Dear partner,

Lobby and advocacy take in an ever more important place in the work of Oxfam Novib and its partners. Oxfam Novib is currently appealing for a compensation for the damages Israel has caused in Gaza and eight Burundian counterparts have followed training in lobby-work. Meanwhile, in March the 'WE CAN end all violence against women' campaign will start in the Netherlands. And you can participate. Read more in this Oxfam Novib Network.

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“Damages Gaza must be compensated”

The European Union must hold Israel, Hamas and other Palestinian armed groups accountable for the damage to project in Gaza that were built with European aid. Late January, in Brussels, Oxfam Novib urged on behalf of the Oxfams that this happens.

Oxfam Novib leads the international lobby-work of the joint Oxfams for a solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in line with International Law. “We want ‘Brussels’ to make an inventory of all projects launched with European aid that are now destroyed or damaged,” clarifies Suying Lai, Oxfam Novib’s policy advisor.

Difficult

The Palestinian statistics office estimates the damages resulting from the conflict at around 1.9 billion dollar. “When it becomes clear which party has caused the damages, Brussels must hold that party accountable”, says Suying Lai. It will not be easy to then get the damages compensated. The European Union finances many projects in the form of ‘grants’. This means that once a project has been concluded it is legally difficult to get the damages compensated. Suying Lai: “What donors often do, is to lodge a complaint with the Israeli authorities.”

Lift the blockade

Oxfam Novib also asked the EU ministers of Foreign Affairs to shelve the plans for intensifying relations between Europe and Israel until the blockade of Gaza has been lifted. As a result of the blockade humanitarian aid cannot get in or out of Gaza, and neither can commercial goods and people.

Partners

Oxfam’s partner organisations working in Gaza, such as the Palestinian Center for Human Rights, are collecting information on violations of human rights and International humanitarian law by the Israeli military actions. Policy advisors like Suying Lai use these data in their ongoing meetings with, e.g., members of parliament and officials from the ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Appeal Israeli organisations

Israeli human rights organisations also provide Oxfam with fact-based material. Nine organisations, including five partner organisations of Oxfam Novib, wrote a letter to their prime minister, Olmert, on their serious suspicions of “heavy violations of international human rights law by the armed forces”. The nine Israeli organisations asked Olmert to investigate this.

Four Oxfams work in Gaza: Oxfam Great Britain, Oxfam Solidarité, Oxfam Québec and Oxfam Novib. There are also contributions from Oxfam America, Oxfam Hong Kong and Oxfam New Zealand. Oxfam Novib has the lead in the Oxfams’ humanitarian work.
Violence against women campaign in the Netherlands

On March 8 the ‘WE CAN end all violence against women’ campaign will be launched in the Netherlands. The goal is to have millions of ‘change-makers’ around the world in due course. The campaign is a new and practical way to ban violence against women on a large scale.

Oxfam Great Britain set up the WE CAN campaign in South Asia in 2004. By now more than one million people and 1,800 organisations spread over six countries are taking part. The goal for India is to have 50 million ‘change-makers’, and ultimately end violence against women. It is in the first place about the day-to-day violence, such as beating, discrimination and withholding money.

Stimulate

WE CAN is really a programme to get a mass of people to take a stand. It starts with stimulating individuals to denounce violence and become ‘change-makers’. They in turn inspire at least ten others to start talking about violence and discrimination in their own lives. Next, alliances are formed with, for example, businesses, schools, hospitals or civil society organisations. In this manner a critical mass emerges that no longer considers violence against women normal and is able to influence politics and policies.

Attuned to the culture

In the Netherlands Movisie, a knowledge and advice centre for social development, is implementing the campaign. Oxfam Novib supports the initiative financially. In the coming years other donors have to join and Oxfam Novib will reduce its contribution. It is a worldwide campaign, attuned to the culture of each separate country, with messages that relate to local life.

Support

Everybody can participate in the WE CAN campaign; Oxfam Novib’s partners too. Oxfam Novib can support in providing information and inspiration, and in forming alliances. For example, local initiatives are funded and linking and learning workshops were organised.

Put it on the agenda

Partners in countries that do not yet have a WE CAN campaign are called on to take the initiative. Talk with colleagues about the issue of violence against women, raise it at meetings, and put it on the agenda. A campaign does not start on its own. It starts with involved people who believe in change.

For more information see: www.wecanendvaw.org

Source: Oxfam Novib, February 27, 2009
Order out of chaos: mapping Pan African civil society

The number of African civil society organisations (CSOs) has exploded over the last two decades. Oxfam Novib recently published a picture of the complex Pan African civil society. It not only helps to understand (potential) linkages between actors, but also to find the necessary strategies in building civil society.

After a year of hard work, Oxfam Novib’s Pan Africa Programme completed the Mapping Report of Pan African Civil Society for themes related to two Oxfam International campaigns: Economic Justice and Gender Justice. This innovative post-doctoral study focussed on CSOs and farmers’ organisations involved in trade and agriculture campaigns, as well as the women’s movement working on gender justice: “to get a picture of the complexity of Pan African civil society”.

**Linkages**

The study is explorative and tries to understand the landscape of African civil society and the (potential) linkages between actors across national, regional, and continental borders. The study also engages in questions on hidden or dormant power, on the strategies necessary to build civil society, and on how to activate the hidden power. A mapping of the landscape of African civil society will help to answer these questions.

**Alliance building**

Especially since the early 1990s there has been an explosion of organised civil society – ranging from small grassroots community groups, labour unions, coalitions, alliances, advocacy groups, think tanks, church alliances, regional organisations to media groups. Oxfam Novib believes in capacity building of CSOs through alliance building, lobby and advocacy, and active citizens’ participation. It is essential that the linkages are made from the grassroots to the country, region and continent.

**New spaces**

The study shows that regional and continental institutions, like the African Union, are providing new space for engagement in policy issues. That African regions have their own characteristic in the levels of engagement with the Regional Economic Communities (ECOWAS, EAC and SADC). And that in addition the CSOs’ own challenges – including the competition and positioning, branding and funding issues – there is a growing responsibility for African civil society to work together.

**Order out of Chaos: Mapping the Complexity of Pan African Civil Society**

Two thematic mappings by region and their Pan-African Linkages
Programmes promoting advocacy and democracy need to work with an understanding of power.

Learning about advocacy and campaigning

The KIC Portal has opened a new community for sharing and learning about advocacy and campaigning. The community is available to the public, even without logging in. The aim is to collect interesting guides, toolkits and resource books on how to prepare and implement advocacy activities.

Below there are a few examples of the documents and links you can find in this community space. KIC invites Oxfam’s counterparts and others to send in their own manuals and resources about advocacy. What is your organisation’s learning agenda on advocacy? Have you got practical experience in advocacy that you can share?

Visit the community

To visit the community at [www.oxfamkic.org](http://www.oxfamkic.org), click on ‘Communities’ (button at the top), click on ‘Other’ in the left hand grey navigation panel, and click on ‘Learning on Advocacy and Campaigning’. Use the quick links to find other websites on advocacy and campaigning, or click on ‘Documents’ in the left hand grey navigation panel to see what is already there.

Contribute

Email your own contributions to [kic@oxfamnovib.nl](mailto:kic@oxfamnovib.nl) with your suggestions for uploading and linking.

Until now KIC has collected several English language resources, and a French one, but more will be collected in French, Spanish and Portuguese.

Action Guide

In the community you can find *The Action Guide for Advocacy and Citizen Participation – Power and Empowerment*. It is a manual that explains power, power relations and empowerment for advocacy programmes. Because programmes promoting advocacy and democracy need to work with an understanding of power: existing, underlying power relationships in the context of the programmes. In order to analyse the power situation, it is important for practitioners to become aware of their own power, and of their assumptions about power. The manual, made by Just Associates, contains exercises for groups and tips for facilitators.

*Source: Oxfam Novib, 27 February 2009*

*Author: Jessica Teunissen, Research and Development*
Lobby-work in Burundi

In January Oxfam Novib trained eight Burundian partners in lobby and advocacy. The result: three strategies partners can use to lobby for agricultural reform, against violence against women, and for fair elections in 2010, with more women elected at the local level.

The training showed how much partner organisations all together already know.

The lobby training launched work to increase the capacity of Burundian partners in the field of humanitarian assistance. This is taking place in the context of Oxfam International’s Rights in Crisis campaign in countries in crisis and where citizens need to be protected.

**Improved**
All eight participating organisations already had experience in lobby and campaigning. But it is not always done strategically. Perpétue Kanyange, of the women’s network SPPDF: “I had followed a lobby training before, but it wasn’t as structured, well founded and practical as this one. We’ve evaluated our own lobby strategy and been able to improve considerably in terms of planning, tactics and implementation.”

**Right moment**
For SPPDF the training came at the right moment. “We were very happy it happened. We are now preparing ourselves for a series of lobby and campaigning activities for more involvement of women in the 2010 elections and for a new law to reduce domestic violence against women.”

**Discovery**
With a right mix of theory and practical exercises, at the end of three days of training there were lobby strategies that partners could start using. One of the discoveries was the amount that partner organisations all together already know. The task now is to achieve a lot together.

Also see the article ‘Learning on lobby and campaigning’ in this Network. Visit the community at [www.oxfamkic.org](http://www.oxfamkic.org). Under ‘Learning on Advocacy and Campaigning’ you will find tools and good practices of advocacy and campaigning.

Organisations that want training in the field of advocacy and campaigning can contact the responsible country desk officer.

*Source: Oxfam Novib, February 27, 2009*
*Author: Eveline Rooijmans, regional lobbyist Great Lakes*
Sustainable cotton in mainstream retail

In January Oxfam Novib invited the Dutch textile retail sector to discuss strategies for sustainable cotton in mainstream retail. There is a growing awareness of their responsibility among retailers and the public. But only few consumers want to pay a higher price.

Cotton is an unsustainable product in itself. It causes water shortages and pollution. It is known for its social-economic issues, such as child labour and unsafe working conditions. Since 2007 Oxfam Novib has been involved in a project together with the World Wildlife Fund, two big retailers in the Netherlands (HEMA and Bijenkorf) and the branch organisation for chain stores in textile (VGT). The participants looked at the issues, choices and dilemmas for their companies regarding a more sustainable cotton supply chain for the clothes they sell in their shops.

More advanced

In January Oxfam Novib organised a workshop for sharing the results of the project with fourteen other retailers and four other NGOs. C&A and H&M, two chain stores exclusively in textile, were invited to share their experiences, which were more advanced than others. In actual practice most companies work with fair trade or organic certified cotton for some of their products. The big issues discussed were how to ensure that the cotton for all their products comes from a sustainable source and who has to pay.

Scale makes it cheaper

C&A prefers organic cotton and wants to increase it in all their products. It already buys fifteen percent of all organic cotton available in the world market. Scale makes it cheaper, it says. H&M, member of the Better Cotton Initiative - a multi-stakeholder network - has a three step approach: organic cotton (0.5%), transitional cotton and better cotton for its mainstream products. They call on others to join and to work together on supporting and involving farmers to grow better cotton.

Ambitious steps

The awareness of the retailers’ responsibility is growing in the Netherlands, as is the demand of consumers for better cotton. Only few consumers are prepared to pay a higher price though. Oxfam Novib will continue to encourage retailers to ensure all their products are made of more sustainable cotton.

Source: Oxfam Novib, 27 February 2009

Author: Liesbeth Unger, programme officer Private Sector Programme Asia, Middle East and Eastern Europe
Community Knowledge Centre shares good gender practices

Community Knowledge Centres (CKCs) provide information for communities that do not have regular access to information. They are run by volunteers who help disseminate practical experiences and good practices, and encourage people to document their knowledge. One of the benefits to the community is the empowerment of women through information sharing.

Oxfam Novib’s counterpart ALIN-EA supports a number of CKCs together with their partners in East-Africa. One such centre is in Lukwanga, Uganda. It was started up by Oxfam Novib’s partner Environmental Alert, in co-operation with ALIN-EA. The CKC primarily aims to include farmers, men and women, in the information flow on good farming practices. The centre has now become an important hub for the whole community. The people can get information through books, newspapers, magazines and the internet.

Good practices on gender

In July 2008, the CKC was involved in a learning event: people from other organisations visited the centre to learn more about its good gender practices. Lukwanga’s CKC showed how they make sure that those who are unable to visit the centre, are still informed and involved in documenting experiences. Information sharing is also not limited to literate people but involves discussions and the sharing of pictures and videos. People are encouraged to document their own practical experiences and share them with others. Increasingly, women have contributed to this and are documenting and sharing their practices.

Needs and gaps

Before setting up the CKC in Lukwanga, Environmental Alert identified the information needs and gaps of the community. Female representatives in the centre’s support committee ensure that activities are designed in a way that enables women to benefit.

A CKC needs a good internet and phone connection, a good source of energy and electronic equipment, and of course it needs to buy or obtain relevant books and magazines. For documenting farmers’ practices, the CKC needs digital cameras. This is especially vital because of illiteracy rates and the lack of written material in local languages. A picture speaks more than a thousand words!

Read more about the CKC at Lukwanga.
Do you have a similar practice that you want to inform other organisations about? Go to www.oxfamkic.org today and register. For quick registration approval, write ‘Network’ in the ‘Note to Administrator’ when you apply.

Source: Oxfam Novib, February 27, 2009
Author: Jessica Teunissen, Research and Development
Build the capacity for young people to engage themselves in society.

Quality education: an engine for social change

Twenty partners of Oxfam Novib in West Africa are going to lobby for quality education. To come to a joined vision they came together in Dakar in December 2008. There they reviewed Oxfam Novib’s position paper on quality education and translated this position to the context of West Africa.

The NGOs defined this vision of quality education: education can make greater equity and justice happen. The citizens of 2015, when the Millennium Development Goals must be achieved, are or should be in school now. Education systems have to build the capacity for young people to engage themselves in society. Apart from the right to access to education, there is also the right to a safe education that prepares children sufficiently for facing the challenges of the future.

Lobby

The meeting not only delivered a shared vision, but also the intention to work together much closer to make sure that quality education is defined and provided in the West African region. To make this a reality the partners will join forces and lobby their governments to take action to provide good quality education. The first step in that direction is an agreement about a joined vision on what good quality education is.

Priorities

The following priorities were defined for West Africa: the political will and responsibility of the state are needed to provide adequate resources; NGOs should lobby their state institutions to provide this; shared leadership between men and women is important in West Africa, and it should start at school too; while school materials should be adapted to local circumstances and languages, they should also teach openness to other cultures; the principles of quality education are adaptability, affordability, accessibility and availability to all.

Click here to read more about the workshop at the KIC Portal. A French version is forthcoming.

Read Oxfam Novib’s position paper on Quality Education:

English: Quality Education: Oxfam Novib’s Position
French: Éducation de Qualité: la Position d'Oxfam Novib
Portugese: Educação de Qualidade: Posição da Oxfam Novib

Source: Novib, February 27, 2009
Author: Jessica Teunissen, Research and Development
Free new resources from Oxfam Great Britain

Oxfam GB is offering a free copy of 'Improving the Safety of Civilians: A Protection Training Pack' to Oxfam Novib's counterparts if you contact them before 01 April 2009.

Send an email to publish@oxfam.org.uk with the words OXFAM NOVIB OFFER in the subject line. Give the title of the resource you would like to receive and give a full delivery address and contact phone number.

**Improving the Safety of Civilians: A Protection Training Pack**

This training pack is intended to help humanitarian workers to improve the safety of civilians being subjected to violence, coercion, or deliberate deprivation. The pack includes modules on: what is protection; planning a programme; mainstreaming protection; programming for protection.

The activity sessions within the modules cover topics as diverse as international standards for civilian protection, objective setting, indicators and monitoring, humanitarian negotiation, co-ordination and alliance building, reducing the risk of sexual violence and advocacy for humanitarian protection. A selection of core exercises at the end of the book is designed to encourage interaction and create debate.

Improving the Safety of Civilians outlines all activities, with detailed trainers’ notes, timings, resources needed, and handouts, feedback, and evaluation sheets. Colour cards and posters are included at the back of the book. An accompanying CD contains the full text of the manual including the cards and posters for users to print.

The materials are designed for use by experienced facilitators, who have some knowledge of protection issues, to train emergency-response teams. Activities can be adapted for participants with different levels of knowledge.

**Online resources from Oxfam:**

Visit [www.oxfam.org.uk/publications](http://www.oxfam.org.uk/publications) for a full list of online resources available to download as free pdfs. Recent papers include:

- [Turning Carbon into Gold – How the international community can finance climate change adaptation without breaking the bank](http://www.oxfam.org.uk/sites/oxfam.org.uk/files/Turning
downloads.pdf) by Heather K. Coleman and David Waskow
- [Climate, Poverty, and Justice: What the Poznan UN climate conference needs to deliver for a fair and effective global deal](http://www.oxfam.org.uk/sites/oxfam.org.uk/files/Climate%2C
Poverty%2C_and_Justice.pdf) by Jan Kowalzig
- [Viet Nam: Climate Change, Adaptation and Poor People](http://www.oxfam.org.uk/sites/oxfam.org.uk/files/Viet_Nam
Climate_Change%2C_Adaptation_and_Poor_People.pdf)
- [One year after Cyclone Sidr: fear replaces hope](http://www.oxfam.org.uk/sites/oxfam.org.uk/files/One_year
after_Cyclone_Sidr.pdf) by Shaheen Chughtai
• If Not Now, When? Three actions the G20 must take now to protect the world's poor from the economic crisis and build a new political and economic governance system by Max Lawson and Richard King

Source: Oxfam Novib, February 27, 2009
Author: Helen Moreno, Online Communications Executive Oxfam Great Brittain
Mali partners in Dutch education campaign

Investing in education in developing countries works. But much still needs to be done before all children are going to school in 2015. With this message Oxfam Novib is going to start an education campaign on March 17. It will last until July 11, one day after the G8 leaders have met in Italy.

In this campaign Oxfam Novib makes clear that education is an important tool for reducing poverty. But it also shows that hard work is necessary to end the shortage of education, and that much still needs to be done.

Governments need to keep the promises they made in the context of the Millennium Development Goals. The Netherlands is keeping its promises, but other European countries are not. In this campaign Oxfam Novib calls on Dutch citizens, as European citizens, to increase the pressure on European leaders.

Kady Baby

In the campaign Mali, and in particular Kady Baby, director of the Coalition Education Pour Tous, plays a prominent role. In the past she got the opportunity to go to school. This has taken her to where she is today. Now, as the coalition’s director she sees to it that more children in Mali get the same opportunity.

Kady Baby’s person forms the red thread in the campaign. She takes centre stage in the communication expressions and calls on the Dutch to ensure that more children around the world get the same opportunity as her. Either by donating money to Oxfam Novib, or by exerting political pressure for more money to become available for education in countries like Mali.

Next to Kady Baby and the Coalition EPT, AADEC and IEP, Oxfam Novib’s education partners in Mali, play an important role in the campaign. They are proof that education makes a difference and is indispensible if people want to develop themselves and their country.

The public

The Dutch public can support the campaign by calling on the government leaders of the seven richest countries to honour agreements and invest in education, so that all children can go to school by 2015. This action – called The Big Promise – is held worldwide and asks the public to give the right example to world leaders by showing how you can keep your promise.

Source: Oxfam Novib, February 27, 2009
Author: Fred Geelen, editor staff bureau Communication
Sustainable banking

How sustainable is your bank? Since 22 January the Dutch consumer gets an answer to this question at the website www.eerlijkebankwijzer.nl (fair bank guide). The bank guide is an initiative of Oxfam Novib, Amnesty International, Defence of the Earth and the trade union FNV Mondial.

The Fair Bank Guide shows the policies of Dutch banks in the fields of environment, human rights, labour conditions, arms trade and production. It is the first time that banks have been investigated in all the fields of corporate social responsibility and that the results were brought together on a website in an easy to read overview.

Big interest
The Fair Bank Guide gives banks scores in several fields quickly and clearly. Right after the launch there was a run to the site. The interest was so big that the website ground to a halt and a second server had to be added.

Increase pressure
With the Fair Bank Guide the initiators want to increase the pressure on the banks to use account holders' money in a sustainable and fair manner. Every quarter the Fair Bank Guide’s data is refreshed on the basis of research into the reality of the policies the banks say they have. One week after the launch the DSB Bank called, the only one of twelve researched banks that had not given information on its sustainability policy, to tell that it will lend its co-operation in future.

Not without strings
On launching the site project leader Peter Ras of Oxfam Novib said: “The financial crisis has made the need for a turn-around abundantly clear. We must make use of this momentum. If the banks do not change track this time, we will fall back into the old reflexes of a one-sided emphasis on economic growth, profit and bonuses. Such a code of conduct must certainly not be without strings attached. Sustainability is not something you practice a bit now and then.”

Moral responsibility
At the same occasion the Dutch minister of Finances, Bos, told in a personal video message that bank governors have a moral responsibility not only to tackle the financial crisis, but above all also to tackle the climate problem and poverty issue.

Source: Oxfam Novib, February 27, 2009
Author: Fred Geelen, editor staff bureau Communication
Oxfam Novib wants an enquiry into international co-operation

Oxfam Novib's general director, Farah Karimi, wants a parliamentary enquiry into the international co-operation of the Netherlands. In her New Year's speech she called 2008 a 'low point' in the debate on the sense of development aid.

According to Karimi development co-operation deserves better than the 2008 ad hoc debate. “We need more and more effective international co-operation. Development co-operation is an essential part of that.” She therefore argues for a parliamentary enquiry into the policies in the field of international co-operation, above all for learning the lessons and come to recommendations.

Politics of incidents
With her proposal Karimi responded to the debate in the Netherlands on the effectiveness of development co-operation. The debate, she said, is made up of “shooting blanks over small components of a so-called aid industry”. She wants the politics of incidents to be abandoned, as well as positioning like ‘aid works’ versus ‘aid does not work’. “The reality of our work is far more complicated than such one-liners.”

No crisis
Oxfam Novib’s general director disputed that there is a crisis in development co-operation. “There are numerous small and big successes. But we must also realise that one-on-one proof of success is an illusion in the complexity of fighting poverty.”

Source: Fred Geelen, editor staff bureau Communications
Author: Oxfam Novib, February 27, 2009