

# A GUIDE TO LEADING A CONVERSATION ABOUT INEQUALITY



## IN YOUR COMMUNITY



**OXFAM**

The future is equal

# INTRODUCTION

## Are you interested in building durable community power to move forward the movement for equality?

A simple way you can take action is by bringing your community together for a conversation about inequality, how it's affecting all of us, and how you all envision a more equal future. It doesn't have to be a big event. These conversations can start small, within your own circles. Whether you're hosting a book club, a crafternoon, or a wine and cheese night, any space can be the right space to make a change. It can even just be tea with a friend.

Oxfam America put together this toolkit of resources to help you on your journey, wherever you may be. We've included talking points, a discussion guide, and ideas for activities to take your engagement to the next level.

For those of you who are ready to take collective action, we are offering resources to help you write letters to your Member of Congress, as well as other tools to help you mobilize people in your community.

If you're not ready to lead a conversation yet, that's OK. We hope you can use this offering to expand your own knowledge about inequality.

## A NOTE ON "TEA"

Originating in Black drag culture and now a commonplace cheeky idiom, "spill the tea" is an invitation to speak the truth. Whether it's sharing gossip or speaking truth to power, who doesn't love some piping hot *tea*?

On the right: Sapphira Cristál, a contestant from season 16 of "RuPaul's Drag Race"





## WHAT IS THIS INITIATIVE ALL ABOUT?

We invite you to take part in a new initiative we're calling the EQUALI-TEA Project. It's a community-powered project that brings people together to spark honest conversations about inequality. Through community gatherings, shared learning, and collective action, we are inviting all to sip on the truth, share, and speak out about the growing gap between the ultra-wealthy and everyone else.

The reality is we are in the midst of an inequality emergency, both in the United States, and globally. We are living in a world where the super-rich are able to rewrite the rules of economies and societies to their benefit.

In 2025, President Trump signed the One Big Beautiful Bill Act (OBBBA) into law. The destructive law makes a number of tax cuts that disproportionately benefit large corporations and the country's wealthiest households at the expense of ordinary Americans.

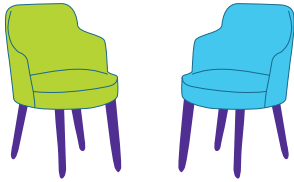
**The message in the tea leaves:** In 2027, the top 0.1% will see their tax bill fall by around \$311,000 each, while the lowest-income households (people making less than \$15,000) will face tax increases.

The OBBBA is not only crafted to the benefit of the ultra-wealthy few; it's also watering down our already threadbare social safety net. The tax reform package pays for corporate and billionaire tax handouts in part by making massive cuts to essential programs like Medicaid and the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), which millions of people rely on. While the ultra-rich get richer, the rest of us lose out on investments in our communities.

Here's the tea: That's not the future Oxfam envisions. We believe in an equal future, where everyday people don't have to struggle to get by. We are calling on policymakers to put forward an agenda that reduces inequality.

Through community dialogues, gatherings, and virtual events, we are encouraging people to spill the tea on extreme inequality. These conversations are part of a larger movement towards a more equal future. The more we speak our truths, the more difficult it will be for lawmakers to ignore the reality that our economic system isn't working.

**If you share our belief that a better future is possible, we hope you will join us in stirring things up.**



## STEP 1: GATHER YOUR PEOPLE.

### How can you use this toolkit to make a difference in your community?

Social change can start at home. Have you heard of consciousness-raising parties? It's a form of activism where people gather in small groups to talk about their experience and analyze and address systemic issues. What we're proposing is a modern take on those parties. It's collective action that anyone can engage in. Every time someone spills the tea, the movement for change grows.

So, put on the kettle and gather your friends, your social groups, your chosen community, or your neighbors for an honest and inspirational conversation about equality.

You can adapt these conversations to fit your group's interests:

- **Want to nibble on something while you spill the tea?** Brew up some fair-trade tea (or put on a pot on a coffee, or whatever beverage you prefer) and check out these recipes for ideas at [oxf.am/recipes](https://oxf.am/recipes). You can even assign snacks to your attendees like a potluck, so the work is distributed equally.
- **Are you a member of a book club?** For your next read, suggest a novel or memoir with a theme of inequality. Here's a list of Oxfam staff recommendations: [oxf.am/books](https://oxf.am/books). Use what you learned in the book as a foundation for your conversation.
- **Thinking of a hosting a movie night?** You can show a movie or documentary that ties to inequality and use the perspectives gained to inform your conversation.
- **Dreaming of a wardrobe refresh?** We all have clothes we've outgrown or that don't meet our needs anymore. Host a clothing swap where guests can exchange threads.

Whatever direction you take your event in is up to you. Choose your own adventure!



Have other ideas for ways you can bring the EQUALI-TEA Project to your circles and community? Jot those down here!

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# STEP 2: SPILL THE TEA



## A framework for leading the discussion

How you frame these conversations is ultimately your decision, but we've put together some talking points and guiding questions to help you spill the tea on extreme inequality.

### Part 1. What is inequality?

Imagine lining up everyone on the planet by their wealth and status. On one end, a small group of individuals that have few, if any, barriers to living a full and healthy life. On the other, a larger group of people who find themselves excluded from the possibility to do the same. That's what inequality looks like.

Unfortunately, the same rights, treatment, and opportunities are not available to everyone on this planet. For instance, while we produce enough food to feed every person on Earth, one in four people are food insecure, unable to access this food for a variety of reasons.

Inequality is also an issue here in the United States. If you face generational poverty, racial, or gender discrimination, these barriers to equality can have profound implications for the kind of life you want to live.

### Part 2. By the numbers

Sharing stats can help people better understand inequality. Here are a few that could help your guests visualize why inequality is the most pressing issue of our time. (See [Additional Resources](#) for a print-friendly version of these statistics.)

1. The U.S. is home to more billionaires than any other country and has the world's largest economy, yet over 40% of the population is considered living in poverty or low income.
2. Think it's a coincidence the president is a billionaire? It's actually part of a trend. Billionaires are over 4,000 times more likely to hold political office than ordinary people.
3. The world's 12 richest billionaires, all of whom are men, own more wealth than half of the world.
4. In the span of time between 1989 and 2022, U.S. households in the top 1% gained at least 101 times more wealth than the median household.
5. In 2024, the median annual earnings for full-time women workers in the U.S. was \$57,520. The median annual earnings for U.S. men was \$13,570 more.
6. While Black and Hispanic households make up one-third of the U.S. population, they own just 5.8% of all U.S. wealth.
7. The U.S. is more unequal than many other wealthy countries. Among 10 peer countries, the U.S. has the second highest rate of child poverty and infant mortality, and the second lowest life expectancy.
8. The amount of wealth gained by the world's billionaires over the last year is enough to give every single person in the world \$250 and still leave billionaires more than \$500 billion richer.

If you want even more examples, you can find those on [Oxfam America's website](#).



For more information on U.S. inequality, visit: [oxfam.us/inequality](https://oxfam.us/inequality)



For more information on global inequality, visit: [oxfam.org/inequality](https://oxfam.org/inequality)

## Part 3. Questions to get the tea flowing

**Suggestion:** You may want to consider writing out or printing out the questions and putting them in a bowl, so people can take turns. (See [Additional Resources](#) for a print-friendly version of these questions.) It's OK if you only get through a few of these, what matters is the conversation.

- What does economic fairness mean to you?
- Does the U.S. economy seem fair to you? Why or why not?
- What role do billionaires play in our society? How is their influence affecting our day-to-day lives?
- How have you observed inequality increase or decrease in your lifetime? What do you think is behind those shifts?
- How have you experienced or witnessed unpaid or underpaid labor? Does this burden disproportionately fall on some people more than others? What can we do as a society to redistribute this work, or create a support system for people?
- What kind of economy are future generations inheriting? How are you preparing younger people to think about inequality?
- How is global inequality affecting your day-to-day life? What role does the U.S. play in global inequality?
- If you have traveled outside the U.S., how have you observed inequality abroad?
- What would a fair economy look like?
- How do you think we can move toward equality as a society?

## Part 4. Introduce Oxfam

This would be a good time to provide background on Oxfam and our mission, before diving into solutions and activities.

Here's a brand statement you can use:

**Oxfam is a global organization that fights inequality to end poverty and injustice. They offer life-saving support in times of crisis and advocate for economic justice, gender equality, and climate action. They demand equal rights and equal treatment so that everyone can thrive, not just survive.**

If you have a personal connection—if for instance, you have partnered with Oxfam America in a coalition space, have donated to Oxfam America before, or have participated in an *Oxfam Hunger Banquet* event—share your story!

## Part 5. Solutions to inequality

Inequality is a complex issue, but one important way to create a more equal future is to ensure the ultra-rich and large corporations pay their fair share in taxes. That's critical to curbing growing inequality and can support ordinary people. Something Oxfam found in its latest report on inequality is that **the increase in billionaires' total wealth in the past year alone could end extreme poverty worldwide 26 times over**. Imagine what that world would be like!

Policymakers must stop prioritizing the ultra-rich above everyone else. Here's how Oxfam proposes they balance the economic system:

### **MAKE LARGE CORPORATIONS AND THE SUPER-RICH PAY THEIR FAIR SHARE**

The ultra-wealthy and big corporations should contribute more—not less. Closing loopholes, ending special tax breaks, and taxing extreme wealth fairly would raise the revenue needed to invest in our communities.

## STRENGTHEN THE SAFETY NET

Revenue from fair taxes should be poured back into the programs people rely on. That includes affordable and accessible child and adult care, health care, housing, food assistance, and education, just to start.

## PROTECT AND EMPOWER WORKERS

Workers deserve fair wages, safe conditions, and the freedom to organize. Strengthening labor protections ensures that the people who create wealth in this country share in it.

An economy steeped in fairness ensures that prosperity is shared—with fair wages, worker protections, and dignity for all.



# STEP 3: TAKE ACTION

## Here's how you can make a difference with Oxfam America

Now that your group is at a boiling point, how can you let off some steam? Time to take action—collective action—to tackle extreme inequality.

In simple terms, collective action refers to coordination efforts by people, groups, organizations, etc, who are working toward the same goal. Whether you are marching in the streets, calling your representative to demand change, or advocating to people in your sphere of influence, you can be part of the movement.

Recent examples of powerful movements for change include #MeToo, BLM, and actions to defend immigrants.

Depending on your group's time and energy, you can:

### 1. Sign a petition together.

Oxfam America and allies across the U.S. are working to hold Congress accountable for their decision to prioritize billionaires and corporations over regular people. Though we could not stop this terrible tax law from being signed, we are not backing down from the fight for equality. It is important to continue putting pressure on our representatives to build an economy that works for everyone. This petition calls on Congress to make corporations and the ultra-wealthy pay their fair share.

You can direct people to use this QR code if they want to take collective action on inequality with Oxfam. For ease, we have created a QR code printout (see [Additional Resources](#)), which you can pass around or sprinkle throughout your audience.

Encourage your guests to forward the petition to three friends. This is a good option if you don't have a lot of time to do an activity. If you have more time, consider one of the options below.



## 2. Send postcards to your Members of Congress

For Republicans who voted in favor of the One Big Beautiful Bill Act (OBBBA), they need to hear that their constituents are upset. And for the Democrats and the handful of Republicans who voted against—Rep. Massie (KY), Rep. Fitzpatrick (PA), Sen. Paul (KY), Sen. Tillis (NC), and Sen. Collins (ME)—we need to encourage them keep fighting to make sure the ultra-rich and corporations pay their fair share.

Before the event, you'll want to stock up on postcards, stamps, and pens. You'll also want to identify your Members of Congress and keep that information handy. Here's a straightforward way to find your Representative, see how they voted on the OBBBA, and get their mailing address.

1. To find out who represents you in the U.S. House of Representatives, go to [house.gov](https://www.house.gov) and enter your ZIP code.
2. To find out how they voted, you can use [Congress.gov](https://www.congress.gov) or [GovTrack.us](https://www.govtrack.us) to search for "One Big Beautiful Bill Act." Open the bill's page. Click the "Actions" tab and you can see how each Member of Congress voted.
3. Members of Congress can always be reached by mail at:

The Honorable [Full Name]  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

### SAMPLE LANGUAGE IF YOU ARE WRITING TO A DEMOCRATIC MEMBER OF CONGRESS

Dear [Representative last name],

**[Choose some statements from the following bullet points and personalize:]**

- Thank you for voting against more tax breaks for billionaires.
- Thank you for defending Medicaid, SNAP, and other essential services our community needs.
- We need you to keep fighting to ensure the ultra-rich pay their fair share.
- Voting NO on the One Big Beautiful Bill Act isn't enough. Please be a champion for a fair tax code.
- The ultra-rich are hoarding wealth while millions of people struggle to meet their basic needs.
- Our tax code is rigged in favor of the ultra-rich, while we pay the price.
- If billionaires paid their fair share in taxes, we could fund programs that fight inequality. We could have a more equal future.

Sincerely,

**[Name, City, and Zip code]**

## SAMPLE LANGUAGE IF YOU ARE WRITING TO A REPUBLICAN MEMBER OF CONGRESS WHO VOTED FOR THE ONE BIG BEAUTIFUL BILL ACT

Dear [Representative last name]

**[Choose some statements from the following bullet points and personalize:]**

- I am deeply disappointed that you voted for more tax breaks for billionaires, while slashing funding for essential services.
- With your vote for the One Big Beautiful Bill Act, you are stealing from the poor to give to the rich. Our state and communities will suffer for it.
- Millions of people depend on Medicaid, SNAP, and other essential programs. We need you to represent all of the people of [your state], not just billionaires.
- People in [your state] are already struggling to get by and the effects of this law will be devastating, slashing Medicaid, food aid, and lifelines to millions in need.
- Instead of harmful trickle-down tax policies, we need to invest in affordability for ordinary Americans by taxing the ultra-rich.
- I am calling on you to respond to your constituents/community, defend essential services that are crucial to your constituents' survival, and make the ultra-rich pay their fair share.

Sincerely,

[Name, City, and Zip code]

### 3. Prepare for a community action

If there's a pro-equality march in your community, you could create signage together and make a plan to meet up with attendees at the event. You would just need to provide cardboard and art supplies (like markers, paint, and paintbrushes).

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES



An "EQUALI-TEA" graphic for adding to your digital or print invitations



Printable petition QR codes from page 6



Oxfam's Tax the Ultra-Rich postcard writing toolkit



Oxfam articles that can be shared ahead of time as pre-reading, printed out and shared at your gathering, or sent in follow-up communications with your guests:



Printable "By the numbers" statistics from page 4



[What Percent of the World's Wealth is Controlled By Billionaires?](#)



Printable "questions to get the tea flowing" from page 5



[Do the Rich Pay Their Fair Share?](#)



[Is the U.S. Becoming an Oligarchy?](#)

## INEQUALITY, BY THE NUMBERS (PRINTABLE VERSION)

Sharing stats can help people better understand inequality. Here are a few that could help your guests visualize why inequality is the most pressing issue of our time. You can print these out on letter-sized paper and cut out individually for use at your event.

### INEQUALITY: BY THE NUMBERS

The U.S. is home to more billionaires than any other country and has the world's largest economy, yet over 40% of the population is considered living in poverty or low income.



### INEQUALITY: BY THE NUMBERS

In 2024, the median annual earnings for full-time women workers in the U.S. was \$57,520. The median annual earnings for U.S. men was \$13,570 more.



### INEQUALITY: BY THE NUMBERS

Think it's a coincidence the president is a billionaire? It's actually part of a trend. Billionaires are over 4,000 times more likely to hold political office than ordinary people.



### INEQUALITY: BY THE NUMBERS

While Black and Hispanic households make up one-third of the U.S. population, they own just 5.8% of all U.S. wealth.



### INEQUALITY: BY THE NUMBERS

The world's 12 richest billionaires, all of whom are men, own more wealth than half of the world.



### INEQUALITY: BY THE NUMBERS

The U.S. is more unequal than many other wealthy countries. Among 10 peer countries, the U.S. has the second highest rate of child poverty and infant mortality, and the second lowest life expectancy.



### INEQUALITY: BY THE NUMBERS

In the span of time between 1989 and 2022, U.S. households in the top 1% gained at least 101 times more wealth than the median household.



### INEQUALITY: BY THE NUMBERS

The amount of wealth gained by the world's billionaires over the last year is enough to give every single person in the world \$250 and still leave billionaires more than \$500 billion richer.



## QUESTIONS TO GET THE TEA FLOWING (PRINTABLE VERSION)

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What does economic fairness mean to you?



What kind of economy are future generations inheriting? How are you preparing younger people to think about inequality?



Does the U.S. economy seem fair to you? Why or why not?



How is global inequality affecting your day-to-day life? What role does the U.S. play in global inequality?



What role do billionaires play in our society? How is their influence affecting our day-to-day lives?



If you have traveled outside the U.S., how have you observed inequality abroad?



How have you observed inequality increase or decrease in your lifetime? What do you think is behind those shifts?



What would a fair economy look like?



How have you experienced or witnessed unpaid or underpaid labor? Does this burden disproportionately fall on some people more than others? What can we do as a society to redistribute this work, or create a support system for people?



How do you think we can move toward equality as a society?



## PRINTABLE QR CODES TO SIGN OXFAM'S PETITION

You can direct people to use this QR code if they want to take collective action on inequality with Oxfam. For ease, we have created this page to print multiple copies of the QR code, which you can cut out and pass around or sprinkle throughout your audience.

**SIGN THE PETITION:  
TAX THE  
SUPER-RICH**

[oxf.am/tax](https://oxf.am/tax)



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