

OXFAM CLOSEUP

SPRING 2019

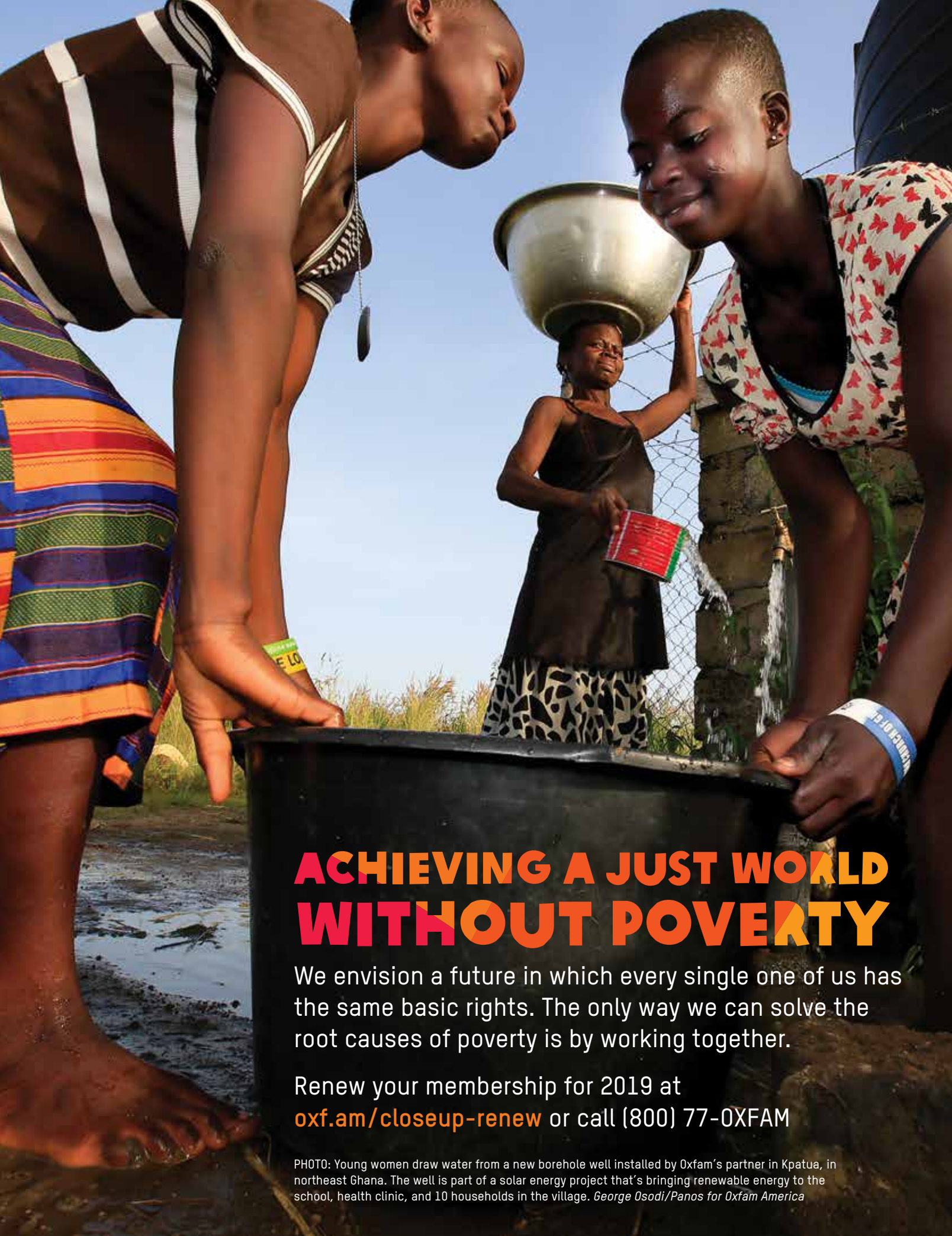
THE POWER OF LOCAL RADIO

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE:

- > PAKISTAN: WOMEN LEADERS OF TOMORROW
- > PEANUT BUTTER THAT SAVES LIVES
- > BUILDING A PATH OUT OF POVERTY



OXFAM



ACHIEVING A JUST WORLD WITHOUT POVERTY

We envision a future in which every single one of us has the same basic rights. The only way we can solve the root causes of poverty is by working together.

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PHOTO: Young women draw water from a new borehole well installed by Oxfam's partner in Kpatua, in northeast Ghana. The well is part of a solar energy project that's bringing renewable energy to the school, health clinic, and 10 households in the village. *George Osodi/Panos for Oxfam America*

DEAR FRIENDS,

This issue has some great examples of how your generous support for Oxfam is making a difference: You are helping malnourished families in Malawi learn about nutrition, grow more food, and help each other stay healthy. You are supporting community radio stations, like the one in Uganda that helps refugees work together, support themselves, and communicate their needs to local leaders. In Pakistan, you're helping our Women Leaders of Tomorrow program provide scholarships to girls who might otherwise drop out of school. And here in the US, you're supporting the work of our partner New Way Mississippi that assists people coming out of prison into a "re-entry pipeline" of qualified workers ready for good jobs.

Without a decent job, the ability to read and write, the resources to feed a family, or even to live in peace and safety, it's impossible to plan for the future. When we work with the right local organizations and respond to the needs of people to find their own pathways forward, we can help them build their own dignified futures.

In all these initiatives, Oxfam and our partners recognize the different needs of women and people with diverse gender identities. This is also an important part of our humanitarian response in Yemen, where citizens are enduring conflict, near-famine conditions, outbreaks of disease, and economic crisis. Our program there is specifically helping women not only with clean water and cash, but also with job training to help them earn their own money.

As peace talks begin, Oxfam is advocating for all parties of the conflict to include women and youth in negotiations. Only with inclusive peace can the people of Yemen enjoy their right to live with dignity.

Sincerely,



Abby Maxman
President & CEO, Oxfam America

COVER: Radio Pacis Program Manager Ayikobua Noel hosts a radio show in Arua, Uganda, for people living in refugee resettlements. Oxfam's support helps the station create shows where refugees can air their concerns.
Elizabeth Stevens/Oxfam America

OXFAM CLOSEUP

OXFAM AMERICA'S MEMBER MAGAZINE

SPRING 2019 VOLUME 19, ISSUE 1

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EDITOR'S NOTE: The small graphics you see with each story represent the three major approaches we take in our work:



**SAVING LIVES
DURING DISASTERS**



**CHALLENGING
THE POWERFUL**



**BUILDING LASTING
SOLUTIONS**

We welcome your feedback. Please direct letters to editor@oxfamamerica.org.

MEDIA MASHUP

LOOK. WATCH. LISTEN. JOIN THE CONVERSATION.

IN THE NEWS

SEEKING SAFE HAVEN

As thousands of Central American migrants attempted to make their way to the United States last fall, Oxfam and its local partners responded with essential aid for nearly 2,500 migrants who were stranded at the Guatemala-Mexico border. Oxfam and its partners distributed thousands of personal hygiene kits and installed 60 latrines, built showers, and provided access to drinking water in coordination with the town of Tecún Umán, in western Guatemala.

As the groups approached the US-Mexico border, VOA News reported that Oxfam and other aid groups urged faster asylum processing. "The people at the border are exercising their legal right to seek asylum, as they are entitled to under US and international law," said Vicki Gass, Oxfam senior policy advisor for Central America. "Rather than prioritizing a militarized response to women, children, and men seeking refuge, the Trump administration should focus on providing resources for an orderly asylum process."

Read more: bit.ly/closeup-refuge



IN THE NEWS

BRINGING HOPE IN YEMEN

Yemen continues to face the world's largest humanitarian crisis following just over four years of conflict. Nearly 80 percent of Yemen's 30 million people are in need of humanitarian assistance, and millions are on the brink of famine, according to the United Nations. Oxfam has provided aid to more than three million people in Yemen by supplying clean water and hygiene items, cash for people to buy food and other necessities in local markets, and job training. Oxfam has also worked with partners to advocate for peace.

The Washington Post quoted Scott Paul, Oxfam's humanitarian policy lead, saying that Yemeni "parents are making Sophie's choice every single day," forced by their circumstances to make impossible decisions about "which of their children will live or die."

Read more: bit.ly/closeup-yemenhope

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY SISTERS ON THE PLANET LOBBY CONGRESS

More than 40 of Oxfam's Sisters on the Planet—political and faith leaders, veterans, CEOs, and philanthropists—joined Oxfam staffers on International Women's Day in March to lobby members of Congress in Washington, DC. The group asked legislators to address gender-based violence in Central America, one of several root causes of migration from the region.

The gathering included inspiring speeches from Oxfam America President Abby Maxman and Centro Presente's Rebeca Alfaro, a Salvadoran immigrant who fled her home country after witnessing the murder of her husband and mother by gangs. Our aim is to use the energy and momentum of the Sisters' Capitol Hill visits to carry forward our advocacy related to migration from Central America.

Learn more: oxf.am/closeup-Sisters



EATING FOR GOOD WORLD FOOD DAY IN BOSTON

In celebration of World Food Day in October 2018, Oxfam partnered with The KITCHEN at Boston Public Market and a local Boston chef to host a public event to teach consumers how to fight hunger starting right at their kitchen tables.

Chef Jennifer Heilig of the restaurant For the Table demonstrated how to buy and cook local food that's in season, and she shared how that can make a global impact based on Oxfam's Eat for Good method. The Eat for Good method focuses on five principles: save food, shop seasonal, eat less meat, support farmers and food producers, and cook smart.

Learn more: oxf.am/closeup-eat



“

I truly believe that leaving a gift in your will to Oxfam is an excellent investment in helping to create the kind of world you'd want the young people of tomorrow to grow up in—a world without the unnecessary suffering of poverty.

—PETER SINGER, PHILOSOPHER, ETHICIST, OXFAM SUPPORTER

PLAN NOW FOR OXFAM'S FUTURE

Keep working to end the injustice of poverty for decades to come by joining the Oxfam Legacy Circle. Learn how to approach gift planning in a way that reflects your values and helps create a just world free of hunger and poverty.

Have you ordered your **Legacy Gift Planning Guide** yet? Visit oxf.am/closeup-legacy, call Andrew Morrison at (800) 776-9326, or email legacy@oxfamamerica.org.



ABOVE: Two girls play after an Oxfam-supported farmer training in Nusta Pakana, Peru. Ilvy Njiokiktjien/Oxfam



THE POWER OF LOCAL RADIO

ELIZABETH STEVENS REPORTS ON A COMMUNITY RADIO STATION IN UGANDA
THAT HELPS REFUGEES HELP THEMSELVES.

In northern Uganda, where more than a million South Sudanese have crossed the border to escape the brutal armed conflict in their country, it is hard to overestimate the power of community radio.

Refugees living in camps (known here as settlements) yearn for contact with the outside world—with their families back home, with other refugees, with supporters and agencies that fund humanitarian programs, and with the authorities that govern their fate.

So when Ayikobua Noel from Radio Pacis makes a visit to Omugo settlement, residents give him a warm welcome.

Noel hosts two weekly shows for and about refugees: *Voice of the Voiceless* is recorded in the settlements and gives refugees a chance to speak out about a host of issues; *Refugee Hour* takes place in the studio, where he invites guests for a deeper dive into a topic of concern to the refugees.

Oxfam and our local partner Community Empowerment for Rural Development (CEFORD) have been supporting the radio shows, but not by simply handing Radio Pacis a check to cover costs. Our goal in Uganda—and everywhere we work—is to help important local organizations engaged with an emergency to

become stronger, more effective, and more sustainable. Through CEFORD, we have offered trainings in humanitarian response, financial systems, advocacy, strategic planning, and fundraising.

Moses Lomude, who lives in the settlement, has appreciated the result. “I like the refugee program so much,” he says. “The people who speak are the voice for those of us who can’t. They describe our suffering.”

And people are listening who can address that suffering. People like Amulen Mary, a staffer in the local office of Uganda’s prime minister. “The refugee radio shows give us a chance to listen to the people,” she says, “and hear the views of the community.”

LEARNING WHAT’S POSSIBLE

The residents themselves tune in for all kinds of reasons.

“The radio show is very important, because it helps the refugees learn from one another,” says Aloro Fred, who works for the AVSI Foundation. “Refugee farmers can learn from other refugee farmers how to share land with host communities and how to grow crops here. They learn what is possible.”





// IT'S MY FAVORITE RADIO STATION. ... THE PEOPLE WHO SPEAK ARE THE VOICE FOR THOSE OF US WHO CAN'T. THEY DESCRIBE OUR SUFFERING. //

MOSES LOMUDE, A RESIDENT OF OMUGO SETTLEMENT IN NORTHERN UGANDA

"These shows are helping educate youth," says youth leader Taban Peter. "The community is learning how to prevent addiction and how to coexist peacefully with our hosts."

Sports—soccer in particular—take on special importance in a setting like this, as much-needed entertainment for people whose lives have been upended by war, and also as a way to ease tensions among groups that might otherwise come into conflict. "People learn about our [soccer] games on the radio," says Peter. "They learn where they will be, and what the scores are. People join teams because they hear about them on the radio."

Noel has his eye on other results.

"People learned on the show about the situation for youth," he says. "Most were idle after primary school. They had nowhere to go. They were getting involved in criminal activity, like theft of solar panels that were needed for our water pumps. We believe construction of two new secondary schools was the direct result of what people said on the radio shows. Now youth are kept busy with school—and there is less theft."

Further, he says, many of the women who have participated in the radio show are now recognized as leaders—by themselves and others. "They realized they were able to speak out and it gave them confidence. Since then they have been recruited as representatives by international agencies and their own communities."

REACHING BACK HOME

As program manager, Noel's work is never done. He rolls into the office at 7 in the morning and doesn't leave before midnight. If he's awake, in other words, he's working. He's in trouble with his mother for missing so many family events, but clearly the apple hasn't fallen far from the tree.

"My mother was an inspiration to me," Noel says. "She struggled a lot. She was a single mother who raised four children, but she was also very welcoming. When she saw someone struggling, she tried to help, so she raised the children of relatives, as well. Every time I see her, I see a hero."

But grueling as the hours are, Noel loves his job. Asked what feels most satisfying about his work, he thinks a moment and then answers, "everything."

There's no question but that he's making a difference. Not just in improving the material conditions of life in the camp, but also by lifting the spirits of people suffering from the effects of violence, displacement, and the loss of loved ones. For now, they can't be reunited with their friends and families, but some hold out a special hope: "With the radio show," says a community leader, "our voices might reach back home."

A CLOSER LOOK Q

Find out how a radio station in El Salvador is fighting poverty: oxf.am/closeup-radio.

ABOVE: In northern Uganda, Radio Pacis Program Manager Ayikobua Noel (center) hosts *Refugee Hour*, where guests can talk about topics of concern in the refugee settlements.

OPPOSITE: Omugo camp resident Betty Tabu says she listens to Radio Pacis whenever she has a chance. Radio Pacis, an Oxfam partner, broadcasts shows that enable camp residents to speak out about issues that affect them.

PHOTOS: Elizabeth Stevens/Oxfam America



WOMEN LEADERS OF TOMORROW

SHIZA MALIK REPORTS ON AN INNOVATIVE PROGRAM IN PAKISTAN THAT HELPS GIRLS STAY IN SCHOOL, AND TEACHES READING, WRITING, AND ARITHMETIC TO WOMEN WHO NEVER FINISHED THEIR EDUCATION.

For 14-year-old Maria Junaid, every day brought with it the fear that today might be her last day in school.

Junaid (not her real name) had always been a high achiever in school. But her stepfather, a worker at a textile mill in a poor suburb near Multan, in Pakistan's Punjab province, often pressured her mother to take her out of school.

"My stepfather doesn't think education is worth spending money on, so whenever he is stressed about money he tells my mother to take me out of school," Junaid says. "If I had to quit school, I would have shattered to pieces. I would have missed my friends, my teacher, and the lessons."

Fortunately, Junaid can continue her education because she was selected for a scholarship under Oxfam's Women Leaders of Tomorrow (WLT) project. "My mother tells my stepfather that 'now Maria is paying for her own education through her hard work, and no one can stop her from going to school,'" she says.

The WLT project is supporting the education and development of young girls

as future leaders by providing scholarships and opportunities for 140 girls in two districts of Multan and Muzaffargarh in South Punjab. Every month, WLT provides 2,000 rupees (US \$14) to girls in grades 6 to 10, and about \$28 for girls in grades 10 to 12—money that goes toward transportation costs and school supplies.

FINANCING FOR GIRLS' EDUCATION

In Pakistan, more than one-third of Pakistani girls are not attending primary school, compared with 21 percent of boys. By grade 6, 59 percent of girls are out of school, and only 13 percent of girls remain in school by the ninth grade. Out-of-school girls face a greater risk of early marriage.

One barrier is cost. While government schools in Punjab do not charge fees and books are also provided to the students, parents pay for other costs such as transportation, uniforms, stationery, and lunch. For a lot of parents in Pakistan, these costs can be debilitating—and for girls this means an end to their schooling.

But even if more girls attended primary schools, there is another obstacle—a shortage of government schools beyond the primary level, especially for girls. This means that most girls are only able to complete schooling until grade 5.

Umair Bilal, who is the regional coordinator for Oxfam's local partner Human Development Foundation, says in this area there are 44 primary schools for girls and only one middle school. "We have formed school management committees (SMCs) across the district, which includes parents and teachers," he says. "The SMCs identify needs and raise a collective voice to demand resources."

Bilal says the Basti Tibba SMC requested an increase in financial allocations for girls' primary schools so they can be upgraded to middle schools. As a result, two schools in the area that usually receive around \$400 every three to four months for maintenance got an additional \$5,904 for upgrades such as building additional classrooms and toilets, installing swings, and buying furniture.

OPENING A NEW WORLD

Attitudes toward girls' education in this area have changed over the past decade, and more parents are keeping their daughters in school. But there are many women here who were never allowed to attend school, and who cannot read or write.

The Accelerated Learning Centres (ALCs) set up by Oxfam are allowing those women and girls to gain basic literacy and numeracy skills. Each is run by a trained teacher, and most centers have been established in homes so women from the neighborhood can attend with less difficulty. Over six months, 56 ALCs were set up where 1,180 women and girls attended classes.

For most adult students, the ALCs are providing a unique second chance at an education. Shakila Ismail, 35, says, "My parents were very strict and did not allow girls to attend school." She always looked at books and newspapers and wondered what people read in them.

After completing her course at the ALC, she can now read and write. "I used to spend my days doing household chores and caring for animals, but being able to read has opened up a whole world of learning for me," she says.

Another student, Rubina, 37, says her lack of formal education made her feel inadequate and inferior among her well-educated in-laws. "My sisters-in-law are fluent in Urdu and English, and I would feel ashamed when I couldn't participate in their conversations," she says. At the ALC, her lifelong feelings of inadequacy motivated her to become the best student in the class.

"From not even knowing how to write my own name to putting down the entire grocery list, my life has completely changed," she says.

Rubina's eyes well up with tears and her voice breaks with emotion. "Even in my wildest dreams, I couldn't imagine that I would learn to read and write at this age.



// I USED TO SPEND MY DAYS DOING HOUSEHOLD CHORES AND CARING FOR ANIMALS, BUT BEING ABLE TO READ HAS OPENED UP A WHOLE WORLD OF LEARNING FOR ME. //

SHAKILA ISMAIL, A STUDENT AT AN OXFAM-SUPPORTED LEARNING CENTER IN PAKISTAN'S PUNJAB PROVINCE

Without the ALC, I would have forever remained in the shadows."

Shiza Malik is Oxfam's manager of media and communications in Pakistan. Fareeha Ali contributed additional reporting to this story.

A CLOSER LOOK Q

Tooba Sharif received a scholarship through Oxfam's Women Leaders of Tomorrow project: oxf.am/closeup-tooba.

ABOVE, TOP: Students at a primary school near Muzzafargargh are using new desks and chairs provided by Oxfam. Previously, children had to sit on the floor while classes were in session.

ABOVE, BOTTOM: Shakila Ismail is learning how to read, write, and do basic math along with gaining job skills at an Accelerated Learning Centre in Punjab province.

PHOTOS: Khaula Jamil/Oxfam America

PEANUT BUTTER THAT SAVES LIVES

KATE BENSON REPORTS ON A PROGRAM IN MALAWI THAT TACKLES MALNUTRITION THROUGH HEALTHY EATING EDUCATION AND PROTEIN-POWERED COOPERATIVES. EDITED BY DIVYA AMLADI.



Peanut butter: Love it or love to hate it, you can't deny its draw. It's protein-packed, relatively cheap, and a good source of magnesium, a mineral essential to a healthy immune system. Put it in just about any meal, savory or sweet, and it makes a filling addition.

Plus, it's portable and can be stored on a shelf for long periods, two qualities that make it invaluable in environments where food is scarce.

That's why for the past decade and a half, health providers have been feeding it to malnourished children in Malawi,

where, according to Unicef, more than one-third of children under five years old suffer from chronic malnutrition.

Lotina, a mother of four in rural Lilon-gwe, came to rely on these peanut butter and soya powder distributions to manage her children's health. But the closest hospital is in the big city, and she tells us that getting there was time-consuming—time that could be better spent tilling her farmland.

For mothers like Lotina whose children are constantly getting sick, depending on hospital provisions is no solution.

Wouldn't it be better to prevent children from becoming ill in the first place?

That's where Oxfam comes in. In 2016, Oxfam kicked off its Scaling Up Nutrition program in four rural districts of Malawi that have been feeling the effects of climate change. Flooding in 2015 and a drought in 2016 wiped out crops, leaving communities without enough food.

Half of all pregnant women and 29 percent of nursing mothers in Malawi are anemic. The Scaling Up Nutrition program focuses on children under five and pregnant and nursing mothers in an



// MOST PEOPLE WOULD DISMISS US WHEN WE FIRST STARTED THIS PROJECT. THEY THEN REALIZED LATER THAT THIS WAS SERIOUS BUSINESS AND THERE WERE VISIBLE DEVELOPMENTS. I AM NOW ABLE TO PAY SCHOOL FEES FOR MY THREE CHILDREN. //

—SOFERETI, MEMBER OF THE MWAYI WATHU PEANUT BUTTER COOPERATIVE

attempt to diversify and improve household nutrition—and, critically, reduce the number of deaths of kids under five by as much as 10 percent.

Thanks to your support, Oxfam and its partner, the Catholic Development Commission of Malawi (CADECOM), have established demonstration gardens where women learn solar-powered irrigation and crop diversification techniques. We've also set up community groups where mothers teach each other about balanced diets, food hygiene, and community health.

This project aims to reach 26,000 households, or roughly 143,000 people: 16,000 households with children under age five, and 10,000 with lactating and pregnant mothers.

It's the sort of intervention that sets Oxfam apart from other aid providers. We work with organizations on the ground to develop solutions that will help communities get through current crises and become more resilient in the future.

Lotina is not just participating in training about nutritious cooking and better

sanitation practices—she's also leading a mothers' group. She's growing vegetables in her garden, and is intent on feeding her family a balanced diet of fruits, vegetables, porridge, and proteins.

And she hasn't visited the hospital since September of last year. "If I had known what I know now about eating a healthy, balanced, and nutritious diet, ... I could have avoided the malnutrition my daughter suffered, and given birth to healthier babies."

A PEANUT BUTTER COOPERATIVE

Oxfam and CADECOM also support the Mwayi Wathu Peanut Butter Processing Group. The Lilongwe-based cooperative received solar panels, batteries, and a solar-powered machine for peanut butter processing, as well as training on operating the machine.

Chikadza Jabesa, the group's chairman, estimates the peanut butter cooperative produces about 50 bottles of peanut butter a day. Small bottles sell for 500 kwacha (\$0.70) and large bottles sell for 1,000 kwacha (\$1.40); members share the profits.

Mkulila, 26, shells and roasts the peanuts, known locally as groundnuts. She's also in charge of marketing and sales; she and two other members of the cooperative sell the peanut butter at local markets. Since adding the peanut butter to the porridge she feeds her four children, Mkulila has noticed they've started to gain weight, especially her baby.

Prior to joining the group, Mkulila took her children to the hospital when she noticed they weren't gaining weight and their cheeks and feet were swelling. She says hospital officials would diagnose her children as malnourished, put them on a feeding program, and send them off without nutritional education.

Now part of her sales route includes the hospital. Doctors are stocking up on the Mwayi Wathu Peanut Butter Processing Group's products, and directing their patients to the co-op. The co-op also sells to local schools.

Everyone is reaping the benefits. Members are learning how to make a living and save money, and those with children are using profits to send their kids to school. Now the group wants to branch out—they're setting their sights on a cooking oil processing machine.

"Our lives have been transformed," says Jabesa, the co-op chair, who has watched peanut butter improve his children's diets. "This has benefited the whole community."

A CLOSER LOOK Q

See how bicycles keep girls in school in Malawi: oxf.am/closeup-malawi.

ABOVE: Sofereti (left) and Daisi Besamu sort through a tray of peanuts before roasting them outside the solar-powered Mwayi Wathu Peanut Butter processing plant in Lilongwe, Malawi.

OPPOSITE: Mkulila sells peanut butter at an Oxfam-supported peanut processing cooperative in Lilongwe, Malawi, but she also uses it at home, adding it to porridge for her children. "When I take my child for a health check now, I feel happy because there has been improvement in the way the child is growing and gaining weight, all due to the peanut butter project."

PHOTOS: Aurelie Marrier d'Unienville/Oxfam



BUILDING A PATH OUT OF POVERTY

OXFAM HAS BEEN WORKING IN THE GULF COAST FOR MORE THAN A DECADE, PROVIDING EMERGENCY RELIEF AFTER HURRICANE KATRINA AND LATER INVESTING IN GREEN JOBS AFTER THE BP OIL SPILL. TODAY, OUR GOOD JOBS PROGRAM CONNECTS SOME OF THE AREA'S MOST MARGINALIZED POPULATIONS WITH ACCESS TO DECENT, STABLE WORK. **MARY BABIC**, A US DOMESTIC PROGRAMS MANAGER, REPORTS.

Scarred with potholes, the road to West Jackson, Mississippi, runs along a battered freight rail line, past boarded-up businesses, abandoned houses, and scrapyards strung with barbed wire. The desolation is palpable, and no wonder: Household income in this neighborhood is less than a third of the national median, and the crime rate is roughly three times the national average.

But along the way is a building that, although dilapidated, holds promise: New Way Mississippi. Staff there provide transitional housing, employment training and placement, transportation, coaching in life skills, and a sense of dignity and responsibility for homeless veterans, recovering addicts, and others

seeking help. But the organization's primary work is with "returning citizens"—formerly incarcerated individuals—who are on a long road to what New Way Mississippi calls "restoration."

"It's so difficult coming out of prison," says Executive Director Larry Perry, himself a recovering addict. To secure their release, returning citizens need to prove they have a home base free of drugs and crime. "If you don't have an address, you can't get a job. If you don't have a job, you can't save money to get a home."

A PILOT WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

"You see so many homeless people on the streets of Jackson at night; it's

heartbreaking. Many of them have been released from prison and have nowhere to go," says Joi Owens, senior Gulf Coast policy officer for Oxfam in Mississippi. She realized there had to be a way to connect programs that train workers in hard and soft skills to employers who would provide jobs—and "not just jobs, but good jobs."

She and New Way staff contacted the city of Jackson and worked with city leaders to create a "re-entry workforce pipeline" called the Good Jobs Program.

New Way is now training workers for jobs in a major public works program in the city that involves upgrading the fiber-optic infrastructure. The new broadband



// NEW WAY SHOWS THAT I'VE
CHANGED MY WAYS, AND I'M READY
TO GET BACK INTO SOCIETY. //

—DAPHNE HARRIS, PARTICIPANT IN THE GOOD JOBS
PROGRAM AT NEW WAY MISSISSIPPI

network will provide high-speed internet to educational institutions and hospitals, but it's also expected to attract young entrepreneurs to Jackson, where real estate is inexpensive and plentiful. The organization has also partnered with a number of employers, which will result in roughly 50 people getting the skills they need for full-time employment.

A place like New Way is essential today, as incarceration rates have skyrocketed over the past 30 years. Mississippi ranks third in the US for incarceration. Moreover, mass incarceration has disproportionately locked up black men. While blacks are 37 percent of Mississippi's population, they are 57 percent of the prison population; over 90 percent are male.

Eventually, thousands of people return to society each year, suffering from "lasting effects that we don't consider," says Larry Christian, New Way's development director. "Any normal person would be traumatized by this." He says New

Way Mississippi's program deliberately prompts a "psychological switch" in participants.

"In prison, every day someone is telling them what to do, [and] how to do it. In society, you have to make decisions about everything."

DEALING WITH STIGMA

"If you're a convicted felon, don't nobody want to hire you," says Daphne Harris, mother of three and grandmother of two, who ended up in prison after struggling with drugs and alcohol. "I'll be an addict until the day I die. ... But New Way shows that I've changed my ways, and I'm ready to get back into society."

After three and a half years in prison, Harris was ready to gain the skills she'd need to deal with society, and land a job. At New Way, she learned how to build a résumé and conduct herself during an interview, and she soaked up information about using computers and being online.

ABOVE: After three and a half years in prison, Daphne Harris graduated from the New Way program in November 2018. She now manages the New Way thrift store in a neighboring town.
Mary Babic/Oxfam America



ABOVE, LEFT: Larry Christian, development director at New Way, welcomes program participants to the facility in West Jackson, Mississippi.

ABOVE, RIGHT: New Way operates several transitional housing facilities in Mississippi; this one is in West Jackson.

PHOTOS: Mary Babic/Oxfam America



After Harris graduated in November, New Way hired her to manage its thrift store in Clinton (a prosperous suburb). Harris regards this position as a mark of trust and an endorsement of her skills. "I open and close the store three days a week. When people donate things, I go online to find comparable items to price them. I learned how to use a cash register for the first time."

A COMPREHENSIVE AGENDA FOR THE WORKING POOR

"While Mississippi has the highest poverty rate in the country, it's not because people don't work. It's because so many jobs here pay low wages," Owens says. The Good Jobs Program concentrates on changing systems that will improve jobs, and access to jobs.

To that end, Oxfam also works on a robust policy agenda at the federal level, and on the state and local levels in Mississippi and Louisiana.

Owens hopes that as more workers find decent jobs, the economic landscape in Mississippi will improve. "As families move out of poverty, the impact is dramatic," she says. "Housing, nutrition, health, [and] education are all directly linked to improving economic security."

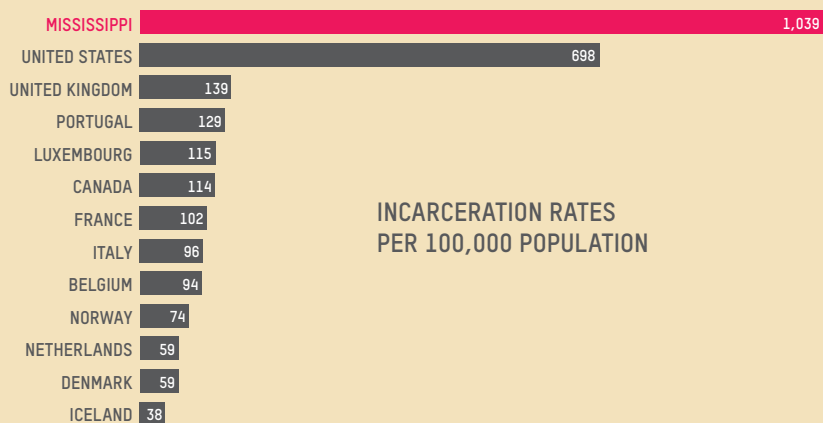
This initiative is possible in part from a grant from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation.

A CLOSER LOOK Q

Read about our efforts to raise the minimum wage: oxf.am/closeup-wage.

LOCKED UP: MISSISSIPPI'S HIGH RATE OF INCARCERATION

Comparing Mississippi and founding NATO countries



Source: <https://www.prisonpolicy.org/profiles/MS.html>



HUMAN RIGHTS AND THE FOOD WE BUY

WILL A DUTCH SUPERMARKET'S DECISION DELIVER CHANGE FOR FARMERS AND WORKERS IN THE SUPPLY CHAIN? WE HOPE SO. AN UPDATE ON OUR BEHIND THE BARCODES CAMPAIGN.

We heard some big news in the food sector in February—Albert Heijn, one of the largest grocery chains in the Netherlands, committed to addressing human rights impacts in its supply chain.

If Albert Heijn doesn't sound familiar, maybe Giant, Hannaford, and Stop & Shop do. They're all owned by parent company Ahold Delhaize, which is one of the biggest supermarket chains in the world. And the US is Ahold Delhaize's largest market—and growing.

Starting in 2019, Albert Heijn agreed to conduct six human rights impact assessments per year with the involvement of local workers and trade unions, as well as farmers and representatives of communities, including women and nongovernmental organizations. We're cautiously optimistic these commitments will deliver change for farmers and workers in the supply chain.

Albert Heijn's commitment is a direct result of our Behind the Barcodes campaign and an important sign for the global retail sector overall. Over this past year, we have pushed supermarkets like Whole Foods, Walmart, and Costco to recognize their responsibility to respect human

rights in their global supply chains and to treat workers, women, and farmers with dignity.

Around 60 percent of parent company Ahold Delhaize's sales are in the US—at supermarket giants like Giant—which means the company pays a lot of attention to what American shoppers think. A change in policy toward taking human rights more seriously could mean a considerable shift in the way retailers do business.

Whole Foods, much like Ahold Delhaize, is in the perfect position to demonstrate leadership among all the other retail actors and recognize its responsibility to respect human rights. It describes itself as one of the most sustainable supermarkets in the industry: "We're

a purpose-driven company that aims to set the standards of excellence for food retailers." Based on our research, however, Whole Foods is one of the worst-performing supermarkets in the US regarding transparency and fair treatment of workers.

Thanks to your support, we are continuing to reach out to Whole Foods and parent company Amazon to remind them that human suffering has no place on our supermarket shelves. And we're continuing to encourage US consumers to take action: We can all use our voices at the checkout line to make a difference.

A CLOSER LOOK Q

For more information about the campaign, visit: oxf.am/closeup-barcodes.

RIGHT: Oxfam projected our Behind the Barcodes message on the front of Whole Foods' headquarters in Austin, Texas, in March 2019.
Becky Davis/Oxfam America





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Use the enclosed envelope or make your gift at oxf.am/closeup-partners.

PHOTO: A sixth-grade Oxfam scholarship recipient from a primary school in Muzzafargarh, Pakistan, raises her hand in class. Read about girls like her on page 6. *Khaula Jamil/Oxfam America*

