
TAKING STOCK

OSP Evaluation: What the Indicative Outcome Areas tell us about Oxfam's contribution to transformational change

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Pittman, A. and L. Haylock (2016) Assessing Oxfam's Contribution to Changes in Social Norms in VAWG/GBV Programming Globally. Oxfam, February.

Wood, E. (2016) Saving Lives, now and in the future: Strategic Outcome Report. Research and Evaluation Services, February.

Maes, Jan (2016). *Oxfam Strategic Plan (OSP) Evaluation: Sustainable Food Outcome Area*. Oxfam, February.

Bahadur, A., Pichon, F. and E. Lovell (2016) Effectiveness in Building Resilience: Synthesis report for Oxfam's Resilience Outcome Area. Overseas Development Institute, February.

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ACRONYMS

AGIR	Programa de Acções para uma Governação Inclusiva e Responsável
BtB	Behind the Brands
CAR	Central African Republic
CBO	Community Based Organisation
CCA	Climate Change Adaptation
CCCD	Partnership for Equitable Resilience to the Impacts of Climate Change of the Coastal Communities in Deltas of Vietnam
CG	Change Goal
CRAFT	Capacity For Research And Advocacy For Fair Taxation
CSO	Civil Society Organization
CSP	Coalition Support Program
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction
EDP	Enterprise Development Program
EJ	Economic Justice
GBV	Gender-based violence
GHT	Global Humanitarian Team (Oxfam)
GPIIF	Global Program Influencing and Investment Framework
HIT	Oxfam's Global Humanitarian Indicator Tool
INGO	International NGO
JCAS	Joint Country Analysis and Strategy
KH	Knowledge Hub
KNOW	Knowledge Network for Oxfam Worldwide
LAG	Local Action Group (Albania)
MEAL	Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning
MEL	Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning
MENA	Middle East and North Africa
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
02020	Oxfam 2020, an internal organizational change process
OAU	Oxfam Australia
OBE	Oxfam Belgium
OCA	Oxfam Canada
OGB	Oxfam Great Britain
OHK	Oxfam Hong Kong
OHS	Occupational Health and Safety
OI	Oxfam International
OIN	Oxfam India
ON	Oxfam Novib (Netherlands)
OPA	One Program Approach
OPT	Occupied Palestinian Territories
OQC	Oxfam Québec
OSP	Oxfam Strategic Plan
PWDVA	Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act
REE-CALL	Resilience through Economic Empowerment in Bangladesh
RESOLVE	Regenerative Agriculture and Sustainable Livelihood for Vulnerable Ecosystems
RtbH	Right to be Heard
ToC	Theory of Change
UN	United Nations
VAWG	Violence against women and girls
VNGO	Vietnamese Non-Governmental Organisation
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
WIN	Worldwide Influencing Network
WSP	Workers' Support Point (Vietnam)

1 WHAT THE INDICATIVE OUTCOME AREAS TELL US ABOUT OXFAM'S CONTRIBUTION TO TRANSFORMATIONAL CHANGE

1.1 Introduction

This report is an overview of Oxfam's progress against its objectives as expressed in the strategic plan "The Power of People against Poverty 2013 – 2019". This mid-term assessment builds on program and project evaluations finalized between January 2013 and October 2015 in different outcome areas within 4 change goals (and 1 cross cutting issue). It forms part of Oxfam's overall process to evaluate the outcomes of its Strategic Plan. The report was developed through a multi-affiliate effort expressed in outcome area working groups, following the now traditional practice of 'One Oxfam' MEL work that is reflective of the O2020 vision of Oxfam as a networked organization.

This review is meant to help Oxfam identify some results that our programs are achieving, along with strengths, weaknesses and lessons from those programs. It does not offer a comprehensive overview of Oxfam's achievements, nor does it consider any information regarding Oxfam's enabling internal goals. Its purpose is to provide evidence-based input that will prompt reflection, provoke curiosity, and raise questions. The review serves both learning and accountability functions; following its presentation to the Executive Board, it will be published on Oxfam's website and shared extensively with our peers.

The first chapter offers an overview of the findings from each individual outcome area. This includes information about the process that has produced the overview, key headlines from each outcome area, and some essential questions that are emerging from the analysis of Oxfam's efforts (including issues related to the quality of our evaluations); it concludes with reflections about the ways forward. The following chapters provide summaries of each indicative outcome area. The full reports covering each outcome area are available separately.

With so many documents (see [bibliography](#)), it would be impossible to highlight all of the outcomes that Oxfam has achieved over the past 3 years. Further, given the programmatic, affiliate and geographic complexity in which Oxfam works, it is not feasible to generalize those outcomes across the confederation; despite the number of documents reviewed, affiliates involved, and countries considered, this document reflects just a small proportion of Oxfam's work.

1.2 OSP evaluation background

The OSP evaluation includes three components: the annual output reporting, partner feedback and the indicative outcome areas presented in this report. These indicative outcome areas are not intended to represent the totality of the work being done by Oxfam. Instead, they focus on meaningful areas which are intended to help **us speak about our ability to contribute to change and our added value**. Three years into the OSP it's time for a first in-depth look at the outcomes to which Oxfam has contributed and their resonance with the ambitions set out in the OSP. **What does Oxfam have to do differently to be able to contribute to the transformational change we want to see by the end of the OSP?**

This is the first review of the indicative outcome areas. Though evaluations available for this review were conducted from January 2013 to October 2015, in most cases they include work designed before the start of this OSP. Oxfam's contribution to the results in the outcome areas will be measured twice during the OSP lifespan. A second review, covering the period from November 2015 to October 2018, will be presented to the Executive Board in 2019.

Figure 1: Overview key questions indicative outcome areas

ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP	How have power relations been transformed in the contexts in which Oxfam is working? What are best 'ways of working' for Oxfam to contribute to transformations of power relations, explicitly including Oxfam's specific role?
GENDER JUSTICE	How has Oxfam contributed to changing cultural norms and ultimately behaviors to prevent VAWG / GBV?
SAVING LIVES	To what extent have Oxfam's responses adhered to quality standards in humanitarian programming? What are the enablers and blockers to a good quality program?
FOOD SYSTEMS	To what extent are programs aiming to support greater income and food security successfully shifting from service delivery to influencing strategies to achieve change at scale? How successful are we at changing the income and food security of people at scale through an increased use of influencing strategies?
RESILIENCE	To what extent is there evidence that Oxfam's interventions contributed to build absorptive, adaptive and transformative capacities together at multiple levels (individuals -women, men-, households, communities, municipalities or wider systems (regional or national)? If so, why? If not, why not?

What's different about this OSP?

Oxfam's transformative approach seeks "change that is fundamental, lasting, and which challenges existing structural inequality. It is part of Oxfam's approach to development and humanitarian response, and it is continuously being refined and developed within the Oxfam confederation. Transformative change requires fundamental shifts in power relationships.

1.3 Methodology and its limitations

Recognizing that we work together with others to achieve change in a complex and 'messy' environment where the pathways towards change are rarely, if ever, linear and influenced by multiple factors, Oxfam defines effectiveness as a **positive contribution to change**. We do not seek to assess the proportion of observed change which can be traced solely to the evaluated interventions.

Once approved by the Executive Board, program policy colleagues joined MEL colleagues to identify the key question(s) that needed to be answered under each outcome area. MEL colleagues designed mechanisms that could measure outcomes and provide evidence to answer the questions.

While the terms of reference for each report had similar components, each outcome area worked with different consultants, each with different understanding of Oxfam; there was no discussion among these professionals to provide common guidance or answer questions. The evaluations did not share any methodology; as a result, they differed in their quality, the information that was available was uneven both within and across the outcome areas.

Unless otherwise noted, the term "programs" refers to programs, projects, campaigns or advocacy, influencing efforts, and/or humanitarian preparedness initiatives.

Global level is distant from the actual programs that were reviewed. Any effort to distil findings across such a wide range of themes, approaches and geographies, as is the case in this review, will necessarily result in some of the information getting lost. The full reports for each indicative outcome area provide a wealth of insights and learning; it is impossible to do justice to the analysis that they provide.

Transformational change takes time. Each of the outcome areas addresses questions of transformational change. Being complex and multi-layered in nature this type of change is not only difficult to observe, it also takes time to materialize. With only three years into the current OSP it cannot yet be expected to observe whether these systemic changes (and expected impact) at scale are indeed materializing.

We don't always ask the hard questions. While it is not possible to see what is not there, some evaluations have avoided asking the 'big' questions related to Oxfam's contribution to transformative change. Instead they focus on the 'easy-to-assess' aspects of programming, such as implementation quality and outputs. While all but the Sustainable Food outcome area have developed methodological frameworks that unpack the programmatic concepts we are looking for and propose practical guidance for applying them in our evaluation practice, none of the evaluations included in this review had integrated these frameworks in their design (due to being completed before the frameworks had been developed). Instead we applied the frameworks retrospectively to the evaluations. While this practical approach delivered interesting findings, in some cases we may have missed substantial changes, as evaluations (*which were commissioned by Oxfam staff*) did not always ask about the transformational changes that are sought by Oxfam.

1.4 Outcome Areas

Ten affiliates¹ as well as the OI secretariat contributed evaluations commissioned by them to this exercise; in many instances, the evaluations covered efforts that crossed affiliate-specific boundaries to 'One Oxfam' efforts. The evaluations covered countries in all Oxfam regions. It is not possible to determine the exact number of partners involved, but in all cases, Oxfam worked with multiple entities, in alliances or coalitions or, in the case of humanitarian response work, leading sector coordination bodies. Figures are not available that indicate the total spend linked to these outcome areas²; in most cases, that information was not even available about the individual programs that were reviewed.

Together with partners, Oxfam is contributing to change but is it transformational?

Transforming power relations: in 26 evaluation reports from programs in 24 countries (across Asia and the Pacific, Africa and Latin America as well as domestic programs in the US and Australia), where 5 Oxfam affiliates were engaged, changes in three dimensions of power relationships were observed.

Almost all of the programs aiming to achieve **changes in policies, practices and accountability mechanisms of duty-bearers** have *to some extent* proven to be successful in changing formal power relations (the first dimension). Success has been evidenced related to changes in policies, practices and accountability mechanisms, although changes in the mind-set of duty-bearers were reported less than changes in, for instance, practices and regulations.

In the second dimension, the projects aimed to **increase citizens' engagement with duty bearers** (the majority in this outcome area); there is evidence of a wide range of positive outcomes, where citizens' are becoming increasingly active in decision-making processes, participating in broad-based movements through which their voices can be heard and by gaining access to information to feed their ideas and actions.

In the third dimension, where a much smaller number of projects aimed primarily to **change the collective power of individual citizens**, the evidence indicated positive change. The evaluations demonstrated the importance of citizens acquiring knowledge,

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skills and tools for active citizenship, the relevance of a platform to share knowledge and skills, and in one case, the introduction of new ways of operating by CSOs in that specific setting.

Oxfam's overall focus is on the power of citizen's individual or collective contributions and citizen empowerment to make their voices be heard and to claim their rights. This focus is sufficiently observed in the reviewed evaluations, but **there is insufficient evidence to say that Oxfam is achieving its goal of transforming power relations.**

VAWG/GBV: in reports about 13 projects in 8 countries, 2 regions and one multi-country initiative involving at least 6 affiliates, the evidence shows **Oxfam has made progress in shifting the awareness of what is considered violence among hundreds of thousands of people globally. Access to quality services has also impacted thousands of women's lives directly, and efforts supporting better implementation of laws and the penalization of VAWG/GBV have the potential to affect millions.** Strong progress has been seen in community support and vigilance mechanisms. Efforts to embed support units in police stations in India that increase the visibility of VAWG/GBV and shift awareness, attitudes and behaviors internally are particularly noteworthy. The effort towards breaking taboos around the silence of VAWG/GBV in communities and formal institutions, such as justice and religious communities, is also a critical first step in shifting the social norms that condone violence.

However, **most results remained at the awareness and access to services level. No evaluation presented reliable evidence of Oxfam's contribution to changed social norms that underpin VAWG/GBV.** Across affiliates, more strategic alignment related to changing those social norms is needed. The Conceptual Framework, developed by Oxfam's VAWG/GBV Knowledge Hub, is a key synthesis document to support the development of an umbrella ToC that respects the context-specific diversity and intersectional analysis that is required for this type of work, and as such should be further refined, collectively adopted and be a key reference in program design and monitoring and evaluation.

Saving Lives: in six responses³ spanning nine countries involving seven affiliates, Oxfam's humanitarian work is reported to have provided high quality, lifesaving assistance to millions of people. The highest performing areas in Oxfam's responses are coverage, advocacy and safe programming (protection), with the lowest performing areas being timeliness, partner relationships and feedback/complaints systems.

Oxfam demonstrated that it is highly aware of the need to **link emergency response strategies with development programs** and is a strong advocate of this approach. To further the integration of emergency response and development program teams, key enablers are clear communication about roles and responsibilities, the connectivity between surge capacity emergency staff and in-country support teams, as well as emergency response capacity building with country teams and partners. We have proven to be **very strong on sector coordination**, often leading or co-leading sector working groups. Further, Oxfam has demonstrated its **commitment to evidence based humanitarian responses** through needs assessments, analyses, as well as the contribution of knowledge to humanitarian coordination systems. As timeliness is a key factor in a quality humanitarian response. Particularly in situations where Oxfam does not have a presence or in medical emergencies Oxfam needs to ensure their added value role is clear and decisions are made in a timely manner.

Sustainable Food: Even more direct service delivery programs typically show only modest impacts in terms of food security and incomes. Thus, it is not surprising that according to the 34 evaluations reviewed for this outcome area including project, program and campaigns work in seven regions and at least 15 countries involving at least seven Oxfam affiliates, projects have not achieved the intended impact, i.e. improved food security and incomes. **Most projects/programs** however are achieving other (intermediate) outcomes

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such as increased farmer participation in markets, improved access to credit and other resources, even improved material wellbeing, improved attitudes and perceptions of women's empowerment, building resilience and increased female self-efficacy.

The GROW campaign has focused on building the capacity of civil society (including farmers' and women's organizations) to claim rights and influence policy and securing a number of promising commitments from policy makers and multinational food companies to be more inclusive and respectful of the rights of smallholders. The most significant achievement was securing policy changes or commitments on food and land from governments, corporations, and global bodies in addition to involving rural women and smallholders in these processes. One of the key roles for Oxfam has been to act as facilitator and convener, bringing together different organizations in alliances to work jointly on the campaign.

Such intermediate outcomes offer great potential to eventually translate into the intended impact, but further time and additional evidence is needed to demonstrate this. The evaluations show that the shift to influencing has primarily been interpreted as influencing government policy but, in order to deliver broader change, Oxfam must increase its ability to work both with and against the private sector, from SMEs through to multi-national entities. Programs and campaigns need to move away from specific outcomes (e.g. commitment by a specific multinational company to respect rights of smallholder farmers) to systemic changes (e.g. improved economic governance in market systems,) grounded in the coordinated efforts of multiple stakeholders. Pursuing a holistic approach, that can be tailored to local circumstances and adapted frequently based upon new learning and changing circumstances, Oxfam needs to set a clear focus for its role, which is increasingly related to creating the evidence to drive change and supporting multiple stakeholder networks to facilitate systemic changes.

Resilience: in 23 reports about projects involving four affiliates across 16 countries, there is evidence that Oxfam's initiatives have been effective in supporting communities in increasing their resilience by strengthening absorptive, adaptive and transformative capacities, often simultaneously. Although projects show more improvement in building absorptive capacity to known shocks and stresses, evidence also points to modest changes in adaptive and transformative capacities.

Oxfam has developed a conceptual framework that strengthens its potential to work in a transformative approach, by building an understanding of the context, working collaboratively, designing initiatives with a long term perspective, promoting multi-stakeholder processes for social change (empowering, securing and enhancing livelihoods, learning, planning and managing, informing and accountable governing), and informing its implementation by iterative learning and ongoing adaptive management. All affiliates need to approve the framework and operationalize it in their resilience programming.

The weight of the evidence makes a plausible case that Oxfam interventions are making a difference, although perhaps not always on the scale or in the timeframe originally envisaged. We are seeing important achievements towards transformational change but both programmatic and methodological challenges still prevail so that we remain cautious on making a judgement about the degree to which we are contributing to transformational change as envisaged in the OSP.

1.5 Emerging Issues: Key Messages

This is a mid-term assessment, so there is still time to see more significant results for 2019. It is important to remember that most interventions were actually carried out during the time frame of the previous strategic plan. Nonetheless, the transformational change that Oxfam is seeking will not happen by accident. The issues outlined below were common to several outcome areas and deserve closer examination.

Program Quality

In the context of the demands the O2020 process poses to Oxfam staff, senior leadership has recently been quite vocal about their concerns that program quality is slipping off the radar screen. The evidence from the evaluations, across all outcome areas, provides a range of insights (including areas of coincidence) and actionable recommendations which can help teams take measures to overcome some recurring challenges. Make no mistake: changes in program quality will only come about through systematic and focused work on improvements.

- **Program design**

There is no doubt that improving program design is critical to Oxfam and partners achieving the bold outcomes expressed in the OSP. The outcomes achieved to date will not automatically translate to more significant change. Reiterated examples demonstrate that **transformational intent and systemic approaches must be considered from the start**. For example, in both resilience and VAWG/GBV programming, Oxfam and partners will only be able to move beyond household levels to achieve systematic results across communities and at higher political levels if the program design starts with those orientations. Further, in the very initial stages of project design, the benefits of shared, umbrella Theories of Change, that respect contextual specificity, could potentially help focus and streamline Oxfam's combined efforts.

- **Gender**

There is uneven evidence regarding the incorporation of a gendered perspective in Oxfam's programs and projects, no matter the outcome area. Notably, Oxfam's resilience work showed positive progress on empowerment and inclusion of vulnerable groups, especially women. But difficult questions were raised in other work, in some cases, even by partners. More problematically, even from this sense making distance, it is possible to perceive a lack of gender-sensitivity in some evaluations which could inadvertently create real damage to those involved in these processes. The severity of the problem is most obvious when working with survivors of violence and/or natural disaster; if relevant ethical standards are not adhered to, we (as well as our partners and external evaluators) may unintentionally put survivors at risk of re-victimization. Oxfam needs to take responsibility to ensure that, at a bare minimum, projects, programs and evaluations are safe for their stakeholders.

- **Partnership and multi-stakeholder alliances**

Though our output numbers don't reveal changes in our relationships yet, the evaluations reviewed do show emerging changes in the nature of the partnerships we are building, including multi-stakeholder alliances that bring together actors that are often unfamiliar with each other's work or spheres of influence. All outcome area reports have highlighted that our work in multi-stakeholder approaches is valued (which corresponds to the findings in our partner feedback report) and plays a critical role in achieving change. Because evidence-based advocacy was cited as a key driver of change in multiple instances, specialists, thematic experts or academics have specific contributions to make to broaden the input to the ideas and foundations for transformational change. These types of alliances often contribute to capacity building of members (although at times it is an unintended outcome). They often increase the reach, and the legitimacy, of the initiative as well.

Oxfam has identified the private sector as a potential partner, yet they continue to occupy an aspirational status in practice. While this is somewhat understandable given Oxfam's history, the private sector is in fact a duty bearer. In spite of many possible modes of collaboration, the evidence demonstrates a serious lack of attention to engagement with them. Is there no case for them to play a more favorable role? A more structured power analysis, combined with a detailed examination of the different contexts where initiatives

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are being planned may reveal more and better ways to effectively engage this overlooked sector.

As one researcher noted, a determined focus on identifying strong partners and creating more stable and effective partnerships will align Oxfam's country and regional level ways of working with partners, ensuring consistency in the partnership approach across the confederation. Given Oxfam's context specific approach, a certain degree of flexibility, in both the strategic and financial dimensions, is essential for sustainable and mutually empowering relationships.

- **Dealing with resistance and/or backlash**

The evaluation reports reveal very limited discussions of resistance or backlash. As Oxfam and partners assume roles and promote work that has at its essential objective challenging and transforming power relations, it is naïve to ignore this real danger. While not exclusive to any particular change goal, the threat of resistance or backlash is particularly acute within work in the Advancing Gender Justice and the Right to be Heard change goals. The evaluations include testimonies from some initiatives where project participants reported being threatened, signalled as 'dangerous to the community', and more. Oxfam must propose **proactive action plans and safeguards to ensure that neither staff nor partners unknowingly expose themselves in undue risk**. Appropriate precautions should be incorporated in the design phase of every initiative.

- **Longer time frames accompanied by the corresponding funds**

Throughout the different reports, the evaluators were quite blunt: the **short project time lines, coupled with insufficient funding, are inconsistent with the bold, intended outcomes** that Oxfam has proposed, no matter the change goal. While Oxfam is no stranger to the funding challenges affecting the sector, it would seem that we are failing to play one of the critical roles that we outlined for ourselves in the OSP. It is worth mentioning that our partner feedback also noted that Oxfam could play this important role. It may be that the intention, outlined in the program design, should normally be toward longer time frames, which could then mobilize appropriate efforts to bring in the corresponding funds.

The KNOW challenge

One of Oxfam's currencies is knowledge, and the evaluations indicate that Oxfam is significantly under-exploiting a wealth of knowledge and experience. There is enormous potential for capitalizing on this knowledge to improve program quality and contribute to the broader (I)NGO sector through deliberate, in-depth learning processes, including with external peers, and supported by a research agenda. In addition, both Oxfam peers and Partner colleagues across individual project and programs at the country-level could benefit from more agile processes and tighter feedback loops, to assess progress and to shape stronger understandings in real time about what is and isn't working in any given intervention, in order to adjust course.

Engaging with the lessons from across the confederation, including emerging practice about different interventions and strategies, would allow teams to better target and more effectively achieve the transformational results that we are working for, whether these are proposed at individual, household, community or societal levels. This implies a need for both cultural and procedural changes, such as leadership support for systematic monitoring processes, regular budgeting for evaluation and time for evidence-informed learning sessions.

Learning across boundaries

Though tightly linked to the KNOW challenge, the work to learn by cross-program, cross-change goal reviews merits a separate note.

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While the resilience outcome area is designed as cutting across change goals, the remaining outcome areas appear to be separate entities. However, their findings often transcend the somewhat fluid boundaries of the change goals to which they speak. Power, as addressed under the Right to be Heard change goal, is without a doubt a fundamental concern across Oxfam's work. Influencing, which is at the core of the Sustainable Food Outcome Area, is increasingly moving to the center of our programming. The insights that the VAWG/GBV outcome area offers on deep rooted social norms and how to challenge them are relevant to many of our Theories of Change, well beyond our work to advance Gender Justice. As humanitarian crises are increasing in numbers and scale due to multiple hazards, both the Saving Lives outcome area and the Resilience outcome area share important lessons about preparedness and integrated programming.

Siloed thinking and limited cross-fertilization amongst change goals still present a major challenge as we fail to build on strengths and capitalize on assets and good practices. We invite our colleagues to use the opportunity of this review to further break the silos and engage in cross-change goal conversations about what we can learn from each other as well as together.

The reality of the WIN ambition

In keeping with our vision, there has been a shift of attention and resources within Oxfam, toward national level change. Unsurprisingly, the majority of the programs and projects reviewed in the entire report take place at local or national levels, and the change is happening at that level as well. However, the ambition to become a Worldwide Influencing Network (WIN) proposes linkages between national, regional and global levels as part of a holistic influencing model. The question is to what extent this ambition is becoming a reality, as there was little apparent link to regional or global processes in these interventions. While it is true that evaluations need to have clear boundaries, which might have required not including an examination of those linkages (if they existed), the question remains. In the context of worldwide changes in civil society space, which often translate into closing opportunities, the need for a more holistic approach is clear, posing both programming – and measurement – challenges to Oxfam.

The GPIIF framing and what we still do not know

In the OSP, Oxfam formulated its ambition to adopt a differentiated approach in different types of countries; this was later further developed through the articulation of the GPIIF with 4 categories of countries: fragile and conflict-affected states, more stable poorer countries, poorer countries with real development prospects and countries with emerging global influence. Both these categories, as well as the change goal categories themselves, are framed with relatively fluid boundaries. Nonetheless, the intriguing question of program lessons according to country categories rises before us.

The same limitations that apply to the lessons emerging about the results within each outcome area apply to the categorization of countries: the categories were established after the approval of the OSP, and the corresponding approaches and investments are still in early stages. While our outcome area reports reveal progress across change goals, there is no mechanism – at this time - through which we can assess if there are any particular approaches and/or combinations of intervention strategies that can be categorized as especially effective in the different country settings. If country program evaluations consistently address the outcome area questions and live up to the good quality evaluation standards that the Program Directors have supported, this type of analysis is ripe with potential.

Observations about evaluation quality

The evaluations suffer from problems that are widely acknowledged amongst MEL colleagues (discussed in detail in the recent sense making of evaluations 2013-14): lack of baselines and end lines, focus on outputs or short-term outcomes and a failure to

contextualize outcomes in a clear theory of change or by using comparison groups are recurring issues. In many instances the evidence discussed is spotty or biased in some way and conclusions are not always sufficiently backed by evidence. At times, Oxfam's evaluations offer little information about the quality of the experience for women and men and often lack gender-sensitivity.

Oxfam VAWG/GBV projects and programs must use the WHO Ethical and Safety Recommendations for Research on Domestic Violence against Women as minimum standards in carrying out research and evaluations for VAWG/GBV programming. In addition, Oxfam should devise its own ethical standards that go beyond the minimum standards.

Worryingly, there is little to no acknowledgement of negative outcomes, and it is inconceivable that all outcomes were positive. In the context of Oxfam's work to change power relations, monitoring exercises need to pay careful attention to unintended, and especially negative, consequences, to ensure that opportunities or demands for course correction are followed up immediately.

Because of the limited information that was shared on how and why change happens, the evaluations often failed to give a clear sense of Oxfam's contributions to the different change processes. Evaluation quality must be improved if Oxfam would like to truly demonstrate any contribution to impact in 2019.

Generally, Oxfam's MEL practice has put a spotlight on individual, household and sometimes community level change. While this should continue, we also have to face the challenge of measuring broader system-level changes. Also, as Oxfam moves to assume different roles related to influencing, we cannot avoid the need to understand how to value different roles (such as broker, convener) and the commitment to develop different relationships with partners and allies. This will require creativity, openness to experiment and the willingness to engage with the broader (external) evaluation community.

1.6 Taking forward the findings

The findings from these evaluations, across the different change goals, demonstrate that Oxfam and partners have made tangible progress on different fronts, with sporadic evidence of good potential across some of our work. Yet, the desired transformational change that underlies Oxfam's OSP remains elusive. Fortunately, without exception, the findings also provide significant input to improve our programming and offer suggestions for next steps.

Investment in program design

By its very nature, transformational change takes time to materialize. In some cases, Oxfam and partners have already demonstrated the capacity to improve their programs, feeding their learning into new thinking on the ground. After reviewing these evaluations, the most obvious next step is to work to strengthen program design.

More specifically, the intention of transformative change should be deliberately included within the design of any program/project and thought through so that it can be more effective. Beyond the household level, creating the conditions for transformational change (starting with people's participation in higher level decision making processes and better social inclusion) will happen as a result of strong, grounded yet strategic theories of change, intentional design, careful monitoring and learning, and consistent adjustment and follow up.

While the work occasioned by O2020 has sometimes been cited as a source of workload tension, pushing issues like 'improve program design' lower on the list of priorities; all colleagues should understand O2020 as the source of inspiration for re-ordering those priorities. Good program design should happen because of O2020 (not in spite of it).

The role of Knowledge Hubs

The VAWG/GBV, Resilience, and 'Transforming Power Relations' outcome areas have all been accompanied by Knowledge Hubs. In each case, Oxfam peers have worked across affiliate lines to support the development of conceptual frameworks and measurement systems to capture change. None of the evaluations covered in the outcome areas review had applied those frameworks (as these were developed after the approval of the OSP); there now exists the imperative to acknowledge the frameworks, and operationalize their use in program design, implementation, measurement and feedback.

All staff need to bring their efforts to bear on this challenge as the opportunities for increased focus, streamlined collaboration and effective engagement across the confederation and with our partners are too great to ignore through a 'business as usual' approach. Seeing the potential that these Knowledge Hubs have opened for these colleagues raises the imperative to establish the same for a subset of the remaining change goals as expressed in outcome areas (e.g., inequality for the Financing Development change goal) as well as linking the work on Income and Food Security to a KH and/or Change Goal Lead.

A new multi-stakeholder world

The need to develop new types of relationships, new typologies of partners, and new ways of working across (sometimes) unusual allies could not be clearer. This reinforces findings from our partner survey, and reflects the vision of O2020. Oxfam should not presume, however, that we all know how to take forward this new work. At its very essence, this is about cultural change, and a fundamental shift in Oxfam's own power. Guidance along this road is desperately needed, as good intentions will be insufficient. To start, leadership can model changes in our management structures and practices, and examples of better practice, found in pockets across the confederation, should be celebrated.

A strategic choice?

Oxfam is no stranger to the mechanistic projectized approach of many large back donors, and the frustrating gaps this practice provokes. In fact, at times, Oxfam itself is guilty of falling into this short term logic with our partners. Surely we have experienced the need to develop protective approaches that support longer term holistic programming, accompanied by persistent, strategic fund raising. Is it time for Oxfam to make a choice to be smaller, to streamline and focus our efforts on the most strategic programs, and develop deeper pockets of funding?

An evolving MEL practice

Across the confederation, MEL colleagues need to ensure the balance between getting the basics right (baselines and end lines, less retroactive approach to data collection and analysis, consistently strong evaluative practice) and supporting Oxfam to step up to the new challenge of measuring transformative change. This will involve systematic and sustained engagement with program colleagues and focused investment in designing and trialing new measurement tools.

MEL colleagues are currently developing a tool to analyze Oxfam investment in MEL work. While we do not have accurate figures right now to discuss MEL spend, several light touch assessments by MEL colleagues show us that we have a way to go before reaching the Oxfam goal of allocating 5% of program spend for MEL work. The commitment of the Oxfam leadership to this effort will help us move forward. Getting the right balance between the nature of measuring system level change and the continued need to reinforce the basics of MEL practice will be critical.

2 RIGHT TO BE HEARD: TRANSFORMING POWER RELATIONS ¹



2.1 Introducing the outcome area

Three generic outcomes are:

1. Policies, practices and mechanisms of duty-bearers (government / private sector / international institutions) have changed in favor of poor and marginalised people and/or negative change has been averted
2. The engagement of poor and marginalized people with duty-bearers (government / private sector / international institutions) has increased and/or decrease has been averted
3. The ability and confidence of poor and marginalized people to claim their rights and state their voice has improved

A cross-confederation working group of MEL colleagues, linked to the Governance and Citizenship Knowledge Hub, was instrumental in articulating the concepts that underlie the 'transforming power relations' outcome area, articulating the above generic outcomes to provide greater focus to this change goal and outlining the measurement possibilities of Oxfam's work in this outcome area. The above framework was developed after the evaluations included in this study were established, so the information available for review doesn't necessarily correspond to those above areas.

This section is based on 26 evaluation reports (finalized between 2013 -15) from programs in 24 countries (across Asia and the Pacific, Africa and Latin America as well as domestic programs in the US and Australia), where 5 Oxfam affiliates (Oxfam America, Oxfam Australia, Oxfam Belgium, Oxfam GB and Oxfam Novib) were engaged.

Based on the outcomes, the central question formulated by Oxfam⁴ is the following: "*How have power relations been transformed in the contexts in which Oxfam is working? Has Oxfam contributed to transform these power relations? If so, how? If not, why not?*"

The study was developed through a literature review, a quality assessment of the available evaluations and the analysis of findings across the reports.

2.2 What are we talking about? Key concepts and definitions

The analysis that underpins the RtBh change goal is multilayered and complex. Two main concepts in the Outcome Area 'Transforming Power Relations' are **Transformation** and

¹ This summary chapter is based on: Hogeling, L. and C Carabain (2016) The Right to be Heard: Transforming Power Relations Outcome Area. Synthesis report (revised version). Kaleidos Research, February. The full report is available [here](#).

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Power. As mentioned in its Conceptual Framework, Oxfam refers to transformation as a 'change that is fundamental, lasting, and which challenges existing structural inequality'.

Power can be manifested in 4 forms:

- Power over: the power of the strong over the weak, including the power to exclude others
- Power to: the capability to decide actions and carry them out
- Power with: collective power, through organization, solidarity and joint action.
- Power within: personal self - confidence, often linked to culture, religion or other aspect of identity, which influences the thoughts and actions that appear legitimate or acceptable⁵.

Additionally, Oxfam defines *forms* of power (visible, hidden or invisible), *spaces* in which power is manifested or used (closed, invited, created or claimed) and *levels* of power (household level, local level, national level, regional level, global level)⁶.

2.3 How do we aim to contribute to change? Theories of Change and Strategies

The **three generic outcomes** noted above are formulated to address transforming power relations:

- **changes on the institutional level**
- **increased citizens' engagement with duty-bearers, and**
- **improved ability and confidence of citizens to claim their rights.**

Strategies contributing to these outcome areas include evidence-based advocacy and campaigning, engaging with duty-bearers, mobilizing networks and alliances as well as public support, strengthen the capacity of citizens to claim their rights and participate in decision-making.

A significant number of the programs in this study aimed to promote changes on the institutional level and the majority of the programs addressed increased engagement of citizens, either collectively or individually, with duty-bearers. Only a small number of initiatives undertook activities for improved ability and confidence of citizens to claim their rights and state their voice.

According to the reports reviewed, only one of all 26 initiatives approached their work by considering all three outcomes as a coherent approach.

2.4 What have we achieved? Evidence from Practice

Generic outcome 1: changes in policies, practices & accountability mechanisms of duty-bearers

Programs focused here are trying to **achieve change in the "power over" realm**. The evaluations show they focus mainly on 1) making practices more responsive to the needs of poor and marginalized citizens by targeting (individual) duty-bearers' mind-sets, 2) achieving transparent practices (including enhanced accountability of duty-bearers), 3) influencing and changing the political agenda or debate, and 4) on changing actual laws and policies. All dimensions of institutional power relations are addressed in the interventions.

A small majority of the selected interventions focused on achieving changes in this area (laws, legislation, policies and practices of duty-bearers). Almost all of these programs have to some extent proven to be successful in changing formal power relations. Success has been evidenced in all dimensions, although **changes in the mind-set of duty-bearers were reported less** than changes in, for instance, practices and regulations.

Drivers of success for changing 'formal' power relations are: 1) a multi-stakeholder approach for advocacy work, 2) evidence based advocacy enhances the effectiveness, 3)

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the use of inclusive and participatory strategies and methods, and 4) working with meaningful regional or local partners.

The information in the evaluations gives reason to say that it is important to **carefully select the (implementing) partners**. The work benefits from a partner that has expertise in the area (e.g. in women's rights) but also from a combination of partners that work with varying support groups and at different levels. In Uganda, ONL-supported CRAFT worked with regionally based partners in 23 districts where the project was being implemented and the evaluation states that 'these partners spoke the language communities understood and added reality to tax justice work, by using examples that citizens knew in their local/community settings.'⁷ Involving sub-nationally-based partners also proved successful in Afghanistan, where the role of the Afghan civil society organizations has contributed to maintaining gender issues on the agenda. In this case, it is noteworthy **that the combination of national and international actors was very effective**; 'In addition to Oxfam's interventions, national CSOs had some effect, especially because they were influencing the government directly, but international opinion leaders were the most effective actors putting the topic on the international and Afghan agenda.'⁸ In an OGB-supported program in Vietnam, 'the smart mix in the choice of partners to help deliver the program's intended outcomes is also of a particular notice'⁹. Finally, in Ghana, where regional or local partners were not involved from the start, the evaluator noted some polemic differences about how advocacy should be done in the country and recommended that all stakeholders be incorporated from the planning stages in the future.

Generic outcome 2: increased engagement of citizens

In this generic outcome, power mainly manifests itself as '**power to**': the **capability to decide actions and carry them out (and being effective in using their 'power over' as available)**. The aim under Generic Outcome 2 is to have citizens, poor and marginalized people in particular, increasingly active in decision-making processes and participating in coalitions, alliances and movements through which their voices can be heard; have access to accurate, relevant and timely information to feed their ideas and actions¹⁰. In the overall sample (of all 26 evaluations), the majority of the programs focus on achieving change in this area.

Some programs focus more on empowerment of citizens and CSOs and capacity-building by means of information, while others use information more as a side product or have no (intermediate) outcome about information at all. There are a few programs that have a dominant focus on access to information. Some programs provide information to citizen's organisations or movements, while others promote awareness of certain issues or rights by providing information directly to (individual) citizens.

The evaluations provide evidence that a wide range of outcomes and goals have been achieved. 23 evaluations provide evidence of actual positive changes on engagement. These numbers indicate that while achieving the desired outcomes may not be easy, a relatively large number of programs do realise some positive change in citizens' engagement with duty-bearers.

Even though it may seem easier to work with citizens through civil society organizations, several evaluations provide evidence of **changing citizens, poor and marginalized people themselves**. Individual people have been empowered, often through and in the **personal sphere such as their community or household**. For example, OGB's Raising Her Voice portfolio gives evidence of changes in the personal sphere: "*A significant result of the increased confidence and solidarity of women and awareness of their rights has been their increased ability and will to speak out on rights abuses and access justice on their own or their peers' behalf. There are several reported cases from the case studies and evaluations of women accessing property rights, stopping harmful and discriminatory traditional practices and reporting cases of violence against women.*"¹¹

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The evaluation of OBE's Country Program for Viet Nam celebrates the results achieved at the **individual level as well as achievements at the level of CSOs**: *"Workers have increased role in monitoring working conditions (e.g. OHS committees) and in labour law enforcement mechanisms; (iii) Migrants workers, female workers in particular, are substantially better equipped with improved mechanisms and facilities (e.g. kiosks, WSPs, mobile legal consultancies, access to a network of service providers such as legal professionals, etc.) to access to and exchange needs-based information and legal advice; (...) Workers' groups got increased capacity and confidence in organizing their members to participate in social dialogues with employers discussing collective labour agreements, labour policies, social insurance and social security issues, etc."*¹²

The information in the evaluations addresses the importance of the involvement of CSOs, and especially **stimulating collaboration** between (national) civil society organizations and movements and **improving the internal structure** of existing CSOs. In an OAU supported program in Vanuatu, some tangible changes for network members include *"new technical and administrative skills, ... greater understanding of each other's work, as well as external stakeholders' activities and requirements; collaboration on joint activities and strategies to address common issues; improved relationships with each other and external bodies such as government and donors; and collective contribution to government policies and plans."*¹³

Even though many evaluations report achievements, it appears that in some programs the intervention left the process partially unfinished. For instance, in an ONL-supported program in Cambodia, the evaluation reports that people's awareness has increased and they have been more frequently able to file their complaints, but 'little follow up action has been observed from the government'. The authors recommend that *'more emphasis should be put on facilitating networking among communities and organisations to increase the chance that people get their rights indeed'*. Further, in some instances, steps have been made in the direction of short term changing of power relations, but that real transformation of these power relations over the long term still needs work. For instance, in an OGB-supported program in Albania, *"advocacy training was also delivered, however its impact appears marginal in terms of sustainability and there was no measurable evidence of success in promoting this gendered LAG model to key stakeholders and policy makers at the national level"*¹⁴ In this instance, monitoring and follow up would seem an essential next step to ensure changes in power relations over time.

Several evaluations mention positive effects of **collaboration with a strong partner**, preferably an organization or movement that has already gained experience in a specific issue. The partnership will enable a strong partner to build on its existing work, and enables Oxfam to 'use' the partners' expertise, reach and members or supporters. *"With reference to OGB's decision to support projects that build on existing work and local processes, interviews to members of Corporación Humanas direction reveal that the work done has been very well aligned and embedded into the partner's work and mandate. Women's political participation was already a strong area of work of Corporación Humanas and Raising her Voice came to critically support some activities that were either difficult to fund or needed extra funding."*¹⁵

Several evaluations reveal the importance of **flexibility** in the partner relations. Flexibility can further strengthen the work of the (implementing) partner. Additionally, a funding structure that includes a certain degree of flexibility allows for the partner organization to react to emerging opportunities. *"A large number of the AGIR partner organisations are supported through core funding and also have access to flexible funds available for short-term and more ad hoc advocacy activities. This enables them to focus on their own strategies and the political processes they have found most relevant. From a civil society perspective this creates conditions for more focused and strategic accountability work, including the possibility to build and strengthen alliances with domestic and international partners. The combination of a higher degree of institutional financial stability and the*

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access to flexible funds for advocacy activities has enabled the key partner organisations to respond rapidly when opportunities to influence and voice claims have presented themselves.”¹⁶

Various evaluations show that the **use of adequate materials, methods and expertise** has been important in changes in the ‘power to’ dimension. This is amongst others evidenced by the *Free Universal Health Care Campaign* in Ghana. *The evaluation has shown that civil society was equipped with powerful data to endorse what was already recognised at the community level; that access to health care under the insurance scheme was inequitable and did not favour the most vulnerable members of society. (...) The dissemination of the report’s findings enabled civil society actors to better understand the technical nature of the universal health care discourse, supporting wider campaigning efforts.”¹⁷*

Finally, mention must be made of the positive effects of a **participatory, multi-stakeholder approach** in several programs and projects: *“The programme has shaped policy advocacy with the participation and cooperation of multiple stakeholders - rather than just networks of NGOs as before. (...) The Programme operates by identifying, fostering and supporting issue-based coalitions for effective advocacy within the policy making process. ‘Coalitions’ in this context means multi-stakeholder cooperation among Vietnamese NGOs (VNGOs), state agencies at different levels, media, universities and research institutes, and the private sector.”¹⁸*

Generic outcome 3: improved ability and confidence of citizens

Power manifests itself in this generic outcome as ‘power within’ and ‘power to’: the capability of poor and marginalized people to better be able to claim and exercise their rights to organize, to information, to public participation and to equal justice. Oxfam also aims to support civil society organizations and citizen’s initiatives ‘power with’ to state their voice and claim their rights.

This section focuses specifically on those interventions that (from the evaluations) appear to aim *mainly* for change in the collective power of (individual) citizens (and less to increase citizen’s engagement with duty-bearers). The number of evaluations in this section is small compared to the previous sections. Most evaluations show that interventions combine multiple strategies and thus work on different dimensions of power to create change. The majority of the reports indicated positive change in this area of work.

The evaluations demonstrate the importance of citizens acquiring knowledge, skills and tools for active citizenship, the relevance of a platform to share knowledge and skills and the introduction of new ways of operating by CSOs in a specific setting or region.

The acquisition of knowledge and skills can run the gamut of experiences. In an OGB-supported initiative in Bangladesh, REE-CALL provided training for women to earn income, but the outcomes extended beyond that: *“The women in the target villages/CBOs are greatly facilitated towards not only to earn income for the family, but also to earn respect following their economic and social progression. Women are certainly not seen as a passive member confined in a household, they have emerged as pro-active members of the society who can contribute to their immediate family and the neighbourhood in their own rights. Collectively, they have formed pressure groups to at least claim entitlements & rights, goods and services, if not manage to ensure services from the local level service providers and duty-bearers”¹⁹*

In a few evaluations, it seemed important that the partner facilitate a platform for the community group to share their knowledge and skills with peers and to put them to use to raise their voices and claim their rights. The relevance of such a **platform to share knowledge and skills** is evidenced in the evaluation of the Straight Talk program for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women in Australia. Amongst other things, the program offers two events, which are held over four days, *“where Aboriginal and Torres*

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*Strait Islander women are given a platform to share stories and solutions and strengthen one another so they can shape the decisions that affect their lives and their peoples. Women learn how the political system works, the tools and strategies for creating change, and meet politicians to talk about the issues they face in the community.*²⁰

When it comes to empowering citizens collectively, in CSOs, some evaluations show that **introducing new ways of operating in a specific setting or region** can be effective. In Vietnam, Oxfam has introduced new ways of organizing farmers and workers into collective action: *'The program brings into Vietnam new and relatively creative ways of gathering and organizing farmers and workers into groups based on their own choice, needs, interest and self-governance while some of domestic efforts, including those recently initiated by mass organizations are less ... effective. Thus, the program enriches national policy menu by bringing to the table more choices for policy and decisions makers to consider as ultimately, external support should not and cannot replace domestic initiatives and efforts.'*²¹

Finally, in some interventions Oxfam has enabled specific groups to directly participate in the process of learning and advocacy. For instance in Georgia, where the My Rights My Voice campaign focused on youth participation, *"the project promoted children and youth as agents of change by fully involving them in campaigning and awareness-raising and by establishing youth clubs through which children and youth can organize events and discuss issues of health rights that affect them."*²²

The strategies that appear to be successful in this dimension are developing capacity regarding leadership and knowledge, skills and tools among citizens, helping citizens to organize themselves and developing innovative approaches to break through traditional barriers of power.

2.5 General Enablers and Blockers, Oxfam's contribution

Drivers of success for changes to policies, practices and mechanisms of duty-bearers (the more formal, institutional changes) include: 1) a multi-stakeholder approach for advocacy work, 2) evidence based advocacy, 3) the use of inclusive and participatory strategies and methods and 4) working with regional or local partners. The findings also show that it is important to carefully select (implementing) partners.

With regard to strategies that to some extent have proven to be effective when it comes to realising changes in the engagement of citizens, several evaluations mention positive effects of collaboration with a **strong partner**. Also, the importance of **flexibility** in the partner relations is evidenced. Various evaluations show that the use of **adequate materials, methods and expertise** has been important in changes in the 'power to' dimension, as well as a **participatory, multi-stakeholder approach**.

The strategies that appear to be successful in this dimension are developing capacity regarding leadership and knowledge, skills and tools among citizens, helping citizens to organize themselves and developing innovative approaches to break through traditional barriers of power.

The findings suggest that the following barriers exist:

- The absence of a strong, regional implementing partner (as noted above)
- A lack of flexibility by the coordinating partner or donor (Oxfam)
- Vagueness in the structure of a program, uncertainty about the core message of a program and uncertainty about roles and responsibilities between mutual partners and between donors and partners.
- The complexity of changing practices of duty-bearers, caused by (fixed) mind-sets, lack of accountability and transparency mechanisms and other contextual factors such as the political context and (cultural) history.

One of the most apparent barriers across the evaluations is the struggle of various programs and projects to change practices of (individual) duty-bearers. This challenge was very clearly presented in one evaluation: *"It is however difficult to discern major shifts towards sustainable changes in the behaviour of the duty-bearers. This is partly due to the difficulty to follow intended behaviour changes of duty-bearers throughout the reporting during the evaluated period. But is also a reflection of the dependency of changes in single actor's behaviour rather than the behaviour of institutions. This was an issue raised by many of the respondents and is a situation that needs to be addressed with long-term and multiple advocacy strategies"*²³

This review also suggests the importance of social norms affecting duty-bearers, and mentions the need to assess the institutional culture that influences them, when making efforts to change mindsets.

Based on the indicated barriers, it seems that Oxfam, as a donor, should start by seeking a strong implementing partner. Afterwards, the essential way to enhance programming appears to be by providing a clearer steer on the structure and core message of programs as well as the division of roles and responsibilities and, overall, being more flexible as a coordinating donor.

2.6 What is holding us back? Program Quality Issues

Across all the evaluations, there is little evidence of any engagement with international institutions and even less with private sector actors; the focus seems to be on public institutions and governments. While this is understandable, it must be acknowledged that, in some contexts, companies are directly responsible for the repression or exclusion of citizens and their organizations (e.g., no recognition of labor organizations, direct violence); more frequently, they pressure governments to deny these rights (e.g., to create a favorable investment climate). Is there no place for the private sector to play a favorable role? This seems to be a blind spot in the current work on RtBH; isn't it necessary to make the private sector part of the equation?

In some programs, while the evaluation report did show concrete outcomes, the sustainability of the changes achieved was questionable. Planning for longer term change from the beginning is essential.

The evidence suggests the importance of building multi-stakeholder approaches to influencing work. A good example of a participatory, bottom-up approach is the REE-CALL women's program in Bangladesh²⁴, whereas Oxfam's work in Vietnam provides a good example of including multiple stakeholders (e.g. media, universities, private sector), rather than just networks of NGOs in Vietnam.²⁵

Gender

The findings suggest that, based on the evaluations, the majority of interventions address women's rights to a certain extent. A substantial number of programs exclusively target women's rights and voice or are directly aimed at changes for (individual) women, while in others women's issues are part of a broader range of issues. Very few programs do not specifically involve women or women's issues in any of their outcomes and activities.

However, in one evaluation, the author mentions the doubts that certain stakeholders have about progress in the field of gender issues: *"(...) some serious concerns about the progress of gender equality and gender mainstreaming. Two years have passed, so is the glass half empty or half full when it comes to promoting gender equality? A programme that aims to challenge non-participatory and non-transparent development processes and to hold people in power accountable should also be able to challenge discriminatory social norms. The call for gender perspective in interventions driven by the civil society is nothing new"*.²⁶

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It is also important to note that some evaluations also describe a program's struggle when it comes to gender issues. An informative example is provided by the evaluation of OBE's Country Program in Vietnam, which mentions that '*strategic gender mainstreaming into normal development processes for both target groups (farmers and workers) as a cross cutting issue faced difficulties*'²⁷.

Addressing women's rights and women's issues *to a certain extent* doesn't seem adequate nor does it reflect the type of transformational programs that Oxfam is seeking. Paraphrasing from above, *an organization that aims to ... hold people in power accountable should also be able to challenge discriminatory social norms* more systemically, in particular as part of its 'transforming power relations' outcome area.

2.7 Recommendations: What Does Oxfam Have to Improve?

The interventions reviewed in the report take place at local or national levels, with little apparent link to regional or global processes. On one hand, this is not surprising (evaluations do have to be limited) and within Oxfam, there has been a shift of attention and resources towards national level change. However, the ambition to become a Worldwide Influencing Network (WIN) does foresee these linkages as part of a holistic influencing model. The question is to what extent this ambition is becoming a reality. The need for such a more holistic approach is clear, considering the worldwide trend where space for citizens is shifting and, in many places, closing-down.

The work to challenge power relations is not to be underestimated. While difficult, Oxfam and partners need to pay attention to the complexity and importance of **changing mind-sets** to make (individual) duty-bearers more open and responsive to the needs of poor and marginalized people. Fixed mind-sets may hinder further change as well as the sustainability of achieved changes.

The findings from the evaluation reports clearly demonstrate the importance of **(scientific) evidence (adequate and correct materials) and the involvement of experts** in the work on change. Key information – or access to it – can inform social movements, strengthen arguments in advocacy and campaigns, and open doors to new opportunities.

Using a **participatory and multi-stakeholder approach** to advocacy and empowerment is effective, though it requires work.

It is important that Oxfam acknowledge the advantage of working with **strong (implementing) partners** for results in specific regions and contexts. Together, Oxfam and partners can develop innovative approaches to break through traditional barriers of power, and to adjust to different and changing contexts. If possible, Oxfam should strive to create **flexibility** in the Oxfam – partner relationship, both in terms of goals and strategies and in financial support. As logical as it may seem, it is essential to avoid a vague division of responsibilities and unclear structures within programs and between program partners.

3 ADVANCING GENDER JUSTICE: CHANGING ATTITUDES, BELIEFS AND SOCIAL NORMS ²



3.1 Introducing the outcome area

Oxfam believes that, of the diverse causes of VAWG/GBV, the root cause is unequal gender and power relations. In line with its intention to move towards transformational programming, Oxfam has prioritized ending violence by highlighting the reduction of the social acceptance and incidence of VAWG/GBV as a key priority, as seen in the above articulation of the change goal. As such, the key question that frames this evaluation is: *How has Oxfam contributed to changing cultural norms and ultimately behaviors to prevent GBV?*

Oxfam has a Global Program that aims to end VAWG/GBV in more than 50 countries. Preventative interventions are central to Oxfam's global program, with all 50 countries working to tackle the root causes of VAWG/GBV. These 50 countries make up the vibrant, dynamic knowledge network of Oxfam's Knowledge Hub to end VAWG/GBV. Together with the VAWG/GBV Knowledge Hub, gender justice colleagues across Oxfam were instrumental in articulating and shaping the concepts that underlie this outcome area, and MEL colleagues supported the development of the measurement possibilities of this work.

This meta-evaluation is based on 13 program and project evaluations that were conducted between 2013 and 2015. The evaluation reports consider projects in 8 countries (Bangladesh, Mozambique, Yemen, Vietnam, India, Malawi, Nigeria and Benin), 2 regions (Central America and MENA), and one multi-country program. Six affiliates were involved in the projects included in this review (OIN, OHK, OGB, OBE, OCA, and OQC), and worked together in 'One Oxfam' efforts in Bangladesh, Malawi, and Nigeria. They are considered short-term initiatives (1-4 years); only 4 were considered medium term, with none being long term (9+ years). The funding totaled US\$13.6 million.

3.2 How do we aim to contribute to change? Theories of Change and Strategies

While strategies were often described in the reports, the effectiveness of these strategies on outcomes was less frequently assessed. Reviewing these strategies in relation to outcomes to gain more evidence on what strategies are working or not and under what

² This summary chapter is based on: Pittman, A. and L. Haylock (2016) Assessing Oxfam's Contribution to Changes in Social Norms in VAWG/GBV Programming Globally. Oxfam, February. The full report is available [here](#).

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conditions is an essential exercise that needs to be undertaken through monitoring. The strategies that teams employ can be designed and implemented in a variety of different ways which affect the transformational potential of the outcomes. For example, service delivery can be delivered with attention to empowerment and rights based principles, which would change the *quality* of that outcome of increased access to VAWG/GBV services.

The top three strategies used across the projects were *awareness campaigns on VAWG/GBV, advocacy and lobbying, and service delivery*. The top four theories of change (ToC) implicitly referred to in evaluations were: *Empowerment, Influencing Legal Frameworks, Changing Knowledge, Attitudes and Practice, and Modeling Positive Behavior*.

Nine out of 13 Oxfam VAWG/GBV projects addressed at least one of Oxfam's Guiding Principles to ending VAWG/GBV, which improve the quality of outcomes. The top four principles most often referred to in the evaluations include:

- Programs/projects should target multiple levels, sectors and timeframes
- Engaging men and boys are critical to sustaining change in social norms
- Women and their organizations are vital to creating last changes in social norms
- Duty bearers are critical in both modeling positive attitudes and influencing their institutions to create a positive enabling environment

Projects tended to focus on:

- **Individual shifts** in awareness of what elements constitute violence, awareness of GBV laws and services, and individuals, including duty bearers and men's and boys' attitudes that violence against women is wrong;
- **Community level changes** such as strengthened access to and services for survivors of violence and strengthened ability of civil society organizations (CSOs) to refer individuals to appropriate services and access justice; and
- **Societal level legal changes**, such as instating or advocating for legal protection mechanisms that prevent or penalize GBV/VAWG.

As described, there were substantive gaps in attention to the household and relational levels, which is particularly important when aiming to achieve lasting normative changes in VAWG/GBV.

Getting deeper information on how and why change happens, the effectiveness of particular strategies and their contribution to particular outcomes is critical to better tracking progress on the road to social norm change.

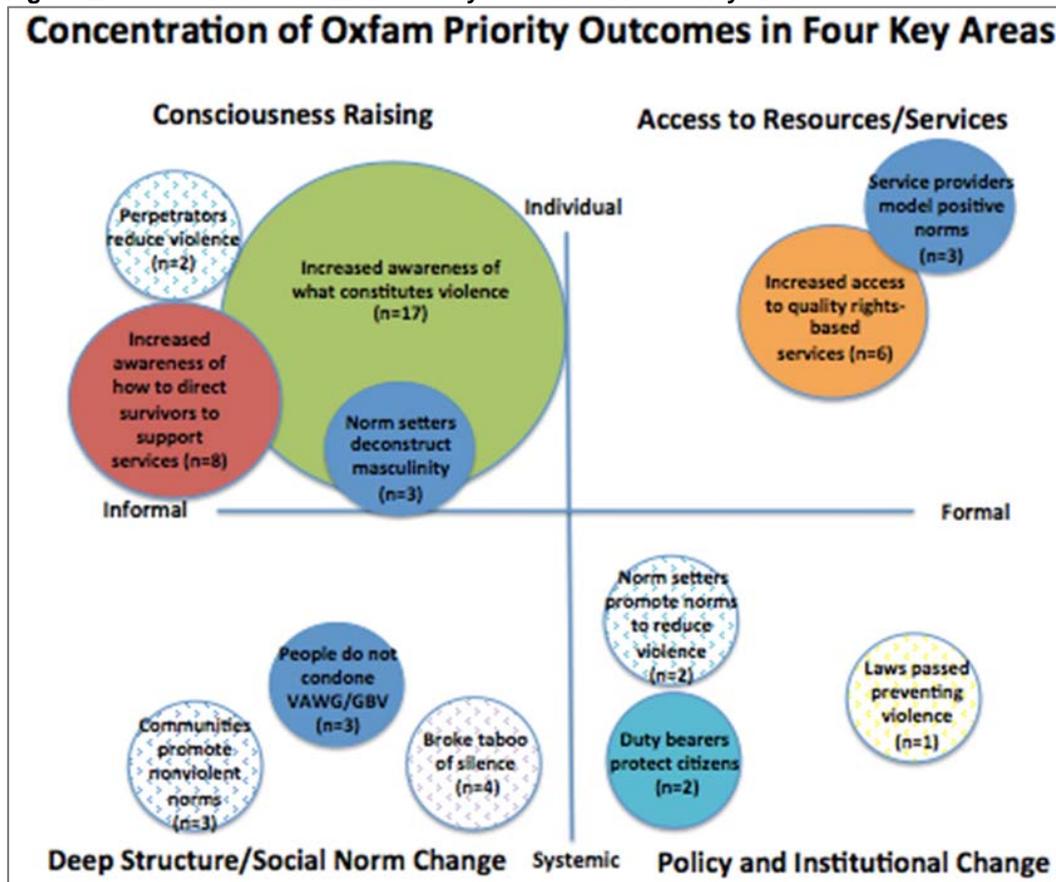
3.3 What have we achieved? Evidence from Practice

All 13 evaluation reports revealed outcomes that the reviewers deemed to depict some level of progress towards changes in social norms. Nonetheless, **no evaluation presented discernible, reliable evidence of Oxfam's contribution to changed social norms that underpin VAWG/GBV**. Failings in the evaluation reports limit the extent to which one can reliably say that Oxfam's programming contributed to awareness-level shifts, let alone deeper behavior or normative shifts. It is unclear whether or not those failings extended to the projects.

The reports revealed 43 immediate and 13 intermediate outcomes as important signposts on the road to social norm change. Mapping these outcomes onto the [Gender@Work framework](#)³ (which underpins the Theory of Change in Oxfam's Gender Justice change goal), it's clear that over half of the outcomes fall in the consciousness raising quadrant. The remaining outcomes were split up nearly equally into the access to resources and services, deep structure and norm change, and policy and institutional change quadrants.

³Accessed on February 16, 2016

Figure 2: Concentration of Oxfam Priority outcomes in Four Key Areas



The most common **immediate** results were related to shifting awareness: men's, women's, boys' and girls' (including, importantly, duty bearers') increased awareness of what constitutes violence and debunking the justifications for violence against women. Other common awareness level shifts included duty bearers and individuals having increased awareness about how to direct help for GBV survivors. While an important first step, this falls short of social norm change, especially because it is not clear if changes in awareness have led to shifts in attitudes or behaviors, if these translate to greater community awareness, or even to sustainable individual awareness shifts over time. Another common outcome was increased access to better quality services that promote gender equality and positive social norms.

In terms of intermediate outcomes, the evaluations most frequently highlighted achievements related to breaking taboos and silence around VAWG/GBV in communities and formal institutions, such as justice and religious communities, which is a critical and important gain and first step in shifting the social norms that condone violence. In addition, evaluations also revealed that perpetrators reflected on gender norms and took action to reduce violence and that powerful norm-setters and opinion leaders in key institutions actively promoted positive social norms to prevent VAWG/GBV.

A few projects in OIN and OHK saw positive shifts in relation to perpetrator and survivor support groups formed to raise awareness of violations and aimed to shift behaviors to prevent VAWG. As the OIN report underscored, the survivor groups supported the development of community vigilance groups, which enhanced community ownership of anti-VAWG work. In another example, an OIN-supported project did target negative social norms, by embedding citizen support units in police stations. *"This kind of collaboration has provided for greater accessibility with the PWDVA agency (Police) and also provided greater visibility to the support centres. As the police department is directly and formally involved with support centres, there is greater recognition of the magnitude and complexity of VAWG issues within the department. Further, the quality of services and commitment of*

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partners has enhanced their acceptance and credibility, making advocacy work more effective at the level of police department and with other relevant government agencies.”
(OIN, 2014b)

REACH OF CHANGES THROUGH OXFAM-SUPPORTED GBV PROGRAMMING

1) Increased capacity in 2,101 duty bearers

- 70 men and women from 22 civil society organizations with increased knowledge on approaches for working with men about boys to end violence against women across Lebanon, Jordan, and the Occupied Palestinian Territories
- 1095 men in key institutions (judge, lawyers, police, religious leaders) trained to end violence against women in Lebanon, North Iraq, Jordan and the Occupied Palestinian Territories
- 21 core authorities trained to help solve domestic violence in Vietnam
- 673 community leaders more aware of women's legal rights in the Jordan, Iraq, and Lebanon
- 242 lawyers more aware of women's legal rights in Jordan, Iraq, and Lebanon

2) Increased awareness amongst more than 325,000 individuals

- 300,000 people reached through broadcast messages to end violence against women Lebanon, North Iraq, Jordan and the Occupied Palestinian Territories
- 56 male perpetrators of domestic violence participating in awareness raising activities in Vietnam
- 2,879 participants in awareness and training programmes in India
- Estimated 13,000 viewers of Edutainment in Nigeria
- 7507 women more aware of legal rights in Jordan, Iraq, and Lebanon
- 1500 people have participated in community discussions about violence against women in Nicaragua
- Approximately 200 men have increased awareness in working to eliminate violence against women in rural Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq, and OPT
- 50 youth are more aware and sensitive to masculinity and sexuality in Nicaragua

3) Increased empowerment and local leadership amongst 6,872 women and girls

- 2000 women more confident in speaking up in community in Nepal
- 1472 women Community Discussion Classes participants who have taken leadership roles in their communities in Nepal
- 3400 women and girls trained to help demand reduced violence against women and girls

4) Improved service delivery and support services for 39,053 survivors of violence by over 55 organizations, local groups, and support centers

- 39,053 women survivors of violence have received support services in India
- 5 organizations and 32 local groups improved provision of services to women victims of violence in Mozambique
- 18 support centers for domestic violence set up in police stations in India

5) Increased participation in legal and social reform

- 6000 signatures were collected to reform penal code in Jordan, Iraq, Lebanon, and Occupied Palestinian Territories
- 3000 signatures of White Ribbon Campaign were collected promising to end violence against women Jordan, Iraq, Lebanon, and Occupied Palestinian Territories
- 854 new cases were registered in India under the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act 2005

Note: all evaluations did not provide information on intended versus actual reach, so it is difficult to assess if the reach described in the evaluations is greater, lesser or equal to what was anticipated in project designs.

3.4 Oxfam's contribution, enablers & blockers, partnerships and gender

Five key roles emerged from the evaluations that speak to Oxfam's value added and contributions. These include Oxfam's roles as a convener, technical expert, political ally, capacity builder and funding partner. Together these roles suggest that Oxfam's value added is diverse, yet responsive to partners' needs and strategic in a given programmatic context. Two key functions that were absent from the 'roles' described in "The Power of People against Poverty" are 'enabler of transformative change' and 'leverager of resources

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to multiple funds'. The evaluators found the lack of mention of Oxfam's transformative approach particularly surprising, as it was articulated before the timeframe of the OSP.

Oxfam's role as a convener is not always smooth, particularly related to the influencing work that Oxfam and partners engage in. For example, in the MENA region, amongst all the positive developments, one project also saw negative consequences in some of the partnerships with duty bearers and leaders. Working with government agencies stalled processes and the evaluators due to bureaucratic conditions and called for the need for contingency plans when working with Ministries that may not be able to efficiently implement the project. Additionally, the evaluation highlighted that while engaging and working with politicians and decision-makers and duty bearers is important, it also could have the unintended consequence of creating women's rights enemies. *"Decision makers in key institutions were the most difficult to address, namely because such institutions are not neutral and are strongly affiliated with political parties. This was the case in Lebanon as well as in Iraq. Political parties are often in conflict with each other, which poses a risk to the project if the right approach is not adopted. It can negatively influence the project and may even result in creating enemies for women's rights."* (Chirizzi et al., 2014)

Nevertheless, many partners acknowledge that Oxfam brings significant experience in influencing, opening up new avenues for partners. *"Our relationship with Oxfam began seven years ago. It has played a fundamental role in the success of our organization. Oxfam has demonstrated solidarity in the national lobbying work as well as supporting our institutional strengthening. This goes beyond funding our organization, although that is important too!"* (D'Angelo, A. et al., 2014)

3.5 What is holding us back? Program Quality Issues

Based on the project evaluations, it appears the majority of Oxfam's work in VAWG/GBV has not necessarily been developed and implemented from a transformative and norm shifting perspective, but instead is predominately focused on increasing the awareness of men, women, boys, girls and duty bearers. Are projects designed to support deeper and longer-term shifts in behaviors and norms or even changes (in individuals & community) in attitudes and awareness that are sustainable over time? It appears that there is a misalignment between strategies implemented in projects and the promise to pursue social norm change.

More positively, the evaluations highlighted the power of creative and interactive means of communication through role plays, dramas and public hearings, rather than passive awareness-raising through leaflets or informational channels. Modeling positive behavior, especially through the Edutainment model, was the focus of two evaluations in Nigeria and Bangladesh. Innovative and interactive means of communication was also mentioned by the evaluations in India and Vietnam. For example, Oxfam Hong Kong's program in Vietnam found particular success in attracting larger crowds when raising awareness of violence against women through role play that combined culture and art.

There is a worrisome absence of pro-active efforts on the part of Oxfam to support partners who are taking significant risks in this work. The importance of tracking resistance (as well as pushbacks or reversals of progress) should not be understated. **The realities of resistance to gender equality and redistribution of power and privileges and the occurrence of backlash and reversals of progress also underscore why longer-term and substantive resource investments and programming that builds on past gains, relationships, and effective strategies, are necessary.** In the women's economic empowerment program in Yemen, the evaluation found an increased reporting of violence after participation in the project, particularly for cases of thefts, insults and humiliation. It was unclear if increases in violence were backlashes due to the project or if they were due to increased awareness of violence. This highlights the need for better monitoring of incidences of and reporting of VAWG/GBV. Within Oxfam programming, it is also important to monitor if increased reporting is due to increased awareness or if there are backlashes

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that women are facing from attitude and norm change like power redistribution in the household. If so, Oxfam programming must address the reality of potential backlash and set up support structures to enhance women's safety.

Overall, **there was a lack of inclusion of key aspects of Oxfam's transformative programming in the project evaluations** (and potentially the projects themselves), and proactive work to support partners if there is backlash in the face of progress. Moreover, the overall quality of the evaluations made it difficult to determine if Oxfam was actually achieving changes to social norms (a finding that is also in line 2014-2015 OSP Sense making Exercise). Only 3 evaluation reports were explicitly designed to capture changes in social norms. Only 5 evaluations provided sufficient evidence to truly support the achievement of outcomes as suggested in the evaluation. And, the reliability of results in multiple evaluations was called into question because there were very few baseline-final evaluation comparisons.

Of course this is a mid-term assessment, and it may well be that deeper results emerge by 2019. **However, at this time, the heavy focus on awareness-raising, the short timelines for change, and the modest pockets of funding allocated seem inconsistent with the ability to achieve the bold, intended change goal of norm and behavior change to prevent VAWG/GBV.**

3.6 Moving forward: What does Oxfam have to Improve?

Oxfam has made progress in shifting the awareness of what is considered violence among hundreds of thousands of people globally, which is a positive achievement. Access to quality services has also impacted thousands of women's lives directly, and initiatives supporting better implementation of laws and the penalization of VAWG/GBV have the ability to affect millions. Strong progress has been seen in community support and vigilance mechanisms. Efforts to embed support units in police stations that increase the visibility of VAWG/GBV and shift awareness, attitudes and behaviors internally are particularly noteworthy.

However, **no evaluation presented reliable evidence of Oxfam's contribution to changed social norms that underpin VAWG/GBV.** As described, most results remained at the awareness and access to services level.

There are clear next steps that Oxfam should take.

Oxfam can step up its efforts in using a transformative approach to program design and implementation that aims to address the root causes of gender inequalities. This is where Oxfam adds value.

More specifically, projects should deepen their attention to power structures at the household/relational level in addition to attending to individual, community and societal levels. Ultimately, it is the relational aspect that provides a bridge from the individual to broader levels of norm changes. On a related note, Oxfam should consider supporting programs with longer time frames for the types of change that it is seeking.

More strategic alignment across affiliates on social norm work related to VAWG/GBV work is needed. The *Conceptual Framework* developed by Oxfam's Knowledge Hub on VAWG/GBV is a key synthesis document to support the development of an umbrella ToC that respects the context-specific diversity and intersectional analysis that is required for a more cohesive and coherent approach in this type of work and should be a key reference in program design.

It is noteworthy that achievements have already been made to better understand and align this work, including the Power to Prevent event, now evolving as an on-going project put forward by the VAWG/GBV Knowledge Hub that has focused on deepening the Confederation's learning and strengthening staff competencies around social norm change to end VAWG/GBV. In addition, the approach and social norm focus of Oxfam's new

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campaign to challenge negative social norms to end VAWG already demonstrates a strong political will and commitment to better align Oxfam's efforts to be able to demonstrate discernible contributions to impact by 2019.

Oxfam should move toward not only tracking the most frequently used strategies in projects and programs, but also assessing these strategies in relation to outcomes, to gain more evidence on what strategies are working or not and in what contexts.

Oxfam needs to increase partner funding over longer-term, more predictable and more flexible ways. Further, Oxfam should advocate with donors to support longer-term social norm change.

The nature of normative change that challenges gender and power relationships is fraught with backlash and potential for reversals of progress; as such, Oxfam should support partners in planning strategically for these challenges and develop effective threat mitigation strategies.

Only a few evaluations captured the resistance, backlash and negative outcomes that are commonly experienced in gender equality work and when relationships of power are challenged. This finding suggests that questions related to resistance, backlash and negative outcomes were absent from evaluation designs. In alignment with Oxfam's Guiding Principles to Feminist MEL,⁴ quality gender justice evaluations must capture this important dimension of change.

Evaluation quality, in general, must be improved if Oxfam would like to truly demonstrate any contribution to impact in 2019. Oxfam must invest in baseline and final evaluation comparisons, and frame evaluative work such that researchers assess Oxfam and partners' contributions to changes in social norms. Evaluations need to provide clearer links between the information gathered and the interpretation of the results.

⁴ See Oxfam. 2013. ["Oxfam's Feminist Guiding Principles for MEL."](#) Internal document.

4 SAVING LIVES: THE QUALITY OF THE RESPONSE JUDGED AGAINST SECTOR STANDARDS⁵



4.1 Introducing the outcome area

The indicative outcome area of change goal 3 is **the quality of the response judged against sector standards**. The primary measurement tool is the Global Humanitarian Indicator Tool (HIT) which is based on the Core Humanitarian Standards.

Out of approximately 105 humanitarian responses since 2013 the sample **includes country level HIT evaluation reports from six humanitarian responses spanning nine countries in four continents involving seven affiliates**; the regional Ebola Crisis Response, the rapid onset natural disasters in the Philippines and the Solomon Islands²⁸, the slow onset food security and nutrition crisis in Chad, as well as the relatively slow onset crises' relating to conflict resulting in displaced populations in the Central African Republic (CAR), South Sudan and the Syrian Crisis. The selected programs provide an overview of the diversity of Oxfam's humanitarian response work led by different affiliates, response locations, response categories and slow versus rapid onset crises.

4.2 What are we talking about? Key concepts and Definitions

The Humanitarian Indicator Toolkit is comprised of the following 15 standards:

Timeliness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Slow onset: rapid appraisal of the facts within 24 hours of a pre-defined trigger, plans in place and scale-up or start-up commended within 3 days. • Rapid onset: rapid appraisal/assessment enough to make decisions within 24 hours and initial implementation within three days. • Additional requirements relate to monitoring of the situation and the monitoring data being analyzed and reacted upon
Coverage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Slow onset: uses 10% of affected population as a planned figure (response should reflect the scale of the disaster) with clear justification for final count.

⁵ This summary chapter is based on: Wood, E. (2016) Saving Lives, now and in the future: Strategic Outcome Report. Research and Evaluation Services, February. The full report is available [here](#).

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rapid onset: the coverage standard is 25% of the affected population.
Technical standards	Technical aspects of program measured against Sphere standards which should be referred to in proposals and log frames and used in monitoring against indicators.
MEAL	MEAL strategy and plan in place and being implemented using appropriate indicators
Feedback/complaints systems	Feedback/complaints system for affected population in place and functioning. Documented evidence of information sharing, consultation and participation leading to a program relevant to context and needs.
Partner relationships	Partner relationships defined, capacity assessed and partners fully engaged in all stages of program cycle.
Safe programming	Program is considered a safe program: action taken to avoid harm and program considered conflict sensitive.
Gender	Program (including advocacy) addresses gender equity and specific concerns and needs of women, girls, men and boys and vulnerable groups
Vulnerable Groups	Program (including advocacy) addresses specific concerns and needs of vulnerable groups.
Preparedness	Evidence that preparedness measures were in place and effectively actioned.
Advocacy and campaigns	Program has an advocacy/campaigns strategy and has incorporated advocacy into program plans based on evidence from the field.
Staff capacity	Evidence of appropriate staff capacity to ensure quality programming
Integrated approach and resilience	Country program has an integrated approach including reducing and managing risk through existing longer-term development programs and building resilience for the future.
Coordination	Evidence of appropriate staff capacity to ensure quality programming
Resource management	Resources are managed and used responsibly for their intended purpose

4.3 How do we aim to contribute to change? Strategies

Oxfam has demonstrated its **commitment to evidence based humanitarian responses** through needs assessments, analyses, as well as the contribution of knowledge to humanitarian coordination systems. It has shown a **flexible, targeted and needs based approach** in the frame of Oxfam's strategic approach. Examples are CAR, the Philippines, Liberia and Sierra Leone.

Oxfam has proven to be **very strong on sector coordination**, often leading or co-leading sector working groups such as clusters. This seems to be facilitated by **strong technical knowledge** and the mobilization of experienced staff. Throughout the response evaluation reports, there are frequent citations by other INGOs, national partners, UN agencies and government departments that Oxfam's efforts were appreciated and trusted; their knowledge contributions to the cluster system were highly valued.

Oxfam demonstrated that it is highly aware of the need to **link emergency response strategies with development programs and resilience building** and is a strong advocate of this approach. For example, for Chad, there is evidence of the linkages between relief and longer-term programs in key project document, including connecting recovery programs with the most vulnerable communities, researching locally used DRR techniques and capacity building with national lobby groups

Finally, the strategy of systematic external evaluations of Oxfam's humanitarian responses demonstrates the commitment to quality and best practice.

4.4 What have we achieved? Evidence from Practice

Oxfam's humanitarian responses have **provided high quality, lifesaving assistance to millions of people. The highest performing areas in Oxfam's responses are coverage, advocacy and safe programming (protection), with the lowest performing areas being timeliness, partner relationships and feedback/complaints systems.**

Both in slow and rapid onset responses **Oxfam met the coverage standard.** Challenges were often related to out-of-control factors. For example, in Jordan, humanitarian actors faced severely delayed government approval to work in the urban and rural areas. Partnerships with national organizations have proven to be critical, as well as with partners who have sufficient experience in humanitarian emergency response and relevant programmatic themes – and who are supported by Oxfam to scale up.

***In fact, timeliness has generally improved over time.** The low average is largely due to the **Ebola Crisis response** where a particular set of unique and complex circumstances required specialist attention and risk analysis in a tough funding environment. The scale of the crisis was unprecedented. Additionally, it was being widely considered a medical crisis by the international community and not a focus on a humanitarian crisis. In addition, the Ebola Crisis (and the crisis in Haiti) demonstrated that national and international staff can have different welfare needs - national staff may have suffered trauma due to losing family members in the crisis and seeing the impact on their country.*

Oxfam has shown **excellent performance in advocacy** work and met the standard in most of the responses included in this review. In the response to Typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines, an advocacy strategy that was aligned with Oxfam affiliates resulted in tangible successes in fundraising. Advocacy work is also crucial in highlighting the needs of the most vulnerable groups in a crisis, not only improving their access to assistance but also connecting their needs to lobbying with high profile decision makers around the globe.

Oxfam's Global Protection Strategy and standard practice is that all category 2 disasters must have a protection analysis. There is evidence in all the responses included in this outcome area review that **safe programming and protection issues were taken into account and integrated, although to varying degrees.** Oxfam's response to the Syrian Crisis in Lebanon is an excellent example of integrating a protection component throughout the response. Due to the response team's identification of protection issues at an early stage, Oxfam deployed a protection specialist who supported the risk analysis and the development of the protection strategy. The strategy reflected Sphere standards and included training for Oxfam and partner staff, identification and referral of vulnerable people to other actors such as MSF and UNCHR, as well as information sessions for refugees about available services and awareness of risk factors such as GBV.

Timeliness was a particular challenge in CAR and the regional Ebola crisis but has otherwise generally improved over time. Clearer, faster analysis and decision making at all levels around Oxfam's role and added value would have enabled a more timely response to the Ebola Crisis as the crisis was initially framed as a medical crisis. Consequently the funding environment was initially not aligned with Oxfam's areas of specialism.

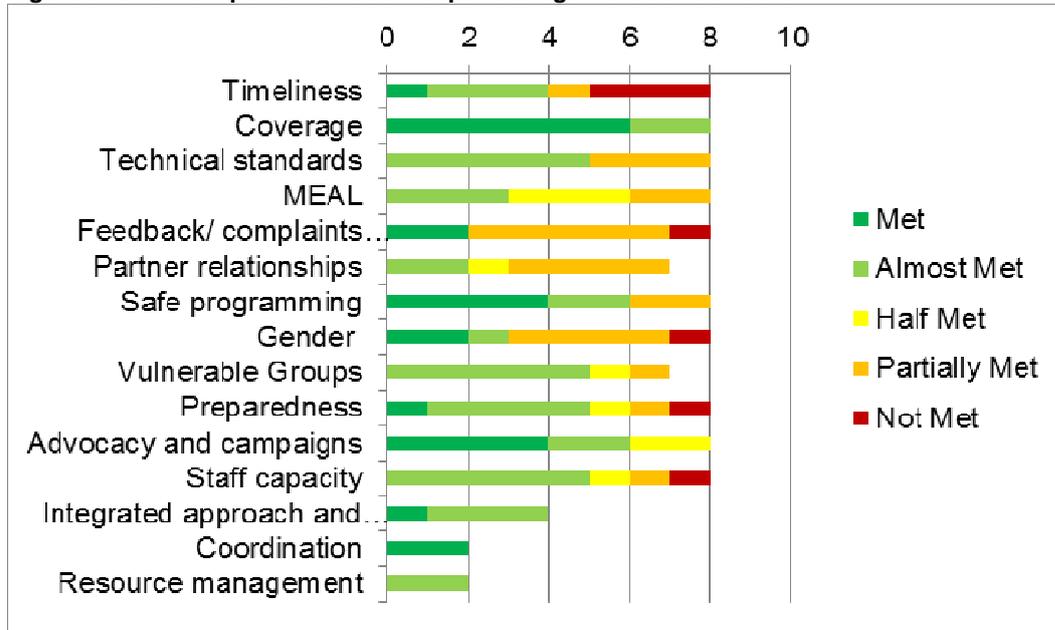
Although partners seem to be generally well integrated and part of Oxfam's humanitarian responses, there is a **trend towards not focusing sufficiently on capacity building and the role of partner organizations can become limited to pure implementation** with little voice in strategy development. Especially where partners have an expertise in participatory, consultative approaches and maintain established relationships within affected communities, insufficient involvement of partners also affects other aspects of the quality of the response. Examples of success include the responses to the Syrian Crisis and the Ebola Crisis where the capacity of partners was built prior to the crisis. This has proven to enhance response timeliness and scale up, especially overcoming barriers such

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as government approval, recruitment of national staff and gaining the acceptance of communities.

Although **Oxfam still needs to improve in ensuring adequate feedback and complaints mechanisms**, specifically in relation to closing the feedback loop, there are several examples of successful formal feedback and complaints mechanisms throughout the responses, sometimes relying more on community mobilization and presence within communities as opposed to telephone hotlines.

Figure 3: Overview performance of responses against each standard



Overarching enabling factors include Oxfam’s technical expertise, specialist knowledge in cross cutting areas, regional monitoring of potential crisis, coordination and collaboration both internally and externally and linkages between programs and advocacy work.

Blocking factors impacting on key standards such as timeliness are often out of Oxfam’s control. The main factors constraining responses are not having prior presence in-country or solid foot-hold, complex and high-risk crisis, tough funding environment, challenges to recruit experienced staff and sudden increases in the number of affected people.

The out of control blocking factors identified often times seem to be associated with complex, relatively slow onset crisis. Rapid onset crises, such as natural disasters, are more affected by blocking factors that tend to be within Oxfam’s control, such as not having prior connections to established national partners or the late deployment of people in cross-cutting roles such as gender, protection and MEAL posts.

The response to the humanitarian crisis in the **Solomon Islands performed well across the evaluated standards**, especially in the areas of technical standards, appropriateness of the response and consideration of gender, protection and vulnerable groups. Key enabling factors include humanitarian training of country program staff, support from regional specialists, monitoring and evaluation capacity, gender capacity, integration of response teams, drawing on gender analysis from existing programs and learning from other responses in the Pacific region. Blocking factors to the response which impacted on general coordination between agencies include structural deficiencies within the humanitarian coordination system and within government departments.

Figure 4: Final HIT Scores for all responses included in this review

	Lebanon '13	Jordan '13	South Sudan '14	Philippines '14	Chad '15	CAR '15	Liberia '15	Sierra Leone '15
	Syria Crisis						Ebola crisis	
Final scores	60%	62%	67%	77%	64%	37%	55%	60%

4.5 Success factors enabling a high quality response

Oxfam's approach to **coordination and contributions to responses have contributed to donor support and partnerships with UN agencies and civil organizations**. These factors have played an important role in Oxfam being a leading actor in humanitarian responses around the world.

The **monitoring of early warning systems and other triggers by an Oxfam regional base is a key factor facilitating timeliness of a response**, particularly where Oxfam has not previously established programming. For example in the responses in Jordan and Lebanon Oxfam has shown the value of investing in regional monitoring of at-risk regions and countries even when there is no Oxfam presence in-country.

Connections in-country through national partners, links to communities and pre-existing programs have also demonstrated their essential role in facilitating a rapid response. Oxfam's **experience in community mobilization** has enabled timely responses resulting in faster assessments and beneficiary selection in Chad and in Jordan.

The evidence presented in the evaluation reports highlights that several factors influence the coverage of responses; for example, how the crisis is categorized, the funding environment, the role of national governments in the crisis and if Oxfam has an established presence and capacity in country. Partnerships with national organizations have proven to be critical where they are possible, as well as with partners who have sufficient experience in humanitarian emergency response and relevant programmatic themes – and who are supported by Oxfam to scale up.

Throughout the responses there are **several examples of successful formal feedback and complaints mechanisms**, sometimes relying more on community mobilization and presence within communities as opposed to telephone hotlines. In Oxfam's responses in the Philippines and Jordan, where the standard was fully met, the **common factors driving success are accountability of the management team for the system and its role in feeding into program design, as well as capacity building of staff**.

In a number of responses, Oxfam showed skill in gender sensitive programming by helping to tailor the response to meet the specific needs of affected people. On the other hand, examples of some of the **potential impacts identified in Oxfam's responses of not integrating a gender approach include a risk of women being excluded from beneficiary selection and from feedback/complaints mechanisms**.

Engagement of affected people not only results in tailoring the response according to their needs but also takes into account the dignity of people affected by crisis. In Jordan, the changes made to the program in response to feedback were significant: Modifications were made to the WASH blocks in Al Za'atari Refugee Camp such as improved lighting and access for disabled people, different models of latrines were trialled and soap distributions were

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Key factors enabling an integrated approach include evidence based strategies backed by assessments and analysis, ensuring linkages between emergency response and development programs in project documents, as well as practical considerations such as the skill set of staff and training. **Capacity building and engagement of partner organizations has also been highlighted as important, especially for ensuring sustainability of strategies.**

The **presence of pre-existing country programs** is also a key enabling factor, not only due to ongoing resilience building or DRR programming, but also because of **already established links to communities and knowledge of the context.** Moreover, facilitating an integrated approach between the country program and emergency response teams has been noted as key, especially as a mixture of staff with both development and emergency expertise is important.

4.6 What is holding us back? Program Quality Issues

In cases where country level programs are presented with multiple challenges to **scale up** (for example funding uncertainty, challenges recruiting experienced staff, low humanitarian access and high operational costs) there is a **risk of compromising on technical standards** such as Sphere.

Generally partners seem to be well integrated and part of Oxfam's humanitarian responses, but there is a **trend towards not focusing sufficiently on capacity building and often partners' roles can become reduced to mere implementation of activities.**

The emergency response in the Philippines has been noted as an example of best practice in contributing to an integrated approach in several ways: Firstly, the Rights in Crisis (RiC) strategy, which included the national government in the audience, had strong elements of Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) and emergency preparedness and response. Secondly, the Joint Country Analysis and Strategy (JCAS) emphasised increasing partner-led response capacity with a focus on DRR in vulnerable areas. Following this, the Oxfam Country Strategy 2014-20 includes objectives relating to climate resilience economic development, sustainable livelihoods and resilience to disasters.

Factors blocking successful integration of advocacy into programming seem to be rooted in staff resources, with challenges securing international and national advocacy, media or communications staff in the early stage of the response. Connected to this, there was not a connection to a MEAL plan to monitor and evaluate the implementation of the advocacy strategy.

Oxfam has a great deal of expertise in cross cutting areas such as gender, protection and MEAL.

However, these areas are often undermined in relief efforts due to the **relatively late deployments of staff specializing in these areas,** such as after the first wave of responders. The impact of this has resulted in these areas not being integrated into the response strategy and becoming more of an add-on, which hinders the quality of the response in several key ways. Responses that have been successful in these cross-cutting areas such as the response in the Philippines have shown commitment by senior managers in ensuring the necessary resources are available.

4.7 Moving forward: What does Oxfam have to Improve?

There is already a great deal of awareness throughout Oxfam of many of the highlighted trends and the associated enabling/blocking factors to quality humanitarian responses. Several initiatives are currently being considered, planned or already underway to alleviate the blocking factors and further capitalize on the common enabling factors. The establishment of the GHT is key to addressing some of these issues.

Additional learning points the review highlights relate to timely deployment of specialized staff (e.g. early recruitment of distribution teams where large scale distributions are an

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initial need), the **integration of humanitarian and development programming, thorough analysis at the beginning of a response as well as the inclusion of advocacy and other cross-cutting roles** (e.g. Gender, MEAL) from the start of a response. A high-quality response requires that cross cutting roles as well as resources are included in budgets and prioritized in the first phase of humanitarian responses. A gender analysis should inform the contingency plan and response strategy. The information should be updated and further nuanced during periods of crisis.

As the **role of advocacy is key in achieving a 'one program approach' and promoting DRR and preparedness at the national, and other, levels**, technical and support staff should be briefed on the advocacy strategy and the role of each person in fulfilling the strategy.

To **facilitate the integration of emergency response and development program teams**, key enablers are clear communication about roles and responsibilities, the connectivity between surge capacity emergency staff and in-country support teams, as well as emergency response capacity building with country teams and partners. The GHT have in their remit to support better capacity building of national partners.

As shown in various responses, **partners often play a key role in responses**, e.g. facilitating access to communities and ensuring that the response strategy meets the needs of the target communities; **involving established national partners in response strategies, including capacity building of partners (e.g. NGOs, CSOs and municipalities) in technical and cross cutting areas, is connected to the quality responses in several core ways such as preparedness, timeliness, coverage and building resilience/DRR programs.**

Well-functioning feedback and complaints systems can be an important source of information for enhancing the quality and effectiveness of a response if the feedback received is acted upon. Oxfam needs to improve the feedback/complaints mechanisms in humanitarian responses especially closing the feedback loop. **The commitment of response managers is key for achieving this standard in order that revisions to program design take feedback/complaints into consideration.**

Finally, **timeliness is a key factor in a quality humanitarian response. Particularly in situations where Oxfam does not have a presence or in medical emergencies Oxfam needs to ensure their added value role is clear and decisions are made in a timely manner.**

5 SUSTAINABLE FOOD: INCOME AND FOOD SECURITY⁶



5.1 Introducing the outcome area

With the aim of achieving change at scale Oxfam is **moving from a focus on direct service delivery to influencing** systemic change in many areas including its work on sustainable food. The assumption is that **targeted influencing** (through demonstration, evidence gathering, advocacy and focus on replicability and scalability) **at national and global level will leverage increased income and food security at scale**, i.e. for more people, sustainably. This first review of progress against strategic objectives represents an opportunity for critical reflection and initial learning on whether Oxfam is doing the right things (right) as well as identify examples of where this is working, i.e. to what extent are these strategies successful at achieving the intended impact of improving income and food security at scale. *The key questions of this review are:*

- **How is Oxfam doing in terms of its intended shift from service delivery to influencing strategies?**
- **How much progress has been made so far in terms of achieving greater food security, income, prosperity and resilience at a large scale?**

To gauge whether Oxfam country programs are firmly committing to a strategic shift from service delivery to influencing, this review also analyses ten high-quality Oxfam Country Strategies²⁹ (OCS). We intend to identify good practice and thinking found in OCSs, that are deemed particularly strong in expressing their intention to use influencing as a key strategy for achieving the CG4 among other change goals,.

The review is based on **37 evaluations of food security projects/programs** with an influencing component and campaigns, **10 country strategies as well as existing meta reviews**. The evaluations span a **significant number of Oxfam affiliates (at least seven), seven regions and at least 15 countries**. Evaluations range from large multi-million dollar programs to pilot projects with much smaller budgets, and range from targeting a few hundred to more than one million people.

⁶ This summary chapter is based on: Maes, Jan (2016). Oxfam Strategic Plan (OSP) Evaluation: Sustainable Food Outcome Area. Oxfam, February. The full report is available [here](#).

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Most **program** evaluations included an outcome assessment of indicators of food security and/or income or intermediary outcome indicators along impact chains that were **assumed** as leading to those impacts (such as increased productivity, access to markets, knowledge, etc.). Most **campaign** evaluations, however, did not report on any such indicators close to the expected impact, but focused mostly on effectiveness of influencing strategies (such as advocacy, mobilization, capacity building), their immediate results (responses by different target audiences, from government, private sector, civic society and the public at large), and intermediary outcomes (budget allocations, policies, negotiating power, etc.).

5.2 What are we talking about? Key concepts and definitions

Direct Service Delivery (and Implementation) Strategies: Rather than defining the boundaries of direct delivery or implementation as compared to influencing strategies, this review departs from the limitations inherent in direct service delivery strategies; Due to scarcity of funds, direct implementation approaches are by necessity limited in scale and often unsustainable. This does not mean that direct implementation is always inappropriate or ineffective: such strategies can test and demonstrate new models to be replicated, create new learning or present leveraging mechanisms to reach scale (e.g. jumpstarting a new type of enterprise, market, etc.).

Influencing Strategies: The OSP refers to influencing as a strategy by proposing a **worldwide influencing network** (WIN) as an expression of **Oxfam's enabling role**, marking "a trend towards working more on influencing authorities and the powerful, and less on delivering the services for which duty-bearers are responsible."³⁰ In this report, influencing strategies in general refer to systematic efforts to change the root causes of poverty rather than addressing the symptoms. This includes both influencing change and leveraging solutions to achieve scale, with specific influencing approaches related to Sustainable Food (see also box next page).

5.3 How do we aim to contribute to change? Theories of Change and Strategies

A review of evaluations conducted between 2010 and 2013 about EJ programs by OGB notes "a **gradual shift** [...] of long-term economic justice programming from reducing direct delivery to reach beneficiaries (focusing on access to better techniques, inputs and markets, awareness raising and collective action), **towards employing more systems approaches, influencing strategies and improved (market) governance**"³¹ On the other hand, a more recent review³² of OGB EJ programming found that **almost all (evaluated) livelihood projects directly supported the development of productive smallholder agriculture**.

An increasing number of Oxfam programs aiming to take a (gendered) market systems approach to influence change, with a **clear intention to move away from direct provision towards influencing more effective and inclusive markets**. However, the degree to which such programs move away from direct delivery of products and services can vary greatly. While some programs are clearly moving towards systems analysis and influencing, they have **not yet been proven this works**, which is at least partially due to the time it takes to pioneer, validate and prove innovations.

Oxfam's use of gendered market systems approaches is criticized by some as too heavy-handed, as it **often still involves elements that are direct interventions** such as investing in or capacity building rural enterprises rather than solely influencing the provision of rural enterprise finance and producer organisation capacity building, etc. **Whether such efforts will be replicated or lead to systemic change remains to be seen** in most cases.

The Enterprise Development Program is one of a number of enterprise and impact funds in the confederation, that support influencing enterprise finance as one potential intervention in agricultural markets for example. This program has **not yet delivered against its**

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promise of systems leverage (e.g. by enticing other banks to finance enterprises outside of Oxfam programs or investors to support similar early-stage rural enterprises), but it has successfully translated **other types of leverage into greater social impact**³³: financial leverage (stretching philanthropic funds to create more impact, and attracting more investments for the sector), political leverage (enterprises as vehicles to influence agricultural policy), network leverage (center for training, inputs, gender awareness), and organizational leverage for Oxfam (skills and learning in market engagement and social enterprise development).

Multi-stakeholder network approaches represent promising strategies for shifting from direct service delivery towards influencing. Examples exist in many Oxfam countries, e.g. Armenia and Georgia, and the Occupied Palestinian Territories. The Grove to Market program in the West Bank (OPT)³⁴, shows how such an approach can bring together anyone involved in the agricultural sector, NGOs, cooperatives, women's organizations, policy makers, and private sector actors, to foster dialogue, engage in joint advocacy, and generate partnerships to help the sector develop with a strong focus on women and smallholders inclusion and poverty reduction. Activities can include drafting legislation, monitoring implementation of government agriculture and food security strategies, influencing private sector engagement with cooperatives, or promoting innovative models (for example in rural finance).

Influencing approaches in Sustainable Food Campaigns³⁵

The GROW campaign, launched in 2011 in response to the triple challenges of sustainable food production, equity, and resilience operates at national, regional and global levels, while aiming to be regionally or nationally led, across four thematic areas – land, investment in small-scale agriculture, climate change and food price volatility. Not all commitments have received the same level of attention in GROW Influencing Approaches (see box below). **The strongest emphasis was on supporting rural organizations, especially of women, and advocacy for positive changes in policies to include their interests, including policies to strengthen resilience and reduce volatility of food prices.** As part of this, Oxfam's role has increasingly become one facilitator of multi-stakeholder approaches and broker of broad-based alliances. There is **less evidence about Oxfam's role in influencing states to support development of domestic markets and challenging the private sector to develop inclusive business models.** Surprisingly, **relatively little attention appears to go to the promotion of more productive and resilient agricultural models.** It is not clear from the evaluations to what extent Oxfam is influencing donor food policies, and there is no mention about improving trade regulation or development of innovative rural finance models.

While the choice of specific influencing approaches might depend on local context and objectives, there is also a sense that the selection is not always based on strong theories of change.

Strong Emphasis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote increased investment in female smallholders, support rural women's organizations and advocate for positive changes in policies and beliefs about women's roles. Facilitate effective economic organization and promotions of women's voices in the economic sphere Promote policies that strengthen resilience through risk analysis, reducing price volatility for basic food commodities and providing protection for the most Oxfam acts as facilitator or broker and convene multi-stakeholder groups to increase impact by building coalitions for change
Moderate Emphasis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Influence states to attract investment and support development of domestic markets and challenge the private sector to develop inclusive business models Promote scalable agricultural production systems that sustainably increase yield, resilience and adaptation to climate change, from subsistence farmers to market-based small-scale producers
Weak attention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enable communities to manage land and water resources sustainably and strengthen the livelihoods of those most chronically at risk of crisis in priority-1 countries Influence governments, business and multilateral organizations to increase financial flows to smallholder agriculture and promote policies to benefit the poor by rebalancing investment and services between small and large scale production Improve donor food policies, especially in fragile states
No mention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Empower small-scale producers to improve trade regulation, to enter and influence Fair Trade value chains Facilitate the development of innovative rural finance models and consumer and fair trade movements, particularly in the BRICSAMs and major cities

The objectives of national GROW campaigns are generally in line with those of the global campaign but customized to the local context, with some campaign goals receiving higher priority than others. Most pursue a **two-pronged strategy** by growing or **strengthening civil society** movements (especially women's organizations) on family farming and food security on the one hand, and **advocating for governments** to increase investments in agriculture (in accordance with their commitments to the Maputo declaration calling for public investment in agriculture to reach at least 10% of national budgets), and adopt policies to establish and protect the rights of smallholders, especially women and ethnic minorities. However, the sense-making exercise points out that "while Oxfam is supporting much more influencing work at the national level, **work remains to be done on articulation of a holistic model that integrates influencing between global and local level.**"³⁶ The encouragement is that GROW campaign work is now rarely stand-alone work, rather integrated as one part of a larger national program of work on the food system.

How are Oxfam Country Strategies planning to shift Sustainable Food programming towards Influencing?

Almost every OCS reviewed states clearly that the **shift from direct programs to influencing is central to its county strategy**, in line with the OSP. The overwhelming focus of planned advocacy and voice work is with state institutions at both national and local levels. A recent review of OCS³⁷ indicates a **much greater focus on advocacy on policy issues and on the engagement of farmers groups in decision making** processes, while less direct work is planned with specific groups of farmers to increase productivity and link to value chains.

Most OCSs express a four-pronged approach in their Influencing Strategy, like this one from Vietnam for instance:

- Leveraging or using Oxfam's program experience** to drive large-scale solutions;
- Advocacy and campaigning** (includes coalition building, research, policy development, lobbying, media, and digital tools);
- Support movements/mobilization** of rights-holders, activists, supporters, and citizens (ensuring that women and their organizations are included and their voices heard);
- Improved governance**, building the capacity of institutions to engage the marginalized, and creating spaces for poor or marginalized people to influence institutions;

Development programs are increasingly seen as demonstration pilots to provide evidence and leverage influencing. **Influencing and long-term programming are also seen as linked** instead of separate activities. At the same time, some OCS caution against an advocacy only approach at the risk of 'losing touch' with the women and smallholders whose wellbeing Oxfam is promoting in the first place. The Ghana OCS plans "to incorporate some community based work within project portfolios, with Oxfam role being working within consortia, as facilitator and broker of change (not service deliverer)."

Alignment of interests is a major theme, and Oxfam often sees its role as creating the evidence base to influence change, frequently the convener and broker of alliances or multi-stakeholder networks that cut across sectors, to implement change. The Ghana OCS identifies the State (authorities), traditional authorities and the private sector including civil society as the three groups that can influence policy and investments linked to agriculture, food security, women's economic empowerment and land and natural resources— and states that "change can happen when the interests and incentives of these groups are made to align, and coalitions for change form that cut across them." Regularly, programs take an integrated approach to agricultural development, women's economic empowerment and building resilience.

On the other hand, often building on a **too generic power analysis and utopian theories of change, OCS tend to lack specific targets and outcomes**. "The weaknesses in most strategies are how that visionary change is coupled with a focus on what the most is that can be achieved within a five-year window."³⁸ Some OCS warn that influencing takes time for systemic changes to emerge. The Ghana OCS for instance, mentions that "policy change, reform of traditional practices, etc. cannot be influenced within a short time [...]" and this requires that Oxfam and its partners are committed to a long haul when doing advocacy."

Most OCS offer generic 'good practice' evaluations, but lack a clear focus on which indicators or outcomes need to be monitored to gauge progress towards desired objectives and impact. Intermediary outcomes recurring in OCS include empowered citizenry, demonstrations of alternative models, more inclusive and effective policies, etc. but these tend to be vague, and , even though they are plausible steps in the right direction, they don't guarantee ultimate success. Many OCS also tend to take an overly comprehensive approach by listing an almost endless number of intermediary outcomes. Such an overly comprehensive strategy may result in a lack of focus, a tendency to continue direct support to achieve the many intended outcomes, and inability to evaluate success. **The role that Oxfam intends to play tends to be equally vague**: designing and demonstrating innovative models, facilitating learning, strengthening poor people's organizations, facilitating alliances, and the activities that are planned to achieve those.

5.4 What have we achieved? Evidence from Practice

Even more direct service delivery programs typically show only modest impacts in terms of food security and incomes. The OGB EJ review reports **modest household income increases**, noting "that changes in policy or norms take a long time to materialize, and even longer before poor women and smallholders experience tangible, positive outcomes."³⁹ It **questions whether a greater focus on influencing would not further reduce this modest** (attributable) **impact on income** (at least in the short term), and recommends that "leveraging solutions to income generation or the reduction of negative impacts on income need to be clearly articulated and evaluated alongside increase advocacy in EJ programme design".⁴⁰ The majority of programs have focused on influencing national policy to influence change, with a limited number of OCS's intending to engage the private sector, despite the primary employment and income potential of the private sector. There is a lack of tapping into private sector actors (small entrepreneurs, traders or investors) and forging relationships among these actors and its target communities, but "some Oxfam partners and allies question the effectiveness of private sector advocacy to bring about significant change."⁴¹

While the **intended impact is often not achieved** (in the relatively short time between project and evaluation), **most projects/programs are achieving other outcomes (increased farmer participation in markets, improved access to credit and other resources, even improve material wellbeing, improved attitudes perceptions of women's empowerment, building resilience and increased female self-efficacy).**

It is plausible that such intermediary outcomes offer great potential to eventually translate into the intended impact, but additional evidence (which should also be obtained by allowing more time between intervention and assessment) is needed to demonstrate this. **When positive results are mentioned, they remain at the scale of the project, and there is no information on how such results will be maintained and scale up through influencing.**

Most campaign evaluations mention the achievement of intermediary outcomes, such as increased support to small-scale food producers to build movements, new platforms for civil society dialogues and effective engagement with policy/decision makers, more inclusive agricultural policies, etc.

The GROW campaign has focused on building the capacity of civil society (including farmers' and women's organizations) to claim rights and influence policy and securing a number of promising commitments from policy makers and multinational food companies to be more inclusive and respectful of the rights of smallholders. The most significant achievement was **securing policy changes or commitments on food and land from governments, corporations, and global bodies** in addition to **involving rural women and smallholders** in these processes. One of the **key roles** for Oxfam has been **to act as facilitator and convener**, bringing together different organizations in alliances to jointly work on a campaign.

In sum, the **results we see emerging from evaluations are still far removed from the objectives under the Sustainable Food Change Goal**, i.e. intensify small-scale productions systems and make them more resilient, economically empower rural women, and result in resilient livelihoods, greater food security and participation in agricultural markets. As significant as initial results may be, there is no guarantee that the CG4 objectives will be achieved, as there are numerous unknown hurdles and detours on the way.

*"while changes in agricultural practices are becoming more generalized, there is **mixed evidence that this is translating to better yields and even less evidence that it is leading to better incomes**, among other things, because such an increase depends on other significant factors, often outside project control."⁴¹*

5.5 What is holding us back? Program Quality Issues

In some cases, model interventions were not designed with scale in mind, or were not accompanied with high quality action research to make their promotion (through advocacy for instance) sufficiently convincing. In Bangladesh, the RESOLVE pilot project produced some replicable and easily adopted interventions (such as homestead cultivation for landless households), but other interventions were believed too costly to reproduce at scale (such as asset transfers for the very poor) or face greater market constraints at scale compared to pilot (often the case when new income activities are promoted).⁴² Scaling up certain innovations/pilot projects (through influencing or other means) is sometimes unrealistic, because what works at small scale does not necessarily work at larger scale, especially in market access programs. Equally important is the knowledge management and learning component of (pilot) programs. The RESOLVE pilot failed to properly evaluate and document effectiveness and impact of the intervention, weakening its role in advocacy.

The need for a longer time for changes to take place was one of the obstacles to make the shift from direct service delivery projects to influencing programs. For example, the evaluators of OGB's EDP mentioned that it is unrealistic to expect that supported enterprises can move from blueprint to scale within five years or less, and more time is needed to prove the effectiveness and efficiency of this approach.

"...sometimes the imperative to deliver rapid direct impact at scale inhibits the potential to take a longer-term approach".¹

Example of direct implementation or service delivery, with hardly any links to campaigning or advocacy efforts, or clear intentions for scaling up or replicating: The *Integrated Upland Agricultural Livelihoods Programme* in Laos focused on food security and livelihoods by aiming to address challenges in both production and marketing. Model farmers appeared to have **received inputs and were trained** in extension, but they failed to spread these practices to other farmers, because non-model farmers did not receive the inputs, which the project budget did not support. Even model farmers reported that the provision of inputs, particularly the more expensive breeding stock, was not of substantial assistance.¹

Sometimes **the link between pilot project and influencing is weak or unclear**. For instance, Supporting Rural Livelihoods and Employment project by OGB in Western Georgia⁴³ supported 150 households directly through training, advice, capital and productive inputs over a three year period, while another component of the project involved advocating for a more enabling national policy environment for small producers. But the intended improvements **in the national enabling environment were at a different scale and would take much longer to take place in order to be of relevance for the pilot project. At the same time, the pilot project itself still relied heavily on a service delivery approach to be sufficiently relevant in reinforcing the intended changes in the enabling environment.**

A frequently encountered criticism is that there is no strategic framework or clear impact chain that explains how influencing will lead to the desired outcomes. In Oxfam-Solidarité Belgium's Laos

program it was unclear to which extent advocacy work "responded to an organized strategy to influence policy development."⁴⁴ This can be mitigated in some cases by conducting a deep market system analysis and formulating a logical strategic framework for the program that coherently links the goal of poverty reduction with a focus on sustainable market system change."⁴⁵

In addition, partner organizations might be strong in involving communities in lobbying activities, but might lack sufficient "capacity in lobbying 'upward' more complex issues."

Not all the influencing approaches (CG 4 commitments) are pursued equally, and a lack of focus and follow-up jeopardize further success in the future. The broad focus of the GROW campaign is seen by some as too complex and diverging from the original aim, which is on food justice and an improved food system. In that sense, priorities that emerged from the South (such as agricultural reform) were not conducive to those from the North (such as company policies).

Lack of follow-up is a recurring problem. After making progress in engaging the private sector in land and sugar issues in Brazil, an evaluation cautioned that "failure to walk the last mile with local communities and use Oxfam's voice to help see the cases through to resolution will reinforce the belief that it is not possible to challenge unjust corporate practices and win."⁴⁶ This also presents a potential brand risk for Oxfam.

Ownership and sustainability were identified as a serious concern in the evaluation of the Bangladesh GROW campaign. The evaluators did "not see a clear direction among partners to rise up to the expectation of Oxfam GROW team to own the campaign

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and to ensure long term sustainability.”⁴⁷ According to the same evaluation, this is partly due to lack of capacity issue but probably more with political will of the stakeholders.

Some evaluations express a concern that campaign themes shift too often and too soon, and that there is a danger of not following up on these early achievements. The BtB evaluation for instance mentions that it would take time and effort to fill the gaps between intended policies and practices⁴⁸, which is only the beginning phase of an impact chain leading to improved food security of poor people involved in these companies' value chains. The Ghana OCS warns that “a lot has been achieved under the GROW Campaign but will be lost if the campaign were not sustained.”

Finally, the OPA remains either underutilized or not fully mastered, but signs of progress have been noted. In some instances the campaign used the space generated by the program for awareness raising but the program could not get a space within the campaign.⁴⁹

5.6 Moving forward: What does Oxfam have to improve?

Future programs need to overcome some of the key obstacles that are still preventing a stronger emphasis on influencing. There is a need to **redirect the role of programs further in function of an influencing agenda** (through demonstration, evidence gathering, advocacy and focus on replicability and scalability). Such a shift requires that programs receive adequate support for communication, research, MEL and advocacy: Oxfam needs to further invest in this and make a case to its donors that their financial support and involvement is equally critical to achieve this.

It is **not only necessary for Oxfam to move away from direct service delivery, but also from direct implementation to facilitation** of processes that build capacity of smallholders to exert their rights, governments and private sector to take up their responsibilities, and market systems to become more inclusive and efficient. This should not only apply to programs but also to campaigns, i.e. to move away from specific outcomes (e.g. commitment by a specific multinational company to respect rights of smallholder farmers) to systemic changes (e.g. improved economic governance in market systems, based on the coordinated efforts of multiple stakeholders).

Many country staff have reflected how the GROW campaign has enabled southern leadership with a greater number of integrated programs, delivering on GROW priorities. **However, multi-disciplinary teams and common theories of change are required for both long-term programs and advocacy and campaigning work to be much more closely linked** (as envisioned by OPA). The skills, knowledge, tool, MEAL and organizational structures underlying these two pillars (and for that matter also the third pillar of humanitarian response) need to merge further to pursue a holistic approach, that can be tailored to local circumstances and adapted frequently based upon new learning and changing circumstances. The focus should be on changing the enabling environment (including norms and attitudes), strengthening civic society, as well as demonstrating replicable or scalable innovations (in business, farm and value chain models, collective action models, public private partnerships, but also in advocacy and campaign models, etc.) through engaging government, civil society, and, more forcefully, the private sector.

Since Oxfam alone cannot implement or even orchestrate such a holistic approach, it needs to set a clear focus for its role, which is increasingly related to creating the evidence to drive change and supporting multiple stakeholder networks to facilitate systemic changes. Within Change goal 4 is some of the most innovative work in engaging the Private sector, but still a relatively small amount of programming. **The shift to influencing in CG 4 has primarily been interpreted as influencing Government policy but to deliver broader change Oxfam must increase its ability to work with and against the private sector, from SME through to multi-national.**

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While moving from improving the lives of poor people through direct interventions to facilitating systemic transformations, **direct outcome measures** on Oxfam's target populations, including the CG 4 indicative outcomes, **need to be replaced with indirect, intermediary outcomes** that measure whether market systems are transformed to become more inclusive and fair for the poor. The organisation also needs to decide whether to continue to prioritise income and food security as target outcomes or whether other outcomes have become more primary for Oxfam, such as empowering women and small producers to influence decision-makers. The need for a more holistic market based approach and integration of long-term development programs and advocacy and campaigns also requires that future evaluations take a more holistic approach, instead of focusing on either one or the other (which still seems to be the norm).

Country strategies need to more clearly determine which objectives are of highest priority to achieve key intermediary outcomes, and what Oxfam's role should be. Theories of change need to be better understood and articulated, and should include a better understanding of which intermediary outcomes matter most, and how they relate to systemic changes. Since impact pathways are seldom linear and predictable, a more flexible implementation is required that allows for continuously adapting actions to new learning.

6 CUTTING ACROSS CHANGE GOALS: RESILIENCE ⁷



6.1 Introducing the outcome area

Oxfam describes resilience as the ability of women and men to realize their rights and improve their well-being despite shocks, stresses, and uncertainty.

The Resilience Knowledge Hub, together with a cross-confederation working group of MEL colleagues, has sustained rich discussions about Oxfam's understanding of Resilience. These colleagues were instrumental in articulating the concepts that underlie the 'Resilience' outcome area, articulating the above expected impact for 2019 and outlining the measurement possibilities of Oxfam's work within this cross-cutting issue.

As risks related to climate change, natural hazards, population growth, chronic poverty, food insecurity, and inequality intensify for the world's poorest people, Oxfam has prioritized building resilience to shocks and stresses as an important, cross cutting outcome area across its programming. An overview of a sample of Oxfam's interventions reveals that these risks are real, interrupting the implementation of projects and threatening to undermine development gains. In response to these trends, with support of the Knowledge Hub, Oxfam has articulated a new conceptual understanding of resilience based on emerging research on "resilience capacities". This common understanding was applied to project documentation and used retrospectively to analyze projects' effectiveness in building resilience.

This report examines a sample of 23 projects using a meta-analysis of 16 Oxfam Effectiveness Reviews as well as Evaluation Reports; 7 initiatives were analyzed in depth through case studies (in Senegal, Vanuatu, Timor Leste, Chad, Nicaragua, Pakistan and Nepal), done through a review of evaluation reports, additional project documentation and staff interviews. This approach provided both a 'big picture' view, as well as more detailed insights from the case studies. The analysis looked to identify 'building blocks', 'social change processes', and multi-stakeholder collaborations that had delivered changes in capacities.

6.2 What are we talking about? Key concepts and definitions

Early discussions to articulate one vision for Oxfam's work on resilience led to a shift in thinking, based on current global research, which has been expressed in detail in the Oxfam Framework and Guidance for Resilient Development⁵⁰. Oxfam now uses the

⁷ This summary is based on: Bahadur, A., Pichon, F. and E. Lovell (2016) Effectiveness in Building Resilience: Synthesis report for Oxfam's Resilience Outcome Area. Overseas Development Institute, February. The full report is available [here](#).

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following concepts, as expressed in the framework, to define its approach, and consequently, as a way to measure progress in the work.

Absorptive capacity is the capacity to take intentional protective action and to cope with known shocks and stress. It is needed as shocks and stress will continue to happen, for example due to extreme weather events, protracted conflict, and natural disasters.

Adaptive capacity – is the capacity to make intentional adjustments and incremental changes in anticipation of or in response to change, in ways that create more flexibility in the future. It is needed as change is ongoing and uncertain, and because intentional transformation can take time and sustained engagement.

Transformative capacity – is the capacity to make intentional change to systems that create risk, vulnerability and inequality. It is needed to influence the drivers of risk, vulnerability and inequality and because social and natural systems are themselves being transformed, for example by globalization and climate change.

6.3 Theories of Change and Strategies: multi-stakeholder social change processes and building blocks

The most common social change process that was used to build resilience was empowerment, closely followed by 'securing and enhancing livelihoods'. Gender justice is a key pillar in Oxfam's programming, and empowerment of men and women participating in the projects was often a core focus of initiatives aimed at building resilience. Some did this by focusing specifically on inclusion of women into projects, but 'empowerment' was also achieved through targeted activities: for instance, Oxfam's project in Vanuatu helped create space for youth inclusion in DRR through a range of activities which empowered them to lead a youth climate movement, where they can spearhead activities in contexts where top-down initiatives cannot deliver resilience.

All of the projects reviewed took a multi-stakeholder approach, with a focus on working with community members through local partners, and in some cases with community-based groups, other organizations/institutions, and local/national government. Building horizontal and vertical linkages has been critical to the success of these interventions, and has also helped reduce duplication whilst building the capacity of partners and the outreach of interventions, for instance in Vanuatu. In addition, working with local partners has proven successful in most cases thanks to their knowledge of the local context, culture and language; for instance, in Timor Leste project partners were able to reach more remote areas and ensure higher participation of men and women in the communities as a result of working in the area previously.

This participatory approach has also helped ensure that civil society and local/national governments are held to account. Working with community based organizations can help challenge power relations, build trust and connect the local level with other stakeholders, such as local government who can help support wider policy change. There are a number of projects through which multi-stakeholder collaboration has had an impact on policy and planning. For instance, in Nepal, stronger links between government authorities and communities were created with the support of local development agencies, resulting in the government authorities integrating the project's DRR objectives into Annual Development Plans.

6.4 What have we achieved? Evidence from Practice

Taken together, there is evidence that Oxfam's projects have been effective in building resilience capacities, though these positive impacts on resilience were generally conservative. From the enhanced uptake of adaptive agricultural techniques to the use of credit and finance, and from the improved position of women in decision making to the establishment of community risk management groups, most changes in resilience capacities have taken place at the local level. This is partly due to the nature of the data

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used to assess these changes; household surveys are limited in their ability to capture higher system-level dynamics. Additionally, Effectiveness Reviews that provided a bulk of data for the analysis provided in this report focus sharply on changes at the household and community level.

Still, **nearly every project contributed to enhancing one or more resilience capacities to varying degrees. The projects were most successful in building 'absorptive' capacity, which is associated with disaster risk reduction** and, to a lesser degree, livelihood programs. Though generally smaller, evidence also points to changes in adaptive and transformative capacities, and some of these happened simultaneously. Oxfam understands that **resilience is only built when interventions improve all 3 capacities; the challenge is to incorporate this perspective from the design stage.**

Interventions that enhance absorptive capacity include 'quick wins', such as the establishment of early warning systems, which can be set up and functional within the timeframes of a project; as was the case in the Pakistan project. They also include more difficult, medium-term interventions, including access to savings and contingency resources.

The increase in absorptive capacity across projects is partly due to the prevalence of DRR projects, which are specifically designed to increase a household's ability to survive hydro-meteorological shocks. However, the DRR projects in the sample, from the Effectiveness Reviews and the in-depth analysis (Nepal, Pakistan, Nicaragua, and Senegal), also showed significant increases in adaptive and transformative capacities. Further, as observed in the case of Nepal, DRR can be an entry point for increasing all three capacities. There, the project focused on DRR through the establishment of a flood early warning system and community DRM groups, which were integrated into village and district level decision-making. It gained buy-in from district-level officials, who integrated CCA and DRR into development planning as a priority. Communities were able to feed into a district-level DRR agenda based on their own analysis of their risks, capacities, and vulnerabilities conducted at the start of the project. This empowerment process ultimately enhanced both absorptive and transformative capacities.

In addition to change at the household level, certain projects effected changes at higher levels, for instance in policy processes. This included opening up spaces for people's participation in planning processes (Pakistan), supporting the creation of laws for the improved management and greater conservation of natural resources (Indonesia) and advocacy for the establishment of new government bodies (such as the municipal disaster risk reduction and management council in the Philippines). While the intention behind affecting these shifts was to benefit project communities, it is likely that they will have a broader impact.

The analysis of the case studies reveals interesting insights about the causal mechanisms through which individual projects contributed to resilience capacities. For example, the R4 Rural Resilience Initiative in Senegal helped people absorb shocks by providing weather indexed risk insurance to 3700 farmers. Here, pay outs are linked to hazard events to ensure that farmers have something to fall back on. The Climate Change Adaptation among Small Producers initiative in Nicaragua helped enhance adaptive capacity by promoting new agricultural techniques and seed varieties that were suited to changing conditions by recruiting community volunteers who received this knowledge and helped raise awareness amongst other farmers. The Community-based Disaster Risk Management and Livelihoods Program in Pakistan contributed to enhancing transformative capacity by ensuring that community groups have a seat at the table and a voice in policy making processes around risk management.

6.5 What is holding us back? Program Quality Issues

The practice also reveals issues where the work can be improved.

Change along the capacities spectrum

Currently, the majority of Oxfam's evidence of generating positive changes in resilience capacities lies at the household and community level, mostly for absorptive capacity, though evidence also points to changes in policy processes. Evidence of change in transformative capacity was less substantial.

It may be the case that transformation cannot occur without a certain threshold of wellbeing, as people are less likely to attempt to engage in innovations or get involved in higher-level politics if they cannot meet their basic needs. Program staff in Senegal highlighted this, as communities struggled to maintain food consumption during a drought in year one of the project. The interviewee highlighted that the project was seeing changes in absorptive and adaptive capacities, but that transformative change was still a long way off; though the project successfully encouraged the participation of women, this had not yet translated to a change in intra-household dynamics that was a real shift in power relations between women and men.

Systemic and long term perspective

Building resilience capacities beyond the household level often requires engaging with institutional, political, and environmental factors that rarely show radical changes in a few years. It requires a systemic approach. Oxfam needs to include a multi-scalar perspective to ensure that higher levels of governance are firmly in view from the inception phase. All of this has implications for funding stability, and timelines for the measurement of outcomes.

Multi-dimensional risk analysis

Resilience is inherently 'multi-hazard', and therefore programs should focus on incremental long-term stresses as well as large short-term shocks. While some of the projects analyzed looked at multiple hazards, many were sharply focused on tackling particular shocks (e.g. drought in the case of the initiative in Chad and flooding in the case of the project in Nepal) and the researchers did not find adequate evidence that a broader suite of risks had been considered in depth before prioritization. Rather than focusing on one type of program for resilience capacities, this points to the feasibility and importance of including an on-going multi-dimensional analysis of risks starting with the program design.

Transformational intent

Transformative change should be deliberately included within the design of the project in order to be more effective. Creating the conditions for people's participation in higher level decision making processes and better social inclusion doesn't happen accidentally.

In terms of whether or not successfully building multiple capacities is something that needs to be 'sequenced', evidence from Nepal, Nicaragua, Pakistan and Senegal indicates that resilience capacities can be built simultaneously); however the ingredients for transformational change must be included within the design of the project in order to be most effective.

Power in programs

In depth analysis revealed that issues of power had a crucial bearing on resilience capacities and need more attention. Issues of caste, religion, corruption, debt, and gender have an important mediating effect on people's capacities to deal with shocks and stresses. Project documents shied away from engaging with issues that were impeding resilience but that were beyond the sphere of the project's influence, such as levels of indebtedness or high-level political capture of project activities. Bringing attention to these issues can support design of more adaptive programs that can work more effectively in

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local contexts, moving away from a technocratic approach to resilience building and instead recognizing the inherent difficulties in tackling such complex issues.

The case study in Chad reveals the manner in which staff running project activities found it very difficult to include members of a highly marginalized section of the community belonging to a Haddad ethnic group. They were included only after Oxfam staff engaged in tense negotiations with community elders to ensure their inclusion. Those belonging to this group have no claim over land or access to water and their exclusion from the project may have accentuated their vulnerability and marginalization further as project activities would have resulted in an increase in the resilience capacities of the other community members. Similarly, in Pakistan Oxfam staff discussed the manner in which sustainable improvements in people's capacity to deal with disasters could only be induced by navigating complex administrative and political structures to ensure that vulnerable communities gained a voice and agency in decision making. This was done by claiming a space for people's representation in previously closed policy spaces where crucial plans including the District Disaster Management Plans were consolidated.

The position of women

There was almost no project within this sample that did not acknowledge the importance of gender. The analysis finds that 'empowerment' is one of the most commonly used social change processes and appears across all the projects that are part of the case study review. From engaging women in savings groups in Senegal to running Women Empowerment Centers in Nepal, Oxfam projects demonstrate a strong understanding of the need for gender empowerment.

This in turn has led to changes in the resilience capacities of women. For instance, the strong emphasis on gender empowerment in the 'NGO Climate Change Adaptation Program' in Vanuatu led to more women (90%) than men (73%) reporting that they had resilient livelihoods. Similarly, as a result of the 'Climate Change Adaptation among Small Producers; project in Nicaragua, 87% women beneficiaries actively offered their opinion on adaptive farming activities versus only 76% in comparison households. Oxfam should continue to prioritize these efforts.

Multi-stakeholder collaboration

These changes in resilience capacities are often beyond the scope of any single intervention. Yet, multi-stakeholder collaborations were varied in their ability to deliver these types of changes. Interviews with project staff highlighted the importance of strong relationships with local development organizations and government institutions; those contacts were key to building ownership of the project and encouraging participation from different actors. In a few cases, multi-stakeholder collaborations were an opportunity for innovation; partners could then take on new responsibilities or new activities with the support of Oxfam and other stakeholders.

Across the projects reviewed, there were also a number of challenges associated with working in a consortium and across different scales; these include defining roles and responsibilities, high turnover of staff, coordination and language barriers. Interviews also highlighted the difficulties of working in consortiums with separate funding strategies, which impeded a more collaborative approach. Challenges also existed in terms of finding reliable partners to work with, for instance in Chad, due to corruption and limited capacity of local partners, which had an impact on the scope of the project.

Measurement approaches

In this report, evidence for improvements in transformative capacity must be treated with a degree of skepticism. Transformative capacity pertains to the ability to tackle the social, economic, and political conditions that result in structural vulnerabilities. These changes are very difficult to observe at the household level, and indicators used to measure changes in transformative capacity were chosen generously based on available data from

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household surveys (Fuller, 2016). Often these projects measured transformative change whilst only looking at two or three indicators, such as attitudes towards innovation and participation in planning processes.

Methods of measuring resilience adopted by Oxfam need to be geared to track changes across different scales as opposed to current practice which is largely focused on the household and local levels. Many indicators from the evaluation reports (and some from Effectiveness Reviews) are focused on tracking project outputs or intermediate outcomes (such as the implementation of an early warning system) rather than outcomes (reduced disaster mortality and losses). This only permits an estimation of 'latent' resilience capacities and does not communicate a picture of resilience that has been tested. As an organization that works from local to global levels, with a one program approach, Oxfam is uniquely positioned to translate this practice into more holistic measurement approaches.

6.6 Moving forward: What does Oxfam have to Improve?

The Common Framework: building block for Oxfam's Resilience programming

Oxfam needs to promote the use of the Oxfam Framework for Resilient Development to foster a common understanding of resilience across the confederation. It will support Oxfam and partners to better build capacities and capture changes in resilience in the future. All affiliates should **endorse the Framework** and make it operational in their resilience work.

Agency, Empowerment and Inclusion

Though empowerment is often associated with initiatives related to women and women's rights, there are a number of projects where Oxfam's approach has resulted in increased agency for marginalized groups (as in Chad, above) and building transformative capacities, as noted with the Youth in Vanuatu. Overall, this points to the need for Oxfam to not only continue with but also to put a **renewed emphasis on agency, empowerment and inclusion** as part of building resilience.

Multi-scalar perspective

Most changes in resilience capacities have taken place at the local level. Oxfam needs to **adopt a multi-scalar perspective** to ensure that higher levels of governance are firmly in view from the inception phase, as well as to **adopt adequate methodologies to capture changes across scales**, beyond households and communities.

Multi-stakeholder approach

Building partnerships and collective action across different scales and sectors, through multi-stakeholder collaboration, reflects a systems-based approach which is critical for building resilience. Working in this way helps to promote an inclusive approach to decision-making and planning that is context specific, and helps to harness and build upon different stakeholders' needs, capacities, expectations, knowledge, skills and resources. It is vital that Oxfam **continues to take a multi-stakeholder approach** so as to ensure the greatest impact and uptake of its work across different scales and sectors. This will also help promote the sustainability of the projects.

Measuring resilience and learning from practice

Oxfam now has a conceptual framework that provides guidance to peers (staff and partners) to strengthen resilience programming across the three capacities (absorptive, adaptive and transformative). **The underlying assumption – that an improvement in these capacities leads to resilient development – remains to be tested.** As a result of these efforts, will the system be better able to cope with the uncertain future, adapt and transform itself given improved resilience capacities of people, communities and systems that support them?

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Resilience capacities are not tested until the event of a shock or stress. But these disturbances can highlight what factors were the most important contributors to resilience at the household and community level, and inform which indicators are most appropriate for tracking changes in resilience. A few of Oxfam's programs sampled in the in-depth analysis were interrupted by an environmental stress or shock during or shortly after implementation, including Nepal, Pakistan, and Senegal. These **case studies are key to informing Oxfam's successes and limitations** in building resilience capacities.

As noted above, changes in transformative capacity are very difficult to observe at the household level. To maintain the integrity of the concept of transformation going forward, **Oxfam's resilience programs should track indicators that can demonstrate both higher level changes and changes in intra-household dynamics**. This can also incorporate the 'gender justice' approach which Oxfam integrates across its programming, better capturing how Oxfam's interventions have improved the position of women and vulnerable groups in society.

It is vital that an understanding of resilience (and the three capacities) is reflected in approaches for monitoring and evaluation from the very beginning of projects. A retrospective analysis of the manner in which project activities may have contributed to resilience will always yield only a limited perspective. A robust baseline using contextually relevant indicators that are then tracked at regular intervals is one of the factors that are vital to gain a fuller perspective on changes in people's capacities. Evaluation processes need to be strengthened in order to achieve this for the next exercise.

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End Notes

¹ Affiliates that took advantage of this opportunity included OAU, OBE, OCA, OES, OGB, OHK, OIN, ONL, OQC and OUS.

² The one exception is the VAWG/GBV outcome area, which reported a total of \$USD 13.6 million total spend on the initiatives reviewed.

³ Country level HIT evaluation reports are included from six humanitarian responses: the Chad conflict response, the Ebola Crisis, Typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines, South Sudan regional crisis and the Solomon Islands flooding. Since 2013, Oxfam has carried out approximately 105 humanitarian responses. Given that situation, additional secondary information was considered in this review, including other RTEs, final evaluations, Oxfam Australia's 'Outcomes Report 2014-15' and a recent meta-analysis of RTEs and HITs 2010-15. Further, a series of interviews with key humanitarian staff supplemented the findings.

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- ²⁷ Trinh Tien Dung and Nguyen Thi Minh Hai (2013). *Final Program Evaluation – Vietnam Final Report*. Oxfam Solidarity Belgium, June, p.18.
- ²⁸ The Solomon Islands flood response is discussed separately. Being a category 3 response, the response focused on a limited set of priority HIT standards.
- ²⁹ These countries are: Bangladesh, Ethiopia, Ghana, Laos, Mozambique, Nepal, Nicaragua, Peru, Vietnam and Zambia.
- ³⁰ Oxfam Strategic Plan 2014-2019
- ³¹ Maes, Jan (2015). *Review of Oxfam GB's Economic Justice Programme (2012-2014)*. Oxfam GB, October.
- ³² From reflections by David Bright (OGB)
- ³³ Ibid
- ³⁴ Advance Consulting Services (2014). *"From Grove To Market" Olive Oil Program External Midterm Evaluation Report*. Oxfam GB, January.
- ³⁵ Since campaigns and advocacy are by nature influencing strategies (in comparison to long-term development), they are discussed separately. Unlike development programs, the issue is not the extent to which a shift has taken place from direct service delivery to influencing, but the extent to which the GROW and other campaigns were able to focus on sustainable food and connect to relevant development programs in countries (as envisioned in Oxfam's *One Program Approach*), as well as the types of influencing (called 'commitments' in the OSP to achieve the CG4) being used.
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⁴⁹ Plataforma Agraria (2014) *Evaluación de la Campaña: Cosechemos Justicia para las Mujeres del Campo*. Oxfam GB, Abril.

⁵⁰ For more details, see Oxfam Resilience Knowledge Hub (2016). *The Future is a Choice: Oxfam Framework and Guidance for Resilient Development*, April.

<http://policy-practice.oxfam.org.uk/publications/the-future-is-a-choice-the-oxfam-framework-and-guidance-for-resilient-developme-604990> .

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