OXFAM’S PARTNERSHIP PRINCIPLES

WORKING TOGETHER

Cover: Buton Island, Indonesia. Zafia and husband Misa harvesting seaweed which they have been growing. Photo: Suzi O'Keefe/Oxfam
OXFAM IS PART OF A GLOBAL MOVEMENT FOR CHANGE

Oxfam aspires to make a sustained and significant positive impact on global poverty and injustice, and believes that it is only through the collective efforts of many actors that this goal can be achieved. We think of this as a ‘global movement for change’, which we believe is creating the conditions and structural changes necessary for effective, people-centred, sustainable change and development. As part of this movement, Oxfam works in a variety of partnerships in dozens of countries around the world and at global level.

The number of partners with whom Oxfam engages grows year by year. The key relationships we seek are those that most effectively address the root causes of poverty, vulnerability and injustice, and that help strengthen people as empowered agents of their own development.

Oxfam is privileged to be able to partner with thousands of local civil society organizations – organizations that we believe are crucial in supporting the actions of poor and marginalized people and communities in the development of lasting, locally-owned solutions; and in raising their diverse and locally-grounded voices for equitable development at home and worldwide.

The global movement for change is expanding and growing in strength every day with an ever-increasing diversity in social-change actors. Oxfam welcomes and engages with these diverse actors in a variety of ways, including long-term partnerships, shorter-term strategic alliances, one-on-one relationships and active participation in networks and coalitions.

As part of our reflections on partnership, we have considered our own contributions – in long-term development, humanitarian response, and campaign and advocacy work. Our aim is to bring value by:

• helping to bring together different actors to work on common problems;
• supporting organizational and institutional capacity-strengthening;
• generating and sharing knowledge, whether produced at local or global levels;
• promoting innovation and alternative solutions that may be brought to scale;
• helping to hold duty-bearers to account for recognising, protecting and fulfilling the rights of women and men living with poverty and injustice.

Partnerships lie at the core of how Oxfam understands the world and our role in working for change. We are pleased to share with you this summary of Oxfam’s Partnership Principles. We hope that by setting out our partnership principles we can clarify, and be held to account for, the kinds of relationships we want to foster with different types of partners.

All of Oxfam’s work in long-term development, humanitarian response and disaster prevention, and campaigns and advocacy will be guided by these principles. We welcome all opportunities to discuss with you our performance, and how we can improve.

Rafiga Ahmedova, from Azerbaijan, holds up yellow onions harvested from her onion field in Barda. Photo: Kieran Doherty
The content of the document is not clearly visible due to the image quality. However, based on the visible text, it appears to discuss partnerships, transparency, and accountability in development work. The document seems to outline principles and values that Oxfam adheres to in its partnerships, emphasizing shared vision and values, autonomy and independence, complementarity of purpose and value added, and transparency and mutual accountability.

The document contains sections titled "Six Partnership Principles" and "2. Complementarity of Purpose and Value Added." It also mentions a "4. Transparency and Mutual Accountability" section, which discusses multiple accountabilities to a variety of stakeholders, including donors and beneficiaries.

The text includes references to Oxfam's commitment to joint learning, shared purpose, mutual benefits, and interests, and highlights the importance of empowering relationships, especially with marginalized groups.

Visual elements such as images of a boy holding a tomato plant and a farmer with her students are present, suggesting a focus on educational and agricultural partnerships.

Overall, the document appears to be a part of a report or publication by Oxfam, emphasizing the organization's approach to partnerships and its commitment to making a positive impact on communities.
We will put in place feedback mechanisms that enable partners (and other stakeholders) to assess Oxfam’s performance, supported by formal grievance procedures or complaints mechanisms. We are committed to openness and transparency about how decisions are made regarding partnership, and will establish regular consultations and communications with partners.

Oxfam and partners discuss the power imbalances that exist between us, created by funding discrepancies, size, experience, access to information, and North/South dynamics. Where we are in the position of power, we will act with humility and aim to reduce such imbalances. We acknowledge that such power relations have often led to women’s civil society organisations being marginalized or sidelined, and will fulfil our commitment to strengthen partnerships with women’s organizations, networks and movements.

5. CLARITY ON ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Partnerships are built on clear understanding and robust partnership agreements. For funding partnerships, all the elements of the partnering process and decision-making are discussed and agreed by partners. Oxfam understands that the credibility and trust required to sustain healthy partnerships comes from good communication, competence and reliability.

Oxfam and partners are the co-strategists of programs and activities on which they jointly work, though the extent to which they are co-owners of programs will vary according to the nature and maturity of programs and partnerships themselves. Whatever the nature of the relationship, Oxfam will create opportunities for regular consultation with partners, ensuring that such spaces enable all partners to voice their issues.

Partner relationships, and with them the roles and responsibilities of each party, will evolve over time. The understandings and agreements that define a particular partnership will need to be revisited at regular intervals. This evolving reality will require flexibility and responsiveness on all sides as organizational circumstances and social contexts change.

Oxfam will discuss our understanding of roles with partners, and clarify the ways in which we will work together within and across these dimensions. At all times we will work with local and accountable organizations towards strengthening and/or facilitating the establishment of such organizations or structures. Whatever can be done with sufficient quality, effectiveness and efficiency by local organizations must be done by them. We will support efforts to increase partners’ visibility across all areas of our work, and will explicitly acknowledge the work they have done.

6. COMMITMENT TO JOINT LEARNING

Oxfam, as a learning organization, promotes continuous and systematic learning. In partnerships, this requires upfront agreement on how Oxfam and partners can learn from their joint work, and from each other, with the aim of incorporating learning, communications and knowledge-sharing into the relationship.

Our learning agenda with partners will explore both partnership processes and outcomes. As Oxfam works primarily through partnerships, we have an interest in understanding the factors, including ways of working, that condition successful partnerships. We will work with partners to ensure that joint learning is used regularly to adjust our strategy and plans as we strive for increased impact.