



GOVERNANCE AND SOCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY

AT OXFAM



OXFAM
Australia

ABOUT OXFAM

Oxfam is a leading non-profit global development and humanitarian organisation with more than 75 years of experience. In 2017–2018, the global Oxfam confederation worked with 3,663 local partners to deliver life-changing development and advocacy programs for more than 22.3 million people in 79 countries around the world. Of that number, Oxfam Australia directly reached more than 1.7 million people in 29 countries. In partnership with our Oxfam affiliates, we reached 13.1 million people affected by disaster or conflict worldwide. Oxfam Australia is a member of Oxfam International, a confederation of 20 organisations that works with partners and local communities to mobilise the power of people against poverty.

OUR VISION

At Oxfam we believe all lives are equal and no-one should live in poverty. We join forces with people who share this belief, to empower communities to build better lives for themselves. That's why we are there on the ground, not only to save lives in times of crisis, but also to develop lasting solutions. Our work spans wide because there are many causes of poverty. That's why we're also in front of decision-makers, governments and corporations, and speak out on the big issues. Together we are tackling poverty by changing minds, systems and lives.

CONTEXT

Oxfam's work is based on the understanding that unequal power relations are the underlying driver of inequality, poverty and suffering. Addressing these power relations is deeply political and gets to the root cause of poverty and injustice. Oxfam seeks to confront these imbalances of power in order to change policy and practice in ways that improve the lives of women and men living in poverty. For Oxfam, influencing is not only a tool, it is part of who we are. Whether it is working to ensure there is adequate humanitarian space so a response can take place quickly and effectively, learning from the best of our country programs and advocating for replication at scale, supporting partners to hold their government to account for delivery of essential services, or lobbying a G20 member to adopt policies that will empower people living in poverty, influencing has a key role to play in every country in which Oxfam works.

- Our world is becoming more unequal. In 2017, 82% of new wealth created globally was owned by the richest 1% of the population. (Oxfam, 2018)
- In 2017, 109 countries closed, repressed or obstructed civic space. (CIVICUS, 2017)
- More than half the world's countries have laws or customs that prohibit women from owning, inheriting or managing land. (World Bank, 2017)
- In 2014, USD \$172 billion in global tax revenue was diverted out of 110 developing countries and shifted to tax havens. (Oxfam, 2016)

OUR GOAL

Our aim is to support people and communities to exercise their civil and political rights and influence decisions, thereby making governments, businesses and decision-makers more accountable.

OUR APPROACH

Oxfam takes a rights-based approach to tackling poverty and injustice, supporting people with the knowledge, skills and tools they need to understand their rights and weigh in on decision-making processes that affect their lives. When people know their rights, they can better hold governments, businesses and institutions to account, ensuring they don't adopt harmful policies or practices that infringe or compromise those rights.

Unequal power relations and structures are at the root of most poverty, injustice and inequality. Oxfam tackles these structural inequalities with a systems approach, engaging at institutional level and also identifying and addressing the unique and complex norms and customs of each society.

Our work supports people from the most poor and marginalised communities around the world, including people with disabilities, young people, sexual and gender minority communities, and Indigenous peoples, empowering them to participate more equally in the world around them. We believe practical, lasting solutions for poverty are best developed in partnership with affected communities. So, year after year, we proudly partner with local communities, governments, civil society and private sector organisations to deliver life-changing development, advocacy and humanitarian programs. And we draw upon this well of experience and evidence to influence global systems and structures that perpetuate and reinforce poverty, injustice and inequality.

Oxfam puts gender justice at the heart of all we do. We know that genuinely equitable and sustainable development can only happen when women's rights are upheld. To this end, we work closely with women's rights organisations, networks, and movements, as partners and allies, supporting their catalytic role in advancing gender equality.

INNOVATION AT OXFAM

Poverty is a complex challenge that demands creative solutions and outside-the-box thinking. If we want to change the world around us, we need truly game-changing ideas — ideas that raise the bar on best practice. That's why we constantly search for better, more effective ways of working, and we refuse to settle for the status quo. Year after year, we continue to push boundaries, collaborating with engineers, designers and businesses to find the most practical, efficient and sustainable ways to empower poor and marginalised communities and help people overcome poverty.

Cover photo: Kratie province, Cambodia: Since taking part in Oxfam training, these women have become proud defenders of the Mekong River, which sustains their fishing livelihoods. Photo: Savann Oeurm/Oxfam.



TECHNICAL EXPERTISE

Participation and decision-making

Oxfam supports people to lead and participate in decision-making that affects them and their communities. Our Worldwide Influencing Network of staff and partners strengthens space for the voices of civil society, governments and private organisations to be heard — freely, openly and safely. We convene, broker and facilitate dialogues that are inclusive, constructive, participatory and gender-balanced.

Project: Inclusion Pillar: Strengthening Civil Society Engagement in Water Resource Governance in the Mekong Region

Project date: 2014–2019

Project value: AUD \$9 million

Funded by: Australian Aid

Among the 340 million people who reside in the Mekong region, many poor and marginalised communities are affected by water and land grabs, human rights violations, and rising threats to food security. These communities are rarely consulted when large-

“After many training sessions provided by KMF, I feel very confident leading my community — especially to help [other] Shan ethnic women gain leadership skills.”

— Daw Aye Kyi

Myanmar: Daw Aye Kyi received training from our partner Kalyana Mitta Foundation (KMF) and she now teaches villagers about land rights and human rights, explaining the harmful impacts of hydropower development projects in their region. We partner with KMF in Myanmar to ensure all people living along the banks of the Salween River have equitable access to water resources. Photo: Savann Oeurm/Oxfam.

scale developments impact their access to natural resources. Oxfam promotes the inclusion of civil society in water resource governance and decision-making in the Mekong region.

The Inclusion Pillar project is part of the Mekong Regional Water Governance Program, which mobilises partners and communities across the Mekong and Salween river basins, strengthening civil society and empowering vulnerable farmers and fisherfolk to defend their rights to secure and sustainable livelihoods. The project promotes women’s leadership and participation in decision-making, thereby strengthening civil society, government, and private sector management of water resources more equitably and sustainably. We also convene policy dialogue between government agencies and local partners to improve natural resource management policies in the region.



Mamba, Zambia: Members of an Oxfam-supported Natural Resource Group — Rhodah (front), Obvious (back) and Busiku (centre) — stand proudly on a bridge built and funded by a mining company that had damaged the women’s usual route. Photo: Georgina Goodwin/OxfamAUS.

Influencing policy and practice

Oxfam works to influence the policies and practices of governments, multilateral institutions and private-sector organisations — particularly Australian mining, retail and finance companies. We urge them to be more transparent and accountable; to uphold human rights; and to contribute to reducing poverty and inequality.

Project: Inclusive and Transformative Extractives Industries in Southern Africa

Project date: 2017–2020

Project value: AUD \$4.4 million

Funded by: Australian Government through Australian NGO Cooperation Program (ANCP)

Extractives industries in Southern Africa are very profitable but the benefits and revenues from exploiting natural resources often fail to reach poor and marginalised communities in the region. Governments and private companies often exclude

local communities from participating in big decisions that affect their livelihoods.

So Oxfam is improving natural resource governance in extractives industries in Southern Africa by strengthening transparency and accountability mechanisms; improving the participation of marginalised populations; and promoting transformative links with the wider economy. We support 44 local partners in Malawi, Mozambique, South Africa, Zambia and Zimbabwe to implement this project.

Together with partners, we have facilitated multi-stakeholder meetings that led the Government of Malawi to publically disclose and commit to renegotiate all oil contracts. Similarly, we successfully influenced the Government of Zambia to endorse a new revenue sharing mechanism to ensure a proportion of mining revenues are shared with communities. Oxfam also trains partners and communities to understand the United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights and Free, Prior and Informed Consent. In 2017–18, we empowered 624 women with the skills to participate in governance and decision-making processes at community and sub-national levels.

What She Makes: a living wage campaign for the women who make our clothes

The women who make our clothes do not make enough to live on, which keeps them in poverty. Despite working full time plus many hours of overtime, and long hours away from their families, these women cannot afford the basics of life — food and decent shelter.

Oxfam's What She Makes campaign calls for leading Australian fashion brands to commit to paying a living wage to the people in their supply chains. Big brands are part of a system that pays poverty wages. In Bangladesh, for example, garment workers are paid as little as 39 cents an hour. In Vietnam, it's 64 cents per hour. It's just not enough to live on.

So we are determined to influence big brands to publicly commit to paying living wages. What She Makes builds upon the Bangladesh Fire and Safety Accord. Our campaign tactics include direct engagement with brands, use of digital and online influencing strategies, community mobilisation, and promotion of international standards, such as the United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights.



Dhaka, Bangladesh: Garment worker Anju shows which sweater part she sews each day. She works hard making clothes for big fashion brands but her poverty wages are not enough to live on. Photo: GMB Akash/Panos/OxfamAUS.

Strengthening civil society

Oxfam uses a range of strategies and tactics to bolster local civil society, supporting communities to navigate and negotiate shifting civil space. This includes efforts to increase accountability, strengthen local constituencies, and create coalitions and networks aimed at amplifying community priorities.

Project: Raising Pacific Voices

Project date: 2017–2019

Project value: AUD \$3.7 million

Funded by: European Union

The shaping of regional and global policymaking by civil society organisations is an ongoing and challenging process in the Pacific region. Oxfam's Raising Pacific Voices Program rises to the challenge, building a strong and vibrant tapestry of relationships with partners, institutions, civil society networks and alliances in the region.

The program is implemented by Oxfam in the Pacific, working in partnership with Pacific Disability Forum and members of the Pacific Regional Non-Governmental Organisations Alliance in Fiji, Kiribati, Tonga, Tuvalu, Samoa, Cook Islands, Vanuatu, Solomon Islands, Federated States of Micronesia and the Republic of the Marshall Islands.

Raising Pacific Voices is unique because it offers capacity-building packages contextualised for each sub-region, including Melanesia, Polynesia and Micronesia. The program aims to generate a pool of 40 trainers representing the three sub-regions, trained in strengthening civil society governance and financial systems, influencing capabilities, constituency building and collective action. To date, the program has rolled out pilots in partnership with civil society partners in Melanesia, Micronesia and Polynesia.



"PasifikaRising's tagline — Pacific perspectives for a global future — signals the recognition that Pacific countries are large ocean states, proud of our common heritage and determined to protect and preserve our region for future generations."

— Rajeli Nicole, Oxfam in the Pacific

Tonga: Children enjoy their natural environment on a sunny Sunday.
Photo: Kristian Frires/Oxfam.

Oxfam has launched the PasifikaRising.org platform to support capacity development and resource sharing among Pacific civil society groups. We have also developed an Organisational Capacity Assessment Guide for civil society organisations, which provides a framework for measuring and assessing organisational functions that are critical to more inclusive, transparent, accountable and effective practice.



Stung Treng province, Cambodia: Communities along the Mekong River rely on the river to sustain their fishing and farming livelihoods. So we work with local partners to help preserve and protect this precious natural resource.
Photo: Patrick Brown/Panos/Oxfam America.

PROGRAM MANAGEMENT

Oxfam's programs are designed and implemented in collaboration with communities and civil society partners. Oxfam Australia partners with various donors to implement our programs, including the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), European Union, World Bank, UN agencies, philanthropic trusts and foundations, and the Australian public. We are efficient and accountable stewards of donor resources. In 2017–18, we spent \$57.3 million on development, advocacy and humanitarian programs. Of this, 67% was spent on direct programming, 23% on promotion and fundraising, and 10% on administration.

All Oxfam programs are delivered in line with our Program Management Procedure. Oxfam Australia is a member of the Australian Council for International Development and is a DFAT-Accredited Australian non-government organisation.

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

Our advisors provide technical assistance across all Oxfam programs and provide Oxfam staff and partners with learning opportunities, mentoring and support to ensure that inclusive governance and influencing considerations are reflected in all of our development and humanitarian programs.

Oxfam's significant in-house expertise provides technical assistance, leadership and innovation and knowledge management on relevant issues, including:

- extractives and natural resource management;
- free, prior and informed consent and the United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights;
- labour rights;
- tax and inequality;
- advocacy and influencing for effective governance; and
- monitoring and evaluation on how change happens.

LEARNING FROM OUR WORK

Ongoing monitoring, evaluation and learning are crucial for the continued success and improvement of our programs and projects. By weighing up what worked well — or not so well — and sharing those insights within the sector, we stay on the path to real progress and sustainable development.

Our monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL) frameworks are underpinned by Oxfam's Common Approach to MEL and Social Accountability (CAMSA). We have designed National Influencing Guidelines, a Learning Companion and an MEL framework for our Right to be Heard change goal. We have also developed



HOW DOES NETWORKED CIVIL SOCIETY BRING CHANGE?

MEL frameworks for topics such as influencing, and undertaken research to explore how networked civil society can effect change.

At Oxfam, we are committed to transparency in our work and accountability to our key stakeholders — especially people living in poverty. We share information with people living in poverty, partner organisations, and the general public, and we are accountable to our staff, volunteers, supporters, donors, suppliers and partner governments. We are committed to fostering a safe and inclusive environment in our workplaces and programs, always striving to “do no harm” and working to prevent or limit any unintended negative impacts of our programs.

Oxfam partners with a range of networks, including the How Change Happens initiative at LaTrobe University. In partnership with The Open University, we have developed a massive open online course (MOOC) called Make Change Happen. The course is designed to support change-makers to create effective and lasting change, and understand power dynamics, social systems and how change happens.

We also facilitate global networks of Oxfam staff, partners and wider development practitioners at country, regional and global levels. Oxfam’s Governance and Citizenship Knowledge Hub, for example, leverages critical knowledge and learning from across the global Oxfam confederation.

In 2017, Oxfam Australia published a research paper exploring the question: How does networked civil society bring change? The research focused on what change looks like when it’s delivered by a coalition, network or alliance — or forum, movement, council, consortium or indeed any title under which like-minded people converge. The research investigated whether the attributes of social change effected by collective group actions are worthwhile and justify the decision to work in these groups. Furthermore, the research considered situations where collective action is an appropriate or practical strategy — and times or places where it is not.

The paper presents a meta-analysis of commonalities and differences of 17 coalitions, networks or alliances across sectors and regions. The research identified that networking brought strong and consistent advantages to their reach, credibility and capability. These advantages supported a shared agenda, as well as enhanced individual organisational objectives. Some networks showed a clear shift in participation and power towards previously under-represented groups. The research has been shared widely and is supporting our partners to implement and learn about effective coalitions and networked approaches.



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