

hungry4change

Fast Organizer's Guide



What is the hungry4change program?

Over the years we have found that students, teachers, businesses and individuals alike embrace Oxfam's **hungry4change** program as an opportunity to do something for people in other countries, who are in many ways, just like them. One student, who was instrumental in organizing a fast in his school, said that it was the proudest day of his life!

- **Oxfam's hungry4change** program is a wonderful opportunity for Canadians to learn about global issues of food and poverty, support Oxfam's partners overseas and gain valuable experience organizing an event.
- The great thing about organizing a **hungry4change** fast is that you can be as creative as you like. This Organizer's Guide offers some guidelines to help you think about what to include.
- You know your group better than we do, so be imaginative and create an event that's uniquely you! The goal is to educate, fundraise AND have fun.
- Oxfam considers fasting a symbolic act. It is a valuable reminder that we live in a world where food and resources are not distributed equally. Fasting has been used as a powerful tool to protest political injustice and can be an effective agent of social change.

Getting Started

- **What is a Fast** - Make sure you have a clear idea of what constitutes a fast and the difference between a fast and a famine, and that you can effectively communicate the symbolic importance of an experiential hunger awareness program.
- **Think about timing** - Ideally, you should set the wheels turning at the beginning of the school year. It takes several months lead-time to plan a successful event.
- **Scale of your event** - It's up to you! Many fasts are organized for a whole school or group but a Fast can be done by a single class, smaller group or individual as well.
- **Duration of Fast** - Fasts are usually between 12 - 30 hours long but can be for the number of hours you want it to be. Fasts can be held on any day of the week, but they are often organized to begin after breakfast on a Friday, include an overnight and carry on till Saturday morning.
- **Form your committee** - Gather a small group of dedicated people who have the heart and time to invest in planning and organization. The first time you put on a Fast it is a lot of work! Make sure everyone knows what they're getting into. It is important that the organizing group is a workable size. If the group is too small, there is too much work for each member. Large groups with too few organizers can be difficult to manage.
- **Select a venue and set a date.** Many Fasts are held in school gyms or auditoriums. When choosing a date, consult school administrators about the best possible time to host the event (i.e. when students aren't overcommitted with exams, sports, or other projects).
- **Establish a good student-teacher team.** Many fasts are student-organized, but whether it's a teacher or a student who initiates the Fast, the group will need committed and enthusiastic teacher sponsors.
- **Contact the school principal** – Do this several months in advance and inform him/her of your desire to host a Fast. Be prepared to describe the concept you have in mind for your event, what venue you are considering, and what kinds of activities you might include.
- **Set up an Event page** - this is a great / easy way to get people involved and raise funds
<http://www.oxfam.ca/get-involved/fundraise-for-oxfam/fundraising-toolkit>

- **Decide on a platform and tone for your event.** Many Fasts concentrate on specific issues such as poverty, human rights, etc. The best Fasts balance a mix of serious reflection and fun, with thought-provoking speakers and presentations as well as entertaining games and activities. It's important for students to have some serious activities that get them thinking about what they're doing and why. (See Activities ... include link).
- **Book space and post the event on the school calendar.** Officially book all the areas of your school that will be used for the event. You might want use of the gym and the cafeteria, for example. Maybe there's an audiovisual room for viewing videos. You may need to book equipment such as microphones, speakers, sound systems etc.

Fasting Guidelines

- It is safe to fast for a brief period. Everyone in normal health can fast for 12 hours without ill effects. **However you should not fast if you are less than 10 years old, pregnant, have liver or kidney problems or suffer from a serious illness such as heart disease, diabetes or stomach ulcers.** Fasters can prepare themselves by limiting intake of meat and dairy products on the day before beginning the Fast. This helps the body adjust to the dramatic change.
- During the Fast, everyone needs to drink plenty of fluids. Ensure that lots of water, real fruit or vegetable juices or non-caffeinated drinks like herbal teas are available (Coke and Pepsi are caffeinated). Approach mineral water companies or other sponsors for donations.
- If anyone feels sick or weak during the Fast, they should know that it is okay to stop fasting. Health comes first.
- Have a first aid kit on hand at all times, and if possible, a volunteer trained in first aid.

SAFETY & SECURITY

- **It's important to think about safety and security. Recruit parent volunteers to supervise and ensure you have a suitable number of parents on at any given time.** You might like to organize 4-hour shifts, with special recognition to parents willing to come in the middle of the night! Planning supervision should take place at least a month ahead. Recruit more people than you need in case of cancellations. Keep complete records of parent volunteers and remind them of their commitment just prior to the Fast.
- To keep track of participants at the fast, you might wish to "stamp" Fasters with an inexpensive smiley stamp. Ensure that there is a secure area for storing money.

PLEDGES

- The focus of the **hungry4change** Fast is to raise awareness and raise money. Participants need to commit to seeking pledges as well as to fasting. In order for us to issue receipts, all pledge forms must be complete with full names and addresses and printed CLEARLY.
- You will need to assign responsibility to a committee or an individual to oversee pledges. It is important to keep track and ensure that participants' pledges match the amounts

they bring in and that some aren't collecting pledges without fasting or handing in the cash.

- Encourage participants to approach family, friends, churches and community organizations for support.
- Students should be encouraged to collect the money at the time when supporters make the pledge. If participants are unable to complete the fast, they return the pledge if their supporters so desire, although this is rarely necessary.
- It is best to have all students bring their money to school at the same time — the day before or the morning of the fast. It is ideal if your school (or a teacher) can take in all the cash and then write a single cheque to Oxfam. If the money cannot be handled at the school office, then make sure the sponsor teacher is at the door receiving the pledge envelopes as participants enter the Fast venue. The donations and pledge forms need to be submitted to Oxfam's National Fundraising Office along with a Revenue Summary Form (available from our website). It is very important that we receive the donations in a timely manner so that tax receipts and thank you letters can be sent to all supporters.

COMMUNICATING WITH PARENTS

- Make sure parents are well-informed about what students will be doing. You will need to send out an initial bulletin describing the event, accompanied by a parental consent form to be signed and returned to teacher sponsors. A reminder should go out the week of the fast (again, signed by parents and returned to teacher sponsors). It's useful to include a "What to Bring" list and an itinerary in the final reminder.

SPONSORS

- You can find community sponsors to help with juice, water, prizes, wind-up meals and anything else you can think of. You might like to create a big poster naming the sponsors and post it at the Fast venue (a nice thank you to sponsors might include a photo of the fasters in front of the poster).

Follow Up

You've just held a wildly successful Fast!

But the work isn't quite over yet.... To show your appreciation to all who helped make your **hungry4change** fast possible, write thank you cards or letters to parents, teachers, sponsors, special guests, school officials and every member of your organizing committee. Remember to tell them how many students participated in the Fast and how much money you raised.

Make sure all the money has been collected from participants and send the funds and pledge forms along with the Revenue Summary Form to:

**Oxfam Canada,
National Office,**

39 McArthur Avenue
Ottawa, Ontario, K1L 8L7
Tel: +1 (613) 237-5236
Fax: +1 (613) 237-0524
info@oxfam.ca

Follow up at school by arranging for an announcement on the P.A. (indicating the amount raised and the level of student participation), writing an article for the newspaper or making a final poster or banner showing the results of the fast. It is nice if the principal formally thanks those who were involved.

Suggested Planning Checklist

At least 3 to 4 months ahead:

- Get a core group together to organize the event
- Get teacher sponsors
- Decide on the “big picture” (i.e. -- how do you envision the event?)
- Contact school principal
- Contact Oxfam Canada
- Select venue and date

At least 2 months ahead:

- Form committees
- Begin researching and planning activities
- Begin planning speakers
- Book all equipment and facilities
- Begin looking for sponsors

1 month ahead:

- Organize all pledging kits and create a record-keeping system
- Begin in-school publicity blitz to recruit participants
- Recruit parent supervisors and first aid helpers
- Create an information bulletin and release form to go out to parents
- Hold meeting for all participants to discuss the Fast and pledging in particular
- Send parents a detailed description of the event and a consent form
- Continue planning activities
- Begin asking friends and family to sponsor you

2 weeks ahead:

- Make sure your activity agenda is finalized
- Check in with your participants to see how they are doing with the pledges

The week of the Fast:

- Organizers' meeting to coordinate final details
- Send parents a final reminder with itinerary, reminder about how/when pledge money is to come in, a what-to-bring list, etc.
- Double-check with parent supervisors and special guests to confirm participation
- Send reminder to teachers and school administration with a list of participants (students will need to be allowed to drink in class the day of the fast)

The day of the Fast:

- Set up venue & equipment well in advance
- Make sure everyone knows what they're responsible for and that you have keys for everything.
- During the fast, HAVE FUN, learn lots and take lots of photos!

The week after the Fast:

- Send thank you notes
- Send funds to Oxfam
- Do follow-up publicity
- Hold a debrief meeting of the organizing committee

Fast Pledge Form

In solidarity with those working to meet their basic needs, I _____
pledge to fast for _____ hours.

I further pledge to ask friends, family, neighbours and others to support me in helping Oxfam Canada's partners overseas.

REGISTRATION INFORMATION

(please print clearly)

Student's Name _____ Phone () _____

Address _____ City: _____ Province: _____ P.C. _____

School Name _____ Phone () _____

Address _____ City: _____ Province: _____ P.C. _____

Please print clearly. A tax receipt will be issued for a contribution of \$10 or more, if the full name, address and postal code are provided. This information is required by Revenue Canada.

SUPPORTERS NAME	ADDRESS	CITY	POSTAL	AMOUNT	PAID