

# Promises to keep

Report on the evaluation of the implementation of  
*Towards Global Equity*,  
Oxfam International's Strategic Plan, 2001 – 2006

Volume 1:  
**Synthesis Report**

*“The woods are lovely, dark and deep  
But I have promises to keep  
And miles to go before I sleep”*  
(Robert Frost)

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February 2006

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Volume II of the Evaluation Report contains the complete reports of the internal and external evaluators. It is accessible to Oxfam Board members and staff through the Oxfam International Dashboard. It is also available on CD-ROM (obtainable from the OI Secretariat) to those who do not have access to the Dashboard.

### Trade, Markets and Assets Sector

1. Contextual Reviews for the Oxfam External Trade Evaluation, NSI, Ottawa, February 2006
2. Labour Rights in Asia: Contextual Review, by Dr. Jehan Loza, Dr. John Prince and Ms Sarah Ogilvie Social Compass, Melbourne, December 2005
3. Make Trade Fair: Internal Evaluation Report plus Case Studies, Laura Roper, November 2005
4. External Evaluation of Oxfam's Make Trade Fair Campaign, Ann Weston and Chantal Blouin, NSI, Ottawa, February 2006,
5. External Evaluation of Oxfam's Labour Rights Campaign, Ann Weston and Heather Gibb, NSI, Ottawa, January 2006
6. External Evaluation of Oxfam's Cotton Dumping Campaign, Nizar Assanie and Matthew Walls, IE Market Research, NSI, Ottawa, February 2006
7. Labour Rights in Indonesia: External Evaluation by Dr. Jehan Loza and Dr. John Prince, Social Compass, Melbourne, December 2005

### Education Sector

8. Evaluation of Contributions in the Education Sector, Part I: the Context, by Dr. Rosemary Preston, Oxford, October 2005
9. Girls' Access to Education: Internal Evaluation Report, by Sally Burrows, Rome, October 2005
10. Evaluation of Contributions in the Education Sector, Part II: Review and Discussion of the Internal Evaluation, by Dr. Rosemary Preston, Oxford, November 2005 (Revision January 2006)

### Humanitarian Response Sector

11. Trends and Projections for Humanitarian Action, by Pierrette Parriaux, November 2005
12. Humanitarian Response: Internal Evaluation Report by Pierrette Parriaux, January 2006
13. External Evaluation of the Oxfam International Humanitarian Consortium, by Peter Walker, Isabel Madzorera and Larry Minear, Feinstein International Famine Centre, Tufts University, December 2005
14. An Evaluation of the Effectiveness and Efficiency of the Oxfam Tsunami Fund Management Team, by Peter Walker, Larry Minear and Isabel Madzorera, Feinstein International Famine Centre, Tufts University, December 2005

### Gender Equality Sector

15. Gender: Internal Assessment and External Context, by Rieky Stuart, Ottawa, November 2005



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The evaluators also acknowledge the cooperation of those affiliate staff and members of Oxfam International Sub-Groups who provided documents and gave time to take part in interviews.

“Promises to keep” summarises the work of two teams of evaluators. The Internal Evaluation Team comprised Laura Roper (Trade, with inputs from Francisco Alvarez); Sally Burrows (Education); Pierrette Parriaux (Humanitarian response) and Rieky Stuart (Gender). Valuable backup was provided by Inka Stock. This Synthesis Report is the product of the Internal Evaluation Team's work. As Evaluation Coordinator, I would like to express my appreciation of the expertise, hard work and professionalism of my fellow team-members.

The External Evaluators were for Trade Markets and Assets: Ann Weston and colleagues at the North-South Institute in Ottawa; and Jehan Loza and John Prince at Social Compass in Melbourne; for Education: Rosemary Preston, University of Warwick, UK (Education) and for Humanitarian Response: Peter Walker and colleagues at the Feinstein International Famine Centre, Tufts University, USA.

The evaluation process has been a challenging and fascinating learning experience for both teams and we appreciate being commissioned to undertake it. We realise that there gaps and errors remain, partly due to the difficulties we faced in obtaining information as well as to our misinterpretations of the information we did receive. Despite these shortcomings, we trust that Oxfam will benefit from the Evaluation, both at the sectoral level in respect of trade, education, humanitarian response and gender; and also at the Oxfam-wide level, where issues such as making the confederation work more effectively; models of change; focus and priority-setting; and monitoring and evaluation need to be addressed as Oxfam moves into the development of its third strategic plan.

On behalf of the Internal Evaluation Team,

Geoffrey Salkeld  
Evaluation Coordinator

February 2006



## List of abbreviations

(In order of first appearance in the text)

MTF(C)	Make Trade Fair (Campaign)
WTO	World Trade Organization
TNC	Trans-National Corporation
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
SAM	South America Region
RTA	Regional Trade Agreement
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategic Programme
GCE	Global Campaign for Education
HC	Humanitarian Consortium
ED	Executive Director
HCMG	Humanitarian Consortium Management Group
RST	Regional Strategic Team
RBA	Rights-Based Approach
CAMEXCA	Caribbean, Mexico and Central America Region
HACT	Humanitarian Advocacy Coordinating Team
OI	Oxfam International (usually referred to as “Oxfam” in this report)
TFMT	Tsunami Fund Management Team
HCT	Humanitarian Coordination Team
MTR	Mid-term Review
LRM	Lead Regional Manager
EEFSU	East Europe and Former Soviet Union Region
MEMAG	Middle East and Maghreb Region
GCT	Global Coordination Team
LAG	Learning and Accountability Group
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
TCPG	Trade Campaign Project Group
EU	European Union
FTA	Free Trade Agreement
NSI	North-South Institute
CSO	Community Service Organization
SC	Social Compass
ILO	International Labour Organization
MFA	Multi-Fibre Agreement
WCA	West and Central Africa
EC	European Commission
FTAA	Free Trade Area of the Americas
CAFTA	Central American Free Trade Agreement
TRIPS	Trade related aspects of Intellectual Property Rights
LDC	Less-Developed Country
ACP	African, Caribbean and Pacific group of states
FT	Fair Trade
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
IDB	International Development Bank
WB	World Bank
GLACC	Global Alliance for Coffee and Commodities
GCT	Global Coordination Team
LRT	Labour Rights Team
PFAO	Play Fair at the Olympics
ITLGWF	International Garment and Footwear Union
STAOR	Stop Trading Away Our Rights
EPA	Economic Partnership Agreement
UNRISD	United Nations Research Institute for Social Development
HIPC	Heavily Indebted Poor Countries
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
FTI	Fast Track Initiative
SACCS	South Asian Coalition on Child Servitude
GCAP	Global Campaign against Poverty
IFI	International Finance Institution

INGO	International Non-Governmental Organization
ATT	Association of Tin Tua
EFA	Education for All
CBO	Community-Based Organization
ANCEFA	African Network Campaign on Education for All
RSPBP	Regional Strategic Programme Business Plan
MEL	Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning
MLO	Multi-Lateral Organization
UNHCR	United Nations High Commission for Refugees
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
DRC	Democratic Republic of the Congo
DEC	Disasters Emergency Committee
IFRCRC	International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent
GBV	Gender Based Violence
JEP	Joint Emergency Programme
MSF	Médecins Sans Frontières
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
IMF	International Monetary Fund
CARE	Cooperative American Relief Everywhere
IFRCRC	International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent
PWC	Price Waterhouse Cooper
ASEAN	Association of South East Asian Nations
NAMA	Non-Agricultural Market Access
SCO	Strategic Change Objective
OISP	Oxfam International Strategic Plan

**Promises to keep**  
Evaluation of the implementation of *Towards Global Equity*,  
Oxfam's strategic plan, 2001 – 2006,

**Volume I: Synthesis Report**

**Executive Summary**

Please note we have employed the term **Oxfam** throughout the Synthesis Report as a synonym for Oxfam International. Where necessary and appropriate we have referred by name to specific affiliates, the Oxfam International Secretariat or other OI bodies.

## **1. Introduction**

Towards the end of 2005, when this Evaluation was nearing completion, the “World Trade” Organization was again failing the world’s poorest farmers and workers and their families. Kashmiris were dying from exposure and cold-related diseases while winterized tents remained locked in military warehouses. Victims of the 2001 Gujarat Earthquake were still living in “temporary” shelters. Humanity’s first global warming refugees were being evacuated from islands in the Pacific. In Britain, a study announced that achieving equality for women would take another 200 years.

Much of Oxfam’s work during recent years has focused on these and similar problems. Their causes lie in global policies and practices but their effects blight and destroy the daily lives of the majority the world’s women, men and children; whole families and communities.

Assessing and measuring the value of Oxfam’s thematically diverse and geographically widespread efforts can only be attempted by looking at examples of its interventions and by forming educated guesses as to their wider significance. Between June and December 2005, two teams evaluated samples of Oxfam’s work during the period 2001-2005. They produced 15 reports, the complete versions of which are in Volume II of this Evaluation Report.

Working to terms of reference<sup>1</sup> agreed by Oxfam’s Learning and Accountability Group, the evaluation teams approached the different sectors through a common framework which asked four basic questions:

- **Context:** What changes in policies and practices have caused significant and positive impact on the lives of people suffering poverty and injustice has taken place in the period (irrespective of Oxfam’s interventions)?
- **Outcomes and impact:** What has been Oxfam’s contribution to these changes?
- **Value added:** What value have Oxfam’s “models of change” added to Oxfam’s interventions?
- **Lessons:** What are the implications of this Evaluation for the future?

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<sup>1</sup> Terms of Reference: see Annex 3

These four questions provide the framework for the first part of this Executive Summary. In order to find answers to the questions the teams evaluated a selection of Oxfam's interventions in sectors of the rights-based Aims which underpin the strategic plan<sup>2</sup>:

1. Trade, markets and assets sector (Aim 1: right to a sustainable livelihood)
  - The overall Make Trade Fair Campaign
  - The Cotton Dumping Campaign (with particular attention to West Africa)
  - The Labour Rights Campaign (with particular attention to Indonesia, Colombia and Morocco)
  - The Coffee Campaign "revisited"
2. Education sector (Aim 2: right to basic social services)

The evaluation of Oxfam's work in increasing girls' access to quality basic education looked at the joint and individual work of four affiliates in Burkina Faso, India, and Mozambique, and the international campaign.
3. Humanitarian response sector (Aim 3: the right to life and security)

This sector is represented by a global contextual review of recent trends; an evaluation of four of Oxfam's responses (Hurricane Mitch, the Gujarat Earthquake, the Ethiopia Drought and the Darfur-Chad Crisis); and evaluations of the Humanitarian Consortium and the Tsunami Fund Management Team.
4. Gender equality sector (Aim 5: the right to an identity)

The evaluation reviewed external trends and developments; Oxfam's architecture and the lessons of Oxfam's work in Bangladesh, Ethiopia, Nicaragua and Palestine. The Evaluation treated Gender Equality as both a separate issue in its own right as well as a "cross-cutting" issue.

The four sectors provide the framework for the Main Report. This Executive Summary presents, in a very condensed form, our key findings, conclusions and recommendations. In the following section (2) we offer eight "headline" observations which (in our view) express the most important general messages we want to convey to Oxfam's senior managers. These are followed summaries of findings and conclusions regarding Context, Outcomes and Impact, Models of Change and Gender in the sector evaluations. Sections 7 and 8 summarise the Lessons for the Future. Section 9 summarises what we have learned about the methodology and approach adopted for this Evaluation and offers some recommendations regarding monitoring and evaluation.

Fuller summaries of the findings, conclusions and recommendations of both the internal and external evaluations appear in the Main Report following this Executive Summary. The complete internal and external sector evaluation reports are contained in the (separate) Volume II of the Evaluation Report.

Annexes 1 and 2 add further dimensions. Annex 1 summarises the conclusions and recommendations of the 2004 Mid-Term Review<sup>3</sup> and compares them with the outcomes of this Evaluation.

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<sup>2</sup> "Voice" (part of Aim 4) has been treated as a "cross-cutting" issue. It has manifested itself mainly in relation to the campaigning aspects of MTF, national campaigns in education and parental/community involvement in education delivery.

<sup>3</sup> Sally Burrows and Linda Kelly. Mid-Term Review of the OI Strategic Plan 2001-2006. August 2004

Annex 2 (“Perceptions of some key actors”) summarises responses to interviews with six affiliate Executive Directors and five Lead Regional Managers. Annex 3 contains the Terms of Reference and Annex 4 recapitulates the main recommendations of the Evaluation.

## **2. Eight headlines**

1. The Make Trade Fair Campaign shows what Oxfam can achieve at its best. Oxfam’s footprints are evident in global and national policy and practice changes in labour rights and agriculture. There is also some evidence of positive changes in the lives of working women and poor farmers. But MTF has also exposed Oxfam’s vulnerabilities: shifts in focus and discontinuity of effort; unwillingness to listen to others and difficulty in integrating regional and field concerns.
2. Decreased priority during this Strategic Plan means that Oxfam’s work in the education sector, though showing positive effects in its own terms, has not realised its earlier potential. Oxfam needs to face up squarely to the implications of its rights-based approach and its involvement in service delivery in the education sector.
3. Organisational changes in Oxfam’s humanitarian response sector have demonstrated their value – most visibly in the Tsunami response (further Tsunami response evaluation will add to these findings). But much work remains to be done at affiliate level to ensure a consistently high level of quality. Affiliate preoccupations sometimes jeopardise the excellent intentions of the Humanitarian Dossier.
4. Mainstreaming efforts to promote gender equality has failed. Gender expertise has become marginalised and a considerable investment in staff education, training and management is needed to reverse the decline in Oxfam’s commitment to promoting gender equality as an intrinsic part of the rights-based approach. Examples of good practice, as in Labour Rights and the CAMEXCA Women’s Rights work, are admirable – but exceptional.
5. The beneficial effects of Oxfam’s “models of change” are visible in all four sectors. They need to be articulated more clearly and given practical and consistent application in day-to-day programme development, planning and management. In particular, as suggested in headline (2). Oxfam’s approach to the rights-based approach needs to be more consistent across the board.
6. In all four sectors we find examples of field-level programming empowering and equipping poor people to benefit from policy changes which Oxfam is campaigning to change: but these examples are not the norm. The “one-programme” reforms in OI-level architecture have not yet been replicated throughout the confederation.
7. Trust, complementarity and cooperation among affiliates are being achieved in pockets of the confederation’s work. Affiliates have differing perceptions of the cost-benefits of collaborating in the confederation. Managing the power imbalances and tensions that could block Oxfam’s progress demands courageous leadership from the Board and Executive Directors.
8. The Evaluation did not study the evaluation systems or capacities of all affiliates. Oxfam International confederation lacks a coherent system for quantitative and qualitative programme and financial information to support monitoring, evaluation, learning and accountability and as a solid advocacy platform.

### 3. Changes in the lives of the poor and marginalized

We asked the evaluators to look first at the wider context of Oxfam's work in each of the four sectors. What significant changes are taking place in the policies and practices that cause, sustain or combat poverty and injustice?

In the economic sphere, the evaluators focused on the continuing debate regarding the contribution of trade to development; the relevance of achieving trade justice to poverty reduction; progress and regression in labour rights.

- Regional Trade Agreements and Bilateral Free Trade Agreements have proliferated during the last five years. By the end of 2004 such agreements accounted for nearly 40% of world trade. The conditionalities of such agreements for developing countries are usually **more stringent than in the WTO**.
- The World Bank has reduced its estimate of the potential impact of the Doha Round on global poverty reduction. Critics note that for most people any positive **changes will be incremental rather than transformative**. Complementary measures might have a greater impact on poverty.
- Many governments (particularly in Latin America) have become more attentive to civil society and expert criticism of **the emphasis on free trade**.
- Trends such as increased Foreign Direct Investment, the stronger influence of multilateral agreements and of international bodies and TNCs have not translated into better working conditions in Asia. The increasing mobility of capital could **undermine labour movements' efforts to secure workers' rights** and improve their living conditions.
- In China, policy and legal changes on labour have been positive but there remains considerable scope for the widespread abuse of labour rights abuses, particularly for migrant workers and women. There is evidence that education programmes initiated by workers (rather than boycotts or shaming) have potential but this is not reflected in the literature, in which the **voices of Northern NGOs are predominant**.
- In Indonesia, successes are being achieved through partnerships between trades unions and NGOs, where **local pressure combined with international campaigning** gives significant leverage.
- Despite the progressive legislative framework in Sri Lanka, abuses persist, with **women being concentrated in low-paid, low-skilled sectors** where the application of labour laws is most difficult.
- Morocco's textile workers (75% women) have been severely affected by the end of the Multi-Fibre Agreement. A new labour code approved by Parliament brings increased flexibility for employers and benefits for workers. The challenge is to **extend these gains to the informal sector**.
- Labour standards (including wages) in Colombia have fallen while the economy has grown. Trade reforms have contributed to **rising wage inequality**. Meanwhile the World Bank's "Doing Business in 2006" report cites Colombia's labour laws as rigid and ranks the country as 130<sup>th</sup> out of 155 in terms of ease of hiring and firing workers.

In the education sector the evaluators note:

- In 2005, according to UNICEF, 120 million primary school-age children are out of school. Thirty-five million of them are in India and **60% of these children are girls**.
- The global target of gender equality in education by 2005 has been missed in 94 countries. On the positive side, between 2000 and 2002, **primary gross enrolment in Sub-Saharan Africa rose from 83% to 95%**, much faster than in previous decades.

- The Education for All initiative has been the dominant campaign for a decade and a half. It has successfully marshalled debate, research and resources. However, in Africa there is considerable **weakness in local institutions' capacity** to sustain their own policies rather than those of their dominant external funders.
- UNESCO's Global Monitoring Report for 2003 points out that bilateral aid for education fell by 16% between 1999 and 2000. Aid for education from OECD countries is increasing but is in decline from the multilateral donors and development banks. Current **support needed for basic education falls short of the US\$ 5.6 billion required** to meet the Universal Primary Education target and the gendered MDGs.

In the humanitarian response sector the evaluators make the following observations about the context:

- Some 50 million people currently live in countries or regions marked by protracted crises. The indefinite duration and political character of these crises are challenging humanitarian agencies **struggling between bringing basic relief to victims and defending their rights**.
- An estimated six million people live in refugee camps and more than 25 million people live internally displaced in their own countries.
- While the number of lives lost has declined in the past 20 years – 800,000 people died from natural disasters in the 1990s compared with two million in the 1970s – **the number of people affected has risen**.
- In the past two decades, direct **economic losses from natural disasters multiplied fivefold** to US\$ 629 billion. In 2003, 700 natural disasters killed approximately 75,000 people and caused US\$ 65 billion worth of damage (of which one third was insured).
- The debate over ethics in humanitarian action is not new. Ten years ago the “Code of Conduct” was drafted at a time when many donors were **transferring support from traditional development assistance to emergency relief**. A host of new, mainly non-governmental agencies came into existence. Ten years later, more than 300 organizations have adopted the Code of Conduct. The evaluator observes: “However, little reference is made to it in everyday practice and many have **questioned whether the Code is still a living document**.”

In the gender equality sector, the evaluator describes the changing context as follows:

- Although there have been amazing gains in the past generation, **the speed of change has declined** since 1995.
- Positive developments include the **narrowing gender gap in education**; the **legal protection** of women's rights; improved **property rights** for women and increased representation in **decision-making**; **working conditions** have improved for the increasing numbers of women in the labour force.
- On the downside, the face of **poverty is overwhelmingly female** as the rich-poor gap increases internationally. Women bear the brunt of **welfare cutbacks** and the privatisation of public services. Women have not broken through **the 20% barrier** in senior leadership. The increasing proportion of women with HIV/AIDS highlights **women's continuing lack of control** over their own bodies and lives, despite rhetoric, policies and laws.
- **Funding for women's rights**, especially for research and policy advocacy and for learning, is static (and therefore shrinking).
- Northern, once politically strong national feminist movements “are but **pale shadows of their former selves**”.

## 4. Oxfam's footprints: outcomes and impacts

### 4.1 Introduction: Trade *and* Livelihoods?

*The following observations were prompted by a concern that the MTF Campaign might be criticized for failing to achieve "impacts" which it could not be expected to achieve on its own. In fact the successes of the Campaign shine a rather critical light on some other areas of Oxfam's policies, structure and working methods, where a lack of coherence undermines good intentions.*

At a late stage in the Evaluation, concern was expressed that the report would criticize the lack of evidence of Oxfam's *impact* (changes in peoples lives) compared with the considerable evidence of *outcomes* (changes in the terms of debate, influencing policies and practices). This concern, though understandable, is misplaced. Both the internal and external evaluators appreciate and acknowledge that "positive and sustained changes" in people's livelihoods need longer than the time span of a single campaign or a six-year strategic plan. (Some of the MDGs are regarded as unattainable even in fifteen years). "Too early to tell" is as true now as it was a year earlier when the Mid-Term Review drew a similar conclusion. It is indeed too early to tell, but we have to step outside that comfort zone: contributing to "impacts on people's lives" requires constructing and operationalizing a causal network so that you are working on leverage points throughout the system.

This issue aside, however, concern about the "*outcomes to impact*" trajectory does lie at the heart of the evaluation, not only in relation to Trade and Livelihoods but also to other sectors. There are three main issues of concern.

- First, the coupling of "Trade" with "Livelihoods" in "The right to a sustainable livelihood" (Aim 1) was (unintentionally) ambiguous. It created unrealistic expectations as to what could be achieved at field level during the time span of one strategic plan. The complete vision was expressed (in Aim 1) but in implementation it attracted Oxfam-wide energy only through the MTF. The same level of collective energy was not invested in "livelihoods" because of slower progress in building strategic collaboration in that area.
- Second, it perpetuated at least the perception of a simplistic, linear cause-and-effect approach which ignores the importance of a range of external and (sometimes) unforeseeable factors in shaping people's lives. As many have observed, you support unions in organizing for better conditions but this is only one of many factors affecting the economic security of working families.
- Third, the coupling of Trade and Livelihoods demanded close working cooperation between two quite distinct organizational cultures within Oxfam – the livelihoods programmers and the policy campaigners – at a time (2001) when they were even further apart than they are today (this was when the "Programme Directors" and "Advocacy Directors" committees were still functioning.

Two other, "beyond-MTF" issues are at play here. First, even acknowledging that there might be a gap of half a generation or more between a significant policy outcome and (resultant) changes in people's livelihoods, the question arises of Oxfam's seriousness about medium and long-term planning and programming. To what extent have the staff, partners and communities involved in Oxfam's "livelihoods" work been prepared, empowered and equipped to *take advantage* of policy outcomes when they are achieved? And how seriously did Oxfam take the idea that staff, partners and communities might have valuable insights about policy-change priorities? While there is some evidence of this happening in the Labour Rights and Coffee campaigns and in the Educational Access sector, these examples of integration give the impression of being incidental and exceptional rather than the norm.

Second, even if the policy outcomes achieved by advocacy and campaigning were to result in “significant and positive changes” in poor people’s livelihoods, we would probably not know much about them because of the serious weaknesses in Oxfam International’s monitoring and evaluation systems, resources and capacities – an across-the-board weakness noted in all four sector evaluations. This report raises questions about the quality and coherence of Oxfam’s livelihoods-related work. Part of the doubt arises from that fact that very little of this work is visible on Oxfam’s collective “radar” – despite serious attempts to collate and analyse information at affiliate level, such as Oxfam GB’s annual Programme Impact Report.

## **4.2 The Make Trade Fair Campaign**

Several achievements stand out as having advanced the MTF Campaign objectives and strengthened Oxfam as a whole. For example:

- Oxfam’s strong analysis, lobbying and campaigning work in late 2003 helped Southern countries act more assertively at the WTO in Cancun and the Summit of the Americas in Miami. Oxfam skilfully kept attention focused on US and EU policies as a reason for the failure of Cancun. Oxfam and more assertive southern governments continued to maintain pressure on the USA and EU until the 2005 Hong Kong Ministerial.
- The Labour Rights Campaign has demonstrated the potential for Southern campaigning to shift power dynamics and cause policy changes with direct impact on the lives of traditionally vulnerable and politically weak people. The combination of a robust analysis and argument; the linking labour, human rights and women’s rights and alliances with a focus on specific, actionable demands has been powerful and contains broader lessons for the future.
- Oxfam and its allies raised broad public interest in trade and collected more than 17 million signatures for the “Big Noise”.
- The Hemispheric Reference Group and regional teams (ECIP and SAM) have aligned trade work (especially around RTAs) and shown what can be achieved when regional staff are motivated and empowered to focus their energies. The architecture works, with strong planning and management; transferring learning from one campaign to the next and an integrated strategy. The OI Washington DC office has played a key supportive role.

The specific outcomes and impacts of the Labour Rights and Agriculture (Coffee and Cotton) campaigns are summarised in Chapter 2 of the Main Report and in full in the internal and external evaluation reports included in Volume II.

## **4.3 Girls’ access to education**

The geographical focus of Oxfam’s field programming is small but it includes a country with one of the highest percentages of children not in school (Burkina Faso), one with the highest absolute number of children denied that right (India) and the country where the Oxfams have invested most programme expenditure in education (Mozambique). The most significant outcomes in this sector are those which show:

- How broad policy change and field-level programming are interrelated;
- How interdependent they are; and
- The importance of investing in and working on the connections between the two levels of work.

Oxfam-supported programmes in Burkina Faso and Mozambique were evaluated positively in terms of targeting areas where the right to education (especially for girls) has furthest to go. Enrolment, retention and completion figures increased in the Oxfam-supported programmes in Mozambique and the gender gap has diminished. Further details regarding programme outcomes in all three countries can be found in Chapter 3.

National level field programming has matured over the years in all three countries reviewed:

- There has been a shift in content and in geographical focus, including investment in national policy influence in Africa.
- Programme content has moved towards embedding Oxfam's programme in the government system, national education plans and/or PRSPs.
- This has also increased the number of people reached and positively affected.

The global campaign contributed to a positive shift in the international terms of debate between 1999 and 2005, which has led to some quantifiable, positive policy outcomes on increasing primary education for girls, especially in Africa.

At the global level Oxfam played an important role in maintaining attention to gender issues in GCE and donor government circles.

#### 4.4 Humanitarian response

The evaluation of this sector included assessments of Oxfam's learning from a series of humanitarian responses from 1998 to 2005 and the extent to which the learning has been applied; and evaluations of the Humanitarian Consortium and of the Tsunami Fund Management Team. There is clear evidence of progress in the coherence and quality of Oxfam's responses from Hurricane Mitch in 1998 through Gujarat (2001), Ethiopia (1998-2002) and Darfur-Chad (2004-5). The following key points emerge from the Internal Evaluation Report by Pierrette Parriaux:

- The Ethiopia Drought was one of the first humanitarian crises which saw the transition from OI's previous strategic plan (*Towards an Ever-Closer Union*) to the current one (*Towards Global Equity*). An Emergency Harmonization Group was formed. There was information-sharing between affiliates and affiliates attended outside meetings on behalf of OI as a whole. Information-sharing among Oxfam affiliates was effective but hardly applied to local partners at project level.
- There is a clear evolution in the way affiliates have taken possession of and make use of the Humanitarian Dossier, although some field offices (especially in Africa) were slow in adopting the models and protocols due to difficult internet access and poor dissemination.
- With each succeeding emergency involving several affiliates, the system became more refined (not necessarily more efficient). The need for common services such as advocacy officer, security officer and a point person for information and media services become obvious. However the information flow is still imperfect.

With regard to the Humanitarian Consortium, the external evaluator concludes:

- For the most part the process targets have been met. The majority of EDs interviewed (within an outside the HC) responded that the HCMG has been effective and that it is a big step forward from the previous rather anarchic situation. However, leadership around humanitarian advocacy is seen as an area where process has been weak: the present setup is not providing sufficiently clear leadership and management for advocacy.
- Oxfam's response to the Tsunami was the critical test. The HC provided a framework within which all the affiliates could act. It allowed for decisions to be taken by a small expert group on behalf of all the affiliates. The scale and highly public nature of the response forced OI and the HCMG to act ahead of its time, proving the value of what the consortium approach can deliver even if, by its own admission, it is not always delivering such a coherent and well-led approach in other less high profile emergencies.
- The HC's key strengths are:
  - It has demonstrated that a skills based approach works better for OI than a simple all-representational approach;

- The membership of the HC and the HCMG (humanitarian directors) has provided a vital link with the EDs
- The HCMG seems to have made a determined effort to link in well with Oxfam's regional and field structure.

#### **4.5 Gender equality**

The evaluator found little evidence of significant outcomes or impact in this sector. The following summarises her positive findings:

In Ethiopia there is evidence of a shift in a number of Oxfam-funded NGOs to increase both their gender equality work, and to increase the inclusion of and benefit to women of their programming. There is evidence that women are not being forgotten in Aim 1 and Aim 3 programming. Women do receive grants of livestock, or nursery stock or seeds. Some women are trained in vegetable and poultry production. There is an effort to consult women in water harvesting programmes. Protecting assets in emergencies takes account of women's assets (small stock) as well as men's (camels and cattle.) Female-headed households are mentioned as beneficiaries in a number of projects. While it is impossible to attribute this directly to the interventions offered by Oxfam affiliates, (dialogue, training, financial support) it is very likely that Oxfam's interventions contributed to this change.

In Bangladesh, programme reports indicate that Oxfam supports this expanded and integrated microfinance programming by supporting legal aid for women, monitoring the participation and roles of women NGO staff, and funding NGO-run primary education that is targeted to poor girls as well as boys. Most of the reports and evaluations do not look deeply at gender issues, and where challenges are mentioned, prescriptions for action are vague.

Of the four country programmes reviewed, Nicaragua is unique in that the Regional Strategic Team established a joint regional 'Women and Rights' programme as early as 1998. Like their local counterparts, Oxfam programmers working on women and rights concentrate their Aim 5 strategy with women's organizations, and devote few resources to encourage mixed organizations to address gender equality concerns. Major areas of focus have been violence against women, indigenous women's rights (mainly in Guatemala) and women in global production chains. They mark progress and results in the following areas:

- Understanding and agreement among RST members that gender equality is important, and increased knowledge of how to analyze and approach gender equality issues in all of Oxfam's work;
- Effective collaboration in the design and implementation of Trading Away Our Rights. Improved conditions for women workers in the region were one outcome, as was stronger and more effective collaboration among a range of organizations to win them;
- Mutual support and learning among the RST committee on women and rights, and stronger links among and outside Oxfam affiliates;
- The development of a regional Aim 5 strategy to align with the next OI strategic plan.

The Labour Rights Campaign is also cited as a positive example of gender equality programming.

### **5. Added value: Oxfam's "models of change"**

The Trade, Education and Gender evaluations included reviews of the extent to which Oxfam's models of change were being adopted and implemented, and of their added value. (This issue was not addressed in the Humanitarian Response sector evaluations.)

Discussion and definition of these “models of change” has continued during the Plan period and we have included what appears to be the currently agreed list.

There are two issues: first, Oxfam’s ideas regarding theories and models of social and economic change; second, Oxfam’s ideas about the models it employs in contributing to change. Both need to be articulated further in the development of the next strategic plan.

## **5.1 The rights-based approach**

### Trade markets and assets sector

The use of rights language to hold governments and TNCs accountable for their actions based on standards of fairness or rights has been effective as far as it has gone. Nevertheless, it was only in the case of the labour rights campaign that rights were the point of departure and an organizing principle for devising strategy. This suggests that the RBA could also have strengthened other MTF campaigns – but there is no hard evidence to support this.

### Education sector

The RBA has helped in clarifying the NGO role in education in general and Oxfam’s in particular, alongside the primary duty-holder, the state. Externally, it provides a good entry-point and common language for alliances and helps civil society organisations and citizens to be more assertive. Internally, it promotes greater coherence.

However, there has been no conscious plan and very limited staff training for applying the RBA in programming. Opinion is divided between staff who see it as having under-used potential and those who see its further potential to challenge power relations that maintain poverty as limited.

### Gender equality sector

All of the Oxfam gender policy statements reviewed for this study are unequivocally based on rights. A rights rationale is used to support programming on political and civil rights of women as well as economic and social rights. Oxfam was ahead of the curve in this understanding, although there is now general agreement that the case for gender equality is rooted in human rights. Most Aim 5 programming is now proposed on a rights basis, while commentary in proposals and reports on ‘cross-cutting’ in programming still tends to be utilitarian.

## **5.2 Programme integration**

### Trade markets and assets sector

In MTF, Oxfam has made considerable progress in achieving vertical alignment, aligning campaigning with other program activities, and acting as Oxfam International instead of a dozen independent affiliates. In those Regional Teams involved in the campaigns, it is evident a positive tipping point has been reached in this regard. However, the debate as to the cost of achieving “one programme” synergy versus the opportunity cost of failing to achieve it remains unresolved. Campaigning on an issue on which Oxfam has no field-level programming experience raises issues of mandate and credibility. But should the lack of such a basis prevent Oxfam from speaking out when its voice might make a difference?

Oxfam has made important steps toward better integration, with adjustments in the trade campaign architecture and more investment in regional campaigning capacity. Oxfam needs to further invest (funds, time, and energy) in West Africa and East Asia to consolidate their capacity and develop a strategy for more fully incorporating the majority of regions that are not so engaged.

#### Education sector

Only one of the three country programmes does not explicitly attempt to create coherence and synergy between different levels and kinds of intervention. Affiliates feel they have made considerable progress on this, though there is still room for further improvement. The education sector confirms the OI Mid-Term Review finding (for other sectors) that creating synergy between kinds of intervention has a direct, positive effect on levels of intervention.

#### Gender equality sector

Oxfam's research and campaigning on women's labour rights and precarious employment, Trading Away Our Rights is the first example of local-to-global and functionally integrated programming that demonstrates how a strong gender analysis can strengthen Oxfam's work and make a significant contribution to gender equality. The labour rights work built strong links between actors whose strategic collaboration can have significant impact (trade unionists, women's and feminist organizations and academics).

### **5.3 Strategic collaboration**

#### Trade, markets and assets sector

Affiliate strategic collaboration has increased tremendously in the context of Make Trade Fair, particularly at headquarters level and in the different campaign teams and working groups. Strategic collaboration amongst the affiliates in some regions still remains a challenge. This appears to be less about ideological differences and more of a capacity issue in most cases.

#### Education sector

There has been limited progress (mainly at field level) and added value in three ways:

- All 12 affiliates are engaged in campaigning internationally and/or in their home countries on the basis of field programmes of four affiliates.
- Second, there is some joint programming in Burkina Faso and Mozambique, reducing management overheads. This is absent in India.
- Third, there is a country-level education working group in Mozambique, which appears to have contributed to some convergence on good practice between affiliates.

Nevertheless, strategic collaboration is the area in which the highest number of staff interviewed saw need and potential to do much more, though others are more cautious. There is also evidence of missed opportunities and brand risk from failure to collaborate.

## 5.4 Global campaigning force

### Trade, markets and assets sector

MTF is proof, in many respects, that campaigning works – Oxfam has changed the terms of the debate, it has generated massive interest in trade issues, it has been a catalyst, a facilitator and a valued participant in an array of alliances. However, as many Oxfam staff have mentioned, policy change on the scale Oxfam is seeking takes a long time. Oxfam injected much needed, high quality analysis into the trade debate, but has learned that achieving and sustaining policy change requires sustained investment. Oxfam should address three questions:

- How to set priorities that balance global and regional needs, opportunities and constraints;
- Are campaign resources deployed to maximum effectiveness to sustain policy change?
- How much does Oxfam want to invest in itself and how much in others?

## 5.5 Working in alliances

### Trade, markets and assets sector

(See “Global campaigning Force”) above.

### Education sector

This received by far the greatest investment and had the greatest added value (of Oxfam’s “models of change”). The main alliance, the GCE, has delivered influence on policy-makers in North and South.

### Gender equality sector

Several informants noted that Oxfam gained significantly in its positive profile with the labour movement because of the quality of the labour rights work. At the same time, the bottom-up development of the research and the advocacy goals meant that allies felt they had a strong stake and say in the work and gained similar recognition. (This was reported both from South African partners and Colombian partners). This sets a new Oxfam standard for collaboration: there is recognition of Oxfam’s leadership and contribution, while at the same time there is similar recognition for partners in their own context – a win-win combination. Oxfam’s added value was its ability to convene; deep knowledge by the labour rights team of gender issues and pitfalls as they occur in a wide variety of contexts; Oxfam’s global-to-local links; and its policy, advocacy and campaigning know-how.

## 5.6 Oxfam brand

### Trade, markets and assets sector

Through MTF the Oxfam brand has become much more widely recognized globally, in affiliate countries and in the regions. This helps Oxfam position itself as an important and generally respected actor in trade and development issues. At the same time, a strong brand presents challenges in alliances.

### Education sector

Generally, its value is seen as insignificant, or even negative, for work in the South, but often very important for advocacy and campaign work in the North.

## 6. Gender in the Trade and Education sector evaluations

### Trade, markets and assets sector

The Labour Rights Campaign demonstrates the power of a gendered analysis and strategy for delivering results. Everyone involved in the campaign, up to the OI media coordinator, was conversant with the gendered nature of the campaign. There is unanimous agreement among Oxfam staff that this made the campaigning stronger conceptually, but also in its appeal and effectiveness.

Gender analysis does not feature as explicitly in other MTF campaigns as in Labour Rights. Gender is touched on in policy documents but is not strategically integrated in campaign planning. It is noticeable, for example, that the quantified outcomes of much of the Coffee Campaign are not disaggregated by gender. Women's organizations played an important role in the RTA campaigning in the Americas but this was neither planned nor reported on from an explicitly gender equity point of view.

### Education sector

Most programmes reviewed have gendered objectives, but only the programmes in Mozambique were found to have a clear gender strategy to meet these. Most have at best a 'Women in Development' strategy, focusing on improving women's participation in the existing society, rather than changing the power relations between the genders. This risks verbal expressions of change only. Others deliberately avoid provoking a backlash from men.

There is some evidence that the Mozambique gender strategy is a factor in improved girls' enrolment, retention and completion rates. Oxfam experience confirms that gender disparities in primary education are related to three main cultural and economic blocks: parents' (in)ability to see the value of educating daughters; the loss of female labour for the household; and concerns about girls' security in school.

## 7. Lessons and recommendations: (a) the sector evaluations

The distinction between "lessons" and "recommendations" is not always explicit in the sector evaluation reports. In order to assist readers, we have emphasized the "action points" in the following sections. There is also a Summary of Main Recommendations at Annex 4, which can be used as a checklist.

### 7.1 Trade, markets and assets

- The major substantive issue concerns focus and priority-setting. As noted above, MTF demonstrates what Oxfam can achieve when it is focused. The current plan gave priority status to Trade and Livelihoods in Aim 1 and Humanitarian Response in Aim 3. These are two distinctive ("stand alone") and substantive areas of work. Despite Oxfam's substantial achievements in both the Trade and Humanitarian Response sectors, **there is a need to consider focus and priority-setting in these areas**. In addition, questions arise as to the legitimacy, purpose and positioning of Oxfam's work in Basic Social Services (i.e. Education and Health).

- If Oxfam is to reap dividends from its work in the Trade and Markets sector, there is a clear need to set priorities, realistic and measurable outcomes and **to ensure that campaigns are sustained** either directly (by Oxfam) or indirectly (by Oxfam-supported allies) once the focus of global campaigning has moved on.
- Oxfam should address the challenge of **raising the quality, scale and significance of its field-level livelihoods programming** to the same levels achieved by the Make Trade Fair Campaign programme during the last five years. **Future planning should ensure that these two approaches to achieving “sustainable livelihoods” are fully synchronized and mutually supportive** rather than being (in some areas) “ships that pass in the night”.
- The regions that have been most effective in engaging in campaigning are CAMEXCA, SAM, East Asia and West Africa owing to strong leadership and committed staff. But even in these regions, **capacity constraints have limited their potential and should be addressed.**
- Significant lessons have been learned intra-regionally, but there is very limited cross regional learning. **Oxfam would benefit from institutionalizing and deepening the learning practices** of the Hemispheric Reference Group and the Labour Rights team. Those teams would add far more value to Oxfam if they **documented and disseminated their experiences.**
- Taking a global perspective on poverty, MTF has generated critical reflection on the part of some regional staff on **the need to address the (in)adequacy of Oxfam-supported rural development programs.**
- The high impact strategy around livelihoods has focused on trade and the predominant question has been, “How do we campaign on this?” In the next cycle, more balanced attention should be paid to the other components of integrated programming for the right to a sustainable livelihood. **The point of departure for planning should be:** what is the full range of interventions that would be needed to achieve a development goal (e.g. achieve sustainable livelihoods in specific and significant geographic areas)? What is Oxfam’s value added at the local, national, and international levels? What is the universe of potential allies; what might the division of labour be, and what level of investment is Oxfam willing to make?
- **Oxfam should extend the positive experiences of MTF** with the one-programme approach to other sectors.
- **If integrated programmes are to realise their full potential**, partners and Oxfam staff working directly with target population groups will need;
  - To develop their capacity to help identify needs and opportunities for campaigning on relevant policies and practices; and
  - To concentrate on equipping and empowering target populations groups to take advantage of the positive policy and practice changes that are achieved.

## 7.2 Education

- **There is a need for debate and decision about Oxfam’s future in the Basic Social Services area** – specifically, Education and Health. The evaluation reports on the Education sector challenge Oxfam to define its interest and role in this sector. Does Oxfam support education as a means to various ends (gender equality, community ownership and participation, democracy) or as an end in itself?

If the former, would it not be more effective to promote these ends through the trade, livelihoods and humanitarian response sectors where Oxfam has achieved and demonstrated competence and leadership? The (education) external evaluator asks: Is Oxfam achieving anything in education *per se* that could not be equally well (or even better) achieved by more specialised agencies? Is service delivery (“gap-filling”) a legitimate function for an NGO which claims a rights-based approach?

- There has been mixed progress in learning from the evaluation of the 'Education Now!' campaign in 2001 (and some lessons have also been taken up in the Trade campaign):
  - There has been huge improvement in increasing popular campaigning, campaigning to Southern national governments, and working with others
  - There has been some improvement in developing corporate knowledge and skills, especially in field programme, and partial improvement on working with each other.
  - There has been low or no improvement in power analysis and strategising, internal Oxfam coherence, mutual accountability between affiliates, clarity on a sectoral or holistic approach, and individual and collective responsibility.

*Lessons emerging from this (2005) Evaluation:*

- Continuity and sustained pressure are now recognized by staff as essential to success. Greater complexity (absorbing education in the MDG Campaign and then in GCAP) and lower priority do not mix well. **Oxfam needs to think through more carefully the internal implications for staff and management, when a campaign is in a low-key phase**, in order to avoid losing past gains and reputation.
- Oxfam is still not explicit about whether education is a means or an end. Implicitly, Oxfam seems to see education as a means to the broader end of sustainable livelihoods, peace and security and the right to be heard, regardless of gender and identity. If this were made explicit, it would give a stronger steer for focus and choice of strategic priorities in education. **Oxfam should be more strategic** – success comes where there is solid power analysis as a base for a holistic, localised strategy for policy and practice change.
- There is a virtuous spiral between the right to basic education and the right to be heard, as shown by the role of School Councils. There is also a potential virtuous spiral between attention to gender as a cross-cutting issue and field programme impact. Attention to factors enhancing or inhibiting girls' success in school brings out issues (e.g. on teacher training and curriculum) that, if successfully addressed, are likely to benefit all children.
- We found patchy evaluation systems in affiliates and no common monitoring, evaluation and learning system in OI.
- **Oxfam's education programme should focus on areas that are key factors in success in contributing to achieving gender parity** (in school access and success) and in deepening democracy.
- **Oxfam should strategize on education with a 5-10 year perspective in selected countries** with strategic partners and allies and a continuing campaign agenda, including local-to-global linkages.
- **A defined level of strategic collaboration between participating affiliates should be obligatory, not optional.**

### 7.3 Humanitarian response

- The Humanitarian Advocacy Coordinating Team (HACT) was particularly involved during the lead-up to the (2<sup>nd</sup>) Iraq War and with the situation in the Sudan. The HACT has not always been able to achieve its ambitious goals.
- In several responses, including Mitch and Gujarat, expatriates were not familiar with the local context. In particular in Mitch the language barrier was a real impediment. **Understanding the political context and establishing diplomatic relations** at all levels is still at an early stage in Oxfam. In Darfur, for example, MSF and ICRC had access to areas that were off limits to other organizations.
- The gap between the high quality of Oxfam’s humanitarian vision, quality standards and other objectives and actual practice should be narrowed. **Improve timeliness of response through improving management capacities**, the availability of trained staff and better analysis of field realities and government policies.
- In countries like India, where governments have emergency response capacities, **Oxfam should establish stronger links with state governments and agencies**. In other contexts, such as Sudan, understanding the political economy of war and developing diplomatic contacts before the crisis would help the people in the field.
- Building the preparedness of national staff and partners to emergency response in vulnerable areas has been started in Central America and parts of Asia but is well behind in Africa. **An Oxfam introductory training should be developed** for all existing and future employees.
- The majority of evaluations provided by affiliates responding through partners do not include enough consideration of the pluses and minuses. There is a lack of systematic quality evaluation based on a common framework.
- **Special action should be taken to ensure that the Code of Conduct and Sphere standards are effectively disseminated to all affiliates, understood and applied.**
- Most of the documents reviewed ignore gender, generation and the protection needs of specific groups. The OxAus evaluation of Gujarat was the only exception. **The next OI strategic plan should focus on the transformation of rhetoric about gender, generation and protection into action.**

#### The Humanitarian Consortium

- We can assume that the demands on Oxfam’s capacity for Humanitarian Response will increase rather than diminish, challenging affiliates to apply the lessons learned from the many emergencies of the last five years, and to take the appropriate decisions regarding empowering the Humanitarian Consortium to fulfil its mandate on behalf of the confederation as a whole. Key issues include relations and communications between the HCMG and the rest of the confederation (especially non-member affiliates); making a reality of the “lead agency” concept; **replacing the destructive inter-affiliate disagreements about direct and indirect interventions with a research-based debate about the appropriateness of both approaches in different scenarios.**

- While HCMG process seems to have been going well, it is less clear that outputs and outcomes are robust. Investment plans still fall far short of what is needed. Many recent OI humanitarian operations have made less use of the new OI philosophy, structures and procedures and have had to fall back on an older model, with the major affiliate in the country taking the lead.
- A clear gap is the apparent lack of any system to provide metrics for OI humanitarian operations. Basic questions like how many operations have there been in the last year to assist how many people with what success cannot be answered. There is no regular generation, collection and collating of data.
- Without the HC, Oxfam's disaster response operations would remain single affiliate affairs. Each Oxfam would develop its own style, competence, standards and working methods. OI would not be able to realize its full transnational potential. **The immediate challenge for the HC is to help the field employees and management systems of the affiliates put the agreed standards and systems into practice in a consistent way.**
- Key weaknesses are:
  - The much felt lack of information flow from the HCMG to non-HC affiliates.
  - The relationship between the HCMG and OI's advocacy around humanitarian issues looks satisfactory on paper but in practice is not working as well as it needs to.
  - The relationship between HCMG's investment aspirations and the line management functions of all affiliates. The HCMG is a leadership structure, not an exclusive club. The proposals from OxAus to build an OI-wide roster of skilled individuals suggests that an Oxfam-wide approach is possible.

#### The Tsunami Fund Management Team

The following points from the study indicate the stronger and weaker aspects of the TFMT.

- The TFMT has taken its managerial role seriously and has been innovative and pragmatic in finding solutions to unprecedented problems.
- However the structures into which the TFMT fed not been equally effective. In particular the HCTs faced the challenge of having to work together for the first time. Although affiliates' internal systems are finding it difficult to adapt to the needs of a common fund, the establishment of the Fund is seen as very positive...

#### **7.4 Gender equality**

The evaluation confirms the MTR's conclusions: Oxfam has good gender policies and systems but the contribution to gender equality in programme development and implementation is mediocre – with a few exceptions.

- Knowledge and understanding of Oxfam's gender policies and their implications for programming has **had decreasing attention and investment** over the period of the strategic plan and has become an excuse for lack of attention to the practical application of gender analysis in day-to-day work.
- The coherence of the Labour Rights Campaign, demonstrates what a strong, gendered analysis, research, alliance-building and field-level programming can achieve - but is almost exceptional. An equally successful – but also exceptional – example is the positive energy generated by the Women and Rights programme in the CAMEXCA Region, which shows what can be achieved through smart strategic alignment.

- **Oxfam needs to focus (in the gender area as in so many others). Building on Oxfam’s strengths, it would make sense to develop a confederation-wide gender equality programme** integrated with an area where Oxfam already has experience and a good track record. Possible areas of work include:
  - Taking women’s labour rights further;
  - Women’s leadership in humanitarian response;
  - A focus on gender in primary education;
  - Women and PRSPs;
  - Women and violence.
- The Labour Rights Campaign and the CAMEXCA Women and Rights demonstrate the added value of vertical and strategic alignment (the one programme approach and smart collaboration between affiliates). **These virtues should be combined in a new Aim Five programme** which would benefit from OI’s increasingly integrated architecture.
- **Spending targets for gender equality work should be established – and honoured** – in the next strategic plan. Similarly, gender equality criteria for grant-making – along the lines of Novib Oxfam Oxfam’s “traffic lights” system – should be adopted by all affiliates.
- OI-wide, **bring in external resources to consistently and jointly develop staff and partner capacities** in integrating gender work in all sectors of programme development, implementation and management. Underpin this education and training process with confederation-wide monitoring, evaluation and learning using gender equality as a pilot for an enhanced LAG strategy. Ensure these improvements are taken seriously by reporting progress and setbacks at Board and ED levels.

## 8. Lessons and recommendations: (b) Oxfam-wide issues

While many of our conclusions and recommendations are sector-specific, some have wider implications for Oxfam as a whole. There are a larger number of organizational issues which also require resolution and decision if the impetus achieved during the last five years is to be maintained and even surpassed. On the organizational side, the strongest messages emerging from the sector evaluations concern the following issues.

- Managing relative size and balance within the confederation continues to be a challenge. Oxfam GB’s outstanding human resources, financial clout and global reach can sometimes have an intimidating effect on some (not all) affiliates in some (not all) situations. At the same time affiliates express different views about the role and mandate of the OI Secretariat. Some affiliate leaders wish to empower the Secretariat (or other central bodies) to carry out important tasks on behalf of the whole confederation while from one affiliate there are signs of irritation with the Secretariat’s (alleged) “ambitions”. The external evaluation of the Humanitarian Consortium presents in microcosm some of the issues facing Oxfam International as a whole and emphasises a) that such tensions won’t go away and are the price all confederations pay for their consensual nature; b) **that the advantages of the confederation model can far outweigh the disadvantages only if c) the imbalances and tensions are acknowledged, understood and proactively managed.**
- Although the sector evaluations give credit to Oxfam’s progress in alliance-building and alliance-membership, there is continuing concern about Oxfam’s tendency to ignore the roles, contributions and views of others. These criticisms, expressed by some external evaluators and internal respondents, suggest a dangerously “Oxfam-centred” view of the world of development and humanitarian response.

- Oxfam remains predominantly Euro-centric and Anglophone. These characteristics affect the smaller affiliates and those outside Europe and of course have an impact on allies and advocacy targets. Much energy is (rightly) expended on brand development and protection: perhaps **the deeper question of Oxfam's identity deserves even more attention**.
- There is still far to go in establishing “one programme” integration between policy advocacy and campaigning, and service-delivery programming as the basis for work at all levels. **Stronger leadership and support is required to help Oxfam's professionals achieve coherence at the inception, design, planning, implementation and monitoring phases of campaigns**.
- **Oxfam should decide the level at which planning and programming should be focused for strategic collaboration: region or country**. Linked to this, the quoted examples of successful collaboration and joint programming at country-level suggest that **the idea of concentrating collaborative resources on a manageable number of integrated, scaled-up country-level programmes has several attractions** and would be do-able. Such an approach could be an entry-point for taking forward Oxfam's vision of strategic collaboration.
- Oxfam sets itself very high success criteria, particularly its definition of “impact”. While “significant and sustained changes...etc.” should of course remain the vision (and be supported by sector-specific criteria and indicators), **Oxfam should develop more meaningful and better-defined intermediate outcomes**. Repetition of “It's too early to tell” is valueless for learning and management purposes and understandably demotivating for staff.
- Under-investment in monitoring and evaluation seriously undermines Oxfam's collective learning and accountability capacity. All four sector evaluations underscore this. **Learning and accountability can only be achieved on the basis of rigorous and comprehensive monitoring and evaluation**.
- RSTs and LRMs value the increased support and respect they have gained during the last five years but are still aware of the gap between field-level programming and (mainly) HQ. **Oxfam has to decide on the level at which planning and programming should be focused for strategic collaboration: region or country**. Regions which do not conform to the conventional pattern (the Pacific, EEFSU and MEMAG) tend to be neglected by OI policy makers and planners, which affects programme potential.
- EDs make commitments about strategic collaboration and strengthening the confederation when they meet but sometimes appear to abandon them when confronted by affiliate preoccupations and priorities. This suggests the need for a) **more realistic commitments** at OI level combined with b) **more robust communication** with affiliate staff, supporters and back donors.

## 9. Methodology, approach and counting the cost

## 9.1 Introduction

This is the second evaluation of the implementation of Towards Global Equity. The first was the Mid-Term Review (MTR), conducted in 2004. We have tried to build on and not duplicate the findings of that review. Our mandate differed in three important ways:

- The MTR was conducted as a purely internal exercise (with some interviews with external respondents). This Evaluation has been carried out by internal and external evaluators.
- The MTR's scope was limited to joint affiliate programmes and activities: this Evaluation covers both individual and joint work.
- The MTR did not include the education sector.

The parameters for this Evaluation were set by the Global Coordination Team (GCT), through the Learning and Accountability Group (LAG). The Terms of Reference for the Evaluation were approved by the LAG in April 2005<sup>4</sup>. Recruitment of the internal and external evaluators began immediately and work began in earnest at the beginning of June.

The teams studied a very small sample of Oxfam's total output during the five-year period. These included interventions by individual affiliates as well as those involving joint work by two or more affiliates. The sector evaluations are based largely on secondary, written sources (available evaluation, monitoring and progress reports) plus some interviews with external and internal respondents (including Executive Directors and Lead Regional Managers). Accessing documents proved difficult, time-consuming (and therefore, for Oxfam, expensive). Field-based case studies were conducted in Mali and Senegal (Cotton Dumping), Indonesia (Labour Rights) and Mozambique (Education).

The main sources for the sector evaluations were existing evaluations, monitoring and progress reports, supplemented by interviews with some Executive Directors, Lead Regional Managers and key affiliate and OI staff. Further depth was added by field-based case studies:

- Labour rights campaigning in Indonesia
- Coffee campaigning in Honduras and Nicaragua
- Cotton dumping in Senegal and Mali
- Educational access for girls in Mozambique.

The evaluation of the Humanitarian Consortium and TFMT involved interviews with HCMG members and EDs (of HC member and non-member affiliates); attendance at the TFMT meeting in Colombo in October 2005 and interviews with Country Team members.

## 9.2 Critical reflections on the Evaluation

**The Evaluation studied programmes and campaigns implemented by affiliates (individuals and groups) and by OI as a whole. The Evaluation Team recognize that OI is “a work in progress” and that systems for accountability and learning at confederation level are still being developed. One important area which we have not been able to address is Oxfam's *cost-effectiveness*. During the early stages of the Evaluation we attempted to collect information about affiliates' investments in the four sectors over the five year period.**

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<sup>4</sup> Terms of Reference – see Annex 3

**We looked at the figures supplied by affiliates for the annual “financial mapping” exercise complied by the Oxfam International Secretariat as well as some affiliates’ own figures on activities such as campaigning<sup>5</sup>. Some expenditure figures are included in the internal evaluation reports on Education and Gender (see Volume II) but we were unable to obtain sufficient information to enable us to draw useful conclusions about Oxfam’s overall cost-effectiveness or efficiency.**

Generally speaking the process worked reasonably well but there were weaknesses:

- The combination of “context-in” and “programme-out” perspectives needed to be articulated in greater detail.
- The recruitment of the internal and external evaluators took longer than planned, which meant that the time available for external evaluators to critically review the internal evaluation reports and compare them with the contextual reviews was very short.
- If resources (and timing) had permitted, it would have been very useful to have brought the internal and external evaluators teams together at the start of the process for a general briefing and discussion of methodology and working methods and for a post-Evaluation meeting.
- Because there is no single, comprehensive data-base, we are cannot be sure that our conclusions are based on all the information that exists.
- There was no research among actual or intended beneficiaries. We relied largely on existing evaluation reports, many of which suffered from the same weakness.

All the sector evaluations make critical observations regarding monitoring and evaluation. The following observations from the Trade sector are representative:

The MTF Campaign set up a monitoring and reporting system and is better documented than the other sectors covered by this Evaluation, but that is a poor benchmark. There are three main weaknesses:

- Rigorous external evaluations of the campaigns are rare and much of the available documentation is reporting on media coverage and publicity;
- There has been little systematic, Oxfam-wide effort to link MTF monitoring and evaluation work with the monitoring of field-level livelihoods programming. It may be too early to expect significant or large-scale impacts on people’s lives, but the system for capturing such changes should be in place from the start, so as to establish baselines.
- In MTF as in other joint affiliate work, there is no systematic recording or reporting of direct and indirect costs. Until affiliates agree on and apply common programme and financial categories and definitions Oxfam will not be able to judge the cost-effectiveness of its work.

### **9.3 Cost-benefit of the Evaluation**

The Evaluation has taken nearly one year and the budgeted cost was approximately US\$ 400,000. This is an enormous investment of time and money. It is for Oxfam, as client, to decide whether the benefits justify the costs. In this context, two comments are appropriate:

- First, during the course of the first four years of the current strategic plan, the combined expenditure of the Oxfams will amount to some US\$ 2 billion. The estimated cost of this evaluation represents approximately only 0.02% of the total combined expenditure: a very low level of investment in monitoring, evaluation and learning.

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<sup>5</sup> We appreciate the information received the few affiliates who responded: however the data was insufficiently complete to be useful.

- Second, if affiliates and OI as a whole invested in a continuing and well-organised monitoring and evaluation system, “mega evaluations” such as this, which are disruptive and which (because of their infrequency) arouse defensive reactions, would not be necessary.

#### 9.4 Conclusions and recommendations

On the basis of the experience of the Evaluation Team and the observations of the external evaluators, our conclusions and recommendations are as follows:

- In setting Learning and Accountability as an objective without investing adequately in Monitoring and Evaluation, Oxfam has put the cart before the horse, leaving Learning and Accountability as a slogan;
- Oxfam should **study and agree on those areas of M&E work which can best be carried out collectively**, and those which to need to be done at affiliate level;
- One option would be to **pilot collaboration on M&E in one high priority area** of work during the next strategic plan period. (This suggestion is also made in Chapters 3, Education and 5, Gender Equality).
- Having defined the scope of collective M&E work Oxfam should **establish the necessary architecture, toolkit and resources** to carry it out as a service to the confederation as a whole. Information systems – storage, classification, retrieval and dissemination – need to be brought up to the standards required to support the agreed M&E objectives;
- **M&E needs to become – and to be seen as – an integral, normal and continuing part of management** (like financial accounting), not as an occasional, optional add-on.
- M&E is an important contributor to Learning and Accountability but it is not the only one. Linkages should also be established with **policy-development, programme planning staff training and development**.
- Oxfam’s M&E work seems to have swung far enough in the “qualitative” direction. This should now be balanced by **greater attention to quantitative data**. Narrative information should be more closely aligned with financial data. Without this Oxfam cannot judge the cost-effectiveness of its campaigning or field-level service delivery programmes. This weakness undermines accountability, learning and campaigning.

# Promises to keep: Evaluation of the implementation of *Towards Global Equity*, Oxfam's strategic plan, 2001 – 2006

## Main Report

### Chapter 1. General Introduction

#### 1.1 Not a zero-sum game

Oxfam International is a community of thousands of supporters, volunteers and staff in twelve national affiliates. These are altruistic, intelligent, knowledgeable, committed and capable people whose approach combines idealism with practical skills based on years of accumulated experience. Their work is based on shared values and objectives which are articulated in a strategic plan for the period 2001 – 2006, which the Board of Oxfam International adopted in 2000. To implement this plan the Oxfams together mobilise some US\$400 million annually to finance cooperation with people and organizations sharing similar values and qualities, in more than a hundred countries where most of the world's poorest and most powerless people live.

It would be astonishing (and scandalous) if such a powerful combination of moral and material capacities failed to achieve significant results and outcomes. And there is plenty of objective evidence that Oxfam has made and continue to make a very considerable positive difference to the lives of many hundreds of thousands of people across the world. However, this Evaluation attempts to answer the question "Given its very considerable human, financial and other resources (including its brand), to what extent is Oxfam realising its **full potential** and how could Oxfam do **even better** in the future?"

#### 1.2 Promises, promises

When the Board of Oxfam International adopted *Towards Global Equity* at their Melbourne meeting in 2000, they set the bar very high indeed. Substantively, the Strategic Plan committed Oxfam to achieving significant progress towards the realisation of five rights-based aims and eight "strategic change objectives":

1. The right to a sustainable livelihood
2. The right to basic social services
3. The right to life and security
4. The right to be heard
5. The right to an identity

Oxfam also made "three commitments" concerning co-operation for global citizenship; the promotion of economic and social justice, and quality & coherence. Oxfam further promised to achieve another eight general goals by the end of the plan period:

- Significantly increasing public understanding that economic and social justice is crucial to sustainable development;
- Engaged in the wider global movement for economic and social justice through membership and leadership;

- Enabling more individuals, groups and organizations to become active global citizens in the struggle against poverty and injustice;
- Expanding Oxfam's relations with "compatible" organizations;
- Aligned all of Oxfam's grant-making, advocacy, campaigning and communication towards the strategic change objectives;
- Analyzed and learn from our experiences and share the learning to maximize impact
- Provided credible evidence of practical and durable changes in the lives of the people we work with;
- Exploited the strengths of our confederative structure to improve efficiency in pursuing our goals.

This is a formidable set of challenges and it is not surprising that the picture that emerges from this Evaluation is mixed. There is certainly evidence in the different sectors we have looked at that Oxfam has made progress towards realising each of its commitments and promises, although we have not found significant progress on all fronts in any one sector. It is also not surprising to find that progress on the greatest number of these general promises has been made in the Trade sector, to which Oxfam has given high priority and invested very considerable (though difficult to quantify) resources.

## 1.3 Methodology and approach

### 1.3.1 Terms of reference and process

This is the second evaluation of the implementation of Towards Global Equity. The first was the Mid-Term Review (MTR), conducted in 2004. We have tried to build on and not duplicate the findings of that review. Our mandate differed in three important ways:

- The MTR was conducted as a purely internal exercise (with some interviews with external respondents). This Evaluation has been carried out by internal and external evaluators.
- The MTR's scope was limited to joint affiliate programmes and activities: this Evaluation covers both individual and joint work.
- The MTR did not include the education sector.

The parameters for this Evaluation were set by the Global Coordination Team (GCT), through the Learning and Accountability Group (LAG). The Terms of Reference for the Evaluation were approved by the LAG in April 2005. Recruitment of the internal and external evaluators began immediately and work began in earnest at the beginning of June.

The objectives set for the Evaluation were ambitious. We were to seek verifiable evidence about the outcomes and impact of Oxfam's work during this five year period by looking at selected programmes in four main sectors related to the rights based aims on which *Towards Global Equity* is built. We wanted to avoid the blinkered approach which ignores all external influences and the work of other actors and which sometimes leads to seeing causality where none exists. In order to avoid these pitfalls we asked the evaluators to start by looking at external developments in their respective sectors without reference to Oxfam's work. We asked them to identify important changes during the last five years, which have significantly affected the lives of people suffering poverty and injustice. In the case of Trade and Education, these contextual reviews were conducted by the external evaluators.

The main sources for the sector evaluations were existing evaluations, monitoring and progress reports, supplemented by interviews with some Executive Directors, Lead Regional Managers and key affiliate and OI staff. Further depth was added by field-based case studies:

- Labour rights campaigning in Indonesia

- Coffee campaigning in Honduras and Nicaragua
- Cotton dumping in Senegal and Mali
- Educational access for girls in Mozambique.

The evaluation of the Humanitarian Consortium and TFMT involved interviews with HCMG members and EDs (of HC member and non-member affiliates); attendance at the TFMT meeting in Colombo in October 2005 and interviews with Country Team members.

The Evaluation Team consisted of four internal evaluators located in Rome, the USA and Canada plus the Evaluation Coordinator (France) and Evaluation Researcher (Spain). They communicated with each other, with the external evaluators and with the OI Secretariat mainly through e-mail. They held one meeting in August 2005. They posted a series of five Progress Reports on the Oxfam International Dashboard. The Evaluation Coordinator attended the LAG meeting in September 2005 and presented an interim report. He presented a further interim report to the GCT at their Doorn meeting in November 2005.

The draft sector evaluation reports were sent to relevant Sub-Groups and subject leads who were asked to point out possible errors of fact or interpretation. These were corrected in the final version of the reports. The draft Synthesis Report was submitted to the LAG (to confirm fulfilment of the ToR) in February 2006.

### 1.3.2 Critical reflection on the Evaluation

Both the internal and external evaluators realise that we have been able to fulfil some aspects of our terms of reference better than others.

**One important area which we have not been able to address is *cost-effectiveness*. During the early stages of the Evaluation we attempted to collect information about affiliates' investments in the four sectors over the plan period. We looked at the figures supplied by affiliates for the annual "financial mapping" exercises as well as affiliates' own figures on activities such as campaigning. Some expenditure figures are included in the internal evaluation reports on Education and Gender (see Volume II) but we failed to obtain sufficient information to enable us to draw useful conclusions about Oxfam's overall cost-effectiveness or efficiency.**

The process we designed was complex. Our twofold aim was

- To place the significance of Oxfam's interventions in the wider perspective through the contextual reviews conducted by the external evaluators.
- To put a "firewall" between the internal and external evaluations in order to obtain different perspectives on the same subject-matter.

The process worked reasonably well but there were weaknesses:

- The combination of "context-in" and "programme-out" perspectives needed to be articulated in greater detail. One of the external evaluators found it difficult to pitch the "contextual review" at a level which would both capture the macro-scale developments *and* detect Oxfam's "footprints".
- The recruitment of the internal and external evaluators took longer than planned, which meant that some work was starting at the same time as other work was nearing completion. As a result the time available for external evaluators to critically review the internal evaluation reports and compare them with the contextual reviews was very short.
- If resources (and timing) had permitted, it would have been very useful to have brought the internal and external evaluators teams together at the start of the process for a general briefing and discussion of methodology and working methods.

- Similarly, a post-Evaluation meeting would have permitted clarifying some conceptual and other misunderstandings between internal and external evaluators and would also have made a valuable contribution to the drafting of this Synthesis Report.
- Obtaining documentary evidence (existing evaluations, monitoring and progress reports) was time-consuming and, because there is no single, comprehensive data-base, we are cannot be sure that our conclusions are based on all the information that exists.
- There was no research among actual or intended beneficiaries. We relied largely on existing evaluation reports, many of which suffered from the same weakness.

### 1.3.3 Cost-benefit

The Evaluation has taken nearly one year and the budgeted cost was approximately US\$ 400,000. A significant amount of this was due to the amount of time the evaluators had to spend on obtaining documents. Nine individual evaluators or institutions have been involved, together with the Evaluation Coordinator and Evaluation Researcher. This is an enormous investment of time and money. It is for Oxfam, as client, to decide whether the benefits justify the costs. In this context, two comments are appropriate:

- First, during the course of the first four years of the current strategic plan, the combined expenditure of the Oxfams will amount to some US\$ 2 billion. The estimated cost of this evaluation represents approximately 0.02% of the total combined expenditure: a very low level of investment in monitoring, evaluation and learning. Even allowing for the fact that individual affiliates have also paid for separate evaluations during the same period, Oxfam's total investment in evaluation appears to be extremely modest as a percentage of total turnover.
- Second, if affiliates and OI as a whole invested in a continuing and well-organised monitoring and evaluation system, "mega evaluations" such as this, which are disruptive and which (because of their infrequency) arouse defensive reactions, would not be necessary. If we take the example of financial accounting and auditing as a model, we could arrive at a situation where systematic, responsible and objective monitoring and evaluation is carried out on a regular basis by affiliates and OI; and is verified ("audited") on a regular basis by external evaluators. In other words, monitoring and evaluation would become a normal and integral part of the organization's work – like financial accounting and auditing.

### 1.3.4 Conclusions and recommendations

On the basis of the experience of the Evaluation Team and the observations of the external evaluators, our conclusions are as follows:

- In setting Learning and Accountability as an objective without investing adequately in Monitoring and Evaluation, Oxfam has put the cart before the horse, leaving Learning and Accountability as a slogan;
- Oxfam should study and agree on those areas of M&E work which can best be carried out collectively, and those which to need to be done at affiliate level;
- One option would be to pilot collaboration on M&E in one high priority area of work during the next strategic plan period. (This suggestion is also made in Chapters 3, Education and 5, Gender Equality).
- Having defined the scope of collective M&E work Oxfam should establish the necessary architecture, toolkit and resources to carry it out as a service to the confederation as a whole. Information systems – storage, classification, retrieval and dissemination – need to be brought up to the standards required to support the agreed M&E objectives;
- M&E needs to become – and to be seen as – an integral, normal and continuing part of management (like financial accounting), not as an occasional, optional add-on.

- M&E is an important contributor to Learning and Accountability but it is not the only one. Linkages should also be established with policy-development, programme planning staff training and development.
- Oxfam’s M&E work seems to have swung far enough in the “qualitative” direction. This should now be balanced by greater attention to quantitative data. Narrative information should be more closely aligned with financial data. Without this Oxfam cannot judge the cost-effectiveness of its campaigning or field-level service delivery programmes.

## 1.4 Sample selection

The work of 12 affiliates in more than 100 countries over a five year period presented a vast and unmanageable number of possible subjects for the Evaluation and it was essential to be selective. We have therefore selected a feasible (but still large) sample of Oxfam’s interventions<sup>6</sup> which illustrate Oxfam’s work in each of the five rights-based Aims. The selected interventions are within the following sectors of the five Aims:

- We have paid considerably more attention to Trade and Livelihoods sector (as part of Aim 1) and Humanitarian Response sector (as part of Aim 3) since these were given priority in the implementation of the Plan.
- We selected the Education sector within Aim 2 and the Gender Equity sector in Aim 5.
- Our brief was to look at “voice” (Aim 4) across the four other Aims.

Looking at the samples as a whole, we have tried to ensure that there is at least one intervention from each of the Regions where Oxfam has invested most resources during the current plan period. In selecting interventions we consulted with the Oxfam “architecture” where it exists. For Trade and Humanitarian Response we consulted the TCPG and the OI Humanitarian Coordinator, representing the Humanitarian Consortium. For Education we consulted affiliate “leads” where they existed and for Gender Equity we consulted affiliate leads and the informal gender network they have created. The table on the following page shows the range of samples:

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<sup>6</sup> Interventions: as the word “programme” is capable of being understood in different ways, we have used “intervention” to mean any combination of the “tools” Oxfam uses to achieve its objectives: grant-making; direct operational work; campaigning, advocacy, lobby and alliances.

Aims	Sectors	Interventions	Regions	Countries
1. Right to a sustainable livelihood	<u>Trade</u> • The Make Trade Fair Campaign	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Research basis</li> <li>• Rationale and strategic choices</li> <li>• Top-level advocacy (e.g. WTO, RTAs)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Global</li> <li>• Global and South America</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Peru (CAFTA)</li> </ul>
	• Labour Rights	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stop Trading Away Our Rights <i>and</i></li> <li>• Play Fair at the Olympics</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• South America</li> <li>• East Asia</li> <li>• South Asia</li> <li>• Maghreb &amp; Middle East</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nicaragua, Colombia</li> <li>• Indonesia</li> <li>• Sri Lanka</li> <li>• Morocco</li> </ul>
	Agriculture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cotton dumping</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• West Africa</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Senegal, Mali</li> </ul>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Revisit coffee campaign</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CAMEXCA</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nicaragua</li> <li>• Honduras</li> <li>• Guatemala</li> </ul>
2. Right to basic social services	<u>Education</u> • Quality primary education for girls	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Three selected country-level interventions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• West Africa</li> <li>• Southern Africa</li> <li>• South Asia</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Burkina Faso</li> <li>• Mozambique</li> <li>• India</li> </ul>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• International level campaign</li> <li>•</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Global</li> </ul>	
3. Right to life and security	<u>Humanitarian response</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quality of four selected humanitarian responses, 1999-2005, including advocacy</li> <li>• Functioning of the Humanitarian Consortium and TFMT</li> <li>• Cross-reference to the OI Tsunami M&amp;E work</li> <li>•</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Latin America</li> <li>• Horn of Africa</li> <li>• South Asia</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hurricane Mitch, 1998-2000</li> <li>• Ethiopia, 1998-2002</li> <li>• Darfur-Chad 2005</li> <li>• Gujarat Earthquake 2002</li> </ul>
4. Right to be heard	This was looked at across the four “stand-alone” sectors as a cross-cutting issue.			
5. Right to an identity	<u>Gender equity</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Global and regional context</li> <li>• Examples of best Oxfam practice</li> <li>• Support other sector evaluations in analysing gender equity</li> <li>• Internal changes in Oxfam</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Horn of Africa</li> <li>• Middle East &amp; Maghreb</li> <li>• South Asia</li> <li>• CAMEXCA</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ethiopia</li> <li>• Occupied Palestine</li> <li>• Bangladesh</li> <li>• Nicaragua</li> </ul>

## Chapter 2: Trade, Markets and Assets: the Make Trade Fair Campaign

### 2.1 Introduction

The Evaluation confirms and adds to the positive findings of the 2004 Mid-Term Review. As the “flagship” of *Towards Global Equity*, the Make Trade Fair Campaign has demonstrated what can be achieved when Oxfam:

- Focuses on a coherent set of priority issues with a clear narrative which has both intellectual authority and is capable of being communicated to diverse audiences;
- Invests the required human and financial resources and creates an effective organizational structure;
- Empowers teams to develop a strong ethos and to function with considerable autonomy;
- Encourages the team’s sense of identity with the common project rather than with narrow affiliate interests and preoccupations.

Oxfam launched the Make Trade Fair Campaign in April 2002. Its goal was to create a global movement in support of trade justice and to put pressure on governments and the WTO to ensure that the Doha Round would indeed be a truly “development round”. Campaigning has focused on commodity pricing and company purchasing policies (coffee); ending dumping (with cotton as the emblematic commodity); market access (sugar) and the right to protect (rice).<sup>7</sup> On TRIPS the focus was on reforming WTO patent regimes. Labour rights campaigning focused on reversing the erosion of workers’ rights, especially those of female workers. All the campaigns have employed the tools of research, alliance building, expanding Oxfam’s presence, advocacy, lobbying, media and popular campaigning.

The Make Trade Fair Campaign and its sub-campaigns is the core of the “High impact strategy” for markets and trade, as part of the programming to for Aim 1: the right to a sustainable livelihood. Oxfam would “direct the highest possible levels of attention, energy and resources towards establishing ‘fair rules for the global economy’” and “give the highest priority to increasing poor people’s access to and power over markets, and to supporting the reform of global trade”. Allied to this was the objective of including “poor people in the benefits of economic activity”.<sup>8</sup>

This is necessarily the longest chapter of the Synthesis Report: the Make Trade Fair Campaign and sub-campaigns has been the biggest single joint initiative by Oxfam during the course of the current strategic plan. Although we have only been able to look at samples of the campaigning, this involved a huge amount of work on the part of the Internal Evaluator and six separate studies by two teams of External Evaluators. Despite the length of the chapter, it is nevertheless only a summary of the findings, conclusions and recommendations contained in the internal and external evaluation reports, the full versions of which are included in Volume II.

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<sup>7</sup> Sugar and rice were not included in this Evaluation

<sup>8</sup> Quotations from *Towards Global Equity* sections 4.3 and 4.4

The first part of this chapter (section 1.2 “The context”) summarises the significant changes in the general area of trade, poverty and development; cotton dumping and labour rights identified in the Contextual Reviews by the North-South Institute and Social Compass (full version in Volume II). The second part (sections 1.3 – 1.4) summarises the Internal Evaluation Report on “Make Trade Fair” by Laura Roper, reviewing “outcomes and impacts”, “added value of Oxfam’s models of change” and “lessons for the future”. Comments from the External Evaluation Reports are summarised at the end of the chapter. The full text of Laura’s report (Main Report and Case Studies) and the reports of the External Evaluators are included in Volume II.

## 2.2 The context

The contextual reviews are important for three reasons. First, they provide an assessment by external experts of the relative significance of the issues within the sector and of how these issues affect the lives and welfare of the people with whom Oxfam is concerned. Thus they provide a means of checking the extent to which Oxfam is “on target” in its choice of the issues in which it intervenes. For example, has Oxfam balanced campaigning to end cotton subsidies with helping large numbers of marginal cultivators in West Africa to diversify their production and raise family incomes?

Second, the contextual reviews identify the wide range of actors (MFIs, governments, local, national, regional and international civil society organisations and NGOs). This enables us to see the role of Oxfam and its interventions (direct and in alliance with others) in relation to the total effort by all actors, and avoid the simplistic, linear attribution of “effect” to “cause”.

Third, the contextual reviews, together with the findings of the evaluation reports, provide benchmark information which can be used as a baseline for future monitoring and evaluation.

### 2.2.1 Trade, poverty and development

The first section of NSI’s contextual review sketches the history of debate regarding the contribution of trade to development and poverty reduction and concentrates on developments since 2000. (Emphasis added in bold.)

*The WTO: ...After five years of the WTO there was a growing realisation that a serious imbalance had emerged between the costs and benefits of the new multilateral trading system for developing countries, and questions were raised about the consequences for poor people. For many, the confrontations at the WTO Ministerial conference in Seattle in 1999 were a wake-up call to address public concerns about globalisation...  
...key changes have included measures to increase WTO’s transparency and dialogue with non-government groups; the promotion of a positive agenda on globalisation...and enhanced capacity building in developing countries. Despite these changes, however, **the WTO remains firmly committed to trade liberalisation** – perhaps more than the World Bank...*

*Trade and poverty: The World Bank’s estimated impact of the Doha Round on global poverty was reduced in 2005, reflecting...new data about tariff levels, China’s entry to the WTO, and changes to EU clothing imports...[Both estimates] are considerably less than the US\$144 million estimated in 2003 and well below the US\$1.49 billion target of MDG1...And critics note that **for most people the change will be incremental rather than transformative**; there will be little qualitative difference in their lives, with many just moving across the poverty line.  
...Many studies find that complementary measures are needed to ensure that the benefits of trade reform are realised and these may have a far greater impact on poverty.*

*Regional Trade Agreements: In the last five years there has been a proliferation of regional and bilateral FTA which has raised several concerns...91 agreements have been notified to the WTO since January 2000, bringing the total to some 160 by the end of 2004, accounting for between 1/3 and 40% of world trade.*

*One (concern) is that in RTAs, developing countries usually have to accelerate their liberalisation and conform to rules relating to IPRs and services which are more stringent than in the WTO...*

*The experience of the last five years suggests that many (and particularly Latin American) governments have become more attentive to criticism of the emphasis on free trade...In response they chose...to underline the importance of...other issues...Nonetheless there were still questions about the coherence of these initiatives with the free trade agenda...*

*There is now a broad network of CSOs (and regional bodies) in the Americas working on trade issues...An underlying belief is that national analysis, advocacy of alternatives and action are much more effective if it is undertaken in solidarity with other social groups from across the hemisphere.*

### **2.2.2 Labour rights**

Both NSI and Social Compass review recent developments in this sector in their contextual reports. NSI provides a global perspective including a review of the impact of the Fair Trade movement, codes of conduct, multilateral initiatives and national policies, before looking in greater detail at the status of labour rights in Morocco and Colombia, the two countries which are the focus of its evaluation of Oxfam's Labour Rights Campaign. Social Compass reviewed the regional picture in China, the Philippines, Sri Lanka and Thailand as well as in Indonesia, the subject of its internal evaluation report. The follow extracts are from the NSI and Social Compass country context reviews:

Social Compass notes that: *...At the regional level, trends such as increased Foreign Direct Investment, the stronger influence of multilateral agreements and of international bodies and TNCs have not translated into better working conditions or improvement of the labour situation in the region. Rather, **the increased mobility of capital is potentially undermining the attempt of the labour movement to secure workers' rights and improve [their] socio-economic conditions.***

Although China is not one of the countries specifically studied in this Evaluation, because of its dominant position and influence, we asked SC to include China in the contextual review of labour rights in East Asia. *In China, policy and legislative changes give the impression "that workers are fully protected under the law" and "it could be argued that structural change is occurring with the liberalisation of the economy. However, many of these laws seem also to provide scope...for...serious human rights abuses...**evidence on the ground is suggestive of widespread, serious and, at times, fatal labour rights abuses, particularly for women and migrant workers.**" Social Compass sees hope in campaigns initiated by the workers themselves, in workers' education programmes (rather than boycotts or shaming). Tellingly, SC observes "there is a distinct lack of the workers' voice in the literature and therefore, **representation of Chinese workers by northern NGOs...becomes a questionable proposition.**"*

*Indonesia completed its ratification of ILO conventions in 2000 and has enacted new labour legislation with ILO help. Changes to national law have been promulgated.*

*This looks like an impressive reform agenda covering minimum working age, discrimination, working conditions...menstrual leave and maternity leave, rights to establish a union....and rights for migrant workers, trafficking of women and children... However, ILO study covering the period 1998-2003 “showed that Indonesian workers have to endure harsh treatment when fighting for their rights.” Indonesia is an important source of unskilled migrant workers. Although laws protecting these workers have been passed, Human Rights Watch reported in 2005 that thousands of Indonesian domestic workers in Malaysia were being abused because government policies in both countries were failing to protect them”. SC concludes that **“Most successes appear to be through Union-NGO partnerships, where local pressure, combined with international campaigning, provides significant leverage...”***

*Because Sri Lanka benefited enormously from the Multi-Fibre Agreement (MFA), the phasing out of this agreement is predicted to impact significantly on the country’s garment industry, Employment and Labour was re-launched in December 2002 with an outlook that is “developmental, proactive and service-oriented” according to the ILO, which is working with the Ministry on the elimination of child labour; youth unemployment and labour market issues.*

*Despite the legislative and regulatory framework, abuses of labour rights persist. **“Women are concentrated in low-paid, low-skilled, time-consuming and labour-intensive sectors....where the application of labour law is most difficult.** For domestic and home workers there is no protection at all.” Child labour remains widespread, as does child trafficking and the exploitation of children in the sex trade.*

(SC’s contextual review also includes studies of labour rights policy changes in the Philippines and Thailand: see the full version in Volume II).

NSI’s review of labour rights in Morocco and Colombia identifies the following major trends and developments:

#### Morocco

- *Workers have been severely affected by the end of the MFA, with **exports of textiles and clothing falling by 16% in the first four months of 2005;***
- *This sector provided 43% of total employment: 201,000 jobs of which 75% are held by women.*
- *In 2002 the government and textile manufacturers association agreed on measures to boost the competitiveness of the sector. At the same time the government and ILO developed a programme to make “decent work” a competitive factor. NGO involvement has been limited. Concrete results have not yet been reported, other than dialogue replacing conflictual relations between the private sector and trades unions.*
- *A new labour code approved by parliament in 2003 brings **increased flexibility for employers and benefits for workers.** The challenge is to extend these gains to the informal sector (108,000 garment workers in 1999).*

#### Colombia

- *In 2003 the government lost a referendum to make labour laws more flexible. Employers have replaced labour agreements with contractual service agreements and contracting out to evade minimum wage laws and other benefits. **Labour standards –including wages–have fallen while economic growth has risen.***
- *Liberalisation of the agricultural sector has driven people to the cities, depressing wages.*
- *Trades union efforts to resist changes have been weakened by intimidation from paramilitary forces. Sources report the murder of over 100 trade union members in 2003 and again in 2004.*

- However, the World Bank “Doing Business in 2006” report cites Colombian labour legislation as rigid and ranks Colombia as 130<sup>th</sup> out of 155 countries in terms of ease of hiring and firing workers.
- A 2003 study found that tariff cuts in Colombia during the 1990s were associated with lower wages and increased informal production. **Trade reforms contributed to rising wage inequality.**

### 2.2.3 Agriculture: Cotton dumping

NSI’s Contextual Report analyses the complexities of the poverty dynamics of cotton in the countries of West and Central African (WCA) and draws three key conclusions:

1. *While not a one-for-one relationships, **changes in income levels of cotton producers are directly proportional to cotton price changes**.....negative changes in world cotton prices over the last decade appear to have had an impact on income levels of producers in these countries.*

2. *This relationship...is partly reflected in the fact **that cotton-producing regions in WCA countries do not necessarily have a lower level of income poverty or a higher level of poverty reduction than non-cotton producing rural regions**. This is confirmed by region-level survey data in both Mali and Burkina Faso. Further, expanded cotton production out of these regions may have translated into reduced poverty for cotton producers and their*

*families but did not necessarily translate into reduced poverty for the regions as a whole. In the case of both Mali and Burkina Faso, important cotton-producing regions...had nearly stagnant poverty headcounts over various survey periods, partly reflecting the secular decline in world cotton prices.*

3. *Cotton production is only one source of income for rural households...Survey evidence from Mali suggests **that the marginal contribution of livestock and non-farm income is higher than cotton income in propelling cotton farmers out of poverty**. It appears that farmers quickly diversify their sources of income as they move up the income scale. Further, such factors as population densities, migration and remittance patterns and climatic differences are important in WCA rural poverty.*

Reviewing current trends and their implications for the future, NSI observes:

*There are four interconnected trends in world cotton markets today that have an important bearing on WCA countries’ medium- and long-term production and international trading environment for cotton:*

- Synthetic production will continue its hold on fibre demand;*
- Price volatility is now the norm in world cotton markets;*
- Transgenic cotton will play an increasing role in yields and marketing*
- Supports are not likely to decline.*

Addressing the last of the trends in more detail, NSI reports:

*...It is unlikely that the level and composition of US (or EC) cotton subsidies will change....as a direct result of the Cotton Initiative...First, there are no indications that the current US Farm Bill will be amended in any substantive way in 2006, which means **that the current level and composition of subsidies will run to 2010, as planned**.*

NSI also notes on capacity-building that: *While Oxfam must be credited with some of (the) increased capacity o engage, there have been many other NGOs, think-tanks and international organisations involved in...capacity-building...Over US\$ 800 million was spent by donors and international organisations on trade-related capacity-building in 2004.*

## 2.3 Outcomes and impacts

### 2.3.1 The overall Make Trade Fair campaign

#### Post-Hong Kong challenges

The internal and external evaluation reports were substantially completed before the WTO meeting in Hong Kong in December 2005. However, both Laura Roper and NSI kindly agreed to update their reports in the light of the meeting's outcomes.

Oxfam's own position paper stated: "The WTO Ministerial meetings in Hong Kong were a lost opportunity to make trade fairer for poor people around the world...small progress in agriculture was more than cancelled out by backward steps in other areas." Laura Roper's assessment of Oxfam's overall strategy has been "generative" in four ways:

- Oxfam invested in intellectual capital which has positioned it as an authority on trade issues, equipped a wide range of allies and challenged northern governments;
- Oxfam also invested in the institutional capacity of allies and partners so that they are better able to move forward advocacy agendas with or without additional Oxfam support;
- Oxfam made progress in moving away from a northern-focused campaigning model and using its assets to innovate and campaign in both North and South;
- Oxfam emerged strong, more diversified, better networked, more strategic and with a broader range of in-house competencies.

Nevertheless, Oxfam invested heavily in the proposition that the reform of global trade rules could be achieved within the context of the WTO. "A legitimate question as the Doha Round winds down is whether a reformist strategy has *not yet* succeeded or *cannot* succeed..." Even if reform is possible, is the WTO the correct arena to focus on, given the aggressive pursuit of bilateral and regional trade agreements by the EU and USA? And has Oxfam focused adequately on other global actors – multinationals and emerging economic powers: Brazil, China and India?

Laura Roper concludes: "Finally, the outcome (of Hong Kong) reconfirms the recommendation in the main body of this report that Oxfam needs to take a broad view of the range of policy and programmatic interventions that can affect both the right to sustainable livelihoods and the right to be heard at international, regional and national levels....Oxfam may want to redeploy some of its substantial assets into other policy issues and/or in "deepening" its response in a limited number of areas, to test fully the theory that robust alignment leads to substantial and sustained changes in people's lives, perhaps focusing on regions that were not so fully involved in the trade campaign, so that they can make accelerated progress in developing and implementing the "one programme" approach.

NSI added a post-script to its general evaluation of the MTF and broadly supported Oxfam's initial response. Their note concluded with the following: *What does this all mean for small farmers and workers in developing countries? It is difficult to estimate – though the World Bank will no doubt fine tune its projections and still conclude that developing countries would gain more if only they agreed more to cut their own tariffs more. There is an increasing danger that an increasing number of people will be cynical about the time and money spent on these high-profile and well-attended events. It may be important to highlight some gains, while maintaining the process of dialogue with trade officials and the pressure from CSO partners. When the negotiations resume their intensive pace in Geneva shortly, developing countries will continue to need support to advance their own demands and resist pressure for liberalisation of their own markets.*

### 2.3.2 Evaluation of the overall campaign

#### The Internal evaluation report

Laura Roper's internal evaluation report summarises the "top-level" successes of the MTF Campaign as follows:

- Through MTF, Oxfam has promoted the right of a wide range of actors to be heard:
  - Over ten million signatures to the "Big Noise" of which more than 85% from the South;
  - Construction of non-traditional alliances such as those between labour, women's and human rights organizations;
  - Developing common platforms with partners and allies;
  - Promoting partners' participation in national, regional and international forums.
- Partners attest that Oxfam has contributed to changing people's attitudes and beliefs about the relevance of trade policy in their lives and in their capacity and right to influence trade agreements;
- Oxfam staff judge that Oxfam has contributed to important policy outcomes:
  - The ability of Southern governments to resist EU and US proposals on agriculture at Cancun 2003 and subsequently on cotton dumping;
  - Changing the climate around dumping and creating a more favourable environment for the successful resolution of Brazil's complaint against the US on cotton dumping and a similar decision on EU sugar dumping;
  - Contributing to the failure of FTAA negotiations and delay CAFTA by almost a year;
  - Specific labour policy victories in US, UK, South Africa, Nicaragua, Kenya, Guatemala, Sri Lanka;
  - The "big four" coffee roasters started Fair Trade lines and some Southern governments introduced policies to support producers affected by the coffee crisis;
  - The Doha Declaration confirming the primacy of public health over patent rights and the decision on TRIPS compliance for LDCs to 2016.

Laura Roper's report acknowledges Oxfam staff's awareness that in most cases these outcomes fall short of the policy goals set out in *Rigged Rules and Double Standards*.

In terms of concrete changes in people's lives, Oxfam can claim to have contributed to:

- Increased sales by coffee producers via fair trade and speciality coffee channels and increased donor investment;
- Gains in wages and health enforcement in Labour Rights Campaign countries, specially Indonesia;
- Limited gains in access to medicines, partly offset by pharmaceutical company manoeuvring and lack of political will.

#### The External Evaluation Report

The NSI general evaluation of the MTFC broadly concurs with the internal evaluation report but raises three issues which NSI believes should have been addressed in greater detail:

- *Capacity building: It seems that Oxfam has helped developing country governments and CSOs to be more engaged and forceful on WTO issues, but how long will this continue?...Is this part of a larger capacity-building strategy?*

- *There are a number of areas in which the internal evaluation proposes that Oxfam extend its work – notably influencing Northern governments, targeting corporate control, addressing RTAs (North-South and South-South) and complementary policies/programming. But can Oxfam continue to expand the scope of its work without cutting back in some areas?*
- *Context: the internal evaluation is fairly introspective...There is little consideration of what others are doing...One of the few weaknesses of the report is its limited reference to the issue of competition and what this may mean for Oxfam.*

In general: *Oxfam's work – and its capacity to attract the media as well as the attention of key governments, international organisations and think tanks – is generally admired by a wide range of other groups...Its analysis and opinions hold particular weight because of the connection made with the grassroots...Oxfam's research helps to give them a voice in trade policy discussions.*

Key NSI criticisms of the MTF include:

- *Research quality: can be selective in its sources and may not use the most up-to-date data;*
- *Some research (in main body of reports) inconsistent with executive summaries which appear to have been written to support campaigning messages;*
- *Too much emphasis on subsidies as key cause of dumping;*
- *Outsiders' feedback often not taken into account...especially comments that would call for a revision of a key research message.*

Regarding Oxfam's "models of change", NSI observes:

- *Overall the rights-based approach was superficial and applied selectively;*
- *Oxfam's concept of rights and its rights language is inconsistent with the conventional human rights concepts and language of the UN;*
- *The association of the Oxfam brand...has added value to its trade work. On the other hand, in some developing countries, having a campaign branded as Oxfam can be problematic;*
- *Oxfam's leadership in research, advocacy and dialogue on trade issues has both attracted allies and also built on the strengths of its allies;*
- *There is scope for Oxfam to improve its alliance skills. Many groups find Oxfam difficult to work with – as a result of its size, its resistance to different campaign ideas...and its attention to media impact.*

### **2.3.3 Agriculture (1): The Cotton Dumping Campaign**

#### Changes in the Terms of the Debate

Very early on in the campaign, and consistently in the lead up to Cancun, editorial pages and regular reporting in the *New York Times* and the *Financial Times* had clearly picked up on the hypocrisy messages found in *Rigged Rules and Double Standard*. In turn, the EU and US have had to address publicly address the issues of subsidies and since Cancun have voiced commitment to their reduction, including recent statements by George Bush.

#### Increasing Poor Countries' Voice in the WTO

When asked about turning points in the campaign, the vast majority of Oxfam respondents cite Cancun because the G20 was able to resist EU and US pressures on agriculture and the Singapore issues.

On cotton, Brazil obviously exerted its voice through employing the dispute resolution mechanism against the US, which they would have done with or without Oxfam support, but Oxfam staff believe they amplified Brazil's message through its press work and research studies.

The similar ruling on EU practices regarding sugar dumping has reinforced this idea. Oxfam has played a more seminal and proactive role with West African governments, particularly the 4 Cs (Mali, Burkina Faso, Benin and Chad), on the cotton issue and Oxfam research and the ACP secretariat and the LDC Sugar Forum recognize lobbying on sugar policy.

#### Increasing producers' voices in trade policy negotiations

There is some progress in countries or regions where a serious investment has been made in this. The West Africa region is working closely with cotton producers and increasingly other producer groups (particularly rice), providing a range of support to make them more effective advocates. In the various Latin American regional agreements producer organizations have been important actors. Certainly in both regions, producer groups and their allies have participated in various fora at the country, regional, and at times international level. This remains an area that requires a lot of investment and can be frustrating given that producer groups, particularly the base groups, tend to be quite weak, the sector at best under-resourced and at worst totally neglected, and their capacity for building and maintaining alliances and proposing feasible policy alternatives is under-developed. Oxfam has also been subject to some criticism in West Africa, where there have been complaints that Oxfam is privileging cotton producers over other groups, as well as focusing on the wrong trade issues (cotton instead of other commodities; the WTO instead of EPAs).

#### Policy and Practice Change

A final assessment will depend on the outcome of the Hong Kong Ministerial and the future of bi-lateral and regional negotiations, but as of this writing the prognosis is not terribly good.<sup>9</sup> Despite a professed willingness by the US and Europe to commit to a substantial cut in export subsidies, in Oxfam's analysis, in practice this would have negligible impact in the overall level of subsidies (direct and hidden credibility with partners, loss of credibility of OI's campaigning model, difficulty to secure buy-in for future campaigns."

Given that crucial policy changes have not been achieved, it is premature to expect direct impacts in people's livelihoods.

#### **2.3.4 Agriculture (2): Coffee revisited**

A study of the Oxfam Coffee Campaign in the CAMEXCA Region was conducted in 2003, prior to the Mid-term Review. For this Strategic Plan Evaluation we asked Laura Roper, co-author of the earlier study, to revisit the region to assess the extent to which outcomes and impacts observed in 2003-2004 had been sustained, improved on or fallen back... The following are the key points from Laura's report, based on a field-visit in September 2005.)

#### Increased Demand for FT Coffee

Coffee prices have recovered substantially after the low point of the 2001/2 season. The general consensus is that this *cannot* be attributed to the OI campaign.

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<sup>9</sup> For comments on the WTO Hong Meeting and Oxfam's position, see the full versions of the Internal and External Evaluation Reports in Volume II.

However, what Oxfam can claim some credit for is both increased demand for fairly traded coffee and specialty coffees. Oxfam added to these efforts by combining both broad based education and targeted interventions in national markets leading, in some cases, to specific decisions by companies to increase the purchases of FT coffee. One factor in increased demand has been generated by the entry of the big roasters – primary targets in the coffee campaign-- into the FT market:

- Kraft, which originally committed to buying 5000 tons/year, is currently buying about 6,500 tons/year (about 1.5 percent of their total).
- P&G has its Millstone brand (although it does not provide sales figures).
- Sara Lee committed to purchasing 5.5 million pounds of certified coffee from Utz Kapeh Foundation.
- Most recently in October 2005, Nestlé, who had taken an active stance against FT coffee, launched a FT line of its own.
- Starbucks, with whom Oxfam has had a somewhat complicated relationship, increased its purchases of FT coffee to 2.1 million pounds in 2003 (up 91 percent from 2002) and 4.8 million pounds in 2004.
- Various affiliates (including but not limited to Oxfams Australia, Canada, America, and GB) report successes in getting FT coffee offered at supermarkets, coffee shops, and on university campuses.
- Also recently, MacDonald's announced it would be selling FT coffee provided by Green Mountain Coffee Roasters (a key US ally of Oxfam America during the coffee campaign), signalling that Fair Trade has entered the mainstream.

The big roasters are falling far short of the two percent goal set in the Coffee rescue Plan and there is much debate on the desirability of the big roasters penetrating the FT coffee market.

#### Income for coffee producers

Partners in Nicaragua, Honduras, and Guatemala reported increased sales volume and income over the last two years. One factor is simply the recovery in prices which means farmers are harvesting more of their production and earning more from conventional coffee sales. A second is that more farmers are converting to organic coffee which brings a premium price and has a broader market. A third factor is that cooperatives are expanding their processing and marketing capacities and seeking out member and non-member producers to supply them.

This analysis is constrained somewhat by limited data. While individual partners keep track of sales figures, in general Oxfam affiliates do not summarize this data, nor were time series data readily available. That said, the data that exists is consistent with the more global figures about increased demand for fair trade coffee (above table).

It should be noted that benefits are not limited to CAMEXCA. For example, the Oromia Coffee Cooperative in Ethiopia increased its sales of fairly traded coffee from one container in 2001 to 10 containers in 2002, to 60 in 2003, doubling that in 2004 (when it ran out of coffee beans to sell).

Even for stronger cooperatives, some marketing efforts in the end did not deliver results. Both La Central and a Mexican cooperative (CEPCO) had experimental arrangements with Starbucks. Although La Central met the conditions of the contract with Starbucks, it never got another contract with the coffee retailer. The CEPCO project with Starbucks was more complicated and despite efforts to meet Starbucks demands, that relationship ended also after two years. Starbucks has since established a relationship with USAID and Conservation International.

While this data is limited, it does make the link between increased northern sales and real benefits to growers, both Oxfam partners and others. In addition, other funders, including USAID, the IDB, the WB, and European funders have conservatively committed \$20,000,000 to coffee quality and commercialisation programs in Central America and the Caribbean alone, one assumes motivated by promising returns on loans and grants.

The group that continues to remain highly vulnerable are agricultural labourers. Employment has not recovered from the height of the crisis, wages were always very low, and many of these labourers are itinerant.

In terms of **social investment**, partners and evaluations reported that investments were made in schools, roads, and particularly in scholarships. In some cases numbers of schools, scholarships, etc. were included, but dollar amounts were not assigned. Nobody seems to track what kinds of medium to longer term impacts these investments have.

#### Effective use of Voice

One of the major impacts of the campaign for small producers was [for them] to understand the dynamics of the crisis and be able to identify steps their own governments could take. Very strong efforts at organizing and mobilizing took place in the priority countries in the campaign, with a focus on developing proposals. While this work tends to be less high profile now, Oxfam commitment to voice continues in a variety of ways, including supporting “*escuelas de incidencia politica*” (political advocacy schools) in Nicaragua and Honduras. Oxfam encourages participating organizations to send women members and they track women’s participation in the *escuelas*.

Internationally, partners are still active in GLACC, which Oxfam is trying to encourage to become a more independent entity. Partners comment that it is “an important political space,” but not one in which the producers have “assumed true leadership.” Through GLACC they’ve participated in the producers’ group in the 4 Cs, but are ambivalent about the efficacy of the effort, feeling that the participating corporations are engaged more for PR purposes than a genuine commitment to corporate social responsibility.

### **2.3.5 The Labour Rights Campaigns**

#### Introduction

The campaigning around labour rights is probably the aspect of MTF about which there is the least consensus. The report on the GCF states “...about half the people interviewed for this review think the [partner-based] planning for the labour campaign ...[was] exemplary. The other half thinks it was grossly unrealistic and that the cost benefit analysis in terms of impact on poor peoples’ lives will not look good.”<sup>10</sup>

Are Oxfam’s resources better invested in “big picture” efforts or should they also/instead be invested in very specific on-the-ground work that, in effect, assures (when successful) concrete changes in people’s lives? It is a conversation Oxfam now is better positioned to have both because there is a better evidence base for making decisions and because there is a broader acceptance of campaigning as an important set of tools to bring about change at various levels (thereby getting beyond the dialogue of the deaf).

#### Campaigning

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<sup>10</sup> Alison Woodhead, *Review of Oxfam’s capacity to deliver global campaigning*, August 2005

The point of departure for labour campaigning was to ask partners and allies how Oxfam could add value to global labour movements and, more specifically, how best to support partners' existing initiatives. The LRT intended to do this by building the campaign from the ground up, with regional program work playing a much bigger role in both refining the messages found in *Rigged Rules* and *Double Standards* and setting the campaign priorities. In addition, the team wanted to have a "gendered" campaign, one that was based on sound gender analysis that would demonstrate the different economic and social impacts of precarious employment on male and female workers, with a strong focus on the impacts on women workers in both the economic and domestic spheres (and by implication on their families) – in effect explicitly "linking productive and caring economies". Thirdly, they wanted the campaign to be firmly focused on rights – both labour rights and women's rights within the context of a broader rights-based approach.

Despite their conceptual differences, both campaigns employed similar strategies. Both sets of research presented plenty of data, personal stories and analysis to challenge the notion that flexible labour markets were good for a country and its economy, by demonstrating the hidden costs of such a strategy. Both sets of research also wanted to get away from the notion that it was a few "bad" companies that abused workers rights and demonstrate that the system extracted value at the expense of workers.

#### Alliance building and media

A central component of the strategy was alliance building where, in many of the countries, Oxfam supported non-traditional alliances between trade union groups and other workers associations, women's organizations and human rights NGOs. This occurred in Colombia, Chile, and Morocco, and Sri Lanka among other countries. Consistently, from both Oxfam staff and partner input, [it is evident that] probably the most important role that Oxfam played was supporting and facilitating alliances.

The campaigns made extensive and effective use of the media. In Southern countries this included a strategy of outreach and education for journalists, including workshops on labour issue; hosting events or participating in demonstrations that would attract media coverage, and paying for spots on radio and TV. Oxfam had its usual success in attracting the elite media, but the Play Fair campaign had hoped to have the breakthroughs at reaching the "broadsheet" or popular press (given the sports angle), but these were largely unrealized.

In the period in the lead up to the Olympics, PFAO managed to reframe the debate, making purchasing practices a sectoral issue, by demanding a response from the second-tier companies as a group. In July 2005, Adidas, Nike, Lotto, Puma, and ASICS attended a meeting organized by the International Garment and Footwear Union (ITLGWF) and agreed to continue the dialogue at a national level (something they had resisted to date). This falls short of the commitment to the Program of Work the campaign was seeking, but an Oxfam Australia staffer characterizes it as "...limited but important progress."

While building political alliances has been one of the most interesting, challenging and dynamic aspects of the labour campaigning, Oxfam should take advantage of these and other experiences to begin to systematize learnings about the alliance building process – when it works, when it doesn't, when organizations are better off working alone or in smaller alliance vs. efforts to build broad-based coalitions, and so on.

#### Sensitizing corporates and workers to labour rights

In both the regional and national level fora Oxfam sees evidence that discussions have: “...moved forward brands’ commitments towards a socially responsible garment sector, which addresses sourcing strategies and purchasing practices among other issues. The brands were also brought to engage with governments, unions and NGOs on a long term and sector-wide basis at both global and local levels. The participating brands [are] key players in the global clothing supply chain.”

Many of the campaigns occurred in countries with restricted political space and/or elite dominated political systems. In the textile sectors of many of these countries, union organizing has been discouraged or prohibited (for example, in the *maquila* sector in Honduras) or manipulated through the creation of company or government sponsored unions (as in Indonesia). The same is true for workers in the export-agriculture sector, where organizing is also made more difficult by the seasonal nature of the work.

Quoting from external evaluation done on the Nicaraguan campaign, “There is not room for any doubt that the campaign has significantly contributed to increased knowledge by workers in the *maquilas* about their workers’ rights and right to health, and the women now have at their disposal better capacity to claim those rights.”<sup>11</sup> This was also confirmed in a regional evaluation covering Honduras, Guatemala and El Salvador and the in a variety of interviews conducted for Oxfam Australia’s forthcoming report on respect for worker’s rights in the sportswear industry.

#### Specific outcomes

- In the US, Yum! Brands (Taco Bell) agrees to increase purchase price paid to tomato growers to directly increase piece rates paid to farm workers; Mt. Olive Pickle and the North Carolina Growers Association reaches an agreement with the Farm Labour Organizing Coalition company to provide 8000 guest farm workers with union representation (covering 1000 farms), increased wages, seniority and complaint mechanisms;
- In South Africa establishment of minimum daily wage for farm workers
- In UK home workers minimum wage legislation extended to home workers
- In Indonesia, the FSBKU (union) succeeded in pressuring the Chang Hong Company in Tangerang to make contract labour permanent. At the PT Panarub factory, the unfair dismissal of workers resolved and all were reinstated.
- In Sri Lanka, employers are required to comply with compensation provisions of labour laws as factories downsize with the end of the MFA.

#### Improvements in Working Conditions, Health and Safety

- In Nicaragua, Kenya and Guatemala **increased work site inspections** to monitor compliance with labour laws. In Nicaragua data on inspections and violations in the public domain.
- In Nicaragua the Labour Department issues a Plan for **Workers’ Health and Security** 2005-2010, which has baseline data, benchmarks and indicators established, including specific goals and benchmarks related to women workers.<sup>12</sup> New *maquilas* are being built to higher safety standards.

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<sup>11</sup> Joel Zamora, “Los resultados de la Campaña en Nicaragua: Hallazgos de una evaluación externa,” July, 2005 (internal document)

<sup>12</sup> See Zamora, 2005 and Urbina and Rosales, 2005.

- In Nicaragua and Guatemala factories commit to ensuring factory **managers trained in health and safety**.
- At the PT Panarub Factory in Indonesia, as a result of a report by the Workers Rights Consortium, health and safety conditions have improved for workers, including presence of doctor at the factory and better **working conditions for pregnant women** who, in the past, were pressured to resign, and widespread verbal and physical abuse has dropped dramatically.

## Gender

This labour campaign demonstrates the power of a **gendered analysis and strategy** for delivering results. Everyone involved in the campaign, up to the OI media coordinator, was conversant with the gendered nature of the campaign. There is unanimous agreement among Oxfam staff that this made the campaigning stronger conceptually, but also in its appeal and effectiveness

The campaign, because it built on existing programming, not only insured buy-in from both partners and Oxfam country offices, but also served to insure **greater sustainability** over the long term. At the same time, with the campaign both partners and affiliates were forced to **think more strategically about women's rights and labour rights** -- labour issues became a significant part of livelihoods strategies for the first time in many countries; and both affiliates and partners defined new, protagonistic roles for themselves.

The majority of national campaigns managed, at a minimum, to get the issue in the public sphere and almost all of these got to the point of some level of serious engagement with government officials. This is particularly noteworthy because, unlike coffee or cotton where southern governments saw an alignment of interests with Oxfam campaign goals, labour rights are much more controversial in the context of the dominant neo-liberal model and it is a tribute to the campaigns' effectiveness in lining up political forces to push an agenda

## **2.4 Added value: Oxfam's models of change**

### **2.4.1 Rights-based approach**

The use of rights language as a framing device and the thrust of the various campaigns to hold governments and TNCs accountable for their actions based on standards of fairness or rights have been effective. Nevertheless, it was only in the case of the labour campaign that rights were the point of departure and an organizing principle for devising strategy. In the governance component of the labour campaigning, national governments were targeted as the primary duty bearer and the campaigns were largely effective in challenging governments regarding the policies towards workers and workers rights using both international conventions and domestic law.

## Gender equality

Mainstreaming a gender analysis and deepening the scope of the rights discussion to include women's rights further strengthened the labour campaign. It is very hard to make a judgment as to whether other components of the MTF campaign would have been stronger with a more fully developed rights approach, but it is suggestive that the labour campaigns seem to have been very effective in alliance building and making in-roads with policy makers, even in some countries with quite limited political space.

#### **2.4.2 One Program Approach**

Oxfam was struggling with the implementation of the one-program approach at the time of the introduction of the MTF campaign and this has probably been the biggest internal challenge of MTF. Here as elsewhere Oxfam has made considerable progress, and certainly there is much greater awareness of the promise of the one program approach. Although there is still no place you can point to that a program is fully articulated locally to internationally, one can see that regional programs are being more strategic in their thinking, definitively moving from the project approach to much more sophisticated and ambitious strategies that combine grant-making with campaigning. They are better prepared to engage in OI campaign strategizing (particularly CAMEXCA, SAM, West Africa and East Asia) and the OI Trade Campaign Project Group (TCPG) has learned from experience that integrating those perspectives makes for sounder strategic decision making and greater likelihood for positive outcomes on the ground. Oxfam has made important steps toward better integration with adjustments in the campaign architecture and more investment in regional campaigning capacity. Oxfam needs to further invest (funds, time, and energy) in West Africa and East Asia to consolidate their capacity and develop a strategy for more fully incorporating the majority of regions that are not so engaged.

#### **2.4.3 Strategic collaboration**

This has increased tremendously in the course of Make Trade Fair, particularly at headquarters level and in the different campaign teams and working groups. The frequent comment is that participants “think like OI” rather than representatives of their affiliates. Teams that are frequently mentioned where there is strong and effective collaboration are the Trade Campaign Project Group, The Trade Policy Group, the Hemispheric Reference Group (Americas), and the Labour Rights Team. Strategic collaboration amongst the affiliates in the regions still remains a challenge. While there are some very positive examples (such as the CAMEXCA Political Advocacy Team), in many places collaboration is limited to coordination, rather than co-strategizing and co-investing, and holding each other mutually accountable. This appears to be less about ideological differences and more of a capacity issue in the vast majority of cases.

#### **2.4.4 Global campaigning force**

MTF was the test of the global campaigning force idea, and as has been noted in another evaluation, Oxfam went from 0-60 in 5 years. MTF is proof, in many respects, that campaigning works – Oxfam has changed the terms of the debate, it has generated massive interest in trade issues, it has been a catalyst, a facilitator and a valued participant in an array of alliances. However, many Oxfam staff has mentioned that policy change on the scale Oxfam is seeking takes a long time. Oxfam injected much needed, high quality analysis into the trade debate, but has learned that achieving and sustaining policy change requires:

- labour intensive lobbying with a complex array of actors (executive, legislative, private sector) with distinct and often parochial interests;
- alliance building that goes beyond sign-ons and one-off mobilizations to strategic alliances that actually shifts the power balance in the public arena;
- follow through so policy gains are not reversed and are implemented throughout the system.

## 2.5 Lessons for the future

Oxfam needs to be more explicit about its goals regarding “changing attitudes and beliefs”. It is ill-defined and indicators range from number of sign-ons to the Big Noise, to public pronouncements by policy makers (which may or may not be sincere), to a female factory worker realizing she can play a leadership role. More rigour would help Oxfam target its influencing efforts more strategically and encourage more consistent follow-through.

Policy change requires realigning political forces both nationally and internationally. There is now a near unanimous realization that policy change on the ambitions of the MTF campaign takes a long time (5-10 years). Early successes in changing the terms of the debate may have created the expectation that changing the policies of the WTO, TNCs, and northern governments would be easier than in fact it has been. While reframing the issue and increasing (diffuse) popular pressure through mechanisms like the Big Noise is a necessary precondition, changing policy is about power and influence.

To be more effective, Oxfam needs to develop its own and partners’ capacity for more **sophisticated power analysis** and should continue to need to increase investments to influence northern governments. More will need to be done about working with the key southern governments who are influential in the WTO.

**Understanding the corporate-government interface** needs to be part of any power analysis. Oxfam needs to link, consistently and explicitly, alliance building with changing the alignment of political forces.

**Oxfam’s support of women’s organizations and women’s leadership** has proved to be important in both the labour and RTAs campaigning in the Americas, but this is an under-developed focus elsewhere in MTF.

To sustain policy change efforts after the high profile campaigning is over, partners and allies need to engage in multi-stakeholder dialogues and policy dialogues, which often create stress for individual negotiators and strains on alliances. **Oxfam would benefit from more reflection on how it handles its power within alliances.** Oxfam has become better, but still has not entirely learned to manage the sensitivities related to its size, the power of its brand, and the fact that it is often also a donor in its alliance work.

Progress with **strategic alignment** has a long way to go. There is enough evidence of the positive power of alignment to make an even greater commitment to insuring this will occur. It is important to make sure that the next campaign or set of campaign issues are mutually reinforcing. Oxfam should act on what seems to have been a genuine shift toward considering the regions as important strategic allies as opposed to supporting players in the campaign. This needs to be fostered aggressively and intentionally, because there are still far too many “disconnects” between campaigning and work on the ground. This is all by way of saying that **alignment needs to be constructed and it often requires a heavy investment – identifying a range of policy leverage points and jointly deciding which ones have the most potential to deliver, resolving differences, finding new partners or changing the nature of the relationship with long-standing ones, etc.**

Where there have been changes that are likely to have livelihood impacts is a result the labour and coffee campaigning. These two cases indicate that achieving **changes in people's lives requires program work at the country and community level to position partners to take advantage to improvements in the international context or to improve the national policy context independent of what does or does not occur internationally**. International trade policy is just part of the problem. Taking a global perspective on poverty, has generated critical reflection on the part of regional staff on the adequacy of Oxfam's rural development programs. As Oxfam moves into the new planning cycle, it may want to ensure that **the point of departure for planning is not, "How do we campaign on this issue?" but rather "What is the full range of interventions that would be needed to achieve a particular goal -- secure livelihoods for small producers or access to HIV/AIDS treatments for South Africans?"**

**Opportunities were lost** because of poor planning and a lack of follow-through. That staff and partners continue to achieve things, even with reduced resources and attention, can mask frustrations and drop in morale. It also is experienced as devaluing the issue and/or the effort. Oxfam has been extremely fortunate in the way so many staff have risen to the occasion, but there are still too many instances when either the right competencies aren't in place or staff is not given adequate support to develop those competencies.

Finally, while the campaign has been well monitored and individuals are open to learning and adjusting strategies, **institutional learning practices are very weak**. Only the CAMEXCA region has made significant investments in campaign evaluation, and even then that information has not necessarily been translated into applied learning, especially outside the region.

A lot of the achievements of the campaign – from results to overcoming obstacles – are completely invisible. (The author) is willing to posit that Oxfam is losing about 20-25% return on its investment, due to the lack of institutional learning.

#### Lessons from the Labour Rights campaigns

The Labour Rights campaign did not live up to its full potential for several reasons;

- Because STAOR never defined regional or international targets, it contributed to its marginalization within the broader MTF campaign. The solution, to sign onto Play Fair, is regarded by even those quite involved in PFAO, to have detracted from the profile and potential effectiveness of STAOR, in part because it sent mixed messages to Oxfam offices and partners working on labour.
- While the challenge for other aspects of the MTF campaign has been “translating down” to the regional and country levels, the labour campaigns have had some trouble “translating up” the implications of national successes to global strategy and/or movement.
- Oxfam should be more rigorous in the criteria that are used in selecting campaign leads at the country or regional level and more consistent with the support they are provided by their managers.
- Important questions about labour rights campaigning remain:
  - How much more might have been achieved had the labour campaigning been more internally coherent, more fully integrated into MTF, and better funded?
  - Has momentum been built up for real reforms in the garment sector and a new stage of labour-government relations (at least in some countries) or was it really a matter of somewhat more successfully carrying out rearguard actions against a steady and continuing attack on labour rights?
  - Answers to the first two would provide a more robust answer to the third question – how much should OI be investing in labour rights campaigning in the future?

- While the TCPG, looking at the labour campaigning through the MTF lens, considers that no additional resources can be made available, perhaps there are other criteria the labour work should be judged against. These include
  - deepening Oxfam’s expertise in implementing gendered and RBA strategies; the potential to learn from country strategies that brought about realignment of political forces and resulted in concrete victories;
  - effective campaigning and organizing tactics in closed or hostile environments;
  - and the obligation to more fully capitalize on early victories to gain more policy ground and also ensure that benefits are reaching workers and their families.

### Lessons from the Coffee and Cotton campaigns

At the time of the 2003 review, there were questions about the appropriateness of coffee as a campaign issue: it might distract from the main MFT messages; the existence of the Fair Trade alternative allowed the “big four” roasters an escape route. However, on balance, the coffee campaign contributed to the broader policy goals of MTF:

- Coffee brought many people to the MTF web site. It gave people the sense that they could be effective;
- The campaign demonstrated the potential of campaigning for awareness raising and realigning political forces for policy change at the national level. It also demonstrated the power of regional participation;
- Framing the crisis as a rights issue helped change the terms of the debate. Farmers gained a sense of efficacy which translated into greater activism;
- The coffee campaign showed Oxfam that campaigning requires sustained commitment – although the campaign itself did not benefit from this lesson;

The internal evaluation report (Part II: Case Studies) highlights the following lessons which Oxfam staff in West Africa have drawn from the cotton campaign:

- Cotton was too narrow a focus, as is the focus on dumping and subsidies;
- The WTO is less important to West African producers than the Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs) being promoted by the European Union.
- It was not clear that cotton was seen as a priority by all parties. At least one affiliate did not support cotton farmers because of perceived environmental damage and the belief that production did not support food security.
- Initially it was a challenge for country teams to respond to “imposed” campaign priorities. While the situation has improved, further work needs to be done.
- The campaign again raised the issue of Oxfam’s role in Southern advocacy and the perception that Oxfam was privileging cotton over issues which were perceived as being more important by local and regional actors

## **2.6 External evaluations (summarised comments)**

(Comments based on NSI’s external evaluation of the MTF as a whole are summarised in section 2.3.2 at the beginning of this chapter.)

### **2.6.1 Cotton Dumping Campaign**

All the comments in this section are from NSI’s external evaluation of Oxfam’s Cotton Dumping Campaign.

*While we think that Oxfam's cotton campaign and its overall Make Trade Fair Campaign have resulted in increased discussions on trade issues by civil society in WCA countries, the quality of citizen engagement" or "empowerment" is questionable. One organisation in West Africa (that was considered by Oxfam to be a key regional partner and that has organised campaigns for Oxfam) went so far as to say:*

*"Oxfam is content to speak about the number of signatures on collection, but not looking at the real issue of informing people." And an Oxfam staff member commented:  
"The cotton campaign may be too disconnected from the context. The confluence of global and local issues matters....we cannot present them with that are meant for them...these objectives must come from them."*

Outcomes and impacts: *... There have been no significant policy changes related to cotton since the launch of Oxfam's campaign.....interviewees (especially in Senegal and Mali) were generally optimistic about the role that Oxfam has played thus far in changing attitudes and behaviours...In that sense Oxfam has contributed to "practice changes" that could lead to positive changes in the lives of poor and marginalised people in WCA countries.*

*External stakeholders recognised and appreciated Oxfam's unique role in taking on cotton dumping and exposing it to media internationally....most stakeholders generally felt that Oxfam's campaign model is successful.  
'There is no way today to get back to the situation where subsidies would have a significant legitimacy. Oxfam and other NGOs have shown that argument is flawed.' (Representative of a Developing Country Delegation to the WTO).  
'Oxfam's work helped producers to better lobby for themselves. Its campaign also resulted in changes in African consumers' attitudes.' (Representative of a Senegalese Producer Association)*

*NSI goes on to nuance these positive comments with some salient observations and words of advice: The dynamics of poverty in cotton-producing regions of WCA countries are complex...cotton-producing regions in those countries do not necessarily have a lower level of income poverty... Cotton production is only one element...with other sources such as livestock rearing and non-farm activities playing an important role in propelling cotton farmers out of poverty... While we understand that a media campaign requires some sharpness...a "sharp" message...that ignores ground realities has (rightly) been viewed with suspicion...*

Research and campaign messaging: *NSI comments Many external stakeholders feel that Oxfam's campaign model for cotton oversimplifies a complex issue....Going forward we do not think that there needs to be a trade-off between a sharp campaign message and a nuanced approach to how campaigning and research are conducted...*

Objective-setting: *NSI addresses the paradox that although the Cotton Dumping Campaign's policy change outcomes have not been achieved, nevertheless the campaign is regarded as very successful: In our view, this is because external stakeholders (and Oxfam staff) measure impact through "intermediate" outcomes...These are all valid and important criteria by which to measure impact.*

*By focusing on long-term outcomes, Oxfam runs the risk of creating expectations... Our interviews... provide evidence that Oxfam's campaign goals were viewed as too ambitious, something confirmed in the Internal Evaluation.*

*We think that, going forward, Oxfam may need to manage expectations...by focusing on intermediate outcomes that are more reasonable and measurable...(There are) longer term visions that must always provide a guide to Oxfam and its staff as they meet specific intermediate outcomes.*

*In our view, enough has been achieved on the cotton file at the WTO to allow Oxfam to focus attention on the complex issues of poverty and rural dynamics in cotton-producing regions of WCA countries.*

*Almost all stakeholders interviewed either suggested that there has been no impact on poverty alleviation in cotton sectors in West African countries or that it was too early to tell...*

*By focusing on long-term outcomes, Oxfam runs the risk of creating expectations.....that it cannot resolve on its own. Our interviews with external stakeholders and Oxfam staff provide evidence that Oxfam's campaign goals were viewed as too ambitious, something confirmed in the Internal Evaluation.*

## **2.6.2 Labour Rights Campaign**

Both NSI and Social Compass reviewed the Labour Rights Campaign. Social Compass conducted a field-based study in Indonesia.

### **North-South Institute (NSI)**

NSI comments on the Internal Evaluation as follows:

*The Internal Evaluation (IE) as it relates to Oxfam's labour rights work is comprehensive, balanced, frank and well-documented. It presents both strengths and weaknesses...The IE was weakened by a lack of clarity about original goals, expected outcomes and impacts of the two campaigns as well as a lack of data...Even so, available data might have been more clearly used, the recommendations...could have been summarised, and gender analysis used to assess the campaigns' gendered aspects."*

On the quality of Oxfam's research in this area, NSI comments:

*It is clear that the research which Oxfam has supported or undertaken directly has contributed in some cases to changing views about precarious employment. In particular, the focus on the supply chain has helped to shift the focus ...to the retailers/buyers. This is not a unique contribution; others have been doing this type of research. But it is one where there is scope for constant updating of research and analysis – and one where Oxfam's brand can usually attract attention in a unique way.*

*But there is a concern with partial focus and some oversimplification of associated messages. Some of Oxfam's MTF research and messaging has alienated some labour rights partners...for instance there is a sense that Oxfam overstated the benefits of free trade and overlooked the importance of protecting domestic markets, and on garments paid more attention to the potential for job gains in China than to the prospect of job losses in other countries.*

NSI's overall assessment is positive:

*We found that those working on labour-related aspects of globalisation appreciate Oxfam's ability to have its work on labour taken seriously. Its reports and policy proposals in this area...attract serious consideration...Oxfam's model for achieving change is one that others view with admiration.*

Reviewing the outcomes and impacts of the labour rights campaigns, NSI makes the following observations:

*Oxfam has been able to leverage the reputation it has acquired through the MTF and other work to draw attention to labour rights issues in a way which other organisations have found difficult. For instance, in the case of PFAO, Oxfam was able to give purchasing policies a higher profile....This resulted in the Ethical Trade Initiative...*

*But it is less clear that Oxfam has been so successful in engaging with governments on PFAO demands. There are several instances in STAOR here Oxfam-supported research...may have contributed to changes in understanding and outcomes, such as the passing of the new labour code in Morocco.*

*On the issue of measuring impacts...there could be some use made...of studies by others such as UNRISD...and the ILO...*

Monitoring and evaluation: NSI comments: *Quantitative impact metrics need to be developed.....Given that Oxfam's issues, instruments and impacts are significantly more complex than campaigns run by private sector companies, the need for quantitative impact metrics is further strengthened. These metrics are relatively simple to develop and technology exists that would allow their delivery to a representative group of stakeholders at a relatively low cost.*

NSI points to two lessons for the future regarding Labour Rights work:

**a. Labour rights work needs a longer term view – and the identification of medium-term outcomes.** *Oxfam's experience shows that the development and implementation of labour rights work in partnership with national groups requires a long time-frame...Also, while research and activities such as training and lobbying are able to produce results in the short-to medium-term, impacts on workers' lives require longer-term strategies. Oxfam needs to consider making such longer-term commitment and at the same time clarifying medium-term outcomes that can be expected.*

**b. The positioning of Oxfam's labour rights work needs to be reviewed.** *Oxfam faces choices about whether to continue to link its labour rights work to trade or its sustainable livelihoods programming....Labour rights work requires a long-term commitment to ongoing research and advocacy, and one that is sensitive to national political contexts. This may not be compatible with the approach of the trade campaigns. In this case it might be appropriate to move the bulk of the labour rights work to the sustainable livelihoods team, whilst leaving open the option of joint initiatives on trade and labour on a more selective basis.*

### Social Compass

Social Compass (SC) carried out a field-based case study of Labour Rights work by Oxfam Australia and Oxfam GB in Indonesia and reviewed the Labour Rights section of the Internal Evaluation Report. Some SC's key observations and conclusions are summarised below.

#### Comments on the Internal Evaluation

(Social Compass initially reviewed the first draft of the Internal Evaluation Report. They later reviewed the revised (final version) and the "addendum" to their External Evaluation Report is included in the full version in Volume II. They found that the draft Internal Evaluation Report had a "critical edge" which has been somewhat diluted in the final version.)

*One of the striking features of the internal evaluation Report is that to the external reader, the Report contains a number of unsubstantiated statements with no back-up evidence. [However...] the internal evaluation Report presents a number of other arguments and conclusions that are supported by or, at least, aligned with both the 'Context-in' Report and the field-based case study.*

### Outcomes and impacts

*There was surprising consistency across the range of organisations and individuals interviewed and, therefore, the data presented is strong in terms of its validity and reliability. Given the size, resources and relative infancy of most of these. Generally, the organisations are surviving on the commitment of a small number of paid staff and a significant number of volunteers. Where the organisation is receiving funding from one or more Oxfam affiliates, there is a significant dependency, both financial and non-financial, on that funding. The networks, which have been established through formal and informal mechanisms, by Oxfam GB and OxAus, appear to be extremely strong and trustworthy with open and frank communication – though both affiliates could do better in terms of coordination and having information and material readily available in Bahasa Indonesia.*

*Across the interviews, there was general acknowledgement that certain conditions had improved over the previous five years and, therefore, the life of OI's Strategic Plan. These improvements included improved wages in certain factories, changes to the process of wage implementation regulation and some, albeit limited, impacts on public policy. For the NGOs, the last five years had seen some improvement in the freedoms under which workers can meet and collaborate.*

*Gender: It seems more than reasonable to assume that the rights and even the opportunities for women workers have, to some possibly small measure, improved over the life of OI's Strategic Plan and there is some evidence to suggest Oxfam's approach has played at least, some part in this progress. There is clearly much more to be done given that women still have a disadvantaged position within the labour market and any changes that impact negatively on the overall Indonesian labour market, have an often additional impact on women.*

*The field-based case study broadly supported the evidence sourced from public documentation for the 'Context-in' review. That is, the facts on the ground supported the findings of the Context-in' Report and are highly consistent with the data presented in Oxfam documentation such as We Are Not Machines and field trip reports such as Field Trip Report, Oxfam's Work on Precarious Employment by Mary Sue Smiaroski. In this sense, the case study validates previous findings and, itself, becomes a valid and reliable account of the status of labour rights, at least, in*

*In terms of the shift in attitudes and beliefs towards gender, however, it is obvious that Oxfam campaigning has placed gender, at least at the regional level in Indonesia, on the agenda with some partners and allies stating that "gender is a non-negotiable issue". However, there are still issues around female representation and active participation in decision making and alliance building processes in trade unions. While a challenging cultural, political and social task, OxAus is aiming to promote greater gender equity and voice through the implementation of their new union funding model. These are notable tangible outcomes though the shift is in its infancy stage with substantial work yet to be done and further strategies and approaches for gender equity to be developed.*

Lack of evidence: *The internal evaluation Report asserts that there has been no consistent attempt made to document the impacts and outcomes of the campaigning to the community level or to create “a chain of evidence that that would suggest that campaigning actions by Oxfam globally lead to concrete changes in people’s lives on any kind of scale”. Our analysis of the documentation and the finding from the case study support this claim.*

Attitudes and beliefs: *In terms of other impacts, it is evident from the findings that the campaigns did have a direct impact on people’s lives in changing attitudes and beliefs and in giving partners and allies, possibly workers themselves, a greater voice. This is consistent with the findings of the internal evaluation Report. According to the internal Report, impacts can also be seen in changes in policy and practices that have direct livelihood implications.*

### Campaign strategies

*Questions around goal achievement and the progression towards that goal are important to ask. However, the implication in questions about the speed at which campaigning work is moving does suggest that there is some sort of final ‘bang impact/outcome’ that will be at once obvious and conclusive. For Oxfam, this raises several questions including:*

- *What is Oxfam’s approach to bringing about sustained changes in the lives of the poor and marginalised with respect to its campaign work? What does this look like in terms of commitment in time, financial and human resources?*
- *How does Oxfam measure what is ‘successful’ or ‘end’ impact as opposed to ‘not enough impact’?*
- *When should this measurement occur?*
- *What are the exit strategies for when ‘final’ impact (or not) has occurred?*
- *How will you know when you have achieved desired impact?*
- *How do you ensure consensus of end-impacts with affiliates, partners and allies?*
- *What is the potential impact on partners and allies of being hard nosed?*
- *What is the cost-benefit analysis required to being hard-nosed?*

### Absence of financial data system

*Conducting such an investigation, however, requires processes and procedures that are underpinned by strong information and communication and resource measurement systems. Oxfam documentation, including the internal evaluation Report, suggests that these systems are currently lacking. A striking finding, for example, is that, while there is a consistent call for more resources, a centralised financial data system that correlates overall and affiliate specific program budget with activity and impact is missing. Indeed, as the internal evaluation Report notes, without a budget tracking of the deployment of resources in the campaign, one is left to make guesstimates.*

### Strategic collaboration

*It is an easy criticism to make that the coordination of the Oxfams working in Indonesia is poor. While this case study found acknowledgment by the Oxfam staff themselves of this, strategies were already being developed and partially implemented to address this issue. There is also some evidence of partner agencies being linked up. It is evident from the documentation outlining the formal meeting held with Oxfam staff working on labour in Indonesia (March 2005) that Oxfams in Indonesia are willing to more effectively work together as a confederation and in strategic collaboration.*

## Chapter 3: Girls' Access to Education

This chapter is a much-condensed version of Internal Evaluation Report on Girls' Access to Education by Sally Burrows (October 2005). The complete version, which includes lists of documents and interviews and other annexes, is included in Volume II of the Evaluation Report.

Oxfam GB conducted a Strategic Evaluation of its work in education during 2005.<sup>13</sup> Initially planned to be an input to this OI Evaluation, it was completed after the education sector of the OI Evaluation. It offers complementary findings on outcomes and impact in countries different from those studied in the OI Evaluation and makes recommendations for the future - some convergent and some divergent with this OI Evaluation.

*Extracts from the External Evaluation Report by Dr. Rosemary Preston have been interpolated, in italics. The full version of the External Evaluation Report is included in Volume II.*

### 3.1 The context

The Internal Evaluation Report sets the scene with the following observations:

UNICEF's State of the World's Children Report for 2005 puts the figure of primary school age children out of school at 120 million. Thirty-five million are in India alone of whom around 60% are girls. Forty million are in Sub-Saharan Africa, of whom 55% are girls. Completion rates in 2003 were over 90% in East Asia and Latin America but still only 59% in Sub-Saharan Africa; 80% in South Asia as a whole and seemingly as low as 60% in India. According to UNESCO, the Millennium Development Goal target of gender equality in education by 2005 has been missed in 94 countries, rather than the 71 countries predicted in the last EFA Global Monitoring Report.

But where political will and resources are present, progress can be made. Between 2000 and 2002 the primary gross enrolment rate in Sub-Saharan Africa rose from 83% to 95% (much faster than during the previous decade).

On the wider economic and political context for education, Dr. Preston observes:

*In South Asia, economic returns to investment in primary education are estimated at 24 per cent, while each additional year of schooling for girls, translates into a reduction in child mortality and female fertility of 5 – 10 per cent (UNICEF). Heads of states and governments are already pledged to achieve priority goals, committed themselves in 2002 to "free, inclusive and gender-responsive quality basic education for all.*

*The current education system being promoted across the world reinforces neo-liberal values and thereby the inequalities inherent to those values. Even mother-tongue learning is viewed and/or used as a transition to more globalised learning, rather than as a way of unlocking alternative.*

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<sup>13</sup> Bines. H. Oxfam GB Strategic Evaluation of Education – Synthesis Report, 2005

*EFA has been the dominant campaign for a decade and a half. It has successfully marshalled debate, research and resources and has spawned a multitude of institutions with criss-crossing interests, forming bridges in the aid hierarchy. However, in Africa, there is considerable weakness in the capacity of all these bodies to sustain their own particular remits, rather than vacillate between those of their currently most important funder. The EFA strategy looks good on paper, but it lacks the considerable resources necessary to make it happen and targets must extend to quality of education to be meaningful.*

*UNESCO's Global Monitoring Report for 2003 points out that bilateral aid for education fell by 16% between 1999 and 200. Aid for education from OECD countries is increasing but in decline from the multilateral donors and development banks. Current support needed for basic education falls far below the US\$5.6 billion required to meet the Universal Primary Education target and gendered the MDGs. (For the full version of Dr. Preston's contextual review, please see Volume II.)*

## **3.2 Outcomes and impacts**

N.B. The full versions of the Internal and External Evaluation Reports also include findings and conclusions regarding success factors and constraints. Please see Volume II.

### **3.2.1 Global campaigning**

Oxfam believes that the international terms of debate shifted between 1999 and 2005. There is now widespread acceptance of key points that Oxfam and its allies have been calling for. Specifically, that basic education is a cornerstone for sustainable development, including economic development; that it has to be free to make it work; and that more aid is needed in order to provide it – for example, for investment in raising the quality of teaching. In 2000, these points were not widely accepted. Oxfam campaigners and advocates also maintain that education is now higher on the regular donor agenda (after HIV/AIDS) than it was in 1999.

On increasing finance for education, the GCE claims that debt relief has made a difference. "The 27 countries that qualified for HIPC debt relief since 2000 have increased poverty-reducing expenditure including for basic education, from 6.4% of GDP in 1999 to 7.9 in 2003" and "Niger is using 40% of the resources freed by debt relief to fund its UPE programme."

The EFA Fast Track Initiative was established in 2002, hosted by the World Bank. It represents a coherent, multilateral vehicle for harnessing and coordinating donor contributions to assist poor countries that show commitment to achieving UPE by developing sound national education plans. It currently serves 13 countries (of which 7 are in Africa and include Burkina Faso and Mozambique). A further 25 (including India) are waiting for endorsement of their plans and available donor funds. Seventeen of them are in Africa. Aid via the Fast Track Initiative increased by US\$50 million in 2004 to reach US\$350 million. Novib Oxfam maintains that Dutch aid to Mozambique is increasingly given as budget support, which gives greater flexibility.

Oxfam has anecdotal evidence that it contributed to these policy outcomes. Above all, Oxfam has been a key founder member and supporter of the Global Campaign for Education, which now has 53 members, covering 150 countries, and succeeded in making a world record by mobilising two million people for the Global Week of Action in 2003 on girls' education. That became three million in 2004 and five million in 2005. The GCE is represented in 6 UN committees on education, including the FTI Working Group on Finance, and is a member of the World Economic Forum expert taskforce on education.

Influential academics, advisors and government officials supporting free, universal primary education have indicated to Oxfam that their room for manoeuvre was increased by the work of the GCE and of Oxfam within it.

In 2001, the Canadian government agreed to triple funding for basic education and make it a priority. In 2004, the Netherlands government pledged to triple its aid to basic education to €625 million by 2007. Making the announcement, the Minister referred to the GCE Global Week of Action and used words prompted by GCE members. In 2005, the Spanish government approved its first contribution to the FTI. Oxfam affiliates are central or leading members of the GCE in their home countries.

The FTI was launched by the World Bank in conjunction with Oxfam. With its allies, Oxfam had been calling for something of the sort since 1999. World Bank staff have told Oxfam staff that Oxfam campaigning had affected it. A senior ex-member of World Bank staff has also told Oxfam that it had played a role in influencing the World Bank's decision to support abolition of user fees.

Oxfam has been a major, long-term supporter and funder of key Southern civil society organisations which it believes are likely to have been influential in positive Southern government policy decisions. Many are also members of the GCE. This evaluation did not receive hard evidence that they were in fact influential. But, for example, Novib Oxfam has been a major supporter of organisations that are members of the national Parliamentary forum in India and advisory commissions to the government on education and/or have held long-standing campaigns (e.g. the Global March against Child Labour, SACCS and Pratham). Evaluators found that SACCS long-term campaign had almost certainly contributed (amongst many others) to India's 86th Constitutional Amendment in 2002, making basic education a fundamental human right and abolishing user fees. Intermón Oxfam's education programme officer in Burkina Faso argues that the civil society campaign has moved government position on the extent of focus on enrolling more girls in school.

The External Evaluation comments:

*With Education For All, OI mounted the first global campaign in 1999, committed itself to the Global Campaign for Education and introduced a planned programme of field operations, supporting the delivery of educational services to poor people in remote areas and favouring the participation of women and girls.*

***Endorsement of the MDGs and GCAP has gone hand in hand with a weakening of more strongly focussed educational commitment***

*While data about direct campaign contributions to poverty alleviation are lacking, Oxfam is congratulated for mobilising Education Now and the GCE.*

***There are reservations relating to:***

- *campaign commitment to mobilising global institutions, unmatched by mechanisms for response to issues identified in poor states;*
- *the real extent of campaign influence on IFI policy in particular, and, more generally outside the INGO community;*
- *lack of systems to monitor implementation following campaign policy achievements;*
- *the complexity of engaging with five successive education sector campaigns in a five year period, simultaneously deprioritising its commitment, while mounting new global campaigns on apparently unrelated themes.*

*There is criticism of the **failure to make links between the new global campaigns and educational processes** and, bottom up, of the lack of response to educational issues indicated by communities and other sub-national actors within the wider national and international campaign.*

### **3.2.2 Field programmes**

The findings are limited by the fact that few of the documents reviewed offered quantified outcomes. Several stop at quantified outputs. This may be partly due to low quality of terms of reference and/or reports and/or because the base data simply has not been recorded by Oxfam or its partner organisations. Whatever the reason, the poor recording of baseline and monitoring data is in need of improvement.

**Targeting:** The programmes in Burkina Faso and Mozambique were evaluated positively in terms of targeting areas where the right to education (especially for girls) has a very long way to go. They are operating in the most under-developed and remote provinces with high levels of poverty and the lowest literacy rates. However, except for one case, no differentiation is made between socio-economic groups within the province. It appears to be assumed that they are addressing the poorest population groups, because the programmes are in the poorest regions.

**Increased numbers of girls in school:** The Oxfam GB programme in Zambezia, Mozambique covers five districts. Enrolment, retention and completion figures have all increased. In general, with the five supported districts are doing better than the average for the province as a whole as regards girls' attendance in school in both lower and higher primary. During the project so far, the gender gap has diminished from 20% to 13% (fewer girls complete than boys). All five districts have gender parity in grade 1 and above 45% girls in lower primary.

However, one evaluation concludes: while "the gender gaps in enrolment, retention and completion are decreasing significantly, the school efficiency (pass rates) and waste of human resources (drop-out rates) are still worrying".

Intermón Oxfam's Niassa Programme covers 4 districts. According to the evaluation of the provincial gender unit, girls' enrolment has increased by between 5% and 16% between 2001 and 2004 (except for one district showing decreases in the early primary years and strong increase in the last 3 years of primary). Gender parity has almost been achieved. Intermón Oxfam's Annual Report for 2004 claims an additional 46,000 children (not only girls) in primary school since 2001.

In Burkina Faso, two of the field programmes documented mix basic education for adults and youth. The Oxfam Quebec programme in the Eastern provinces records problems similar to the Mozambique programmes with retention and completion. In a basic education programme for 9000 adults and young girls implemented by 5 local partner organisations, 26% of pupils came out still not literate and 35% failed first grade (the national repetition average is 17%).

Oxfam Quebec also manages the Gender Equitable Basic Education Programme, funded by Oxfam GB, with Association Munyu. The review claims that Association Munyu achieved increased girls enrolment between 1995 and 2002, but this is only quantified in the case of one school where it rose from 0 to 60%.

In India, Pratham (supported by Novib Oxfam) is said to be delivering basic education through innovative methodologies to 220,500 children in about 20 cities in 'learning communities' within slums and also rural areas. Pratham does not keep records of enrolment, retention and completion and deliberately does not monitor on gender and identity. But UNICEF in India estimates an attendance rate of 75/365 days in poor urban areas – and that is amongst those enrolled.

**Changes in community attitudes:** The Oxfam Quebec Programme in Burkina Faso records outcomes in terms of changes in community attitudes: 95% of those who had become literate claimed improved hygiene practices; 85% claimed it had improved family relations; 86% claimed improved community relations (including ability to solve problems and better mutual acceptance); 62% used health clinics more; and 70% claim benefits in being able to use written correspondence. 45% claimed economic/financial benefits. This included 9% of household heads noticing this in their daughters or wives.

**.....specifically on gender:** Most importantly the Oxfam Quebec programme and the Association Munyu programmes in Burkina Faso record evidence of a decrease in harmful practices, such as early marriage. Programme staff in Mozambique believe this is also true there, but no documentary evidence was yet provided.

The evaluation of Association Tin Tua (ATT) also claims visibly improved men-women relations, greater female leadership and participation in development initiatives, increased school attendance rates amongst girls because of parents' attitudes changing; and ex-pupils claim easier access to the labour market. Unfortunately, the evaluation does not quantify or substantiate these claims. The wider Novib Oxfam Programme Evaluation (covering 8 countries) finds that there has been a "positive influence on the living conditions of women, contributing to more equal gender relationships. It appears that community development initiatives are more often initiated by women than by men...and Increased self-respect and increased autonomy regarding their own and their children's living conditions are the result".

In Mozambique, traditional leaders have asked staff of the Niassa Gender Unit to help work on changing family attitudes to encourage more equitable division of household tasks, so girls have more time for education. In both Niassa (IO) and Zambezia (Oxfam GB) the number of women teachers and women in leadership positions (head teachers and school directors) has increased.

In India too, one of the Pratham programme's most striking outcomes on community attitudes is on attitudes to the roles and potential of women. It is said to be "bringing about small revolutions in society, not just by making teachers out of thousands of young women each year, but by constantly challenging their limits and letting them experience the joy of self-discovery, but also by creating role models for younger girls.

**HIV/AIDS awareness:** The two Oxfam programmes in Mozambique and ATT in Burkina Faso also incorporate education on HIV/AIDS in the localised curriculum. This was done at the request of communities. It is too early to have recorded results, although studies have shown it can work elsewhere (e.g. Uganda). The programmes in India do not attempt to tackle HIV/AIDS, though evaluators say that Pratham recognises it as an important issue.

**Mainstreaming and replication:** In Mozambique, both Oxfam programmes are completely integrated into the national education strategy. Government departments are integrated into the programme alongside civil society organisations, including management training for school directors.

The latter is proposed as the focus for a major new Oxfam GB programme in India. In Burkina, they are run by CSOs but integrated in the national education plan. In Burkina Faso, Oxfam programmes are run by CSOs but integrated in the national education plan.

In 2004 the Burkina government adopted the bi-lingual formal education curriculum developed by ATT, which enables students to complete primary schooling in 5 years instead of 6 with satisfactory to good results. In Mozambique, the 2nd National Strategic Plan for Education (2005) now includes a gender strategy. It picks up the topics modelled by the Niassa Gender Unit, set up by the Oxfam Intermón programme. The gender unit set up at provincial level in the IO programme has been duplicated in other provinces. Also in Mozambique, government has accepted Oxfam GB's low-cost, low-maintenance design for schools.

In India Pratham, regards government as its primary client. Its rapid learning programme is designed to help children keep abreast of the curriculum in school and enable out-of-school children to get into school. In Maharashtra state in India, Pratham has been asked to train government teachers. Also, 30% of Pratham's teachers are later recruited by government.

**Promoting the right to be heard:** The Burkina Faso programmes all state strongly their intention to give effective "voice" to the most disempowered in influencing decisions affecting their lives but the strategies to do this are not yet clearly worked out at provincial and district levels, so the impact is found to be limited. Up until now the strategy seems to be more one of campaigning to communities (on the importance of sending girls to school) via radio, discussion groups etc, rather than campaigning with communities.

However, the realisation of the importance and potential power of the School Councils (in both Burkina Faso and Mozambique) - coupled with the readiness of the national coalitions on education to expand from lobby to national government downwards into the provinces - may be taking the programmes into a new phase where democracy may be deepened. For the urban poor and marginalized castes of Northern India, merely getting children into learning and creating libraries within the communities is an important step on the road towards promoting the right of their voice to be heard. This is because it begins to reverse a pervading sense of powerlessness over their own lives.

#### **The External Evaluation comments:**

*Among the poorest countries receiving Oxfam support, Mozambique, Burkina Faso and India are all working to PRSPs and committed to achieving EFA by 2010 and the MDGs by 2015. Assistance goes to partners working variously in comprehensive community interventions, including school buildings, community literacy and school council support, gender awareness and HIV/AIDS, professional development of teachers (especially women), incentives to keep girls in school, and partner capacity-building.*

*A repeated concern is the **lack of articulation of educational campaign, policy and programme initiatives** in ways that strengthen the overall coherence of contributions being made and value the input of all stakeholder groups.*

*None [of the evaluations] doubt the immediate contributions being made by the different interventions supported in areas directly affected, but their **data do not permit comparative descriptions or examination of the relations of inputs to outcomes.***

*It is **hard to verify the extent of learning implied by increasing enrolment and retention** or its longer term contribution to the quality of life.*

*In each case Oxfam's role is to coordinate CSO and CBO input to the different programmes, while it may be an implementer in other partnerships.*

***Complementary programme developments in education have achieved measurable learning outcomes and increased gender awareness in the areas affected, contributing at a micro level to EFA and MDG objectives. In terms of overall need in the countries concerned and globally, the visibility of Oxfam's input is small and where funding has already ceased it is disappearing.***

***The enduring Oxfam footprint is like to remain on what is probably a small number of individuals, whose life chances have been significantly affected by the opportunities afforded by Oxfam and their desire to model what they do according to its principles. This should be sufficient incentive for Oxfam to continue to invest in educational development, backed up multiple modes of dissemination of information about what is achieved and how.***

### **3.3 Added value: Oxfam's models of change**

#### **3.3.1 The rights-based approach**

Programme staff at Novib Oxfam for the three countries reviewed by claim they assess programme proposals differently now and campaign staff that it is changing the Dutch public perception of Novib Oxfam. A rights-based approach automatically increases emphasis on enabling the voice to be heard of those whose rights are being denied (Aim 4). "It implies a more dynamic vision of development, in which ownership and empowerment are leading concepts". The RBA is useful externally because it provides a common framework and language with others working on education, since Oxfam took it on as part of a wider trend in development circles, including among Southern governments. It is a good entry-point for working in alliances.

It is useful internally because it promotes greater coherence between campaigns, advocacy and field programme. "It is the wire that threads them together."

Neither Intermón Oxfam nor Oxfam Quebec have had a conscious plan for implementation of an RBA. Novib Oxfam has done some staff training but it is limited. Several staff in Oxfam GB (all functions) stress that a purist RBA approach is not sufficient alone. They refer to a more pragmatic "Rights-Plus" approach. For example, in advocacy, these staff argue that it is better to add the argument that education is essential for macro-economic growth and show public pressure, rather than rely on the 'right' alone. Others (all functions and all affiliates) find that the RBA has not been used to the full.

A couple of staff interviewed pointed out that Oxfam's current pragmatic approach means that education advocacy focuses on the G8 because that is where the real power lies (as opposed to the United Nations), even though the G8 has no legitimately derived authority. They are concerned that this may bring short-term successes, while compromising possibilities for long-term gains.

The External Evaluation comments:

***All Oxfam work in education seems to endorse a rights-based approach, however implicitly, but some affiliates report resistance to the complexity of working to the OI frameworks, while lack of attention to language is disempowering and is seen to deny the right to be heard within Oxfam and its partnerships.***

### 3.3.2 One programme

In Burkina Faso Oxfam's programmes are active at community level (including advocacy to communities) and at national level at international level. But the linkages between the different levels are often weak, especially at regional level and in the (big) space between national action and local action with communities. The picture is similar in Mozambique. Within the provinces where the two Oxfam programmes reviewed are located, Oxfam plays a strong role in creating coherence and synergy between actors at different levels. But action needs to be more strategic and the link to the national coalition is weak.

India is even more challenging because of the federal system and sheer size. There is no single national coalition uniting all organisations campaigning on education. Novib Oxfam does have two partner organisations which have the ear of government. However, the lack of collaboration between Novib Oxfam and Oxfam GB in India and unfocused nature of both their past education programmes has meant that Oxfam has not yet played as constructive role in supporting the development of local to global connections in India as it might have done.

The other weak area is at regional level beyond national boundaries. This is being addressed more consistently in West Africa through ANCEFA. This is almost certainly because education is a priority for the West Africa Regional Strategic Team and it is not in the other two regions.

Three Oxfams (feel they have made big progress on this, although Novib Oxfam and Oxfam Quebec both state that there is still much room for improvement. In Intermón Oxfam, there is regular communication between staff working on advocacy on education and field programme coordinators. But in Novib Oxfam, for example, the campaigns department knows little about the field programme (partly because education is a lower priority).

Also, both Oxfam Quebec and Novib Oxfam advocacy departments feel that there needs to be more co-strategising from the bottom up with partner organisations, rather than just using field work to illustrate policy positions formulated elsewhere. There is then the additional challenge of ensure that local-global connections identified within the affiliate feed in to the OI international work: either into the OI MDG campaign or to the OI Representative on the GCE.

Oxfam GB staff analysed the issue in some detail because they are concerned that the coherence between functions is not proving easy in education. Besides external hindrances, such as difficulty in communications in the field, there are systemic hindrances. These apply almost certainly to other affiliates too.

Various Oxfam GB staff (from all functions) remark that programmers and advocacy/campaigns staff appear to struggle to value each other's competencies in this sector.

### 3.3.3 Strategic alignment

There has been some progress on strategic collaboration in education since 2001. The following examples were found:

**Campaigning on other affiliates' programme base:** Although only four affiliates have field programme in education, all are engaged in their home country or internationally.

**Programme managed by one on behalf of more affiliates:** In Burkina Faso, Intermón Oxfam manages the Oxfam relationship with the national civil society coalition. Oxfam GB handed over management of its education programme in Burkina Faso to Oxfam Quebec in 2003. Partner organisations valued these moves as simplifying and improving relations.

**Country level education working group:** Country staff in Mozambique created a Working Group on Education primarily for learning, but also to coordinate Oxfam action on national issues. Officially (under OI policy), it is not permitted to exist. There has been a visible cross-fertilization between the programmes in two separate provinces since 2003. But it is not clear how much programme improvements (in both programmes) came from learning from this group or from other fora in which all affiliates participate.

**(Provisional) Regional Education Strategy:** In West Africa in 2004, affiliates agreed to make one strategic plan for education, since it is one of the priorities in the RSPBP. Novib Oxfam is the lead. But long delays in recruitment and staff changes have led to serious delays after a promising beginning. The process was due to recommence in November 2005.

**Campaign:** Lack of consultation between affiliates before the GCE meetings to prepare the OI position and lack of debriefing – not even between the four Oxfams with a considerable stake in education - is an important missing link in Oxfam's input to international campaigns.

**Missed opportunities and blockages:** Several examples of missed opportunities due to lack of collaboration or alignment became evident during this Evaluation. The following are two such examples:

- When two Oxfams are supporting two competing civil society coalitions in the same country (as happened in West Africa and India), there is a risk of undermining movement-building;
- The two Oxfams operating in India both reviewed their programmes at around the same time (including commissioning major studies). Both decided to focus in the North - without any consultation with each other. A third affiliate is proposing to begin a programme in India, and has apparently not yet referred to the others.

Differences in approach to dealing with partner organisations, in levels of operationality and some differences of opinion on the extent to which Oxfam should be directive in campaigns and take a leadership role in alliances hamper greater collaboration. A larger factor is probably the lack of management support and scrutiny in education because it is lower priority than Aims 1 and 3. Staff are not encouraged to work with, question and challenge colleagues in other Oxfams.

Only one of the evaluations reviewed in this Evaluation reviews strategic collaboration between Oxfam affiliates, despite the fact that they do look at performance on working in alliances with others. This is so even in the case of the documents on the Mozambique programmes of Intermón Oxfam and Oxfam GB where the programmes are so similar and where there is an active Oxfam Working Group on Education.

The External Evaluation comments:

*The number of inter-organisational links that each operation supports, vertically and horizontally, requires high levels of maintenance, to the extent that network management rather than technical expertise risks dominating relations with government and partners, from local to global levels. The time required across multiple organisations to maintain successive short-term income strands has additional implications for loss of skill and institutional memory.*

*Structural weaknesses in regional and global level management are noted, along with a trend to the de-specialisation of Oxfam staff.*

### **3.3.4 The Oxfam brand**

The majority of the (education) campaign work is done under the GCE or GCAP brand and not as Oxfam. Some isolated comments were made about the value of the Oxfam brand:

- That in Southern countries it is better to be part of an alliance (as Oxfam is). Interview respondents found that the Oxfam brand adds little or no value and can even be counter-productive, especially for campaigning in Southern countries.
- That in some Northern contexts (e.g. to Spanish government), where the GCE brand is not well known, the Oxfam brand opens doors.
- That Oxfam needs to take care that the brand is not becoming associated with doing too many things at once.

*There is complementarity in the work of different affiliates and between overall Oxfam input and global priorities. There is only limited awareness of OI as a global Confederation, internal uncertainty about corporate branding, and disquieting concern at the profile and presumption of OGB in relation to affiliates, severally and collectively.*

### **3.3.5 Working in alliances**

The GCE has 53 members covering 150 countries. The main finding is that an alliance like the GCE (and potentially GCAP) delivers influence on policy-makers. The main reasons can be summarised as follows:

- (GCE) enables Oxfam to be part of a campaign mobilising more than 2 million people in 2003 and 2004. This is inspiring for staff and supporters.
- Delivers local to global connections;
- Gives richer content, greater weight, credibility and legitimacy
- Opens doors for less well-known organisations
- Mass action creates political space for "voices to be heard", which can be a major achievement in itself in some countries even if it does not result in immediate policy or practice change.
- For Oxfam it enables sustained campaigning even when Oxfam gives priority to other issues
- Also for Oxfam it has indirectly assisted integration between programme, advocacy and campaigns,
- It has turned education into a 'solidarity' issue, which it was not previously.

All Oxfams appear to have made major progress on working in alliances in the period under review, especially Oxfam GB, building on the experience gained during the "Education Now!" campaign.

'Working in alliance with others' has been a point of attention in evaluations too and major value is found. Oxfam is seen as a flexible, facilitating partner. Oxfam GB is specifically praised for strong, clear advocacy messages and strategies, high quality and committed staff, and for being good at facilitating coalitions. Novib Oxfam Oxfam's work in alliances over eight countries on education is praised by evaluators and Novib Oxfam is rated as strong amongst other comparable Dutch INGOs.

## 3.4 Lessons for the future

### 3.4.1 Oxfam's models of change can work well...if

The education sector offers some clear examples of how well the OI Models of Change can work and the value they add, when applied thoroughly. There has been an improvement in focus and quality of field programme (achieved in two and planned in one of the three countries reviewed), stimulated by the Rights-Based Approach and the desire to ensure appropriate policy change at country level. Lead responsibility for campaign and advocacy lies within an alliance (in fact, more than one). Neither of these trends is complete nor perfect, but they are important improvements compared to the situation in 2001.

**Continuity and sustained pressure** are now recognised by many staff as two vital factors in success. Sustained change takes time. So does building alliances and coalitions. With GCAP, even campaigners are looking at long-term lines. This is a major lesson actually learned since the "Education Now!" campaign.

The least valuable of the six 'Models of Change' in this sector is the Oxfam brand. That is partly because campaigning has been successful through the Global Campaign for Education. And it is partly because the major challenge now is to ensure appropriate policy change and implementation in Southern countries. The Oxfam brand is not an asset for campaigning in the South.

### 3.4.2 Working in alliance with others delivers

The **Global Campaign for Education** has continued to be a successful model. It is now multi-polar, which is a huge advance compared to 2001. Sustained pressure over time through a truly universal alliance with a clear vision, active at all levels and 'owned' by any one of them delivers results. The challenge now is to strengthen the weaker links in the local to global chain. That is, expanding national coalitions out into the provinces to connect to communities active in making education happen in the districts.

The lesson most commonly stated by staff interviewed for this evaluation was that (with some exceptions) Oxfam's international and Northern advocacy messages are still Northern-centric and need to be rooted much better in local reality and messages. On the one hand, programme staff need to look 'upwards' more to the bigger context in which they are working. They need to capture learning and policy messages and they need clear mechanisms to feed these in to campaigns. Campaigns and advocacy staff need to be enabled to reach downwards

Lastly, there are indications that there may still be some tension around the balance between insider and outsider strategies and when and how to use Oxfam's weight and reputation to the benefit of all – not just of Oxfam.

### 3.4.3 Low priority and greater complexity are not good bed-fellows

Oxfam needs to think through more carefully what it means when a campaign has lower priority. This is essential in order to maximise use of the (albeit fewer) resources that are still going in and to avoid losing past gains and reputation. Staff that are still working on education (now mostly in the field) need to know at least how to connect to the GCE and to other staff working on education. The picture is getting even more complex with education being one issue – but amongst many – in the OI MDG campaign and GCAP as well.

#### **3.4.4 Be more strategic**

Success comes where power analysis of the various actors (including Oxfam itself) is good, strategy is practical and specific and there is an implementation plan. In order to be more strategic, the Oxfams need to be very well in touch with the ground and the specific context. This is especially so in the case of education because it is a decentralised government responsibility. A holistic strategic plan (offering advocacy, media, popular mobilisation and other development practice), is needed with very strategic choice of partner organisations and alliances and co-strategising with them. Very few other organisations can offer this. Oxfam can, but only with input from **all functions** (programme, advocacy & campaigns).

Being in close touch with the ground is a particular challenge for Novib Oxfam. But this is the area where greater **strategic collaboration** between the Oxfams could be most effective. This would require a stronger and more widespread spirit of collaboration, of common Oxfam identity and of mutual accountability than now. It is curious that while all Oxfams appear to agree on the need to be more strategic, one of the main factors standing in the way is competition between the Oxfams. Countering this will require leadership to help staff raise their behaviour to overcome rivalries, sort out back-donor constraints and give practical support to staff who take positive initiative.

#### **3.4.5 Decide whether education is a means or an end**

Oxfam has no pedagogical policy and limited specialist expertise in education. Oxfam sees education as a fundamental cornerstone for sustainable development, peace and security and the right to be heard, regardless of gender and identity. It is a means to a wider end. That is why six affiliates added a focus on empowerment of children, youth and adults as a goal in their education policies. To date, this fundamental organisational value has been more implicit, than explicit. If Oxfam were to make this explicit, it would act as a stronger guide for choices and prioritising in the ways described below.

#### **3.4.6 Virtuous spiral between the Right to Education and the Right to be Heard**

Evaluation of the field programmes indicates a potential ‘virtuous spiral’ link between overall campaign impact and attention to the right to be heard as a cross-cutting issue. School councils are playing a vital role in increasing both access to and quality of school education. At the same time, national civil society coalitions are seeking to expand outwards into the provinces and connect to citizen pressure groups. Here is an opportunity to make a connection in the weakest area of the local to global chain.

#### **3.4.7 ....and with gender too**

Campaign and field programme have also had some success in working towards gender parity. But there is a difference between getting more girls into school and actually changing gender relations.

Mozambique is the only country (of the three included in this evaluation) where there is a clear gender strategy in the field programme. In the other cases, there is a clear focus on getting girls into school, but not nearly so clear on changing the attitudes and beliefs that stopped them getting there in the first place or that will determine their role in society and in the household later in life.

Yet evaluation of these field programmes (especially in Mozambique and Burkina Faso) indicates a potential 'virtuous spiral' link between attention to gender as a cross-cutting issue and field programme impact. Attention to factors inhibiting or enhancing girls' success in school brings out issues around teacher training, details of the curriculum, incompatibility of school hours and household duties etc. Successfully addressing these for girls is also likely to improve boys' participation and success rates.

### **3.4.8 Weak Oxfam International Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Systems**

Novib Oxfam & Oxfam GB have been specifically criticised for having no system for gathering and reflecting on their (partners') experiences and for enabling partners to learn from each other. But the weakness applies more widely in OI.

This evaluation confirms that weaknesses identified in the 2004 MTR (in other sectors) apply also to the education sector (which was not covered in the MTR). The only additional point of concern arising in the education sector is on tracking cost-effectiveness. Not one of the 11 formal evaluations and reviews from 4 different Oxfams used for this report had any information on costs, let alone attempt to assess cost-effectiveness. Not all had information on outcomes. They stopped at outputs.

## **3.5 Recommendations**

### **3.5.1 Recommendations summarised from the Internal Evaluation Report**

(for full text see Volume II)

- 1) Education focused on changing gender relations & on the Right to be Heard: Oxfam should be explicit in its implicit philosophy that it sees education as a cornerstone for sustainable livelihoods, peace and security and the right to be heard, regardless of gender and identity.
- 2) Oxfam Strategic Acupuncture on education: Oxfam could create a country-specific Oxfam strategy on education in selected strategic countries with strategically-placed partners and a continuing advocacy agenda, including local to global linkages. It should be with a perspective of 5-10 years' engagement. This needs to be developed by a cross-functional group from the start to create a shared language, mutual knowledge and better content with real resonance at both ends of the local-global chain. For other countries, the following minimum level of OI architecture should be permitted:
  - a country level education Working Group (where there are education programmes)
  - a place on the OI Dashboard for information on education.
  - automatic exchange of info with others working in country: studies; plans; major evaluations
- 3) Insist upon strategic collaboration between affiliates: Senior management needs to show leadership commitment. Induction of new staff about Oxfam (and how OI works) is key, especially in the larger affiliates, as recommended in the MTR of the OI Strategic Plan.
- 4) Keep developing the GCE: Continue investment and participation in the GCE with special attention to:
  - developing capacity in popular campaigning skills (especially advocacy and use of media), where necessary
  - strengthening the alliance where it is weakest – commonly, expanding from capital-based national level out into provinces and at regional levels.

5) Develop common MEL mechanisms across all Oxfam affiliates: Consider having one joint MEL system for all Oxfam affiliates in education, as a pilot. Since there are no major points of disagreement between Oxfam affiliates on content or strategy, the subject lends itself to a joint approach. This would make it affordable for small Oxfam affiliates and could stimulate strategic collaboration. It would be easier to develop if a joint Oxfam programme were agreed. Finally, the education sector should be included in action to ensure Oxfam financial accountability.

### **3.5.2 Recommendations summarised from the External Evaluation Report** (for full text see Volume II)

- 1) *If (Oxfam) support to educational interventions is to continue:*
  - *It should be done as sustainably as possible through multi-faceted interventions, aiming to create a critical mass of participative citizens.*
  - *It should continue to endorse humanistic philosophies as the basis of its practice, much simpler than those currently applied, and find new ways to enrich technical interventions.*
  - *It should investigate the extent to which partnership coordination in effect implies the consolidation of parastatal education systems able to by-pass rather than support government at different levels and the opportunity costs of building partner capacities and sustaining multiple short-term income strands for slightly differing purposes.*
  - *Quality should be improved: Oxfam's interventions are good but not innovative;*
  - *Address the problems caused by high staff turn-over;*
  - *Develop the staff skills needed to improve Oxfam's ability to work more effectively with partners.*
- 2) *Will increased support to education programming be seen as a prerequisite of poverty alleviation and the realisation of rights, particularly among women?*
- 3) *Oxfam should review its rights-based approach and change objectives and consider the implications of uncritical acceptance of IFI and MLO thinking.*
- 4) *Oxfam should commit to a multi-faceted education programme that builds local capacities and creates a critical mass within communities.*
- 5) *Oxfam should commission research on its Basic Social Services strategy including the implications of service delivery for its advocacy role vis-à-vis the public sector's responsibilities.*
- 6) *Oxfam should review its monitoring and evaluation practices and those it requires of its funders.*

Dr. Preston concludes her contextual review with a warning: [Oxfam's] *uncritical subscription to dominant funding and implementation modalities, is noted, as are the ways in which Oxfam (along with other INGOs) is being positioned within global funding arrangements at the hub of clusters of sub-national, non-state educational providers, perhaps consolidating a system that may exacerbate as much as alleviate poverty.*

## Chapter 4: Humanitarian Response

### 4.1 Introduction

Humanitarian response is the core of Oxfam's strategy for the realisation of Aim 3: the right to life and security. The Executive Directors decided that this area of Oxfam's work, would have high priority (along with the Trade and Markets High Impact Strategy).

The evaluation of the humanitarian response sector looked at four topics, each the subject of a separate report:

- Section 4.2: The context: "Trends and Projections for Humanitarian Action", Pierrette Parriaux, November 2005
- Section 4.3: Internal evaluation: "Humanitarian Response: Internal Evaluation Report" Pierrette Parriaux, December 2005
- Section 4.4: "External evaluation of the Oxfam International Humanitarian Consortium", Peter Walker and Isabel Madzorera, Feinstein International Famine Centre, Tufts University, December 2005.
- Section 4.5: "The Efficiency and Effectiveness of the Tsunami Fund Management Team", Peter Walker and Larry Minear, Feinstein International Famine Centre, Tufts University, October 2005

This chapter summarises the four reports, all of which are included, in full, in Volume II.

### 4.2 The context

#### 4.2.1 Introduction: the global picture

This is a highly abridged version of a study by Pierrette Parriaux which was commissioned for the Evaluation. The study reviewed the international community's response four humanitarian crises: Hurricane Mitch; the Gujarat Earthquake; Ethiopia and Darfur-Chad. The study provides a "wide-focus" backdrop to Pierrette second piece of work for this Evaluation: a study of Oxfam's responses to the same four emergencies.

Today, approximately 50 million people live in a country or region marked by a protracted crisis. The indefinite duration and political character of these crises are challenging humanitarian agencies struggling between bringing basic relief assistance to victims and defending the basic political and social rights of the sufferers they want to protect. An estimated 6 million people live in refugee's camps and more than 25 million people live internally displaced in their countries.

Statistical analysis of the impact of disasters indicates an increase in their occurrence. While the number of lives lost declined in the past 20 years—800,000 people died from natural disasters in the 1990s compared with 2 million in the 1970s—the number of people affected has risen. In the past decade, the number of people affected by natural disasters tripled to 2 billion according to the World Disaster Report, 2001.

In the past two decades alone, direct economic losses from natural disasters multiplied five fold to \$629 billion. Annual direct losses from weather-related events increased from an estimated \$3.9 billion in the 1950s to \$63 billion in the 1990s. Other recent statistics show that an average of 80,000 people died each year in natural disasters in the 1990s. In 2003 alone, however, 700 natural disasters killed approximately 75,000 people and caused \$65 billion in damage and insured losses accounted for only \$15.8 billion.

The convergence between natural disasters and poverty and their interaction with fragile environments and vulnerable communities are becoming increasingly evident.

At the beginning of 2003, the UNHCR identified 20.6 million “people of concern” throughout the world – about one out of every 300 persons — which includes about 5.8 million IDPs. The Special U.N. Representative for IDPs estimates that there are in fact as many as 25 million IDPs worldwide, but nearly half of the global IDPs have been displaced through protracted conflict in just three African countries: Angola, Sudan, and the DRC. In Africa, IDPs outnumber refugees by four to one, totalling approximately 13.5 million people. According to Save the Children, 60% of IDPs in Sierra Leone are children. While only about 7% of “people of concern” are 60 years of age or over, in nine countries in East-Central Europe, North Africa, and Latin America the rate is 15% or more. In some refugee camps, the children, youth and/or older people are the majority. In one Sudanese camp, 94% were children aged four or under; and in another, only 14% were aged between 18 and 60. Dependency ratios in such “communities” are sufficiently high that the inhabitants are, for all intents and purposes, absolutely dependent on external provision.

In the background, the global “war on terror” influences the international community’s choices regarding responding to or ignoring crises (vide Chad and Sudan). Humanitarian agencies continue to struggle with issues of identity, ethics, structure, effectiveness, timeliness and professionalism.

The debate over ethics in general in humanitarian action is not new, and in fact, traditional humanitarian principles have crumbled at an alarming rate since 2001. Ten years ago, the “Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and non-Governmental Organizations in Disaster relief” was drafted in response to a pressing need. At that time, many donors felt disillusioned that development assistance, despite decades of investment, seemed to produce few tangible results. In comparison, humanitarian action became highly attractive, producing an immediate, visible, and (at least on the surface) positive impact.

Parallel to the growth of existing agencies, a host of new, mainly non-governmental organizations suddenly came into existence. Although all claimed to be “humanitarian,” many launched operations in the field that reflected questionable, vague, or sometimes non-existent ethical standards. As a result, the integrity of humanitarian action itself was threatened. In the atmosphere of such confusion, the framers of the Code of Conduct sought to establish common standards for disaster relief.

Ten years later, more than 300 organizations have adopted the Code of Conduct since its creation in 1994, and it has become a binding instrument for humanitarian organizations. However, little reference has been made to it in everyday practice, and many have questioned whether the Code is still a living document and how its use can be promoted.

#### **4.2.2 Hurricane Mitch (1998 – 2000)**

What is the situation now in the hardest-hit countries—especially Honduras—five years after Hurricane Mitch? Honduras has inched forward from 119th place (out of 174 countries) on the 1998 U.N. Human Development Index to 115th on the 2003 index; Nicaragua is down from 126 to 121; and Guatemala has jumped from 111 to 119, meanwhile, El Salvador, the country least affected by Mitch, dropped from 114 to 105.

It must be noted that the economic problems in the region are complex and are not just due to Mitch. A number of factors, including a decline in coffee and banana prices, all play a role, but this gives us a baseline of overall improvement.

Hurricane Mitch opened up significant possibilities to tackle the social, economic and ecological vulnerabilities left by the storm, but few of these were addressed. However, the post-Mitch period did bring some benefits to Central America. For most of the previous decade the region had slipped from the international agenda and the flow of aid had been diminishing, a trend Mitch reversed. The region's problems obtained greater visibility, especially in Honduras, which, before the hurricane, was the country with the weakest international profile. The inflow of reconstruction funds helped stabilize the macroeconomic situation of both Nicaragua and Honduras, and international awareness and lobbying by citizens groups has led to major efforts to resolve the debt crisis faced by both countries. This resulted in Honduras being declared eligible for HIPC (Heavily Indebted Poor Countries) benefits in December 1999. Without the hurricane, access to HIPC would not have occurred before 2005.

On the ground, the results of reconstruction led by community efforts have been impressive. Where local groups have obtained access to resources, they have been able to mobilize, and the physical improvements in water schemes, sanitation, housing and agricultural rehabilitation has been dramatic. However, the governments of both Honduras and Nicaragua have failed to find the political will to tackle the issue of land for reconstruction—for houses in urban areas and for distribution to small farmers who have lost their productive assets. Local landowners have sought to exploit the situation, and there has been serious land speculation in areas adjacent to hurricane-damaged zones

#### **4.2.3 The Gujarat Earthquake (2001-2002)**

Although the international response to the earthquake which shook the western Indian state of Gujarat in January 2001 was overwhelming, an independent evaluation commissioned by the Disasters Emergency Committee (DEC), an umbrella group of British agencies, concluded that the British NGOs could have acted more efficiently and effectively, however. The evaluation team said that both the appeal for funds and the way that program was carried out displayed an inadvertent lack of respect for local people and insufficient knowledge of working in the region.

Aid agencies failed to learn from previous experiences and mistakes were repeated. Specifically, British NGOs failed to learn from Latur eight years previously and responded to the destruction of complex village infrastructure by attempting to build rows of concrete houses and by undertaking paternalistic village adoption schemes.

Organizations missed opportunities to influence the Government by mobilizing and representing the affected people. Even agencies that had been working for years in India failed to cooperate with the many available progressive Indian NGOs. Many international aid agencies failed to engage in longer-term issues and to focus on restoring livelihoods. One explanation is the short timeframe for the response. As the IFRC observed "Placing a six month spending window...it was trapped by imposing a time limit on something that can't always be rushed".

#### **4.2.4 Ethiopia's protracted crisis**

Over the past few years, concerns have increased throughout the international aid system about the scope and nature of aid responses in protracted crises. Approximately 50 million people worldwide live in an area marked by a protracted crisis — a crisis that has lasted for five years or more. Ethiopia, Somalia and Sudan, for example, have each been in a state of protracted crisis for over 15 years. The majority of the world's poorest populations — those with the least transferable skills — is located in rural areas, locations where the opportunity costs of armed violence are low and the incidence of conflict is high.

According to the Ethiopian Prime Minister and the UN food agencies, around 11 million people in Ethiopia faced serious food shortages in 2003 as a result of "drought," and in the absence of a half million tons of international food aid, Ethiopia would allegedly be the scene of "mass starvation." This appeal, relayed by the majority of humanitarian organizations, came barely three years after Ethiopia declared that it was on the brink of a famine "rivalling that of 1984–85." While at war with Eritrea and engaged in a crucial election period in 2000, Addis Ababa claimed that a serious drought threatened the lives of 10.5 million people. As a result of an intense advocacy campaign involving the Western media, the UN and nearly all NGOs, donors gave the government one of the highest volumes of assistance in its history: 1.2m tons of food. Despite this substantial aid, several thousand Ethiopian Somalis died of hunger in the Ogaden region because they did not receive sufficient relief. The rapid succession of these appeals and the mixed results of previous aid operations raise the question of whether it is Ethiopia's climate that condemns the country to regular famines or whether the priorities and policies of the government are partly to blame.

In region where aid operations are well established after several years of investment in monitoring and targeting procedures – usually financed by NGOs – the bureaucratic infrastructure has become blind to real developments in food security. Aid recipients have developed skills that enable them to take advantage of these institutional arrangements. A small farmer in Wollo, for example, might plough his field but not sow anything in order to claim that his harvest has failed and convince the authorities of his eligibility for food aid, which will bring him two or three quintals more than a risky harvest. Rather than a "dependency syndrome," he and other beneficiaries have developed genuine skills that allow them to diversify their methods of obtaining food. Such strategies flourish mainly in areas such as Wollo, where farming no longer provides enough to meet the needs of the most disadvantaged.

Although the food situation in Ethiopia has improved substantially since the fall of Mengistu, this improvement is fragile and does not benefit all segments of the population. While it is not up to humanitarian agencies to solve Ethiopia's endemic food problems, NGOs do have a responsibility not to hide the social and political origins of the crisis affecting marginalized populations and to ensure that relief actually gets to those who need it. It is crucial that NGOs preserve their independence of the official machinery for the allocation of relief.

#### **4.2.5 Chad and Darfur**

The refugee crisis in Chad constituted a forgotten emergency until September/October 2003, when the humanitarian community drew attention to the presence of the refugees and the problems they are facing. After an extremely slow start, United Nations agencies and aid organizations have improved their response to the roughly 210,000 refugees from Darfur living in Chad. Refugees have been relocated from the border and are now living in camps where their basic needs are being met, although water and firewood will always remain issues. Aid agencies estimate that refugees from Darfur will be in Chad for at least two years.

Response to gender-based violence is underdeveloped and inadequate. Given the widespread use of rape as a weapon war in Darfur, it can be assumed that large numbers of refugee women now in Chad are survivors of rape. Refugee women in Chad are also at risk of rape and other forms of GBV. There are few NGOs working in eastern Chad with experience implementing gender-based-violence programs, and many NGO staff lack knowledge of the issue. An integrated response, which assists and supports all women who have experienced rape or other forms of violence, as well as sensitizes the larger refugee community about prevention, has yet to be implemented in the refugee camps in Chad.

In the case of Darfur, the international community has not denied, but it has delayed and hesitated. Once engaged, it also mishandled and took far too long to achieve a united and sufficiently assertive response. The UN Security Council did not hold a major discussion on Darfur until 7 July 2004.

There were competing political priorities within Sudan, within the region and in the world at large which acted to distract and inhibit political response to what was happening in Darfur. In particular, the competing peace process aimed at ending the civil war in southern Sudan was at a critical point, and this has been an important, sometimes immobilizing factor. So far, a massive humanitarian intervention is protecting the large displaced population from starvation. Diplomatic intervention has opened corridors for humanitarian relief but failed to stop the fighting.

#### **4.2.6 Conclusions**

The case studies show a humanitarian community entangled in the same debates than during the last three decades. Meanwhile the face of disasters is changing. Soaring urban populations, environmental degradation, poverty and disease are compounding seasonal hazards such as droughts and floods to create situations of chronic adversity. Old ways of coping are proving inadequate. But equally, people at risk are finding new ways to cope on their own initiative. Aid organizations have to put the rhetoric about working with local communities into practice. They need new approaches that boost people's resilience to the full spectrum of physical, social and economic adversities they face.

Natural disasters are not the biggest killers. In sub-Saharan Africa IN 2004, 2.2 million people died from HIV/AIDS, while 25 million live with the infection. Disease, drought, malnutrition, poor healthcare and poverty have together created a complex catastrophe, demanding a more integrated response than simply food aid or drugs. Here too, humanitarian agencies have been slow in incorporating this new parameter in their program's strategy.

### **4.3 Oxfam's response to selected emergencies 1998 - 2005**

We asked Pierrette Parriaux to review Oxfam's response to the same four emergencies described in the previous section. The aim was to explore the extent to which Oxfam has learned from these experiences and been able to apply the lessons. The full report (see Volume II) provides detailed reviews of Oxfam's responses to each of the four emergencies. The following sections summarize Pierrette's findings, conclusions and recommendations.

### 4.3.1 Key points from case studies

Although the details of the Mitch, Gujarat, Ethiopia and Darfur emergency responses are doubtless familiar to the humanitarian response staff of the affiliates concerned, we included this review in the Evaluation in order to determine the extent to which Oxfam as a whole has learned from *and applied* the lessons.

The following summary is from the Internal Evaluation Report of Pierrette Parriaux.

#### Hurricanes George and Mitch, Central America, September – October 1998

The Earthquake and Oxfam's response predates the Humanitarian Dossier and the current Oxfam International Strategic Plan. Seven affiliates supported relief and rehabilitation efforts, each working separately and with its own approach.

- Oxfam GB's activities "were appropriate to the circumstances..(but)...the effectiveness of some interventions would have been greater if, in addition to being more speedily implemented, they had also been better coordinated and more frequently reviewed."
- "Novib's creation of the *Platforma de Conterpartes*...during the governments' refusal at that time to recognize the impact of the disaster, has been considered an excellent initiative by the majority of the partners' evaluations of the process..."
- "...Oxfam GB was able to build upon previous regional office support for two advocacy networks in Nicaragua and Honduras in order to develop a timely and effective advocacy response...through Oxfam International".
- "...a vulnerability mapping would have increased the efficiency of the response."

#### Earthquake in Gujarat, India, 2001

The Gujarat Earthquake was the first disaster to which OI responded after the formulation of (its) emergency guidelines. Three affiliates were operational in India (not all in Gujarat) and a total of nine supported the relief and rehabilitation work.

- "Oxfam opted for an OI response with Oxfam GB taking the lead role...Although the mid-term evaluation of Oxfam GB...does not emphasize the coordination issues faced by the leading agency, the report by Oxfam Australia depicts the poor level of coordination...This is confirmed by the Oxfam Intermón report.
- "Various external reports...have noted that the successful work tended to involve strong partner agencies. Because of Oxfam Australia's network of partner agencies, it is one of the very few organizations which was able to provide support in relief and rehabilitation measures outside the devastated Kutch District."
- "Some of the partner agencies involved in the response discussed the planning and design phase of the response with both women and men, and included them in the process...Women have remained members of the many newly created village communities and many women have the role of leaders in these committees and communities."
- "In countries like India, the government is not hopeless in the face of disasters and more cooperation should be established with state governments..."

#### Ethiopia Drought, 2000 – 2001

- Oxfam affiliates implemented a total of 18 emergency projects under the Joint Emergency Programme (JEP) "...duplication of interventions has been avoided."

- “In this first phase of the implementation of the new (OI) strategic plan, and despite confusion on the added value of the JEP, Oxfam affiliates in Ethiopia had formed the Emergency Harmonization Group and had tried to coordinate Oxfam emergency responses. In addition...the Oxfam affiliates were sharing information from other sources...While the country harmonization group was meeting regularly and sharing information, understanding of the OI strategy...at the partner agency and project staff levels remained very blurred. The communication between the partner agencies and Oxfam affiliates seems to focus on implementation issues only.”
- “At OI level the decision process is not clear. There are draft documents which had not been approved...responsibility to (oversee) the approval of the drafts was not given to any specific person or body.”
- “...we do not have the necessary financial reports that would provide us with the capacity to compare one programme with another...In fact the contribution of the Oxfam affiliates in the target areas in relation to the total emergency need...has been small, 1.3% only...But the contribution of the Oxfam affiliates increasing awareness to international community...is believed to have assisted fund raising...”
- “The impact of the ‘OI JEP’ does not seem noticeable at field level, but the added value...is seen at Addis level...roughly 20% of the population has benefited one way or another from the Oxfam funded interventions. However the number of beneficiaries is a very crude number. Where monitoring has been superficial, the total population figures of villages have been used instead of the effectively reached part of the population.”
- In some cases “the number of beneficiaries has been double counted. In general the total of beneficiaries has been inflated.”
- “Most projects benefited women, though this has not always been planned consciously...Whenever local management committees were formed, women have been included and occupied crucial functions, especially in relation to financial matters. However, during assessment and planning, the involvement of women was low.”
- “OI contributed to coordinate the media work...The contribution of media coverage to campaigning and fund-raising is not documented. However it is evident that the international media had moved the international public, donors and governments to respond to individual Oxfam affiliates’ demands.”
- Partners’ project proposals do not reflect their implementation capacity. In general, proposals are impressive, contain much background information but do not set measurable objectives and ignore the roles and interventions of other actors.

#### Darfur conflict, 2003 – present

The two-year conflict in Sudan’s western region of Darfur has resulted in two million people internally displaced, 300,000 taking refuge in Chad and a death toll estimated at 70,000 by WHO but possibly much higher according to The UN’s Emergency Relief Coordinator. Violence continues and the space for humanitarian response is limited.

Oxfam’s response is led and implemented by Oxfam GB and “is now exceeding its goals for 2005”. Its objectives include “the reduction in the incidence of water-related diseases. Despite a slow start and an extremely challenging working environment, the project met and exceeded its goals in the year, eventually meeting the public health needs of 650,000 people with a £10 million budget in 2004 – 2005.

In its Programme Impact Report of 2005, Oxfam GB reports that...response impact included a decrease of 80% in diarrhoea morbidity (against an objective of 50%) in Abu Shouk; clean water provision in three sites and doubling the planned latrine provision to four locations serving 256,000 people. "It is harder to quantify our impact on protection needs but a protection analysis was integrated into our work and substantial public and private advocacy work took place throughout the programme period".

The Darfur crisis again raised the perennial dilemma for Oxfam of how to balance its humanitarian campaigning with operational programmes, when frank campaigning may increase risks. Oxfam struck a balance which largely restricted its specific policy proposals and its criticisms of warring parties to private lobbying and off-the-record media briefing. It is not clear whether more robust campaigning would have had greater impact....In the early stages of the crisis Oxfam lobbied successfully for improving humanitarian access....Criticisms have arisen that Oxfam was silent in the face of atrocities but...the security of staff on the ground prevailed.

Oxfam GB's own evaluation of July 2004 highlights the following lessons:

- Timeliness of response: the need to balance quality and speed of response. Management capacities are essential as well as trained and independent staff. In addition, analysis of government and various group policies is essential.
- The recruitment of qualified local staff with knowledge – for example – of labour laws should have been a higher priority.
- It is noted that MSF was quite successful in scaling up by using extensive training packages for new staff. More frequent visits by (the affiliate's) senior management are necessary to support operational planning.

It also needs to be remembered that Oxfam needs to balance the needs and priorities of the emergency programme with those of its continuing country programme and to acknowledge that such balance is very difficult to achieve and maintain.

#### **4.3.2 Oxfam's strategy and added value**

The Ethiopia Drought was one of the first humanitarian crises which saw the transition from OI's previous strategic plan (*Towards an Ever-Closer Union*) to the current one (*Towards Global Equity*). An Emergency Harmonization Group was formed. There was information-sharing between affiliates and affiliates attended outside meetings on behalf of OI as a whole. Information-sharing among Oxfam affiliates was effective but hardly applied to local partners at project level.

There is a clear evolution in the way affiliates have taken possession of and make use of the Humanitarian Dossier, although some field offices (especially in Africa) were slow in adopting the models and protocols due to difficult internet access and poor dissemination.

The introduction of the Action Plan, though imperfect, has changed the way affiliates connect to each other. For example, Oxfam affiliates responding to Hurricane Mitch (which predated developments such as the Action Plan) operated separately and the response was characterized by disconnected projects within national frameworks. One conclusion about the response was the need for a shared framework – anticipating what would later appear in the Humanitarian Dossier.

With each succeeding emergency involving several affiliates, the system became more refined (not necessarily more efficient).

The need for common services such as advocacy officer, security officer and a point person for information and media services because obvious. However the information flow is still imperfect.

The HACT was particularly involved during the lead-up to the (2<sup>nd</sup>) Iraq War and with the situation in the Sudan. The HACT has not always been able to achieve its ambitious goals.

### **4.3.3 General impact of Oxfam's interventions**

Impacts may look small at field level on the scale of an emergency such as Ethiopia, where the Oxfam contribution in 2000 amounted to 1.3% of total contributions. But Oxfam's contribution and media work created awareness within the international community which assisted fund-raising for the emergency. The added value of the Joint Emergency Programme was perceived at the Addis Ababa level as an achievement.

#### Effects of understanding local context on impact:

In several responses, including Mitch and Gujarat, expatriates were not familiar with the local context. In particular in Mitch the language barrier was a real impediment.

In Gujarat the partners of OxAus could support communities isolated by distance or caste status. They also provided a space for women to be part of reconstruction.

Understanding the political context and establishing diplomatic relations at all levels is still at an early stage in Oxfam. In Darfur, for example, MSF and ICRC had access to areas that were off limits to other organizations.

#### Intervention through partner agencies

This can have the advantage of lower cost, local knowledge, ability to make fast assessments and plans, contacts and cooperation with local authorities and longer-term sustainability (though not in cases such as Zimbabwe). However lack of impartiality, inadequate skills and resources can negate the value of this approach. Novib Oxfam noted that it was important not to over fund partners after Hurricane Mitch.

#### Direct implementation

In the Sudan, only the expertise and resources of Oxfam GB would have been able to save lives and protect women.

In Ethiopia, only Oxfam GB adheres to the Sphere standards in some of its work. None of the other affiliates' projects followed the standards.

#### Impact of advocacy

After Hurricane Mitch, Oxfam GB was able to build upon previous regional office support for two advocacy networks in Nicaragua and Honduras. Oxfam GB and OI briefing papers in 1998 targeted the World Bank, IMF and Paris Club meetings. In part due to this lobbying, a moratorium was adopted on debt repayment until February 2001 and the Bank and IMF agreed to multilateral debt relief.

Darfur raised the perennial dilemma of how to balance humanitarian advocacy with operational programmes, when frank campaigning may increase risks.

Oxfam struck a balance which largely restricted specific policy proposals and criticism of warring parties to private lobbying and off-the-record briefings. In the early stages of the crisis Oxfam successfully lobbied for improving humanitarian access. There has been criticism that Oxfam remained silent in the face of atrocities, in order to protect the security of staff on the ground.

#### **4.3.4 Synthesis of lessons learned**

##### Working within a common framework

The Oxfam GB evaluation of the Hurricane Mitch response observed that emergency programmes would have benefited from more explicit project frameworks. Within each geographical area, integrated project frameworks could have improved coordination and facilitated better timing. At country and regional levels, better coordination would have promoted learning for staff and partners, for example in housing.

##### Understanding the local context

The report underlines the importance of participation of local staff in discussing advocacy and security strategies. In the evaluation of Mitch, Gujarat and Darfur a pattern emerges regarding missed opportunities due to distance from local context.

##### Importance of timely response

Initial delays were generally due to failure to recruit the proper staff for launching or scaling-up a response. In general, recruitment of more experienced staff would have speeded up the response in almost all cases.

##### Human resources and management

The absence of clear lines to field management slows down the recruitment process. Project managers are not always given clear signals as to their mandate and authorities.

##### Direct and indirect implementation

Working through local organizations is generally appreciated by local authorities and populations. However project design by partners is not necessarily appropriate to the broader view of the situation. For example Oxfam GB's partners in Cortes stressed food security during the initial period, though this did not feature significantly in the programme. The Oxfam GB review team also found that housing design (by partners) in Cortes was not necessarily appropriate.

Direct implementation has provided material assistance in line with Sphere standards, especially for internally displaced people, refugees and in the Ethiopian context.

##### Participation of communities in the design and implementation of rehabilitation

The evaluation of Novib Oxfam partners (in Mitch) regretted that local communities were insufficiently involved in the design of projects. They also wanted more physical presence of Novib Oxfam staff to help collect data, to understand the local context and to monitor project implementation.

### Emergency preparedness

In early responses, the absence of contingency plans was a factor in delaying response. The value of the enormous investment of effort in writing contingency plans will become evident at a later stage.

### Application of lessons learned

OxAus learned from earlier experience in the Latur earthquake and applied the lessons in Gujarat, especially in relation to women participating in village-level institutions.

#### **4.3.5 Recommendations**

- The gap between the high quality of Oxfam's humanitarian vision, quality standards and other objectives and actual practice should be narrowed.
- In countries like India, where governments have emergency response capacities, Oxfam should establish stronger links with state governments and agencies. In other contexts, such as Sudan, understanding the political economy of war and developing diplomatic contacts before the crisis would help the people in the field.
- Improve timeliness of response through improving management capacities, the availability of trained staff and better analysis of field realities and government policies.
- Oxfam GB should undertake an evaluation of the logistical and human resource difficulties that seem to have affected these operations.
- Building the preparedness of national staff and partners to emergency response in vulnerable areas has been started in Central America and parts of Asia but is well behind in Africa. An Oxfam introductory training should be developed for all existing and future employees.
- Both affiliates and partners need to strengthen their capacity to use information and communication technology more effectively, to improve cooperation and facilitate informed decision making about humanitarian advocacy.
- The majority of evaluations provided by affiliates responding through partners do not include enough consideration of the pluses and minuses. There is a lack of systematic quality evaluation based on a common framework
- Oxfam should develop an evaluation model for emergency response. (For example the OI report on the Ethiopian drought in 2000-2001 was extremely useful.)
- Special action should be taken to ensure that the Code of Conduct and Sphere standards are effectively disseminated to all affiliates, understood and applied.
- Most of the documents reviewed ignore gender, generation and the protection needs of specific groups. The OxAus evaluation of Gujarat was the only exception. The next OI strategic plan should focus on the transformation of rhetoric about gender, generation and protection into action.

## **4.4 The Oxfam International Humanitarian Consortium**

*"Confederations are very messy, costly and time-consuming. Yet organizations in both the profit and not-for-profit sectors are choosing to move towards them to leverage resources and effectively coordinate inputs in order to yield increased outputs and impact. Confederations are full of tensions; all confederations experience these. These tensions will not fade and are rarely resolved. They have to be managed"*<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Peter Walker and Isabel Madzorera, External evaluation of the Oxfam International Humanitarian Consortium", December 2005.

#### 4.4.1 Introduction

The external evaluation report on the Humanitarian Consortium (HC) briefly reviews the history of humanitarian response in Oxfam and traces the evolution of the Consortium. The report then looks at the particular opportunities and constraints created by the confederative nature and structure of Oxfam International and draws comparisons with other organisations. The second part of the report identifies a series of issues and concerns; addresses the specific questions set in the ToR and makes a series of recommendations.

This chapter of the Synthesis Report summarises the issues and concerns, the answers to the ToR questions and the recommendations.

#### 4.4.2 Issues and concerns

- 1) The Humanitarian Vision: OI has laid out a clear vision of how it sees humanitarianism evolving in its Humanitarian Vision document. It points clearly to the need for unambiguous and cohesive values to underlie OI's work and for these values to be grounded in the reality of the operating environment – how it is, not how we would like it to be.
- 2) Power relations: Power imbalances are a reality. Oxfam GB is orders of magnitude richer than any of the other Oxfams. There are power imbalances between those inside the HC and those outside. There are power imbalances between OI and its partners and between the operational way of doing things and the partnership way....Addressing power imbalances does not mean making everybody equal. It means managing reality.
- 3) Evolving a confederation: The report discusses a number of the tensions inherent in a confederative structure and lists the benefits and costs of a number of approaches employed by other organisations. These include:
  - Outsourcing to external vendors rather than maintaining specialized in-house capacity;
  - Outsourcing to affiliates or subsidiaries: i.e. taking advantage of specialization within the confederation;
  - The lead member system: as adopted by CARE;
  - The emergency coordination team system, as adopted by the Save the Children Alliance;
  - Standards and systems: centralised planning, implementation, reporting and evaluation systems administered by one affiliate and accepted by all.
- 4) Representation and action: the trade-off: The examples listed above attempt to manage the need for buy-in representation, which requires time-consuming consultation and compromise, with the urgency of decision-making and the need for speed and clarity. The report reviews how the OI HC has managed this trade-off:
  - *The Humanitarian Dossier* is a very credible set of consortium standards, procedures and rules for decision-making. It builds in reference to the OI Working Principles, the Contract for OI Humanitarian Action, the Code of Conduct for the IRCRC and NGOs, and the Sphere Standards. The Dossier has many of the tools needed to make a consortium work and **if the principles in it were followed rigorously and all players had the will and competence to perform their allotted roles, OI would have a wonderful emergency operating system.**
  - *The online Dashboard* provides a wealth of reference material for humanitarian operations...The organization of the site, though, does not differentiate well between the material which is specific to individual affiliates and that which is OI material. Also, even over a broadband connection...it is slow to download and difficult to navigate.

- *The lead affiliate model* requires that other HCMG affiliates are willing and able to believe in the leadership of the appointed affiliate, and more importantly the specific in-country staff of the affiliate. The lead model has many implementation problems, all acknowledged by the HCMG. These stem principally from the lack of operational surge capacity within many of the appointed lead agencies and their field staff. **This does not negate the value of the lead agency approach but does highlight the need to invest in it.**

5) Interventions or empowerment? Discussions with staff on the approaches to humanitarian response often seem to end up in a dialectic between those who support direct intervention and those who believe working through partnerships is everything. **The argument is of little value.** The real questions to ask are: what are the range of models and methods available for saving lives and protecting human dignity in crises? What is the evidence for their efficiency, effectiveness and appropriateness?

- *Direct intervention* is often **the most effective alternative**. It allows the affiliate to maintain a great deal of control...It delivers a service for which the affiliate has the necessary skills and resources...**On the down side, it is not efficient.** The implementing agency picks up most of the costs, responsibilities and liabilities...**It is not empowering.** Local organizations are often left weaker after a direct intervention than before. They may be stripped of staff seeking higher wages...The affected population is not empowered. It is rarely consulted over services needed or form of delivery preferred. It rarely has any recourse to mechanism of redress.
- *Working through local partners: If done well it is empowering*, lifting the local partner in the eyes of their clientele and helping them grow as an organization. The downside is that **in massive disasters...it is unlikely that local partners will have the surge capacity** to meet the needs.
- *Strengthening local partners*, working with them prior to the crisis. This disaster preparedness model is much used by the IFRCRC. If properly resourced it can create viable response agencies, but more often in the image of the facilitating funder...It often makes the local organization increasingly dependent on outside donations to sustain a staffing and level of skill above that which is normally needed and, in a country where crises are infrequent...structures and skills quickly become moribund.
- *Going direct to the people*: Some international agencies are beginning to experiment with providing cash direct to disaster victims. This shortens and simplifies the supply chain.

Which method or blend of methods works best in which situation? Answering this question requires evidence...OI, like most Western-based humanitarian agencies, has done a great deal of research on and investment in the **direct intervention methodology**. There has been virtually no research or investment in understanding how best to work through local partners...In the absence of evidence, the tendency is always to fall back on direct intervention.

6) Impartial and neutral? Oxfam has always sought to be impartial in disaster and humanitarian response but seems to be more ambivalent about neutrality<sup>15</sup>. In a number of interviews...there was uneasiness about this ambivalence. (The evaluators) were left with a sense that it needed to be debated more thoroughly and more openly within OI. Many questions need to be resolved. Can one affiliate be neutral if others are not? Can OI be partial in its development work and neutral in its emergency response? Does it even need to be neutral, particularly if it is working through local partners?

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<sup>15</sup> Oxfam's alleged "ambivalence" on neutrality is disputed by the Executive Director of Oxfam International.

7) Mandates, preparedness and advocacy: The HCMG's mandate is extremely broad. It encompasses development-like preparedness; strengthening affiliates' own capacities; disaster response and rehabilitation and advocacy. The HCMG is a very specific, simple and small structure to manage such a wide variety of tasks. The vast majority of respondents expressed concern over this tension. Most felt that the breadth of the mandate was right...But they also recognize that the present make-up of the Management Group seems too limited to truly manage, let alone coordinate this interrelated array of activities.

8) Investment plans: The investment plans of the affiliates are summarized in a document of May 2005 which calls for many millions of dollars investments over the next two years. Much of this focuses on building up specialized human resource capacity. It is unclear whether these are funds that have been raised and allocated or are funds that affiliates wish to spend. It is also unclear what the expected end state is or how their success is going to be measured. However, the HC's willingness to make such plans is a huge step forward.

9) Advocacy: In a paper of July 2005 the HACT lists five areas where it feels OI management of humanitarian advocacy needs to be improved:

- Oversight/accountability
- Strategic guidance
- Addressing resource questions
- Feedback on ways of working
- Problem solving

The evaluators would concur with this analysis...There are two key elements to the problem. First. The HCMG finds most of its time taken up with the urgency of humanitarian operational response. Second, the Group comprises managers whose prime duty is to ensure the effectiveness of that urgent response. Advocacy is seen as important but not always urgent. The causes of these tensions are unlikely to be resolved. Instead they need to be better managed.

10) Response and leadership: Allocation of leadership was done based on experience, affiliate interests and capacity to respond. Although HCMG members avoided political games, it may happen that the different affiliate interests may have created a not ideal distribution of responsibilities. Since the initiation of this approach it has been tested in a number of emergencies: the Bam earthquake, Ethiopia drought, Darfur-Chad, Haiti floods, east African locust plague and the Pakistan earthquake. The HCMG's own assessment of "many failures" identifies the underlying causes:

- Institutional capacity and know-how;
- Internal leadership and vision;
- Internal affiliate alignment of multidisciplinary systems to fulfil the humanitarian mandate;
- Communication skills;
- Different approaches;
- Recognition.

The evaluators observe: In short, all the normal problems inherent in operating a consortium style of management where capacities vary massively but expected response (timeliness, appropriateness, efficiency and effectiveness) is held to a common standard. With investment in the capacity of affiliates to provide well resourced leadership, investment in the consortium to move agreed standards from the handbook to common practice...the lead agency model will work.

11) Membership of the Humanitarian Consortium: OI has set very definite criteria for membership of the HC. At present five affiliates are members and seven not members. The consequences of this division caused more discussion and disagreement than any other aspect of the HCMG's work. On the positive side...it demonstrated that OI was moving from a structure where every affiliate felt the need to always be represented, to a more trusting one where affiliates gain membership through their skills and competence. On the negative side, EDs pointed out that the criteria were focused around emergency operational delivery capacity, yet the mandate of the group included preparedness and rehabilitation.

Affiliates outside the HC raised three key problems:

- They are outside the information loop and the present flow of information is too uncertain, infrequent and lacking in usable detail;
- As all Oxfams are involved at least through their fund-raising and advocacy, they should be part of the decision-making about initiating humanitarian operations.
- On some occasions, non-HC members might be the most appropriate to lead.

Of these three issues, that of reliable and timely information flow is the most critical. Regardless of structure and system, OI is never going to involve all affiliates equally and thus good information flow so that all can play their appropriate roles to their best ability, is essential.

12) Evolution and mapping: OI's confederation approach, the HC and the HCMG are all in early stages of development. The critical issue is how they want to evolve in the next five years. One key question that faces all confederations is how much they want to invest in doing things via a secretariat, and how much via the affiliates. Could the future involve the OI secretariat running all OI humanitarian operations, with affiliate staff being seconded from a common roster of trained personnel? (This is the IFRC model.) Or does OI wish to place more emphasis on the lead agency model (as CARE International has chosen). The critical issue is not which model to choose but the future nature of the OI confederation.

#### **4.4.3 Answering the ToR questions**

1) Has the HC met its targets? For the most part the process targets have been met. The majority of EDs interviewed (within and outside the HC) responded that the HCMG has been effective and that it is a big step forward from the previous rather anarchic situation. However, leadership around humanitarian advocacy is seen as an area where process has been weak: the present setup is not providing sufficiently clear leadership and management for advocacy (see above, 4.4.2, 9).

While HCMG process seems to have been going well, it is less clear that outputs and outcomes are robust. Investment plans still fall far short of what is needed. Many recent OI humanitarian operations have made less use of the new OI philosophy, structures and procedures and have had to fall back on an older model, with the major affiliate in the country taking the lead.

A clear gap is the apparent lack of any system to provide metrics for OI humanitarian operations. Basic questions like how many operations have there been in the last year to assist how many people with what success cannot be answered. There is no regular generation, collection and collating of data.

2) What value does the HC add? Oxfam's response to the Tsunami was the critical test. The HC provided a framework within which all the affiliates could act.

It allowed for decisions to be taken by a small expert group on behalf of all the affiliates. The scale and highly public nature of the response forced OI and the HCMG to act ahead of its time, proving the value of what the consortium approach can deliver even if, by its own admission, it is not always delivering such a coherent and well-led approach in other less high profile emergencies.

Without the HC, Oxfam's disaster response operations would remain single affiliate affairs. Each Oxfam would develop its own style, competence, standards and working methods. OI would not be able to realize its full transnational potential.

The immediate challenge for the HC is to help the field employees and management systems of the affiliates put the agreed standards and systems into practice in a consistent way.

3) What are the strengths and weaknesses in the HC's relationships with affiliates and other OI structures? The HC's key strengths are:

- It has demonstrated that a skills based approach works better for OI than a simple all-representational approach;
- The membership of the HC and the HCMG (humanitarian directors) has proved a vital link with the EDs
- The HCMG seems to have made a determined effort to link in well with Oxfam's regional and field structure.

Key weaknesses are;

- The much felt lack of information flow from the HCMG to non-HC affiliates.
- The relationship between the HCMG and OI's advocacy around humanitarian issues looks satisfactory on paper but in practice is not working as well as it needs to.
- The relationship between HCMG's investment aspirations and the line management functions of all affiliates. The HCMG is a leadership structure, not an exclusive club. The proposals from OxAus to build an OI-wide roster of skilled individuals suggests that an Oxfam-wide approach is possible.

4) How appropriate are the HC's structure and procedures? Most disaster victims do not divide their lives into separate response packages. And true humanitarian response makes use of all the tools at its disposal to alleviate suffering and to address the root causes of that suffering. Over the next year the HC needs to evolve its prototype structure to find better ways to tie into the OI advocacy structure, the country and regional long-term development structures and the affiliates' internal resource development structures.

The defined procedures and tools have made an excellent beginning. The Humanitarian Dossier and the presence on the Dashboard contain much of the material affiliates need. The lead agency model is conceptually sound and the HC has done a good job in defining an attainable core of common standards to which all OI operations should be held accountable.

However, for an outsider, the Dossier has the feel of a good first draft rather than a finished product and it could benefit from some good design work. Similarly the Dashboard is not easy to navigate and is slow to download. The evaluators cannot imagine trying to access it via a dial-up connection in the Sudan.

#### **4.4.4 Recommendations** (summary of key points: for full text see Volume II)

- OI may want to consider how it can make the HCMG more permeable in response to particular situations.

- The critical issue is to see the HCMG as the core of OI's humanitarian management but to give them the ability to expand membership where needed for specific functions.
- The five Humanitarian Directors who make up the HCMG are primarily affiliate managers who spend some of their time on Consortium business. The HC needs to think through what proportion of their time is reasonable to devote to Consortium business. If the necessary proportion is too big then the alternative is to invest more in the OI Secretariat so that it can shoulder more of the workload.
- The Humanitarian Dossier and the Dashboard need to evolve to become more user-friendly, especially for those working in the field. OI should consider building their se into regular training for field staff.
- The lead model as had many implementation problems, all acknowledged by the HCMG. Oxfam needs to see the model as evolving. Affiliates being asked to take on the lead agency role may need to be initially restricted to two or three. This may mean re-visiting affiliate investment plans to ensure they are in line with the requirements for becoming a functioning lead agency.
- The recognized disconnect between the HCMG and the HACT. The solution lies in either increasing the ability of the HCMG to provide proper management and direction to humanitarian advocacy, or in shifting responsibility towards the OI Humanitarian Advocacy Manager and line management more towards the Campaign Sub-Group. Totally separating the HACT from the HCMG would not be a good option.
- Investment plans to step up affiliate capacities should be matched by a similar plan for the OI Secretariat so that it can more effectively support the membership.
- Reliable and timely information flow: there is not yet any standard OI-wide information system for humanitarian response. OI should study the feasibility and cost of putting such a system in place and implement it as soon as possible.
- If OI is to be able to say anything meaningful about the quality of its response work, it must be able to regularly monitor and report on a set of basic parameters. In conjunction with the information system recommended above, OI should agree on the parameters it will measure and report on for all OI humanitarian operations.
- There has been virtually no research on how best to work through local partners. Oxfam should be championing research in this area, which has the potential to add great value to Oxfam's work.
- OI needs to have an open, vigorous and informed debate about neutrality and develop an OI-wide practice.

## **4.5 The Tsunami Fund Management Team**

### **4.5.1 Introduction**

We also commissioned Dr. Peter Walker to evaluate the “efficiency and effectiveness of the Oxfam Tsunami Fund Management Team (TFMT)”. Time and resource constraints meant that Dr. Walker was only able to spend a few days on this part of his assignment, which limited the extent to which he was able to interview respondents. The full text of the evaluation report is included in Volume II. The draft report was sent to HC members and corrections to specific errors of fact were incorporated in the final version.

This section summarises Dr. Walker's main findings and conclusions. The evaluation sought answers to three questions:

- To what extent has the TFMT effectively supported Oxfam's response (including advocacy)?
- What organizational lessons can be learned and how can they be taken forward to equip Oxfam to respond more effectively to future major humanitarian disasters?

- What is the consultant's view of the findings of the Price Waterhouse report?

Dr. Walker's findings and conclusions take the "confederative" nature of Oxfam International as their starting-point. "It (OI) seeks to push decision-making as far down the organization as possible (subsidiarity). Line management remains strictly within the affiliates. The construct has multiple power centres rather than centralized authority". The study points out that "The normal model for managing disaster response, by contrast, is one of unified command and centralized control." The Humanitarian Consortium Management Group (HCMG) and the TFMT had to bridge the gap between "the facilitating nature of coordination within a confederation and the command-and-control direction of programming within the line management...of the individual national affiliates."

The relative ease with which Oxfam International has got from 26th December through to today without any major political upsets is a testament to the deftness with which this team has fulfilled its mandate and to the skill with which differences have been negotiated."

#### **4.5.2 Fund management**

All twelve affiliates raised funds which, by 21st October 2005 totalled \$263,318,000. The innovative idea of a common "virtual pot" was proposed the day after the Tsunami and the formal decision to establish the Trust Fund was taken by EDs on 1st March. A further innovation was to allocate the funds proportionately between the affected countries rather than between affiliates. Spending was authorized on the basis of programme plans submitted to the TFMT by the Humanitarian Coordination Teams (HCTs) in each country. The approved programme plan would then go through the line management of the HCT Leader's "own" Oxfam to the Humanitarian Director (who is by definition a member of the HCMG.

The study commends this system: "First, it made a clear separation between fund management (the TFMT's responsibility) and programme management (the responsibility of the line management of the affiliate). This avoided the temptation of the entity that established policy [the TFMT] to manage or micro-manage operations. Second, since the TFMT included the totality of the HCMG, the structure allowed the TFMT to set the overall strategy...and to use the need for quality plans from the country teams as a device to put pressure on the HCTs to become more functional.....This device is a telling example of how confederations can work effectively and efficiently without compromising their principles of subsidiarity and independence of affiliate action."

#### **4.5.3 Global Framework and Accountability Framework**

The TFMT created two strategic documents to guide affiliates programmes.

The Global Framework sets out OI strategies and offers specific guidance on sectoral priorities and "the need to consider relief and development in the same policy frame". The Accountability Framework sets out "how the funds are to be managed in a unified, coherent fashion by OI."

The study concludes that "it is evident that the TFMT has been diligent in fulfilling its responsibilities as defined in these documents...They have been innovative in finding solutions to problems...and...have shown great willingness to forego individual prestige for the sake of a better common programme."<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> The Executive Director of Oxfam International points out that the TFMT recognised the risk to the Oxfam brand of *not* pooling resources effectively.

#### **4.5.4 Monitoring and evaluation**

The system proposed by Oxfam Australia in March 2005 was at an early stage of implementation at the time of Dr. Walker's study, thus "It is too early to say anything about the success or otherwise of its implementation."

#### **4.4.5 Humanitarian advocacy**

The study reports that "some disquiet has been expressed by Regional and Country Team Leaders that advocacy and (more especially) media messages have used language that oversells or distorts Oxfam's intent..." However, "These particular criticisms aside, Oxfam's advocacy in regards to the Tsunami has consistently focused on themes that have made their way through the TFMT from the country teams."

#### **4.5.6 Transaction costs**

The study acknowledges the relatively high costs of implementing the structure and the fact that "the notion of the fund and the TFMT as a fund manager, not a programme management team...caused considerable stress and uncertainty for the country teams." One country team saw the TFMT in a line management role and addressed questions which should in fact have been addressed to line managers in the affiliate.

The study observes, however, that these "transaction costs" need to be contrasted with the possible alternatives. If the traditional OI approach had been followed (with affiliates working out their own programmes and funding arrangements, two critical short-comings would have followed. First, this would not have provided a mechanism "for ensuring proportionality between affected population" this would have meant Oxfam failing to observe the paramount need for impartiality. Second, "without some mechanism for redistributing agency income, the temptation for those individual affiliates which are not normally operational to launch their own activities could become overwhelming...IT would be to contribute to the "NGO scramble" which often characterizes high-profile emergencies."

#### **4.5.7 Summary of findings and conclusions**

The following is a selection of key quotations from the study indicating the stronger and weaker aspects of the TFMT.

- "The evidence suggests that the TFMT has taken its managerial role seriously. It has been innovative, seeking solutions to problems rather than dogmatically applying procedures. It has developed good guidance for affiliates."
- "The collegial manner in which the fund works...has made a significant difference."
- "...the team has an exceptional chair. His facilitating and consensual style...has allowed the team to be effective, focused and optimistic."
- "While the TFMT has performed well, the structures into which it fed...have not been equally effective...affiliates had a hard time bringing the HCTs up to speed...cooperation through HCTs is still an alien practice for the affiliates. HCTs existed more in theory than in practice...For many teams, the response to the Tsunami was really the first time they had met each other...Little wonder that notions of coherence in OI programming and timely reporting have taken a hit."
- "There is also evidence that the internal systems of individual affiliates are finding it difficult to adapt to the needs of a common fund."
- "The establishment of the Tsunami Fund...has greatly facilitated the management of funds, much more so than the initial notion of a "virtual account" would have done".

- “Affiliates have to think through carefully their commitment to being a Lead Agency in-country....it is recommended that affiliates redouble their efforts to put into practice what they have committed themselves to in terms of the HCTs and Lead Agencies, in the Humanitarian Dossier.”

#### **4.5.8 The PWC report**

Although “the PWC report is a balanced and thorough piece of work....[it] underestimates that effect a confederate political structure has on operational management.”

“PWC seems to attribute a programme management function to the TFMT, a function which specifically it was not given and did not seek to have.”

## Chapter 5: Gender equality

This section is a summary of “Gender: Internal Assessment and External Context” by Rieky Stuart (November 2005). The full text is included in Volume II.

### 5.1 Introduction

The 2004 Mid-Term Review raised a concern that, at least in its joint efforts, Oxfam International was not paying sufficient attention to the gender equality dimensions of its work, and this should be addressed.

This study explores in more depth the issues raised in the Mid-Term Review. It includes four elements:

- A review of the external environment in the field of gender equality work;
- Review of four country programmes (Nicaragua, Palestine, Ethiopia and Bangladesh) of the Oxfam affiliates working in those countries to look at the quantity and quality of gender equality work, both on its own, and as a component of all of Oxfam’s work.
- Contribution to the gender dimensions of the other sector studies that form part of this evaluation (trade, education, humanitarian relief).
- Review of the gender architecture of Oxfam affiliates and Oxfam International – the systems, policies, and ways of working – that underpin the capacity of OI and affiliates to contribute to gender equality.

In this paper, the term ‘gender equality’ is used rather than ‘gender equity’, because the latter term is sometimes used to argue that women may receive different treatment because they are different than men, and this would still be “equitable”. Also, gender equality work by Oxfams is defined as work that contributes to changing unequal power relations between women and men. Work that benefits women but does not deliberately work to change their status vis-à-vis men is not included in this definition, although it forms an important part of Oxfam’s work. The distinction between these two categorizations of programming is sometimes blurred, but it seems to be the operating distinction employed by a number of the programmers interviewed.

### 5.2 The external context

2005 was a year of stock-taking on progress in gender equality. Early in the year the 10-year review of the agreements made at the Beijing Conference took place in New York. Several bilateral donors are reviewing their gender equality policies and programmes. Overall, there have been amazing gains for women’s equality in the past generation, although the speed of change has decreased since 1995:

- More girls are getting more education than ever before, and the gender gap in education is narrowing globally;
- Women’s rights are protected by international agreements signed by 180 countries, and by national laws in many countries;
- Women are better represented in decision-making, especially at the sub-national level, in some cases through legislated reserved places for women;
- Women’s property rights have improved in many countries through legislation and judicial rulings, especially in the case of marriage break-up;
- Women’s legislated right to control over their bodies and sexuality has improved in many countries;
- More women are in the labour force, and both working conditions and wages have improved, with reductions in the male/female wage gap;

- Violence against women is publicly condemned in many countries. Although violence statistics are up, all concerned say this is due to improved reporting and protection for women.

These gains are tempered by other sobering evidence:

- The gap between the rich and the poor is growing, and the face of the poor is disproportionately female;
- Women bear the brunt of cutbacks and privatization in public services as they struggle to fill the gaps in services like health care, the provision of water and eldercare;
- Globally, women have not broken the 20% barrier in senior leadership, not even coming close in politics or business;
- The increase in the numbers and proportion of women with HIV-AIDS highlights the lack of control women have over their bodies and their lives, in spite of rhetoric, policies and laws that enshrine that right.

### 5.3 The failure of mainstreaming

By 1995, there had been over 10 years of experience with ‘gender training’ and ‘gender policies’ of various kinds in the whole range of international development organizations. The big push at the Beijing Conference in that year was an agreement to ‘mainstream’ gender. This came from the view that specialized gender units or ‘focal points’, whether in government departments or development organizations, were not affecting the bulk of development programming, and that progress required the integration of gender equality concerns across every part of the organization. For development organizations this meant that rather than allocating the responsibility for gender sensitive and inclusive development to ‘gender focal points’ or specialized ‘gender and development units’ or ‘national machinery’ for women, now *everyone* and *every activity* related to international development would be required to assess how their efforts could enhance gender equality.

But by making everyone responsible, no one was held accountable.

In 2005, the overwhelming consensus among those concerned about gender equality in international development is that mainstreaming has failed abysmally. With mainstreaming, many organizations dismantled or reduced their investment in specialized units and expected that the previous investment in gender policies and expertise would be sufficient to sustain continued policy implementation.

Mainstreaming gender, however, generated a number of simultaneous and contradictory problematics:

- Everyone considers that s/he is knowledgeable on gender issues, even though attitudes, belief and knowledge may not be strongly evidence-based, coherent or even consciously known.
- For busy staff, the additional work required may not be feasible, the timelines too tight, or the context too unsupportive. When there is little clarity about expected performance standards, individual staff make the choice about the level of effort.
- There is a tension between the rights rationale and the instrumental or needs-based rationale, in that they often lead to different strategies, emphasis and priorities. This can generate misunderstanding and conflict. To give a simple example, it is one thing to ensure women get their fair share of food distributions in an emergency setting. It is a different and more complex process to ensure women are consulted about who gets priority in distributions, to ensure women take equal leadership in the distribution, and to organize the distribution so that it respects women’s and men’s dignity and agency.

- A serious approach to gender equality work implies a cultural revolution. This not only requires courage and appropriate risk-taking, it requires knowledge, wisdom and strategy. Where staff are committed to gender equality, they may still hesitate because they lack appropriate and constructive support.
- For the few specialists who survived the shift to mainstreaming, trying to cover the integration of gender concerns into every policy, every taskforce, every activity was an impossible task.

At worst, staff do not examine gender inequality, and their programming perpetuates or worsens existing gender relations. More commonly, pressures of workload often result in routine application of checklists. Only those men and women who truly care about issues of gender equality invest time and energy in developing and managing programmes that generate positive change for women.

Funding for women's rights, especially for research and policy advocacy, and for learning at national, regional and global levels is static (and therefore shrinking). In northern countries like the U.S.A. and Canada, what were once vibrant and politically strong national feminist organizations (NOW, NAC) are but pale shadows of their former selves. Leaders in the women's movement are discovering that they have only begun to touch on the systemic change required for true gender equality: that systems and structures of subordination are complex and interrelated. Like an onion, removing one layer only exposes another.

For example, campaigns against violence against women will succeed when women have economic alternatives – property rights and decent work – as well as social disavowal of violence and the protection of the legal system. Violence against women is also inextricably linked to respect for women's sexual and reproductive health rights.

## 5.4 Overview of country programming

The review looked at joint and affiliate-only programmes in four countries: Nicaragua, Palestine and the occupied territories, Nicaragua and Bangladesh. It did not look at region-wide or inter-country programming. So, for example, funding for regional women's labour rights in Central America, or Israeli-Palestinian women's peace efforts did not turn up in the information received. In only one country, Nicaragua, had affiliates through the RST decided to work collaboratively on Aim 5 programming through the 'Women and Rights' initiative. In addition, the review looked at all available internal and external evaluation and monitoring reports of these programmes. Where possible, programme officers were interviewed. The information provided was reviewed with the following questions in mind:

- What proportion of funding is going to gender equality work?
- Is there evidence of learning and linking between gender equality programming and other programming?
- What is the quality of the programming in terms of its contribution to improving women's lot materially and strategically?
- Is there evidence that programmers are looking at how non-gender equality programming affects women and men differently and ensuring women are not harmed by such programming?
- Do evaluations and monitoring, or other activities address gender equality concerns?
- Is there evidence of support to programmers to address gender equality issues in all their work?

Seven affiliates support gender-related Aim 5 programming in the four countries, distributed as follows:

- Intermón Oxfam: Ethiopia, Nicaragua;
- Novib Oxfam: Ethiopia, Palestine, Bangladesh, Nicaragua;
- Oxfam America: Ethiopia, Nicaragua;
- Oxfam Australia: Ethiopia
- Oxfam Canada: Ethiopia, Nicaragua
- Oxfam GB: Ethiopia, Palestine, Bangladesh, Nicaragua;
- Oxfam Quebec: Palestine, Nicaragua
- Oxfam Solidarité: Palestine

(From another angle, five affiliates are supporting Aim 5 programming in Ethiopia; six in Nicaragua; four in Palestine; and two in Bangladesh. In some cases a partner organisation receives funding from more than one Oxfam.)

There is significant variation in the spending on Aim 5 in each of the four countries under review. The highest proportion spent is in Bangladesh (17% average over the three years under review) and the lowest is in Ethiopia (3% average over the three years). This compares with 7-9% spent OI-wide on Aim 5.

Not every affiliate provided complete information on its programmes in each country, so the overview's completeness and accuracy is constrained by information gaps. In addition, what is not present is just as telling as what is there, and is mentioned in each section.

#### 5.4.1 Ethiopia

The vast majority of programming in Ethiopia responds to the needs of marginal agriculturalists, both those living in densely populated areas of intense cultivation and those living in very arid sparsely populated areas inhabited by nomadic pastoralists. OGB works mainly with local government and peasant associations, while other affiliates fund and build the capacity of local NGOs mainly working on integrated rural development. In addition, Oxfams fund organizations that promote women's legal rights, both in terms of legal aid and in terms of awareness of women's rights, and support work against harmful traditional practices like FGM on a region-wide basis. Oxfam Australia undertook intensive support of partners to build their gender awareness and their capacity to work on gender equality issues in this plan period, prior to their withdrawal from the region. Other affiliates also report that they promote gender equality in discussions with partners.

There is evidence of a shift in a number of Oxfam-funded NGOs to increase both their gender equality work, and to increase the inclusion of and benefit to women of their programming. There is evidence that women are not being forgotten in Aim 1 and Aim 3 programming. Women do receive grants of livestock, or nursery stock or seeds. Some women are trained in vegetable and poultry production. There is an effort to consult women in water harvesting programmes. Protecting assets in emergencies takes account of women's assets (small stock) as well as men's (camels and cattle.) Female-headed households are mentioned as beneficiaries in a number of projects. While it is impossible to attribute this directly to the interventions offered by Oxfam affiliates, (dialogue, training, financial support) it is very likely that Oxfam's interventions contributed to this change.

An example that illustrates both the success and the limitations of the gender equality work of Oxfam affiliates in the region is Oxfam Canada's highly regarded region-wide civil society capacity-building programme. Begun in 1999, it worked with selected NGOs in the region to strengthen their democratic accountability and governance, their strategic capacity, and their ability to make claims for and with their members.

The NGOs which were part of the capacity-building networks and interventions in Phase I included some women's rights NGOs, but knowledge about and capacity to deliver on gender equality was not part of the capacity that was being built network-wide. This lack was noted in monitoring and evaluation reports, and the decision was made that gender equality will be a major focus of Phase II of the programme, starting in 2005.

Ethiopia has few strong, articulate women's rights champions in public life, unlike Uganda or Kenya. This gap means that international development NGOs committed to gender equality have little foundation to build on: they have to help create it. It is arguable that the precariousness of life for the poor in Ethiopia cannot be tackled effectively unless serious attention to gender equality is a core dimension of development programmes. There is no evidence that there is any effort by Oxfams to explore or invest in high-leverage strategies like improving women's position in agriculture, building an effective women's movement, or tackling FGM on the scale of similar work in West Africa. In fact, the low percentage of investment in gender equality programming, compared to the confederation average, argues that there is room to invest in this area.

**Oxfam-supported programming ranges from the minimally acceptable – ensuring women are included as beneficiaries, particularly women heading households - to support for lessening the harm done to women (abductions and other forms of abuse). Oxfam could do significantly more to build women's and men's capacity to organize for gender equality.**

#### 5.4.2 Palestine

This programme has the lowest proportion of funding spent on Aim 5 of any of the four under review. Funding for women as part of the peace movement was not visible in the information provided (it may exist at another level), nor was there any documentation of differences in attitudes, behaviour and interest among women and men in terms of peace strategies and how this might be built upon to achieve major programming goals around a sustainable peace settlement. In other parts of the world (Ireland, Argentina, Rwanda, Somalia) women's contribution to conflict resolution has been important.

Water provisioning work views women primarily as beneficiaries, particularly women who head households either permanently or temporarily. There is no record of proposed remediation around location timing and duration of meetings, escorted travel or child care support.

In agriculture, one of Novib Oxfam's counterparts, PARC, had participated in Novib Oxfam's Gender Route project (a capacity-building initiative similar to Oxfam Australia's gender audit). PARC had increased the quantity and quality of its programming with women, moving well beyond supporting women's traditional economic role in food-production to expanded opportunities for savings and credit, and to significant investment in leadership training and organizational capacity-building. While a recent evaluation did not look at PARC's gender mainstreaming in detail, evaluators felt that 'PARC would compare favourably with peer organizations in the Palestinian context'. Similarly, Oxfam Quebec's programming focuses on women's livelihoods. There is no documented reflection shared with this review on women and livelihoods in Palestine and the occupied territories. What is the profile of women and livelihoods, how has Oxfam-supported programming changed women's workload or status, or what are promising innovations/standard pitfalls in this work in this particular context? Given the emphasis on women-targeted livelihoods programming, this absence from central organizational records is surprising.

### 5.4.3 Bangladesh

Bangladesh is known for its strong indigenous NGOs which have built up considerable expertise in microfinance lending, especially to poor women. This is a major part of Oxfam-supported programming in Bangladesh. There is strong evidence that good microfinance programmes do increase the assets of poor families and make them less vulnerable in crises. It is less evident that such programmes on their own change the status of women or enhance gender equality, and there is considerable concern that they don't. In some cases, women are responsible for taking out and paying back loans that are invested and controlled by men (for example to purchase rickshaws). They may be subject to significant family pressure to take advantage of microfinance loans. In some cases, the relationship of loan officers to women clients reproduces and reinforces existing gender (and class) relations. When savings and loan groups are also used as a forum for learning about women's rights (including legal and political rights); for influencing village dispute resolution mechanisms in favour of treating women equitably; when there are opportunities for girls' education; and when NGOs provide opportunities for women staff to develop and exercise non-traditional roles and responsibilities, there is greater potential for improving gender equality. Programme reports indicate that Oxfam supports this expanded and integrated microfinance programming by supporting legal aid for women, monitoring the participation and roles of women NGO staff, and funding NGO-run primary education that is targeted to poor girls as well as boys. Most of the reports and evaluations do not look deeply at gender issues, and where challenges are mentioned, prescriptions for action are vague.

One of the most visible changes for women in Bangladesh has been the entry of over two million young women into export-oriented factory jobs, especially in the garment sector. As part of the trade campaign, Oxfam has looked at the implications of the end of the Multi-Fibre Arrangement for these workers, and supported the research on women workers in Bangladesh by NGO partners.

There was evidence that the NGOs organized to promote women's rights were collaborating with and influencing the micro-credit and basic education programming. For instance, clients served by women's legal aid NGOs were identified by micro-credit NGOs. The shift from strictly micro-credit interventions to women's legal rights, especially in local traditional courts (*shalish*), women's voice on local councils, and girls' education came about to increase women's status, voice and bargaining power. What is not evident from the documentation made available is how learning from programmes in other aims has influenced or shaped Aim 5 gender equality work. In Bangladesh, Oxfam GB has led the 'We Can' campaign on violence against women, and is endeavouring to broaden local ownership and participation in the campaign. There was no information provided to demonstrate the link of this campaign as Aim 5 work with gender equality learning from 'mainstreamed' programming under other Aims.

### 5.4.4 Nicaragua

Of the four country programmes reviewed, Nicaragua is unique in that the RST established a joint regional 'Women and Rights' programme as early as 1998. Rather than interrupting privileged affiliate-partner relations through a full-scale joint programme, the RST strategy was to:

- Jointly share information and analysis about work done to promote gender equality in the region;
- Co-fund networking and strategic investments for gender equality in the areas of violence and political participation at a regional level, including research;

- Include non-specialists in the programme's development to build buy-in and collaboration among all affiliate staff (and sometimes partners) working on other aims;
- Build shared analysis and agreement on joint priorities over time, based on reviews of existing capacity (inside and outside Oxfam and its partners) and analysis of the context;
- Struggle with issues of impact implied by the notion of an aim-based programme strategy in a region deeply rooted in concepts of solidarity and a sector rooted in process;
- Collaborate closely with leaders in gender equality in Nicaragua and in the region.

Like their local counterparts, Oxfam programmers working on women and rights concentrate their Aim 5 strategy with women's organizations, and devote few resources to encourage mixed organizations to address gender equality concerns. Major areas of focus have been violence against women, indigenous women's rights (mainly in Guatemala) and women in global production chains. They mark progress and results in the following areas:

- Understanding and agreement among RST members that gender equality is important, and increased knowledge of how to analyze and approach gender equality issues in all of Oxfam's work;
- Effective collaboration in the design and implementation of Trading Away Our Rights. Improved conditions for women workers in the region were one outcome, as was stronger and more effective collaboration among a range of organizations to win them;
- Mutual support and learning among the RST committee on women and rights, and stronger links among and outside Oxfam affiliates;
- The development of a regional Aim 5 strategy to align with the next OI strategic plan.

Progress has been slower than originally planned, due mainly to the transfer of resources out of the Americas to other regions during this plan period, and to the lack of OI infrastructure. This country was the only one of the four under review where Oxfams, through the RST, had decided to collaborate with each other and with relevant national and regional actors to analyse and propose joint and coordinated action. This Aim 5 work has reportedly strengthened affiliate capacity to improve cross-cutting work as well, through regional seminars and reports. **This collaboration would be further strengthened by investment in joint impact assessment.**

## 5.5 Overview of architecture and systems

Oxfam has been concerned about the failings of mainstreaming for at least four years. In the late 1990s, Novib Oxfam and Oxfam GB, the two biggest Oxfams, with the greatest specialist capacity, re-organized their specialized gender initiatives. While they didn't call it mainstreaming, the intention was clearly to devolve responsibility for attention to gender relations and women's needs and rights to all parts of the organization, and to shift specialist resources to programme teams (with or without additional time and funding attached). Mainstreaming also implies application to all parts of the organization – campaigning, advocacy, fundraising, management, as well as programme. The specialized initiatives had focused their efforts almost exclusively on the overseas programme department, so the other functions and departments had not been supported to contribute to gender equality goals.

At the Implementation Conference held for senior staff of all affiliates at the beginning of this strategic plan period, there was concern that the aims not included as a priority (i.e. aims 2, 4 and 5) would languish and fall behind. There was a proposal that from year 2 on, there be an OI 'community of practice' supported to ensure appropriate learning and attention to gender equality both as a stand-alone and as a cross-cutting issue. This proposal was accepted but never implemented, due to lack of follow-through. Only in 2005 did the GCT agree that there should be a group on gender, but its final scope and status is pending agreement of priorities in the next strategic plan.

At about the same time, both Novib Oxfam and Oxfam GB staff raised concerns about the quality of work on gender, both cross-cutting and stand-alone. A 2001-02 review in Oxfam GB led to a number of proposals for strengthening this aspect of OGB's work, a number of which were adopted. There has been no formal report on the success of implementing these recommendations.

Almost every affiliate has a gender policy in place, and there is no significant divergence in the policies. Between the late 1980s and 2003, at least four Oxfams (Oxfam GB, Novib Oxfam, Oxfam Canada and Oxfam Australia) went through a similar process of collective workshops with staff and partners to learn how to do a gendered programme analysis and ensure that women benefited from programme investments. This involved diagnosis, training and follow-up. Reports on these processes indicate that participants and their organizations felt there had been significant improvement in organizational and individual commitment, understanding and capacity, and some of the evidence from Bangladesh and Ethiopia support these reports.<sup>17</sup>

Except for Oxfam Australia's gender audit process, where staff learning is an important by-product, there has been no reported investment in gender training of staff during the period of this strategic plan. The assumption has been that existing staff had received training, and new staff being hired would already have the knowledge, skills and commitment to ensure gender equality issues were addressed. In fact, this evaluation generated unsolicited examples of hiring where gender equality knowledge was a criterion but was viewed as 'nice to have but not essential.'

The two biggest Oxfams have systematic requirements (in the programme departments only) for assessing the gender impact of a proposal or a partner. In Novib Oxfam's system, a partner's gender score will rate a green, amber or red light. Amber or red means the capacity to address gender inequality is weak or inadequate. Red-rated organizations cannot be funded. Such a rating system would be more challenging to apply consistently to affiliates with operational programming.

The two largest Oxfams also require reporting on gender differentiated impact. Other affiliates receiving funding from back donors with gender equality policies also have to report on the gender disaggregated impact of their work. Most of these reports are fairly basic, with the number of direct and indirect beneficiaries categorized as male and female, and sometimes include comments about the issues encountered at the implementation level in including women as well as men. Annual reports tend to concentrate on examples of programmes directed specifically to gender equality (i.e. Aim 5) and not on including gender equality concerns effectively in other programming. The exception that proves the rule is the global campaign on primary education, where systematic efforts to include girls have provided the knowledge and inspiration for improving quality as well as access for girls – and boys – in some important programmes.

Smaller Oxfams have fewer formal procedures in place for assessing proposals and programmes on gender equality impact. This does not mean such scrutiny does not occur, but only that it is less well documented and perhaps less systematic. Oxfam Australia is currently developing a programming framework and process that will include other dimensions besides gender equality.

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<sup>17</sup> In general, the best results of this type of training come with significant and high quality investment, training of teams who normally work together and ongoing follow-up, when policies and accountability systems are also in place.

The external programme/partner evaluations reviewed during the course of this study all had terms of reference that included gendered impact of programming. The quality of those reviews was mixed, with only a few that were impressive in terms of conceptualizing the assessment of impact as well as examining implementation/output issues, or in terms of looking at how/whether the status of women was changing, rather than only the proportion of women participating or the benefit women received.

Several other issues emerged from interviews and reports. First, the tendency has been to designate individuals as ‘focal points’ or points of coordination and reference for gender equality in various units in a number of affiliates. Staff commented that this responsibility was interesting and important, but that it was invariably added on to what was already a more than full-time job. Secondly, there were several examples where an individual senior manager was named as the designated champion or ‘driver’ of gender equality in the programme or the organization. Again, this was often added on top of regular duties without additional resources, and there were no clear examples of what such an organizational role entails – there was no job description. Finally, the Nicaragua programme/CAMEXCA region and the Labour Rights campaign have been immeasurably strengthened by the quality of the relationships with various actors in the women’s movement, who added a depth of knowledge, analysis and connections that enriched Oxfam’s programming (and vice versa, according to external informants).

It is important to acknowledge that just as the changes in the affiliates’ gender architecture were taking place at the end of the 1990s, a new and ambitious agenda was articulated in the strategic plan. However, gender equality was one of the issues that ‘became invisibilized’ to use the term invented by the critics of mainstreaming. Rhetorical commitments to ensuring gender equality was addressed in all of Oxfam’s activities were not matched by evidence of follow-up, management attention, or investment.

## **5.6 Added value of Oxfam’s strategy (“models of change”)**

### **5.6.1 Rights-based approach**

All of the Oxfam gender policy statements reviewed for this study are unequivocally based on rights. A rights rationale is used to support programming on political and civil rights of women as well as economic and social rights. Oxfam was ahead of the curve in this understanding, although there is now general agreement that the case for gender equality is rooted in human rights. Most Aim 5 programming is now proposed on a rights basis, while commentary in proposals and reports on ‘cross-cutting’ in programming still tends to be utilitarian.

### **5.6.2 Programme integration and strategic collaboration**

Oxfam’s research and campaigning on women’s labour rights and precarious employment, [Trading Away Our Rights](#) is the first example of local-to-global and functionally integrated programming that demonstrates how a strong gender analysis can strengthen Oxfam’s work and make a significant contribution to gender equality.

The labour rights work built strong links between actors whose strategic collaboration can have significant impact (trade unionists, women’s and feminist organizations and academics).

There is no other example of gender equality programming that comes close, in terms of adding value based on Oxfam's knowledge and expertise. Oxfam does not have anywhere near the experience or value to add in areas like violence against women, or women in political leadership as it does in these aspects of livelihoods and gender.

### 5.6.3 Oxfam brand

Several informants noted that Oxfam gained significantly in its positive profile with the labour movement because of the quality of the labour rights work. At the same time, the bottom-up development of the research and the advocacy goals meant that allies felt they had a strong stake and say in the work and gained similar recognition. (This was reported both from South African partners and Colombian partners). This sets a new Oxfam standard for collaboration: there is recognition of Oxfam's leadership and contribution, while at the same time there is similar recognition for partners in their own context – a win-win combination. Oxfam's added value was its ability to convene; deep knowledge by the labour rights team of gender issues and pitfalls as they occur in a wide variety of contexts; Oxfam's global-to-local links; and its policy, advocacy and campaigning know-how.

## 5.7 Conclusions and recommendations (summary)

(Please refer to the complete version of this report in Volume II for the full text of the conclusions and recommendations.)

### 5.7.1 Conclusions

- 1) While Oxfams have good gender policies in place, and have created systems to ensure women are not forgotten, at the programme development and implementation level **Oxfam's work is, with a few notable and shining exceptions, mediocre in terms of its potential contribution to gender equality** – both cross-cutting and stand alone programming.
- 2) **The challenge is not in the policies** – they could use some editing and updating, particularly in terms of taking a clearer approach to the rights/instrumentalist dichotomy – **but in how and whether they are understood and operationalized**, and in systems of accountability.
- 3) The question remains, however, whether the problem of mediocrity in this area is fundamentally one of differing 'frames' and ideologies, or whether it also has other, less tractable roots. The Mid Term Review also pointed out that Oxfam's main strength is the quality and commitment of its staff, and urged re-investment in learning. The LAG, and its predecessor, the MELT, have documented how little Oxfam invests in monitoring, learning and evaluation.
- 4) When everything is a priority, there are no priorities. Oxfam prides itself on being a leader in terms of gender equality, both stand alone and cross-cutting, in its personnel policies and in its communication. Yet **the attention of Oxfam's leadership to follow-through, investment, systems and accountability requires strengthening**.
- 5) **Oxfam's historical roots in a solidarity and needs-based model of working create tensions with a rights- and an aims-based model**, generating further confusion. Ensuring women-headed households get seeds and tools after a flood is not the same as supporting communities to treat them as equals to two-parent families. This review generated some encouraging examples of efforts to do both at the same time.

6) The best examples of developing integrated programming, like coffee in Ethiopia or CAMEXCA, or the labour rights work, or the Women and Rights work in CAMEXCA demonstrate that **joining together to build aims-based and rights-based programming with strong analysis and robust partnerships can be inspiring and effective**. Increasing this approach in gender equality programming has better potential for impact.

7) Finally, **this is one area where collective OI action and infrastructure makes eminent sense**. The goals, the analysis and the ways of working on Aim 5 have a great deal of commonality, as the positive energy generated by the ‘Women and Rights’ programme in CAMEXCA shows. Yet for each Oxfam to develop its own expertise, training programme, monitoring system, contacts and grantees for less than 10% of any given budget makes no sense.

### 5.7.2 Recommendations

The recommendations coming from this review are bold, because the potential is great, the need to do better is pressing, and this particular work holds promise for improving and strengthening the confederation in its next leap forward, as well as building on the best of the learning of the past five years.

1. **Take forward one of the areas of gender equality work that relate to Oxfam’s historical expertise as a key local-to-global focus in the next strategic plan.** In addition to its impact on gender equality, a campaign led by a group with similar profile and support as the labour rights team or the TCPG would strengthen Oxfam-wide knowledge and programming strategies on a key aspect of gender equality. It’s important to recognize the attraction that a high-profile Oxfam-wide activity like the trade campaign has for improving overall programming analysis, consensus, quality – and impact. This attraction could be used to strengthen gender equality work. Potential issues that emerged during this review process are:
  - a. Women and violence;<sup>18</sup>
  - b. Women’s labour rights;
  - c. Women (as leaders) in conflict resolution;
  - d. An even stronger gender focus for primary education (in terms of both quality and equity);
  - e. Women and PRSPs. How are women affected by PRSPs, and what are their recommendations for priorities?
  - f. Women and HIV/AIDS. The high incidence of AIDS amongst African women links to issues of intra-familial power and traditions and beliefs about women as chattel.
2. Just as the last strategic plan set five-year targets for shifting financial resources between regions, in the coming strategic plan **set increasing percentage allocations for stand-alone gender equality work.**
3. **Make Aim 5 programming the first integrated OI programme** on the model of CAMEXCA’s ‘Women and Rights’ programme. Its advantage is that it builds a common analysis, common programme framework, joint strategy, and still allows, if desired, each affiliate to maintain its own partner relationships for accountability purposes.

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<sup>18</sup> A number of affiliates in different regions (CAMEXCA, South Asia) are contributing to national women’s movements campaigning against violence against women, and this was mentioned most often as a potential campaign. However, there were also concerns expressed about Oxfam’s role, focus and added value in a VAW campaign.

4. **Make the ‘traffic light’ process that Novib Oxfam has set up, and something like Oxfam GB’s gender reporting (or Oxfam Australia’s M&E framework) Oxfam-wide.**  
These two systems provide the bare minimum requirements to ensure women are not forgotten or harmed and that Oxfam’s partners share some of our basic values about rights.
5. **Invest in continuing training and capacity-building of staff and partners.** Oxfam GB, Oxfam Australia, Novib Oxfam and Oxfam Canada have each individually invested in training and accompanying programme staff using some proven principles. Doing this collectively (in priority sectors or programmes or countries) would generate cost savings, improved alignment, shared understanding, and stronger working relationships.
6. **Reinforce the confederation’s goals of quality, effectiveness and efficiency by using gender equality as the pilot for the shift to sector-led programming and confederation-wide monitoring, evaluation and learning.** The LAG is already proposing to work system-wide. Beginning with one (or more) sector(s), especially one that is cross-cutting, means the OI LAG group would have to learn in detail how each affiliate currently works, and tackle the enormous job of smoothing out some of the idiosyncrasies and redundancies in tracking and reporting systems.
7. **Report progress on the impact of gender equality programming in Oxfam to a senior body on a regular basis.** This could be the Board, the EDs, the GCT, or the consultative forum. The profile generated by this type of reporting would encourage all concerned to improve the quality of the work, and its impact.

## Annex 1: The Mid-Term Review and the Evaluation

### 1. Comparison of major conclusions

Mid-Term Review 2004	Evaluation 2006
2.02 The High Impact Strategy is not yet underpinning and encasing the Trade Campaign.	Significant outcomes and impact in the “Livelihoods” component of Trade and Livelihoods remain largely invisible.
2.03 However, at least six regions now appear to be building aligned, mutually reinforcing programme from the Trade Campaign entry-point.	The Evaluation adds Morocco in the MEMAG Region (Labour Rights)
2.04 The “jury is still out” on humanitarian response. Identifiable differences to people’s lives have been made, but evaluations suggest that impact has not been as significant as it could be in many situations, partly because affiliates have difficulty agreeing and implementing a joint approach in emergency work. The difficulties are in part due to the extreme dominance of one Oxfam with disadvantages for that Oxfam and others. It may also be due to the gap that still appears to exist for staff between longer term development work and humanitarian response (including disaster preparation and mitigation).	The Evaluation is positive regarding the progress made by the Humanitarian Consortium and cites the specific example of the TFMT. However, differences between affiliates’ philosophies, resources-bases, capacities and understanding of humanitarian response continue to undermine collective progress towards realising the high standards set by the Humanitarian Dossier.
2.05 Where advocacy work has been linked to humanitarian intervention, most affiliates report better outcomes overall and a higher degree of satisfaction with the outcomes. If lessons from other parts of OI apply here, the recent boost to increasing advocacy and campaigning in humanitarian response and in aligning it with what the Oxfams really do on the ground, coupled with the recent simplification of the OI architecture, are likely to have a positive influence.	Both the internal and external evaluators are positive about Oxfam’s humanitarian advocacy, while pointing out the need to strengthen this area.
2.06 Progress on the Right to be Heard as a cross-cutting issue has been generally good as far as it has gone, but there is still a long way to go in both the Trade Campaign and humanitarian response.	The Evaluation is positive about “voice” in the Trade Campaign (specifically Labour Rights) and Education (parental and community involvement). Oxfam’s attitudes and behaviour as an ally, through improved, come in for criticism.

<b>Mid-Term Review 2004</b>	<b>Evaluation 2006</b>
<p>2.07 Progress on gender as a cross-cutting issue in the Trade Campaign, HIS and humanitarian response is poor overall. There are patches of very good work, but they are isolated. This is a major deficit.</p>	<p>The conclusions of the Evaluation are identical. Mainstreaming has failed (not only in Oxfam). “Oxfam’s work is, with a few shining exceptions, mediocre in terms of its potential contribution to gender equality”.</p>
<p>2.08 All affiliates express huge added value of the common brand in work together on advocacy and campaigning from the biggest affiliate to the smallest. The greatest added value for all is in extended reach and influence and in learning from the diversity OI brings. However, the potential for learning is still under-exploited. Notably partners and allies have also felt the added value of the brand in opening space, where Southern organisations could not have done it alone.</p>	<p>The Evaluation is more nuanced. While the Oxfam brand is generally a huge asset, its value is not always evident in Southern campaigning and advocacy and was even perceived as negative in the Education evaluation.</p>
<p>2.09 There has been dramatic increase in high quality news media coverage with numerous positive spin-offs. There is a sense that OI needs to work more with popular media in order to meet its popular campaigning ambitions. But there is insufficient information to assess the effect of the brand on the market, largely due to the absence of consistent brand monitoring.</p>	<p>The Evaluation is positive about media and campaigning achievements in MTF and in some cases of humanitarian response. However, Oxfam is criticized for not adopting and utilizing the metrics that exist for measuring the impact of campaigning and media communication on attitudes and beliefs.</p>
<p>2.10 The OI Secretariat and staff associated with the Trade Campaign and humanitarian work are consistently rated as high quality by external interviewees (and by the Oxfams themselves!). This is a major asset.</p>	<p>Though this is not explicitly stated in the Evaluation, it is implicit in both the internal and external evaluations of MTF. However, Oxfam is criticized for being unwilling to listen to other viewpoints on some of its trade-related research.</p>
<p>2.11 Final Conclusion: the basic strategy of 'Towards Global Equity' appears good. OI is on the right track. The most important message from all sides now is to consolidate, focus, manage and implement it.</p>	<p>The Evaluation does not draw a single “final conclusion” but the overall message would be similar. See the “eight headlines” in the Executive Summary.</p>

## 2. Implementation of MTR recommendations

Mid-Term Review 2004	Evaluation 2006
3.02 – 3.03: <u>People</u> : Greater investment in human capital than has yet been made.	The EDs interviewed agree that after an initial meeting by HR Directors, little or no progress has been made in implementing this recommendation.
3.04: <u>Vision</u> : Oxfam needs to begin thinking about the next stage of OI, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• its identity as a secular western organisation in an increasingly polarised world</li> <li>• the confederative structure and vision for growth</li> <li>• the implications of the new security agenda for models of intervention</li> <li>• all Oxfams’ understanding of and commitment to a Rights-Based Approach and the implications.</li> </ul>	These issues are being addressed in the preparation of the next Strategic Plan.
3.05 <u>Models of change</u> : a) the Oxfams should continue to develop thinking on how change happens and (b) intensify communication and leadership on it within affiliates.	The Evaluation paints a mixed picture. Further work is needed in defining and articulating the change models. Oxfam needs to distinguish between the theories on which its humanitarian and development work is based (e.g. the rights-based approach) and the models on which its internal processes are based (e.g. strategic collaboration).
3.06 – 3.07 <u>Humanitarian response</u> : (see Conclusion 2.04 above). This situation merits open and honest examination and discussion about the future shape and delivery of humanitarian response in OI.	Oxfam is addressing the issues raised in the MTR, through the Humanitarian Consortium. But this is still a “work in progress” and the gap between collectively agreed intentions and individual (affiliate) capacity to implement them remains wide. There is also a gap between “pragmatists” who believe that ideological debates are wasting time (and could cost lives) and those who believe that fundamental issues have not yet been resolved.

Mid-Term Review 2004	Evaluation 2006
<p>3.09 – 3.10: <u>Focus and alignment:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Executive Directors develop a plan for communicating and popularising the meaning and goals of alignment throughout affiliates and via leadership of OI organs.</li> <li>• All affiliates are urged to invest more in advancing functional alignment internally.</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Campaign planning and decision-making processes should be (further) adapted to enable even more interaction between LRMs and campaign staff and better consultation with and within the regions.</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focus especially on country level and (if possible) on trade and markets (the High Impact Strategy). One option would be to build on current energy by identifying a selected number of key countries and regional themes and develop highly aligned programme, incorporating new thinking about long-term 'models of change.</li> <li>• Scale up work on mainstreaming HIV/AIDS as a cross-cutting issue (in response to the external analysis).</li> </ul>	<p>This is an area where any progress is seen as a considerable achievement. When measured against the goals of the Strategic Plan, however, progress is fragmented.</p> <p>The Evaluation Team was unable to investigate progress on alignment within affiliates. The interviewed EDs did not spontaneously mention this issue.</p> <p>LRMs interviewed were generally positive though there are important examples of regional concerns being bypassed in campaign planning and implementation.</p> <p>Although no progress appears to have been made, the interviewed LRMs emphasized the need to move to country-level planning. The idea of identifying specific countries for this approach has been taken forward into the development of the next Strategic Plan.</p> <p>Considerable progress has been made in implementing this recommendation.</p>
<p>3.11 <u>Fund-raising</u></p>	<p>The Evaluation did not address this issue.</p>
<p><b>3.12 – 3.13 <u>“Aspirational and pragmatic planning: the LAG should review and make proposals to simplify the level and degree of detail required in the OI planning system before planning starts for the next Strategic Plan.</u></b></p> <p><b>3.14 <u>Mutual accountability: besides the relevant recommendations above, OI is recommended to conduct exercises in mutual accountability in all OI fora.</u></b> 3.15 The OI Executive Director should produce a proposal for advancing mutual accountability on working with diversity (perhaps coupled to a rights-based approach) and mainstreaming gender equity in the priority areas (trade and markets and humanitarian response), as a pilot– including amongst campaigns staff.</p>	<p>This does not appear to have happened. Our observation is that the current system sometimes combines the worst of both extremes: aspirational vagueness with over-prescriptive micro-management.</p> <p>The current Strategic Plan continues to include unfunded and under-funded objectives. The Evaluation Team is not aware of “mutual accountability exercises”.</p> <p>If such a proposal has been produced, there is no evidence of it being adopted or implemented.</p>

Mid-Term Review 2004	Evaluation 2006
3.16 <u>Internal and external communication strategy</u>	The Evaluation did not address this issue.
<p>3.17 <u>Managing and staffing humanitarian response</u>: OI needs to develop suitable managers with experience in humanitarian response and the ability to work with and facilitate staff from relief, development and advocacy experience.</p> <p>3.18 Clarify further the roles and responsibilities for humanitarian response. Within affiliates, this includes clear communication about and leadership to implement the humanitarian dossier and support for and management of the humanitarian leads within countries.</p>	<p>The appointment of the OI Humanitarian Response Coordinator has greatly strengthened Oxfam’s capacity to respond coherently. However, there remain huge imbalances between affiliates’ humanitarian response capacities.</p> <p>Work on contingency planning and country lead roles has made good progress but its practical application lags behind.</p>
<p>3.19 – 3.22 <u>Monitoring, evaluation, accountability and learning</u>:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The OI Secretariat should be resourced to develop a system for sharing knowledge and best practice across the Oxfams – for example, through an OI virtual resource centre. It should focus first on gender equity and working with diversity.</li> <li>• A common OI monitoring system (including for RST Operational Plans) needs to be developed as a priority.</li> <li>• A cycle of action, evaluation, and impact assessment in campaigns needs to be developed.</li> <li>• All evaluations of joint programme work and selected evaluations on humanitarian response should be asked to test the key assumptions in 'Towards Global Equity' (on the benefits of a 'joined up' approach, working together, local-global connections, and working in alliances to become part of a Global Campaigning Force) and to assess performance on promoting voice and gender equity as cross-cutting issues.</li> <li>• All humanitarian response evaluations should look at numbers of beneficiaries and costs per unit in a consistent and comparable way and should examine short term and long term outcomes.</li> </ul>	<p>Not implemented</p> <p>Not implemented</p> <p>Not implemented</p> <p>This Evaluation has examined the assumptions underlying the “models of change”. However, this does not appear to be the case in other post-MTR evaluations.</p> <p>Not implemented consistently. (This point is highlighted in the Internal Evaluation of the Humanitarian Response Sector. It is consistent with the Evaluation Team’s general observation of Oxfam’s inherent “number-blindness”.</p>

## Annex 2: Perceptions of some key actors

In addition to looking at Oxfam's work in the Trade, Education, Humanitarian and Gender sectors, we also considered some of the wider issues facing the confederation. We did this on the basis of interviews with a number of Executive Directors and Lead Regional Managers<sup>19</sup>. The responses summarised below provide a snapshot of the perceptions of some of the confederation's senior managers about the state of, Oxfam's challenges, successes and failures; organisational issues and how Oxfam should develop. We apologise to those who find that their more affiliate-specific or region-specific responses have been omitted.

### 1. Positive external developments at global and regional levels

The most frequently-mentioned positive external developments and trends included:

- The increasing power of G20 members vis-à-vis Europe and the US; coupled with the rise of India and China in particular. (There was also recognition that this could also have a negative impact by shifting attention away from the Least Developed Countries.) At a regional level the position of four West African countries on cotton negotiations was also cited as a positive development.
- The public's response to the Tsunami;
- The establishment of the Millennium Development Goals was seen as an important opportunity for NGOs to exercise leverage;
- The opening up of political space for civil society in some countries of East Asia and the stabilisation of East Asian economies;
- The European-Mediterranean Agreement;
- Increasing awareness of international humanitarian law (though not increasing observance)
- Some indirect consequences of 9/11 in the USA were cited, including increases in foreign assistance and support for debt relief.
- The security agenda was seen as presenting Oxfam with an opportunity to take on a more challenging role.

### 2. Negative external developments

- Almost unanimous mention of 9/11 and other terrorist atrocities; the "War on Terror" and the Iraq War; linked with Western emphasis on military solutions and the shifting of the international community's agenda away from human security and the corrosive impact on official aid programmes, including increasing attempts to co-opt the humanitarian community into military strategies; the closing down of space for civil society in some South Asian countries; the tensions some of the post-9/11 developments have created within the confederation.
- The "mercantilisation", or commercialisation of public goods, with states retreating from their duties to provide basic social services pushes Oxfam and other NGOs into gap-filling and away from the true meaning of a rights-based approach.
- The multiple impacts of HIV/AIDS, particularly in Southern Africa, including the changing nature of the region's food security problems.
- The failure of the UN to address atrocities like Darfur;
- In the Middle East and Maghreb: failure to recognise downward trends in human development and the fact that 25% of the region's people live in poverty;
- In Southern Africa, the increasingly dominant economic role of South Africa;
- In East Asia, the failure of ASEAN to play a constructive role in social development.
- Militarization and privatization of humanitarian response – should lead Oxfam and NGOs to play a stronger advocacy role and avoid co-option.

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<sup>19</sup> We invited all EDs and LRMs to participate. We were able to interview six EDs and five LRMs. Their responses (which have been made anonymous as far as possible) are therefore not necessarily representative. However the geographical and "size" distribution was reasonable.

### **3. Oxfam's significant achievements...**

- Almost unanimous mention of Oxfam's response to the Tsunami; including how Oxfam facilitated local voices in Aceh and Sri Lanka;
- Oxfam's work in Darfur – helping ¾ million people (after a late start);
- The Make Trade Fair Campaign, changing the terms of the debate and campaigning on the MDGs and MDGs/GCAP;
- The Responsibility to Protect decision at the (otherwise dismal) UN 2005 Summit;
- Regionally, Oxfam's work on HIV/AIDS in Southern Africa; cooperation on the Gaza Withdrawal response; progress on Zimbabwe (but see below); Oxfam's preparations for Iraq; Labour Rights and NAMA work in South Asia; and the joint Malawi programme were cited as examples of success.
- In MEMAG: Oxfam is now on record as accepting that international humanitarian law applies to the Israel-Palestine conflict, has spoken out about abuses and has contributed to the demand for change;
- In West Africa, the education programme and Oxfam's responses to drought and the food crisis were seen as successful;
- The work of the Campaigns Sub-Group;
- The impact of MTF on East Asian governments was mentioned: Oxfam's reports are read "and used" in China.

### **4. ...and failures**

- In Southern Africa: lack of serious programming on the MDGs – while life expectancy is actually declining; lack of engagement by the RST in the MTF (and vice versa); and failure to continue the joint Zambia programme;
- In MEMAG also: failure to engage with MTF;
- In East Asia: lack of a common agenda in Indonesia; lack of progress on gender mainstreaming and violence against women;
- Among EDs: Oxfam's inability to manage different (affiliate) views of risk (in relation to Israel-Palestine);
- Failure to fulfil the potential of the Humanitarian Consortium in the country-level Tsunami response, with weak leadership in India;
- Failure of GCT and RST to resolve the Zimbabwe problem (but see above);
- Other specific failures cited included Bam (48 hours to respond); Angola, Gujarat; and the failure to get agreement on the Olympics campaign document;
- Labour (Olympics campaign) was "dilettantish";
- The Trade campaign showed a lack of foresight (Oxfam could have anticipated the Hong Kong outcomes several years earlier); short-termism and poor alliance work. The agenda was dominated by a few affiliates and this was a leadership failure by EDs.

Some of the "failures" that were mentioned are reported below under "Organisational factors blocking progress".

### **5. Positive organisational developments in the confederation**

- Not surprisingly the LRMs all cited the fact that RSTs are now taken more seriously by Oxfam's senior management, coupled with the strengthening and support of the LRM position;
- The "one programme" architecture (the GCT); the development of the Humanitarian Consortium, the Humanitarian Dossier and Contingency Planning; the establishment and strengthening of the advocacy offices in Washington DC, Geneva and Brussels and the growth of joint advocacy;
- The emergence of a new approach on "adding value to social change" – though this needs more work;
- Investments in France, the USA and Germany.

## 6. Organisational factors blocking Oxfam's progress

This section attracted the most responses from both LRMs and EDs. Regional concerns included:

- Lack of alignment between affiliate and OI agendas; tension between “activist” and “reformist” affiliates;
- High staff turnover in some affiliates;
- Ambiguity and lack of clear leadership from EDs on country-level programming;
- Opportunism and lack of horizontal accountability: RST members (and GCT members and EDs) preach the importance of agreed (Oxfam-wide) strategies and policies when attending joint OI meetings, but back down and pursue narrow affiliate agendas when they are back at their own desks
- Another angle on this was the observation that “EDs want space for affiliate differences at ED level – but not for the RSTs”.
- A concern that Aims, SCOs and the related methodology (and jargon) obscure the human needs and dimensions of Oxfam's work;
- Despite LRMs' appreciation of the strengthening of their role, “OI work is still viewed (by affiliates) as additional, not core” work;
- Constraints on OI Secretariat due to “competitive” attitude of OGB;
- Oxfam's inward-looking perspective;
- Failure to develop and exploit our main advantage – the partner basis of our work.

EDs cited the following concerns:

- Failure to address strategic issues including the financing of the confederation – lack of investment is holding back LAG, livelihoods, research and brand work; lack of clarity about role and financing of the Secretariat; equivocal attitude to “making the confederation happen”;
- Too many campaigns simultaneously (MPH was added but not resourced);
- Under-investment in Washington DC office;
- Strategic collaboration “still blurry”;
- The new architecture has not delivered: GCT still lapses into functional divisions; it depends on quality of membership (which is uneven);
- Persistence of ideological/political debates impeded action on agreements; lack of skills and resources in some affiliates has “seriously compromised” some humanitarian responses;
- Persistence of ideological quarrels between affiliates (OGB and Novib Oxfam were specifically mentioned);
- Need to respond more coherently to RSTs and LRMs: “we set people up to fail”;
- Need to study the interaction between campaigning and impact on the ground;
- Oxfam still is – and is seen as – a Northern network (compare with Action Aid);
- Affiliates use structural/co-funding as an excuse for deviating from agreed OI priorities;
- Livelihoods work was seen as a weak area by several respondents; poor quality; too many micro-projects not amounting to anything significant; need for stronger leadership at centre.

## 7. Progress towards “one programme” at regional level

We asked LRMs specifically about progress towards integrating field level work with campaigning and advocacy:

- The Cut the Cost campaign helped stimulate programming on HIV/AIDS in Southern Africa;
- South Asia reports progress in Labour Rights work and (recently) on Agriculture – but generally fieldwork is disconnected;
- Advocacy and campaigning staff are not sufficiently sensitive to field programming;
- In West Africa there is little satisfaction: focus is more on global campaigning and campaigns are not generated in the field, leading to questions about relevance and tensions with local organizations.<sup>20</sup>

## 8. Progress in implementing MTR agreements

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<sup>20</sup> In this connection, see the External Evaluation of the Cotton Dumping Campaign

We asked EDs how satisfied they are about progress in putting the agreed recommendations into effect:

- As a general observation: “the reopening of ideological debates impedes action”;
- Poor progress on “investing in people” (four out of five respondents); there is a lack of vision and lack of urgency about this issue;
- Poor progress on investing in Learning.
- Progress on HIV/AIDS by the joint working group.

#### **9. What EDs like (and dislike) about working in the confederation**

We asked EDs what they most valued and what they found the most frustrating about being working in Oxfam International:

##### Most valued:

- Oxfam’s ambition to become a global campaigning force;
- Operating in a global network raises expectations and standards;
- The challenge of integrating campaigning and programming;
- The ability to make *more* of a difference;
- Working with other EDs (despite conflict avoidance);
- Shared values and fairness;
- Being associated with Oxfam’s “brilliant” advocacy;
- High level of intelligence around the table – challenging and raises standards;

##### Most frustrating

- Too many issues; lack of control by EDs;
- “OI Secretariat looking for more power instead of delivering what affiliates have agreed”;
- Euro-centricity; lack of respect for languages other than English (and lack of resourcing for translation); neglect of some regions;
- Too much paperwork and high transaction costs for small affiliates;
- Conflict avoidance and “ducking the issues” by EDs;
- Short-term thinking in planning and being satisfied with short-term achievements in campaigning.

## Annex 3: Terms of Reference

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Evaluating the implementation of *Towards Global Equity*, Oxfam's strategic plan, 2001 – 2006

### Terms of reference

5<sup>th</sup> July 2005

Author: Learning and Accountability Sub-Group: OISP Evaluation Reference Group

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*Update note: these ToR were approved by the LAG in mid-April 2005. Since then some practical details such as the timetable have evolved. However, the objectives and methodological approach remain unchanged.*

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### Purpose

The purpose of this document is a) to communicate the scope, objectives and methodology of the evaluation within Oxfam International; and b) to provide a common framework for the external evaluators and evaluation team members.

A more detailed project workplan has been produced to guide OI and affiliate staff and external consultants directly involved in the evaluation.

### Background: our assumptions

In 2001 the eleven organisations that constitute Oxfam International<sup>21</sup> embarked on their second joint strategic plan, *Towards Global Equity*, covering the period 2001 – 2006. The plan called for four strategic shifts in Oxfam's way of working:

- First, moving further towards the rights-based approach which some affiliates had already embarked on;
- Second, establishing greater coherence and synergy between our levels of intervention (local to global) and kinds of intervention (grant-making, operational work, advocacy, campaigning and alliance-building);
- Third, aligning affiliate interventions and investments through models of strategic collaboration between affiliates;
- Fourth, becoming more of a force for change in the world by playing a stronger role as a campaigning organisation, through engagement in the wider movement for global citizenship.

These strategic shifts amounted in effect to “models of change” which assumed that changing our ways of working would enable Oxfam to contribute more effectively to the eradication of poverty and injustice than the more fragmented and “needs-based” approaches of the past.

Testing these assumptions is therefore an important objective of the evaluation:

- What progress are we achieving in making a reality of the rights-based approach, and is this approach making a significant difference?
- How successful are our efforts to achieve synergy between field-level programming and campaigning and advocacy at other levels and what difference does it make?

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<sup>21</sup> Oxfam International: hereafter referred to as Oxfam.

- Are affiliates really adding value to their work by joining forces and collaborating and are the costs involved worthwhile?
- To what extent has Oxfam become a “global campaigning force” and how effectively has this strategic shift contributed to bringing about changes in the lives of people living in poverty and those marginalised by gender or powerlessness?

### **Expectations: who needs the evaluation?**

To avoid the danger of “evaluation for its own sake” it is useful to remind ourselves of why we are doing it and for whom. The primary, (though of course indirect) stakeholders in this exercise are those with whom and for whom we work. Even if it is unrealistic to expect that these constituencies<sup>22</sup> will be aware of the evaluation process, the ultimate goal is of course to improve the ways in which we work with them and for their benefit.

More directly, the evaluation of the implementation of *Towards Global Equity* should be of importance to and is intended to be of value to three groups of people and institutions:

- Those individuals and institutions on whom Oxfam depends for financial, moral and political support and to whom we are accountable: **private and institutional donors, bilateral and multilateral agencies, supportive (and critical) media, political and official bodies and individuals working in them.**
- The evaluation is also an important tool for internal learning. For many staff and volunteers, Oxfam International remains a somewhat unknown quantity. There are high expectations – but there are also doubts and a lack of knowledge. Are we on the right track and if so how can we do it better? Another group of stakeholders are therefore the **board members, directors, managers, staff and volunteers of all the affiliates.**
- Oxfam wants to position itself as a good and reliable ally, willing and able to work with others on equal terms. A further important group of stakeholders would therefore be **Oxfam’s allies and potential allies.** The evaluation should be able to demonstrate the extent to which Oxfam is succeeding in this objective and what needs changing to improve our performance.

### **Scope of the evaluation**

The scope of the current strategic plan is very wide-ranging. The five aims address the right to a sustainable livelihood; the right to basic social services, the right to life and security; the right to be heard and the right to an identity. During the period of the plan the twelve affiliates have been working individually and collectively in all regions of the world and at every level from village through national to global; implementing thousands of projects and programmes. No single evaluation could cover all or even most of Oxfam’s work during this period.

In 2004 Oxfam commissioned a Mid-Term Review (MTR) whose aim was “to take stock of any significant changes in the external environment and to monitor progress towards the goals of *Towards Global Equity* in order to determine whether adjustments need to be made....It was not intended to assess impact but does refer to evidence of impact, where available”.<sup>23</sup> The MTR concentrated on joint work among affiliates on priority aspects of Aim 1 (sustainable livelihoods) and Aim 3 (humanitarian response). Two Aims - Aim 4 (right to be heard) and Aim 5 (right to an identity) - were examined as “cross-cutting issues”.

<sup>22</sup> constituencies: also referred to as “beneficiaries” and “target groups”

<sup>23</sup> Mid-Term Review, August 2004

This evaluation will build on the findings and conclusions of the MTR but will not repeat the work done in that review. However, the MTR's important internal recommendations will be carried forward into this evaluation since they provide valuable guidelines for the GCT and EDs in the development of the next strategic plan.

#### Scope: four sectors

This evaluation will have a wider and deeper scope than was expected for the MTR. We will examine examples of Oxfam's collective and individual work, focusing on areas where we have invested most resources and collective effort and where the full range of our programming tools (grant-making, humanitarian response, alliances, campaigning, media, lobby) have been employed to achieve change from local to global levels. The evaluation will focus on four of the strategic plan's Aims:

1. Aim 1: Trade, markets and assets: Oxfam defined part of this Aim as a "high impact strategy". Focusing particularly on the Trade Campaign, the evaluation will also include collective and individual affiliate work on improving the livelihoods of poor women and men through increasing their assets, power in markets and rights as workers.
2. Aim 2: Education: collective and individual affiliate work on increasing access to good quality basic education, particularly for girls.
3. Aim 3: Humanitarian response: an assessment of the effectiveness of Oxfam's responses in humanitarian crises, our operating structures and procedures, with a particular focus on Tsunami response.
4. Aim 5: Gender equity: following a negative finding in the Mid-Term Review, we aim to "uncover" where there are significant lessons to be learned and provide input to new strategic plan in order to disseminate good practice.

In each of these areas, we will look at Oxfam's efforts to achieve gender equity and strengthening the voice of poor people in decisions that affect their lives.

#### Scope: four sets of questions

At the end of the process, we want to be able to answer four sets of key questions based on the evaluation of the four priority sectors:

1. Change: Looking "context in", what changes have happened (for better or worse) in the lives of poor and marginalised people in the four priority sectors and what significant changes can we predict for the coming years?
2. Outcomes and impact<sup>24</sup>: To what extent have we done what we said we would do? What evidence is there that our interventions have contributed to the changes identified in answer to question 1? What is the probable longer-term impact of our interventions? What unintended outcomes (positive and negative) have been observed? How has our work contributed to achieving gender equity and strengthening the voice of poor and marginalised people?
3. Oxfam's added value: What value have we added to our interventions by aligning our work to the rights-based approach; by linking types and levels of programme intervention and by working together in strategic collaboration? How could we have achieved more

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<sup>24</sup> Outcomes and impact: see note at end of ToR

with greater effect and efficiency? How have changes in the dissemination of the Oxfam brand contributed to our work?

4. Lessons for the future: What does the evaluation tell us about the models of change we have adopted and their usefulness for the future of our work? What are the implications for our programme<sup>25</sup>, management and governance in the next strategic plan period?

## Methodology

The evaluation will look at the four sectors and their wider implications for Oxfam as a whole from two perspectives:

1. The “context-in” perspective takes a wide-focus look at the environment in which Oxfam is working including the effects of other factors and the interventions of other actors. This perspective aims at giving as-objective-as-possible picture of what is actually happening (trends and prospects) in the lives of poor and marginalised people in relation to the sector under consideration. This work will be largely conducted by external evaluators
2. The “organisation-out” perspective examines and analyses the interventions and investments we have made in each of the sectors and assesses the extent to which we have contributed to any of the changes. The raw material for this part of the work will be based on existing and planned evaluations<sup>26</sup> and reports as well as interviews with key individuals and groups including Regional Strategy Teams and Sub-Groups.

The evaluation process for each sector therefore involves three phases of work:

1. The “context-in” phase: work by external experts (individuals and/or institutions);
2. The “organisation-out” phase: assembling and analysing available major reports and evaluations (including tapping into on-going or planned evaluations, to be done by the evaluation team in co-operation with affiliate staff;
3. The evaluation phase: critically review and verification of the evidence by external experts.

## The product

This evaluation process is expected to result in a report which will be disseminated among the stakeholder-audiences referred to earlier. The report will also provide an important input into the development of Oxfam’s next strategic plan. The report will be structured as follows:<sup>27</sup>

- Executive summary
- Introduction and background
- Methodology
- Change
  - Overview
  - By sector (Trade, Education, Humanitarian, Gender)
  - Conclusions
  - Recommendations

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<sup>25</sup> Programme: meaning grant-making, operational work, advocacy, campaigning and alliance-building

<sup>26</sup> Planned evaluations: such as the Tsunami evaluation and Oxfam GB’s strategic evaluation of its education programme

<sup>27</sup> Report structure: provisional outline structure, subject to change

- Implementation and impact
  - Overview
  - By sector
  - Conclusions
  - Recommendations
- Oxfam's added value
  - Overview
  - by sector
  - Conclusions
  - Recommendations
- Lessons for the future
  - Overview
  - By sector
  - Conclusions
  - Recommendations
- Annexes (including ToR)

### **Management and timetable**

Responsibility for the evaluation has been delegated by the Global Co-ordination Team to the Learning and Accountability Sub-group (LAG) of the GCT. Within the LAG a smaller reference group has been tasked with guiding and overseeing the planning and conduct of the evaluation. Within the Oxfam International Secretariat, the evaluation is being led by Pauline Martin, Director of Planning and Development. A part-time consultant, reporting to Pauline, will function as Evaluation Co-ordinator, supported by a part-time researcher. The Evaluation Co-ordinator will also be responsible for producing the final report. External consultants and experts will be commissioned to carry out specific pieces of work.

The evaluation will be structured to enable RSTs and sub-groups to contribute to the outcomes as well as to learn from the process, in order to strengthen further Oxfam's accountability, learning and planning capacities. An important input will be the Consultative Forum, scheduled for November 2005, at which a large number of representatives of partners and other Southern institutions and experts will be invited to contribute their insights to the evaluation. The key dates for the evaluation process are as follows:

#### 2005

- |               |   |
|---------------|---|
| April - May   | - Finalising ToRs and workplan; hiring staff          |
| May – August: | - Intensive work on the Trade and Education sectors   |
|               | - Start work on Humanitarian and Gender sectors       |
| September:    | - Meeting of LAG to review and steer work-in-progress |
|               | - Complete work on Trade and Education                |
|               | - Continue work on Humanitarian and Gender            |
| November:     | - Inputs from Consultative Forum                      |
|               | - Complete work on Humanitarian and Gender            |
| December:     | - Final external reviews                              |

#### 2006

- |          |  |
|----------|--|
| January: | - Report writing                           |
| March:   | - Report presented at EDs – Board meetings |

## **Budget**

A detailed budget is in preparation and will be incorporated into the overall OI budget and financial control system. The budget will be published on the OI Dashboard.

### Note: definitions

In the current strategic plan Oxfam has defined impact as “significant and sustained positive changes in the lives of people suffering poverty and injustice”. Positive outcomes are generally understood to be the effects of interventions on their intended beneficiaries or other groups.

However, as the terms “impact” and “outcomes” may be used differently in the four sector evaluations, the evaluators will be expected to make their own definitions of these and other terms clear and explicit.

## Annex 4: Summary of main recommendations

The following are summaries of the main recommendations, simply intended to provide a checklist. In most cases readers should refer to the full text for the context (the “conclusions and lessons”) on which the recommendations are based. In order to ensure capturing all the main recommendations, we have included the recommendations set out Executive Summary as well as the Main Report. This results in some unavoidable repetition.

### 1. Recommendations from the Executive Summary

#### 7. (a) Recommendations from the sector evaluations

- There is a need to consider focus and priority-setting in the Trade and Humanitarian sectors. Questions about the legitimacy, purpose and positioning of Oxfam’s work in the Basic Social Services sector need to be addressed.

##### 7.1 Trade, markets and assets

- There is a clear need to set realistic and measurable objectives and to ensure that campaigns are sustained after Oxfam’s direct intervention.
- Oxfam should address the challenge of raising the quality, scale and significance of its field-level livelihoods programming and synchronizing it with the policy advocacy and campaigning wing of a truly integrated sustainable livelihoods strategy.
- Oxfam would benefit from institutionalizing and deepening the learning practices of the Hemispheric Reference Group and the Labour Rights Team. They would add more value if they documented and disseminated their experiences.
- In the next cycle, more balanced attention should be paid to components (other than campaigning) of integrating programming for the right to a sustainable livelihood.

##### 7.2 Education

- Continuity and sustained pressure are essential to success
- Oxfam should think through the implications when a campaign is in a “low-key” phase.
- The education programme should focus on areas that are key factors in success in contributing to gender parity and deepening democracy.
- A defined level of strategic collaboration for participating affiliates should be obligatory, not optional.

##### 7.3 Humanitarian response

- Understanding the political context and establishing diplomatic relations at all levels needs further development.
- In countries with strong emergency response capacities (such as India) Oxfam should establish strong links with local authorities and agencies.
- Special action needed to ensure effective dissemination and application of the Code of Conduct and Sphere Standards among affiliates.
- The next strategic plan should translate rhetoric about gender, generation (i.e. age) and protection into action.
- The immediate challenge for the Humanitarian Consortium is to help affiliates put agreed standards and systems into practice consistently.
- Key issues for the HC are

##### 7.4 Gender equality

- Consider building a confederation-wide gender equality programme integrated in an area in which Oxfam has solid experience.
- Spending targets for gender should be established and honoured.
- Gender equality criteria for grant-making should be established by all affiliates.
- Use external resources to develop staff and partner capacities in integrating gender in all sectors

- Confederation-wide monitoring and evaluation should take gender as a pilot for an enhanced LAG strategy.
- Report progress and setbacks at ED and Board levels.

#### 8. (b) Oxfam-wide issues

- Oxfam should face up to the challenge of managing relative affiliate size and balance within the confederation; recognize that the advantages of the confederation model outweigh the disadvantages and better manage the tensions that arise from the model.
- Oxfam should correct the tendency to ignore the views of other actors in alliances and avoid an “Oxfam-centred” viewpoint.
- Oxfam’s predominantly Euro-centric and Anglophone character should be corrected. Identity needs to be managed as well as brand.
- Leadership and support is needed to help staff with different professional backgrounds and responsibilities to achieve coherence in programme design and implementation.
- While Oxfam’s definition of “impact” should remain the ultimate goal, Oxfam should develop and define meaningful intermediate outcomes.
- Oxfam should decide on the level at which planning and programming should be focused for strategic collaboration: region or country.
- Oxfam’s policy-makers and planners should pay more attention to regions which do not conform to conventional patterns (MEMAG, the Pacific and EEFSU).

#### 9.4 Recommendations regarding monitoring and evaluation

- Oxfam should study and agree on those areas of M&E which can best be done collectively and those which need to be done at affiliate level.
- Having defined the scope of collective M&E work, Oxfam should establish the necessary architecture, toolkit and resources.
- M&E needs to become and be seen as an integral component of management and as an essential (though not the only) foundation of learning and accountability.
- Oxfam should adopt a more robust attitude to quantitative, statistical and financial information as key ingredients in credible M&E work.

## 2. **Recommendations from the Main Report**

### Chapter 2: Trade, markets and assets

#### 2.5 (“Lessons for the future”)

- Be more explicit about goals regarding changing attitudes and beliefs. Use better metrics (including these used in the corporate sector) and be more rigorous.
- Oxfam needs to develop its own and partners’ capacity for more sophisticated power analysis, including understanding the corporate/government interface.
- The support for women’s leadership evident in the Labour Rights and RTA campaigning needs to be taken further in other areas of MTF.
- Oxfam should act on an apparent shift towards seeing the Regional Teams as allies rather than supporting players.
- The Labour and Coffee campaigns show that achieving changes in people’s lives require work at country and community levels to position partners to take advantage of policy improvements.
- Oxfam needs to ensure that the right competencies are in place and that staff are effectively supported. Oxfam should be more rigorous in selecting campaign leads and provide them with adequate support.

#### 2.6.1 From the external evaluation of the Cotton Dumping Campaign

- Oxfam should (better) manage expectations by focusing on intermediate outcomes that are more reasonable and measurable.

- Enough has been achieved on the cotton file at the WTO to allow Oxfam to focus on the complex issues of poverty and rural dynamics in cotton-producing regions of WCA countries.

### 2.6.2 From the external evaluations of the Labour Rights Campaign

- On the issue of measuring impacts: Oxfam should make use of studies by (e.g.) UNRISD and ILO.
- Quantitative metrics need to be employed (for measuring changes in attitudes and beliefs). These are relatively simple to develop and the technology exists that would allow their delivery to a representative group of stakeholders at a relatively low cost.
- Labour rights work needs a longer-term view and the identification of medium-term outcomes.
- Oxfam should review the positioning of its labour rights work: it might be appropriate to reposition it within the sustainable livelihoods area.
- Social Compass poses the following specific questions about Oxfam's campaigning objectives that should be addressed:
  - What is Oxfam's commitment in time, financial and human resources?
  - How does Oxfam measure "success"?
  - When should this measurement happen?
  - What are Oxfam's exit strategies when "impact" is achieved (or not achieved)?
  - How should Oxfam ensure consensus among allies and partners about impact?
  - What is the potential effect of being "hard-nosed" on partners and allies, and what is the cost-benefit?

## Chapter 3: Girls' access to education

### 3.5.1 From the Internal Evaluation Report

- 1) Oxfam should be explicit that it sees education as a cornerstone for sustainable livelihoods, peace, security, the right to be heard, regardless of gender and identity.
- 2) Strategic acupuncture on education: create a country-specific strategy in selected countries with a longer-term agenda and commitment.
- 3) Insist on strategic collaboration between (participating) affiliates
- 4) Continue development of and investment in the Global Campaign for Education
- 5) Consider having one joint M&E system with education as a pilot. Include education in action to ensure Oxfam's financial accountability.

### 3.5.2 From the External Evaluation Report

- 1) If Oxfam support for education is to continue:
  - It should be sustainable, through multi-faceted interventions aiming to create a critical mass of participating citizens
  - It should continue to endorse humanistic philosophies as the basis of its practice, simpler than those currently applied, and find new ways to enrich technical interventions
  - Consider the implication of consolidating parastatal education systems able to bypass rather than support government programmes.
  - Improve quality: Oxfam's interventions are good but not innovative. Address problems caused by high staff turnover and develop staff skills in working with partners.
  - Review its rights-based approach and consider implications of uncritically accepting IFI and MLO thinking.

## Chapter 4: Humanitarian response

### 4.3.4 From: Synthesis of lessons learned (from Internal Evaluation Report)

- Develop more explicit and integrated project frameworks to improve coordination and timing.
- Involve local staff in discussing advocacy and security strategies
- Improve timely recruitment of experienced staff
- Continue the investment in developing contingency plans

### 4.3.5 Recommendations

- Reduce the gap between humanitarian vision and actual practice
- Establish stronger links with competent (emergency response) authorities in countries such as India
- Improve timeliness of response through improving management capacities, the availability of trained staff and better analysis of field realities and government policies.
- Oxfam GB should review the logistical and human resource difficulties that appear to have affected the reviewed interventions.
- Building local staff preparedness is lagging behind in Africa.
- Affiliates and partners should strengthen their use of information and communication technology.
- Oxfam should develop an evaluation model for humanitarian response (taking the OI Ethiopian drought report of 2001-2002 as a model)
- Take action to ensure dissemination and application of agreed standards. Transform rhetoric about gender, generation and protection into action.

### 4.4.4 Recommendations from the External Evaluation of the Humanitarian Consortium

- Consider making the HC more permeable – able to expand membership in particular situations
- Consider workload of HCMG members and if necessary investment in the OI Secretariat
- Make the Dossier and the Dashboard more user-friendly
- Reduce (initially) the number of lead agency affiliates to 2 or 3 in conjunction with reviewing affiliate investment plans (for humanitarian response)
- Resource OI Secretariat to be able to support HC membership more effectively
- Study feasibility and cost of establishing an OI-wide humanitarian response information system
- Agree on the basic parameters for monitoring, measuring and evaluating its humanitarian response work.
- Research on how best to work through local partners could add great value to Oxfam's work
- Conduct an open and informed debate about neutrality and develop an OI-wide practice.

## Chapter 5: Gender equality

### 5.7.2 Recommendations

1) Take forward one area of gender equality as a key local-to-global focus in the next strategic plan. Potential issues include:

- Women and violence
- Women's labour rights
- Women as leaders in conflict resolution
- Stronger gender focus in primary education
- Women and PRSPs
- Women and HIV/AIDS

2) Set increasing percentage allocations for stand-alone gender equality work

- 3) Main Aim 5 programming the first integrated Oxfam programme on the model of CAMEXCA's "Women and Rights" programme.
- 4) Make a process like the Novib Oxfam "traffic lights" system/Oxfam GB's gender reporting or OxAus M&E framework) Oxfam-wide.
- 5) Invest in continuous training and capacity-building for staff and partners
- 6) Use gender equality as a pilot for sector-led programming and a confederation-wide M&E system.
- 7) Report progress on gender equality programming to a senior Oxfam body on a regular basis.