

OUT & ABOUT WITH OXFAM

A TASTE OF 2008

Music Month - CDs and 45s may be a thing of the past for you, but they could unlock the door to the future for many of the world's poorest people. In April we ask you to pop into your nearest Oxfam shop and donate your music. We have been building up an ever-improving collection of CDs and records which allow us to raise more vital funds for our work. If you donate three vinyl albums, their sale could secure access to a doctor for 30 children affected by HIV and AIDS. Now that's how music can save the world!

Monthly music quiz - We have more musical merriment on offer in the way of a monthly quiz in Pravda, Dublin. 4 people per table - and if you come alone, we'll match you up with a group. Pay €5 per person or bring an album and pay just €2.50. Look out on our website for upcoming dates. The next quiz is on Tuesday, February 19th at 7:30pm. Bring your thinking cap!

Dun Laoghaire Festival of World Cultures - You'll find us at the heart of the Festival of World Cultures again this August where every year we endeavour to bring something new and exciting to the festival that illustrates Oxfam Ireland's work. Last year we had a Fairtrade Garden café, where you could pick up a tasty cup of Fairtrade tea or coffee while buying a plant or seeds from the Oxfam Garden shop. Come and see us there this year. We hope to see you at **Tennants Vital** this August too.

Electric Picnic - This September we'll have an even bigger presence at Electric Picnic, setting up the vintage shop we had last year and introducing an exciting and innovative new way to interact with Oxfam. We'll keep you posted!

Oxjam returns this October - our month of every music-related event you can think of, from a quiet indie gig to a soaring orchestra to a town festival... all organised by YOU (with our help, of course) to help raise funds and awareness for Oxfam.

And finally, dare we forget, Oxfam Ireland will celebrate our 10th birthday this year and will be organising ways in which you can help us celebrate.

Interested in attending or volunteering for any of these events? Visit our website at www.oxfamireland.org to register.



The M&S and Oxfam Ireland Clothes Exchange

Bring in your unwanted M&S clothes, get a €7/£5 M&S voucher and help to end poverty



Oxfam Ireland is concerned about climate change. If you would like to receive this magazine by e-mail rather than by post in the future, please email eilis.nichaithnia@oxfamireland.org and we will change your preference on our database. Thank you!



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CAMPAIGNER!

SPRING EDITION 2008



POOR COUNTRIES HELD TO RANSOM BY THE EU

It was an impossible decision: risk millions of jobs and billions in investments now or hand over the keys to your future. Not the plot of a criminal mastermind: instead the choice faced by many developing countries at the start of 2008.

You may remember in December's issue of Campaigner, we were calling for your help in bringing a halt to Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs). Yet these potentially devastating trade deals have now been signed by Caribbean countries, and agreed, in a temporary form, by many nations throughout Africa and the Pacific. Faced with intense pressure from a powerful and determined EU negotiating team these countries had little choice but to comply (see page 4 for more details).

President Wade of Senegal gave a clear vote of no confidence on behalf of developing countries when he asked how he could tell his people "We have just signed with Europe a new agreement which eliminates 35% of our budgets. Consequently, we will close down schools,

healthcare centres and hospitals, stop road building projects and lay off personnel while waiting for hypothetical compensations!" His country still refuses to sign.

Oxfam Ireland campaigners have been quick to show solidarity on this issue. Over 600 of you sent emails just before Christmas to demand a halt to the damaging deals. The Irish and UK governments were two of only four EU member states to ask for a fairer negotiation process. However, even more action is needed. EU negotiators are continuing to push deals which will damage already vulnerable economies and only benefit the short term interests of European big business.

These deals can't be final: they must be changed. Visit www.oxfamireland.org/campaigns and act now!



OXFAM IRELAND AT A UNIVERSITY NEAR YOU

Oxfam Ireland was out and about at the start of last term, visiting Freshers' Fairs to promote campaigning with the message 'You don't need to play guitar to be a hero!'. We'll be at many more universities and colleges at the same time this year - so watch out for us.

This academic year also saw the setting up of an Oxfam Ireland society at Queen's University Belfast - QUBox! The group have worked hard, gathering hundreds of signatures for a chain petition against Economic Partnership Agreements, distributing our handy wall charts to their fellow students and working with other Queen's societies on a series of special events around World Aids Day on 1st December. All this, not to mention fundraising for Oxfam's development and campaigning work (including a tasty real-life cake sale!). Plans are already under way for 2008, including some special events for Fairtrade Fortnight.

If you're a student or member of staff at Queen's and you'd like to get involved, email andrew.mcdowell@oxfamireland.org to find out more.

If you'd like to set up an Oxfam society at your college or university, please get in touch.



Caption

A WELL-DESERVED PAT ON THE BACK



Grade 4 student Oumou reading her demands for a better quality education at Aouta Public school in Dosso, Niger. Photo by Heather Johnston/Oxfam GB

Oxfam Ireland campaigners played a huge part in some good news stories in 2007:

- The number of children out of school fell to 72 million, down from 76 million in 2006, and down from 120 million when Oxfam International launched its education campaign in 2000.
- Debt cancellation agreed as a result of Make Poverty History continued to have a positive effect. It is now paying for new teachers and health workers in Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Burkina Faso, Nigeria and many other countries.
- The Global Fund to Fight HIV/AIDS, TB and Malaria lobbied for by Oxfam and others, has now distributed \$8.6 billion in grants to 136 countries. It has got 1.1 million people onto treatment for HIV/AIDS - partly due to its use of cheap generic medicines, only possible thanks to campaigners.

FAIRTRADE NEWS

CHANGE TODAY CHOOSE FAIRTRADE



Fairtrade Fortnight: 25th February - 9th March 2008



Oxfam Ireland is a Fair Trade pioneer and innovator in Ireland and has been promoting and supporting the Fair Trade movement since the 1980s. Our Fair Trade shops can be found in Cork, Dublin, Galway and Belfast - as well as online - so you can have great Fair Trade products delivered direct to your door. Oxfam

Ireland has one of the widest ranges of Fair Trade products in the country.

Each year we run our own Fair Trade promotional activities under the umbrella of Fairtrade Ireland's Fairtrade Fortnight event. Fairtrade Mark Ireland is the group who certify products as eligible for the Fairtrade Mark here. In addition to this they also run community programmes such as the Fairtrade Town initiative. At the moment there are 61 Fairtrade Town Committees in Ireland and 31 of them have met the criteria to become Fairtrade Towns.

During Fairtrade Fortnight 2008 many of these groups are organising events in their areas and are welcoming producers from developing countries to their towns. You can find out which events are open to the public by visiting www.fairtrade.ie. This year Fair Trade farmers and supporters are visiting from Belize, Uganda and Tanzania.

As usual, this year we also have our own Oxfam Ireland calendar of events. All of these will be on the website from mid-February and can be accessed from our homepage. Highlights include our own Fairtrade Woman and member of our Campaigns team Eilís who will keep a blog on our Oxfam Ireland website and on Facebook: follow the progress of one person's attempt to live a Fair Trade life for the fortnight. Give her suggestions on good Fair Trade recipes, products, restaurants, etc. and enter the draw to win a massive Fair Trade hamper supplied courtesy of yummy Fair Trade chocolate producer, Divine Chocolate. Our Fair Trade shops will also be having special tastings during the fortnight, so do pop in.



Oxfam Ireland Fair Trade Shops:
 South King St, Dublin
 Rosemary St, Belfast
 Lower Abbeygate St, Galway
 French Church St, Cork

Shop online at:
www.oxfamirelandshop.com

EPAS: BAD DEALS THAT MAY BECOME WORSE

'[Economic Partnership Agreements] are free trade agreements, and as such, they will bring poverty to Africa. I come from a small fishing village in Ghana. Members of my family fished for their livelihood, but fishing has become impossible since larger European fishing vessels came and fished our seas empty. The same happened with poultry; EU imports of frozen chicken wings destroyed the local market.' **Tetteh Hormeku, Third World Network, Accra, Ghana**

In brief: What do the agreements look like?

The agreements vary from country to country. At the heart of all the Economic Partnership Agreements is an agreement to eliminate most taxes on imports from the EU. Some agreements also contain other commitments to benefit European companies in areas like intellectual property standards. Others contain commitments to negotiate more rules to benefit European companies in the future - such as agreements to open up markets for services.

Who has signed?

32 African, Caribbean and Pacific countries have signed up to EPA agreements in some form. **44 have not.**



Faced with the European Union's threat to impose crippling taxes on their exports on the 1st of January, many poor countries signed Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs) in December. They faced little choice: if Kenya had not signed for example, the country would have faced a tariff hike of up to 15% on farm and fish products - and an immediate loss of over US \$1 billion in annual exports to the EU.

We have already highlighted how EPAs will force developing countries to open their markets to cheap and subsidised EU goods, mostly over the next ten to fifteen years. They also prevent these countries using tariffs to nurture new industries in the future. Meanwhile, less government revenue from taxes on imports means less money to spend on priorities like education and healthcare: hence the anger of leaders like President Wade quoted on the front page.

The approach taken by the EU negotiators was unfair, and the substance of the deals makes a mockery of their claims that the deals were designed to "support development". The EU also used the excuse that new

agreements were needed under WTO rules, yet cynically went well beyond what was required. All this led Guyana's foreign minister to describe how negotiations were "without consultation and contradict[ed] the European Union's own sermons to us on partnership and good governance."

Thank you if you joined in the campaign before Christmas. In late December Oxfam International took the fight to Lisbon on your behalf, standing alongside poor country representatives at the EU-Africa summit. Peter Mandelson was recently taken to task by members of the European Parliament over the way the negotiations have been handled.

We need you to stay with us and keep up the pressure, as there is still a lot to be agreed in 2008 and possibly beyond. Because most of the deals are partial agreements there is a lot of campaigning to be done to reverse the most damaging elements. Many countries have also not yet signed.

Visit our EPAs web pages now to see the latest and take action.

SNOW PATROL VISIT UGANDA WITH OXFAM IRELAND

Snow Patrol has been supporting Oxfam's work for several years now. In 2005 the band kindly agreed to take time out from the recording of an album in Dingle to be 'dumped on' with rice. By doing so they highlighted the fact that subsidised agricultural commodities, like rice, were being dumped by wealthy countries on poor countries. This practice often leads to products being sold at up to 75 per cent less than the cost to produce the product locally, putting farmers out of business. Snow Patrol's support, along with that of many other well-known people, both in Ireland and around the world, allowed this complicated issue to get more media attention and ultimately led to millions of people around the world joining Oxfam's Make Trade Fair campaign.

In 2007, Snow Patrol band members Gary Lightbody and Jonny Quinn visited some of Oxfam's overseas work in Uganda. This trip was shared with Save the Children. After visiting child soldiers in Northern Uganda, Jonny and Gary joined Oxfam staff in Kampala and were shown some of the work Oxfam is supporting in the Mbuya slum.

Oxfam believes people have certain fundamental rights such as the right to live with dignity, the right to be heard, the right to make a living and the right to basic services like healthcare. In Mbuya, Jonny and Gary saw how Oxfam's rhetoric on rights came to life. During the trip they visited the Kinawataka Women's Initiative and met the charismatic Benedicta Manyonga Nabingi.

Benedicta, 56, worked for 20 years at the Bank of Uganda until leaving due to a spinal illness.

In Gary's own words...

"One [person] in particular I'll never forget. Benedicta, is the leader of the Kinawataka Women's Initiative. Buoyant, and clearly in charge, she showed us her work, her home and some of the homes nearby. She not only created and runs the women's initiative that makes bags and belts from simple drinking straws, she also looks after several children whose parents have been lost to war, AIDS or poverty. Each room in her little house is filled with bunk beds, some containing children that giggle at the tall skinny white fella as I pass. Benedicta is a force of nature and seems to be holding this community together with



Jonny and Gary follow Benedicta through the streets of Mbuya.

her two strong hands. She later takes us on a trip through the slums to the house of one of her colleagues who had not the strength to make it today as she is in the later ravages of AIDS."

Gary and Jonny's visit to Mbuya highlighted how in very difficult circumstances, where people are living in poverty and with life threatening diseases, there are amazing acts of humanity which are supported by organisations like Oxfam. Initiatives like Benedicta's are directly tied to Oxfam's rights-based approach to human development and are instrumental to not only ensuring access to life-saving medicines, but also seek to ensuring that people's right to a living, to a voice, to live in dignity are respected.

Gary continues...

"Oxfam needs to do everything it can to support people like Benedicta and to encourage local people to help themselves and those around them. Aid alone cannot rebuild a ruined country. National and personal pride need to be restored and that can only be done through the empowerment of the local people."

On February 15th at the Irish Meteor Awards Gary Lightbody and Lisa Hannigan sang "Some Surprise" from the double platinum selling CD The Cake Sale. The Cake Sale has raised over €250,000 for Oxfam Ireland's overseas programme work and for its campaign and advocacy work to date. Visit www.thecakesale.com for more information on this fantastic collaborative project.

WHAT'S CLIMATE CHANGE GOT TO DO WITH IT?

Q There's a lot of fuss out there about climate change already - aren't you just jumping on the bandwagon?

Not at all. Oxfam has carried out its own in-depth research on climate change. We have concluded that it is an issue that demands our time, attention and funding. Our campaigning is about connecting with the problems people face in the developing world and fighting for justice alongside them. Poor countries are already experiencing climate change with a vengeance.

Q But isn't this primarily a 'green' issue?

Climate change is hugely important to the world's poor. We need a broad coalition to tackle it, beyond the environmental movement. It threatens to undermine the fight against global poverty. People already struggling to work themselves out of poverty are the ones least able to deal with the effects: especially in areas already prone to natural disasters.

Q What do we need to do?

Oxfam already works with poor communities to help them prepare for disasters before they happen. We will continue this work by helping those communities to work in ways that will allow them to adapt to the effects of climate change.

However, the scale of adjustment needed to deal with climate change means that major new funding will be needed. As well as paying to help ease the problem we've created, rich countries need to make drastic cuts in greenhouse gases immediately.

Climate Change Facts

AROUND 250 MILLION PEOPLE are now affected by natural disasters each year - up from an average of 174 million two decades ago
150,000 PEOPLE DIE EVERY YEAR due to climate change, according to the World Health Organisation
BY 2050, 30 MILLION PEOPLE MAY GO HUNGRY because of climate change



Q But you work in poor countries. Is it really up to you to tell people in Ireland to change the way they live?

Just as in our trade campaign, we want to get at the causes of injustice, not just the symptoms. This means working hard to get tough international agreements on climate change. But it also means taking a good look at what we do at home. That's why we're working with the Stop Climate Chaos Coalition and the NI Climate Change Coalition.

Q Isn't the problem with places like the US and China, not us?

Actually Ireland has some of the worst greenhouse gas emissions per head in Europe - the sixth highest in the world. Northern Ireland lags badly behind England, Scotland and Wales in tackling the problem. Governments like the US government have been a big problem in tackling climate change - that's why Oxfam is also campaigning in the US and elsewhere to ensure that they meet their responsibilities to cut carbon emissions and support poor countries to adapt. There were some positive signs at the talks in Bali in December - but there is a long way to go. There needs to be a truly international effort if it is to succeed - we all need to play our part.

Case Study: Uganda



Amana Ikuru is a member of the Acholi tribe from northern Uganda, forced to flee to the capital after the violence in the north. Climate change is adding to her difficulties. She says:

"Climate change has brought a lot of change. In the past...we could plan. When people needed food, they planned what and when they planted. Normally, there is a period of rain, during planting. During harvesting the rain should not be there. This is best: sometimes rain, sometimes no rain... Now it rains too much. This destroys the crops. The rains are unpredictable. People cannot plan, and people go hungry."

Amana holds a placard as part of an Oxfam International campaign for a robust, UN-backed process to tackle the problem of climate chaos.

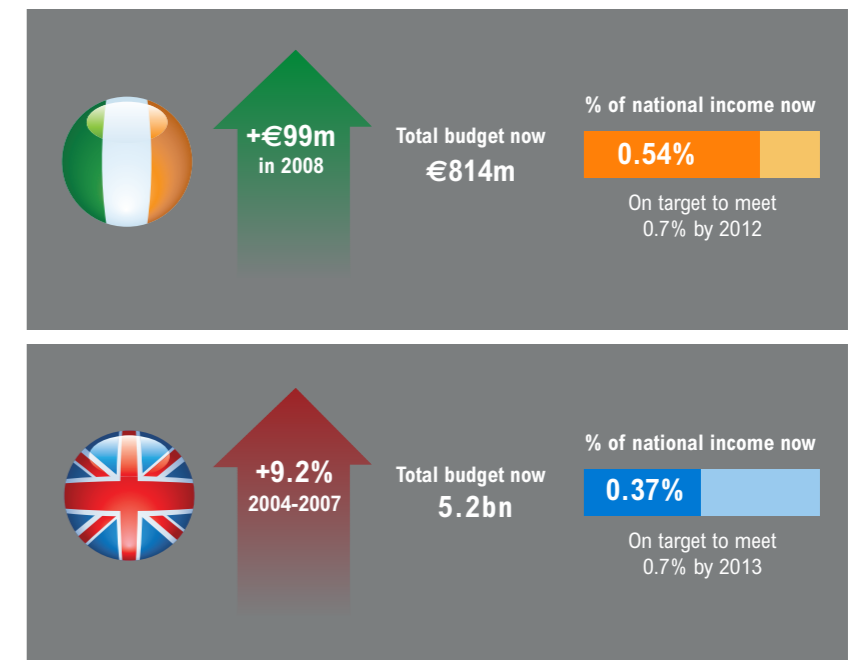
Nabil Elderkin/Oxfam GB

AID: ON TARGET?

Oxfam Ireland campaigners have worked hard to make sure that the Irish and British governments live up to their promises on aid. The extra money is essential if the Millennium Development Goals for the basic needs of the world's poor are to be met by 2015.

Both governments are on track to keep the promises they made after Make Poverty History. Of course, if you campaigned with us in 2005 you'll remember that we were demanding more and **better aid**. We'll be working hard to check that it's being spent wisely. Donors need to make sure that aid is targeted at tackling poverty but must not impose damaging pre-conditions on other things like privatising public services.

Explore the Irish government programme for yourself: Irish Aid has opened a new centre on O'Connell Street in Dublin. Find out more at www.irishaid.gov.ie/centre



A big **THANK YOU** from all of us here at Oxfam Ireland to those of you who bought an **Oxfam Unwrapped** gift at Christmas!



Thaa-nks!
You're
baa-riliant!

Thanks to you, children in Tanzania will have books for school, farmers in Uganda will get seeds for new vegetable gardens, and villagers in Rwanda will receive goats. You can see how your choice has made a real difference at www.youtube.com/oxfamireland

If you feel inspired to support our projects on a regular basis, please consider becoming a regular donor. By donating monthly you allow us to make long-term commitments to thousands of families in Africa.

Visit www.oxfamireland.org/donate for more.

Thank you!