

Oxfam Purpose and Beliefs

This document is to be read as a whole.

Our Vision

1. Oxfam's vision is a just world without poverty. We envision a world in which people can influence decisions which affect their lives, enjoy their rights, and assume their responsibilities as full citizens of a world in which all human beings are valued and treated equally.

Our Purpose

2. The purpose of Oxfam is to help create lasting solutions to the injustice of poverty. We are part of a global movement for change, one that empowers people to create a future that is secure, just, and free from poverty.

Achieving our Purpose

3. Oxfam uses a combination of rights-based sustainable development programs, public education, Fair Trade, campaigns, advocacy, and humanitarian assistance in disasters and conflicts. In doing so, we seek to be innovative and practical, and to learn from others in ways which will increase impact on a larger scale.

4. Oxfam challenges the structural causes of the injustice of poverty at global, regional, national, local, community and household levels, within the framework of rights-based development. We link local to global, and we work with partners at all levels. We do so through direct and alliance-based advocacy and campaigns, by strengthening and empowering local organizations, by helping people where necessary, and by assisting the development of structures which are accountable to and directly benefit people living in poverty.

5. Oxfam recognizes the critical importance of gender justice, diversity, active citizenship, transparency, good governance, and effectively responding to the environmental and other crises that confront vulnerable communities and developing countries.

6. In the pursuit of its purpose Oxfam will be accountable to all stakeholders, especially those living in poverty. We will be positive, optimistic, and committed, and will reach out to engage and include others.

Our Beliefs

7. Everyone has a right to realize their potential, and to have the opportunity to live free of poverty in a secure and more equitable world. We believe that, with the necessary human action and political will, a just world without poverty is possible.

8. Oxfam subscribes to all international covenants on rights, and to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. People have basic rights: a right to life and security; to a sustainable livelihood; to be heard; to have an identity; and to have access to basic social services.

9. Poverty is a state in which people have little power and are denied an effective voice in decisions which affect them. Poverty means little income, too few assets, lack of access to basic services and opportunities, deep inequalities, ongoing insecurity and little opportunity for development.

10. Poverty is rooted in inequality, and in human action or inaction. Poverty can be made worse by natural disasters, human violence, oppression and environmental damage. It can be maintained by institutions and economic mechanisms.

11. Women and girls are often the most oppressed by poverty; their needs and rights must be central to eliminating it.

12. We face unprecedented changes and challenges in the 21st century, including climate change and its consequences, famines and food price crises, global financial crises, increasing humanitarian crises, energy limitations, proliferation of weapons, urbanization, and natural resources shortages. These challenges can be met, but we need unprecedented levels of global co-operation and cohesion to pursue the necessary changes.

13. Governments should be accountable to their people for the protection and promotion of fundamental rights, and that all society's institutions – governments, corporations, organizations and groups, including Oxfam – should be accountable for the impact of their actions on people and their economic, social, political and cultural rights.

14. Oxfam is secular, open-minded and pluralistic. We welcome people of all beliefs which advance human rights.

Working together

15. Oxfam is a confederation of affiliates with diverse backgrounds, all dedicated to the achievement of Oxfam's purpose and seeking maximum impact by building on their respective strengths.

16. By working closely together, we will provide a clear and consistent approach across the world, and will enhance our collective impact, our cost effectiveness, and will contribute to a just world without poverty.