

DFID – Oxfam GB
Partnership Programme Agreement
2001/02 – 2004/05

Final Report

Supporting poor people to gain access, power, and fair prices in markets.

Promoting quality of humanitarian assistance and protection for people affected by conflict and natural disasters.

Supporting poor people's right to be heard and promoting accountability of governments and other institutions.

February 2006



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1 Introduction and organisational overview

This report looks back over the four years (2001–2005) of Oxfam GB's first Partnership Programme Agreement (PPA) with DFID. Activities and developments since April 2005 will be reported under the second PPA (2005-2011). However, some references to events and changes during 2005 have been made in this report for clarity.

The Agreement noted that Oxfam was undergoing profound organisational change in 2001 as we started the partnership. In this introduction, some of the significant organisational developments that have taken place over the past four years are mentioned. DFID's partnership with Oxfam in the UK and in regions across the world is then illustrated through examples, and a summary table is provided of DFID's financial contributions to the PPA and Oxfam GB's overall programme expenditure on the priority areas covered by the Agreement.

Short chapters follow on each of the three priority areas. These chapters seek to outline the scope of the work pursued under the partnership, with some general observations about progress against the outcome indicators agreed in the PPA, and challenges faced. It is not possible to analyse and illustrate programme outcomes in any detail; the reader is referred to the longer reports that have been submitted each year for more detailed discussion of programme results, and Oxfam's contributions.

New management and global programme architecture

During the course of the PPA, Oxfam GB's regional management structure for international programme delivery has become firmly established. Programme work is now more clearly aligned within Oxfam's aims and strategic change objectives, and priority areas and strategies under these objectives have been defined and are updated each year through Oxfam's rolling strategic planning process. Each Region continues to evolve, seeking the most effective staffing structure in countries and at the Regional Centre, and building the capacities required to deliver high-quality programmes.

Oxfam International's programme infrastructure has also been strengthened, with advocacy offices now operating in New York, Washington, Geneva, and Brussels, and capacity for influencing in countries such as Germany, France, and Japan increased through collaboration between Oxfam International affiliates and partner organisations. A Humanitarian Consortium has been set-up to assure the quality of Oxfam's humanitarian work (see section 2.2, page 17).

A new electronic programme-management system has been introduced (OPAL – Oxfam Programme Accountability and Learning System), but there is still a way to go to embed new ways of working to improve programme quality and learning.

Having made good progress in strengthening management and programme delivery systems, Oxfam is now better placed to be more ambitious about the impact it can have. The quality of Oxfam's humanitarian, development, and campaigning work, and the links between these different components, can now develop on strong foundations. Oxfam is looking for bigger impact from specific, strong programmes, and wants to make sure it maximises its strength in being 'local to global'.

During the latter part of the PPA Oxfam, like other humanitarian agencies, was challenged by the demands resulting from the succession of large-scale humanitarian crises that occurred, including the crisis in Darfur, Western Sudan, and the tsunami in the Indian Ocean. As a result of our experiences and reflection during this period, a Humanitarian

Investment Plan has been drawn-up in order to enhance Oxfam's future contribution and performance, especially in large-scale emergencies (see section 2.2, page 16).

Working more effectively with others

The PPA Agreement noted Oxfam's commitment to strengthening its ways of working with, and accountability to, its partners, allies, and other constituents. Progress has been made, and new challenges are being faced as Oxfam's global programme strategy develops.

Oxfam has been a core member of inter-agency initiatives to improve accountability in the humanitarian sector (see section 2.2, page 16). While this is leading to improved accountability to people affected by major disasters, there is work still to be done to develop our processes of accountability to people living in poverty across Oxfam's global programme (see section 2.3, page 22).

One of Oxfam's key strategies for increasing programme impact has been the promotion of a 'Global Campaigning Force' and the development of Oxfam's campaigning role in the South. As described later in this report (see sections 2.1, page 9, and 2.3, page 22), Oxfam has played a significant role in the promotion and support of a number of the international alliances of southern and northern constituencies now campaigning to overcome poverty. Inevitably issues arise for large organisations about when it is appropriate to lead and when to follow within broad alliances, and about the transaction costs involved at times. We are also gaining experience about the time required for partners to develop joint campaign plans, about defining campaign messages for different country contexts, and about being able to seize the moment to campaign in different situations.

Progressively, we are sharing more key documents on Oxfam's website, in order to strengthen accountability and share learning with a range of stakeholders. We have been slow to implement our policy of making more evaluations available in the public domain, but we are now working on this.

Changing management culture and attitudes

Considerable investment was made in the development of staff in leadership roles during Oxfam's regionalisation process. Management development training and coaching is available for line managers, and a new performance management and development system has been introduced across the organisation and is widely applied. Retention of international staff has been improved through the offer of more open-ended contracts.

Oxfam continues to explore how best to listen to its diverse workforce and constituencies, for instance through the development of its surveys of internal and external stakeholders (first introduced in 1998), assemblies of stakeholders, a staff 'graffiti wall' (now known as 'Have your Say'), and intranet consultation on key issues.

There were reductions in staff based in the UK as the Regions were established. As the change process progressed, teams in Oxford then undertook further reviews to ensure work was being done in the most cost-effective way. This 'getting things done' initiative has led to further restructuring and reduction in posts in the UK.

Monitoring change and capturing, sharing, and applying learning.

Oxfam has encouraged staff to develop their monitoring and evaluation practice within a broad framework for Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning, which started to come into use six years ago. This has given time for new concepts to be embedded, and for practice to

evolve alongside the development of more strategic programmes, both in Regions and globally. However, we recognise the challenges we still face in developing more rigorous processes for assessing our work. The majority of Regions have now established staff roles to lead and support the development of programme quality, monitoring, evaluation, learning, and accountability. The emergence of these posts has been key in providing the opportunity now to take stock of current monitoring and evaluation practice, ensure the basics are in place, and test some new initiatives. Recommendations will then be made about how Oxfam GB's monitoring and evaluation processes need to be adapted and developed for the future.

A Programme Resource Centre has been established to support programme staff to make the most of available knowledge, experience, and resources. The Programme Resource Officers help programme staff to share good practice and learning from the programme, respond to queries via a 'Programme Help Desk', and support the generation of new learning from innovative work.

Oxfam has changed significantly during the course of the first PPA, but structures and processes will continue to evolve, and staff development will continue, as we seek to build the quality and impact of Oxfam's programmes.

DFID/Oxfam relationship

The PPA builds on a wide range of policy, programme, and funding links between DFID and Oxfam that have developed over more than twenty years. Formal channels of communication with UK Ministers exist through Oxfam's membership of the British Overseas Aid Group (BOAG), and there are many less formal links at departmental and country level.

Oxfam contributes to policy discussions on the focus and future of DFID's work, including the role of DFID in middle-income countries, the development and security debate, and the future of DFID's trade policy. Oxfam and DFID have worked together to strengthen policy analysis on key areas, such as arms exports and their effect on development.

Oxfam regularly takes part in consultations on DFID's Country Assistance Plans (CAPs), Regional Assistance Plans (RAPs), and other strategy documents. This has included engagement with CAP and RAP processes in Viet Nam, Ethiopia, Nigeria, Rwanda, Eritrea, Somalia, and Latin America and the Caribbean. Oxfam welcomes the opportunities these processes have provided to discuss areas of common interest, as well as to raise issues of concern.

In the regions, DFID and Oxfam staff are pursuing more strategic engagement, focusing on major policy concerns, individual sector challenges, and drivers of change. Oxfam GB has developed strong relationships with DFID country offices in Sudan, Sierra Leone, Kenya, Sri Lanka, Viet Nam, Indonesia, and Peru.

The locally negotiated PPA in Kenya has supported the continuation of long-standing collaboration between DFID and Oxfam GB on a range of issues, and included support for work on Kenya's Poverty Reduction Strategy and conflict and peace issues. DFID and Oxfam are also discussing ways to pilot a new, long-term, social-safety-net programme in Northern Kenya, as part of DFID's active interest and involvement in support for safety nets for vulnerable and chronically food-insecure people.

In Indonesia, DFID and Oxfam have collaborated on the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper process for the past three years. This has involved substantial dialogue about ways to

promote constructive dialogue between NGOs, government, and donors, and has culminated in the Oxfam/DFID Driving Change Programme: Strengthening Civil Society Engagement in the Planning, Implementation, and Monitoring of Pro-Poor Local Government Policies in Indonesia.

Oxfam and DFID collaborate on a number of key projects that are mentioned later in this report. For example, Oxfam GB is an important DFID partner in the areas of ethical trade and socially responsible business, through involvement with the Ethical Trading Initiative and Fairtrade Foundation, among other things, and by participating in the DFID/DTI-led discourse on corporate social responsibility. DFID and Oxfam have worked closely on the Sphere project, and both actively supported the establishment of the Humanitarian Accountability Partnership – International (HAP-I). Oxfam GB’s Policy Department maintains regular, informal contact with DFID and other UK Government Departments across a broad range of policy issues including, for example, debt, poverty reduction strategies, the education Fast Track Initiative, and EU co-operation.

Expenditure under the PPA

DFID made payments of twenty million pounds to Oxfam during the PPA 2001/02-2003/04, and further payments totalling £7.228m during the PPA extension year 2004/05. These payments have contributed to implementing the priority areas of work defined in the PPA, which fall under three of Oxfam’s five aims. Total Oxfam direct programme expenditure on the three aims that fall within the PPA amounted to £217.5m during 2001/02-2003/04, and £102.2m during 2004/05.

Oxfam Expenditure in priority areas of the PPA and DFID contributions

Oxfam expenditure by Priority Area	2001/02		2002/03		2003/04		2004/05	
	Million £	%*	Million £	%*	Million £	%	Million £	%*
Sustainable Livelihoods	21.1	23%	27.1	29%	26.2	27%	25.9	20%
Saving/protecting lives	42.1	46%	37.8	40%	35.2	36%	63.9	48%
Right to be heard	7.7	8%	9.4	10%	10.9	11%	12.4	9%
Total expenditure on the priority areas £319.7m	70.9		74.3		72.3		102.2	
DFID contribution								
Global PPA	5.760		5.920		6.070		6.228	
Kenya PPA	0.650		0.650		0.650		1.000	
Uganda PPA	0.100		0.100		0.100		—	
Total DFID contribution £27.228m	6.510		6.670		6.820		7.228	

Notes:

Financial years 2001/02 and 2002/03 have been restated from previous presentations of programme expenditure in order to make the calculations consistent with current reporting methods. Oxfam expenditure figures by priority area represent direct programme expenditure, excluding support costs and costs of managing and administering the charity.

* % - these columns shows the percentage of Oxfam GB’s total direct programme expenditure directed to each of the three aims that fall within the PPA.

2.1 The Right to a Sustainable Livelihood: global trade rules and ethical trade

Priority strategy:

Supporting poor producers to gain access, power, and fair prices in markets

Outcome indicators:

A Improving access to markets for small producers in programme areas.

B Increasing the influence of civil society, especially poor women and men, on local institutions, national trade policies, and regional/global trade agreements that affect their livelihoods.

C Greater accountability of trading corporations and institutions governing trade rules, and policies affecting trade.

D Growth in pro-Fairtrade consumer movement and increased offer of Fairtrade-certified products in Britain.

Oxfam GB's direct programme expenditure on The Right to a Sustainable Livelihood has been approximately £100m during the four years of the PPA. The percentage of Oxfam GB's total direct programme expenditure focused on this Aim has varied between 20 per cent and 29 per cent during the four years.

Progress against priority strategies and outcome indicators

A Improving access to markets for small-scale producers in programme areas

During the first year of the PPA, Oxfam GB was terminating its long-standing Fair Trade programme, and shifting focus towards the development of a Market Access/Power in Markets programme. Oxfam stopped purchasing goods directly from small-scale producers for sale under the Oxfam brand in Oxfam shops, and now promotes the FAIRTRADE Mark through sales of recognised, Fairtrade-certified brands such as Traidcraft, Cafedirect and Divine chocolate in its shops. Oxfam also extended its engagement in the promotion of Fairtrade sales through mainstream retailers and other channels (see Outcome area D below, page 9). In the Regions, a range of 'power in markets' programmes developed. This has put a new emphasis on efforts to assist producers to build secure institutions, gain access to markets, and gain the power to negotiate a fair return, alongside continuing to assist them to acquire secure assets.

Some partners from the previous Fair Trade programme have continued to be supported in the development of their enterprises, and in marketing their goods within their own country or internationally, for example:

Oxfam started supporting the Agro-industrial Association of Organic Producers of El Salvador (APRAINORES) from its creation in 1997. Initially, support was provided to obtain technical assistance, and cashew nuts were purchased for sale in Oxfam shops in the UK. Eight years on, Oxfam continues to provide support to APRAINORES to develop their business and market their product. The Ministry of Agriculture in El Salvador considers that the Association is one of the most successful agro-processing businesses of small-scale producers in the country. It now involves 63 producers (55 men and eight women) and 80 workers (60 women and 20 men) in the processing plant, providing employment in an area with very few employment opportunities.

The 'power in markets' programmes that have developed in Oxfam's Regions vary in approach, scale, and focus. For example:

In Ghana, Oxfam has supported the development of the producers' network, MAPRONET, which was established in 2001, and brings together a wide range of producer groups. The network helps producer groups to test ideas, share market information, and gain access to appropriate market services. Since joining the network, the 15,600 women and men members have increased their sales, on average, by 35 per cent. Women are gaining greater respect through their economic activities, and relationships between women and men are changing. Madam Rekiat, TOPAN Chairperson and member of the Basket Weavers' Association of Nyariga, for example, says 'It was not thinkable for a woman to lead a group, which was a preserve of men, but this has changed...'

In Albania, Oxfam's Livelihood and Market Access programme has supported women and men to form associations and to market a range of products, including herbs, forest fruits, teas, wine, milk, and honey. The Drini Valley Herb Association was set up two years ago and now has 4,000 members. They have been able to double or triple their cash income since becoming involved in the Association. Traditionally, women carry out most manual agricultural activities in Albania. Through Oxfam's programme, women are now involved in jobs that earn income, such as working in the herb-processing unit. Some men, on the other hand, are working as herb collectors.

In Georgia, Oxfam's partner, the Small Business Development Foundation (established in 2001), is a micro-finance provider that also provides support services to poor producers to develop their enterprises. By 2005, the Foundation had about 1,400 loan clients. A new marketing opportunity, identified by one of the loan clients, is the sale of kiwi fruit. Forty three clients are now kiwi farming, and 19 permanent jobs and about 100 seasonal jobs have been created through the initiative.

There can be tensions for partners working on microfinance between the dual objectives of providing financial services to poor members of communities and seeking to achieve sustainability as microfinance institutions. Our experience suggests that the need to tackle poor people's lack of access to affordable, relevant, financial services extends across the world, in the North and South, and remains a major challenge. Continued investments in small-scale production, processing, and marketing are also important means of enabling poorer members of communities to participate in local economic developments.

B Increasing the influence of civil society, especially poor women and men, on local institutions, national trade policies, and regional/global trade agreements that affect their livelihoods

As Oxfam's 'power in markets' programmes develop, small-scale producers are being supported to influence institutions at all levels. In the Albania programme, for example, this extends from influencing local policy through Rural Forums, to promoting farmers' associations and co-operatives with national government, to campaigning on *Make Trade Fair* as part of Oxfam's global campaigning and *Big Noise* petition.

About 80 per cent of the eighteen million people who have signed the *Big Noise* petition live in the South.¹ Two million people in Ethiopia signed the petition during a campaign in 2004

¹ This is the figure up to December 2005, when the petition was presented to Pascal Lamy, Director-General of the WTO. In his Web diary, during the WTO Hong Kong meeting, he wrote: 'Back to the Conference Centre for

that focused on the global coffee crisis, and more have signed in 2005. The work of Oxfam GB and other Oxfam International affiliates with coffee farmers over the years is a good example of how poor producers can become major protagonists in international campaigning for change:

Coffee farmers have been supported in a number of countries, for example in Haiti, Honduras, Peru, and Ethiopia, in the development of co-operatives and networks; improvements in production, including organic production; entry into markets, including Fairtrade and organic markets; the development of skills in advocacy and campaigning. The establishment of the Global Alliance on Commodities and Coffee (GLACC) at the beginning of Oxfam's global campaigning on coffee in 2002 then strengthened coffee producers' voice further. Nineteen national networks of coffee organisations are now members of GLACC, and the alliance represents small-scale producers within the major global initiatives (the Common Code for the Coffee Community (CCCC) and the Sustainable Coffee Partnership) that are seeking to resolve the global coffee crisis.

C Greater accountability of trading corporations and institutions governing trade rules and policies affecting trade

In several programmes, there are examples of initiatives to strengthen the accountability of local government authorities and service providers, and to strengthen national legislation, for example:

In the Shire Highlands of Malawi, where Oxfam has a sustainable livelihoods programme, Radio Listening Clubs provide communities with the opportunity to discuss issues, problems, and ways to improve local services, and expenditures from the District Development Funds are now posted on notice boards.

In Honduras, there are positive results from Oxfam's support for communities to engage in local governance processes, as more spaces are opening up for participation. In particular, it has been found that training local leaders in advocacy and negotiation techniques has been important in facilitating constructive engagements with government and other parties, as opposed to the confrontational approach of the past. The building of alliances has also been crucial. In one significant development, municipal authorities, the National Council of the Maya Chorti indigenous group, and local land owners sat down together to negotiate a solution concerning the legalisation of land granted to the Maya Chortis by the national government. About 2,000 citizens have been involved in accountability-focused open forums with municipal authorities, and transparency commissions have been created to undertake social audits of municipal funds. Local Community Development Committees requested funds amounting to US\$555,100 from central government for projects prioritised by the communities, which would benefit 4,500 people. The Committees are monitoring the implementation of 21 such projects, and another 56 proposals are waiting to be cleared.

In the UK, lobbying by the National Group of Homeworkers (NGH), Oxfam, and the Trades Union Congress (TUC) helped close a loophole in UK government legislation which allowed homeworkers to be paid 80 per cent of the minimum wage.

the "Big Noise" — a petition signed by almost 18 million citizens in favour of fair trade. I'm certainly impressed by the petition and by Oxfam's work to get people thinking about trade.'

Internationally, Oxfam International has campaigned on a number of issues since the launch of the *Make Trade Fair* campaign in April 2002. There are many players seeking to shift policies and practices in these areas. We shall briefly consider the types of contribution that we feel Oxfam is making through our campaigning after first introducing the main areas of campaigning on trade over the past four years. Significant events have happened during 2005/06 (which falls outside the reporting period for the PPA 2001 – 2005). These will be reported on under the PPA 2005-11, but for Oxfam’s initial analysis of the results of the 2005 WTO Summit, see ‘*What happened in Hong Kong? Initial analysis of the WTO Ministerial, December 2005*’.²

- ***The reform of intellectual property rules, with a focus on poor people’s access to medicines.*** The *Cut the Cost* campaign was launched in early 2001, prior to the launch of *Make Trade Fair*. Since then the price of antiretroviral medicines for AIDS has fallen dramatically for poor countries, as more developing countries have produced or imported generic versions of medicines, and as more international pharmaceutical companies have accepted the concept of selling medicines at reduced prices to poorer countries. Some progress was made in changing the World Trade Organisation’s intellectual property rules (TRIPS)³, and some major pharmaceutical companies have made significant concessions in agreements with the governments of developing countries. However, the restricted and complex nature of the deal on TRIPS has made it difficult to use, and difficult for poor countries to benefit.
- ***Achieving better livelihoods for farmers trading in commodities, with a focus on coffee.*** *Mugged: poverty in your coffee cup* was launched in September 2002. As mentioned above, the coffee campaign brought together a Global Alliance on Commodities and Coffee (GLACC), including networks of coffee organisations, and has given a voice to small-scale coffee producers within the major global initiatives (the Common Code for the Coffee Community (CCCC) and the Sustainable Coffee Partnership) that are seeking to resolve the global coffee crisis. The major coffee roasters are also participating in these two initiatives, but when talking about sustainability it is not clear if the producers and roasters share a common understanding of the term. Some roasters have increased the volume of Fairtrade coffee that they purchase directly from producers, or started to make Fairtrade purchases. However progress is slow, and falls far short of the initial target of two per cent of total volume of purchases by the major roasters that Oxfam’s coffee campaign sought.
- ***Stopping agricultural over-production and export dumping by rich countries, including a focus on cotton and sugar.*** Some progress was made at the meeting of WTO members in July 2004, when the EU made a promise to eliminate export subsidies. In addition, the WTO’s rulings that some US cotton subsidies and EU sugar subsidies are illegal have been important victories for developing countries, and will substantially influence the process of reforming farm subsidies in the USA and EU. On sugar, the EU has made proposals for reform, although these do not scale back EU production as much as Oxfam recommends, and campaigning to achieve a pro-development outcome is not finished.
- ***Improving labour policies and conditions in international supply chains.*** *Trading Away our Rights* and *Play Fair at the Olympics* were launched in early 2004. *Play Fair at the Olympics* was a joint campaign of the International Confederation of Trade Unions, the

² ‘*What happened in Hong Kong? Initial analysis of the WTO Ministerial, December 2005*’,

www.oxfam.org.uk/what_we_do/issues/trade/bp85_hongkong.htm

³ TRIPS – the World Trade Organisation’s Agreement on Trade Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights

Clean Clothes Campaign, and Oxfam. Five out of the seven companies targeted in the run up to the 2004 Olympics in Athens have reviewed their codes of practice and labour policies. Four have begun to address the issue of freedom of association of workers. The *Trading Away our Rights* campaign, which focuses on the precarious nature of women's work in international supply chains, was launched in 23 countries around the world, and national campaigns continue in 15. A number of governments in campaign countries have strengthened their labour regulations, and there have been shifts in compliance with labour laws by some companies.

- ***Improving access to markets for poor countries through the WTO development round negotiations. Preventing damaging new rules on foreign investment and competition coming on to the WTO agenda.*** UK government policy on trade has become significantly more development-focused during 2004/05, but shifts in the EU and US positions in WTO trade negotiations are now needed, as well as continued strengthening of the voice of developing countries in negotiations through the consolidation of their different blocs. The 'new issues' about foreign investment and competition were dropped from the development round agenda. Generally, Oxfam considers that the WTO Hong Kong ministerial meeting was a lost opportunity to make trade fairer for poor people, and most difficult decisions were put off to a further meeting in 2006.⁴

What forms of contribution does Oxfam make to campaigning with others on trade?

- Different constituencies attest to the quality of the research and policy analysis that underlies Oxfam's campaigning. For example, this was the case in the *Cut the Cost* campaign where our analysis helped challenge the intellectual arguments underpinning the TRIPS Agreement. It was welcomed by developing countries because it assisted them in World Trade Organisation discussions. Our research on major pharmaceutical companies and focus on influencing investors made a particular contribution, and has led to a broader engagement with companies in discussing ideas and strategies for increasing access to medicines in poor countries.
- Campaigns have involved significant investments in the formation and/or strengthening of alliances, as for example in campaigning on coffee and labour rights. Oxfam has also made a significant investment in the development and work of the *Global Call to Action Against Poverty (G-CAP)* and *Make Poverty History (MPH)* alliances over the past year.
- Over the period of the PPA, our experience in supporting Southern-based campaigning has grown, and there have been interesting developments. In campaigning on labour rights, for example, the national alliances that have been formed have sometimes brought together different constituencies to campaign on the same issue for the first time. In Colombia, the campaign involved trade unions and organisations dedicated to development, human rights, and women's issues.
- The *Big Noise* petition has been promoted in the South, linked to issues of major concern nationally. Signing the petition has, for instance, been linked to agricultural trade in Albania, coffee in Ethiopia, and women's labour rights in a number of countries. Government representatives have commented how large numbers of women and men in the South making their views known adds to the weight of their arguments in international negotiations, and helps to hold governments to account to their citizens.
- Investments have also been made in popularising messages about unfair trade in order to reach out to new audiences, including young people. For example, as part of the

⁴ See 'What happened in Hong Kong? Initial analysis of the WTO Ministerial, December 2005', op.cit.

campaign against agricultural subsidies, 16 UK and global celebrities agreed to have agricultural produce 'dumped' on them for a series of photographs, and this helped to secure extensive media reach for the campaign messages.

D Growth in pro-Fairtrade consumer movement and increased offer of Fairtrade-certified products in Britain

Consumer support for Fairtrade continues to grow in the UK. Sales of FAIRTRADE-marked products have risen 51 per cent between 2003 and 2004. Overall sales of Fairtrade certified products in the UK exceeded £140m in 2004, up from £92m in 2003. Oxfam has contributed to this growth through its own direct activities, and through its work with allies. In particular, Oxfam gives financial support to the Fairtrade Foundation, is directly involved in the governance of Cafedirect, and is a member of IFAT (the International Federation of Alternative Traders) and the UK Fair Trade Leaders Forum.

Oxfam activists and regional campaigners, alongside others, have promoted FAIRTRADE-marked products in their local areas, and been involved in the Fairtrade Foundation's Fairtrade Town initiative. There are now over 140 towns that have achieved Fairtrade Town status, compared with 31 at the end of 2003.

Oxfam's direct collaboration with commercial companies is also playing a part in increasing the availability and range of Fairtrade products in the shops. In the honey sector, Oxfam has collaborated for a long time with Cotswold Honey, initially as the importer for Oxfam-branded honey for sale in Oxfam shops. Over the last year, the company has achieved significant expansion and diversification in the UK market for Fairtrade honey. Cotswold's Fairtrade Honey is now available in Asda, a major supermarket, and is an ingredient in several new product ranges. The company's big growth in Fairtrade honey brings significant benefits to poor honey producers. The total volume of honey Cotswold Honey purchases has tripled this year, and now accounts for around 10 per cent of the global Fairtrade honey market.

November 2004 saw the launch of Progreso Cafes Ltd, the UK's first high-street chain of Fairtrade coffee bars created solely for the benefit of coffee growers. Two coffee bars have been opened so far. The growers benefit from the guaranteed Fairtrade price; from the ability to showcase their coffee in the European market; from the direct access to market offered; and from the joint ownership of the cafes through which they share in the profits and have learning opportunities from their position on the Board. The growers who supply Progreso have 25 per cent of the shares and 25 per cent is owned by a coffee growers' trust to benefit coffee-growing communities. This is matched by a 50 per cent shareholding by Oxfam, who started up the cafes in a joint project with Matthew Algie, the UK's largest independent coffee roaster. It is too early to assess results from this new initiative.

Challenges and areas of development

- *Integrating poor producers in markets.* As our work with poor producers has grown, we have developed a greater understanding of how to analyse markets and the factors that increase the power of individual, or groups of, producers. The competencies of programme staff to support 'power in markets' programmes have developed considerably, supported for example through a Market Access training programme and the preparation of a series of Market Access 'parables'. However, we face a number of challenges as we continue to develop this new area of livelihoods work:

- Addressing the widespread lack of appropriate financial services for poor women and men. Currently, very poor people are often excluded and poor producers are often prevented from developing their businesses to a size where they can ensure a fair return in the market.
 - Finding the most appropriate ways of enabling poor producers to access a range of services to assist them to secure sustainable markets, for example business advice alongside financial services.
 - Finding ways to increase the equity and efficiency of poor producers' trading relationships by working with other actors in the value chain.
 - Understanding other ways in which Oxfam can engage with the private sector, whether service providers or trading companies, other than through campaigning, in order to increase the power of poor producers.
 - Broadening the range of institutions we work with in order to have more impact. This includes the identification of new partners, or developing the skills of existing partners, who can increase the capacity of poor producers to integrate into relevant markets.
 - Ensuring that the lessons from what has worked in this new area of livelihoods work are captured and shared consistently across the organisation.
- ***Chronic poverty and vulnerability.*** New patterns of work and relationships are required, drawing on existing livelihoods and humanitarian strategies, to provide more effective responses in countries where the face of poverty is changing as a result of the impact of HIV, climate changes, landlessness, and other factors. There are examples of good practice and interesting initiatives on which to build, but we are conscious of the urgent need to adapt our approaches more widely and fundamentally. Integrating strong advocacy and campaigning at many levels in our approach is essential.
 - ***Gender equality and livelihoods.*** Programme assessments in 2005 from Malawi, Albania, Viet Nam, Ghana, and Mauritania show women becoming involved in new economic enterprises, and adopting new responsibilities outside the home. They show that stereotypes and discriminatory attitudes about the roles of women and men are being challenged, particularly in terms of economic activities. Often, women are more confident as a result of earning more money, and men show them more respect. Women report that the money they have earned has been used to support their children to go to school, improve the family's diet, and support their own or other family members in further economic activities. Findings vary, but many women report a greater participation in decision making, both within the household and in the wider community. However, more often than not, husbands and other family members are taking on few if any of women's traditional household and child-care responsibilities, so their economic empowerment comes at the cost of an increased workload.
 - ***Working in, and supporting the development of, broad-based campaigning alliances.*** All our campaigning is undertaken as Oxfam International and this has contributed significantly to our influencing capacity. Oxfam has also invested heavily in supporting and building campaigning alliances in developing countries, and internationally, in recent years. These coalitions bring enormous reach to campaigning efforts, but also pose challenges for Oxfam and others. Inevitably, civil-society actors differ, sometimes fundamentally, in their analysis of the best ways to achieve change, and therefore they have differing views on campaign messages and strategy. It is important that we keep challenging one another about the potential, and actual, impact of our strategies on poor

people. It is important to understand where different analyses and strategies are complementary, and where they are weakening the effectiveness and efficiency of coalitions. We need to continue to develop our experience in choosing the most appropriate range of campaign strategies in particular situations, being clear about our objectives on each occasion and identifying the potential for change – while always being true to our principle of ensuring that the voices of poor women and men are heard.

- ***Supporting campaigning by Southern constituencies.*** As we promote and support Southern campaigning, we are aware of the challenges for our partner agencies and poor citizens in different contexts. Campaigning is often new for our partners; where there are repressive regimes, the risks that people take in campaigning can be considerable; and people with precarious livelihoods may be justifiably fearful of claiming their rights and making demands on those who buy their products and pay their wages.
- ***Prioritisation.*** The volume and complexity of work on *Make Trade Fair* is hard to manage and link at all levels of campaigning, given the demands and opportunities stimulated by campaigning to date, and with added demands arising as a result of the tsunami in the Indian Ocean and the launch of *MPH* and *G-CAP*. We have transferred some resources to campaigning on trade outside the UK, reducing what we can contribute within the UK. We have to keep asking ourselves where we can best employ our resources to achieve the greatest impact. We need to take care not to stretch ourselves too far, collectively and individually.

2.2 The Right to Life and Security: improving the quality of humanitarian assistance

Priority strategy:

Supporting action that assures the quality of humanitarian assistance and protection for people affected by conflict and natural disasters.

Outcome indicators:

A Affected populations are adequately protected and their needs met in Oxfam emergency programme areas.

B Sphere standards for quality of response met in Oxfam-managed programmes – dissemination and practice.

C International community better co-ordinated and more accountable to affected populations in situations of conflict and natural disaster.

Oxfam GB's direct programme expenditure on The Right to Life and Security has been almost £180m during the four years of the PPA. The percentage of Oxfam GB's total direct programme expenditure focused on this Aim has varied between 36 per cent and 48 per cent during the four years.

Progress against priority strategies and outcome indicators

A Affected populations adequately protected and needs met in Oxfam emergency programme areas

Response in about 40 countries each year

Each year Oxfam responds to humanitarian crises in about 40 countries. During the four years of the PPA, this has included major responses to humanitarian and protection needs arising from:

- Long-standing conflicts in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Northern Uganda, Palestinian Territories, Liberia, South Sudan, and Colombia.
- The US-led coalition's attacks and the fall of the Taliban regime in Afghanistan in the winter of 2001.
- The war in Iraq in 2003.
- The conflict in Darfur, western Sudan, and subsequent refugee crisis in Chad from 2004 to date.
- Food crises across Africa and in countries in South Asia.
- Floods in the Bangladesh and North-East India river basin, which were particularly severe in 2004.
- Floods and violence in Haiti in 2004.
- The earthquake in Bam, Iran, on 26 December 2003.
- The tsunami in the Indian Ocean on 26 December 2004.

Oxfam has continued to specialise in public health (water and sanitation, hygiene promotion, food and emergency livelihoods), and seek to ensure that humanitarian response work is sensitive to, and takes account of, gender inequalities. Increasing expertise has been developed in the provision of shelter, and this is an important component of Oxfam's programme in response to the Asian tsunami.

Just two short examples of programme responses – to the crisis in Darfur and the Asian tsunami – are given in order to illustrate different aspects of Oxfam’s humanitarian work in recent, major emergencies.

The crisis in Darfur, western Sudan, had been building since late 2003, with 2.1 million people forced from their homes by conflict. Despite a slow start and an extremely challenging working environment, Oxfam’s programme exceeded its goals in 2004–05, eventually meeting public-health needs of 650,000 people in 18 sites with a £10 million budget. Highlights of programme results in 2004/05 from a report on work supported through DFID humanitarian funds (for work in six of the sites and reaching 292,000 people) include: a decrease of 80 per cent in diarrhoea morbidity in Abu Shouk camp (population 90,000); 150,000 people having access to a sufficient quantity and quality of water for drinking, cooking, and personal and domestic hygiene; 150,000 people having access to an estimated 5,000 latrines; at least 70 per cent of households demonstrating safe hygiene practices. It is harder to quantify Oxfam’s impact on protection needs, but a protection analysis was integrated into our work, and substantial public and private advocacy work took place throughout the programme period. Oxfam also worked alongside SECADEV, an Oxfam Intermon partner, to respond to the public health needs of about half of the, approximately, 200,000 refugees from Darfur who fled their homes and crossed into eastern Chad. The budget for the programme in Chad in 2004–05 was £4.7 million.

Following the Asian tsunami, Oxfam began a pilot, transitional-shelter project on the south coast of Sri Lanka. Oxfam’s transitional-shelter work has grown from an initial modest plan, and 1,876 family homes have now been completed in four districts, with expenditure totalling £881,000 (February 2006). Key features of the programme have been:

- *Families from all communities have been targeted for assistance. Both families and local government officials have been involved in shelter design and choice of location.*
- *Skilled and unskilled work was carried out by the families themselves. Participants earned a daily wage, while also gaining a sense of ownership of their house.*
- *The shelters were designed so that they could be dismantled after use, and families can take the materials with them when their permanent homes are built. The private living space that families have is big enough and cool enough to carry out livelihood activities such as mending nets and drying fish.*
- *The specific needs of women were targeted, and specific gender and protection considerations for widowed and single women and girls are now made in the internal design options that are offered to families. Solar lanterns have been provided to each family to ensure safety at night, and improved cooking stoves provided to reduce fire risks.*

Oxfam initiated an informal Shelter and Settlement Forum through which agencies can identify and address shared concerns, such as land issues and site planning, and promote standards and a participatory approach. When Oxfam’s pilot project shelters were completed, the local government chose Oxfam’s design as an example of what NGOs should be building. Public information materials have been produced to inform people of their rights to obtain a shelter, and DIY kits containing tools and materials together with training have been provided to help families to further adapt

and equip their homes. This process was filmed by RedR as an example of good practice, and shared with communities through a public event.

Research to develop practice

Oxfam seeks to develop its own practice and contribute to practice development in the humanitarian sector by researching new technologies and approaches in collaboration with other agencies and academic institutions, for example the universities of Loughborough (WEDC), Cranfield, and Surrey in the UK. Areas of research include well-chlorination using local pot chlorinators and locally pressed chlorine, household water filters, the promotion of hand-washing, excreta disposal (in collaboration with the International Federation of the Red Cross, UNICEF, and UNHCR), community-based management of aid distributions, and cash transfers in response to food and livelihood crises.

Protection of civilians

During the period of the PPA, Oxfam has pursued a combination of approaches towards assuring the protection of civilians caught up in conflicts. Improving the protection of civilians is an important aspect of Oxfam's programmes in, for example, Darfur, Colombia, Liberia, and Indonesia. We seek to design protection programmes in accordance with desired outcomes rather than activities, and to support the development of practice in the sector through, for example, co-authoring a new version of the ALNAP⁵ *Protection Guidance Booklet*. We have continued to advocate and campaign about the threats to civilians in a number of crises. We worked with the UN and a number of governments to influence the long preparations for the Millennium Plus Five Summit, and establish as a norm the fact that all governments have a 'responsibility to protect' civilians everywhere.

B Sphere standards for quality of response met in Oxfam-managed programmes

Over the four years of the PPA, we have reported our experiences in using the Sphere minimum standards in our own work. In some programmes, meeting the standards on a practical level has proved a challenge; in others it has been possible to meet the standards even in difficult environments. Assessments provide examples of staff using analysis beyond adherence to Sphere standards to judge the adequacy of provision in different contexts. Oxfam has promoted the adoption of the standards by governments and civil society agencies. We have played an active role in promoting standards in the response to the Asian tsunami; arguably it was especially important in this crisis, given the large number of actors.

Oxfam has continued to be involved in the Sphere Project globally. This includes participation in the Sphere Steering Committee. We made a significant contribution in the drafting of the 2004 revision of the *Humanitarian Charter and Handbook*, specifically the chapter on water and sanitation, but also by integration of protection and gender considerations.

⁵ ALNAP – Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance in Humanitarian Action, an international network of major humanitarian agencies.

C International community better co-ordinated and more accountable to affected populations in situations of conflict and natural disaster

Oxfam seeks to contribute to better co-ordination of humanitarian actors both directly and indirectly through its preparedness and response activities. For example:

- In Kenya, Oxfam has worked over the years to establish relationships with a wide network of emergency actors, and supported the development of food security co-ordination mechanisms between WFP, the Government of Kenya, and other agencies.
- In the Palestinian Territories, Oxfam set up and has chaired the Emergency Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (E-WaSH) co-ordination group, comprising NGOs and the Palestinian Water Authority; this has contributed to a rapid and co-ordinated response to immediate needs.
- In Bangladesh, Oxfam has invested for more than ten years in strengthening preparedness for floods, especially in the *char*⁶ areas of the river basin. Communities, led by Village Disaster Committees, have developed confidence in their own abilities to cope at times of crisis, equipped with improved early warning systems, rescue boats, raised homesteads, and flood shelters. Positive links between local organisations, local government offices, line ministries, and donors are aiding co-ordination and communication.
- In Uganda, Tanzania, and South Sudan, Oxfam has seconded staff members to support inter-agency developments for humanitarian response. Secondments were to the Office of the Prime Minister in Uganda, UNHCR in Tanzania, and Operation Lifeline Sudan/UNICEF in South Sudan.

In addition to our activities in the Sphere Project, mentioned above, Oxfam is actively involved in the other major international initiatives seeking to improve accountability by the humanitarian sector. We are one of the founding members of the *Humanitarian Accountability Partnership International (HAP-I)* and have a seat on the board. We have hosted the ALNAP Working Group on the *Participation of Crisis-affected Populations in Humanitarian Action*; the final version of a *Practitioners' Handbook* on the subject is due to be produced in 2005/06. Oxfam is also one of the members of the Steering Committee for Humanitarian Response (SCHR) that piloted a *Peer Review Process*, focusing on organisational actions designed to meet the challenges exposed by the scandal over the sexual exploitation of refugees in West Africa.

Challenges and areas of development

- *A humanitarian investment plan.* During the four years of the PPA, Oxfam's Regions have been growing in their capacity to manage humanitarian crises, and the Humanitarian Department has been adapting its role in response. During 2004-05, teams at every level of the organisation were challenged by the demands resulting from the succession of large-scale humanitarian crises that occurred. Reflections on the challenges faced in our response to the Darfur crisis contributed to how we mobilised for responding to the Asian tsunami, and this was truly an organisation-wide effort. Now, as a result of these reflections, a Humanitarian Investment Plan has been drawn up. It focuses on creating the right internal climate and levels of competence to improve Oxfam's performance over the coming year. This work will include reviewing Oxfam's standard operating procedures in major emergencies in order to streamline finance,

⁶ *Chars* are lowing-lying islands in rivers

logistics, and systems. There is also increased confidence in improved tools and approaches to Human Resources management, and a less risk-averse approach in offering longer contracts to improve staff-retention in key positions. These developments have been coupled with an attitude that has encouraged managers not to under-estimate staffing needs in order to reduce commonly experienced problems (such as critical personnel gaps, avoidable delays in set-up and implementation, and pressure on over-stretched implementing staff). While care must be exercised in comparing very different contexts, it does feel that generic lessons have been effectively learned.

- ***Building capacity with others.*** Oxfam International's Humanitarian Consortium was created in 2003, representing a commitment by affiliates to invest in assuring the quality and capacity of Oxfam's humanitarian work. Knowledge and application regarding humanitarian assistance issues vary across affiliates and across countries, and the Consortium provides a mechanism to build from the varied experiences within the group, and ensure clear leadership and roles in humanitarian programmes.

Oxfam GB has also entered into a two-year collaborative initiative, the Emergency Capacity Building Project, funded by the Gates Foundation. The project aims to assess and improve practice within the seven agencies involved⁷ and the wider sector in three areas: recruitment, development, and retention of staff; improving accountability and impact assessment; and improving emergency-preparedness work.

- ***Quality and complexity in humanitarian response.*** There is concern that Oxfam is not always clear and consistent in its expectations in the first phase of a humanitarian response, and there are tensions between adopting a 'default' position of focusing resources on public health, and seeking to integrate quality and mainstreaming work. In Aceh, for the first time, technical advisers were joined by experts in gender, Sphere standards, and accountability. It will be important to assess how the programme manages these potential complexities over time.
- ***Gender equality and humanitarian assistance.*** In many of Oxfam's humanitarian programmes, women are targeted to receive food and other goods for their whole household; income-generation activities ensure that women are involved; and particular attention is paid to the participation of households headed by women. We seek to understand and respond to the particular needs and vulnerabilities of women at times of crisis. However, we know that challenges remain, some of which we identify through programme reviews. For example, in Bangladesh after the floods in 2004, distributing relief food supplies to women for their household was found to help build their self-esteem. However, women did not prioritise their own nutritional needs. They explained that this was partly because they tend to deliberately eat less during floods, to control their bowel movements, because of the difficulties and risks involved in finding private places to defecate.
- ***An integrated approach in areas of chronic vulnerability.*** Oxfam teams from a number of countries in our Southern Africa Region and Horn, East, and Central Africa Region are taking part in an initiative that seeks to develop the way in which we operate in areas of chronic vulnerability. Within this initiative, we are carrying out in-depth livelihood assessments, developing early-warning systems for food insecurity, and developing livelihood programmes that have the capacity to respond to acute needs in crises. In many countries, vulnerability arising from high HIV prevalence is another factor that

⁷ Care, CRS, IRC, Mercy Corps, Save the Children US, World Vision, Oxfam GB

needs to be taken into account. In these areas of chronic and multiple vulnerabilities, we need to continue to innovate and share learning between programmes.

- ***Humanitarian campaigning.*** There continue to be tensions in setting priorities for our humanitarian campaigning, because the scale of need far surpasses the resources, in Regions or headquarters, devoted to humanitarian campaigning. For most of 2004–05, Darfur dominated this work, with both the Region and headquarters struggling to deploy sufficient resources in other crises, including Uganda and the Democratic Republic of Congo. In 2005, the tsunami initially diverted effort away from other crises, before tsunami-dedicated resources allowed staff based at headquarters to resume the previous level of work on Sudan.

Levels of global humanitarian aid in 2004 were lower than in 2003, and no more equitably distributed. We are disappointed that the initiative for Good Humanitarian Donorship that Oxfam has significantly supported has not yet had a measurable impact on this trend.

- ***Humanitarian space.*** Major sister agencies have recently withdrawn from Afghanistan and Sudan as a result of insecurity and the lack of sufficient safe 'humanitarian space' to operate. All international agencies face this overall challenge, in environments where it is increasingly easy to be perceived as 'Western', rather than impartial and humanitarian.

2.3 The Right to be Heard

Priority strategies:

Supporting poor people to have the skills, resources, and access required to influence government and institutional policies and practices that affect their lives.

Influencing governments, multi-laterals, and non-governmental organisations to employ practices that allow poor people to participate effectively in the design, implementation and evaluation of the programmes and policies that affect their lives.

Outcome indicators:

A Greater aid and budget accountability to poor people in programme areas.

B Governments actively seek to involve poor people in the development of national poverty reduction strategies and decentralisation plans.

C Poor people and civil society groups have the skills and resources to influence government policies in the interests of poor people.

Oxfam GB's direct programme expenditure on The Right to be Heard has been about £40m during the four years of the PPA. The percentage of Oxfam GB's total direct programme expenditure focused on this Aim has varied between 8 per cent and 11 per cent during the four years.

Progress against priority strategies and outcome indicators

A Greater aid and budget accountability to poor people in programme areas

B Governments actively seek to involve poor people in the development of national poverty reduction strategies and decentralisation plans

C Poor people and civil society groups have the skills and resources to influence government policies in the interests of poor people

For many years Oxfam has worked with others to increase poor people's voice in relation to policy-making processes of states, and the policies and practices of other powerful institutions. We have also worked with civil society partners and government agencies towards greater accountability of state and other institutions.

In Viet Nam, for example, Oxfam's involvement in the development of participatory planning and monitoring processes emerged from an Aid Management and Co-ordination Conference that Oxfam supported in Tra Vinh province in 1996. Following the conference, Oxfam and the World Bank took up the idea of establishing a framework for increased participation and stronger partnership in large development projects. Nine years later, Oxfam continues to engage with government and civil society partners in ensuring that poor people's voices are heard and that the accountability of government agencies as the state's Comprehensive Poverty Reduction and Growth Strategy is implemented at local level. Progress has been made. In Tra Vinh province, more bottom-up planning is occurring, and gender issues receive more consideration in planning. Local organisations have consulted communities over provincial action plans and have the skills to advocate about the concerns of poor women and men. Oxfam also supports the development of independent monitoring of budgets and development activities at different levels of government.

When the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) process was introduced by the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF), we recognised the importance of becoming involved. The PRSP Manual that Oxfam published in 2002, and early work that we did with others on Participatory Poverty Assessments as part of our work in Viet Nam and in Uganda, for example, have been significant contributions to improving civil society's ability to influence the policies of the World Bank, IMF, and national governments.

Oxfam's programmes have responded as the PRSP process has moved on from preparation of the plans to implementation, and as failures and gains have been recognised. There have been positive changes on a number of fronts. Lending documents and negotiations are generally more open to scrutiny. Civil-society organisations have a seat at the table, and a stronger voice in discussions with donors and governments. Donors are less able to pursue special-interest projects, and instead are moving towards harmonising their contributions, and providing budget or programme support.

In Yemen, Oxfam has worked with civil society organisations and government during the development of the country's first PRSP and subsequently. Persistent efforts have been made to ensure that gender inequalities are considered and addressed, and progress is evident now in the second PRSP. At the community-level, once poor people learned about their rights in the context of the PRSP, they started demanding actions to reduce poverty. They are now beginning to address their demands to local councils, and are joining local civil-society organisations (CSOs) in their advocacy. At national level, a CSOs' Thematic Working Group, with representatives from the 21 governorates, has been established as part of the monitoring mechanism for the PRSP.

Too often PRSP processes have failed to tackle the power dynamics that reinforce the position of local and international elites, and the voices of marginalised and impoverished communities are frequently still not heard. PRSPs have often not addressed key macro-economic and governance issues.

In Bolivia, for instance, policy relating to the extractive industry has remained one key issue of popular concern not addressed by the PRSP. Deepening poverty in the country has led to a dramatic rise in popular mobilisation and action, with civil-society organisations aspiring to change the 'rules of the game', and demanding a constitutional assembly and the nationalisation of key extractive resources. Alongside work on the PRSP process, Oxfam has worked with partners to support indigenous communities in their pursuit of specific claims related to the activities of extractive industries in their territories. During the life of Oxfam's programme, compensation payments amounting to US\$2.3m have been made to communities, mining operations that were affecting 28 communities have been halted, and compensation in relation to the mining company COMSUR's mines is being negotiated. Nationally, an Indigenous Development Fund is to be set up, using public revenues from the royalties on hydrocarbons.

In Honduras, although the implementation process for the PRSP provides a degree of participation for civil society, the complicated system of mobilising resources is creating frustration and distrust in the process. PRSP funding partly depends on debt-cancellation funds from the international community, and this in turn depends on compliance with the economic adjustment policies of the World Bank and the IMF. Long-lasting negotiations between unions and the government turned into a two-year dispute with the IMF over salaries in the education and health sectors, which resulted in delayed debt relief and donor cuts amounting to US\$194m. Oxfam supported its partner FOSDEH to produce a paper on the issue, and attend the 2004

spring meetings of the World Bank and IMF to highlight the situation. Meetings were held with senior staff of both agencies, and there was considerable media coverage of the story. The lobbying and advocacy of FOSDEH and other civil-society organisations contributed to the conclusion of an agreement between the unions and government, and with the IMF. A positive development at the national level is that, after pressure from civil society, the government has earmarked 30 per cent of the 2005–06 national budget to support PRSP projects. Now that the completion point has been reached in the approval process for debt cancellation (April 2005), civil-society organisations will be able to introduce six programmes and 33 projects on land access, basic social services, credit access, and agricultural support, to be funded by the release of HIPC funds.

The decentralisation processes that are taking place in many countries have provided new opportunities to work with civil society and government agencies to strengthen the accountability of government structures, and the engagement of citizens in policy making. However, the changes are presenting new challenges too.

In Georgia, Azerbaijan, and Armenia, Oxfam actively supported civil-society participation during the development of the PRSPs. However, it was found that poor people did not see the relevance of national policy work to their day-to-day problems. Therefore, while the programmes continue to seek to influence the PRSPs, there is now a strong focus on budget analysis and monitoring, and on strengthening the role and capacity of municipalities. Research is also undertaken on specific issues, such as oil, corruption, and macroeconomic frameworks. In all three countries, there are indications that the engagements between community members and local authorities on tangible issues is creating greater trust, and helps poor people to develop a better understanding of their rights. For instance, in Azerbaijan, about 60 per cent of 285 local people surveyed felt that ‘municipalities are now more capable of helping people’, and municipality leaders, who now involve communities in budgeting processes, report that their tax collection has increased by 30 per cent. In a local budgeting initiative in Georgia, advocacy has resulted in amendments being made to the budget of the city of Zugdidi, with unspent budget lines being transferred to education and social expenditures.

At the global level, Oxfam’s attention in the last few years to the interconnectedness of people’s rights to fair trade rules, increased and improved aid, and cancellation of debt is increasingly reflected in the donor community and among staff throughout the international finance institutions (IFIs). Well-researched policy documents and campaigning activities by Oxfam and allies, often at IFI meetings, have reinforced this triad of issues. This work has been supplemented by campaigning on particular issues, for example the Fast Track Initiative for education, and advocacy to push for full cancellation of debts owed to the World Bank and IMF by the poorest countries. Oxfam has supported partners to present specific case studies that illustrate ways in which IMF policies are hampering development programmes, as mentioned above in the example from Honduras.

Oxfam also made a significant contribution to the PRSP review undertaken by the World Bank and IMF over the last two years. A policy paper entitled *The IMF and MDGs: Failing to Deliver* was published in August 2003, and *From Donorship to Ownership? Moving towards PRSP Round Two* was published in January 2004. During a conference, soon after the release of the IMF’s and World Bank’s PRSP review reports, the author of the IMF report publicly spoke of the influence of Oxfam’s submissions. A number of the recommendations in the IMF report reflected measures that Oxfam had advocated, such as the greater use of Poverty and Social Impact Analysis. Unfortunately, our advocacy to date has had less influence on the World Bank’s review and behaviour.

Challenges and areas for development

- ***Participation and empowerment.*** Participation does not automatically lead to empowerment. Assisting people to achieve their rights has an obvious legal dimension, but there are also important political and social dimensions to this work, which involve work to change power relations within society. Several Oxfam programmes have reflected on the way in which the unequal power held by different people within networks, multi-stakeholder forums, and partnerships affects the quality and value of participation, and the long way still to go to address issues of unequal power.
- ***Rights and the political environment.*** The challenges for our 'right to be heard' work are huge in the many sensitive and complex political environments in which we work. Our Central America, Caribbean, and Mexico Region reports that advocacy by civil society is often being condemned as political opposition by governments at all levels, and a series of new political reforms on security and 'good governance' is becoming a mechanism for violating civil and political rights. In other Regions too, where we work in areas of conflict, where states are fragile, and where corruption is rife, there are challenges for Oxfam and other international agencies in deciding what role we can most appropriately play to protect and enhance poor people's rights. Across our work on 'the right to be heard', we should consider the opportunities for more active engagement with parliaments and political processes.
- ***Maintaining momentum in campaigning to Make Poverty History and holding governments to account.*** The number of people and the breadth of constituencies now campaigning across the world, especially with the coming together of the *Make Poverty History* and the *Global Call to Action Against Poverty* alliances, are unprecedented, and a powerful force for change. More money for development is becoming available globally. We need to plan ahead with allies to keep up the strength of the campaign, through to the delivery of funds and actions to overcome poverty, considering what support different constituencies need in order to stay involved as debates become more technical. We also need to explore how to convince even more people that poverty is the key political challenge of our generation.
- ***Democratising development practice.*** We have not made progress on democratising development practice as quickly as we had anticipated during the lifetime of the PPA. Our own accountability to partner agencies and to poor women and men involved in, and affected by, our programmes is crucial. Strengthening our own practice in this respect remains a priority for us, and remains an objective in Oxfam's PPA 2005-11. Staff in various parts of Oxfam are seeking to establish a clear set of partnership principles and accountability mechanisms. The UK Poverty Programme has worked with partners to explore a set of minimum standards for participation, and we are looking at the set of principles developed by the Humanitarian Accountability Partnership – International, and their application to development programmes. We aim to be a rights-based organisation. This demands that we enshrine participation and transparency in all our relationships, and understand the factors that can undermine these principles.