

Food Aid Project: Oxfam Fact Sheet

"Oxfam" was the original postal abbreviation for the Oxford Committee for Famine Relief, which was started in England during World War II to provide relief to war victims in Europe. Since then, Oxfams have been established in 12 countries.

A group of volunteers founded Oxfam America in 1970 in response to the humanitarian crisis created by the fight for independence in Bangladesh. The next few years were pivotal as several key supporters made prophetic and significant decisions that defined Oxfam's mission and principles:

- Oxfam America decided not to accept US government grants and to instead try to build broad-based, grassroots support that would remain independent of government foreign policy.
- Appeals for support would also avoid promoting a condescending attitude toward the poor; communications would be thought-provoking rather than emotional.
- Grants would focus on small projects which could serve as models for others.

In 2000, Oxfam America celebrated its 30th anniversary. While the organization today is a very different place—one that has grown and changed to address both the times and the changing needs of developing countries—several things have remained steadfast: the commitment to addressing issues of injustice and poverty, and the set of core values that has informed our work—legacies passed down through three decades of staff and board.

Our Vision: A world in which all people shall know freedom to achieve their fullest potential and to live secure from the dangers of hunger, deprivation, and oppression.

Our Mission: To develop lasting solutions to poverty, hunger, and social injustice.

Financials: In 2005, Oxfam America allocated more than 84 percent of its expenditures for development programs and emergency relief. Between 1995 and 2004, Oxfam America allocated an average of 77 percent of its expenditures for those same activities. During this same period, at least 90 percent of funds designated by donors for humanitarian emergencies directly supported our relief efforts for those emergencies.

President: Raymond C Offenheiser

After working in developing countries for more than 20 years, Raymond C. Offenheiser returned to the US in 1995 to join Oxfam America as its President. Under Mr. Offenheiser's leadership, Oxfam America has more than doubled in size, and has repositioned itself as a leading voice on international development and global trade. Mr. Offenheiser has spent his entire career in the non-profit sector, and is a recognized leader on issues such as poverty alleviation, human rights, foreign policy, and international development. Serving as a resource and frequent commentator in the media, Mr. Offenheiser speaks before diverse audiences on such issues as foreign aid, global poverty, humanitarian relief, international agriculture, human rights, global trade policies, and corporate social responsibility.

The Tasks:

1. Prepare a 10-12 page strategy memo for President Offenheiser on how to respond to the USAid proposal. Be sure to link the strategy to Oxfam's core values propositions while also taking account of the interests of all other crucial stakeholders including USAID, Cargill and Catholic Relief Services.
2. Prepare a 15 minute Powerpoint presentation to persuade USAID, Cargill and Catholic Relief Services on the merits of your position. The presentation will be given during a meeting (held during the last class session) that will include members of all four groups and will be hosted by USAid.
3. Prepare a 30 minute presentation to be given to the advisory board of Oxfam that covers items 1 and 2 above. This presentation will be given outside of class during the week prior to the last class.

Important Links:

Official website: <http://www.oxfamamerica.org>

White paper concerning position on Food Aid reform:

http://www.oxfam.org.uk/what_we_do/issues/trade/downloads/bp71_food_aid.pdf

Values Statement: http://www.oxfamamerica.org/whoweare/welcome_to_oxfam/oxfam_beliefs

Letter from the President: http://www.oxfamamerica.org/whoweare/welcome_to_oxfam