



Claiming Business Support Grants

Learnings and Recommendations from Oxfam GB

AGENDA

14:00 Intros & setting the scene

14:15 Break-out groups: **Effective**

14:30 Share key messages from break-out groups

14:35 *Coffee break & drop in session with Sarasens*

15:05 Break-out groups: **Inclusive**

15:20 Share

15:25 Break-out groups: **Resilient**

15:40 Share

15:45 Close



WHO WE ARE

Oxfam is a global community who believe poverty isn't inevitable.
It's an injustice that can be overcome. We are shop volunteers, women's rights activists,
marathon runners, aid workers, coffee farmers, street fundraisers, goat herders,
policy experts, campaigners, water engineers and more.
And we won't stop until everyone can live life without poverty for good.



Oxfam in numbers

- 20 Oxfam affiliates – central Oxfam International Secretariat – work in 66 countries
- 600 shops including new Oxford Superstore
- 295,000 regular givers, raising over £44m in 2019/20 including in South Korea
- c.4,000 Oxfam GB staff including overseas, plus 20,000 volunteers in UK
- Oxfam GB income 2019/20 - £376.4 million – mostly restricted donors
- Currently Oxfam GB works in 26 countries – reducing to 17 countries from 2022
- 11 million people supported through Oxfam GB programmes in 2019/20

What does Oxfam do?

- Humanitarian: working as a confederation to take action to save lives in emergencies and help people cope when the worst happens
- Development: working for the long-term so that future generations can beat poverty for good
- Campaigning: tackling injustices that keep people poor



Impact of Covid-19

- In UK – income reduced substantially from shop closures, losing £5m income for each month shops are closed
- Fundraising income also declining
- Restructuring to reduce UK costs
- Changes to Oxfam country presence, reducing from 66 to 48 countries overall
- At same time, large increase in levels of need in countries we work in:
 - In Yemen, Oxfam is training volunteers to raise awareness of the virus and promote hygiene in conflict-affected communities. We provide cash to displaced families and have distributed more than 4,500 hygiene kits
 - In Cox's Bazaar, Bangladesh, where over 855,000 Rohingya are living in extremely over-crowded conditions, we have stepped up our work on hygiene promotion and scaled up measures like soap distribution and sanitation facilities to help 70,000 refugees
 - In Zataari Camp, Jordan – the largest Syrian refugee camp in the world – we have delivered hygiene awareness sessions for 2,000 children, and aim to reach 78,000 people with water, hygiene and sanitation
 - In Burkina Faso, where 780,000 people are internally displaced, we are currently working to ensure access to clean, safe water, building or repairing 107 water points

BUSINESS SUPPORT GRANTS: THE OPPORTUNITY

- Various financial support measures were made available by the Government in response to Covid-19:
 - Furlough scheme
 - Business rate relief
 - Grants for businesses specifically affected by coronavirus restrictions
- Oxfam has nearly c.560 charity shops across the UK, all of which were forced to close at various points during lockdowns
- In 2020, some local authorities had automatically credited our accounts with RHL (Retail, Hospitality and Leisure) grants
- At this point there was a limit of **EUR 1m** state aid per organisation so we did not actively apply for more
- In October 2020, new EU state aid rule 3.12 increased the limit to an additional **EUR 3m** under a different regime (eligibility criteria) – which opened the door to us potentially claiming up to EUR 3m under the new grant scheme from January 2021....
 - January 2021 **Closed Business Lockdown Payments** - one off payment of £4k, £6k or £9k per closed business, depending on rateable value

BUSINESS SUPPORT GRANTS: THE CHALLENGES

- Brexit – EU State Aid rules no longer apply to subsidies granted in the UK following the end of the transition period, which ended on 31 December 2020
- Determining Oxfam’s eligibility for grants:
 - Calculate our decline in turnover
 - Calculate our “uncovered fixed costs”
- Making hundreds of separate on-line grant applications for each individual shop
- Navigating different rules/process for England, Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland
- Keeping track of how much cash received; different grants depending on rateable value
- Different schemes have different application deadlines; plus lack of consistency on deadlines across local authorities
- Large proportion of local authority websites still referring to EUR 800k cap and asking applicant to complete declaration

BUSINESS SUPPORT GRANTS: COLLABORATION & CAMPAIGNING

- (1) CTG (Charity Tax Group) organised a subgroup of finance experts to share ideas and agree a formula for claiming under the EUR 3m limit
- (2) CTG talking to Government on our behalf to seek clarity on unclear rules and guidance
- (3) Charity retailers organised a further sub-group of the people actually making the claims
- (4) Twelve months of campaigning eventually resulted in limits on Covid grants being lifted to £10.9m in March 2021 (£9m Covid-19 Business Grant Special Allowance)
- (5) Group of charity retailers via CTG instructed a QC in June 2021 to seek clarity on various issues

BUSINESS SUPPORT GRANTS: MAN POWER!

- Actually started grant applications process from 15 February 2021
 - Confident enough to claim business support grants up to EUR 3m cap – deadline 31 March 2021
- Claims process run by Retail Finance Team based in Newcastle
 - Pulled staff back from furlough
- 3 March Budget announced Restart Grants – deadline 30 June 2021

EFFECTIVE

INCLUSIVE

RESILIENT

WHAT WENT WELL?

Talking to other Charity Retailers & Working with Charity Tax Group

All hands on deck!
Staff stepping outside the day-job

Extra money in the bank
Robust basis for claims

WHAT CAN WE LEARN?

Collaboration

Agile & flexible workforce
United around the charity's mission

Navigating risk & uncertainty

Question for discussion in breakout groups:

Where can your charity's finance team collaborate more in order to maximise your effectiveness?

Question for discussion in breakout groups:

How can you create an inclusive work environment where everyone is working to the best of their ability?

Topic for discussion in breakout groups:

What advice can you share on how your charity has successfully navigated risk & uncertainty?

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WE
WON'T
LIVE
WITH
POVERTY