

Small Farmers, Big Change

Lessons from Oxfam's agricultural programmes:

An overview

Introduction

Improving smallholder agricultural livelihoods is essential for achieving large-scale poverty reduction and growth. Almost 80 per cent of the world's 925 million hungry people live in rural areas and most depend on agriculture as their main source of income and employment. Approximately half of these are smallholder farmers.¹ Overall, smallholder farmers constitute 1.5 billion of the three billion people living in rural areas and 87 per cent of all farmers in developing countries.² Of the one billion poor people living in rural areas, most rely mainly on agriculture for their incomes.³ Equally, agriculture is key to achieving broad-based growth, especially in low-income developing countries.⁴ Investing in smallholder agriculture ensures that this growth is inclusive, pro-poor, and environmentally sustainable. Under certain conditions, it can also be more efficient than large-scale agriculture.⁵

In many developing countries, and particularly in sub-Saharan Africa, women provide a high proportion of agricultural labour, particularly in food production, processing, and marketing.⁶ Women work as subsistence farmers, small-scale entrepreneurs, unpaid workers on family farms, or casual wage labourers, and often they play several of these roles. Because they are also responsible for the majority of caring and household tasks, women's working hours are often longer than men's, limiting their scope to

engage in new opportunities. At the same time, women farmers also have more restricted access to land, credit, and training than their male counterparts.⁷ Where women are involved in marketing the crops that they grow, it is often in small volumes and in the least profitable markets, and often does not lead to significant increases in income. These factors not only limit women's benefits from smallholder agriculture but, crucially, also reduce overall agricultural productivity by as much as 10 per cent.⁸

Oxfam's Global Agricultural Scale Up Initiative (GASUI) was launched in 2005 with the aims of reducing poverty for millions of smallholder farmers, particularly women; driving economic growth by linking farmers into new and wider market opportunities; and advocating for increased donor, government, and private sector investment to support smallholder farming. For Oxfam, 'scale-up' refers to increasing both the reach and quality of Oxfam's agricultural programming and thereby demonstrating to governments, donors, and development actors how agriculture can contribute to economic development and poverty reduction. The initiative's main strategy is to empower smallholder farmers to organize and engage effectively and equitably in agricultural markets and value chains.

This overview is the first of nine Programme Insights papers in the 'Small Farmers, Big Change' series contained in this volume. The papers draw on learning from GASUI and on wider learning from Oxfam GB's agricultural markets-based programming, as well as from programmes implemented by Oxfam India.

The series is based on experiences across several different programmes initially documented for a global learning event in May 2009.⁹ They have been further developed to show different pathways for achieving scale in a variety of contexts. The case studies explored in the papers demonstrate how linking small producers to markets and value chains and enabling them to engage in policy processes can help to improve livelihoods and can be a catalyst to wider, longer-term change. In developing such linkages, Oxfam programmes are working with private companies as well as with farmer organizations to develop new business models which maximize the benefits of market engagement for smallholder farmers, especially women, and contribute to economic growth. Programmes are also developing innovative methods of service delivery to small farmers, in collaboration with financial institutions and other service providers. Such innovations have the potential to be replicated by others, beyond Oxfam's programme interventions.

These Programme Insights papers are intended as a learning resource for development practitioners and professionals working in the field of smallholder agriculture, particularly those promoting rural women's rights and women's economic leadership. The different case studies presented offer an understanding of the varied

livelihood options and risks faced by diverse groups of smallholders and possible strategies for managing these, in the context of globalized markets and a changing policy environment. The analysis and recommendations will be helpful to those involved in developing and delivering agricultural livelihoods programmes, especially those thinking about how to 'scale up' interventions. They will also be of interest to people working in business in the agricultural sector with an interest in linking to small farmers in developing countries, as well as to researchers interested in agricultural development. They provide evidence and examples useful for governments, donors, civil society, and private sector organizations on the potential of investment in smallholder agriculture for contributing to poverty reduction, enterprise development, and economic growth.

The changing context of smallholder agriculture

From the 1980s up to 2006, government and donor support to agricultural investment declined overall, and in support to smallholder agriculture in particular, in most developing countries.¹⁰ Policies of liberalization in the agricultural sector during this period reduced government support to agricultural production and marketing and to rural infrastructure and services. The private sector has not effectively filled the gap left by the withdrawal of the state. At the same time, the power of large agribusinesses in the sector has grown, with the globalization of agricultural value chains and the deregulation of markets.

The food price crisis, which dramatically hit global markets in 2008, underscored the legacy of this underinvestment and brought agriculture back to the forefront of the development debate. Concerns about the security of food supplies in the face of growing urban populations and of climate change have led to a renewed focus on efforts to improve agricultural productivity and growth, to new commitments to agricultural investment, and to growing interest in more sustainable, low-carbon production systems. There is now an emerging consensus that, without significant increases in investment in agriculture, and in small-scale farming in particular, the Millennium Development Goals for poverty and hunger reduction cannot be reached.¹¹

Developing rural food production can not only help to address the rural/urban income gap, but can also provide food for growing urban populations in the face of potential future food crises. The question is no longer about whether to invest in smallholder agriculture, but in what, where, and how. While the case for increased investment in agriculture is widely accepted, and in some cases has translated into significant commitments of funds globally and nationally, translating this into investments that benefit the

majority of small farmers, particularly women, remains a huge challenge.

These papers are about approaches to promoting the knowledge, technologies, policies, and institutional frameworks that enable agricultural markets to function in ways that benefit both poor rural people and the wider economy. Significant change is required to create strategies that are not only technically 'accurate' and able to address complex problems, but also effective in achieving widespread impact and improved life chances for both women and men smallholder farmers. Equally, in response to the growing risks to viable livelihoods associated with climate change, the interventions described in the papers aim to equip smallholder farmers for the future by identifying sustainable opportunities, as well as viable strategies, for their engagement in markets.

Oxfam's work in smallholder agriculture

Oxfam's work in supporting smallholder agriculture has for many years been a major focus of efforts to promote poor people's rights to a sustainable livelihood. Work on sustainable livelihoods is part of a broader, integrated rights-based approach to addressing poverty and suffering. This includes promoting farmer organization and advocacy at all levels, from local to global, to influence the policies and institutions that shape smallholders' livelihood opportunities, with an emphasis on supporting the political participation and leadership of women. Equally, rural areas have long suffered from lack of investment in infrastructure and essential basic services. Such lack of investment has not only denied poor rural people and their families their basic rights, but has limited the capacity of poorer farmers, and particularly women farmers, to play a productive role and to participate fully in development. Poor rural people are also often the most vulnerable to crises, suffer disproportionately from the impacts of climate-related risks, and are increasingly affected by conflicts or outside interventions that dispossess them of their sources of livelihood. Promoting their rights to essential services and reducing their vulnerability to shocks is also a core part of Oxfam's work.

Since 2003, recognizing the shift of power in the agricultural sector towards large-scale business, Oxfam's work with small farmers has focused on strategies to improve their level of organization and their negotiating position in markets, in order to increase their share of agricultural incomes. This has complemented longstanding work on strengthening smallholders' access to and control over assets, recognizing the increasing importance of cash incomes to poor people's livelihoods. The GASUI initiative has reflected and built on this change, with its emphasis on empowering smallholders to improve their own livelihoods by gaining greater 'power in markets' that increases their ability to access and effectively participate in

markets and engaging in policy processes and partnerships with private sector organizations. In addition, in view of the decline in investment in agriculture in general and in smallholder agriculture in particular over many decades, GASUI has also aimed to build a body of evidence and experience to demonstrate the importance of public, as well as private, investment in small-scale agriculture as a means to deliver longer-term poverty reduction and economic growth in different contexts.

Since 2005, GASUI has been implemented in three core countries – Honduras, India, and Ethiopia – with a fourth country, Tanzania, joining in 2007. Partly informed by learning from GASUI, a growing number of other Oxfam country and global programmes – some of which are reflected here – have also been working to support efforts to influence policy, engage in markets and value chains, and promote relevant services to strengthen small producers’ livelihoods. As well as having a greater focus on linking small producers to markets, GASUI has represented a shift in Oxfam’s approach to livelihoods programming, away from asset provision or service delivery in projects to one of facilitating wider processes of change in order to achieve a wider impact. Table 1 below characterizes the shifts in Oxfam’s thinking about how to achieve scale in agricultural programmes that GASUI has been instrumental in promoting.

Table 1. Oxfam’s new focus in livelihoods programming

Original thinking on ‘scale’	New thinking on ‘scale’
Scale achieved through increasing programme numbers : countries, companies, projects, beneficiaries	Scale achieved through increasing influence through innovation, strategic partnerships, alliances, knowledge sharing
Scale increases proportionally to size of programme	Scale achieved exponentially through self-spreading of ideas, practices, services beyond Oxfam’s direct reach
Scale is reached by increasing Oxfam’s programme funding	Scale is reached by leveraging wider investment resources by and to smallholders and supporting service providers

<p>Ad hoc, opportunistic market and company engagement</p>	<p>Systematisation of analysis, tools, and processes for identification of markets, products, companies based on potential for scale, value added, inclusion, and specifically women’s economic leadership</p>
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‘Scaling up’ impact in smallholder agriculture does not mean simply multiplying the number of projects or investing in bigger projects. Rather, it is about doing things in different ways, for example by forming alliances with other actors to leverage greater overall investment. In fact, reliance primarily on donor or INGO resources is likely to lead to ‘unsustainable’ interventions.

Ultimately, achieving scale involves employing innovative and self-sustaining strategies to achieve profound change with the potential for positive impacts on the lives of large numbers of poor people. Interventions can be self-sustaining if they are designed in collaboration with other key actors such as producer organizations, processing companies, district authorities, and providers of financial services. These actors, rather than Oxfam or other NGOs, are the drivers of processes of change, and this requires Oxfam staff and programmes to ‘let go’ of the process.

Diverse ‘scaling’ mechanisms exist within the agricultural sector. These include the farmer-to-farmer spread of new technologies or production practices; franchising, or adoption of new business models by companies; institutional and policy changes across municipalities, regions, or countries; and increased private or public sector investment in innovative and effective models of service delivery to poor rural people, such as mobile banking and the demand-driven spread of new services and technologies.

The role of Oxfam and other NGOs in these processes is to act as innovators and facilitators, working with multiple stakeholders. Such ways of working encourage the emergence of new types of farmer organizations and networks, strengthen the links between small farmers and private companies, and enable the formation of new alliances to influence policy and investment in ways that support small producers. NGOs can also play an important role in this context in promoting communications and learning by different stakeholders.

Pathways to leveraging change in smallholder agriculture

Through GASUI, Oxfam has promoted a ‘market development’ approach to agricultural programming. In this approach, key

'pathways' to leveraging wider change in smallholder agriculture (see Figure 1 below) are:

- Support to producer organizations and enterprise development;
- The facilitation of links with other market actors;
- Enabling wider access to key service providers, such as finance, transportation, and training;
- Improvements in the 'enabling environment' for smallholder agriculture, including e.g. trade policies, policies on women's land rights, and investment in infrastructure.

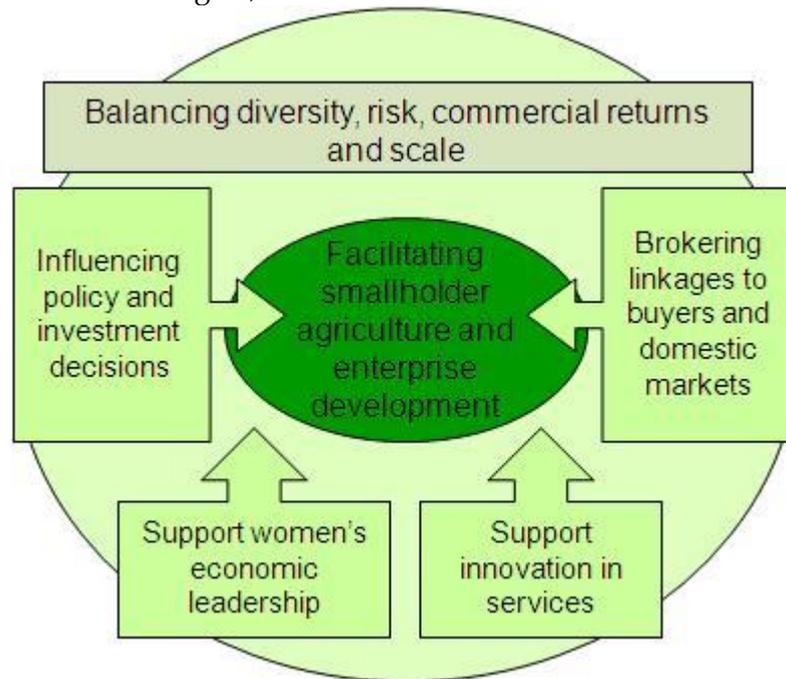


Figure 1. Pathways to scale

The case studies in this series of papers demonstrate examples of the successful application of a number of these strategies, which are now being 'scaled up' or replicated.

Supporting farmer organization underpins the other strategies and is an area in which Oxfam can demonstrate many successes, as shown here in examples from India, Colombia, and Mali. As described in paper two, 'Strength in Numbers', Indian fishing communities in Madhya Pradesh established village co-operatives and formed a federation that has given them a strong voice. This helped their campaign to persuade the state government to revise its fisheries policy and introduce a new law that protects the rights of traditional fishing communities. Paper three, 'Leading by Example', shows how networks of small farmers, NGOs, and other organizations in Colombia worked together to build a successful evidence-based advocacy strategy to influence municipal authorities to allow small agricultural producers access to urban food markets. Influencing of

policy and investment decisions also took place in Honduras. Paper one, 'The Voice of Many', describes how an alliance of rural civil society groups, including small farmers, worked with municipal officials to develop joint plans for the use of funds to implement a regional Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS), in ways that responded to rural people's needs.

Farmer organization is a growing area of interest among development actors. Increased budgets for agriculture mean that successful, yet often young and fragile, farmer organizations are being sought out by donors requiring partners with the capacity for grassroots delivery and by companies seeking new suppliers. Although this is positive, it brings with it the danger of producer organizations being overloaded with responsibilities when their technical capacities and governance structures are weak. Oxfam's learning highlights the need to be clear about the different types of organization and support required for advocacy, enterprise development, and service delivery and to ensure that support to farmer organizations is cost-effective, sustainable, and replicable. It also highlights the fact that specific targeted support, such as literacy and technical training, and flexibility in ways of organizing – including separate women's activities and organizations – are often required to ensure that women as well as men can participate in and benefit from the opportunities offered by organization of farmers (see papers two, four, five, and eight for examples).

Facilitating smallholder engagement in markets and value chains has taken different forms depending on the context and type of market. Paper four, 'Engaging Smallholders in Value Chains', shows how in Ethiopia linking farmers to the private company Ambrosia Ltd has enabled beekeepers to access training services – and international markets – through a joint Oxfam/private sector investment. For farmers in Sri Lanka, a relationship with agri-based company Plenty Foods has offered market opportunities and enabled them to increase their incomes, while also benefiting the company's growth rates, as shown in paper six, 'Growing Partnerships'. Paper five, 'Power to Producers', describes how local farmers' associations in Haiti came together to supply a network of dairies with milk. Through this producer-led enterprise model, they were able to access technical and material support and benefits, and increase their incomes.

Innovation in services in Sri Lanka, where links were facilitated between financial service providers and rural enterprises, has enabled the enterprises to grow significantly and has provided models for replication, as described in paper seven, 'Bridging the Gap'. Paper eight, 'Effective Co-operation', shows how building the capacity of cotton producers' co-operatives in Mali has helped them to provide services to their own members. It has also helped them to build partnerships with lending institutions that are viable in the

long term and has increased the participation of women farmers in the running of cotton co-ops.

Balancing scale with diversity and risk

The market development approach has tended to focus on those small producers who are capable, with support, of organizing and making use of market opportunities, rather than the most vulnerable or food-insecure farmers. Investments are made in existing rural activities to increase farmers' returns rather than activities that maintain livelihoods at subsistence level.

Nevertheless, it is important that market-based interventions are able to be inclusive of different social groups. Oxfam's development and use of tools such as 'Gendered Market Selection' and 'Gendered Market Mapping' (see Box 1) have resulted in interventions that are designed specifically to promote rural women's economic leadership, such as that described in paper four on Ethiopia and paper five on Haiti.

Box 1. Gendered market mapping¹²

Gendered market mapping is the process used to identify economically viable products and market opportunities that are profitable for women. The market map is a comprehensive visual representation of the different steps and actors in a particular value chain. It also shows the external factors affecting the chain (e.g. infrastructure, natural or policy environment) and the market services (e.g. transport, finance, information, extension services) needed to enable the chain to function.

A market map becomes gendered when:

We include sex-disaggregated data – i.e. how many women and men participate in certain levels and positions in market chain(s) and how many women and men are benefiting from each provider of market services;

We pay special attention to the infrastructure and services crucial for women because of their household and social roles (water, health, energy, safe transport, extension services run by or for women);

We identify throughout the map the policies, practices, ideas, and beliefs that (dis)enable women's economic leadership – of traders, co-operatives, buyers, policy-makers, service providers, etc.

A gendered market map is useful for designing interventions because it helps us identify how women can move up the market chain. We can identify opportunities to upgrade women's position in the market system, in both the short and long terms. Market mapping is a tool that encourages us to talk to all buyers, producers, and service providers in a certain sector, and understand how the market looks to them. The visual map enables all actors to see themselves in relation to others in the sector, and helps show why actors might collaborate or change. It can raise their awareness of how gender inequalities may be affecting the quality or quantity of production and the timely delivery of produce to buyers. Women, especially, see themselves more clearly. It stimulates them to think beyond their existing activities and to see where new or more profitable market opportunities might exist.

Even for small farmers who have some assets, livelihoods are highly vulnerable to risks from weather-related events such as drought. Some small producer programmes have developed links between market-based activities and social protection programmes to prevent the depletion of assets or to reduce vulnerability. For example, in India fishponds have been affected by successive droughts. In the programme described in paper two, the participation of fisherfolk in labour programmes under the government's National Rural Employment Guarantee Act has enabled better pond maintenance. At the same time, advocacy on policy has ensured that fisherfolk are compensated for drought-related losses and are also able to use drought-affected pond beds to diversify into other economic activities.

Lessons from scaling up impact in smallholder agriculture

Smallholder agriculture can be the most effective route to bring about both economic growth and poverty reduction, and investment in this sector offers opportunities for increasing the resilience of small farmers to disasters. However, different and flexible strategies to achieving scale in smallholder agricultural programmes are required depending on the political, economic, and social context and on the nature of the specific markets and actors involved.

One lesson that emerges is that the potential and viability of smallholder agriculture as a strategy for sustainable livelihoods and development are not uniform across countries or types of market; neither are they equally relevant for all social groups. In countries where large-scale agriculture is dominant, alternatives might instead be to provide support to agricultural wage labourers, other forms of rural employment, or migration, or to work with large-scale farmers and agricultural companies to improve their employment practices.

Also, both the opportunities and the risks for small farmers vary with the type of market. When developing programmes, some of Oxfam's partners in country apply systematic criteria for selecting markets, while others are more opportunistic. Currently Oxfam's agricultural programmes work across a wide range of agricultural markets, including local food markets (e.g. horticulture in Honduras, fish in India, dairy in Haiti); high-value markets for semi-processed products in collaboration with processing companies; and 'niche' export markets (e.g. organic coffee and honey in Ethiopia and organic cotton and shea butter in Mali).

Local markets are easy to enter but may have limited potential for improving livelihoods at scale, so there is also a need to link farmers with growing urban, regional, and 'higher-value' markets. Entering higher-value markets may require improvements in quality or other

standards and so may tend to exclude those with fewer assets and capacities, unless specific training or support is provided. Over-dependence on external markets is also risky, especially given the increasing volatility of commodity prices and demand. In particular, 'locking in' producers to one buyer is not desirable. Ideally, market development programmes should provide opportunities across different markets (local/national as well as international) to maximize scale and inclusion and to minimize risk.

Agricultural scale-up can offer opportunities for the economic empowerment of rural women. However, the capacity of farmers to adapt and change or to access, understand, or adopt new ideas is affected by their self-confidence, education, and social position. Gender, as well as ethnic or caste background, can be very significant here. Poor women face particular challenges to their participation in markets. These include lack of assets and asset security; lack of time to engage in productive work because of their unequal share of household responsibilities; persistent inequalities in access to resources and decision-making in the household; and legal discrimination and other barriers.

These challenges can be addressed by appropriate public investment – for example, through asset redistribution or infrastructure development to enable more sustainable, equitable outcomes for smallholders. They can also be addressed by proactive strategies to promote women's economic leadership in agricultural markets.

In Ethiopia (paper four), beekeeping is one of the most sustainable livelihood options for landless people and for women generally do not own land. Growing numbers of female beekeepers have learned how to manage improved hives and beekeeping tools and equipment. In Haiti (paper five), women's associations have given their members training on gender equality, which has helped them as producers and in the home. Many women now know that men need not be the sole decision-makers, and that they themselves should also play an important part in this process. In all cases, proactive strategies are required to ensure the participation of women in market-based programmes, where there are social and cultural barriers to this.

From the experiences described in the papers, Oxfam has learned that movements for policy change are more likely to succeed where there is strong community organization and ownership, as demonstrated in the work undertaken by fishing communities in India (paper two). Women's engagement in producer organizations, as well as in advocacy and campaigning activities, increases their confidence more broadly as market actors. The programme in Honduras (paper one) has established over 90 savings and loan community funds with over 2,000 beneficiaries, 48 per cent of whom are women. Women's groups were also involved in the advocacy campaign that leveraged change in policy and investment at the

national level. In Colombia (paper three), one of the programme's main objectives was to support small-scale rural producers, especially women, by strengthening their role in the rural-urban food supply chain. Women played an active role in campaigning activities and in building public support for a food supply plan in Bogotá. Most women who had been engaged in advocacy activities felt more confident about marketing and selling their produce as a result.

In engagements with the private sector, as well as benefits for farmers there needs to be a strong business case for companies to engage with smallholders. This was the case with Plenty Foods – described in paper six – where a 'win-win' arrangement for both company and producer groups has enabled small farmers, especially women, to increase their market opportunities and their incomes, while the company has secured its supply base and has achieved an annual growth rate of 30 per cent through shifting from working with individual farmers to organized groups of small farmers.

Future perspectives

The context in which we are working in 2011 is significantly different than when GASUI began in 2005, and Oxfam's work must adapt to this changing context. Demand for food is rising with growing populations and urbanization, and there is increasing conflict over limited resources. There are now greater shortages of food and water and increased climate instability. Climate change is undermining the long-term viability of agricultural livelihoods in some areas. Equally, with the increasing globalization of food and agricultural markets, global corporations have more power in these markets. There is increased volatility in commodity markets, with the risk of further marginalization and increased vulnerability of smallholders.

However, the renewed interest in agriculture from governments, donors, and private companies and recognition of the importance of small-scale agriculture for pro-poor economic growth provide a huge opportunity. Oxfam's next challenge is to maximize this opportunity by continuing to demonstrate how to most effectively leverage wider change for smallholder agriculture. We will continue to improve our understanding of small-scale agriculture in livelihoods by revisiting strategies for increasing our impact in different contexts. In doing so, it is essential that we identify and clearly state how we expect change to happen within our programmes, what our role is in stimulating that change, and how we define 'scale' as a matter of depth, not just breadth.

Building on our work so far, Oxfam is continuing to innovate in collaboration with both global and domestic private sector companies, as well as with producer-led enterprises, to develop and scale up new business models that can integrate small producers into supply chains in a sustainable and equitable way.¹³ Women's

economic leadership in agricultural markets is critical to ensuring equitable outcomes from smallholder development, as well as to ensuring food security at household and community levels.¹⁴

Development actors and private companies and service providers need effective 'models' for engaging directly with women producers – whether in single-sex or mixed organizations – that are economically sustainable as well as equitable. Actors on the ground also want to know when to promote women organizing separately and when to work via mixed groups, and what different forms of organization and strategy are most effective in different kinds of market and in enabling access to different services. There also remains a longer-term challenge to ensure that, as commercial opportunities develop in key markets, women are able to maintain and build their position within market systems, as well as to consolidate their bargaining power within households and communities.

We also want to enable small producers to be able to work effectively in a future context that may be very different from that of today. This means supporting them to manage resources and risks differently and to adapt to new 'shocks', bearing in mind that both climate change and globalization are changing future risk profiles. Oxfam needs to better understand traditional systems of risk management and to strengthen these, as well as to develop innovative mechanisms for sharing risk among actors along the value chain. It also needs to ensure that small producers, particularly women, have access to information about the likely impacts of changes in weather patterns and that they are supported to adapt production practices and techniques, for example by using new seed varieties. Equally, Oxfam needs to work with smallholders to assess both current market-based livelihoods and new market opportunities against likely future climate change impacts and to identify diverse livelihood strategies that will reduce vulnerability to these impacts.

Finally, alongside this, Oxfam will develop advocacy and campaigning activities to ensure that growing competition for scarce resources in the coming years does not further disadvantage small producers and that governments and companies, as well as NGOs, invest in positive, productive, and sustainable ways in smallholder agriculture.

Notes

¹ FAO (2009) 'The State of Food and Agriculture 2009', Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, Rome,

² World Bank (2007) World Development Report 2008, Washington, p.29.

³ IFAD (2010) 'Rural Poverty Report', International Fund for Agricultural Development, Rome, p.3.

⁴ World Bank, op. cit., Chapter 1.

⁵ Oxfam International (2009) 'Investing in Poor People Pays', op. cit., pp.8-9; Oxfam International (2009) 'Harnessing Agriculture for Development', Oxfam Research Report, September 2009, pp.13-16.

⁶ FAO (1995a) shows that women in sub-Saharan Africa contribute 60–80 per cent of food for both household consumption and for sale.
<http://www.fao.org/docrep/w9990e/w9990e10.htm>

⁷ Women own less than 10 per cent of land resources in many countries, and just 5–15 per cent of agricultural training is targeted at women. Oxfam Research.

⁸ For a study area in Burkina Faso, Udry et al. (1995) show a likely 10–20 per cent increase in output if inputs such as labour and fertilizer are reallocated from men's to women's plots in the same household.

Christopher Udry, John Hoddinot, Harold Alderman, and Lawrence Haddad, "Gender Differentials in Farm Productivity: Implications for Household Efficiency and Agricultural Policy," *Food Policy*, Vol. 20, No. 5 (1995);

⁹ The Small Farmers, Big Change workshop held in Oxford on 12–14 May 2009 was a major learning opportunity, bringing together 45 participants from 18 countries and three Oxfam affiliates (Oxfam GB, Oxfam America, and Oxfam India). Five external speakers also shared inputs, drawing on their experiences with the UK Department for International Development (DFID) and a variety of research institutions and NGOs.

¹⁰ Overall, government spending on agriculture stood at 11 per cent of total government spending in 1980, and had declined to 7 per cent in 2002. Many African countries undertook a commitment to increase agriculture's share of spending to 10 per cent in the 2003 Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) Maputo declaration. However, by 2005, only six out of 24 governments had met this commitment. Official development assistance (ODA) to agriculture dropped by 75 per cent during the late 1980s and early 1990s. Total donor investments in agriculture have since remained low, at around \$4bn per year. In 2007, US and EU ODA commitments to agriculture increased slightly to \$1.2bn and \$1.4bn respectively, compared with the astonishing \$41bn and \$130bn lavished on their own agriculture sectors in 2006. *Harnessing Agriculture for Development*, Arabella Fraser, Oxfam International Research Report (2009b).

¹¹ See e.g. IFAD (2010) 'Rural Poverty Report 2011', Rome.

¹² More details on this and other tools for promoting women's economic leadership in agricultural markets can be found on Oxfam's online community website: www.growsellthrive.org This ning is a social networking

platform that communities of practice can use to support both online and face-to-face interaction, collaboration and learning.

¹³ See Oxfam International (2010) 'Think Big. Go Small: Adapting business models to incorporate smallholders into supply chains', Briefings for Business No. 6, Oxfam.

¹⁴ Women's economic leadership in agricultural markets aims beyond 'more women producers' or 'women as committee members', or improving what women already do, although these are good outcomes. What is new in this approach is an explicit understanding of how agricultural market institutions and services can reinforce gender inequalities in roles and ingrained beliefs about appropriate roles for men and women. Equally, changes in market systems can be a significant lever for longer-term change in gender relations, sparking wider changes at community and household levels. Rather than focus on 'barriers', the starting point for Oxfam is an explicit process to identify market opportunities for women producers to gain new roles and power in agricultural market chains. See www.growsellthrive.org.

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This paper was written by Sally Baden and Claire Harvey. The author wishes to acknowledge the assistance of David Wilson and Abigail Humphries Robertson in the production of this paper. This is part of a series of papers written to inform public debate on development and humanitarian policy issues. The text may be freely used for the purposes of campaigning, education, and research, provided that the source is acknowledged in full.

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ISBN 978-1-84814-834-5. This paper is part of a set **Small Farmers, Big Change: Achieving scale in the development of smallholder agriculture.**

This paper is also available in French and Spanish.

Oxfam GB

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