

Evaluation of Oxfam GB's Climate Change Campaign

Executive Summary



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Cover photo of the rally on 12 December 2009 in Copenhagen by Ainhoa Goma, Oxfam International.

Executive Summary

The purpose of this evaluation is firstly to assess Oxfam GB (OGB)'s ability to influence debates, policies, and practices that support a fair and safe climate change deal. Secondly, it aims to help Oxfam staff learn from feedback, gain new perspectives, and make informed decisions for future strategies.

Internationally, Oxfam affiliates work together, to campaign on climate change under the leadership of Oxfam International (OI). This evaluation is limited to Oxfam GB and a combination of their own country offices and those that have received funds or technical support, but which may also be part of other Oxfam affiliates. We looked at Oxfam GB's global campaign with in-depth case studies from Bangladesh, South Africa and the UK. However, many of the campaign's geographical boundaries and departmental affiliations were difficult to define. The evaluation covers the period from March 2008 to December 2009, although the majority of available documentation and evidence is from 2009.

The evaluation followed a seven step framework: (1) engaging stakeholders and conducting a needs assessment; (2) describing the campaign; (3) refining the evaluation design; (4) gathering credible evidence; (5) consolidating data and writing the report; (6) sharing the draft report with Oxfam for feedback then finalization; and finally, (7) ensuring the lessons are learned and shared. For data collection and analysis we used a mix-method approach, drawing from the best credible evidence across numerous sources. The correlation between these different sources of information was surprisingly high.

History of the campaign

In 2001, three Oxfam affiliates launched their first global campaign, on making trade fair, with considerable success. By 2004, consensus emerged among a larger number of Oxfam affiliates that global campaigning could be an effective tool for the organization. Soon after, in 2005, Oxfam was involved in the *Make Poverty History* campaign, which again, was a huge success.

Oxfam's work on climate change began when staff started to make connections from their own work, including unusual weather patterns that were negatively affecting vulnerable people, and the potential impacts of climate change on the world's poor. Additionally, the work of UNDP researchers helped to demonstrate the urgency and importance of climate change. Politically, with the Kyoto protocol expiring in 2012, Oxfam staff judged that the organization had a short window of time to lobby for a political outcome that could result in lasting and long-term impacts for the world's poor. Thus, climate change became a top priority for some parts of Oxfam GB. Although, the climate change campaign (CCC) was introduced to Oxfam with some controversy, it is now firmly up and running, and is a recognized and resourced core priority.

Objectives of the CC Campaign

The overall objective of the campaign was to get a fair and safe global climate change deal at COP15 in December 2009. This would translate into concrete policy where rich countries recognize their obligations and historic responsibility, to support and finance adaptation actions in developing countries (beyond development assistance) and equitable mitigation based on historic responsibility and capacity, where global temperature would not increase beyond 2 degrees.

To achieve these policy goals, Oxfam's CCC aimed to increase political will by encouraging progressive forces and opposing, or winning over, obstructive ones. Identification of these progressive and obstructive forces was done through a power

analysis that shaped the focus of the campaign. To move these actors, Oxfam employed a generic campaign model, blending research, alliances, popular mobilisation, media work, and lobbying.

Evaluation Findings

- The package of activities, grouped by Oxfam's generic model, helped the campaign to succeed. Most campaign activities were cross-functional, blending elements of research, alliances, popular mobilisation, media work, and lobbying.

Main impact contributions

- Oxfam did not achieve a fair and safe deal at COP15 in Copenhagen. However, they made significant contributions in the lead-up to this event and at present, are pursuing this goal into 2010.
- Oxfam GB's CCC has contributed more to the climate change policies of Southern governments than their Northern counterparts, although they have contributed to political debates, agendas, policies and legislation at all levels. One example was the statement related to prioritizing most vulnerable countries (MVC) in the final COP15 Accord that came directly from the Bangladesh delegation. This demand was picked up by the Government of Bangladesh at the MVC Civil Society conference organized by Oxfam and CSRL.
- Oxfam helped to place climate finance on the EU agenda. Oxfam played a key role in highlighting climate financing in the newspapers, and their research and lobbying helped to make the adaptation financing case. At UK, EU, and UNFCCC level, Oxfam's work around adaptation financing contributed to the formulation of concrete numbers by various actors (such as the World Bank and UNFCCC), which is likely to have influenced the debate and, potentially, concrete financing proposals.
- Oxfam made an impact on politics and policy in regards to raising the relevance of human impact and adaptation financing. There were a few cases of influencing debates on additionality and mitigation. In Bangladesh, the CCC contributed to a shift of government position in international forums from primarily discussing adaptation to being one of the few governments advocating for the 1.5 degree limit with an early peak by 2015. PACJA, with support from Oxfam, contributed to shifting African negotiators in Nairobi to a common negotiation position that changed from calling for Annex 1 2020 targets of 25% to 40% to calling for "at least 40%".

Research

- Over the last two years, the number of climate change publications has increased dramatically, with many being released to coincide with COP15.
- Oxfam's research papers have a small target audience. However, those who know Oxfam's research generally hold a high regard for them.
- The strongest paper, in terms of influencing policy, was "*Raworth, K. (2007) Adapting to climate change: what's needed in poor countries and who should pay*". It is credited with having shaped the debate on climate financing and is cited in a number of UNFCCC publications.
- At the UNFCCC Oxfam research is well regarded. The first UNFCCC record for Oxfam is 2008, WWF from 1992, and Greenpeace from 1990. However, in a short period of time Oxfam was listed in six public UNFCCC publications, more than either WWF or Greenpeace.
- Although Oxfam's papers are widely regarded, informants also expressed critical views, including the charge that they are too Northern-based and too focused on drawing news headlines.

Lobbying/Advocacy

- Oxfam's lobbying capacity has continually improved during their campaign. They have significantly expanded their political contacts during the course of

the campaign in terms of breadth and depth, moving from an early estimate of 11 to 33 documented relations with countries/ negotiating blocs.

- Informants believe that policymakers consider Oxfam to be a realistic and pragmatic organization, possibly due to their grounding in developing countries and the quality of their research.
- Oxfam supported LDC countries with information and analysis that helped them negotiate at COP15. More could have been done to support parties had Oxfam invested additional funds.
- The CCC has supported many progressive forces, and has achieved considerable success in this regard. However, we found only a few examples where Oxfam has obstructed or won over opposing forces.
- Oxfam took a moderate policy position that has allowed them to engage successfully with a number of key players. The question is whether they could have taken a stronger position around specific issues.

Popular mobilisation

- There is evidence of an increased change in public perceptions linking climate change to poverty in the UK, where among peer organizations, Oxfam is the organization most frequently cited in news articles that discuss climate change and poverty.
- Oxfam has attained a niche role as the number one non-environmental organization associated with climate change.
- Across all campaigns, Oxfam's public mobilisation work was frequently conducted through coalitions, often targeting partners' constituencies. This is especially important in the South where it is not always appropriate for a foreign actor to put certain issues on the table.
- There were a range of views on stunts, and overall the feedback was highly positive.
- The climate hearings were singled out as an innovative campaign tool able to mobilize people who are vulnerable to climate change. The climate witnesses have been a valuable instrument across many countries. Through this programme, Oxfam was able to bring the voices of poor and vulnerable people directly to global policy environments.

Media

- Oxfam's media impact was impressive in terms of the volume of coverage. Between COP14 and COP15, Oxfam's media hits at these events roughly doubled.
- At UNFCCC, Oxfam's media capacity and service to journalists was considered to be comparable to that offered by Greenpeace and WWF.
- Oxfam is considered to offer journalists a well-rounded package: a nice story, a credible organization, good and quick analysis, an opinion on the human dimension and a nice photo.
- The synergies between public stunts and media relations were considered a valuable part of Oxfam's media capacity, with the content of many news stories covering stunts.
- There were different views on branded versus unbranded media coverage, and how each may have more or less impact given different contexts.

Alliances and networks

- During the CCC, Oxfam played a key role in facilitating, funding, and supporting the formations of various coalitions around climate change. Partners had a high regard for Oxfam who often underplayed their own branding in support of the coalitions' identity.
- Oxfam's work with the private sector resulted in the heads of well established UK-based companies joining Oxfam in direct lobbying of the UK

Prime Minister. Likewise, Oxfam played an active role with the corporate leaders group, which included contributions to their joint policy positions.

- From partnerships, Oxfam gained partners' expert and local knowledge, support for implementing activities, credibility (especially in the South), capacity and the ability to express views they would otherwise not necessarily say. Partners benefited from Oxfam's credibility, financial expertise, development knowledge, campaigning support, financial assistance and a pleasant working relationship.

Emerging issues

- **North/ South tension:** Although respondents acknowledged that Oxfam has made an effort to engage country offices in the South, some staff feel that not enough investment has been made. When conducting policy analysis and planning campaign objectives and strategies, informants felt the process rolled down from the Head Office. There is a felt need to increase the human resource capacity in country teams and regional offices.
- **BASIC shelter:** In the lead up to the COP15, the BASIC negotiating bloc emerged, as countries classified as developing countries but which are fast becoming the major polluters, with one member, China, now the world's leading greenhouse gas emitter. Many considered that the BASIC group's position and role in the G77 and China created tensions, with some advocating the break up of this group and others wanting to hold it together. Oxfam officially advocates keeping the group together, though staff hold a multitude of views on this subject. This may have led to the contradictory criticism that Oxfam was trying to hold together the bloc, whilst also seeking the opposite, to break them up.
- **Switching on/off:** There was broad agreement that Oxfam shifts its campaigning priorities too quickly, which hinders their ability to build effective relationships with the media, policymakers and civil society partners. Partners fear being left in a difficult position if Oxfam shifts priorities, and lowers their support for a climate change deal.
- **Gender mainstreaming:** Oxfam GB has internalized gender mainstreaming within the CCC. However, many agreed that they have been only timid actions and that gender has not yet been fully mainstreamed within the campaign. There is a need to do more gender disaggregation in research and to give women a more prominent role in policy debates within the organization, and when relating to the outside world.
- **Credibility:** Oxfam is regarded as a highly credible organization. They are perceived as a legitimate and authoritative source of information, particularly in regard to climate impacts on poor people. Reasons cited for their credibility include being a charitable organization, their global network, work on the ground, quality research publications, consistent quality work over many years, and their pragmatism. This credibility was cited as a key success factor in political lobbying, media relations, and building alliances, as Oxfam could leverage their strong reputation to forge consensus among a broad political spectrum of organizations.
- **Quality of their staff:** CCC staff were frequently praised during this evaluation. Oxfam GB would not have got to this point if it were not for the professional and human calibre of their staff.