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# OXFAM'S HUNGER BANQUET PLANNING KIT

→ *A Recipe for Social Change*



**Oxfam**  
America



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*All statistics are taken from the World Bank, the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), Bread for the World Institute, the CIA World Fact Book, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF).*

# INTRODUCTION

*Oxfam America is an international development and relief agency committed to developing lasting solutions to poverty, hunger, and social injustice. As one of twelve affiliates associated with Oxfam International, Oxfam serves more than 120 countries worldwide.*

Oxfam collaborates with local organizations to help people identify and address the root causes of poverty. In more than 30 years of partnerships, we have learned that communities are often most knowledgeable about the best solutions to their own problems.

We have also found there are larger barriers that keep people from thriving. Through our advocacy work we challenge the national and international laws and policies that reinforce poverty.

For more than 30 years, Oxfam has been fighting hunger through the *Fast for a World Harvest*. The Oxfam Hunger Banquet, one of the most popular *Fast* activities, raises funds and engages tens of thousands of participants in a dramatization of the unequal distribution of resources and wealth in the world.

## The Oxfam America Hunger Banquet

The Oxfam Hunger Banquet is a powerful tool that brings to life the inequalities in our world and challenges us—as the more economically fortunate—to realize how our decisions affect others in the world. Few leave an Oxfam Hunger Banquet with full stomachs, but all leave filled with a greater understanding of the problems of global hunger and poverty and the motivation to do something about it.

Each guest draws a ticket randomly assigning them to the high-, middle-, or low-income tier as determined by World Development Report statistics, and is served a corresponding meal. The 15 percent in the high-income tier are served a sumptuous gourmet meal. The 25 percent in the middle-income section eat a simple meal of rice and beans. The 60 percent in the low-income tier waits in line for small portions of rice and water.

Oxfam Hunger Banquets provide opportunities for educating your school, group, or the public on hunger issues; raising funds to support Oxfam's poverty-fighting work; and recruiting new volunteers for your Oxfam group. Some colleges hold Oxfam Hunger Banquets as part of freshman orientation.

As an organizer of the Oxfam Hunger Banquet, we hope this event empowers you to participate in social change, educate others, and help Oxfam partners who are finding solutions to end poverty and hunger.

Thank you for continuing this important tradition by organizing an Oxfam Hunger Banquet and donating your proceeds to Oxfam America. Almost 70 percent of our revenues come from individual donations from people like you.

Please know that your efforts to raise awareness about world hunger and to motivate others to act will make a difference. Don't forget to call us (800/597-FAST) for advice. And be sure to order free materials at [www.oxfamamerica.org/fast](http://www.oxfamamerica.org/fast)!

# PLANNING YOUR OXFAM HUNGER BANQUET: THE NECESSARY INGREDIENTS

*This section explains how to plan your Oxfam Hunger Banquet from beginning to end. We've included advice from our own and others' experiences, as well as tips on the basics of good planning.*

The first step is to recruit volunteers and divide them into committees for 1) outreach, 2) set-up and logistics, and 3) planning the program. They can then ask one to three others to help them. Matching up volunteers' interests and skills with committee responsibilities can make all the difference in the success of your event.

The importance of communication between these committees cannot be overstated. One person should serve as coordinator of all the activities to keep track of the big picture, keep the committees informed about the others' activities, and make sure the committees are on track with your timetable.

## Oxfam Hunger Banquet Planning Timeline

### 5 TO 8 WEEKS BEFORE

- Read this booklet and visit [www.oxfamamerica.org/fast](http://www.oxfamamerica.org/fast) to order free materials. Call Oxfam America at 800/597-FAST for advice on organizing your event.

- Get a group of people together and divide up the work to plan the program, food, publicity, and fund-raising.
- Set a date and reserve a place to hold your Oxfam Hunger Banquet.
- Select and invite a master of ceremonies and other speakers. Make a list of local celebrities, musicians, and public officials to invite. Contact local hunger organizations or the Peace Corps office for help with identifying a speaker.
- Approach dining services or restaurants early for donations.
- Print invitations/flyers: list endorsers, prominent participants, and restaurants donating food.

### 4 WEEKS BEFORE

- Send out invitations.
- Post your event on e-mail and any other appropriate websites to which you have access.
- Prepare press releases for the media (see page 5).
- Decide how you want to arrange your seating (see page 9) and decorate your venue.

### 3 WEEKS BEFORE

- Publicize! Publicize! Publicize! (see page 5)
- Design menus.
- Purchase or make decorations.
- Put up posters and table tents (order free materials at [www.oxfamamerica.org/fast](http://www.oxfamamerica.org/fast)).
- Send out press releases and follow up with phone calls.

### 1 TO 2 WEEKS BEFORE

- Check all final details.
- Review the suggested script (see page 10) or write your own.
- Make more follow-up calls to the media.
- Continue publicity.

## POTENTIAL SPEAKERS

- Returned Peace Corps Volunteers
- Professors
- Teachers
- University presidents
- Local elected officials
- Community leaders
- Directors of area food banks and shelters
- Leaders of faith groups
- Local celebrities or media personalities

### 3 DAYS BEFORE

- Prepare tickets for high-, middle-, and low-income groups. You can download tickets on our order form at [www.oxfamamerica.org/fast](http://www.oxfamamerica.org/fast).
- Buy food, pick up donated food, or go over plans with the chef.
- Check on silverware, tablesettings, etc.
- Make last minute press calls.
- Continue publicity.

### DAY OF THE OXFAM HUNGER BANQUET

- Continue publicity.
- Set up and decorate the room.
- Set up a table with sign-in sheets and other information.
- Orient volunteers.
- Coordinate food for each income group.
- Greet guests and make sure everyone takes a ticket.
- **Begin!**

## Outreach

### *Tell your friends and community about your Oxfam Hunger Banquet.*

The Outreach Committee handles publicity and the media. It should have an attendance goal and generate as much publicity and buzz as possible.

The purpose of these publicity efforts is to get people to attend your Oxfam Hunger Banquet so they can learn about poverty and the dire need to address it. Often, after an event, organizers think of missed opportunities. Here are some tips from experienced organizers:

**Collaborate with other organizations in your community or on your campus.** The more groups that are involved, the more people who will attend your Oxfam Hunger Banquet.

**Invite special guests.** Ask elected officials, popular teachers, professors, administrators, and local celebrities to participate as servers and advertise their participation to boost attendance.

**Get invitations and announcements out early.** Think about which groups you want to invite and get mailing lists early.

**Bold is beautiful.** Catching people's eyes with color, attractive fonts, or taglines are guaranteed ways to drum up interest. In most places, you will be competing for people's attention. Order free Oxfam America posters and table tents.

**Be innovative.** Energy and enthusiasm are underrated in many publicity campaigns. In one school, students plastered high-traffic areas of their campus with poverty and hunger statistics to prepare people ahead of time with "food for thought."

**Use all your contacts.** Use newsletters, listservs, and bulletins. Ask teachers and professors to announce your Oxfam Hunger Banquet in their classes. Some teachers have agreed to give extra credit to students who attend an Oxfam Hunger Banquet and write their reflections afterward.

Your publicity should reflect the nature of the Oxfam Hunger Banquet, including the themes of social justice and education. Sometimes organizers keep their publicity purposefully vague to intrigue prospective guests and add an element of surprise. Some have used statistics, like those on our Hunger Fact Sheet, to give their advertisements a more dramatic effect.

Organizing an Oxfam Hunger Banquet creates a great opportunity to take your message about poverty and hunger issues to the general public through the media—press, radio, and television. By contacting local media, you may receive coverage of your Oxfam Hunger Banquet that will reach far beyond those who attend the event. Oxfam America offers a press kit that can be downloaded directly from [www.oxfamamerica.org/fast](http://www.oxfamamerica.org/fast).

## HARD TO SWALLOW

- 842 million people are plagued by hunger
- Nearly 35 million Americans live below the poverty line
- 1.2 billion people—that's 1 in 5—live on less than \$1 a day
- More than 30,000 children under the age of 5 die every day due to hunger and other preventable causes
- More than 40 million people required emergency food aid in 2003
- In sub-Saharan Africa, 1 in 3 people are malnourished and about half live on less than \$1 a day

## Set-Up and Logistics

This team directs all the groundwork for the Oxfam Hunger Banquet. The Set-Up and Logistics Committee is responsible for fund-raising and/or soliciting donations of food, decorations, venue, and audio-visual equipment. Committee members will also be responsible for recruiting volunteers to prepare for and staff the event. It will be easier on the day of your event if you assign volunteers to tasks (setting up the Oxfam Hunger Banquet, decorating, greeting guests, serving meals, cleaning up) in advance. The goal of this committee is to ensure that the Oxfam Hunger Banquet runs as smoothly as possible.

Once you have conceived your Oxfam Hunger Banquet scheme and planned what you want to do, the next question is: where is the money going to come from? Many organizations run Oxfam Hunger Banquets as a fund raiser for Oxfam America, so they try to spend as little as possible. Whether your event is a fund raiser or not, you will be working within a budget, so keeping expenses down will be important. Your budget will likely include:

- Decorations
- Food
- Publicity
- Room space
- Sound system
- Speaker(s)

It is a good idea to make up your own list before planning your fund-raising strategy. Once you have a list, you can start coming up with ways to cross off expenditures. Food can be your biggest expense, though through donations it can often cost nothing! If you have a dining hall or cafeteria food service, try asking them to donate food. If you don't have a food service, ask for donations from local restaurants and grocery stores. Let potential donors know that they will receive publicity through your printed program, press releases, and at the Oxfam Hunger Banquet itself. Seek out community stores, businesses, institutions, and individuals that might be able to assist you.

When talking with potential sponsors, emphasize the positive nature of your Oxfam Hunger Banquet. Many businesses and organizations have made it their policy to support social justice or public/community service efforts

as a means of supporting the community and burnishing their public images. Tip: when seeking outside support, be sure to write a professional letter first and then follow-up immediately with a call and possibly a visit. The personal touch is almost always helpful.

*Remember: creativity, enthusiasm, and willingness to try anything are essential in garnering support.*

## Program Planning

The Program Committee is generally smaller than the other two, but it plays an important role. By overseeing the structure and design of the program, this committee has the task of making sure that your Oxfam Hunger Banquet meets its educational goals and effectively conveys its message.

The idea is to create a dramatic, interactive event that enables participants to experience the extent of global poverty, the degree of inequality in the world, and the interconnectedness of the three income tiers. Your Oxfam Hunger Banquet should also demonstrate ways in which poor people are taking action to improve their lives. Sample income-level characterizations (see page 14) can be used to illustrate this point. Videos can be ordered online from [www.oxfamamerica.org/fast](http://www.oxfamamerica.org/fast). From this fundamental interconnection stems the hope that through education and action, people can help to create a more just distribution of the world's resources. People should leave with not only a greater understanding of poverty, but also specific actions they can take to help, such as making a financial contribution, joining an Oxfam campus group, or organizing a future event.

Your Oxfam Hunger Banquet should not lose its local distinctiveness. In other words, plan an event that will resonate with your audience—your school, place of worship, or community group—by taking into account people's experiences, values, and environment. An Oxfam Hunger Banquet for 200 college students will look different from one in a church or elementary school.

You may want to prepare your audience with a discussion about hunger and poverty issues prior to the event. Some schools have used advisory groups to inform students about the nature of income distribution so they feel more comfortable and can better appreciate the flow of events. College Oxfam Hunger Banquets sometimes have participants fast the day before the event and/or distribute

educational materials about poverty and hunger issues that will come up at the event. Try to gauge how well you think your audience would react to the message of the Oxfam Hunger Banquet as a surprise versus how much more they would be able to appreciate the issues if they were better informed.

The Program Committee also plans the order and content of the program, including how much time is allocated to each part. It also arranges for a master of ceremonies, other speakers, and VIP guests. Take a look at the sample program below, the sample MC script on page 15, and the sample Income-Level Characterizations on page 14 as starting points to create a program that will suit your audience.

The move up/move down scenarios (contained in the Sample Oxfam Hunger Banquet Script on page 10) are at once engaging, entertaining, and educational. They demonstrate how forces beyond a person's control can cause them to move from one tier to another—either up or down.

The sharing period, after people have finished their meal, is usually the most powerful part of the Oxfam Hunger Banquet, because it allows people to ask the hard questions. The MC may ask people in the first tier how they feel with such an abundance of food, or find out what people in the third tier would propose to make the distribution of food more equal. You may also plan a time for reflection after the Oxfam Hunger Banquet to continue the discussion. A list of possible debrief questions is included in Appendix D.

Creating as much drama as possible will help to engage your audience. Here are some ideas that have worked well with other groups:

- Ask your local ROTC or have student volunteers dress up as guards for first-tier guests.
- As people line up for food, announce that the females must go to the end of the line so they will be served last. This will generate a lively discussion during the sharing period!
- The income-level characterizations, a sample of which are found on page 14 and can be printed from our website as lottery tickets, designate income tiers to add interest to your Oxfam Hunger Banquet. Each one describes the situation of a specific person in one of the three tiers. The MC can invite several people to read their income level characterizations.

For more ideas or advice on planning your Oxfam Hunger Banquet program, call us at 800/597-FAST.

## Sample Oxfam Hunger Banquet Program

- 
- 5:00-6:00** Volunteers arrive. Volunteer coordinator gives orientation and assigns volunteers to specific tasks. Set up and decorate site.
- 
- 6:00-6:15** Greet guests and have them draw tickets; direct guests to their income groups.
- 
- 6:15-6:20** Welcome address by host. Includes acknowledgement of sponsors and people who helped make the event possible.
- 
- 6:20-6:35** MC reads Oxfam Hunger Banquet script describing the three income groups and move up/move down scenarios.
- 
- 6:35-6:50** Meal is eaten. In background: music played to slide show.
- 
- 6:50-7:15** MC asks for a moment of silence to reflect on feelings about the Oxfam Hunger Banquet. Sharing period: MC walks among audience and asks participants to talk about their experience. One or two other people circulate with cordless microphones to give other participants a chance to share.
- 
- 7:00-7:15** Guest speaker or Oxfam video.
- 
- 7:15-7:30** Conclusion: information on how participants can help. Suggestions include donating to Oxfam, going to the Oxfam website to play the [hungerbanquet.org](http://hungerbanquet.org) game, joining the Oxfam eCommunity to take action on poverty, hunger, and injustice, or planning your own Oxfam event.

## WHAT'S COOKING?

### A TYPICAL OXFAM HUNGER BANQUET MENU:

- Low-income—rice and water
- Middle-income—rice, beans and water
- Upper-income—pasta, sauce, salad and juice

# RUNNING YOUR OXFAM HUNGER BANQUET

*This section contains guidance on running your Oxfam Hunger Banquet on the big day. With the Hunger Banquet Coordinator continuing to play a central role, tasks can be divided into four groups: the master of ceremonies, VIP guest relations, coordinating volunteers, and managing the sound system.*

## The Master of Ceremonies

The master of ceremonies (MC) needs to have a commanding presence to hold the audience's attention for the duration of the Oxfam Hunger Banquet. This is the most demanding of all the responsibilities because it falls on the MC's shoulders to get the audience to participate in the sharing session, one of the most important parts of the event. Along with being an effective public speaker, the MC should have a good grasp of the Oxfam Hunger Banquet concept and objectives. Some schools have asked drama students to be their MC; others have asked local newscasters or professors with good public speaking skills. Use the sample Oxfam Hunger Banquet script on page 10 or write your own. The MC should be briefed on how and what will be served during the Banquet, as he/she will be expected to give directions concerning the food.

## VIP Guest Relations

Your VIP guest list will be divided into two parts, celebrities and sponsors. Celebrities are people you invite to draw other people to your Oxfam Hunger Banquet (local politicians, the president of your college, a local band, or dance group) and/or to provide insight into social justice issues (a knowledgeable and articulate speaker from a local homeless shelter or a returned Peace Corps volunteer, for example).

Speakers need to be briefed on where to sit, their place in the program, when they will be called on to speak, and for how long. They should be introduced to the MC and other speakers.

Sponsors, whether individuals or heads of corporations, should be shown how their support contributed to the event and thanked, both in person and by the MC, as part of the program. If appropriate, they may even be given a bit of the spotlight.

## Volunteer Coordinator

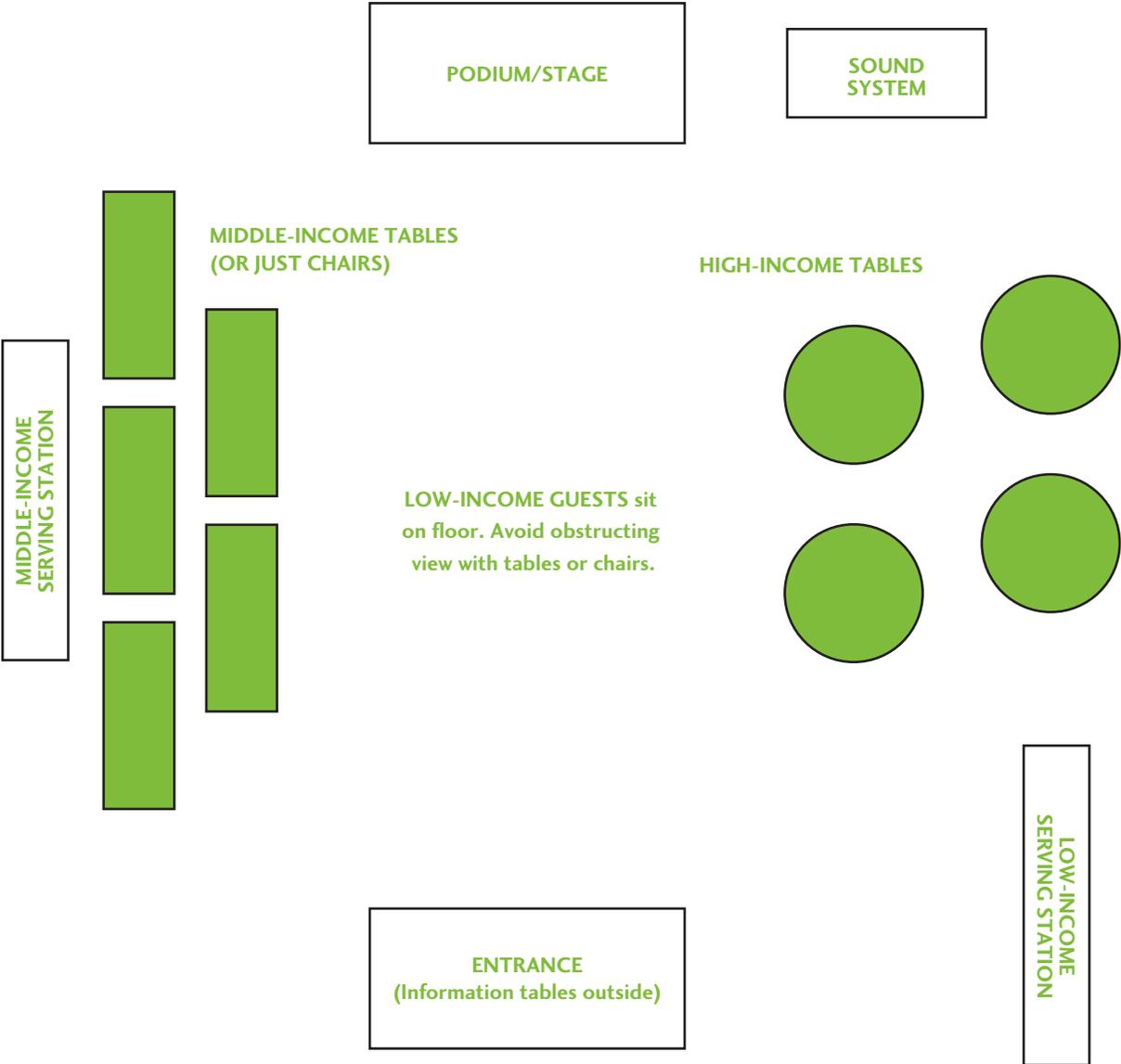
The Volunteer Coordinator picks up where the Set-Up and Logistics and Program Planning Committees left off. This person's most important responsibilities are assigning people to specific tasks and coordinating multiple activities at once.

Volunteers should arrive early for an orientation by the Volunteer Coordinator. They will put up the decorations, set up the room, and perhaps prepare the food. Others will greet the guests, have them add their names to the sign-in sheet and pick their ticket (or "lot in life"), serve the food, and clean up once the Oxfam Hunger Banquet is over. Due to the dramatic nature of the Oxfam Hunger Banquet, volunteers need to be fully versed in their roles. The volunteers serve not only a practical purpose, they are also the first people to interact with participants as they arrive.

## The Sound System

The sound system is an essential feature of the Oxfam Hunger Banquet to keep the audience involved. An effective sound system that can be heard over the crowd, particularly while people are finding their way to their appointed areas, will help your MC stay in control of the event. Look into the quality of the acoustics when you select the site for your Oxfam Hunger Banquet and arrange for at least two microphones (one for the MC and at least one cordless microphone for the audience during the sharing period).

# APPENDIX A – SAMPLE OXFAM HUNGER BANQUET FLOOR PLAN



# APPENDIX B – SAMPLE OXFAM HUNGER BANQUET SCRIPT

Welcome to the Oxfam America Hunger Banquet.

We are here today because 1.2 billion people live in poverty.  
[PAUSE]

842 million of these people suffer from chronic hunger.  
[PAUSE]

Every 2.9 seconds, a child dies from hunger and other preventable diseases. [PAUSE]

That's 30,000 children a day. [PAUSE]

You may think hunger is about too many people and too little food. Not true. Our rich and bountiful planet produces enough to feed every woman, man, and child on earth.

It's about power. The roots of hunger lie in inequalities in access to education and resources. The results are illiteracy, poverty, war, and the inability of families to grow or buy food.

Today, you join Oxfam's fight against hunger.

Oxfam maintains that human rights do not hinge on the country, gender, race or identity we inhabit, or the money we have or may need. Rather they are fundamental and non-negotiable.

Over the more than 30 years of Oxfam's work, millions of dollars have been raised to support human rights and an end to poverty. Millions of people have participated in an Oxfam Hunger Banquet or skipped a meal to recognize the plight of the world's hungry.

Even so, while the proportion of the world's population living in hunger has decreased, hunger endures for millions of people.

The fact that you are here today shows that you are concerned, that you want to learn more about our world of inequality, and that you want to make a difference.

Since 1970, Oxfam America has been making a difference—promoting change “from the bottom up” through hundreds of grassroots organizations around the world. Oxfam doesn't impose solutions. We believe that people have the power, the right, and the understanding of their own realities to innovate

solutions for their own communities. Oxfam provides financial and moral support and networking assistance to enable communities to control their own futures.

Let me give you two examples:

## ACCESS TO FAIR TRADE MARKETS EXAMPLE

*Since 1997, the price of coffee has plummeted 70 percent on the world market, resulting in a widespread humanitarian crisis for more than 25 million coffee growers.*

*El Pinal, a cooperative in El Salvador, is one of thousands of coffee producers in Central America devastated by this price drop. Life in El Pinal, like many rural villages, depends upon coffee sales.*

*In response to the crisis, El Pinal united with 11 groups of coffee producers to form a larger cooperative, APECAFE. This Oxfam-supported federation helps small farmers produce and export their coffee to international markets.*

*One of the most important markets for any small grower is the Fair Trade coffee market. Fair Trade enables cooperatives to bypass middlemen and sell directly to importers at a set price—as much as three times what individual farmers might get if they were selling to the conventional market.*

*The results have been tremendous. “Some 30 percent of our children are now able to go to university,” says APECAFE president Alfredo Rumaldo Osencio. “In spite of the coffee crisis and the low prices, we have not abandoned our farms.”*

## SUPPORTING COMMUNITY CAPACITY EXAMPLE

*Food security is a critical need for most Ethiopians. But in the northern region of Tigray—the most drought-prone region of the country—the situation is especially acute. Here, people suffer from chronic food deficits, which lead to widespread malnutrition and disease. Over 50 percent of children are underweight for their age.*

*Oxfam was there to help. In the village of Enderta, Oxfam funded a river diversion project to irrigate over ten square kilometers of drought-stricken land. The diversion canal channels water from a nearby river to families who make a living harvesting grain.*

*This canal changed the lives of the people of Enderta. Today, villagers enjoy increased yields from their crops. They feed their families and send their children to school. The villagers are also receiving training in irrigation techniques and water management.*

[TO FOLLOW ONE OR BOTH OF THE ABOVE EXAMPLES]

Oxfam also supports other groups, including:

- Small-scale farmers in the US who are forming cooperatives to sell their organic produce;
- Indigenous people in the Amazon working together to protect their rainforest homeland from encroachment and pollution;
- And women starting their own microenterprises in Africa and East Asia.

Altogether, Oxfam America supports some 262 partners in more than 30 countries. While Oxfam is committed to our community-based work, we have found that there are also larger barriers that keep people from thriving. Our community work forms the basis for our policy and advocacy work, through which we challenge the national and international laws and policies that reinforce poverty. We also educate the US public on hunger and poverty issues, which is what this Oxfam Hunger Banquet is all about.

This Oxfam Hunger Banquet is a metaphor for how food and other resources are inequitably distributed in the world. As such, an Oxfam Hunger Banquet can only touch upon the issues. We cannot recreate the many, complex ways poverty manifests itself. We will not have time to go into all the problems associated with lack of access to healthcare, education, and employment opportunities, and the realities of the day-to-day struggle for survival.

The one thing I would like you to remember is this: everyone on earth has the same basic needs; it is only our circumstances—where we live and the culture we are born into—that differ.

Some are born into relative prosperity and security, while millions—by no choice of their own—are born into poverty.

As each of us walked in the door here today, we chose our lot, at random. Look around, and you can see that equality and balance don't exist here.

Please note: no one section of this room represents a single country. While the US is one of the wealthiest countries on

earth, almost 35 million Americans live in poverty. Stark inequalities prevail everywhere.

Now I would like to introduce you to the three segments of this world. But do remember—it's too easy to measure this world purely in economic terms. It is really about each person's ability to achieve a sense of security and have access to resources.

[MOVE NEAR HIGH-INCOME GROUP]

If you are sitting over here, you represent the 15 percent of the world's population with a per capita income of \$9,076 or more. You are fortunate enough to be able to afford a nutritious daily diet. As a group, you consume 70 percent of all the grain grown in the world, most of it in the form of grain-fed meat. Since most of you exceed your daily requirement of calories, you face health problems such as heart disease and diabetes.

But most of you don't worry about getting healthcare. You have access to the best medical care in the world. It's a given that your children will attend school; the only uncertainty is how many years they will study after high school.

Access to credit? You turn down more offers than you can count. You and your family live in a comfortable and secure home. You own at least one car and probably two televisions. When you take your annual two-week vacation, you don't worry about your job disappearing.

You have access to everything you need and the security to enjoy it.

[MOVE NEAR MIDDLE-INCOME GROUP]

If you are sitting here, you represent roughly 25 percent of the world's population. You earn between \$912 and \$9,075 a year. The levels of access and security you enjoy vary greatly. You are the folks who live on the edge. For many, it would take losing only one harvest to drought or a serious illness to throw you into poverty.

You probably own no land and may work as a day laborer, which pays a paltry amount—but it's better than nothing. Your small income allows for some use of electricity and a few years of schooling for your children—especially if they are boys. Alternatively, you may have left your family to go work in the city. You hope that the money you earn from your less-than-minimum-wage job as domestic help or sweatshop worker will eventually allow you to move back home and make a better life for your family.

Let me put a real name to a person in this middle-income group: Romeo Ramirez. In an effort to support his struggling family, Romeo left his home in Guatemala when he was 13 to find farmwork in Mexico. Two years later, he made the difficult journey to the US to chase the American dream. But the promises of this dream were unattainable. Instead, Romeo toiled in the fields of Florida where he needed to pick nearly two tons of tomatoes to make just \$50 a day.

[MOVE NEAR LOW-INCOME GROUP]

If you are sitting on the floor, you represent the majority of the world's population—roughly 60 percent. Your average income is less than \$911 a year—about \$2.50 a day—although many of you earn much less.

Every day is a struggle to meet your family's basic needs. Finding food, water, and shelter can consume your entire day. For many of you women, it would not be uncommon to have to walk 5 to 10 miles every day to get water, spend several more hours working in the fields, and of course take care of the children.

Many of you are frequently hungry. It is quite likely that you don't get the minimum number of calories your hard-working life requires. Many of you are homeless or living in structures so flimsy that a hard rain or strong wind can cause a major catastrophe.

Even though education is the single most powerful weapon against poverty, school is a luxury few of your children will ever experience. Most girls don't even bother to dream about school.

Adequate healthcare is out of the question for many of you in this group. For most of you, early death is all too familiar, with many mothers expecting to lose one or two children before they turn five.

If you are lucky enough to work, you are probably a tenant farmer who must give your landowner 75 percent of your harvest. Or, you may get occasional work as a day laborer at a large plantation growing bananas, sugar, or coffee for export. You reap few benefits from these crops; you'd prefer to grow food your children could eat.

Meet Adis Gemada. Adis lives in the Rift Valley of Ethiopia which has been plagued with chronic droughts. Her husband died and left her with seven children. In good times, they eat one meal a day. As a result, her children have had malaria and other illnesses related to the shortage of food. Adis had three goats but was forced to sell them in an

attempt to feed her children and overcome these problems. "I have nothing left to sell," she says.

[MOVE UP/DOWN SCENARIOS]

Now, I have some news that will affect several of you:

Like we've said, no one can choose the circumstances into which they are born. Some people have the good fortune to change their lives for the better, but for most the circumstances of life are determined by factors outside of their control.

[ASK ANY SIX PEOPLE FROM LOW-INCOME GROUP TO STAND]

These six people live in the border region of Mexico. Another *maquiladora*—an industrial plant owned by an American firm which finds it cheaper to produce their goods in Mexico and then ship the product back to the US—has just opened its doors in your town and needs a few thousand workers for the factory floor. Once hired you will be paid a few dollars a day, and you anticipate your life becoming much more secure. You will be able to feed your family on a regular basis and maybe build yourself a small house out of scrap materials on the edge of a shantytown. I invite you to make a place for yourself in the middle-income group. But before you go...

[ASK ANY SIX PEOPLE FROM MIDDLE-INCOME GROUP TO STAND]

These six people already work in a *maquiladora* in the next town over. You have been working there for many years and have finally gotten angry about the dangerous working conditions, mistreatment by the managers, and low wages. Now, you refuse to work until changes are made. There are no unions for the *maquiladora* workers—union leaders were given stakes in many of the companies early on in order to keep the unions out of the plants—and so you have been fired. You are now forced to look for another equally low-paying job with poor working conditions. You have been living week to week and have no savings and nothing to live on until you, hopefully, manage to find another job. I invite you to take the seats of those six from the low income group who managed to find jobs in the next town over.

[PEOPLE EXCHANGE PLACES AND SIT. NOW, TURN TO HIGH-INCOME GROUP AND ASK SOMEONE TO STAND]

You are a middle manager at a large US-based coffee company. The world market price of coffee has reached record lows. Even though your company is paying less for the

coffee, it is not going to lower the prices it charges US consumers. Your company's profit margins are about to escalate, and you will receive a hefty bonus at the end of the year. Congratulations! Maybe you'll take a Caribbean vacation. While you're deciding how to spend your bonus, please remain standing while I introduce two people you wouldn't ordinarily get to meet.

*[ASK ANY MAN IN MIDDLE-INCOME GROUP TO STAND]*

You are Joseph Mkombo. You have just been laid off from your job picking coffee beans, which allowed you to provide the basics for your family in Kenya. After the price of coffee dropped, your employer was forced to scale back its workforce because it could no longer afford to pay everyone. Please move to the low-income group.

*[ASK ANY WOMAN IN LOW-INCOME GROUP TO STAND]*

Please meet Lillian Kenyatta. You live in the same village as Joseph, and you eke out a living selling maize and other vegetables from your garden in the local market. Because Joseph and many of your other customers have been laid off from the nearby coffee plantation, they are buying less from you, and you can't afford enough corn for your family. You will receive only a half-portion of rice today.

*[TURN BACK TO ADDRESS ENTIRE ROOM]*

This is just a small slice of life as it plays out each day around the globe.

Now, we invite you to eat.

Those of you in the high-income group will be served a nutritious meal *[MAY MENTION MEAL]*. Those in the middle-income group may proceed to the buffet tables where *[RICE AND BEANS, IF THIS IS THE CASE]* are available.

People in the low-income group seated on the floor will find rice and water at the table at the far end of the room *[YOU CAN ALSO SERVE RICE IN LARGE BOWLS PLACED ON THE FLOOR AND HAVE PEOPLE SERVE EACH OTHER]*. Please make your way over there now. Bon appetit!

*[TAPED MUSIC OR SLIDE SHOW DURING MEAL. AT END OF MEAL, TURN OFF THE TAPE]*

Please join me in a moment of silence to reflect on your experience here today.

*[MOMENT OF SILENCE]*

*[SHARING PERIOD: MC WALKS AMONG AUDIENCE MEMBERS, ASKING PEOPLE HOW THEY FEEL ABOUT BEING IN WHICHEVER*

*GROUP THEY ARE IN AND WHAT THEY CAN DO TO TAKE CONCRETE ACTION. ASK PEOPLE IF THEY WANT TO SPEAK, ETC.]*

## CONCLUSION

There is still a lot of work to be done, yet there is also hope.

Let me bring you back to Adis. The Rift Valley continues to be plagued with drought. Through Oxfam funding of partners, people in those communities have received camels to help transport water, sparing women a 10-hour walk with a heavy load. They have also built irrigation systems. But their situation is still tenuous and fraught with uncertainty.

Now let me tell you about Romeo. Romeo ended up in Immokalee, Florida, where he encountered an employer who refused to pay him. Friends directed him to an Oxfam partner called the Coalition of Immokalee Workers or CIW. CIW helped Romeo peacefully confront the grower and demand his rightful wages.

In 2001, working with CIW, Romeo went undercover into a slave camp in Lake Placid, Florida, to gather information that would help free 700 workers being held captive and place three growers in jail. Last year, Romeo was one of three CIW members to receive the Robert F. Kennedy Human Rights Award. This was the first time in its 20-year history that the honor was bestowed on a US-based organization.

Oxfam welcomes you to join Adis, Romeo, and many others in our fight against global hunger and poverty. By attending this Oxfam Hunger Banquet, you have deepened your awareness of world hunger. The key now is how you put this awareness to use.

Here are a few ways to get involved:

- Organize another Oxfam Hunger Banquet.
- Join Oxfam's eCommunity and—with the click of a mouse—make a difference on key policy issues including trade and unfair mining practices that affect millions throughout the world.
- Look for the Fair Trade label when purchasing coffee, tea, and other products in your supermarket. Buy from small and local farmers whenever possible.
- Volunteer or intern at Oxfam or another organization that you believe in.

Together we can make a difference. Thank you for coming.

# APPENDIX C – SAMPLE CHARACTERIZATIONS

*To make your Oxfam Hunger Banquet more interesting for your guests, we have developed characterizations. You'll find a sampling here. A total of 50 characterizations can be found at [www.oxfamamerica.org/fast](http://www.oxfamamerica.org/fast). Copy them onto different colored paper and use as the tickets that guests draw as they arrive. Use a different color for each income group.*

## HIGH-INCOME GROUP

**My name is John.** My parents emigrated from Italy and raised my brothers and me in a tenement in Chicago. I worked my way through college and law school, taking on a variety of odd jobs, and then started my own law practice. I am now able not only to live in a fine home and travel extensively, but I've also been able to "give back" by paying for college for high school graduates with exceptional promise who come from disadvantaged backgrounds.

**I am Verena.** My father was the director of the Festspiel (internationally renowned music festival) in Salzburg, Austria. I studied art in Venice, Italy. My father's connections and financial support allow me to dedicate myself full-time to my artistic endeavors while living comfortably. This month, I am showing my work in a major exposition sponsored by the city.

## MIDDLE-INCOME GROUP

**My name is Romeo.** I left Guatemala when I was 13 to find farm work. Two years later, I moved to the United States, because I heard there was more opportunity there. But working in the fields of Florida is very difficult. I have to pick 125 buckets of tomatoes, or nearly two tons, to make \$50 a day. My shelter is very expensive, and I have no healthcare or benefits.

**My name is Dully.** I live with my family in India. Before my mother joined a women's group, we had no money to buy medicine when my brothers and I would get sick. My mother and her friends talked about problems with their husbands: they wouldn't help out at home, they would spend all their money on themselves, and sometimes they would beat them. But the women were very brave, and they formed a women's group to raise and sell fish. They earn their own income, and the village men's group cooperates with them. Sometimes, my father even helps cook dinner.

## LOW-INCOME GROUP

**My name is Adis.** I live in the Rift Valley in Ethiopia. My husband died, and I have seven children to care for. Because of the drought in this area, it is very difficult to get water and food. My children are constantly ill. Recently, I sold my last three goats. I hope things get better because I have nothing left to sell.

**My name is Ismatullah.** I am 16 years old and work as a shopkeeper in the village of Qadis in Afghanistan. Prospects for my three-month-old kiosk don't look good. Of the 300 shops that used to be open in the town, only 20 are still in business. It is hard to see how I'm going to sell the packs of pasta and bars of Raana soap.

**I am Miguel** from the Dominican Republic. I am a sugar farmer working on a small plantation. Every day, I work for 11 hours. I make very little money, but the work is steady. My dream is to someday own my own farm, but I never seem to be able to save any money for my future.

# APPENDIX D – GUIDELINES FOR MASTER OF CEREMONIES

*The MC is the most critical component of an Oxfam Hunger Banquet. An Oxfam Hunger Banquet should be an interactive learning experience. Your primary job as MC is to facilitate the drama of the Oxfam Hunger Banquet. Think of it as a theatre in which each of the participants are the actors. It is your responsibility to see that the actors play their parts and that the theatre remains dynamic and exciting. Your role requires that you both take responsibility for the event and remain flexible.*

## THE REFLECTION PERIOD

This is the part of the Oxfam Hunger Banquet where learning is reinforced. Participants are invited to describe what happened to them, how it made them feel, and identify ways they can apply this to normal life. Each participant holds a piece of the puzzle. Your job is to help the group put the pieces together into a whole. The following questions will help you start the discussion at your Oxfam Hunger Banquet. Feel free to add other questions you think are important or to ask follow-up questions of participants you think might have something important to share.

## QUESTIONS TO ASK AT AN OXFAM HUNGER BANQUET

### Young audiences:

- Do you think it's fair that the world is divided this way? Why or why not?
- Do you think that the people who got the big meal should help the others? Why or why not?
- Do you think people in the third tier are there because they don't work hard? Or why do you think the people in the third tier are there?

### Older audiences:

- Would anyone like to share any of the thoughts they have on what has taken place here?
- Has anyone witnessed poverty in the US or in a visit to a poor country that they would like to share?
- Does anyone have any ideas on how the personal choices we as Americans make impact this unequal distribution?
- What might we all do to bring about a fairer distribution of resources?

If people are only focused on the dynamics of the banquet itself, remind participants that this is a simulation, not reality for most of us. Challenge the audience to discuss what this represents in the real world and ask what can be done to change things for the better.

## THINGS TO CONSIDER:

- Do not allow the event to go over the allotted time (ideally 90 minutes—check with the organizer to see what s/he has planned). Be comfortable ending the event early if you have exhausted all possibilities for participation.
- Walk around in the audience. Be a part of the banquet. Have the organizer designate one or two people who will share their thoughts to get the ball rolling during discussion. Maybe hand around your microphone so that people can comment if they wish.
- You may want to open with a comment on the idea of the Oxfam Hunger Banquet as theatre. The point of the event is to get people to play their roles.
- Emphasize that the Oxfam Hunger Banquet is only meant to demonstrate the unequal distribution of global resources. Some of the groups may wish to share their food with a lower-income group. Keep the discussion focused away from the notion of handouts as a solution to inequality. Ask what the participants are really willing to give up. Are they willing to give up their credit? Their land? Try to use discussions about handouts to get people to think about long-term solutions to hunger and poverty.
- If people in the lower-income group do not eat their food, point this out. In reality, this is not a choice for hungry people.
- Use audience comments to illustrate the point of the Oxfam Hunger Banquet. The MC's job is to make sure that the discussion stays focused and reinforces the message of the event.

# IS HUNGER EATING AT YOU?

## Four things to do after attending an Oxfam Hunger Banquet



1. Experience [HungerBanquet.org](http://HungerBanquet.org), an interactive learning game that illustrates the root causes of global poverty and hunger. With a simple click of a mouse, learn about hunger from the points of view of those who experience it every day.
2. Join Oxfam's eCommunity at [www.oxfamamerica.org](http://www.oxfamamerica.org), to take action on poverty and keep informed about important current events and ways to participate.
3. Get involved in Oxfam's other campaigns to bring justice and hope to millions, including Make Trade Fair, No Dirty Gold and Fair Trade Coffee.
4. Volunteer or intern at Oxfam or another organization you believe in.

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