Oxfam America and the 1992 Somalia Famine (A)

Rob Buchanan's eyes wandered involuntarily to the large photograph in the center of his desk. It showed five African children clothed in rags looking skeptically at the camera, poised as if watching their future. It was September 1992: a civil war ravaged Somalia and a famine raging in the south killed the population at the rate of 5,000 a day. He was only too familiar with such tragedies, and once more, he would have to decide whether to help or not.

Buchanan was a 1970 graduate of Johns Hopkins University's School of Advanced International Studies (SAIS). Following several years of working for the U.S. Congress, Buchanan joined Oxfam America (OA) in 1985, a non-governmental organization dedicated to fighting hunger and poverty. Buchanan held various positions within OA's Africa programs, until in 1990 he was promoted to program director for the Horn of Africa. As program director he was responsible for all of OA's development projects in the countries of Sudan, Ethiopia, Eritrea and Somalia. In the fall of 1992, Buchanan faced the decision to launch a Somalia project. Despite the fact that the Somalia famine crisis during 1992 had occupied much of the international media attention, Oxfam America had not yet engaged in the crisis directly. Instead it directed donation funds through other relief agencies, such as the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC).

In effect, Buchanan's decision was about how to distribute Oxfam's scarce donation funds among the poorest and neediest in the Horn of Africa. He would need to do so in consideration of how these funds could be optimally leveraged, but also how its disbursement would fit with the strategic objectives of Oxfam America, what the donors expected of Oxfam, and how it would affect Oxfam's advocacy efforts for policy in Washington D.C.

The Oxfam Family

The Oxfam movement celebrated its "50th year of Partnership" in 1992 with a nomination for the Nobel Peace Prize. Oxfam started in England on October 5th 1942 when a group of Oxford academics and local church members formed the "Oxford Committee for Famine Relief" to appeal for funds to aid starving civilians in Nazi-occupied Greece. Following the war, Oxfam helped refugees across Europe, and soon after directed its attention to the needs of the very poor in other countries.

At first, Oxfam supported mostly relief programs. But the sheer scale of the problem made it clear that tackling the consequences of poverty would do little without addressing the root causes. In the course of its larger emphasis on long-term development work in the 1960's, the organization gradually realized that the main causes of poverty were often lack of access to resources and vulnerability to injustice. As a result, the organisation began to embrace the concept of empowerment - that is creating conditions by which the poor are empowered to improve their conditions themselves.

An important hallmark of Oxfam's work was that it tried to link the funds and support of committed individuals and groups from the Global North, with similarly motivated people working to relieve suffering in the Global South. That was Oxfam's

paradigm of "partnership", a joint fight against hunger. Oxfam had always taken a non-sectarian stance and provided help regardless of race, class or creed.

Over the years, groups of concerned citizens in other industrialized countries began to tap into and build on Oxfam's strength. Typically, after having raised money in their home country to support Oxfam, they would establish themselves as a separate organization, and by this become a new member of the Oxfam family. The first to affiliate itself with Oxfam was the Australian organization, "Community Aid Abroad" in 1953. Australia was followed by Oxfam Canada and Oxfam Belgium in 1963, Oxfam America in 1970, Oxfam Quebec in 1974, Oxfam Hong Kong in 1988, and Oxfam New Zealand in 1991.

Despite sharing the same name and philosophy, each Oxfam organization remained completely independent. They worked within their own cultural, political and economic communities to educate people about the causes of poverty and hunger, and raised money to support overseas project work. Over the years, the various organizations developed special characteristics. For instance Oxfam Quebec was sometimes called the "Water Oxfam" for its expertise and emphasis on helping people gain access to safe water supplies and irrigation.

The original Oxfam became known as Oxfam UK&I (United Kingdom and Ireland), and remained the largest member of the Oxfam family. In 1992, it worked in 77 countries, and supported 3,000 long-term development projects. Its annual budget of $160 million made it the second largest charity in the UK and Ireland, trailing Save the Children. Oxfam UK&I was also a significant retailer for crafts imported from Oxfam-supported projects, numbering 800 shops and still growing. It employed 1,200 people in England, and an additional 600 in 50 overseas offices.

The fact that the Oxfam members were independent often created overlap in their project work in developing nations. For instance there were four separate Oxfam offices in the country of El Salvador. In any given major developing country capital there were likely to be at least three Oxfam offices. Every two years, there was a conference of all Oxfam members to exchange experiences and formulate broad policies. In addition, some regions had annual regional meetings to coordinate their various activities. At top management level, efforts were under way to integrate the overseas organizations better with each other, a process hampered by tax regulations and the tradition of independence.

Oxfam America - Partnership in Action

Oxfam America (OA) was founded in 1970 as a response to a crisis in Bangladesh. In 1992, its Boston headquarters had a staff of 85 people including part time and temporary workers. An office in Oakland employed three people, and another 20 were employed in eight regional field offices on four continents. In line with its sister organizations in other countries, Oxfam America was a nonprofit, international agency that funded self-help development and disaster relief projects in Africa, Asia, the Americas and the Caribbean. Viewed by OA as no less important were its activities in educating the US public about the root causes of hunger and poverty, and its advocacy efforts to influence US and UN policies that would affect countries in which Oxfam operated. It supported 268 grassroots projects in 28 countries, with a total budget approaching $12 million. OA emphasized that it neither accepted government funds, nor allowed itself to become dependent on a particularly large donor group, leaving it free to take independent stands in the best interest of its project partners.

Growth of the organisation occurred in waves. Donation revenue peaked the first time in 1979 during the Cambodia crisis at $4 million, representing a 10-fold increase over 1978. In 1985, revenue tripled again to more than $16 million in connection with the Ethiopia famine relief efforts. Since then, revenues have fallen back to an annual average

of $12 million. **Exhibit 1 and 2** shows Oxfam America's balance sheet and revenue history.

The Issue of Hunger

Since Hunger was at the center of Oxfam America's mission, OA did not tire of reminding its supporters and readers about the magnitude of the problem. Examples of recurring issues throughout Oxfam publications include the following:

- Despite an overall improvement of the world economy, an estimated 730 million people are chronically malnourished, twice as many hungry people as a decade ago.
- Each year, more than 15 million children die of hunger and related sickness. The hunger holocaust among children alone is equivalent to a Hiroshima bomb being dropped somewhere in the developing world every three days.
- Hunger and malnutrition is a cruel death. It is a death drawn over weeks or months during which the body painfully decomposes itself, accompanied by numerous diseases, one of which will eventually kill.
- Dehydration caused by diarrhea disease alone, has killed 150 million children in the last 40 years - more than the combined civil and military deaths of both world wars.
- One million girls die each year simply because they are born female.

Among the general public a number of popular opinions were used to explain why help was essentially useless, including: the world is overpopulated anyway, the situation is hopeless, the poor are destroying the environment, there is not enough money to make a meaningful difference, ethnic and military conflicts in the developing world render help impossible, or natural disasters are unpreventable bad luck.

Oxfam countered those popular reasons with another set of data:

- The world produces enough food to provide every person in the world with 3,000 calories a day, well above the recommended daily minimum of 2,300 calories.
- Overpopulation is by itself not a problem. Western Europe is more densely populated than most countries plagued by recurring famine and hunger.
- Many of the developing world's hungriest nations could be and often are producing enough food to feed themselves, usually even during a famine.
- Natural disasters are likewise not a reason for famine. The nations of Africa have dealt with draughts for centuries, without experiencing the recurring large-scale famines so typical of the recent decades. It is failing agricultural policies and social injustices which marginalize communities, and then deliver them to the brink of disaster when inclement weather, wars or pests strike.
- High birth rates and environmental damage are rather the effect of poverty, not the reason. Financially secure and literate communities reduce their birth rate drastically. Ecological balance returns quickly once land is distributed fairly among the population, so that farmers have an economic interest in sustainable farming.
- Wars in and among developing nations are a frequent cause for malnutrition. Since World War II there have been more than 130 significant wars. Many of them were fought as proxy-wars in the East-West conflict, many of them were fought with sophisticated weaponry given by and imported from their respective East or West bloc sponsors. After the cold war was over, those sponsors walked away from countries armed to their teeth with weapons in the hands of former dictator clients and shrugged off any further responsibility.
- Most important of all, even in the most desolate of all places throughout the world, regardless of the suffering and deprivation they might have suffered, if the local farmers are allowed back to their land, free of interference by military governments and/or predatory wealthy families, they will rebuild sustainable

healthy communities at astonishing speeds with little but crucial outside assistance. *Help therefore is effective!*

UNICEF estimated that given a suitable program, it would be possible to bring an end to child malnutrition, preventable diseases and widespread illiteracy at a cost of $25 billion a year. Comparing this amount to other priorities suggests that the money could be available. When the world saw its oil reserves endangered by Iraq's annexation of Kuwait, it produced more than $50 billion dollars to free Kuwait and return it to the undemocratic rule of the Sabah family. According to the New York Times of August 11th 1991, the world as a whole still spent $800 billion a year on military expenditures.

The simplicity of Oxfam's counter arguments, however, can be misleading as well. For instance: the immense amount of calories grown in the form of grains in the northern hemisphere, which is subsequently fed to raise livestock, is of little help to the urban centers of Africa who suffer food quality shortages. Also, much of the social injustice and economic exploitation of the poor in a typical Third World country is incurred by local families of wealth and power, over whom First World governments have virtually no influence. Furthermore, viewed on balance, decades of First World philanthropy and dozens of well-meant development models have often produced questionable results.

One of the most notorious regions demonstrating the difficulty of preventing hunger and deprivation was the Horn of Africa. Accordingly, Oxfam had always maintained a strong commitment to it.

The Horn of Africa

The Horn of Africa comprises of the countries of Somalia, Sudan, Ethiopia, Eritrea and Djibouti. Conditioned by years of media broadcasting calamities, popular images of the region bring forth children with dying eyes and hunger swollen bellies, savage tribal and clannish wars, primitive culture and an arid desert landscape. Yet, these are images of a recent past. Ethiopia in particular used to be a virtual garden of Eden, with plush green valleys, snow-capped mountains and extensive forests. Agricultural output used to be more than sufficient to feed the population. As recent as the early 1980s Sudan was believed to have the capacity to become the "breadbasket of Africa", and nomadic population in the semi-arid areas of the entire Horn were estimated to tend as many as 80 million grazing animals. All cultures of the regions are well advanced, with centuries worth of traditions in poetry, proprietary writing systems, and indigeneous civic societies.

In common with most of Africa, the Horn had been subject to a shifting patchwork of colonial rulers. The countries that eventually emerged in the postwar gains of independence had only limited geographical or political relevance to the many nations inhabiting the area. They all remained inherently unstable:

- In 1960 the current Somalia was formed. Until then the Italians kept southern Somalia and the British kept northern Somalia. The British kept, Somali-settled Ogaden region was ceded to Ethiopia in 1960. The Ogaden was the cause for frequent warfare between Somalia and Ethiopia, and one of the triggers for the Somali civil war starting in 1988. The northern (ex-British) part has declared independence as the Republic of Somaliland in 1991, but is so far not recognized.
- The French kept Djibouti until 1977, and still today contribute 60% of that nations government budget. While comparatively peaceful until 1991, Djibouti faced widespread civil unrest in 1992 /93.
- Ethiopia was only briefly occupied by the Italiens during W.W.II. The emperor Haile Selassie who was crowned in 1930, continued his feudal rule with quasi slavery conditions for the farmers until 1974. He was soon followed by the Marxist dictator Haile Mariam Mengistu. Several regions of Ethiopia were engaged in tribal civil war with the government and with each other until 1989. The country of Eritrea in the North seceded by referendum in 1993.

- The British released Sudan into independence in 1956. Sudan experienced three intervals of democratic rule, none of which could stabilize the country economically and politically enough to prevent civil strife. The late 1980s and 90's saw a protracted civil war between the Muslim North and the Christian southern provinces of Equatoria.

The political instability denied the Horn much of its opportunities of economic and social progress. In the 1990's all countries hovered at the very bottom of the GNP/capita ranking and each of them was heavily dependent on food imports and food aid (in the extreme case of Eritrea 85% of the population depended on food aid). Wars and famines had ravaged several parts of the Horn almost incessantly for more than a generation, having killed an estimated 5 million people since 1955, with an equal number permanently handicapped. Out of a total population of 82 million, there were 2 million refugees, 10 million were internally displaced, 40 million were without access to health services, and 60 million had no safe water supply. Half of the population was below the age of 15. The number of animals was then estimated at around 20 million only. The following table is generated from the Hunger 1993 annual report by the Bread for the World Institute on Hunger and Development.

	Popu-lation	1990 % Urban-	Human ** Dev't	Infant Daily Mortality	Adult calories	Avg GNP literacy	growth
	in mil.	ization	Index '92	per 1000	% of req.	rate m/f	1965-90
Ethiopia	49.2	13	138	122	N/A	N/A	-0.2
Sudan	25.2	22	145	99	85	43/12	N/A
Somalia	7.5	36	151	122	75	27/9	-0.1
Djibouti	0.4	81	153	117	N/A	12 (total)	N/A
Argentina	32.3	86	43	29	133	96/95	-0.3
Thailand	55.7	23	69	24	103	96/90	2.0
Germany	77.6	86	12	8	N/A	N/A	8.0
Canada	26.5	77	1	7	130	N/A	5.0

** Of 160 countries ranked by the UNDP, the lowest rank in 1992 was Guinea at 160.

In stark contrast to the shortage of food was the abundance of the military. According to Bread for the World, in 1988 Ethiopia and Somalia together sported 500,000 soldiers and only 1,000 doctors. The massive militarization of the Horn is partially explained by its geography: it is situated right along the most important western trade route: the Red Sea leading to the Suez-canal, (see **exhibit 5** for a map of the area). Since each of the Horn countries are adjacent to the Red Sea, they became important pawns in the strategy game of the cold war adversaries. Throughout the 1980s Sudan and Somalia were in the western camp, and Ethiopia in the eastern camp. The US Department of Defense revealed that from 1981 to 1989, US military assistance to its Sudan and Somalia totaled over one billion dollars. From 1977 to 1989, Soviet military aid to Ethiopia was close to twelve billion dollars.

The Horn also had a cultural problem of extreme male chauvinism. Whether this was caused by traits inherent to the indigenous cultures, the nearby fundamentalist Islamic influences of the Arabian Peninsular, the military strong*men*ship of the recent governments, or the degree of violence injected into the societies over the last two or three generations, has probably become impossible to sort out. Women had to typically take care of the predominant share of agricultural work, as well as child-rearing and household duties. In return, women were usually deprived of sufficient food, health care provisions or access to education. Women had virtually no representation in government or business, making them completely dependent on their husbands to obtain financial credit, to buy farming input, or to sell farmed and handmade surplus. To make matters worse, most development efforts by governments and NGO's alike until recently have likewise ignored the women, and recognized the men as the head and legal owner of the household to be dealt with.

Somalia

Unlike most African states, the 7.5 million strong Somalian society is ethnically homogenous, encompassing a single language and Islamic religion. However, the Somali people are divided along regionally-based clan and subclan lines, whose members tend to exhibit strong loyalty. See **exhibit 6** for more detailed country statistics other than the following highlights as of 1988:

Capital:	Mogadishu, pop. 500,000
Other cities:	Hargeysa and Berbera in the north, Kismayu and Baidoa in the south each with pop. of around 80,000
Area:	246,000 square miles, about the size of Texas
Transport:	22,000 km mostly unpaved roads, no railroads estimated to have 40,000 motorized vehicles in use
GDP:	$150/capita, agriculture 67%, manufacturing 5%
Tradeflows:	90% of exports to Saudi Arabia, 30% of imports from Italy

After the various colonial powers granted Somalia independence in 1960, attempts to harness a multitude of clan-based political parties into a viable democracy produced only ineffective governments. A military coup in 1969 brought to power Major General Siad Barre. Ruthless about human rights, and ineffective in advancing the nation, Barre needed a foreign ally to support his rule. In the 1970s he thus developed close ties with the Soviet Union. Backed by large scale Soviet military support, he rallied Somali nationalism for a war to reclaim the Somali Ogaden region which Britain gave to neighbouring Ethiopia in 1960.

In parallel developments, Ethiopia experienced its own revolution in 1974 following a protracted large scale famine that was the result of failed agricultural policies. The autocratic rule of Emperor Haile Selassie was overthrown, and replaced with a broad coalition of intellectuals, peasants, Muslims and the military. Bloody infighting within the coalition for power eventually brought forth a new brutal dictator, Mengistu Haile Mariam in 1977.

While Ethiopia had traditionally been considered in the western camp, Mengistu quickly embraced Soviet-style Marxism and offered himself as a satellite to Moscow's orbit. Commanding a tight grip over a population of around 40 million, and a willingness to build a huge army, made Mengistu's Ethiopia a more attractive partner for the Soviets than Somalia. When the Soviet Union switched sides to support Ethiopia in 1978, Somalia immediately lost the Ogaden war.

Since the US lost Ethiopia to the USSR, Somalia and Sudan were established as Western supported counterweights. Over a period of 10 years the United States supported the rule of General Siad Barre with $200 million of military aid. (To put this into perspective: in 1988 the entire annual Somali GNP amounted only to $950 million). In return for that $200 million price tag of cold war security (plus several hundred millions

more in economic aid) Barre knew how to satisfy his client. Unlike the notorious Ethiopia, Barre and Somalia remained out of the international media headlines, and thus he and the US were spared embarrassing questions about his human rights abuses and dictatorship. Furthermore, under his rule, no fundamentalist Islam could emerge which was important for the US who was eager not to let another Iran, Libya or Palestine arise. Finally, General Barre granted the US the strategically important military base of Berbera, a cornerstone of Indian Ocean security.

General Barre used the military and economic aid to contain the unrest against his rule that had plagued his regime virtually from the beginning. The 1978 defeat in the Ogaden war, sent half a million refugees and an army of guerrillas armed with modern weapons back into northern Somalia. Having resented the post-colonial merger with south Somalia already in 1960, the north Somalia based Isaaq clan began in the 1980s to organize guerrilla warfare on Barre's regime. Unrest also sweltered along the southern border with Kenya. General Barre played off the varying clans against each other, by distributing the resources he obtained from the US. However, the widespread opposition began to close in on him. His increasingly fragile hold of power was characterized by discriminatory violations of human rights, while the country exhibited virtually no economic development. Human Rights Watch called the situation in Somalia in 1988 "dismal and deteriorating". By 1990, up to 95% of the country's negotiable assets were controlled by residents of Mogadishu.

The Beginning of the Crisis in 1988

Barre's neighbor Mengistu of Ethiopia was in similarly bad shape. With Gorbachev in power since 1986, support for Ethiopia dwindled drastically. In 1988 Mengistu and Barre struck a deal to abandon support for insurgent groups using their respective territories for maneuvers against their respective regimes. Thus fearing the pending loss of their support base in Ethiopia, north Somali guerrillas launched a "last-chance" full-scale attack on Siad Barre's troops, and initially overwhelmed them.

According to Africa Human Right's Watch, Barre's retribution was savage and thousands of civilians were killed. Nonetheless, in January 1989 North Somali opposition groups claimed to have control over 95% of the northern region. Opposition groups in other parts of the country, encouraged that Barre had become vulnerable, staged armed uprisings as well. In a series of half hearted political reforms and military confrontations, Barre responded to those threats to his regime, but control over the country continued to slip away. Barre was further weakened by the fact that 1988 Congressional action in the US brought American military support to his regime to an end. As recent as April '87, a US military delegation visiting Somalia had agreed to increase US military aid, and in August of that year, joint military exercises were still held. In February 1990 the US suspended all aid to Somalia. Thereafter Barre received some military support from Iraq, Libya and the United Arab Emirates.

It took almost three years until Barre's complete demise, when he fled Mogadishu in January 1991. Much of the tragedy that followed, had its roots in the civil war of 1988-1991. Traditionally, the clans did not have a history of sorting out their differences through armed conflict. However, during the civil war, Barre effectively undermined opposition against him, by arming one sub-clan against the next. Thus, when he exited the stage, he surrendered not only a country depleted of resources and infrastructure by decades of economic mismanagement, years of civil war, and millions of refugees, but he also left behind dozens of untrained, immature and heavily armed militias who were united only by their mutual hate for each other.

In early 1991, while the world watched CNN's Peter Arnett reporting from Bagdad, Somalia split into a dozen or so separate zones, each controlled with difficulty by a warlord. A number of UN-brokered cease-fires proved ineffective, as did various attempts by the armed factions to install a new government. Fights simmered on across the country,

unti in November 1991 full scale civil war broke out once more, this time between the two strongest warlords Ali Mahdi Mohamed and Mohammed Farah Aideed, when they could not find a compromise over the control of Mogadishu. The war between these two warlords (incidentally both of the same Hawiye clan), lasted until March 1992, and left Mogadishu as an empty hull of a city with no electricity, no water, and not a single house in the central city unshelled. That conflict also sucked in large supplies of weaponry from Ethiopia, and established the complete disrespect for civilian lives. Unarmed civilians served as an outlet for pent-up frustration and violence as they became targets of rape, torture and execution. Stray bullets traveling for several miles hit civilians randomly.

The 1992 Famine

A UN-sponsored cease-fire in March 1992 between Ali Mahdi and Aideed faltered when militias outside Mogadishu still supporting the return of Siad Barre used the chance to make strong advances. As the year wore on, the country fell into complete anarchy with even the warlords losing control over their troops. The rule of the gun was so pervasive, because the soldiers were generally not paid. Volunteers for the armies were accepted at the same rate that it was possible to supply them with a gun. The simple economics of the more anarchic than civil war in summer 1992 were that a gun was only useful to the holder, if it was used to obtain food. Fighting other armed factions was a risky undertaking, and generally not pursued enthusiastically. While Somalia was visited by a drought in that summer, that was not the principal cause of the famine. The famine was created by looting gunmen destroying agricultural stocks, and making any kind of economic activity or even delivery of humanitarian assistance impossible.

The extent of the Somalia famine in the fall of 1992, and the number of people at risk of starvation in the southern regions were not unusual by Horn standards. The respective statistics were 3-5.000 deaths a day, 1.5 million at risk, and 4.5 million in need of urgent assistance. The final tally of 350-500.000 famine related deaths was far below the 1 million death record set by the 1984-5 Ethiopian famine. However, the situation was unprecedented in that no degree of civil rule existed at all. In the south, the war that had ravaged the country for nearly four years destroyed any remnants of the state, all infrastructure and most agricultural stocks. Security in northern Somalia was also shaky and the population required some food assistance, but famine generally had been avoided.

Normally, famines in the Horn (as elsewhere in the world) were allowed or even induced for political reasons, whereby governments and rebel groups alike barred or promoted humanitarian relief agencies to deliver food aid as a tactical tool. (see HBS case on "Hunger in The Sudan", for an example). Agencies would negotiate access with either the government or the rebels, and once granted, could generally operate safely.

The absence of any order in southern Somalia in 1992 posed therefore unusual operational problems. International relief agencies could operate only under the protection of armed guards, and then only if a substantial portion of the food aid was given to the gun-toting juvenile bandits answering to one of dozens different warlords. The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) was widely acknowledged to be most effective in feeding the starving masses by delivering small shipments to the feeding kitchens and cook all of the food on the spot. Cooked food was useless to the gunmen. The ICRC had 600 such feeding kitchens in operation, feeding millions of refugees. Even then, feeding could only be done in the morning and midday, because thereafter, the gunmen generally started getting high on the local narcotic of choice, Chat, an amphetamine, and started shooting around randomly.

In a September 1992 letter sent out to selected donors about Somalias famine crisis, John Hammock, Executive Director of Oxfam America, wrote:

> Enclosed is a 9-minute piece of footage from Baidoa and Mogadishu taken by Janet Green, Oxfam America's Director of Education, Outreach and

Communications. I wanted to share our footage with you because the situation is truly the most horrific we have ever witnessed. The dying right now is massive - on the order of thousands daily - and the actions taken by governments and the UN to date are grossly inadequate.

Hammock's strong words were mirrored by many other observer's eye witness accounts. Amidst the chaos, anarchy and famine incurred by the warlords, the majority of Somalis exhibited admirable bravery. Educated teachers, doctors, elders and many more chose to remain in the country to assist the relief efforts of the international humanitarian agencies. The international media for the most part focused on the heroic efforts of relief workers to help the victimized Somali's. The fact that the vast majority of relief workers were actually Somalis was virtually ignored.

Oxfam America - The Management of Hunger

The Somalia crisis was tragic, and in many ways unique. On the other hand, every crisis has its own unique dynamics, and each crisis causes harm to the innocent and poor. At around the same time as the Somalia tragedy, there were four other emergencies: the Kurds in Iraq, the coup in Haiti, a famine in southern Africa and a flood in Bangladesh. These were in addition to the chronic problems in Afghanistan, El Salvador, Myanmar, Armenia, Cambodia, and others. And those crises were in addition to the many places in the world where organisations like Oxfam were helping to reconstruct societies so that emergencies might be avoided in the future, for instance, right next door to Somalia: Ethiopia.

Oxfam's long term success to fulfill its mission to stop hunger would depend on continously managing three critical variables:

- Among all the crisis in the world, and among all the deserving causes where hunger could be alleviated or prevented, Oxfam had to make a selection of where to concentrate its resources. It could not respond everywhere.
- Oxfam had to ensure that for those causes where it did chose to respond, it would deliver the help as effective and with as much impact as possible
- As a donation driven organisation, Oxfam had to ensure that the choices it made, correspond to what it had promised its donors when soliciting their charity.

To achieve these goals, Oxfam America organised itself into three major departments: the Overseas Department, the Education and Outreach Department, and the Resource Development Department. See **Exhibit 5** for Oxfam's organization chart.

Development and Project Work (Overseas Department)

Oxfam's Overseas Department carried out all the development and project work. Projects were selected on a number of parameters. They are typically of small-scale agricultural or income-generating nature where small financial amounts could have significant impact and demonstration value. Many projects were also designed for local institution and network building. In recent years, particular emphasis was given on women's issues. Typical projects included seed and tools programs to jump start communities affected by drought or war, drinking water and irrigation supply systems, managerial support for agricultural cooperatives and local non-governmental organizations, building of schools, conferences and workshops for local communities on medical, environmental and other issues, and R&D on low-tech solutions for improving agricultural productivity. **Exhibit 7** shows the 1993 list of projects and size of respective funding.

A uniting feature of all projects was empowerment of those who were helped. Typically, Oxfam would manage its projects through local project partners. Besides the regional field office, Oxfam had no operational or managerial staff in the countries.

Instead, Oxfam intended to build strong and long lasting relationships with local organizations. On various occasions, OA's Executive Director, John Hammock, expressed Oxfam's development philosophy with the following words:

[quoted from Kennedy-school Forum Panel]
- international assistance does not create goodness
- nobody develops anybody else - people develop themselves
- nobody makes peace for somebody else - people make peace
- be supportive, not importive
- when we try to do good we sent our food and destroy local markets. We send our people, and destroy local capabilities. Sometimes I wonder whether colonialism may have found new agents in the form of NGO's.
- Sometimes I wonder whether we should not rather call them PGO's - as in para-governmental organisations.
- the UN is a den of incredible politics, burocracy and fiefdoms - burocrats who compete for glory and increase their power. The UN is part of the problem, and it needs to be changed
- experts all over the world do not have the answer for development - people do.
- all development is political
- advocacy must be a major component of any activity of an INGO in order to survive as an independent agency in this kind of a world. But too many NGO's shy away from the responsibility
- We are advocates for the poor. We need to stand tall to the poor. Stand by them until it hurts, or otherwise we won't cause the world to change.

Given that attitude, the selection of the right project partners was critical to OA's success, and a process to which considerable attention was given. No written guidelines existed, but partners were generally selected on compatibility with OA's philosophy and intentions, solidity and credentials of management and organization, prospect for long term relations, and ability to generate genuine projects. Oxfam was particularly sensitive to ensure that its local project partners would treat the ultimate beneficiaries of the projects in the same spirit of empowerment as Oxfam perceived it did itself, and to avoid patronization. Country programs tended to become highly effective, once strong relationships with a few local partners developed over the years. Conversely, the focus on strengthening Oxfam's existing relationships in countries where it did have strong programs in place, meant by extension that Oxfam would normally be reluctant to start up programs in new countries.

The Overseas Department divided itself into 8 regions. The regions were: Horn of Africa, West Africa, Southern Africa, South Asia, Southeast Asia, Central America, South America, and The Caribbean. Each region was the responsibility of a program director. With the exception of the Horn of Africa, the program directors were stationed in the regional field offices, where they were responsible for program supervision and project generation. The program directors were paired with regional coordinators in the head office who would concentrate on communications and coordination with the other departments of Oxfam. While the individual program director's approval limits were restricted to $20,000 per grant, with an overall cap of 20% of the regional grant budget, the organisation obviously relied considerably on their regional managers ability to select and recommend suitable projects.

Each regional staff was responsible for developing a 3-year strategic plan, which was an important cornerstone of internal communication for Oxfam America. Weighing in at around 50 pages, it summarized the region's history, Oxfam's involvement in the region and major differentiating characteristics. It also covered particular experience and lessons learned. It would then proceed to suggest OA's strategy for the region as a whole, and recommend the type of projects with which the strategy would be carried out. The strategic plan was refined in an informal iterative process of fine-tuning with other departments, and

committees. After approval by the Board of Directors, it became OA's road map for the region.

New projects with a grant volume not exceeding $50,000 were decided on by the grant forum. The grant forum comprised of most professional staff in the overseas department, plus a number of staff from other departments. Projects exceeding $50,000 needed to be approved by the biannually meeting of the regional board subcommittees. The subcommittee would comprise of selected board members, outside advisors, and regional staff. Only the board members had voting power in the subcommittees. Special telephone procedures were in place in the case of emergency responses. If new grants represented the continuation of previously approved projects, then the program director could approve them up to $20,000, and the director of the department could approve them up to $50,000, without discussion in the grant forum or the subcommittee.

In 1990 the Overseas Department also developed for the first time an overarching three year strategic plan. In this plan the department spelled out its basic development philosophy in more detail, the achievements to date, and the direction the agency's projects would aim at during the next three years. The fundamental thrust of the 1990 strategic plan was to build even stronger relationships with local project partners, thereby enabling the local stake holders to take more responsibility for their destiny, and to view the development process even more holistically, by paying more attention to health, education, environment, emergency, culture, and military conflict issues.

Emergency Relief

Emergencies could naturally not be incorporated into the strategic plan. Emergency relief had always been a thorny issue for Oxfam America. Generally speaking, OA felt that its contributions to disasters could not make as much of a difference to short term relief (such as food-aid), as its contributions to long-term development. Disasters, once broken out, often required help in the order of 100's of millions of dollars, with governments, militaries, multilateral agencies, the UN and its myriad of organizations, and large NGO's like the Red Cross getting involved. OA instead preferred to work through its partners on the underlying structures (social and economic injustice) that are often at the root of a disaster. The strategic wisdom concerning emergency relief beside, the ironic fact was that Oxfam owed both, its origins as well as its growth, to high visibility involvements in just those kind of emergencies in Bangladesh and Ethiopia which were not part of the development niche that it preferred for itself.

Guided by its philosophy of self-help sustainable long-term development, Oxfam America also was not particularly geared towards providing emergency relief. This was in contrast to its sister organization Oxfam UK&I who had extensive emergency capabilities in equipment, technology and management skills. Yet, a number of forces led OA to become involved in them on a regular basis nonetheless. The most frequent reason was, that if OA had projects in a country that was hit by an emergency, then it would need to find ways to help its local project partners to become involved and/or survive through the crisis. During times of a crisis, the local partners often needed OA even more than before. Therefore Oxfam was continuously forced to develop ad-hoc responses to the needs of such situations. Emergencies causing widespread famine, usually came in three varieties, each posing unique challenges:

- weather related: droughts or floods destroying crops and livestock
- nature related: earthquakes or volcanic eruptions causing homelessness
- war related: civil and international wars turning civilians into refugees and destroying food supplies.

Occasionally, OA would also become involved even though it did not have previous projects under way. If a crisis became highly media intensive so that donors would start to provide crisis specific donations, OA might either channel these funds to its sister organizations, or start a project itself. On other occasions OA felt it needed to make a

humanitarian statement. For instance, in 1988 OA became involved in Armenia's earthquake crisis. OA took the lead to provide aid in what was then still the Soviet Union, whereas many other humanitarian agencies pondered the popularity of helping that cold-war foe.

In order to form some consensus and guidance on the issue of emergency relief, Oxfam America developed an internal "Emergency Response Guide" in 1981. However, several emergency responses over the years, have prompted Oxfam America staff repeatedly to question whether the guidelines had really been adhered to, and if not, what its usefulness was. The policy's basic tenets were:

- Disaster response takes place within an agency program framework of commitment to empowerment and just development. Any disaster response must further this fundamental agency program.
- The primary objective of any emergency response is development. The emergency program should enhance the capacities of local people and organizations and restore their productive capacities.
- The emergency response should respect a special opportunity to educate and advocate concerning key issues associated with the disaster, towards a goal of advancing self-reliance and creating greater equity.

In a recent policy review Charny concluded that in order to improve efficacy of the disaster response policy, OA should create a new staff position that would focus exclusively on carrying out the agency's disaster responses. In the event of a major disaster, this person would assist the program and advocacy directors to develop an appropriate response.

Advocacy and Education (Education and Outreach Department)

Oxfam America felt that many of the problems of poverty in developing countries were substantially tied to public policies formulated by the governments of the global North. The regional program directors in particular urged the organization to attempt to influence policy making, as they often witnessed the regional micro impact on the poor of trade embargoes, development aid policies, military involvement et cetera first hand. Not infrequently, they saw years of development work wiped out by one well-intentioned, but ill-conceived policy by industrialized nations. More often, they saw their development efforts seriously impeded by the side effects of actions that the rich nations had or had not taken. The archetypical notorious example of this type was the repeated dumping of agricultural surplus on the world markets by the European community, which depressed prices of commodities for export on which many developing world farming communities critically depended.

For this reason, Oxfam felt that its mission to fight hunger would have to be fought abroad as well as at home, by lobbying the government on specific actions, and educating the public about the needs of the poor and hungry. Lobbying could take several forms. For general bills to pass Congress, such as the "1992 Environment and Sustainable Development Act", Oxfam tried to make its knowledge and experience available to the law makers. For foreign policy actions concerning particular countries, Oxfam wanted to ensure that the voice and the needs of the desperately poor were represented. Oxfam was also quite vocal inside the NGO community about its views about development.

In the words of Janet Green, director of the education and outreach department, the aim of public education campaigns was to:

> .. expand the consciousness of the general public, and to build a global awareness on issues of international development, that will ultimately express itself in political power against governmental actions that may wipe out years of humanitarian work at a moments notice.

A significant campaign aimed at the general public in the spirit of partnership was Oxfam's "Fasts for the World Harvest" campaign. A variety of events would be performed throughout the country, typically shortly before Thanksgiving, that were designed to have the participant give up something, (a meal for instance) and donate that savings to Oxfam. Around 1500 organizations such as churches or universities across the US would organize such an event with the help of Oxfam. Oxfam estimated the total number of participants in all these events at around 200,000, and growing each year. One of the more successful activities that could be organized for the "Fast" were Hunger Banquets. All guests to the Banquet would draw a token at the entrance. 15% of the tokens would designate the guest for a nice, sumptuous meal. 20% of the tokens would allow the guest a no-frill, but sufficient meal of rice and beans, and the rest was afforded merely a bowl of rice and a glass of water. These percentages corresponded roughly to the state of the world population nutrition. Oxfam also organized six "National Hunger Banquets" directly in major cities in the US, with a total participation of 2500 people. The hunger banquets were generally aimed at celebreties and affluent decision makers. Those banquets did not only generate substantial revenue, but also produced considerable visibility in the mass media.

From its advocacy and education efforts in 1980's, Oxfam derived the following lessons for its efficacy:

- Oxfam's local partners want OA to do advocacy work in the Global North on their behalf
- Advocacy efforts are effective when they relate to overseas programs in countries that Oxfam supports
- An overemphasis on policy analysis vs. political advocacy is less advantageous. OA needs the advocacy program to take the analysis from the Overseas Department, and develop a political plan.
- Focus is crucial. OA needs to decide what their priorities are and implement ongoing strategic planning. Otherwise OA would just have a series of ad-hoc initiatives.

Fund raising (Resource Development Department]

Revenues for Oxfam America were almost exclusively private donations. Three out of four individual donors to Oxfam contributed less than $100 a year. Donations reached Oxfam through a variety of channels, including direct mail, corporate sponsors, corporate matching gifts, wills, events, and local development committees. **Exhbit 3** shows a breakdown of the size of donations [data still due from Oxfam].

In 1988, Oxfam also developed a reasonably successful fair-trade catalog, selling crafts from all its regions of operation. Even though growing rapidly each year, the catalog did not provide a significant source of funds to Oxfam. OA just opened a retail store in Cambridge, Ma, and was contemplating other locations in Chicago or San Francisco. It had already sold merchandise from stalls during Christmas time. Retail operations were thought to be a useful tool of spreading Oxfam's message, if they could be run on a break-even basis.

Oxfam's History in the Horn of Africa

Oxfam America had had a strong presence in the Horn of Africa for more than a decade. In Ethiopia in particular it supported a large number of projects as a result of its prominent role in the 1984 famine crisis, during which OA's donor revenues increased by $10 million. In 1992, the Horn still had the largest dollar share of projects among the 8 regions of operations. The first Somalia project was funded in 1981 with a grant to provide health assistance to Ethiopian refugees. Over the years grants were made to introduce solar-powered water pumps in refugee camps, support for various indigenous organizations, build a small dam and a wells project, establish a weavers cooperative,

promote community development among former pastoralists, cooperate on sand dune stabilization and emergency assistance. All together, 27 OA grants were made in Somalia.

The solar-powered water pumps project became a notorious reminder for all of the Oxfam family for how not to do development work. It was a project initiated by Oxfam UK&I, and had the enthusiastic support of Oxfam's project partners as well as the beneficiary communities. Water security in the rural remote areas was a function of availability of diesel to power the pumps. With the uncertain economic and political conditions in Somalia, combined with the decrepit state of its infrastructure (only 40,000 vehicles in use in all of Somalia!) the supply of diesel, however, was always a tenous affair. When solar powered technology became available in the early 1980s, it looked like a panacea to grant the communities economic independence and stability. Oxfam America, contributed a total of $75,000 to the project. The total project amounted to $250,000 and comprised of 46 pumps to be installed in a number of communities.

In a bid to rush the technology into the country, however several mistakes turned the project into a disaster. The solar power part never created any technical problems. But the attached pumps proved not to be able to withstand the rigors of the Somali environment. Filters were not sufficient to protect the pumps from mud when the water levels became low. It then turned out that the pumps were not field serviceable, but had to be returned to the manufacturer in Germany. It also turned out that none of the pumps were ever field tested. As the pumps stopped functioning, some of the wells went dry, leaving the communities worse off than before. There were also social problems: The solar panels required a guard to be posted to protect them from animal or human damage. In some instances, the guards started to divert some of the water to operate their own irrigated field around the well, or started to sell access to the water. Oxfam concluded that despite the obvious attraction of the technology, the technical and social logistics by far exceeded the local communities capacity to handle them. It became a vivid reminder for Oxfam to fight local problems with local solutions.

The Horn had always presented Oxfam with a set of geographical and logistical difficulties. For instance, in an effort to work in the areas of greatest need, often with war or drought-affected populations, OA has funded projects in remote areas. Combined with on-going security problems, supervision and advice for the project partners was difficult to maintain. OA felt that the solution to this would be to cluster projects within the same region.

In order to consolidate OA's program in countries where the agency was most likely to have an impact, an effort was made in 1989 to weed out those countries where OA had only a marginal presence. Never a dominant part of OA's Horn involvement, Somalia's increasing security problems, and a lack of strong local partners, put Somalia into that category, and no further projects were funded there. By 1991, with the continuing deterioration in Somalia, even those relief and development organizations with a long-standing presence in Somalia were finding it difficult to establish viable programs. Oxfam UK&I also left in 1991.

The 1992 Horn of Africa Program Paper

In spring 1992, Buchanan as the Program Director for the Horn of Africa had to prepare and submit to the OA board the 1992-1995 strategic plan for the region. That was right around the time when Somalia became a fixture on the evening TV-screens of the wealthy parts of the world. Concerning Somalia Buchanan wrote:

> OA currently has no program and no presence in Somalia. The country is characterized by insecurity, political instability and high relief needs. Rehabilitation and long-term development work are not feasible in southern Somalia under present conditions, although development activities may be possible

in the relatively more stable north (The Somaliland Republic). The on-going humanitarian crisis in Somalia suggests the need for OA to respond.

However, it is important to be realistic and pragmatic. OA's resources - both human and financial - are not sufficient to undertake a substantial program of work in Somalia at this time. It should be noted that since OA last funded in Somalia, the northern Sudan program has expanded considerably and a southern Sudan component has been added to the Horn program. Moreover, the number of OA staff working on the Horn has been reduced in resent years. Agency resources should be placed where viable programs already exist - in Ethiopia, Eritrea, northern and southern Sudan - and not stretched to include a token program in Somalia.

It is recommended that (1) Oxfam America should not fund development projects in Somalia, and (2) OA should not solicit funds for the Somalia emergency but should pass through any contributions earmarked for Somalia relief to Oxfam UK&I.

The strategic plan was approved by OA's board in March 1992, and thus became the road map for the Horn. However, as the situation deteriorated in Somalia throughout the summer of 1992, the strategic plan became increasingly difficult to defend. Even though the reasoning for non-involvement in Somalia was understood and accepted, it did not feel right to many Oxfam employees. The fact was, that the world stood by as armed thugs deliberately delivered millions of innocent civilians to the brink of famine and death. With the only meaningful exception being the ICRC, every other organization and government in the world had good reasons for non-involvement, just as Oxfam had its own. There had to be a better solution than that.

Somalia Goes from Bad to Worse

As the weeks wore on and as the media pictures broadcast from Somalia turned from the tragic to the unbearable, as children were dying literally in front of TV-cameras, the pressure on Oxfam to become involved increased. Not only did the employees feel decidedly uncomfortable with the non-action stance, but more and more of Oxfam's supporters and donors asked for information concerning OA's involvement. In line with its usual procedure, OA formed a task force comprised of staff members from the various departments to monitor the situation and reach consensus on appropriate action. The task began to meet in shorter intervals, in the fall of '92 almost weekly, to debate the situation. As director of Education and Outreach, Janet Green in particular was subject to outside requests for action in Somalia. Throughout summer, Green found it more and more necessary to respond to the Somalia crisis. She felt that the reputation of the agency with its donor base was at stake, if OA did not respond in some way to Somalia.

At the same time, Buchanan had to contend with reality. Quite apart from the fact that his strategic plan excluding Somalia had only just been approved, the program in the Horn had neither the money, nor the personnel resources to launch a major relief effort in Somalia. It was conceivable that the financial resources for a Somalia relief project could be recruited from fund raising efforts. Oxfam America had handled such emergencies in a similar way before, and as noted, had used some of these occasions to grow the agency considerably, such as Ethiopia of 1984. However, Bernie Beaudreau, Director of Resource Development (fundraising), was certain, that despite the intense media coverage, very large donations would not be forthcoming for Somalia. For that, Somalia had been in the news already too long, and besides, the people were believed to be truly tired of yet another famine in the Horn of Africa. Beaudreau had data to back up his opinion. Until the fall of 1992, Oxfam received only about $200,000 specified for Somalia. In other words, if Oxfam started a program in Somalia, it might draw funds away from other projects in Ethiopia and Sudan that had already been promised to the project partners, and who dearly depended on the help. To Buchanan, there was also a matter of principle involved. Do the

people of Somalia "deserve" the money more than the poor in countries that received less attention in the media, but who were suffering as well?

On the other hand, even if a fund raising campaign might not increase specific revenue for Somalia, the fact that Oxfam was involved in Somalia would probably matter a great deal to its regular donor base, precisely because Somalia was in the headlines for so long. The christmas season was just around the corner, and the degree to which the donors were satisfied with Oxfam would influence their level of generosity for the year end donations.

In order to obtain more information about the situation first hand, and to help reach a decision, Janet Green convinced John Hammock, Executive Director of Oxfam America in September 1992, to make available some funds for her and Rob Buchanan to take a short trip to Somalia. Having worked in the Horn for nearly eight years, Buchanan was no stranger to famine, war and destitution. However, Somalia in the fall of 1992 proved a challenge even for him. In a presentation to Harvard Business School students three months later, Buchanan recalled:

> The first thing you notice in Somalia are guns. Gunshots are everywhere, day and night. The total absence of security and order wears down even the hardiest relief workers. Relief agencies usually do not demand any work from newly arrived relief workers for a week, because they want them to get used to the situation. If they cannot adjust, they will be sent back, without any questions asked. You must have that much more respect for all the educated Somalis who decide to stay and help their people at this time. Not a single relief effort would be possible, without the thousands of Somali doctors, teachers, businessmen and elders helping out.
>
> I also managed to drive to Baidoa, the city with the largest famine problems. It is striking that you could not see any children below the age of 5. Normally, in such situations, the camps would be swarming with children, in Baidoa they had died already. Some children looked as if they were 3 or 4 years old, but actually they were 8 or 9 years old, and dying as well.
>
> In one of the camps I met a mother, who had been walking from her village to the camp for 100 miles, because the countryside had not a bit of food left anymore. While walking, she lost all of her 5 children.
>
> I tried to talk to as many locals as I could, as to what they want us to do, how we could help. The answer was always, that someone has to come in there and free the population from the warlords and their gangs.

Returning from Somalia, Buchanan was convinced that a conventional relief effort the way it had been organized in Ethiopia seven years previously could not be the answer to the famine. Any relief to the region would have to start with some sort of military neutralization. However, this would be a painful stance to take for Oxfam. Oxfam had always condemned militarization, or the use of armed force in general.

So in addition to the questions of whether there would be enough funds for Somalia, who would have the time to organize a Somalia program, where Oxfam would find the local project partners on whom it always relied, and whether Oxfam could even make a difference in Somalia, Buchanan now had to wrestle with the uncomfortable issue of military relief as well.

At the same time with their return from Somalia, it also became clear to the other members of the task force that it was barely possible to stay on the sidelines. OA being renowned as an expert on famines in the Horn, Green and Buchanan were frequently asked by the media as to what their position was. But that was what OA was precisely still

struggling with itself. The credibility of Oxfam not only to the employees and the donors, but also to the media and the public at large, became endangered if Oxfam remained off-line.

Involvement in Somalia could take several forms. Those $200,000 Somalia donations which Oxfam had so far received unsolicited could be continued to be routed through Oxfam UK&I. They had started on an agricultural project in southern Somalia, arranged water supply equipment, supported the ICRC and helped fund a clothing project for women who literally lost everything but their lives. Embarrassed to come to the feeding kitchens completely naked, they and their children died unnoticed in their huts. Oxfam UK&I's emergency response unit started these projects in August of 1992. For PR purposes, OA could broadcast this indirect help to its donor base, and in this way be seen to be involved. However, this strategy would do little to convince the employees, the regular donors, or even probably the media.

Oxfam might also restrict itself to lobbying efforts in Washington D.C. and New York. It could take the position, that any relief efforts will be futile unless the world community gathers the courage to guarantee military protection to relief agencies or the Somali population as a whole. Such a position was not only difficult for Oxfam due to its pacifist bend, but it would also be a first for the UN to sanction unrequested interference in internal affairs of a member country. Given these difficulties, it would also be unclear whether Oxfam had much credibility for lobbying, as long as it was not present in Somalia.

Finally, if Oxfam decided to launch a program, should it join forces with immediate famine relief efforts in southern Somalia where the emergency was largest, or institute rehabilitation efforts in the north, where civil society needed to be reconstructed, but where food was available? In either case, OA would have to hire a new staff member, but whom? How soon could a program be launched? Would a program designed today, still be appropriate tomorrow, given the unstable environment in Somalia?

As the program director for the Horn of Africa, Buchanan's recommendation would count heavily whether and how to engage Oxfam in Somalia or not. But at stake were not only his plans for the region, particularly in Ethiopia, but the credibility of Oxfam America in the eyes of all its stakeholders. In the eyes of employees, donors, legislators and the listening public, how could Oxfam America claim to fight hunger, if it politely declined to help in one of the decade's most tragic and infamous famines? Buchanan looked again at the five children's picture on his desk. What would they think?

Oxfam America and the 1992 Somalia Famine (B)

Following intensive internal discussions, OA released a statement on October 1992, calling for a United Nations armed intervention to create safe passage corridors that would enable the secure supply of humanitarian aid to the Somali people (**Exhibit 8** shows the full text). At the end of November, John Hammock, (OA's Executive Director) led a delegation of NGO's in a White House briefing concerning the Somalia crisis, advocating once more for an armed intervention. Soon thereafter, President Bush proposed an American military mission to the UN security council, and on December 9th, under the glaring light of international media, 1800 American marines landed on Somalia's beaches under US command, but under UN mandate.

The troops encountered virtually no resistance. Within days, Mogadishu had been secured. The deployment was technically called the United Task Force (UNITAF) and eventually included troops from 21 countries. Until mid-January their presence swelled to 33,000 (of whom about three quarters were American) who had secured most of the southern war and famine area. In the wake of military security, humanitarian efforts led by the ICRC restored reliable food distribution to the Somali population, and hunger was eradicated by early spring. Almost immediately, Somalis began returning to their farmlands, and attempted to restore self-sufficiency. Peace councils of clan elders restored civil rule across large areas of the country, and clans made peace again among each other. High level diplomacy between the UN and the warlords led to a series of peace conferences in Addis Abeba.

Since Rob Buchanan had no extra time to spare for Somalia, OA decided to hire another staff member. In January 1993, Qamar Ibrahim was hired with the request to organize a Somalia program. A Somali national, Ibrahim held a Master's Degree in Nutrition from the University of Michigan, and a Bachelor's Degree in Biology, University of Somalia. She had been founder and director of one of the first Somali NGOs in Somalia in 1984 with whom OA had cooperated before, and had a multitude of other development experiences. Parallel to hiring Ibrahim, Buchanan drafted an addendum to the strategic plan, and had the additional Somalia program in the Horn approved by the board in March '93.

Ibrahim went on a trip to Somalia almost immediately, scouting for suitable project partners. She came back with both good news and bad news. The good news was that there were a number of very committed Somali NGO's in operation. The bad news was, that they had virtually no project management skills. The surrounding infrastructure did not help either. Since there was, for instance, no banking system anymore, how would the funds be remitted to the local partners?

Ibrahim identified five projects in Somalia which would be suitable for Oxfam America's support:

- An organization called Saacid ("The Helper") that was repairing a community well serving 8,000 people at Miir-Tuugo village in central Somalia. The rehabilitated well, which was destroyed in the war, would save women from walking up to 20 kilometers a day in search of clean drinking water. ($40,442)

- The Somalia Women's Development Association was establishing a vocational training school for young, unemployed women. The project was located in Hargeisa in the northwest region. ($47,248)
- A group of thirty displaced women could with a grant to the Social Services Voluntary Organization establish a vegetable farm near Borama town in the northwest region. ($20,600). Another grant routed through that organization would support the rehabilitation of three water catchments at Dilla town in the same area. ($22,917)
- The Somali National Women's Organization based in Mogadishu was conducting a series of regional meetings to mobilize women to advocate for their human and political rights. The regional meetings would be followed by a national women's conference. ($49,900)
- A training workshop for leaders from twelve Somali development organizations could be held to strengthen their capacities in areas such as project development, implementation, organizational structure and fundraising. ($27,721).

Identifying participants for the workshop was exemplary of many of the difficulties that Ibrahim encountered in her search. Since relief and rehabilitation was virtually the only industry providing employment in Somalia, many Somalis were eager to built informal groups searching for funds to start their own programs. There was not a final capacity to the workshop, so Ibrahim was determined to support as many as organizations as she found supportable. From an initial selection of 50 organisations, she narrowed it down to 20, of whom in the end twelve qualified. Many of them were not registered or incorporated anywhere, because there was no legal or administrative system to register with. Several could not present any written documents, because they lacked access to typewriters. As a matter of fact, Ibrahim found that those organizations which had presented wonderfully worked out papers and projects, were more likely to be of dubious nature than the others. Her selection criteria were that the local NGO's needed to present an actual beneficiary community who knew that a project was being discussed for them. She also probed the leaders for actual experience and competence in project management and development. Using her own previous experience as an NGO director, she made her personal confidence in the organisation, the people and the project another important criterion.

The total funding for the proposed Somalia program was around $200,000, in addition to the increased overhead cost in Boston of Ibrahim's salary. It took most of 1993, to disburse the funds and start up the projects, so that the communities would benefit beginning in 1994. Bernie Beaudreau of fundraising, started a fund-raising campaign utilizing OA's renewed engagement in Somalia (**exhibit 9** shows the direct mail letter). Just as Buchanen had feared, the Somalia program had drained resources from other Horn programs, despite the fact that 1993 saw solid revenue growth for the Oxfam organization. It was also not clear, how Oxfam would be able to monitor and manage projects in six distinct areas of the Horn (South Somalia, North Somalia or Somaliland, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Sudan, and SPLA controlled Sudan). Such a dispersion would invariably increase either overhead cost, or compromise the quality of support.

Somalia in 1993

After the initial successes, the situation in Somalia had taken a significant turn for the worse. During spring of 1993, President Clinton reduced the number of US troops stationed in Somalia from 26,000 to 4,000 as planned (they were replaced by other nations). On May 1st, a UN command called UNOSOM II took over the military operations in Somalia. UNOSOM II was the UN's largest peace-keeping operation ever, comprising of 28,000 military personnel and 2,800 civilian staff. It was also the first UN peace-keeping operation without consent from parties within the country. Almost immediately, the warlords, particularly General Aideed, tested the UN's resolve to keep peace. In June 1993, a major confrontation between the UN and Aideed's forces resulted in the death of 24 Pakistani soldiers. Over the summer and fall, the number of UN casualties

continued to rise, including American soldiers, whose presence were still crucial to the entire operation.

The deteriorating security in Somalia triggered an intense policy debate in Washington and New York about how to continue in Somalia. The "doves" camp urged the US and the UN to focus on humanitarian efforts, and support regional councils of clan elders, women and intellectuals. These were the leaders who had managed to build feeble political structures across clans and generations. The UN should keep the warlords passively in check through a strong armed presence. The rapid emergence of the regional councils proved that the Somali clan distinctions were abused by the warlords for their personal power benefit, rather than representing pent-up violence bound to erupt in military confrontations. The "hawks" camp insisted that the UN would need to deal with the warlords, as the de facto political powers of Somalia, coax them into a peace process, and then let them rebuild their country themselves. Part of the hawks argument was, that the major impediment to this process was General Aideed, who most visibly obstructed the UN's role in Somalia. His elimination would leave his main opponent Ali Mahdi as a dominant force among the warlords, which could be leveraged to consolidate power and return the country to a Somali organized government.

While the doves camp had the support of virtually all humanitarian agencies active in Somalia, as well as many US government Somalia advisors, it suffered from a considerable drawback: carrying out this mission would require the international community to remain involved for at least two to three years. Keeping peace during this period in which the regional councils came together on a national level, trained and developed police forces and governmental infrastructure, and returned to economic self-sufficiency, would be expensive. The hawks offered a solution that allowed western governments to retreat within the year, and wash its hands of the increasingly murky situation.

The hawks won the argument, but lost their strategy. The March 1993 UN sponsored peace conference in Addis Abeba, Ethiopia, at which most warlords were present, was hailed by the international community as the foundation for Somalia's peace. However, over the summer it became apparent that the agreement was too flawed to be of much practical value for a continued peace process among the warlords in the South. Moreover, none of the warlords were seen to have any legitimate power by the Somali population. During the summer, a US initiated door-to-door manhunt for General Aideed ended up killing scores of Somali civilians who were used as human shields by Aideed's forces. But the hunt continued. As the pressure on Aideed intensified, he struck at the Achilles heel of the American forces: on October 3rd, his forces ambushed a group of 100 rangers and 12 helicoptors in central Mogadishu and kept them under fire for 16 hours, resulting in 18 American deaths, 300 Somali deaths, and 600 Somali wounded. Relief forces that may have prevented much of the bloodshed, somehow could not respond fast enough, a fault largely blamed on the inadequate UN command structure. Several dead American soldiers were dragged through Mogadishu's dusty streets, and presented proudly as trophy's. In the aftermath, the captured helicopter pilot US officer Michael Durant was emprisoned for 11 days. Durant was effectively kept as ransom against the US cancelling the manhunt.

Aideed made sure that the international press would have ample footage of all those events. Predictably, the US public became outraged. On October 7th, the Boston Globe featured 9 pages on Somalia. A Time/CNN opinion poll showed that 60% of Americans did not approve of US troops in Somalia, up from 17% in January. (**exhibit 10** shows the October 18th Time cover) Even though President Clinton did not actually give in to Aideed's demands, the political pressures in the US eventually forced him to stop the aggressive deployment of American troops in Somalia. Instead of being tried as a war-criminal, the man-hunt made Aideed emerge as a hero among his followers. Equipped with that kind of political clout, the UN would now have to negotiate with Aideed. In December

of 1993, all 28,000 UN-troops, including 9,000 US ones remained confined to heavily fortified barracks, and most were scheduled to be pulled out within early 1994.

While the US, the UN and the warlords were sparring over military dominance of the country, using innocent civilians and the international press as their main weapons, humanitarian efforts and politicians who did command the respect of the Somali citizens, received virtually no attention. Male juvenile banditry became rampant again, threatening the fragile economic linkages that the population had rebuilt. At the end of the year 1993 it looked as if Somalia might sink back into a state of perpetual civil warfare, interspersed with unenthusiastic UN peace keepers - its women and children joining a long list of families throughout the world who were living a wretched life under conditions of hunger, rape, cold or drought, and disease.

Oxfam America had published another policy statement on Somalia in October 1993 for advocacy purposes. The main thrust of the policy statement was to reverse the militarization of the conflict, spend efforts on humanitarian help, support clan elders and intellectuals engaged in peaceful nation building, and involve the Somali people in all aspects of the UN operations. (see **exhibit 11** for full text). Under these conditions in Somalia, did Oxfam's involvement given its capabilities represent a good use of its donor's money?