

# VOICES

SPRING 2023



Artwork by Alexis Chivir-Ter Tsegba

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Read how Jessy, a climate activist, is holding leaders to account

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OXFAM

## A NOTE FROM TEAM VOICES

Welcome to your brand-new supporter magazine, VOICES. Here, we'll bring you stories from people in our global community who are tackling poverty and injustice alongside Oxfam and supporters like you.

Recently, we've reflected and recognised that how we talk about our work is just as important as what we do. Language can both liberate and oppress. In the past, we've been guilty of reinforcing stereotypes about the people we work to support. We need to change that.

To end poverty, we need our movement to be open and inclusive. We want Oxfam to be a platform for global storytelling, where communities have their voices heard, and draw attention to the incredible work you'll find in VOICES. We're also spotlighting our global partners who are delivering these projects. Our partnerships are vital, and based on sharing knowledge, improving together and holding each other to account.

Each edition of VOICES has a different focus, and in this edition we're proud to feature women, telling their own stories. Please note that we've curated some pieces so they read smoothly, while staying true to their meaning.

We're proud to have supporters like you as part of our community of change. We know that the cost of living crisis is impacting many unfairly. But we also know that acts of solidarity can come in many different forms, and each is powerful and meaningful in its own right. As you read this issue, you'll find opportunities to listen to podcasts, join campaigns, and get involved to keep this work moving forward.

Yours,  
Team VOICES



### ABOUT THE ARTIST

Alexis Chivir-Ter Tsegba is a Nigerian visual artist whose complex digital collages frame real people in magical or surreal settings. She often explores elements of Afrofuturism, Black history and identity through thought-provoking concepts.

Alexis has created a series of portraits of climate activists, in partnership with Oxfam, which you can see in this edition of VOICES.

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Disability advocates Desi (pictured) and Yani are making disaster planning inclusive



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Solidarity in action with Mary (pictured) and Ana

Jessy holds a tree she planted when she was younger in her village in Kasungu District, Thoko Chikondi/Oxfam. This photo was gathered as part of a project funded by the European Union.



“Unity is POWER.”

Activist Jessy (featured on the cover), 21, writes about what motivated her to become a leader in the youth climate movement, and how solidarity across generations and across borders is vital in fighting for climate justice together.

I am Jessy and I am 21 years old, and this is my story. I grew up in a poor family in the central region of Malawi. In my village many depend on farming as a source of food, as well as income. My parents sell some of our harvest to buy basic needs. After a time the harvest started to [decline]. In a real sense it was the result of climate change and the rain pattern change.

Things started getting worse. Another duty was added on the heads of my parents – school fees. I dropped out of school after my parents were unable to pay. This was because our crops dried up before they became mature. They were forced to cultivate other people's gardens to feed [our] family.

I learned that climate change is real, and it is dangerous. So, I [decided] to fight against it. I started to accompany my father when he was

planting trees in front of our house, to protect the grass thatched roof from strong winds.

ISEM, who partner with Oxfam, helped by paying my school fees and providing me with a school uniform, learning materials and a bicycle. The bicycle shortened the long distance that I used to walk to and from the school. It improved my performance.

Oxfam in Britain and in Malawi helped me and [my] friend Isaac to attend climate strikes with kids from England. We also met with UK leaders where Isaac and I [explained] the impacts of climate change in Malawi.

This experience strengthened my resolve to fight against the impact of climate change. I realised that I can play a part in fighting for a better world, and fighting for future generations. This journey was very important to me because I acquired new ideas from my fellow activists, and the importance of raising youth voices worldwide. This helped build a good relationship among the youths because unity is power.

I feel sad to see the impact of climate change is still increasing at a high speed, although world leaders are meeting every year. This gives me a lot of questions [for world leaders] without [many] answers. What are you doing? When [will] you world leaders take climate change seriously? How do you feel when young people and women from [...] countries like Malawi are suffering because of climate

change? Yes, you have been meeting, but no change is to be seen. We are losing people's lives, properties and livestock in Malawi, which is so painful.

My message to [...] world leaders is that we are tired of your promises.

What we need now is actions on the ground. We need a change. Before things get worse. We need alternative sources of energy that will not emit poisonous gases. Encouraging tree plantation can be another idea that can be helpful, hence [low-income] countries should be funded to increase forestation. I will be glad if my message is considered.

“Climate change is real, and it is dangerous. So I wish to fight against it.”

 IN CONVERSATION

**“In inclusion, everyone is involved. WITHOUT EXCEPTION.”**



Desi (left) is the Vice President of the PBR Forum and Yani (right) is an administrator at Geramin NTT, both disability and inclusion advocacy organisations. Kyo Umareta/Oxfam

When climate disasters strike, they impact everyone. But how they affect people individually varies hugely. And all too often, disaster plans do not take into account the specific needs of people with disabilities.

Disaster preparation, from early warning systems to evacuation plans, must take everyone into account. We cannot leave anyone behind. As disability rights advocates, Desi and Yani are using their expertise and lived experience to make sure planning is more inclusive. In their province of East Nusa Tenggara, Indonesia, the women are working with Oxfam partner PIKUL, to raise awareness in villages affected by climate disasters. By teaching people about extreme weather events, and the individual needs of people with disabilities, they are helping these communities to create emergency plans that work for everyone, and help save lives.



Through Oxfam partner PIKUL, Yani works to reduce the impact of natural and social disasters. Kyo Umareta/Oxfam

**What does inclusive disaster preparation look like?**

**Desi:** We think of how to relay information to friends with disabilities in the countryside. For example, the early warning. For deaf friends in the region, it goes back to local context. Because each region has its own local wisdom. How does this village relay early warning to the deaf friends? There are special symbols. For the blind friends, they only need audio. For other friends we adjust to them.

In our opinion, in inclusion, everyone is involved. Without exception, whether they are disabled, non-disabled, poor, rich, anything, all should be involved. Because a disaster doesn't pick whether you're disabled or whatever. Disaster comes once and plunders everything.

**When it comes to planning for climate disasters, do you think disability is taken into enough consideration?**

**Yani:** [Some] villages [don't really] understand friends with disability, let alone extreme weather. Related

to extreme weather, [villages think] of weather changes as [simply] going from dry to wet season, but they don't know the specifics. My hope is for us to go to villages often. Maybe in time, friends in these villages will understand more about disability [and preparing for] extreme weather. Because when we talk of extreme weather, we [...] give more knowledge to them.

**“A disaster doesn't pick whether you're disabled.”**

**DESI**

**What are your hopes for communities in the future?**

**Desi:** [I hope we can support people with disabilities to advocate for

themselves, but also improve family members' capacity to help.] The ones who rescue first are not the government, NGOs, [or] strangers, it's our own family.

[Next], my wish is for existing NGOs to understand us. Not only do they know about who has [a] disability, but also the relationship between disability and [a disaster] plan. It's crucial. Because upon a disaster, the number of [people with disabilities] increases. We should [expand] our working [area].

**Yani:** My hope is probably the same. For PIKUL to be here again [to support people with disabilities to manage] the same issue, on extreme weather.



**ABOUT PARTNER PIKUL**  
Penguatan Lingkar Belajar Komunitas Lokal (PIKUL) supports the Indonesia Climate and Disaster Resilient Communities (ICDRC) Project. In this project, women in rural and urban communities claim their rights and improve their wellbeing to overcome the shocks and uncertainties of climate change.

Oxfam acknowledges the support of the Australian Government in bringing this project to life through the Australian NGO Cooperation Program (ANCP).



Flooding during the rainy season in Indonesia. Shutterstock



[Left to right] Marice, Marica, Marsalina, and Febi stand near the river that often floods their village. ©Elizabeth Stevens/Oxfam

# “When we talk, THEY LISTEN.”

As a climate leader, Febi is testimony to how amplifying women’s voices is helping to safeguard entire communities.

Climate change means that people living in Bena, Indonesia, need to protect their crops and communities from both droughts and floods. To tackle this, Febi led the way by setting up a crop irrigation system, with support from Oxfam partner CIS Timor. Here, garden plots are connected and watered by a well, a pump, water tanks and piping. As well as safeguarding crops against drought, this system reduces the need to carry heavy water buckets, making the programme much more accessible for older people or those with mobility difficulties.

“Our projects are helping create space for the voices of women.”

**ROSWITHA,  
CIS TIMOR PROJECT  
COORDINATOR**

## Protecting communities from flooding

Alongside other women, Febi is making her voice heard and using specialist knowledge of the community to help manage flood risks and protect everyone. Flood protection measures vary widely, and include a women-led

Whatsapp group, with the local government’s Meteorology and Climatology Department, to spot early warning signs of flooding. The women have also set up a ‘koa’ system: a traditional method of spreading emergency news.

This method includes shouting and passing on messages, such as “The river is full!” These accessible and joined up ways of sharing news mean that vital information reaches more people in Bena. “I feel the community is safer now.” Febi says.



## ABOUT PARTNER CIS TIMOR

With the support of donations, Oxfam partner CIS Timor is helping women to form disaster management groups so that their voices can be heard in local government. Through CIS Timor, women can get involved with leadership training, disaster management, and development planning. They also provide funding and technical support for specialist farming projects, such as Febi’s crop irrigation system.

# “Now is the time for us to have OUR VOICES HEARD.”

For too long, the climate change narrative has left out the voices of people living with its most serious effects. Oxfam first met climate activist Abigael Kima when she partnered with us to gather first-hand accounts of how drought was affecting people in Isiolo county, Kenya. Now, Abigael is amplifying African climate stories with her podcast, Hali Hewa, which means ‘climate’ in Swahili. Her podcast is a platform for voices that might otherwise go unheard, and a forum for activists to discuss vital climate issues.

This project is bigger than me, bigger than all of us. For a long time as Africans, we have had our voices sidelined and now is the time for us to actually take position and have our voices heard, not only at a local level, but also regionally and nationally.

I created this podcast in order to amplify African climate stories, [because] climate change is ... a crisis that is affecting all of us. I personally come from a community of farmers and I have [...] seen [first-hand] what climate change can do to [them]. [My recent visit to farming communities in drought-affected Isiolo county, Kenya, gave] new meaning to the work I do. Seeing [the effect of climate change here] completely changed my perception about [...] what we [need] the world to do. These communities deserve better. It’s sad to see what they are going through. Seeing families go from 50 cows to three is quite something.

Our government really needs to [take action]. We have seen a lot of humanitarian organisations trying to do [what they can] to make [people’s] lives better. I feel like our government has [more] capacity to bring real change to these [severely affected] communities. [For example], the Climate Change Act [...] is in place to ensure that we [are creating] solutions [for the challenges we face], but [these will only work if] responsible stakeholders [stick to them]. We develop really amazing policies, but when it comes to implementation [there is so much more that needs to be done]. I would highly recommend that these policies are implemented. We really do not have time to waste.



## ABOUT ABIGAEEL KIMA

Abigael Kima, 24, is host and producer of the podcast Hali Hewa – which means ‘climate’ in Swahili – as well as a climate justice activist and energy expert. She studied Environmental Science at Kenyatta University, where she became the Chair of the Environmental Society, and won a scholarship to university in Hungary. Recent achievements include joining the Ethics International Advisory Board at Woxsen University in India, and being the Africa Youth Lead for protecting Arctic Sea Ice.

As an environmental educator at Green Generation Initiative, Abigael is inspiring the next generation by teaching children about the climate and sharing her own story.



## LISTEN TO HALI HEWA

Scan here to listen to Abigael’s podcast, and find her interview with Elizabeth, a leading climate activist who you can read more about on the next page.



# “This is not just about money. This is about JUSTICE.”



Environmentalist and activist Elizabeth speaks to Muslima and Amina. Sommie's Photography/Oxfam

## ABOUT ELIZABETH WATHUTI

Elizabeth Wathuti is a Kenyan environmentalist and activist whose tireless campaigning is having a global impact.

In 2016 she founded the Green Generation Initiative, a non-profit youth-led organisation to inspire a generation of environmentally conscious people. At just 24, she received the Africa Green Person of the Year award, and she was featured on Time Magazine's Time 100 NEXT list, which recognises 100 emerging leaders shaping the future.

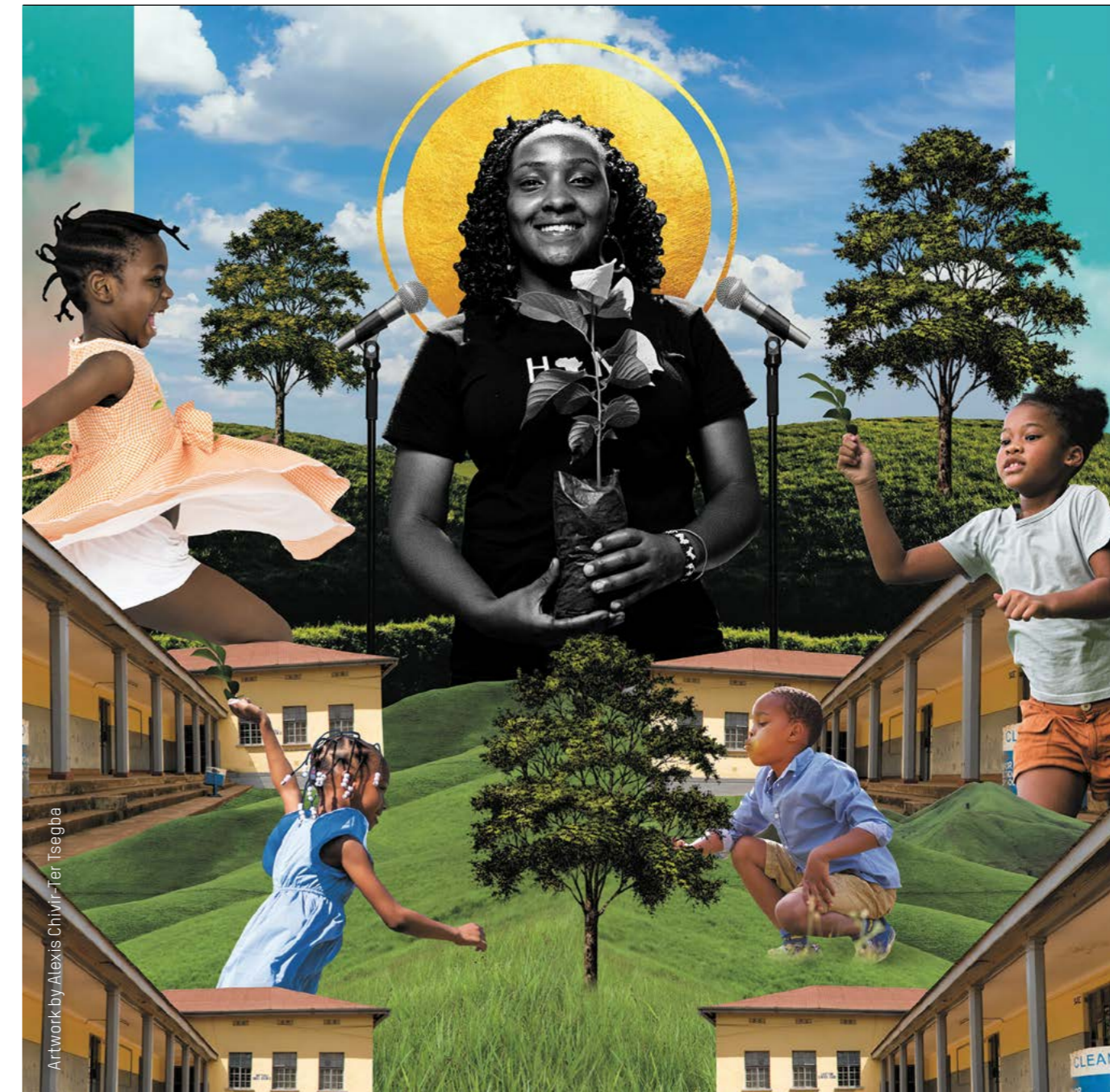
Oxfam joined Elizabeth on a visit to Wajir county, Kenya, to witness the devastating impact climate change is having on the region. Following her trip, Elizabeth wrote an open letter to world leaders ahead of COP 27 to highlight the injustice she had seen, and demanded leaders take action.

For decades, countries who've done the least to cause climate change have shouldered the financial burden of its devastating consequences. In response to this injustice, activists, communities, and people like you have been campaigning for governments to agree to set up a meaningful Loss and Damage fund. This means that rich countries, with higher carbon emissions, agree to help pay for the damage caused by climate disasters in the worst affected countries.

In 2022, environmentalist and activist Elizabeth Wathuti campaigned with Oxfam and supporters to put pressure on world leaders. As an experienced campaigner, Elizabeth's open letter to world leaders contributed towards a historic victory for the climate justice movement: securing the Loss and Damage fund from COP 27.

## Protecting people and the planet

Elizabeth's love of nature began in childhood, as she recalls "I remember planting my first tree at the age of seven years old." Elizabeth went on to found the Green Generation Initiative, and used this personal experience to inspire her own 'Adopt a Tree' campaign. Every child in every school in Kenya is invited to plant and adopt a tree of their own, and grow their own relationship with the planet. Since its foundation, her project has planted over 30,000 trees that have grown to maturity. Through education and campaigning, Elizabeth's initiative is fostering an environmentally conscious generation who love nature, and are galvanised to protect it.



Artwork by Alexis Chirir-Ter Tsegba

## Recognising climate injustice

While youth engagement and individual accountability are essential in facing the climate crisis, Elizabeth recognises that, "Climate action calls for both system change and individual action at the end of the day."

Through her campaigning experience, Elizabeth has witnessed huge climate injustice. Her 2021 visit to Wajir county, Kenya, was influential in her decision to write an open letter to world leaders at COP27. In the letter, Elizabeth explains, "Four consecutive failed rainy seasons have led to terrifying levels of food and water insecurity across the region ... Relentless drought has completely decimated local wildlife populations. And natural ecosystems that should be a life source for all have been pushed beyond breaking point."

She goes on to say, "I saw with my own eyes the terrible suffering that the community in Wajir is experiencing and the stories that local people had to share will never leave me. Thousands of their animals are now dropping dead of thirst and starvation."

**"I have always envisioned a world where we put people and planet above profits."**

## Campaigning for the Loss and Damage fund

Communities have been campaigning for a meaningful Loss and Damage fund for decades, where rich countries agree to pay financial reparations for the real cost of climate change, which they have largely caused. While money can never make up for human loss and planetary damage, this fund is a vital step towards climate justice and protecting against future disasters. Elizabeth writes, "This is not just about money – because money can never replace what the people I met in Wajir have already lost. This is about justice. It is about building trust and solidarity. This is what the global community needs if we are to solve the nature and climate crises together."

## Success in COP 27 is just the start

Elizabeth's open letter was signed by over 141,000 supporters like you, and contributed to the agreement to set up the Loss and Damage fund.



Over **141,000** supporters like you signed Elizabeth's open letter



Elizabeth joining young climate leaders from Kenya during the Global Climate Strike Nairobi Chapter in 2022. Sommie's Photography/Oxfam

Now, it's up to countries responsible for high carbon emissions to compensate countries managing the impact of climate change.

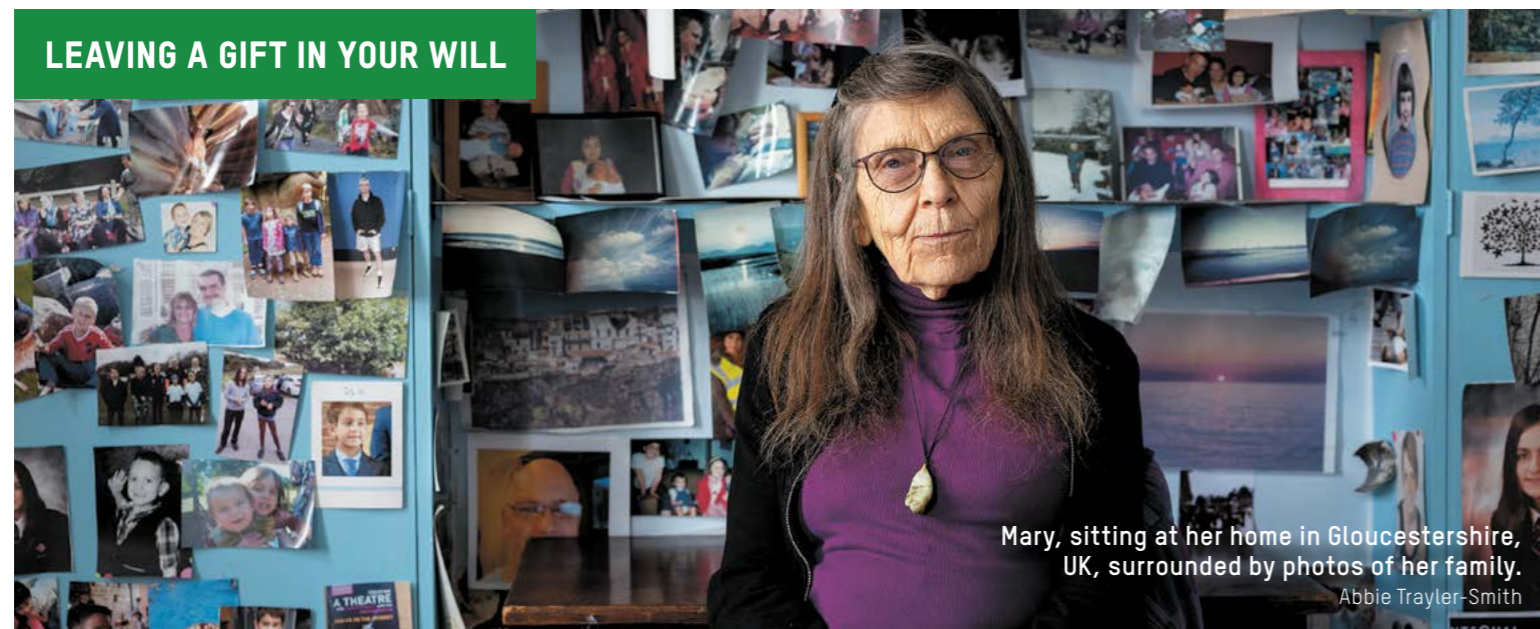
This is a huge step for the climate justice movement. But it's also just the start. As a global community, we must continue to campaign and make sure the fund is set up, paid into, and ready to support the communities worst affected by climate change.

**MAKE YOUR VOICE COUNT**  
Act with us and fight for climate justice. Scan the QR code or visit our website: [oxfam.org.uk/voicescampaigns](https://oxfam.org.uk/voicescampaigns)



# SOLIDARITY FOR LIFE

Whether you're a lifelong supporter or at the start of your journey, there are many ways to act in solidarity with the global community. From volunteering to signing a petition, donating every month or leaving a gift in your Will, there are so many powerful things you can do to fight against poverty. Every action is meaningful in its own right, and pushes the movement for justice forward.



Mary, sitting at her home in Gloucestershire, UK, surrounded by photos of her family.   
 Abbie Trayler-Smith

## LEAVING A GIFT IN YOUR WILL

“These photos are my family, but family is much wider. Family is the entire human race.”

Mary heard of Oxfam in the 1940s, when an activist visited her school to discuss the devastation of the Second World War. This galvanised Mary into action, donating her teenage savings of £25 to Oxfam. Ever since, Mary's advocated for global justice. She gives monthly and is leaving a gift in her Will so she can keep fighting for equality.

### Mary's story

“When I first heard of Oxfam it very much was [about] famine relief. They were working in Germany for people who were starving after the war. It was providing food and blankets for people who had been devastated by [conflict].”

### Taking action against famine

“Lives had been shattered by the war, and I think I must have believed back then that by the time I reached this age we would have relieved all the famines that needed relieving and it's not happened yet. I've left money to Oxfam in my Will because I would like to go on thinking I'm doing some good even after I've died.”

### Systemic problems need systemic solutions

For years, supporters like Mary have taken action against famine, making regular donations and signing petitions to put pressure on governments to make real change. Together, our global community has made progress, but famine persists because its root causes still need to be addressed. Right now, millions of people across East Africa are being forced into a hunger crisis due to a deadly combination of climate change, conflict and rising food prices. To find out more about the crisis, and how you can show solidarity, please visit our website.

### LEARN ABOUT LEAVING A GIFT IN YOUR WILL

Visit [oxfam.org.uk/voicesgiftinwill](https://oxfam.org.uk/voicesgiftinwill) to find out more about leaving a gift in your Will, or scan this code with your phone camera.



Ana, volunteering in her local Oxfam shop.   
 Emily Stein/Oxfam

## VOLUNTEER

“You are going to make a difference.”

One of the most personal ways we can show solidarity is by giving our time to vital causes through volunteering. For Ana, volunteering at her local Oxfam shop was an opportunity to act with the global movement, but also to feel closer to her local community.

### Ana's volunteering story

“I always wanted to volunteer. I love what Oxfam does. Here in this shop you get to meet people from all over. It was a great surprise that I could help with social media. I love photography.”

“It's great to be part of the local neighbourhood. I love getting out in the world and feeling part of something bigger. Even if you can only come in for a few hours you are going to make a difference for sure.”

“It's so great to be part of the local community and neighbourhood you are living in and belonging [to].”

**ANA, SHOP VOLUNTEER**

### VOLUNTEER WITH US!

Join our friendly team of volunteers and be part of something bigger. To find out more about opportunities near you, visit [oxfam.org.uk/voicesvolunteering](https://oxfam.org.uk/voicesvolunteering) or scan the QR code.



## SHOPPING

Discover our Sourced By Oxfam range

Promoting responsible manufacturing can have a hugely positive impact on people and planet.

‘Sourced by Oxfam’ is a range of new, ethically sourced and responsibly made products available in our shops and online. All our products come from accountable suppliers who put people and the planet before profit. We also actively work with our suppliers to ensure we are doing all we can to improve our impact over time. By making sure human and environmental rights are at the heart of the range, we're able to help champion Fair Trade, care for our planet, and create fair employment for the people behind the products.

### FIND ETHICAL PRODUCTS, SOURCED BY OXFAM, HERE:

[oxfam.org.uk/voicesshop](https://oxfam.org.uk/voicesshop) or scan the QR code.



# “ TOGETHER we can take a load off our shoulders.” ”

**By working together as a global community,  
we can create a fairer and more just world.**

In Gaudi, Nepal, 24 women have formed a self-help group to learn about climate change, disaster management, gender equality, farming techniques, and how to make their voices heard in local government. Now, working alongside Oxfam and partner NEEDS, the women are introducing a new cash crop better suited to current farming conditions: garlic.

(From left) Hasha, Bimala, Juna and Sunita celebrate the success of their garlic project.  
©Elizabeth Stevens/Oxfam



## LET'S HEAR YOUR VOICE!

SCAN THIS QR CODE TO FILL OUT OUR SURVEY AND SHARE YOUR THOUGHTS ON VOICES.

