more likely to face poverty, low wages, and discrimination (see box, "The truth about women and chocolate").

Mars, Mondelez International, and Nestlé collectively buy more than 30 percent of the world's cocoa. But Oxfam's researchers found that these companies often know very little about the people who grow and pick their ingredients. As of early 2013, all three needed to look more closely at the way the women who grow and produce their products are treated; listen to what women have to say about their working conditions; and act to put policies in place to protect women's rights and nurture their skills.



THE TRUTH ABOUT WOMEN AND CHOCOLATE

It's no secret that many chocolate companies target women with their advertising. But the reality faced by the women who grow their cocoa is often less than sweet:

- Although women are integral to the production of commodities like cocoa, tea, and coffee, it is usually men who sell the crops to traders and control the cash received as payment.
- In West Africa, where most of the world's cocoa comes from, women do nearly half of the labor on cocoa farms but own just a quarter of the land.
- Women working on cocoa farms have fewer economic opportunities and typically earn less than men. When women farmworkers face discrimination or abuse, they often have no way to complain or fight back.
- In places like Brazil, many women cocoa growers are "invisible" because they labor on their husbands' farms without pay or public recognition. As a result, company and government policies often overlook their contributions.

LEFT: Oxfam volunteers gathered in front of the M&M's store in New York City's Times Square on March 8, International Women's Day. Peter DiCampo / Oxfam America

WEEKS 1–2

A SCORECARD FOR FOOD COMPANIES

Oxfam's effort to help women cocoa growers began as part of a larger campaign to encourage major food companies to address hunger and poverty issues in their supply chains.

On Feb. 26, Oxfam launched an online scorecard—a "behind-the-brands" look—that grades the policies of the 10 biggest food and beverage companies on issues from fair pay to land use. Based on 18 months of research, the Behind the Brands scorecard helps visitors identify the "big 10" companies that make their favorite products, see how they measure up, and, when these companies are falling short, ask them do better.

"Consumers today have more information about the food they eat than ever, and the impact of that knowledge is increasingly clear," wrote Stephanie Strom in a Feb. 27 *New York Times* blog post about the scorecard, citing recent grassroots campaigns that led to changes in food labeling and ingredients.

WEEKS 3–8

SPEAKING UP IN SUPPORT OF WOMEN

So how do you get chocolate companies to change? Mobilize the voices they are most likely to listen to: their customers. Rather than asking people to give up their favorite candy, Oxfam's global campaign invited consumers to get the facts about women and cocoa, then speak directly to companies and ask them to improve their policies.

In the US, Oxfam volunteers and staffers hand-wrapped 18,000 packages of M&M's, Oreo cookies, and Nestlé Crunch bars with new wrappers bearing messages about the power of consumer action. They then handed out the reimagined treats at grassroots events around the country on March 8, International Women's Day.

Digital versions of the redesigned candy wrappers also drew attention on social media, where thousands of people joined the effort by tweeting at these three companies and posting photos and messages on companies' Facebook pages. A month later, more than 100,000 people had signed Oxfam's online petition asking companies to put policies in place to address the inequalities facing women cocoa growers.



WEEKS 5–8

COMMITMENTS TO CHANGE

On March 26, both Mars and Nestlé showed that they were listening. In public statements, both companies made commitments to begin to tackle the inequality, hunger, and poverty faced by women in their cocoa supply chains. On April 23, Mondelez followed suit.

All three companies have now committed to "know and show" more about how women cocoa growers and workers are being treated, to put a plan of action in place to improve poor conditions, and to work with industry organizations to address gender issues. All three have also signed on to the UN Women's Empowerment Principles.

Although Oxfam applauded companies' commitments and the effects these could eventually have on women cocoa farmers, it will continue to work with all three companies to ensure they keep their promises. Supporters will also be able to track companies' progress via the Behind the Brands scorecard, which will be updated in real time. So far, the campaign's website has had nearly 300,000 visits.

"Three of the biggest food giants in the world are changing how they operate because consumers have demanded it," said Judy Beals, global manager of the Behind the Brands campaign. "We hope that the steps taken by Mars, Mondelez, and Nestlé offer an example to the rest of the food and beverage industry."

In the months ahead, said Beals, Oxfam will be calling on supporters to take further actions—and will continue to harness the power of their voices for meaningful change.



LEFT: Jacquan Clark, a student at Grinnell College in Iowa, holds a handmade sign asking Mondelez to improve its policies. His was one of many images posted to the company's Facebook page by Oxfam supporters. *Mary Zheng*

ABOVE: Oxfam America's redesigned Oreo, M&M's, and Nestlé Crunch wrappers.







ANSWER TO YOU

Here's the good news: Even the biggest companies care what their customers think. And that's where you come in.

STAY INFORMED Visit Oxfam's Behind the Brands scorecard at behindthebrands.org to learn—and share—how these 10 companies score on poverty and hunger issues.

SPEAK UP Go to behindthebrands.org to find the latest ways to use your power as a consumer and ask companies to improve their policies.





TO MAKE COCOA SWEET, ADD JUSTICE

IN NIGERIA'S REMOTE COCOA GROVES, CAN THERE BE A NEW DESTINY FOR WOMEN FARMERS STRUGGLING TO FEED THEIR FAMILIES AND SEND THEIR CHILDREN TO SCHOOL? YES, REPORTS COCO MCCABE—IF THE BIG BUSINESS OF CHOCOLATE STARTS TO ADDRESS THE DISADVANTAGES WOMEN COCOA FARMERS FACE.

Deep in the shade of her cocoa trees, Adelaju Olaleye crunches across the dead leaves blanketing her farm. She carries a long pole—some people here call the device “Go to Hell”—affixed with a sharp blade at the end for harvesting cocoa pods high in the canopy of branches. Taking a break from her work, Olaleye sits next to a heap of pods, yellow and almost glowing in the gloom. Recently harvested, they are waiting to be split open so the beans can be scooped out for fermentation and drying, the first steps in their transformation to a chocolate bar.

Olaleye is one of the small percent of Nigerian women who own their own land. In this case, it was through inheritance that she got her roughly 2.5 hectares (six acres) in Oke-Agbede Isale, a tiny village in southwestern Nigeria's cocoa-growing region. Most women don't inherit land in Nigeria, but there were no appropriate males to whom her father could leave it about 15 years ago.

“I am happy because it gives me the opportunity to have the advantage of planting things on my own,” says Olaleye, who is now about 65. “I have seen what good things people are doing with their land and I can also do.”

She planted cocoa trees and five years later started harvesting.

The land, and her harvests, have brought a measure of security to her life. But like all cocoa farmers, Olaleye has to work hard to make ends meet, and she's proud of it.

“Laziness does not pay anybody,” she says. “You put your destiny in your own hands.”

But hard work alone can't make up for some of the disadvantages women cocoa farmers face. Their determination highlights a huge gulf in the \$100 billion chocolate industry that relies on Nigeria, and other top cocoa-producing countries like the Ivory Coast and Indonesia, for its basic ingredient. Less than 5 percent of the price of a typical chocolate bar goes back to cocoa farmers. Shining a light on that injustice and pushing companies to take more responsibility for their immense influence on the lives of poor people is one of the key objectives of Oxfam's global Behind the Brands campaign, launched in February.

Though cocoa is Nigeria's second-biggest earner of foreign exchange behind oil, for most farmers the beans do not provide handsome profits. And for women, who have limited access to many of the essentials that would make growing cocoa more profitable—such as credit and, most important of all, land—the challenges are particularly keen.

MAKING A LIVING IN COCOA COMMUNITIES

About 90 kilometers from Ibadan, a commercial hub in Nigeria's cocoa-growing region, a finger of paved road dips down a hill and up again, twisting away from the highway. Soon, a dirt track appears on the right. Cocoa trees in deep shade crowd the track on both sides, and around a bend, a cluster of homes built of mud walls and rusted metal roofs sits in a clearing.

This is Oke-Agbede Isale—a Yoruba-speaking village of about 26 houses. Basic amenities have yet to find their way here: there is no electricity, and families pull their water, bucket by bucket, from a deep well. People depend on small cocoa farms to earn at least part of their household incomes. Concrete slabs, covered with cocoa beans drying in the sun, stretch in front of some of the homes. Plastic tarps lying on the ground and strewn with beans also serve as drying surfaces—with children, chickens, and dogs scrambling close to the edges. The tangy smell of fermenting beans fills the air.

For many women in these remote communities, helping to make a living for their families requires ingenuity and drive, and cocoa farming, with its hard-won income, is just part of the puzzle.

Along with running her two-acre farm, Maria Daniel of Oke-Agbede Isale also trades in kola nuts. She buys large quantities of the nuts and about four times a year treks north to Kano where she'll stay for up to five days, make her trades, and return with goods to sell in her home region.

For Felicia Adebawale, a microtrader who sells assorted provisions and ready-made clothes, her day starts by assembling her goods in front of her house and getting her children ready for school. When they return from classes, they'll watch the wares while she goes to the farm.

Part of what pushes women to work so hard is the hope they have for their children—hope that they will get good educations and go far in life.

For Comfort Adeniyi, her plan is to make sure her children are well educated, up to the university level if they are so inclined.

"I'm prepared to send them to any learning they want to go," she says, adding that when her father died she was not able to finish her education.

ACCESS TO LAND AND CREDIT

But dreams like Adeniyi's require grit to carry out.

Women farmers not fortunate enough to inherit the land they farm can sometimes scrape their savings together and buy a chunk. Some rent land and still others pay an annual fee in exchange for land bestowed by a village chief or community.

WHAT'S WRONG?

The world's largest food and beverage companies reap huge profits while millions of small-scale farmers who produce the essential ingredients in much of that food live in poverty.

WHAT'S OXFAM DOING?

Oxfam is shining a light on corporate policies and, with consumer support, is urging companies to begin "a race to the top" to improve their social and environmental practices.

Right the Wrong

Felicia Adebawale, the microtrader, pays about 50,000 naira a year, or \$315, to rent the two acres she farms in the village of Ayetoro-Ijesa. She covers the cost with a loan—another aspect of cocoa farming that can leave some women at a disadvantage. Women don't have as much access to credit as men because women don't always have assets—like land—to back up their loans. But for many small-scale cocoa producers, borrowing is a must: they need money up front to pay for basics like pesticides.

water is one of the jobs she does on local cocoa farms—along with removing the beans from their pods during harvest time, carrying them to the site where they will ferment, and then helping with the drying process. For her efforts, she'll earn 500 naira a day, or just over \$3. Men earn more: one local farmer says she pays male laborers 700 naira, or \$4.41, a day for some operations.

But Anna Iyiola, a farmer in Ayetoro-Ijesa, undertakes much of the work on her

THE FARMERS DO THE MOST WORK AND THEY'RE REALIZING THE LEAST. //

SADE RAFIU, FARMER AND COCOA BUYER

Where farmers face a real quandary is when they turn to the village-level buyers for loans—the same middlemen to whom many sell their cocoa. Some women farmers say they have no other options for borrowing. The problem comes at harvest time: often farmers who have borrowed from the village-level buyers are obliged to sell their beans back to them. For farmers, the arrangement breeds resentment and distrust. And that's why women like Beatrice Olowe, a 75-year-old farmer from the village of Oke Agbede Oke, work extra hard to keep their independence.

"I don't borrow money from cocoa buyers because I want my freedom to sell my cocoa to anyone I like," she says. "If I borrow money from cocoa buyers, they are likely to cheat me." Olowe uses her savings to buy what she needs for her farm, and if it's not enough, she turns to friends and relatives for loans.

HARD WORK, LITTLE PAY

Although it eats into their profits, many women farmers hire male laborers to tackle the heavy physical tasks, such as weeding. And while men usually do the spraying, they couldn't manage it without the help of women who are often the ones to lug in the water with which the chemicals get mixed.

For Agnes Gabriel, a 37-year-old migrant worker living in Ayetoro-Ijesa, fetching the

1.5-acre farm herself. If her husband is not too busy, he will help her with the spraying, or she will hire workers to do it. But she fetches the water, weeds, plucks the pods from the trees when the harvest is light, and removes the seeds for fermentation, which she also oversees, along with the drying.

For all that work, Iyiola's harvest in December produced only 50 kilograms of beans—with a value of about \$101 if sold to one of the village-level buyers at the going rate.

"It isn't at all a fair price," says Iyiola.

And that's one of the biggest challenges cocoa farmers—men and women—face: low prices over which they have no control.

THE BUYING CHAIN

In this corner of southwestern Nigeria, where many of the farms are small and the villages are scattered among the hills on dirt roads that are difficult to navigate even in dry weather, many cocoa farmers turn to village-level buyers to sell their beans. The price farmers can get fluctuates: late in 2012, it was dancing between \$2.02 and \$2.14 per kilogram of beans. But whatever the buyer offers is what farmers have to take, they say. There is no room for negotiation.

"There is nothing I can do," says Olaleye, the farmer from Oke-Agbede Isale. "I have no control over the price. Whether I am satisfied or not, I take the price as given."



Sade Rafiu, an enterprising mother of four children from Oke-Agbede Isale, sees the situation from both sides: she is a cocoa farmer and a village-level buyer, among her other pursuits.

"The farmers do the most work and they're realizing the least," says Rafiu, 35.

About 10 years ago, she found a way to carve a place for herself in the cocoa-buying business, traditionally the realm of men. Today, says Rafiu, she buys beans from more than 40 farmers in about eight villages. The roads into some of them are too rough for cars to travel, so Rafiu dispatches a team of motorcycle riders to ferry the cocoa out in sacks. She has designated part of her house a storeroom, and when she opens the door, the rich smell of fermented, sun-dried beans billows out.

From Rafiu's house, the beans make their way into the warehouses of the licensed buying agents with whom she works in the bigger towns of Ife and Ilesa. Rafiu says the buying agents are the ones who set the price for the beans.

For her efforts, Rafiu charges local farmers 3 kilograms of cocoa beans for every 50 kilograms she buys from them, a commission that cuts further into farmers' profits.

Not all of them accept this system. The fiercely independent Olowe is determined to keep her options open and has delivered

her cocoa beans to Ilesa herself to deal directly with buying agents in the hope of getting a better price. When one village-level buyer offered to pay her 15,000 naira, or \$94.53, for a 50-kilogram bag of beans, she declined. She hired a vehicle and found a buyer in Ilesa willing to pay her 16,500 naira, or \$103.95, for the beans—a small triumph, even if the transportation cost her 700 naira (\$4.41).

For many women cocoa farmers, such sweet victories are rare. And compounding their challenges is mystery: many say they don't know what happens to their harvests once they have sold them to the local buyers. That multibillion dollar chocolate industry—the one that turns their beans into truffles and fudges—brings them few benefits, not the least of which is information about the supply chain in which these women farmers play such a vital role. That's just one of the wrongs they face.

They are among millions of others who grow the ingredients that feed the world's biggest food companies—companies that have the power to make a real difference in the lives of poor farmers and their families. And that's the aim of Oxfam's Behind the Brands campaign: to convince the top 10 corporations to use their clout to tackle hunger, inequality, and poverty in their supply chains.

PAGE 8: Anna Iyiola works her own small cocoa farm in the village of Ayetoro-Ijesa. Her dream is to help all seven of her children receive an education, and they are well on their way: all of them have graduated from, are in the middle of, or are waiting for admission to colleges and universities.

ABOVE LEFT: Janet Joseph relies on local buyers to borrow the money she needs to run her cocoa farm. In front of her house in the village of Ilota, a recent harvest of cocoa beans dries in the sun.

ABOVE RIGHT: Spread out to dry on concrete beds in front of houses in many remote villages, fermented cocoa beans emit a familiar smell—the smell of chocolate.

Photos: George Osodi / Panos for Oxfam America



FROM COCOA POD TO COOKING POT

THE BEANS THAT MAKE THE MAGIC: UNDERSTANDING WHERE YOUR CHOCOLATE COMES FROM IS THE FIRST STEP IN HELPING WOMEN COCOA FARMERS GET A BETTER DEAL.

Chocolate that begins its journey in the deep stillness of a grove in West Africa might end up as a dazzling creation in the kitchen of a highly acclaimed restaurant in California. For the farmers who grow and sell the cocoa, the first steps of that trek are the most arduous—from harvesting the pods to extracting and processing the beans.

It's that hard work that gives fermented, sun-dried cocoa the rich flavor chocolate lovers can't resist. In the United States, Americans consume about 11 pounds of chocolate per person each year—approximately half of what Europeans

in Switzerland, Belgium, and Austria eat. Each ounce of milk chocolate they gobble uses about four cocoa beans; the same amount of dark chocolate requires 12.

Roughly the size of small pineapples, cocoa pods contain between 30 and 50 seeds coated in a gooey white pulp that looks like Elmer's glue. After farmers scoop the seeds out, they heap them together, allowing them to ferment for six to 10 days before spreading them out to dry and bagging them for sale.

"As a chef, I'm always on a quest for the best ingredients," says Mary Sue Milliken, co-chef/owner of the Border Grill in Los

Angeles. "When it comes to chocolate, I have tried it from near and far; some made with cocoa from Ecuador, others from Mexico or Ghana. What a luxury it is to have all these delicious and versatile chocolates at our fingertips."

But, for Milliken, the poor working conditions of the women who produce that cocoa rob it of some of its richness and flavor. That's why she's supporting Oxfam's work to deepen the connection between the food we eat and the people who grow it. Try her recipe for mole negro on the next page—the last step in cocoa's journey from pod to cooking pot.



When the cocoa pods have ripened—often turning golden yellow—farmers pick them carefully, using a blade attached to the end of a long pole to reach those that are high above. Workers load baskets or bowls with the pods and carry them to a central location on the farm. There, they gather to crack the pods open with sharp knives and use their hands to remove the pulp-covered seeds inside. Empty pods are left to compost in a heap. After the seeds have fermented for a few days, cocoa farmers spread them to dry in the sun on concrete slabs in front of their homes. Here, Bose Abdebowale helps turn the beans harvested by her parents. Once dried, farmers sell their cocoa beans to local village buyers like Sade Rafiu, who stores them in a room in her house before arranging for their transportation to a warehouse in a larger town.

PHOTOS: George Osodi / Panos for Oxfam America



MOLE NEGRO

RECIPE CONTRIBUTED TO OXFAM AMERICA BY MARY SUE MILLIKEN AND SUSAN FENIGER, BORDER GRILL, LOS ANGELES

INGREDIENTS

- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup extra virgin olive oil
- 1 cup onion, chopped
- 1 cup shallot, chopped
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup garlic, minced
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon black pepper, freshly ground
- 10 dried pasilla chiles negro, seeded and toasted*
- 1 ripe (black) plantain, roasted[†] and mashed
- 1 cinnamon stick
- 1 bay leaf
- 2 cardamom seeds
- 1 teaspoon cloves
- 2 quarts chicken stock
- 1 bunch cilantro, with stems
- $\frac{1}{4}$ pound achote paste, cut into chunks
- 1 jalapeño chile, stemmed
- 2 oranges, juiced
- 2 limes, juiced
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup red wine vinegar
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup balsamic vinegar
- $\frac{1}{4}$ pound dark brown sugar
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup bittersweet chocolate chips
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup honey
- 2 cups tortilla chips

- Salt, to taste
- Black pepper, freshly ground, to taste
- * Toast seeded chiles on a baking sheet in the oven at 350 F for 2 to 3 minutes, just until they start to smell fragrant.
- † Cut a lengthwise slit into the ripe plantain and toast it on a baking sheet in the oven at 350 F. Bake until the flesh is thoroughly soft and oozing through the slit, 40 to 50 minutes. Set aside to cool and then peel and mash.

INSTRUCTIONS

Add olive oil to a large stockpot over medium heat. Add onion, shallot, garlic, salt, and pepper, and sauté until soft and golden brown. Add remaining ingredients to pot and simmer for 30 minutes. Working in batches, puree in a blender until smooth. Strain back into a cleaned pot, taste, and adjust seasoning as necessary.

Chef's note: At Border Grill, we love using this flavorful mole sauce for slow cooking our favorite meats in a 325 F oven until fork-tender. For a 5-pound pork butt [shoulder], cook about 2½ hours; for a whole, bone-in chicken cut into quarters, about 1½ hours.



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