

Programme Impact Report

Oxfam GB's work with partners and
allies around the world

July 2004



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Introduction

"... for the first time, the Government is taking some notice of us."

Coffee farmer from Haiti, talking about Oxfam's coffee campaign

"I would encourage all Trade Ministers to read this paper from beginning to end."

Cham Prasidh, the Cambodian Minister of Commerce, referring to Oxfam's paper on Cambodia's accession to the World Trade Organisation at a plenary session at the World Trade Organisation meeting in Cancún, Mexico

"I'm 75 years old and I'm unable to walk well. There is nothing left at home. We can't go back... there is nothing, no people, no houses, and there is fighting. In the bush, where we were hiding before coming here, the water wasn't good. The water Oxfam brings is close by – just over there. Yes, it's good... we have been here in the camp a while and without this water and other things from Oxfam, our health would have been bad."

Ulama Lucien, Bunia airport camp for displaced people, eastern Democratic Republic of Congo

"Women and men working together is another benefit of the bee-keeping project. Before, women did not have specific jobs in the community. Now those who are involved in the bee project feel proud of their work and have a higher status in the family.... The family sees the work I'm doing and are happy to help me because they know the work with the bees is important."

Lume Isufmehtaj, beekeeper Ure e Shtrenjte village, Albania

"Oxfam hasn't driven the process but has kept it going – always there and with a team of people who have a strategic vision about where it's going. Oxfam could see the whole of the elephant."

Niall Cooper, Church Action on Poverty, talking about Oxfam's work on anti-poverty policies in the UK

This report is the culmination of our annual review process, that looks at the contribution Oxfam is making – together with our partners and allies – to overcoming poverty and suffering in the world. We are encouraged by what our programmes are achieving. The review this year shows that programmes are having an increasing influence on the policies and practices that keep people in poverty, and are reaching out to more and more people. These positive trends result from huge efforts by programme staff in shifting the way we programme – as envisaged in our strategic plan. New types of partnerships have been forged and strong alliances have been built with organisations around the world that are campaigning for change. This includes working together with other Oxfam International affiliates, especially in campaigning¹. Oxfam GB wants to acknowledge that much of the impact described in this report stems from the strength and breadth of the partnerships and

¹ We shall usually refer to Oxfam, rather than Oxfam GB, in this report because of the collaboration between Oxfam International affiliates in many areas of programming.

alliances in which we work, and from the range of knowledge, skills, and influence that they bring.

The report shows that we are also learning about our weaknesses, and where we need to improve our work. Open discussion about weaknesses feels like a risky endeavour for Oxfam at every level. Oxfam staff need to trust that exposing failures and shortcomings will not be interpreted as poor performance. The same is true for partners in their relationship with Oxfam, and for Oxfam in relation to our supporters. But we believe that weaknesses must be discussed, both in the interests of improving the effectiveness of our work, and in terms of Oxfam's accountability to our supporters, partners and people living in poverty. We also believe that the huge task of overcoming poverty – a task that we passionately believe must be achieved in our lifetimes – requires an honest sharing of what has worked and what has not worked in aid delivery. Many of the issues and difficulties we raise present challenges for other agencies too. New partnerships, strategies and commitments by the international community will be needed to confront them. In sharing our own real experience, we wish to contribute to a more honest and effective debate on aid effectiveness, and the role of policy change in achieving lasting changes in the lives of people experiencing poverty. We hope others will join us.

In our annual programme impact reviews, we look at a selection of programme work going back over several years, and draw on a range of evidence to make our assessments. Important in this – as illustrated at the beginning of this report – are the observations of poor women and men, partners, government representatives and others who know our work. Their perspectives help us understand what they value, and reflect on how we can best contribute in different situations. We also draw on evaluations undertaken with the help of consultants, who bring particular expertise and a more independent view into our assessments. More information on the impact assessment process can be found in Appendix A.

Executive summary

Highlights of achievements

- **Better access to, and influence in, markets is helping women and men with insecure livelihoods achieve higher incomes.** Coffee farmers in Central America and the Caribbean, people in remote, rural communities in Albania, pastoralists in the Sahel, farmers in the highlands of Malawi, woodcarvers in Kenya, rice farmers in Thailand – support to these different groups is helping them gain access to local, national, or international markets. By supporting poor producers in the development of trading organisations, and demonstrating to companies the viability of trading fairly with small producers, Oxfam and its partners are helping create the conditions for sustainable change. Some poor producers have gained the confidence to campaign with others for change, and their influence is growing. For instance, a coffee farmer in Haiti felt that, as a result of Oxfam's coffee campaign, "*...for the first time, the Government is taking some notice of us.*"

- **The terms of debate on world trade are changing.** At the World Trade Organisation meeting in Cancún in 2003, it was clear that the governments of developing countries had a new power and they must now be included as an active party to agreements. A poverty and development perspective is now essential in any acceptable solution to trade issues. Oxfam contributed to these huge shifts, through good research, working in broad South-North alliances, substantial dialogue with some Southern governments, dialogue with and lobbying of Northern governments, attracting wide media coverage, and the support of celebrities and well-respected international politicians. Oxfam's campaigning on trade issues has contributed to the following changes:

On medicines – The price of antiretroviral medicines for AIDS has fallen dramatically for poor countries – with the cost per person per year dropping from about US\$12,000 to US\$200 over the past few years. During this time, Oxfam joined others campaigning to cut the cost of medicines. There has been some progress in changing the World Trade Organisation's intellectual property rules (TRIPS)² and some major pharmaceutical companies have made significant concessions in agreements with the governments of developing countries. In Brazil, for instance, the government has negotiated with Bristol-Myers Squibb to buy the medicine, *Atazanavir*, at 76 per cent less than the market price. This will lead to an annual saving on AIDS treatment costs in Brazil of more than US\$60 million. Some developing countries have produced generic versions of some medicines, but there is concern that this production of low-price, generic medicines may dry-up after 2005 when all of the key countries producing them have to implement the TRIPS Agreement. Action continues to be needed on all fronts, because treatment remains neither accessible nor affordable for the majority of poor people across the world.

On coffee – Some major coffee roasters and retailers have increased their purchases of Fair Trade coffee. Others have ambitious plans to do so or are committed to other actions to support coffee farmers and communities. Governments of some coffee-producing countries have begun to change policies in ways that support poor coffee farmers. The European Union has formed a new position on commodities, which is more favourable to developing countries. Companies, governments, and multilateral agencies are involved in initiatives such as the Common Code for Coffee Communities to start developing a joint approach to resolve the crisis. However, the majority of coffee farmers continue to be impoverished and actions need to be accelerated by all the major players.

On agricultural export subsidies – West African countries managed to get cotton included as a specific item on the Cancún agenda, helping to foster unity among

² TRIPS – the World Trade Organisation's Agreement on Trade Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights

developing countries against subsidies. Oxfam's research from West Africa was influential in making the case for ending subsidies on cotton. Since the meeting in Cancún, Brazil's challenge to cotton subsidies in the USA has been upheld at the World Trade Organisation. The European Commission has recently called for action to reform the cotton sector.

- **In some very insecure and politically difficult environments Oxfam has continued to provide life-saving assistance.** In eastern Democratic Republic of Congo, in Liberia and in Northern Uganda, Oxfam has been able to continue providing support to people caught up in intense conflicts, while also making representations to those with the duty to protect civilians. For instance, in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo, Oxfam was able to provide essential public health services to about 45,000 people in Bunia town when conflict worsened in 2003. We advocated locally, nationally, and internationally for protection for people caught up in the conflict. Our advocacy contributed strong evidence in support of the decisions made by the United Nations Security Council to deploy a rapid response force to Bunia and strengthen the mandate of MONUC (the United Nations Mission to the Democratic Republic of Congo).
- **Rapid support has been provided to people in some sudden emergencies.** When a twin typhoon hit Bangladesh, staff and partner organisations were well prepared, and provided plastic sheeting for emergency shelter, food and items such as bleaching powder to mitigate immediate health risks, within 72 hours. When an earthquake struck Bam, in Iran (where Oxfam does not have an office), on 26 December 2003, Oxfam was quickly in discussion with other agencies about how we could assist. We flew out water equipment and a logistician from the UK after four days.
- **Countries are pledging support for an Arms Trade Treaty.** The *Control Arms* campaign was launched by Oxfam, Amnesty International, and IANSA³ in October 2003. Since then, eight governments have pledged support for an Arms Trade Treaty and several others are close to endorsing the initiative.
- **In a number of countries, national policy is shifting and actions are being taken to uphold poor people's rights.** For example, in Peru, the government rejected the Manhattan Minerals Corporation's project to extract minerals in the Tambogrande district. The company started exploration in the area in 1999 and Oxfam has been supporting local communities to defend their rights and make sure their voices were heard in negotiations. The lives of about 70,000 people would have been affected if mining had gone ahead. In Viet Nam, the country's Comprehensive Poverty Reduction and Growth Strategy clearly shows the government's willingness to encourage the participation of civil society in the implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of the strategy. Oxfam has been working with local partners and the government there for ten years to develop participatory planning and monitoring processes. With these now established, continued support for people's participation in the implementation and monitoring of the Strategy should begin to make a real difference to people in two very poor provinces, which have a high concentration of minority ethnic communities.
- **More girls in pastoralist communities are going to school.** Innovative work in the Horn, Central and West Africa is leading to the development of appropriate forms of education for children from pastoralist communities, is helping change ideas and beliefs about the education of girls, and is making governments pay greater attention to pastoralist education. In Mali, local *animatrices* are successfully encouraging parents to send girls to community schools. In Sudan, support to mobile schools means that more

³ IANSA – International Action Network on Small Arms – a grouping of hundreds of southern NGOs working on arms control.

girls are attending. In Kenya, a Non-Formal Education Desk has been established at the Ministry of Education, and a Coalition for Pastoralists' Children's Education is being hosted within the Office of the President.

- **Attitudes are changing and women and men are taking action in South Asia to end violence against women.** Women survivors of violence are gaining confidence through the support they have received, attitudes of service providers are being changed, and men and women are speaking out about the issue for the first time. Oxfam's work in South Asia over a number of years to develop groups, networks, and coalitions concerned with ending violence against women has provided momentum for more concerted campaigning now. The growing involvement of men that has been achieved is encouraging. For instance, in Killonochi, Sri Lanka, they were actively involved in organising 'white ribbon day'⁴.

Lessons and challenges

Clarity, focus and co-ordination. Generally, we have become clearer about the changes we want to see and more focused in developing relationships and strategies to help bring about these changes.

At key moments, such as the World Trade Organisation meeting in Cancún, Mexico, where there is the opportunity to have a significant influence, we have become much stronger at co-ordinating our efforts globally and working with others to bring together the diverse skills and voices that give weight to campaigning.

Food crises and HIV/AIDS have made millions of people more vulnerable. The widespread food crises across Africa in 2002/03, together with the impact of the HIV/AIDS pandemic, have sharpened the awareness of agencies about the need for new strategies and partnerships.

We need to integrate our livelihood and humanitarian interventions better in chronically food-insecure regions, and learn from some of our long-term experiences of doing this. These include work with pastoralist communities in arid parts of Kenya and with vulnerable communities in the *char*⁵ areas of Bangladesh, which suffer from recurrent floods. We need to work with others to explore the role that social safety nets and social insurance provisions can play in helping to reverse the downward spiral faced by millions of poor people, especially in areas of high HIV/AIDS prevalence.

We have gained experience, particularly in countries in Southern Africa, about how to adapt programmes to take account of the impact of HIV/AIDS. However, we need to apply good practices on a much wider scale both within the Southern Africa Region and beyond. We need to develop a clear strategy to do this. The introduction of our workplace policy on HIV/AIDS has been another important development, and partners and other agencies have shown interest in learning from our experience of this.

Working with the private sector to access business services and influence their practice. Oxfam staff have acquired a better understanding of markets and of the knowledge, skills, and services that partners and poor producers need in order to gain more power in them. We recognise that there are skills, resources, and experience in private sector companies that could be of huge benefit to poor countries and communities and that the NGO sector has so far failed to tap. We are exploring how these resources can be drawn on to ensure the viability of poor producers' enterprises. At the same time, we are continuing

⁴ White Ribbon Day is the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women.

⁵ 'Chars' are low-lying islands in rivers.

to develop relationships with companies to influence practices within their supply chains to bring lasting benefits for poor producers.

There are important challenges in our markets work with vulnerable producers. For instance, given the insecurity of the political, environmental and market conditions they face, we need to ensure good assessments are made of the long-term viability of their enterprises. We also need to consider the consequences that market developments can have for very poor people. For example, the higher prices that organic products attract take them out of the reach of the poorest people in society, in both rich and developing countries.

Tackling the quality of basic social services. More children, especially girls, are going to school and the cost of medicines for the treatment of AIDS has fallen dramatically in developing countries as already mentioned. However, treatment is still not accessible or affordable to the majority of poor people and the quality of basic health and education services remains a big concern. Oxfam has commissioned research to explore the conditions that are needed for good-quality service delivery. This will inform our advocacy and campaigning work, particularly work through 2005, on meeting the Millennium Development Goals, as well as our long-term programming and advocacy work on basic service provision. We should include pilot initiatives to provide lessons for influencing the use of the global funds already available and to help us identify responses to HIV/AIDS that could be widely applied.

Holding to account those with a duty to ensure rights are upheld. Oxfam and its partners have made a good contribution to helping poor people express their views to their governments as more opportunities have opened up. But a long-term commitment is required for this work. Often the expression of poor people's views is not leading to changes in policy, or favourable policies are not being carried through into practice. For example, there have been positive shifts in the political environment in Kenya towards addressing poverty, but people are beginning to show frustration with the lack of tangible improvements. Equally, we have seen important commitments at the global level on issues such as subsidies and arms control, but these are not yet being translated into benefits in the lives of poor people. We need to strengthen our work with civil society actors to press governments to follow through commitments to improve the lives of poor people. This will require more engagement by national programme staff in policy work, and support from the wider organisation to develop effective influencing strategies at the national level.

An area where we should learn more from successful experiences is where we have worked on 'both sides of the equation' – supporting communities to identify their needs and demand their rights, but also supporting governments to fulfil those rights. Oxfam's long-term engagement with communities and government agencies all over East Asia shows how these strategies can operate in parallel to good effect. A review of Oxfam's new Programme for Rights, Inclusion, and Development in Peru showed how important it is to support local government in understanding and exercising its responsibilities as a duty bearer.

Gender on our agenda. There are strong examples of successful gender 'mainstreaming' in some of our programmes, with women taking on new positions of responsibility, gaining more control over money, and having more influence over decisions at home and in the community. We see men recognising women's new roles and responsibilities. But, we cannot claim that our practice is strong everywhere.

There are, of course, inherent challenges in this work. It requires shifts in people's ideas and beliefs, as well as in the policies and practices of institutions. We face other challenges in this work too, and recognise a number of weaknesses. Sometimes we have lacked continuity of staff and management support, particularly in some humanitarian programmes in areas of chronic conflict. It has been difficult to recruit women in some insecure environments, such as in Iraq last year. We have broadened the partnerships we work in

and this has added to the challenges we already faced in ensuring all those we work with share our commitment to promoting gender equality. In some programmes, insufficient attention has been given to undertaking a gender analysis at the beginning and we have not collected information for women and men separately.

While some momentum has been established in this area of our work, stronger individual and organisational accountability is required to support and assure good practice across all our programmes.

'Beyond the headlines'. Oxfam's report in 2003, calling for action to protect civilians in neglected crises, was well received in the humanitarian and international community. It was, for instance, quoted by the UN Office for the Co-ordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) in its annual report. However, the war in Iraq has continued to dominate the headlines and the attention of the international community, and there is little sign of any positive change in aid flows. In some of the poorest countries, where years of conflict have left millions dead or displaced, we need to find new approaches that are capable of turning the tide.

Within Oxfam, there are tensions in setting priorities for our humanitarian advocacy given the range of crises and the demands we face. Tensions also arise in deciding how to balance direct humanitarian assistance and protection work with advocacy in different situations, taking into account the security issues and the likely influence we can bring to bear. There are no simple answers and managers are faced with making difficult judgements.

Managing our power as a global campaigning force. Through Oxfam's 'Big Noise' petition, we have seen how large numbers of poor people calling for change gives legitimacy to claims. But broad alliances, especially of large representative organisations across different constituencies, can add weight to these claims and give marginalised groups access to forums where their collective voice can be heard. For instance, the Global Alliance on Coffee and other Commodities that came together through Oxfam's coffee campaign has a membership of over a hundred producer and consumer groups, trade unions, and environmentalists. This added strength to the campaign and helped these organisations to engage their membership in key policy issues.

Working as Oxfam International, and in alliance with others, we have made enormous progress towards our objective of building a global campaigning force capable of achieving significant policy change globally. We have built a capacity to engage millions of people in campaigning and have helped to build some broad South-North alliances. But there continue to be real tensions in this work. As we said last year, we still have much to learn about campaigning with partners in the South, and about ensuring that change is seen through to tangible results for people living in poverty. We are aware also that Oxfam can 'crowd out' other organisations with the power of our voice. We need to ensure that our approach to campaigning leads not just to changes in policy, but also creates the political space for southern organisations and networks to achieve their own strength and legitimacy. There are some inherent tensions in global campaigning that we don't expect to overcome entirely, but we need to continue our efforts to manage these tensions better.

Spreading innovations and bringing about wide-scale change. There are many examples of good ideas and small innovations in our programmes. Some of them spread, and have an influence within Oxfam and beyond. A method for community management of distributions of food and other humanitarian aid, developed in Oxfam's Horn, East and Central Africa programme, is an innovation that has spread and been adapted to different situations across a number of Oxfam regions and other agencies. Taking the idea of community-based health financing into our programme in Eastern Europe, and testing it, has led to the possibility of national adoption of this in Armenia. Lessons are being shared with similar programmes introduced in Azerbaijan and Georgia, and Oxfam is now working with the government of Yemen to start a programme. We need to understand better how

innovations spread and how to support our teams to develop and communicate examples of good practice.

In our more successful programmes, such as the health programme in Armenia, there are often a number of common features. Working directly with marginalised groups of women and men to begin to address specific problems is the initial catalyst for change in many instances. As trust and confidence is built, people become ready to speak out and engage with government authorities and parliamentarians. Alongside building people's trust and confidence, Oxfam can facilitate the production of good research to back-up claims, can work with others to demonstrate practical solutions, and can support the development of broad alliances and coalitions to advocate for change. As momentum gathers, we find there is the potential for lasting and widespread change to occur.

But we want to challenge our own thinking about how change happens and learn from the successes of others, including looking at the experience of other sectors. We want to look more systematically at how impacts can be scaled-up significantly in different situations, how good practices can be spread widely, and how strategies can be adapted to create greater structural change.

Partnership and accountability. Working in partnership and alliance with others is fundamental to Oxfam's approach. In general, partner organisations value their relationship with Oxfam, often mentioning flexibility, openness, mutual respect, and a supportive relationship as positive attributes. However, we know there are weaknesses too in our management of partnership relationships at times and that these can jeopardise the impact of programmes. While flexibility is a desirable quality, clarity about expectations and mutual responsibilities are also essential for an effective partnership – the two are not in contradiction. Careful attention to a potential partner's competencies to implement work that is planned is essential too, especially where the work is not in their area of known expertise. For instance, partners who have experience in development programmes may not have the capacity to undertake effective humanitarian work, and we should seek new partners who *do* have the necessary competencies. We are now working with a wider range of partners than in the past and this increases the challenges involved in managing partnerships. One area we should always explore sufficiently with partners is our values, to ensure that fundamental principles about empowering poor people, equity, and accountability to poor communities are always central in our programmes.

It is important that we reflect on our own accountability in partnerships too. The UK Poverty Programme has initiated work on this, starting with a discussion with partners during the impact assessment process this year.

The way ahead

In summary, the main areas where we shall concentrate on developing our experience and practice in the coming year, to improve our performance and impact, are:

- **Areas of chronic vulnerability.** We shall share learning between programmes to improve our practice in integrating livelihood and humanitarian work in areas of chronic vulnerability, taking account of environmental issues and the impact of HIV/AIDS on poverty.
- **Modifying programmes to take account of HIV/AIDS.** We must have a clear strategy to apply good practices we have learnt about HIV/AIDS 'mainstreaming' on a much wider scale – both within the Southern Africa Region and beyond.

- **Working with the private sector.** We shall continue to explore the best ways of drawing on the business skills and resources of the private sector to benefit poor producers' enterprises.
- **The quality of public sector services.** We shall define our strategy in this area and undertake pilot initiatives to provide lessons for influencing the use of the global funds already available and to help us identify responses to HIV/AIDS that could be widely applied.
- **The accountability of donors and national governments.** We shall increase support to national programme staff and partners to develop and refine national influencing strategies, to turn government policy commitments into actions that bring tangible and widespread improvements for poor people. We shall step-up attention to the accountability of donors too, through a campaign on the Millennium Development Goals.
- **Gender equality.** We must ensure that we consistently hold ourselves accountable, internally and externally, on promoting gender equality in our work, ensuring staff have the support they need to develop their practice.
- **Neglected crises.** We shall seek new approaches to turn the tide and bring appropriate levels of humanitarian assistance and protection to people in the many neglected crises around the world.
- **Campaigning.** We shall continue to develop our experience in choosing the most appropriate range of campaign strategies in different situations, being clear about our objectives on each occasion and the potential for change – while always being true to our principle of ensuring that the voices of poor women and men are heard.
- **Scaling-up and spreading impact.** We shall invest in support to programme staff, to learn from the good ideas and practices within and beyond Oxfam, in order to scale-up and spread the impact that we can have. We shall identify a few key innovations that Oxfam will invest in to ensure they have wider impact.
- **Accountability to partners and people living in poverty.** We shall establish what we consider to be good practices concerning our own accountability to partners and to poor people. We shall work with our partners on this, and should always expect a shared commitment to abide by good practices we agree.

Impact reports by Aim

1 The Right to a Sustainable Livelihood

A The changes we want to see in the world

- People living in poverty will achieve food and income security.
- People living in poverty will have access to secure paid employment, labour rights, and improved working conditions.

Oxfam's priority under this objective is to work with others to shift the power imbalances in local, national, and international markets, which are a fundamental cause of poverty for millions of people. This involves:

- Supporting poor people to acquire secure assets and build secure institutions, to gain access to markets, and to gain the power to negotiate a fair return.
- Campaigning for changes in the policies, rules, and practices of governments, companies, and international institutions, in order to create fair market systems and equitable development. Priorities within Oxfam's *Make Trade Fair* campaign are to change patent rules, agricultural policies, and policies and practices affecting the employment and working conditions of women, especially those working in global trading chains.

B Progress towards our objectives

Highlights

- Poor producers gaining more stable and higher incomes. For instance, poor women and men in Malawi and Albania are gaining better access to, and influence in, markets by working together in associations of producers.
- A number of governments have changed their policy to give support for poor farmers. For instance, the Brazilian government has incorporated family agriculture into the country's foreign trade policy agenda.
- Increased consumer understanding of, and support for, Fair Trade. Increased sales of Fair Trade goods, notably coffee.
- Increased influence of southern governments and civil society in international trade debates and negotiations, as was evident at the World Trade Organisation's Ministerial meeting in Cancún in 2003.

Programmes are demonstrating a clearer analysis of the factors that need to be taken into account if poor women and men are to achieve access to, influence in, and fair returns from markets. Partnerships and alliances are being formed with a broader range of organisations than in the past. We recognise that this is needed if we are to help bring about widespread and lasting changes for poor people.

The acquisition of secure assets

In many places, people do not have the basic assets that would allow them to enter markets. The first steps towards building a more sustainable livelihood may involve acquiring land, making environmental improvements, having a road to market, or having access to credit. In areas of chronic food insecurity, access to cash, food, and seeds is often necessary in order for people to maintain and develop the assets they have.

📁 Case study 1: Secure access and title to land in Zambia

Assisting people acquire secure access to land has been important in an area where many lost their livelihood with the privatisation of the mines. Over a number of years, Oxfam has supported local groups and organisations in the Copper Belt to advocate for squatters' rights. This has resulted in more than 700 households in Mufilira District each gaining title to five hectares of land. Women are the heads of 70 per cent of these households. Mama Chimasa Chapelebwe, a widowed and destitute grandmother is now growing a mixture of cassava, sweet potatoes, and maize, and told us: *"My humanity has been restored and hunger will never visit us"*.

In Mufilira and other districts where Oxfam works, we have seen shifts in the attitudes of mining companies and local government. For example, in 2002, MOPANI Mining Company was threatening to evict about 9,000 households squatting on their land. They have now defined 5,000 hectares of land that will be given to poor households of former miners. The position of the government of Zambia has changed too. Within the national economic diversification plan supported by the World Bank, there is a commitment to making secure land available to poor farmers as a priority over commercial farmers.

📁 Case study 2: Supporting small-scale business development in Georgia

Oxfam's work in developing micro-finance services has helped large numbers of people to develop their small businesses. Recently, Oxfam has supported its partner, the Small Business Development Foundation (SBDF), to expand the services it offers to include marketing support, and this has shown good results from a pilot project with a group of kiwi fruit farmers.

During the past year, about 1,400 people in the Samegrelo region of Georgia received loans from the SBDF, an organisation that Oxfam helped establish. A survey of 300 loan recipients found that more than 90 per cent said that their net income had increased since they received their first loan. They were saving more, investing in developing their businesses, and spending more than others in the same area who had not received loans. Some benefits went beyond those who had received loans. New jobs were created through the development of small businesses, seasonal trading opportunities had expanded, and more goods had become available in the local markets. However, the loan service was not reaching the poorest sections of the community, and Oxfam and SBDF are now looking at developing a new service which will aim to benefit chronically poor people.

Discussion with a small group of kiwi fruit farmers, who were receiving loans, resulted in SBDA expanding its services and providing marketing support. Sixty women and men have been involved in the first year of this new initiative. The loans and marketing support they have received have enabled them to increase the area of land on which they farm, develop storage facilities, set up plant nurseries, and sell directly to wholesalers in the capital, Tbilisi. Good storage facilities have meant that they can now sell when the price is higher after the harvest period. Pooling their harvest, sharing storage and transportation costs, and by-passing middle-men is also helping to increase the return they receive from their fruit. Some of the farmers have joined together and formed a registered company. More of the farmers are likely to join in future. It is estimated that, so far, they have been able to increase their profit from the sale of the fruit by 50 per cent. Further profits can be expected in future as a result of the more sustainable production methods they have learned, as their kiwi plants mature, and as other marketing initiatives are put into practise.

Finding effective, relevant, and sustainable models to assist poor women and men to gain access to micro-credit and micro-finance services, as well as other non-financial services, is a challenging area of work. Oxfam will continue to engage with others in the sector and explore ways of overcoming the barriers poor people face in accessing these services.

In some countries where there is chronic food insecurity, despite years of investment, we have failed to make a sufficient contribution to supporting people to develop secure livelihoods. The challenges are illustrated well from our experiences in Ethiopia.

Case study 3: The challenge of creating more secure livelihoods in Ethiopia

Oxfam's programme in the Deder and Metta Districts of East Hararghe has reached about 22,000 people. It has sought to reduce people's vulnerability through a range of activities including environmental improvements, increasing access to clean water, support for agriculture and trading activities, and the construction of roads. A recent evaluation looked back at ten years' work, and concluded that the households involved were, in general, better off. It also found that, in relation to the resources Oxfam had committed to the programme, the benefits were high. However, the programme only covered about five per cent of the population of the districts.

The evaluation noted the high level of co-operation with local government that had been established, and that Oxfam had found effective ways of working with small groups in the community and transferring resources to them. Some activities though had not been sustained in communities where Oxfam had ceased activities several years ago. There are important lessons about the time needed to generate self-sustaining socio-economic change in very poor communities and the pressure on development agencies to move on and support new communities. A stronger sense of ownership needs to be built in future. More resources also need to be committed to improving women's livelihoods and reducing the amount of work they do. The petty trading groups that were established for women proved popular and opened-up new opportunities for them, but only small numbers of women benefited.

There are fundamental issues though to confront in deciding what our future livelihoods programme should be in Ethiopia. The population of the country is growing, land-holdings are shrinking, an increasing number of people require food aid during droughts, income from cash crops (particularly coffee) has

fallen, and the *ch'at*⁶ market is thriving. New strategies and partnerships are required, and Oxfam is now making an intensive investment in our livelihoods work in Ethiopia, to learn how we might be able to significantly increase our influence and impact.

Building the strength of poor producers, including creating secure institutions

As the example from Georgia showed, collective working, alongside support to understand and access markets, can bring significant benefits for poor producers. A number of programmes in different Oxfam Regions show how producers are able both to increase their income and obtain a more regular income in this way.

📁 Case study 4: A regular income from the sale of milk in Malawi

Oxfam has been supporting the development of the Shire Highlands Milk Producers' Association (SHMPA) over several years. The Association now has about 3,000 members. Part of Oxfam's support has been a project to enable poor farmers, especially women, without livestock or a regular income, to start dairy farming and become active members of the Association.

A heifer loan scheme and technical support has helped about 120 farmers to start dairy farming. This has given them a regular income from the sale of milk. Membership of the SHMPA provides them with a range of support and, crucially, access to a regular market. Farmers are actively involved in the running of the Association and in 21 milk-bulking groups that it organises. These groups handle milk collection and delivery, and provide members with training and other services. Membership of the Association has helped farmers to increase the quantity and quality of milk from their cows, to gain access to markets, and to obtain a small increase in price for raw milk from the processing companies.

The scarcity of land in the area means that many families cannot produce enough food for their own needs; diversification into livestock provides one of the few escapes from increasing poverty. The farmers involved in the project are now able to buy food for their families throughout the year and drink milk themselves. Some have been able to buy chickens, goats, or another cow, build bigger houses, and send their children to secondary schools.

Traditionally men own and manage cattle in the area. By giving priority to households headed by women, the project has helped women demonstrate their ability to be dairy farmers. Women are taking more responsibility in the running and development of the Association as time goes on. Illness and death from AIDS is a worry for families, and members of the Association have been encouraged to write wills to safeguard the continuation of their dairy enterprises if they die. Persuading people to write wills has been a big achievement because, in Malawi, many people believe that if they make a will they will die young.

The heifer loan scheme and technical support project has been operating for about four years. It is estimated that, after ten years, the financial return will be more than five times the investment. Non-financial benefits for families who are directly involved, and in the wider community, are also expected to be considerable. As illustrated above, these are already beginning to be seen.

⁶ The *ch'at* shrub contains a mild narcotic. The leaves are chewed for the euphoric stimulant effect produced.

Case study 5: Entering new markets and changing perceptions and policies in Albania

We see how formation of producers' associations and rural forums is not only helping people from poor, isolated areas to develop their marketing activities but also to enter into dialogue with national government about agricultural and trade policies.

Oxfam's markets programme in Albania reaches about 20,000 people from isolated communities in mountainous and lowland areas which have been neglected for years by the government. We are supporting them to start new initiatives with marketable products such as honey, milk, and wine as well as to increase the profitability of their existing activities. For example, help with processing and the establishment of a marketing association has enabled herb collectors in 19 villages to increase their selling price by between 34 and 50 per cent in the first year of the programme. While a drought that year meant that this did not lead to an increase in their overall income, the better selling price *did* stop them falling into debt.

Holding two national agricultural fairs in the capital, Tirana, enabled more than 280 small-scale producers to test their products with consumers, identify how to improve their marketing, and make contacts with agri-businesses, wholesalers, and restaurant owners. They were able to share this knowledge with others in their associations and some went home seeing the need to start an association in their own area. Producers were able to sell in two days what they would normally sell in two or three months. The fairs were also used to launch public campaigns to 'Buy Local Goods' and 'Make Trade Fair'. A public debate on trade rules and regulations was linked to the publication of an Oxfam briefing paper entitled 'Fair Deal for Albanian Farmers'.

Providing support to rural forums in the programme areas has enabled poor producers to enter directly into negotiation with local and national government about policies that affect their lives. This has been particularly effective in the Shkodra area, where the forum has become the main advocacy network for the whole northern region of Albania. Decision-makers are increasingly consulting the forum. The success here might partly be due to the strong ties and links that exist across the isolated communities in the area. Oxfam's involvement with the communities over a number of years is probably another factor, as the trust we have developed helped us to get communities involved and to facilitate contacts between different sections of the community and the authorities.

There is a long way to go to achieve the investment needed in these poor areas of Albania and to put in place policies that protect producers from unfair competition. However, we are beginning to see changes in perceptions and attitudes among producers themselves, consumers, traders, and government. Producers, who have previously suffered discrimination, are gaining the respect of businesses and local authorities and have grown in confidence both as traders and in making their views known. Women are taking on new roles and we see men beginning to share in some household tasks traditionally done by women. Lume Isufmehtaj is a beekeeper. She says: *"Before, women did not have specific jobs in the community. Now, those who are involved in the bee project feel proud of their work and have a higher status in the family.... The family see the work I am doing and are happy to help me because they know the work with the bees is important."* Women are

also now influencing decisions within the local associations about how some of their profit will be used to benefit their community.

A well-known intellectual commented: *“The Make Trade Fair movement in Tirana has contributed to a new culture of making a conscious choice in the market, and has increased people’s pride.”*

In West Africa, Oxfam’s programme has supported representatives from at least 70 small-scale farmers’ and traders’ organisations to participate in trade fairs and national and regional workshops. If they pass on the new knowledge, contacts, and market information to their membership, they would reach more than 10,000 people. Women’s co-operatives have met other producers and buyers, and have been able to increase their sales. For instance, at the FIARA – a regional agricultural fair held in Senegal – women’s groups from Burkina Faso and Niger sold all their stock and made contacts which could help them market their products on a longer-term basis. The programme has also supported Sahel pastoral producers to form a strong regional network with a small secretariat, to gather and share market information. This has enabled pastoralists from Burkina Faso and Mali to reach more lucrative markets in Ghana, and pastoralists from Niger to access markets in Nigeria.

Obtaining higher returns from organic, Fair Trade, and export markets

Several programmes are helping poor producers to take advantage of the growing demand for organic goods, and the higher prices that they attract. There are also many other benefits that come from organic farming.

In Thailand, rice is the staple food and one of the country’s biggest exports. However, rice farmers have seen falling returns from agro-chemical farming and almost 70 per cent of them are in debt. Estimates suggest that about 30 per cent of the rice-farming population is malnourished. Oxfam’s sustainable livelihoods programme supports a range of partners seeking to address this situation. The Khao Kwan Foundation focuses on developing knowledge about sustainable agriculture, provides technical support to farmers to convert to organic farming, and disseminates knowledge and news. Earthnet Foundation supports the marketing of organic produce. Organic Certification Thailand is another partner. The Rural Reconstruction, Alumni and Friends Association is involved in campaigning and lobbying the Government together with other partners.

Case study 6: Conversion to organic rice farming in Thailand

Rice farmers are seeing the benefits of converting to organic farming, but also the obstacles still to be overcome in Thailand’s export-oriented economy.

The Khao Kwan Foundation (KKF) gives direct technical support to enable women and men farmers to convert to organic farming, and also helps them train others. KKF is a founding member of the Alternative Agriculture Network, and through the network knowledge and information can be spread to its 10,000 members.

Farmers who have converted to organic farming say that they particularly value the better health that their families are now enjoying and the reduction in medical expenses that this has brought. When they were using chemicals in their farming, common complaints were skin problems, respiratory diseases, and severe headaches. They are also pleased to see fish, frogs, crabs, insects, and plants returning to the fields, and to be able to supplement their diet with these. As they farm without expensive chemicals, their

production costs have fallen so they are also beginning to see an increase in profit from their crop. After several harvests without using chemicals, it is estimated that the profit from their crop increases by more than 70 per cent. The farmers are also branching out in their farming activities as their income increases, with some farmers developing fishponds or raising pigs or poultry.

Farmers in non-irrigated farming areas in the North-East have been able to certify as organic farmers. They receive a guaranteed higher price for their crop by selling through Earthnet Foundation. However, this is not possible in irrigated farming areas because the standards for organic certification cannot be met. The Thai government supports the development of organic agriculture because of the increasing demands for organic products in the export market. However, shifts in government agricultural policy and in consumer demands in Thailand are needed if farmers across the country are to reap the full benefits possible from converting to non-chemical farming. Oxfam will continue to work with its partners to press for government policies that are more supportive of poor farmers and sustainable agriculture methods across the country. The programme will also seek to increase awareness in the Thai population about organic farming and how buying organic rice can help improve the lives of farmers.

In Bosnia, about 1,300 villagers have increased their incomes through the production and marketing of a range of organic products. Oxfam's partner, ECON, supports them to form associations, certifies their products, and finds domestic and international markets for them.

Oxfam is also facilitating links between producers in poor countries and companies in the North. We work with companies willing to become licensees of the Fairtrade Mark or meet other ethical trading standards. Sometimes new forms of trading companies are being pioneered to help producers negotiate and gain greater power in markets.

Useful experience in linking producer groups directly with commercial partners in the North has been gained by working with beekeepers in Central America and Zambia and with the Cotswold Honey company based in the UK. Facilitating these links is not straightforward. For instance, a European Union ban on importing honey from Africa first had to be overcome. The ban was imposed on all imported honey that was not certified as free from chemical, antibiotic, and other residues. In Zambia, a process of negotiation was therefore needed to agree a plan for testing honey that satisfied the European Union. Once this was agreed, the ban was lifted for honey from Zambia. Now, with increased market opportunities and better marketing by our partner in North-West Zambia, the bee-keepers have contracts to sell organic and non-organic honey in several European countries. As a result they increased their production four-fold last year, and more women are now being trained in bee-keeping. Cotswold Honey has also extended the range of honeys it markets by becoming a licensee of the Fairtrade Mark. It now imports Fair Trade honey from several co-operatives with whom Oxfam has worked in Central America. Albanian beekeepers are also looking to form a commercial link with Cotswold Honey, but the European ban on honey not certified as free of residues will first need to be lifted for Albania, as for Zambia.

Case study 7: Accessing international markets for products made from sustainable wood in Kenya

One of Oxfam's newer initiatives is with farmers and wood carvers in Kenya. It involves looking at how the Forestry Stewardship Council certification system can promote trade with small-scale producers, and will develop a trading company that will be part-owned by the farmers and wood carvers.

This is a joint programme between Oxfam GB, the Worldwide Fund for Nature (WWF-UK), and Kwetu in Kenya. It has helped farmers' groups to trade sustainable farm-grown *neem* timber with about 3,500 carvers in two wood-carving co-operatives. This has provided additional income to 120 farmers initially, and it is planned that numbers will rise to 1,800 within three years. Carvers have been able to replace rare hard woods with sustainable farm-grown timber. The Kenya Gatsby Trust is providing the carver co-operatives with advice on business models, with help from Oxfam to ensure producer participation. Oxfam is facilitating linkages between the wood-carving co-operatives and three international, socially responsible buyers. A trading company is in the process of formation, which will be partly owned by the farmers and carvers. The aim is that this company will increase the capacity of the farmers and carvers to access new markets and to assess demand for sustainable timber and timber by-products.

Influencing corporate sector policy and practice

In the UK, one of the ways in which Oxfam engages with the corporate sector is through the Ethical Trading Initiative (ETI)⁷. We have been participating in a project to produce and test guidelines for dealing with home-workers in ETI members' supply chains. This successfully led to better practices by suppliers and retailers and was instrumental in securing an amendment to the UK National Minimum Wage Regulations, making home-workers and other piece-rate workers eligible for the full National Minimum Wage. However, the project has also exposed the weak implementation of the ETI Codes by retailers, and their resistance to meeting the costs of raising standards.

The work of Oxfam's UK Poverty Programme with the National Group on Homeworking has shown the vulnerability of home-workers and the weakness of UK labour law. (See Case Study 8)

Case study 8: Homeworkers claiming their rights in the UK

Negotiations by the National Group on Homeworking, the Trade Union Congress (TUC), and Oxfam with the UK government's Department of Trade, successfully closed a loop-hole in the legislation which had allowed home-workers to be paid 80 per cent of the National Minimum Wage. From October 2004, this will become illegal and employers must pay home-workers the full National Minimum Wage. It is estimated that there are 1.4 million home-workers in the UK. They are predominantly women and at least half of them are women from minority ethnic communities. Through their involvement with the National Group on Homeworking, they have become less willing to be exploited by employers and more confident in articulating their case. However, as they have started claiming their rights, we have also seen them lose their jobs. This can happen on an individual level when workers who complain about violations of the National Minimum Wage lose their work, or affect groups of workers when employers switch their production base overseas.

An Outwork Production Manager for a Christmas cracker supplier said: "*Why abroad? Because it's cheaper than using homeworkers, because they are after a lot more for a lot less. Plus, of course, minimum wage – now they are after pensions, holiday rights, day-travel allowances. You name it, they want*

⁷ The ETI is an alliance of companies, NGOs and trade unions, which primarily exists to share experience and promote learning about implementing international labour standards in the international supply chains of UK retailers and brands.

it. Redundancies – what else can I say other than getting irate with them?’

Within the Christmas cracker industry though, some progress has been made, working with retailers. A few have guaranteed their purchases of Christmas crackers from home-worker suppliers working with a minimum wage, and reduced the specification of the product they require in order to support this.

As part of Oxfam’s new international campaign on workers’ rights, Oxfam has now stepped up its campaigning in the UK with the TUC and the National Group on Homeworking. We seek to hold retailers to account for supply chain practices and to encourage better minimum wage enforcement by the UK government.

Promoting consumer demand

Promotion of Fair Trade sales is another aspect of Oxfam’s programme in the UK and in the home countries of other Oxfam International affiliates. In the UK, staff, supporters, and campaigners are involved, working closely with the Fairtrade Foundation and other allies. Together with many others, we have contributed to the 41 per cent increase in sales of Fairtrade-marked products in the UK that occurred between 2002 and 2003. The percentage of the population understanding what the Fairtrade Mark stands for rose from 25 per cent to 39 per cent between 2003 and 2004. One way in which we have sought to increase consumer understanding and demand is through the Fairtrade towns, universities, and workplaces initiative. This began with a campaign led by the local Oxfam group in Garstang in Lancashire, and resulted in the town declaring itself ‘the world’s first Fairtrade Town’ in May 2000. Other towns and villages have followed, supported by Oxfam campaigners and partners together with the Fairtrade Foundation. Thirty-one now have status and 70 are working towards it. Universities and workplaces are now seeking Fairtrade status too. In 2003, Oxford Brookes University became the first university to achieve this.

Changing trade rules and policies and company behaviour

A significant shift has taken place globally in debates about trade. National governments in the South and North have shifted their attitudes and policies towards the interests of poor people. When talks broke down at the World Trade Organisation Ministerial meeting in Cancún in 2003, it was evident that developing countries had a new power; they now have to be included as an active party to agreements. It was clear that a poverty and development perspective is now essential in any acceptable solution to trade issues. Long-standing work with partners in a number of countries and concerted action across the world by Oxfam, partners and allies since the launch of the *Make Trade Fair* campaign in 2002 has contributed to these shifts.

On specific issues that Oxfam has campaigned on internationally, the following progress can be seen:

- **The cost of medicines.** The cost of antiretroviral medicines for HIV/AIDS has fallen from about US\$12,000 to US\$200 per person per year for poor countries over the past few years. During this time Oxfam joined others campaigning to cut the costs of medicines. There has been some progress in changing the World Trade Organisation’s intellectual property rules, and some major pharmaceutical companies have made significant concessions – making agreements with the governments of developing countries to sell their products at much reduced prices. Some developing countries have produced generic versions of some medicines. However, the majority of poor people still do not have access to the treatment they need for AIDS and other major illnesses. There is concern too that the production of low-price, generic medicines may dry-up after 2005

when all of the key countries producing them have to implement the TRIPS Agreement. Action continues to be required on all fronts. (See the Right to Basic Social Services, page 31, for more discussion.)

- **Coffee.** There is little controversy now about the causes of the coffee crisis, in which farmers are selling coffee beans at less than the cost of production, supply has outstripped demand and farmers face many barriers to diversification into other markets. While some progress has been made to address the crisis, there remains a long way to go.

One area of progress is the increase in purchases of Fair Trade coffee by some major coffee roasters and retailers. Starbucks, for example, has doubled its Fair Trade purchasing between 2002 and 2003, and aims to continue increasing its purchases in coming years. The Co-operative Group has switched all its own-brand instant and ground coffee to Fair Trade. Other coffee roasters and retailers have ambitious plans to purchase Fair Trade coffee or have taken initiatives to assist farmers and communities in other ways (e.g. through certification schemes such as the Rainforest Alliance or through technical support). The growth in consumer support in the UK through the Fairtrade towns, universities and workplace initiative has already been mentioned. In the USA too, university campuses and schools are switching to Fair Trade coffee.

In countries where Oxfam has been actively involved in programmes with coffee farmers, and they became involved in campaigning, we have seen national governments taking more notice of their situation. In Honduras, a seven-point agreement was made, including a guaranteed minimum price for coffee and a law on debt-restructuring. In Nicaragua, the government committed to support small farmers in the Las Tunas Agreement. In both the Dominican Republic and Haiti, there is support for coffee institutes with strong farmer representation.

The European Union has formed a new position on commodities, which is more favourable to developing countries, but still leaves important gaps. Initiatives such as the Common Code for Coffee Communities are also underway, bringing together companies, governments, and multilateral organisations to start to develop a joint approach to address the continuing crisis in the coffee market. However, initiatives are all at an early stage and Oxfam will continue to press for action to be accelerated.

- **Agricultural export subsidies.** West African countries managed to get cotton included as a specific item on the Cancún agenda, helping to foster unity among developing countries against subsidies, and putting pressure on the USA. Since Cancún, Brazil's challenge to cotton subsidies in the USA has been upheld at the World Trade Organisation. This will benefit not only Brazil, but many countries in Africa too. The European Commission has recently called for action to reform the cotton sector and the European Union has announced its willingness to eliminate all agricultural export subsidies.
- **'New issues'.** The European Union's insistence on trying to introduce 'new issues' on to the World Trade Organisation agenda at Cancún, contributed to the breakdown in the talks. The European Union tried to introduce issues including investment and competition, against the wishes of many developing countries. Its statement since, that it is no longer a 'demandeur' (proposer) on these issues, is a big step forward.

At a regional or national level, some of the developments seen are:

- **Free Trade Agreements.** Some progress has been made towards preventing the Free Trade Agreement of the Americas signing away more of the rights of poor people in Latin America. However negotiations continue, albeit slowly. More generally though, there is

concern about the Free Trade Agreements that the USA and European Union are pursuing with developing countries.

- **In Peru**, 32 organisations linked to farmers in Peru persuaded the government to launch a 2004-2006 plan to strengthen the agricultural sector and support small-scale farmers to play a significant role in the economy.
- **In Brazil**, where Oxfam has worked in alliance with the government on a number of trade issues, family agriculture is now incorporated into the country's foreign trade policy agenda.
- **In Bosnia**, the government adopted the agriculture and trade recommendations of Oxfam's partners in the country's Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper. This, in turn, has led to the temporary suspension of trade agreements with Croatia and Serbia-Montenegro, due to their harmful impact on domestic farmers. Farmers and partners supported this policy change across ethnic lines.
- **In Mali, Burkina Faso, and Niger**, there have been revisions to laws including the pastoral code, the land-use code, and the trans-border convention. Pastoral associations are now involved in the management of cattle markets and security issues together with local authorities. Oxfam has supported dialogue between authorities and pastoralists to discuss texts, revise them and, most importantly, to discuss their implementation. In Mali, for instance, existing laws were unfavourable to pastoralists. A workshop with mayors, the state technical service, and pastoralists resulted in the adoption of better bye-laws for Wabaria market in Gao.

Many actors, in the South and North, are involved in seeking to change trade rules in the interests of poor people. While it is difficult to be precise about Oxfam's contribution towards bringing about specific changes, we consider that the strengths we have offered include:

- **Strong research and policy papers.** Senior diplomats and ministers, for example from Cambodia, India, Uganda, South Africa, and the Africa Union, have acknowledged the importance and quality of Oxfam's research. Substantial dialogue with developing country governments took place as a result of this and because they recognised the support that NGOs could give through their advocacy. The European Union invested significant resources in responding to Oxfam's Trade Report, *Rigged Rules and Double Standards (2002)*. Companies have engaged on the challenges Oxfam has made. The international media gave wide coverage of the issues that Oxfam has researched.
- **Working in broad South-North alliances.** Working in alliance within countries, regionally, and internationally has been crucial. Working with Pan-Africa groups and the Hemispheric Social Alliance in Latin America is contributing to building a strong global voice on trade. Campaigning as Oxfam International brings a broad range of resources and skills and wide access to the media, governments, international agencies and forums, large corporate sector organisations, and others. Bringing together a broad range of constituencies has given strength. For instance, the Global Alliance on Coffee and other Commodities brought together more than a 100 producer and consumer groups, trade unions, and environmentalists.
- **Ongoing relationships with poor communities.** Oxfam's position was strongest where we were already working in countries on an issue and where poor people engaged in campaigning, for example cotton farmers in West Africa and coffee farmers in Central America and the Caribbean.
- **Creating 'the Big Noise', celebrity support, and media attention.** Five million people from all over the world have now joined in 'the Big Noise' and signed the *Make Trade Fair* petition. Eighty per cent of them are from countries in the South. Celebrities and well-respected international figures have joined in Oxfam's campaign. The mass support shown for the campaign and the involvement of prominent individuals has helped attract

media attention and ensured attention was given to issues in a variety of forums, including at the World Trade Organisation meeting in Cancún. For instance, the G20⁸ Trade Ministers invited Oxfam and UK pop group Coldplay on to the platform to present 'the Big Noise' petition at their first major press conference at Cancún. And, at an African Union press conference there, the Trade Minister for Senegal, Aïcha Agne Pouye, said: *"Before I came to Cancún I was handed a petition from 2,400 Senegalese citizens and a parliamentary statement from MPs, urging me to keep the Doha development obligations at the forefront of the negotiations. I feel very powerful at this moment."*

C New developments

Strategic programmes on supply chains. More strategic programmes are developing, with a strong analysis of supply chains. For instance, a new programme in India is working with cotton farmers, handloom weavers of cotton yarn, and women workers in garment factories. The programme seeks to give each of them greater power in the supply chain for cotton textiles.

Work with the food processing and manufacturing sector to increase Fair Trade sales. Parts of the food processing and manufacturing sector in the UK have been shown that they can engage directly with small producers on fair terms. Products which are attractive to younger consumers, such as snack bars, fruit drinks, and baked products, and which contain sufficient Fair Trade ingredients to carry the Fairtrade Mark, are being promoted. Having demonstrated the viability of manufacturing these Fair Trade goods, major retailers have now been approached and they are beginning to take up the issue with their suppliers.

Working with the private sector. In Indonesia, Oxfam has started to conduct joint research with a multi-national company to explore the contribution of Foreign Direct Investment to poverty reduction. The findings of this research will not only be useful in Indonesia. They will also help Oxfam to define advocacy in order to enhance private sector accountability and responsible investment, and to lobby governments to include pro-poor policies in trade and manufacturing. Other projects with the private sector include working with a major insurance company to bring skills to local organisations in South Africa and discussing with various financial institutions how we can influence the banking sector to respond more effectively to poor producers.

D Lessons, issues, and risks

- ❑ **New skills and relationships to work on markets.** To develop our work on markets, it has been important to invest in the development of tools and training for both Oxfam staff and partners. Collaboration with the Intermediate Technology Development Group to develop a simple tool to analyse markets and with Traidcraft in running workshops for staff and partners has produced good results, leading to developments in some existing programmes as well as supporting the development of new programmes. New markets programmes however require Oxfam's traditional skills too, for instance in supporting the formation of strong membership groups that can sustain activities and development. Markets programmes are also bringing Oxfam into a broader range of partnerships and relationships, in order to ensure effective programming and to seek to maximise impact.
- ❑ **Campaign strategies and alliances.** Working as Oxfam International and in alliance with others, we have made enormous progress towards our objective of building a global campaigning force which is capable of achieving significant policy change globally. We

⁸ The G20 is a bloc of developing nations which emerged in the run-up to the World Trade Organisation meeting in Cancún.

have built the capacity to engage millions of people in campaigning and have helped to build some broad South-North alliances. We have helped poor producers, such as coffee and cotton farmers, to join in regional and international forums, broadening their knowledge and experience, and enabling them to influence their future. Oxfam's new global campaign on women workers' rights, *Trading Away our Rights* (2004), involved a new level of engagement with partners in developing countries in campaign planning.

But there continue to be real tensions in this work. As we said last year, we still have much to learn about campaigning with partners in the South, and ensuring that change is seen through to tangible results for people living in poverty. We are also aware that Oxfam can 'crowd out' other organisations with the power of our voice. We need to ensure that our approach to campaigning leads not just to changes in policy, but also promotes an environment in which southern organisations and networks can achieve their own political strength and legitimacy. There are challenges in balancing campaign strategy with opportunism, and in agreeing policy positions across diverse partners and allies. There are some inherent tensions in global campaigning that we don't expect to overcome entirely, but we need to continue our efforts to manage these tensions better.

- **Gender.** In a number of programmes, women are gaining greater access to and control over resources. This, in turn, is leading to women gaining greater respect and confidence and having more power to make decisions at home and in the community. But some of the risks and difficulties involved are also evident. For instance, as women take on new roles, it is only in a few cases that we find men becoming more involved in household tasks, so women often end up having more work to do. The difficulty of changing relations between women and men in a fundamental way is also apparent. But, as Case Study 5 from the Albania programme shows, there have been many positive results in empowering women. Staff believe this has come from working with men as well as women, so that each comes to see and appreciate the other's contribution. However, staff have expressed their concern that sometimes men have a tendency to take over the lead of new ventures once they become established. The West Africa Region also notes that there is a need to do further work with partners to ensure that decision-making and representation are truly inclusive. For example, women are participating more in local decision-making in the pastoral programme, but no women were included in a visit of pastoralist partners to Kenya.

In our campaigning on trade issues, there are challenges too. We have often found it difficult to incorporate a strong gender analysis and strategies to address gender issues. Many of our partners are organisations in which women have a low profile. For example, in our campaigning on cotton, staff from West Africa note that men farmers are more strongly organised than women. Concrete actions are needed if women are to gain more control over resources and markets. Our new *Trading away our Rights* campaign focuses on women workers. A strong gender analysis has been sustained in the development of this campaign and it has been possible to communicate gender issues simply in the campaign messages.

- **Long term investment in the poorest countries.** In some programme areas, we have been involved for at least ten years, often providing a combination of humanitarian and livelihood support. But, as was illustrated in the example of Ethiopia, we have sometimes failed to have a significant impact in the face of the diverse social, economic, political, and environmental factors constraining development. Oxfam needs to consider how it can contribute to broader and sustainable changes in the future in these places. Ethiopia is now one of the countries Oxfam has identified for concentrated investment to learn how we can significantly scale-up the impact and reach of our livelihoods work.

The prevalence of AIDS adds to the challenge in many countries too, changing the whole face of poverty, and requiring new approaches and partnerships for action. The need for

social safety nets and social security systems must be tackled. (See section on The Right to Basic Social Services, page 29, for more discussion on HIV/AIDS)

- **Corporate sector engagement.** Oxfam is extending its engagement with the corporate sector in a variety of ways and, as campaigning puts more scrutiny on company behaviour and policies, companies are increasingly seeking this. We sometimes both support governments and advocate for them to fulfil their obligations. In the same way, we need to explore ways in which we can engage with the private sector without compromising our ability to influence company accountability.
- **Links and tensions between Fair Trade and ethical trade.** Our efforts to help poor producers to gain access to Fair Trade markets on the one hand, and to promote better working conditions within the supply chains of northern retailers and major companies, are complementary. However, some retailers may use the fact that they stock Fair Trade products as an excuse for not improving standards in their other (i.e. non-Fair Trade) supply chains. We must continue to address this type of risk, using our influence in the Ethical Trading Initiative and other forums.
- **Development of microcredit and microfinance provisions.** The UN International Year of Microcredit (2005) provides an opportunity for Oxfam to engage with others in considering the range of products that very poor people need in order to obtain the resources to achieve a sustainable livelihood. In seeking to support people who are very vulnerable economically, Oxfam has tended to provide a combination of financial services and non-financial support. We have paid particular attention to developing models that ensure women benefit from financial services. We have also, on occasion, played the role of guarantor to encourage banks to agree to loans for enterprises developed by poor people. Oxfam has also had requests to act as a finance institution and to provide loans itself. We will not become a finance institution, but we do need to reconsider what we can contribute to overcoming the barriers poor people face in accessing mainstream financial services and expanding their enterprises.

2 The Right to Basic Social Services

A The changes we want to see in the world

- ➔ People living in poverty will achieve tangible improvements in their health through increased access to basic health services, clean water, and sanitation facilities.
- ➔ All children living in poverty will achieve their right to a good-quality basic education, and adults will have access to sufficient educational opportunities to help overcome their poverty.

Oxfam's priority under this aim is to support the achievement of universal, good-quality, basic education, particularly for girls. This includes campaigning for effective financing mechanisms for basic education.

In areas where we work, we seek to take account of the impact that HIV/AIDS is having – adapting our strategies and interventions as necessary to make them effective and relevant to communities affected by HIV/AIDS. We support some strategic initiatives and undertake advocacy to develop appropriate prevention, treatment, and care services.

We seek to increase poor people's access to essential medicines by campaigning with others for changes in intellectual property rules and in the practices of pharmaceutical companies in the production and pricing of essential medicines. We have campaigned especially for a reduction in the price of medicines for the treatment of AIDS.

We support developments of health services and financing mechanisms, which make services accessible to poor people. In particular, we focus on seeking adequate funding and services for poor people to be able to access treatment and care for AIDS.

B Progress towards our objectives

EDUCATION

Highlights

- ❑ Governments adopting policies and new practices which support better access to, and quality of, education for girls and marginalised groups.
- ❑ The strength of the Global Campaign for Education. It inspires children, parents, and teachers across the world to take action. Almost one million children from 120 countries lobbied their parliaments during the 2004 Global Week of Action.
- ❑ Some progress in donor countries committing funds to the Fast Track Initiative⁹ for which Oxfam and others have campaigned. Greater engagement of civil society concerning education budgets and monitoring how money is spent.

Quality and equality in education for girls and boys

Programmes that bring direct benefits at a community level and engage poor people in advocating for improvements in educational provision are showing good results in a variety of national settings. In our direct work with partners at community level, we are supporting projects in the formal and non-formal education sectors. Projects involve initiatives designed

⁹ The Fast Track Initiative is a mechanism for channelling funds to governments of poor countries with good national development plans.

to increase parents' interest in, and demand for, education for girls; to develop new curricula; to promote child-centred teaching approaches; to improve the quality of school buildings; and to involve parents in school management. Usually programmes work on several of these components. However, as we reflected last year, it is difficult to ensure parallel improvements in access for marginalised groups and in all the factors required to improve the quality of education provision. The campaigning that is done alongside the local programmes seeks to change policy and practice in order to make lasting and widespread improvements.

The complex web of factors that need to be shifted are well illustrated by Oxfam's education programme **in Kenya**. It seeks to increase access to good-quality early childhood development and basic education services for pastoralist, slum, and street children. The strength of Oxfam's programme lies in the combination of strategies it uses. Practical solutions at a local level with strong community ownership are being demonstrated. Through engagement in these developments, people are coming together and finding strength to advocate for change. The programme has both helped to develop coalitions and works with others to lobby the Kenyan government. At the same time, we are working with the government to develop and implement policies that will provide sustainable solutions.

Case study 9: Access to quality education for marginalised children in Kenya

In the Kibera slum in Nairobi, 2,225 children are benefiting from going to the five early childhood development centres and two primary schools developed by the programme.

In Thika town, 511 girls have enrolled in rehabilitation centres for street children and 401 girls who formerly lived on the streets are going to public schools in Mombasa and Nairobi. 183 graduates of the programme are now employed and most of them are now supporting their family.

School enrolment has increased by about 26 per cent between 2002 and 2004 in the pastoralist areas supported by Oxfam's programme. Classrooms have been built or improved, new teachers trained, and others trained as resource teachers to assist their colleagues. Thirty inspectors have been trained in new methods and practices in inspection.

The need for birth certificates, age restrictions in government schools, a standardised curriculum, and negative attitudes of officials, are four of the many factors that have prevented children from marginalised groups from going to school in the past. Demonstration of viable solutions within the programme, direct campaigning by local people, and campaigning within the Elimu Yetu Coalition are helping to change the situation:

- A petition from the Kibera community to the Ministry of Education in 2001 resulted in one of the schools in the programme becoming an examination centre for the Kenya Certificate of Primary Education.
- Lobbying has resulted in relaxation of some regulations by the government Registrar of Persons and in street children being able to obtain identity cards.
- A Non-Formal Education desk has been established at the Ministry of Education and a Coalition for Pastoralists' Children's Education is being hosted within the office of the President. Policies on pastoralist education have been developed and now need to be presented in cabinet papers for discussion in Parliament. Stereotypes about pastoralists' lack of interest in education for their children are being shaken and, in particular,

government officers in the Oxfam programme area are showing commitment to making improvements in education provision.

- The new Kenyan government declared primary education to be free in 2003. Lobbying continues to make it compulsory and to gain recognition of the important place of non-formal education in achieving the Millennium Development Goal of Universal Primary Education. As a step towards providing support to non-formal schools in Nairobi, the government is now collecting information on existing schools, helped by Elimu Kwa Wanavijiji, the association of lobbying groups that Oxfam has nurtured in the slums.
- Involvement in the Global Campaign for Education's Global Week of Action each year has influenced both the community and the government. For instance, the *Hands up for Girls* campaign in 2003 contributed to the increase in girls' enrolment that is occurring in the Kibera schools. During the 2004 children's lobby of parliaments, the government in Kenya announced an end to compulsory school uniforms.

Although there is still a way to go before sustainable solutions are implemented by government, there is momentum to make progress. The programme is contributing to this momentum by supporting local people to demand that changes are made, through good research and documentation of facts and figures, by working in coalition with others and by demonstrating practical local solutions that are owned by the community.

Programmes in other countries illustrate innovative developments as well, and progress is being made towards the introduction of policies and practices that support better educational provision for girls and marginalised groups.

- **In Mali**, Oxfam has been working in pastoralist areas, developing community schools with partner organisations. Local women have been employed as *animatrices* to encourage parents to send their girls to school and to work with teachers and mothers to make schools 'friendly' for girls. The *animatrices* are helping to change the belief that girls have low intellectual abilities, and teachers have been able to persuade some parents to delay the marriage of their daughters and allow them to continue their education. The number of girls in the schools within the programme has almost doubled, from 749 girls in 1999/2000 to 1,423 in 2002/2003. However, a review of the programme showed that greater priority needs to be given to encouraging girls' attendance and achievement once enrolled in school. *Animatrices* also need support to challenge gender stereotypes and help parents to perceive greater value in the education of girls, beyond that of helping them to become good wives and mothers. The Ministry of Education has agreed a process for taking responsibility for the community schools by the end of the programme, and new curricula have been developed which will change the messages about gender that girls and boys learn at school.
- **In Viet Nam**, Oxfam has worked with the government over a number of years to develop and promote education services. The demonstration of new ways of doing things through the Oxfam programme has led to wider adoption of these approaches. For instance, the work done on training teachers in child-centred learning methods has led to them becoming government policy. Training local members of the community to build schools resulted in high-quality buildings and a low level of corruption. The World Bank, which has a large budget for building schools in Vietnam, has now adopted this model. In Sapa District, Lao Cai Province, Oxfam supported partners to carry out a campaign to encourage parents to send their children – especially girls – to school. There were activities in schools and hamlets, including theatre, and campaign materials were

produced. The success of the campaign has encouraged the District Education Department to agree to continue this type of activity.

- **In Zambezia, Northern Mozambique**, the provision of better school buildings, hostels for girls, housing for women teachers and incentives for women to teach in rural schools has increased the number of women teachers and the number of girls in school. Communities took charge of school construction and contributed building materials. Between 2003 and 2004, the number of girls in one school shot up from 198 to 741. In others, the number of girls increased by between 31 per cent and 103 per cent over a one or two year period. Oxfam's campaigning with others in the past contributed to the government's decision to establish school councils in all primary schools. Oxfam is now supporting the development of these councils in its programme area, starting with ten pilot schools. The councils have, for the first time this year, participated in the enrolment of children, and some have been involved in the collection of enrolment fees and in the development of the school plan and budget. Adult literacy centres have been established to help school council members in their new role. Campaigning with others to promote local teaching methods and curricula has also been successful. The new primary school curriculum allocates 20 per cent of the time to topics of importance locally and this is providing the opportunity to promote teaching about HIV.
- **In Cambodia**, support for girls' dormitories helps to keep girls who live far away in school, and increases their access to higher education.

Financing and accountability in education

Oxfam continues to campaign internationally and nationally to achieve adequate financing for education in poor countries, and it is disappointing that only slow progress is being made in donors meeting their commitments to Education for All and putting resources into the Fast Track Initiative¹⁰. In the UK, however, the government has now committed US\$21 million to the Fast Track Initiative, having initially opposed the scheme. The slow progress overall was acknowledged by the President of the World Bank at the 2004 spring meetings of the World Bank and International Monetary Fund. Extensive lobbying by Oxfam and the Global Campaign for Education¹¹ had helped ensure that education was high on the agenda.

Within countries where we work, we are seeing some increases in funding of education services. We are also beginning to see civil society organisations becoming more involved in holding governments to account for how budgets are spent. There are some early signs that this can be effective in ensuring money is spent as intended. Examples of how our partners are contributing include:

- **In Brazil**, the Minister of Education has invited representatives of the National Campaign for the Right to Education to join an executive group in charge of discussing public education finances and social control. Recently, the government also announced an increase of more than 15 per cent in the minimum value of the "National Fund for the Development of Primary Education and the valorisation of primary school teachers".
- **In Malawi**, the Malawi Economic Justice Network, together with other networks, has surveyed primary schools and other services to see whether the extra resources allocated to them in the country's Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper have reached the grassroots. Interviews in the communities sought people's views about local services. Financial figures at the end of the year showed that, in the areas of service monitored,

¹⁰ The Fast Track Initiative is a mechanism for channelling funds to governments of poor countries with good national development plans.

¹¹ The Global Campaign for Education is a broad coalition of major NGOs, national coalitions and teachers' unions in more than one hundred and fifty countries. Oxfam promoted its formation and remains an active member.

resources were not reallocated, whereas reallocations did occur in areas where there was no monitoring.

- **In Indonesia**, after lobbying by Oxfam's partner, Yayasan Madura Mandiri (Madura Self-Reliance Foundation), the local Parliament in Madura increased the education budget from 4 per cent to 12 per cent of the local development budget. The education campaign has also driven the multi-stakeholder forum for education to push the Indonesian government to increase the national budget for education.
- **In Zambia**, the national education coalition, Zanec, successfully lobbied the government to create 1,500 teachers' jobs. This was achieved in the face of a freeze on wages and recruitment of teachers for 2004, imposed as a result of World Bank and International Monetary Fund conditions.
- **In Tanzania**, TEN/MET, the Tanzania Education Network, in collaboration with Oxfam, has developed "*A Simple Guide to Working with Finances and Education*". TEN/MET has used the booklet in training to enable groups to monitor how budgets are spent. Ten TEN/MET members carried out a study in 14 districts focusing on money allocated for the development of school committees and in-service teacher-training. They found that the funds allocated are inadequate and those that are received are not always used efficiently.

The **Week of Action** that is organised by the Global Campaign for Education (GCE) each year stimulates widespread action around the world and provides a focus for dialogue between civil society and governments in the North and South. Oxfam commits significant staff time to helping organise the week and to supporting it in countries where we have education programmes. In 2004, almost one million children from 120 countries took part in a lobby of parliamentarians, and 15 heads of state were involved. The focus this year on parliamentarians seemed to increase the impact that national coalitions had, and various policy announcements were made during the week, including an agreement to abolish compulsory school uniforms in Kenya as mentioned above. In the Philippines, after a session with children in the national parliament, MPs from several cross-party committees vowed to lead a push for budget increases for basic education. Over two-thirds of UK MPs took part in the UK MPs' "Back to School Day" organised by Oxfam on behalf of the GCE. The MPs who went into schools that day included the Education Minister and International Development Minister. In the United States of America, Oxfam supported a GCE Week of Action event with Hillary Clinton, where the senator launched a new initiative to increase the US's aid to education by 500 per cent.

HEALTH

Highlights

- Other organisations want to learn from Oxfam's initiatives to develop a workplace HIV/AIDS policy, and to find ways of adapting programmes to take account of the impact of HIV/AIDS.
- The falling price of medicines, especially for the treatment of AIDS, in poor countries.
- More money available for the treatment of AIDS and other major illnesses in poor countries, through a variety of mechanisms, including the Global Fund¹² that Oxfam and others campaigned for. Oxfam chosen as a representative of civil society agencies on

¹² The Global Fund was created to attract, manage, and disburse resources to fight AIDS, tuberculosis, and malaria. It is a partnership between governments, civil society, the private sector, and affected communities. It operates as a financial mechanism and does not implement programmes directly.

the Portfolio Management and Procurement Committee of the Global Fund. However, major constraints still prevent poor people actually accessing treatment.

Responding to HIV/AIDS

Adapting programmes to take account of HIV/AIDS – ‘mainstreaming’

The Southern Africa Region is leading the way within Oxfam in finding innovative ways of adapting programmes to make them more relevant to the situation created by HIV/AIDS. The whole shape of communities is changing and services are breaking down as a result of sickness and death related to HIV. Within the Region, it is now a requirement that all staff take account of HIV/AIDS during programme design and development. HIV/AIDS is talked about directly in designing programmes with communities in order to raise awareness and develop ownership within the community of actions that can help the situation. Sometimes practical actions can be taken to adapt programmes to the situation. For instance:

- **In Malawi**, treadle pumps were being provided to help farmers irrigate their land. A simple modification to the design meant that they needed less physical strength to be used.
- **In western Zambia**, where Oxfam was responsible for transporting food aid during the 2002/2003 food crisis, all the truck drivers were given training about HIV/AIDS, and in how to discuss it with their friends, families, and others. They were given condoms for themselves and to hand out, and the lorries displayed prominent messages about HIV/AIDS.
- **In Mozambique**, a new school curriculum allows schools to decide how 20 per cent of the time is spent. In areas where Oxfam is supporting education programmes, this has provided the opportunity for education about HIV/AIDS to be incorporated.

The discussion about HIV/AIDS that Oxfam staff and partners have promoted within communities can be seen to have an impact. This was shown to be the case in an evaluation of programmes in Malawi, where most progress has been made in making innovations and adaptations. In some places there is a noticeable decrease in stigmatisation of people affected by HIV, and with it, an increase in willingness to support previously marginalised members of the community. There are also examples of deeply held beliefs and practices changing as a result of greater recognition of the impact of HIV/AIDS. One example has already been given from Malawi, where people’s apprehensions about writing wills were allayed (see Case study 4). Other examples of changes occurring from work in the Southern Africa Region include:

- **In Malawi**, after traditional initiation ceremonies, the initiated take part in a ‘cleansing ceremony’ in which they have sexual intercourse. In programme areas it has been possible to change ideas about this and the ‘cleansing ceremony’ is now not very common.
- **In Oxfam’s humanitarian programmes** in response to the drought in the Region in 2002/03, community committees were responsible for allocating food and other items. They decided to give special attention to households where there was no adult, where elderly people were looking after children, and where there were chronically sick people.

Oxfam has sought to learn alongside other agencies in the Southern Africa region, and to promote approaches and innovations that we have found useful both within the region and beyond. This includes sharing our experience in developing an Oxfam workplace policy on HIV/AIDS and the value of this for staff and the organisation. Within Southern Africa, we see some of our ideas being taken up by government and non-governmental organisations. Oxfam has been invited to join the region’s UN-led high-level working group on the ‘triple thread’ – HIV/AIDS, Food Security, and Governance.

In Oxfam's Horn, East and Central Africa Region, although HIV/AIDS 'mainstreaming' activities are at an earlier stage, progress is being made. For instance, in Oxfam's Northern Uganda programme with displaced people, community committees are ensuring that chronically ill people and those affected by HIV/AIDS are considered when distributions are made and other services organised. And, some partner agencies are discussing HIV/AIDS as a workforce issue, and developing workplace policies.

Despite the efforts being made by Oxfam in Southern Africa, in particular, to ensure that HIV/AIDS is considered in all areas of the programme, we recognise that our activities are not yet of sufficient scale. There remain huge challenges in defining how Oxfam can best contribute to addressing the pandemic, balancing 'mainstreaming' actions with innovative work and advocacy, to develop adequate prevention, treatment, and care services.

Innovation and influencing policy about prevention, treatment and care

While not engaging in wide-scale provision of prevention, care, and treatment services, Oxfam is working with others in a number of Regions to promote their development. This involves supporting innovative developments and advocacy both within countries and internationally.

📁 Case study 10: Home-based care for people affected by HIV/AIDS in Malawi.

Some prevention, treatment, and care initiatives have been supported in Southern Africa alongside the 'mainstreaming' activities. For instance, community care groups have been promoted in Malawi.

Oxfam has provided training and mentoring to volunteers, helping people in their own communities who are affected by HIV/AIDS. Practical support is also provided in the form of food, household items, and care items. About 900 families are benefiting. The emotional as well as the practical support provided by the volunteers is appreciated. For example, three times a week, a volunteer visits Martha Njova, who is 13 years old and cares for her two younger sisters. Martha says: *"She [the volunteer] helps me with drawing water, making porridge, and cultivating our garden. She gives us soap, food, counselling, and encouragement, and advises us not to stop going to school but to continue our education. She advises us about HIV/AIDS and many other things. Before she came we were struggling because both our parents are dead and we had no-one to help us, but now we have help. Nowadays I am stronger and can do more work in our house... and the advice she gives me really helps."*

Other initiatives are being taken by some of the care groups. For instance, in Mbelezi, volunteers used some of the seeds they were given during the food crisis to plant a communal garden and give the crops to orphans and households where there are no adults.

In Thailand, one of Oxfam's partners is the Perinatal HIV Prevention Trial, Chang Mai. The scientific research and innovative prevention, treatment, and care programmes carried out by the group are providing firm evidence on which service developments could be more widely adopted. They are also changing attitudes of both professionals and people affected by HIV/AIDS.

In India, where Oxfam has several years' experience supporting partner agencies with a range of HIV/AIDS projects, we are being invited to be more involved in policy debates and are undertaking more advocacy. For instance, Oxfam is one of the prime players promoting debate nationally about the importance of care and treatment services to prevent HIV/AIDS.

Campaigning to cut the cost of medicines and on the financing of services.

Campaigning to cut the cost of medicines and on the financing of services is the third element of Oxfam's work on HIV/AIDS.

📁 Case study 11: Access to treatment for HIV/AIDS

The price of antiretroviral medicines for the treatment of AIDS in poor countries has dropped greatly over the past few years, from about US\$12,000 to US\$200 per person per year. Under special circumstances it is about US\$140. During this time, Oxfam joined others campaigning to cut the cost of medicines. The fall in price has come about as a result of more developing countries producing or importing generic versions of medicines and more international pharmaceutical companies accepting the concept of selling medicines at reduced prices to poor countries. Some progress has been made in relation to the World Trade Organisation's intellectual property rules (TRIPS)¹³, with the 2001 Doha Declaration on TRIPS and Public Health¹⁴. Some developing countries are using the increased policy space to negotiate price cuts from international pharmaceutical companies, in order to be able to extend treatment programmes. For instance, Bristol-Myers Squibb has come to an agreement with the government of Brazil to sell *Atazanavir* at 76 per cent less than the market price. This will lead to an annual saving of more than US\$ 60 million on AIDS treatment costs in Brazil. There has also been a World Trade Organisation agreement that is supposed to allow export of generic versions of medicines to countries that cannot produce them themselves. However, the restricted and complex nature of the deal makes it difficult to use, and there is concern that production of low-price, generic medicines may dry-up from 2005 when all the key countries producing generic medicines have to implement the TRIPS Agreement.

The strength of the international campaign about access to medicines has come from the combined expertise and contributions of the international and national organisations and networks involved. They include Médecins Sans Frontières, Health Action International, Treatment Action Campaign in South Africa, NGOs in India, and networks in Thailand and Uganda. Oxfam's particular contributions have been:

- Good quality research and policy analysis that was taken seriously by different constituencies, and helped challenge the intellectual arguments underpinning the TRIPS Agreement. It was welcomed by developing countries because it assisted them in World Trade Organisation discussions.
- A focus on the broader development issues as well as the health dimensions of global intellectual property rules, which has helped shift the terms of debate on TRIPS.
- A focus on major pharmaceutical companies and investors, which has led to broader engagement with companies in discussing ideas and strategies for increasing access to medicines in poor countries.

¹³ TRIPS – the World Trade Organisation's Agreement on Trade Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights.

¹⁴ Doha Declaration on TRIPS and Public Health – this reconfirmed the primacy of public health over private patents, and the rights of governments to use the TRIPS public health safeguards to the full, to promote access to medicines for all.

- Our ability to attract media attention to the issue, to generate public concern, and to support key southern organisations and networks in their campaigning.

The fall in the price of medicines is significant. More money is becoming available for the treatment of AIDS and other major illnesses in poor countries through a variety of funds, including the Global Fund. However, if poor people are to receive the treatment they need, action continues to be needed on all fronts: global intellectual property rules and the price of medicines, in particular in relation to US bilateral free trade agreements with developing countries; political will; finance for purchasing medicines; the development of health systems; and Research and Development of drugs for the treatment of illnesses which are common in poor countries.

Financing of, and access to, health services

Oxfam continues to lobby with others for adequate financing for health services, and the development of an equitable financing framework for donor countries. We support research and engage in debate about how available funds, especially through the Global Fund, are used. For instance, we are now considering increasing our support to Equinet, in Southern Africa, which is monitoring the impact of global funding mechanisms on health service development and poor people's access to services. This research is attracting the interest of a number of donors, including DFID, the World Bank, the World Health Organisation, and other government and civil society actors. Since 2003, Oxfam's health adviser has been sitting on the Portfolio Management and Procurement Committee of the Global Fund, having been selected by the northern NGO community as one of its two representatives.

Oxfam's long term commitment **in Armenia** to testing and developing a model of community-based health financing has had excellent results and provides a good example of how small innovations can spread and potentially bring about widespread change. Oxfam is now on a working group with the Armenian Ministry of Health, considering the integration of the model into national policy (see Case Study 12). In schemes such as these, the community only makes a small contribution towards the overall costs of community health care – perhaps five per cent – but contributes about 80 per cent of the costs of medicines. The international community still needs to give long-term support to the financing of health services for poor countries. These community-based models can, however, create community ownership and the spur for change, as has been the case in Armenia.

📁 Case study 12: Modelling a way of developing primary health care services in Armenia

In 1995, Oxfam started to work in the remote village of Goghtanik in Southern Armenia. The health care infrastructure in Armenia, developed during Soviet times, had collapsed and the health of people living in remote villages in mountainous areas was deteriorating. Oxfam, inspired by the 1987 WHO and UNICEF 'Bamako Initiative' on community-based financing for basic health care in Africa, decided to see if a simple health-financing scheme would work in these remote areas of Armenia. The idea was to ask poor people to contribute a nominal amount every three months in return for necessary medication, a working health clinic, the services of a dedicated nurse, and a functioning water system. The scheme would work within the government health structure, by asking the community to make a contribution to funding and running it.

People in Goghtanik were distrustful of Oxfam and its idea, and initially only a small number of families joined the scheme. They persuaded the local nurse, whose clinic was cramped and dirty and whose drugs' cabinet had been

empty for years, to join the scheme. As Oxfam staff demonstrated that they wanted to work closely with the villagers, and when repairs to the clinic were done as promised, trust in the scheme grew, and other members of the community joined in. People from neighbouring villages then started asking whether they too could have a scheme. By 1999, Oxfam was working in 47 villages. In that year, when people heard that Oxfam had more money for the scheme, heads of villages from two regions started putting in bids for their villages to be considered. Oxfam now works in 78 villages with its major partner Support to Communities and, with the support of other donors who have seen the positive results being obtained, they are starting to work in a further 22 villages in another region. About 68,000 people now have access to primary health care services through the scheme. People are not only seeing improvements in their health, they have been helped to regain their dignity. Communities manage the financial contributions to the scheme and decide how exemptions are made.

As the scheme developed, Oxfam and its partners started lobbying nationally for improvements in primary health care services. In 2003, hundreds of people joined in campaigning on the streets and calling for change. Since then, the government has invited Oxfam on to a working group with the Ministry of Health, to help integrate the community-financing model into national policy.

Similar schemes are operating in villages in Azerbaijan and Georgia, and a start is about to be made in Yemen.

C New developments

Beyond Access. Oxfam is playing an increasing role in bringing together practitioners, academics, and policy makers to share good practices and discuss policy in education. An important vehicle is the seminar series organised by Oxfam and London University's Institute of Education, under the *Beyond Access* project. It looks at quality and gender equality in education. The seminars are receiving enthusiastic support from those participating, including within DFID, the project's funder. The project is generating relevant materials to support policy development in education, and the e-network set up by the project is broadening the reach of those able to participate.

The Commonwealth Education Fund.¹⁵ The Fund is providing an incentive and support for increased civil society networking and engagement in policy discussion about education in developing countries in the Commonwealth. It is managed jointly by Action Aid, Save the Children, and Oxfam, both internationally and in the countries where funds are being allocated. In Zambia, where Oxfam is the lead managing agency, the work has been slow to get going, with mixed expectations and insufficient management capacity. We believe we have now addressed these problems.

Public Sector Research Project. The project is looking at how resources can be deployed to best effect in developing countries and what obstacles are in the way of this. The research will provide a framework and analysis to aid understanding of the minimum conditions and public sector institutions required to deliver equitable and good-quality public services, based on good governance practices and strong civil society participation. The emphasis is on how to implement and deliver good-quality public services so that Oxfam can develop a clear programme policy and engage decision makers in practical terms. Four country case studies

¹⁵ The Commonwealth Education Fund was set up by the British Government with funding of £10 million and with the aim of raising further money to ensure that education remains at the top of the political and social agenda of developing countries throughout the Commonwealth.

are involved: Mali looking at education and, in particular, the context and policy environment for promoting gender-equitable education; Yemen looking at the health system; Mozambique with an HIV/AIDS focus; and Tanzania looking at education services in the context of decentralisation. The research is almost complete.

D Lessons, issues, and risks

- ❑ **Educational equality between girls and boys.** The number of girls in formal education is increasing within Oxfam's programme areas, and globally. The goal of 'equal participation of girls and boys' in education is achievable, but it won't be reached by the target date of 2005 set in the Millennium Development Goals. Achieving the changes within education systems – and in communities – that support girls to stay in school and promote their achievement and equality with boys are more complex and challenging.
- ❑ **Innovations to develop appropriate services for excluded groups.** Oxfam is gaining good experience in developing innovative educational provision for previously excluded children, especially the children of pastoralists, and of gaining government support for these developments. We need to continue the process of exchanging experiences between staff in West Africa and the Horn, East and Central Africa, and of sharing our learning with others.
- ❑ **Moving into campaigning and influencing policy.** Where Oxfam has strong education programmes on the ground with good participation from communities, we are seeing increasing engagement on policy issues. Association with activities promoted by the Global Campaign for Education can give added strength to local advocacy. However, staff and partners still need support to develop national-level advocacy and campaign plans.
- ❑ **Developing our expertise in education.** Programme staff and partners have been encouraged to learn from one another through visits and workshops, and to engage in debates outside Oxfam. For example, staff have been able to participate in some of the *Beyond Access* seminars or present their work at the 2003 Oxford International Conference on Education and Development. Oxfam hosted a meeting to bring people together to discuss education for pastoralist communities. Staff have been supported to write about their work for publishing. Good resource materials have also been developed¹⁶, and we now need to support staff and partners to make good use of them.
- ❑ **The impact of HIV/AIDS.** HIV/AIDS is transforming the reality of poverty and inequality in large parts of Africa and the whole shape of communities is being changed. We are not yet paying sufficient attention across our programmes as to how we should adapt what we do to ensure that it is effective and relevant, given the impact that HIV/AIDS is having or might have in future. We also need to 'scale-up' successful work. A good start has been made in Southern Africa, where we have worked and learned in partnership with others. But even there we recognise the need for more strategic partnerships to be formed, and for us to have clarity about what we can contribute best in regional and national communities.
- ❑ **Financing for basic services and the capacities required to deliver quality public services.** Financing for basic services in poor countries remains a major problem, with donor commitments to existing funding mechanisms falling far short of the need. Without the development of services, poor people will remain unable to obtain the treatment they need for HIV/AIDS and other major illnesses. The quality of education that children receive will remain poor. Oxfam's Public Sector Research Project will enhance our understanding of the financing and capacity issues that are holding back the provision of

¹⁶ Oxfam publications: *Practising Gender Analysis in Education*; *Gender, Education and Development* (forthcoming); 'Beyond Access Project' newsletter, "Equals".

good-quality services, and help us develop our programme policy. We recognise that only a few countries in Oxfam's Middle East, Eastern Europe and Commonwealth of Independent States Region are currently working on health policy development, whereas our broader base of education programmes gives us a stronger base to inform policy. Campaigning with others about the Millennium Development Goals will be important in seeking further action from the international community.

3 The Right Life and Security

A The changes we want to see in the world

- ➔ Fewer people die, fall sick, and suffer deprivation as a result of armed conflict or natural disasters.
- ➔ Fewer people will suffer personal or communal violence, forced displacement, or armed conflict.

Within this aim, Oxfam's priority is humanitarian response. Our focus remains on our areas of distinctive competence in public health (specifically water and sanitation, health promotion, and food security) and gender sensitive humanitarian response. We seek to improve protection of civilians and the quality of humanitarian assistance by:

- Ensuring timely, effective and accountable responses to acute public health emergencies as and when they arise in the world.
- Improving the quality and impact of our on-going humanitarian assistance programmes in response to chronic emergencies in many parts of the world.

We work in alliance with others to persuade the international community, states, and individuals to take up their humanitarian responsibilities and to give them support to fulfil their obligations. We seek to engage with greater effectiveness to protect civilians in armed conflict, highlighting action required in specific crises as well as highlighting changes needed globally, for instance to ensure that aid is based on need.

We strive to improve the accountability of humanitarian aid donors and deliverers, including Oxfam, to the populations assisted. Using Sphere standards as a key measure, we seek to ensure that donors and humanitarian agencies deliver assistance to agreed standards on the basis of need and in accordance with the rights of those affected by disasters.

We seek to improve our own preparedness, and to support civil society to play its role both in advocating for appropriate assistance and in being prepared to respond directly where appropriate.

We play a role in developing technical expertise and innovative ways of delivering humanitarian assistance.

We undertake activities relating to humanitarian work in nearly all the countries where we have a long-term presence, as well as in a few where we do not have a base. In 2003/2004, Oxfam GB was involved in humanitarian response programmes in more than 40 countries. In more than 50 countries world-wide, Oxfam GB is leading contingency planning, as part of a wider Oxfam International initiative.

Within Oxfam's work on conflict reduction, our main focus is:

- Supporting civil society organisations and initiatives to reduce conflict and develop peaceful livelihoods.
- Working to curb the flow of arms to reduce the threat of violence to civilians.

B Progress towards our objectives

HUMANITARIAN PROGRAMME

Highlights

- Responding quickly in a number of rapid-onset emergencies. For instance, Oxfam and partner organisations provided plastic sheeting for emergency shelter, food and items such as bleaching powder to mitigate immediate health risks, within 72 hours, when a 'twin typhoon' hit Bangladesh.
- Providing life-saving support to people in some very insecure and politically difficult situations, such as eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, Liberia, and northern Uganda. Drawing attention of the international community to the situation of people caught up in these conflicts to influence the levels of aid and protection provided.
- Communities better able to cope in precarious environments, for instance where there are recurrent droughts or floods, and where long-term support has been provided, such as in Kenya and Bangladesh.
- Technical innovations, such as household water filters and mosquito-proof temporary shelters, and innovations in approach, such as in alternatives to food aid, leading to more effective responses.

Response to acute emergencies

As in other years, Oxfam has responded to sudden emergencies that have arisen as a result of floods, landslides, typhoons, and earthquakes, as well as conflict. In some of these situations, we have seen the benefits of our investments in preparedness and contingency planning – both within Oxfam and with partners and communities – ensuring that a rapid and appropriate response was possible.

In Bangladesh, when a "twin typhoon" hit in April 2004, Oxfam and our partners were able to respond within 72 hours, providing plastic sheeting for emergency shelter, and materials, such as oral re-hydration salts and bleaching powder, to help mitigate immediate health risks. Buckets, jerry cans and a food package complying with Sphere standards were provided, ponds were cleared of debris, tube-wells drilled, and latrines built. About 14,000 people were helped. Oxfam is now co-ordinating a multi-agency assessment to identify what assistance is required for rehabilitation.

In Sri Lanka, when inter-factional fighting flared-up in April 2004 and people from Batticaloa, eastern Sri Lanka, fled their homes, Oxfam already had water equipment available locally, in anticipation, and provided drinking water to about 3,600 people who took refuge in a school. Water was trucked to the area and an Oxfam water engineer from another area quickly arrived to ensure the quality of the water provided. After three days, people returned to their homes.

In Bolivia, disaster preparedness work, supported by Oxfam for over two years, meant that local communities were able to cope with rapid-onset floods. After an assessment, it was decided that Oxfam did not need to be involved in the response – precisely the sort of impact that preparedness work seeks to have.

In Iran, a country where Oxfam does not have an office, we made a quick response to the earthquake that struck Bam on 26 December 2003. Intense activity to agree with other agencies what we could do to assist led to water equipment and a logistician being flown to

Iran after four days. This was the first step in the programme of assistance that Oxfam then developed in co-operation with the Iranian authorities.

In rapid-onset emergencies, there are often challenges to face in meeting the high standards we expect in all our programmes. We may not have knowledge of the area where the emergency has occurred, or have local partners, and the experience of our own Oxfam GB teams and partner agencies varies in countries across the world. Sometimes, another affiliate within Oxfam International is the lead agency for Oxfam in a country, and their capacities also vary. This emphasises the continued importance of the preparedness and contingency planning that Oxfam International members are undertaking across the world. It also underlines the need for good co-ordination and collaboration within and across agencies to ensure that the necessary knowledge and skills, pertinent to a particular situation, are put in place.

Case study 13: Responding after floods in the Dominican Republic

Oxfam GB's Humanitarian Department collaborated with Intermón Oxfam, the lead Oxfam in the Dominican Republic, when sudden flooding hit the north of the country in November 2003. Oxfam GB supported Intermón Oxfam to make a rapid assessment. This led to a programme to meet immediate public health needs. Activities then followed to create more permanent solutions and infrastructure when people returned to their homes. New latrines were constructed, flooded ones were replaced by better ones, a water storage and distribution system was installed for about 100 families, and drainage work was carried out. Health promotion activities, especially with children, were undertaken in most communities. An innovative element of the programme was the testing of new family water-purification units. About 40,000 people benefited directly.

Gender issues were considered from the start – in the original assessment (including the composition of the assessment team), in the consultation processes, and in the design of the work. Given the rapid response time, and the short-term nature of the programme, there was good consultation with communities and their representatives, and collaboration with government authorities. We hope this will have lasting benefits, particularly in terms of establishing good co-ordination mechanisms. Local organisations were also identified in an effort to ensure monitoring of what has been done in the emergency programme and to support future development activities. However this is, of course, less certain than the two- to three-year expected life of the physical infrastructure that was installed.

In another emergency, Oxfam GB's team **in the Philippines** helped about 1,900 people who were affected by landslides on 20 December 2003. The locality was new to Oxfam but, in general, the team was able to provide an appropriate response that was much appreciated by the communities.

Case study 13: Response to landslides in Leyte, Philippines

Leyte was a new area for Oxfam to work in. Initial help from other agencies concentrated on providing food and clothing, so Oxfam's ability to address public health needs filled an important gap. In the livelihood support to the communities that followed, Oxfam worked through a new partner agency, SPIADFI. It had long-term experience in the area, but no experience of humanitarian work. The Oxfam staff involved were very conscious of the need

to apply high standards in their response and, as a result of the intervention, local people, community leaders, some municipal staff, and SPIADFI all acknowledged greater awareness of standards needed in emergency situations. Good knowledge of Sphere technical standards in water and sanitation provision, and strong participatory ways of working meant that Oxfam performed relatively well against Sphere standards. However, we could have done better in relation to public health promotion and meeting our own gender standards if there had been more experience of these issues in the team.

An interesting issue raised by this programme is that public health needs and standards may not be recognised as a priority by communities; good skills in working with communities are essential if staff are both to respect communities' views and ensure public health risks are understood and addressed.

Response in chronic conflict and countries emerging from conflict

Oxfam has continued to support large numbers of civilians caught up in long-standing conflicts around the world and in countries emerging into a more peaceful state. The scale of this work is reflected in the expenditure on humanitarian work in these countries¹⁷. The seven largest responses, in terms of expenditure, in 2003/2004 were: North and South Sudan £4.3 million; Angola £2.2 million; Liberia £1.9 million; Uganda £1.7 million; Democratic Republic of the Congo £1.3 million; Colombia £1.1 million; and Palestinian Territories £0.9 million. In all these countries, and others, advocacy has been undertaken alongside direct humanitarian assistance.

Oxfam's ability to continue to provide assistance during periods of intense conflict and insecurity in some countries, and in complex political environments, has been a notable achievement in itself. However, we have also been faced with enormous difficulties and constraints in many of these situations. For instance, having weighed-up all the risks, particularly in terms of the security of Oxfam's staff and partners, and our ability to provide direct humanitarian assistance, our advocacy has on occasions had to be limited. At times, we have found it hard to provide continuity in management and adequate technical support to programme staff. The environment we are working in, as well as staff capacity in some situations, has also made it difficult for us to meet the standards we aspire to in all our programmes.

Case Study 15 from **Ituri, eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo**, illustrates achievements but also the challenges we have faced as we have sought to continue supporting communities there through years of conflict.

Case study 15: Support to civilians in conflict in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo

Oxfam has been carrying out public health work in Ituri since 1999, and was one of the first humanitarian agencies to work there. Our activities have needed to respond to the changing nature of the conflict in the area and, at times, high levels of insecurity have prevented us from being able to reach project sites. In May 2003, when Oxfam had just started a rehabilitation

¹⁷ These figures represent total direct programme spend during 2003/2004 on humanitarian and conflict reduction work in the countries mentioned.

programme, the situation in Ituri deteriorated drastically again, and we had to limit our public health work to Bunia town for several months.

Oxfam responded rapidly and efficiently at that time, launching its programme in the town three days after the crisis flared-up, and in a very insecure situation. Water and sanitation facilities were provided to meet the immediate public health needs of about 45,000 people in camps that were accessible. This included the provision of facilities at feeding and health centres run by other agencies. There is some evidence that these facilities helped to reduce disease and they were highly appreciated by people in the camps.

Substantial advocacy locally, nationally, and internationally was also undertaken with others at that time to improve the protection of people caught up in the conflict. Members of the UN Security Council considered requirements for a protection force and how it should operate. Senior diplomats and UN officials tell us that information on the local situation was useful in contributing to their deliberations and decision to deploy the European Union's peace-keeping force, "Artemis", from June to September 2003, to assist the UN's Mission to the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC). "Artemis" was undoubtedly successful in saving lives and reducing suffering through reducing violence and protecting civilians.

Good work was carried out at the height of the crisis in 2003, despite the difficult working conditions. During this period, the Oxfam office was looted and we had to move three times. However, since the crisis subsided, we have found it difficult to sustain our efforts, and we recognise a number of weaknesses in our work in Ituri. We have not been able to fill key vacancies on time and have not always assured adequate logistical, financial, and technical support to the team. All but one member of programme staff has worked for Oxfam for less than a year. The programme has tended to be driven by short-term needs for water and sanitation facilities rather than on sustaining our activities with communities – when possible – to ensure more durable changes. We also need to involve women more in projects and need to give staff more support to begin to address gender issues. Women and girls in Ituri live under the daily threat of rape but so far Oxfam has not been actively involved in addressing this issue through our work. We need to consider how we might respond on a much wider scale too than we have done in the past.

Oxfam's water, sanitation and public health programme in the **Palestinian Territories** has reached more than 100,000 people, as we reported last year. An evaluation of the programme, and our own monitoring, have shown a range of impacts that the programme has brought (see Case Study 16). However, we feel that the advocacy we have done to draw attention to the suffering of civilians on both sides of the Israel/Palestinian Territories conflict has yet to have real impact. We need to keep renewing our strategy and tactics.

Case study 16: Meeting public health needs in the Palestinian Territories

Oxfam's public health programme in villages in the Palestinian Territories has repaired damaged roof water storage tanks, constructed and repaired household and community cisterns, repaired damaged networks, developed alternative sources of water, and provided water tankers. Water-saving, sanitation, and public health training activities have also been undertaken.

The programme is impacting on people's lives in a variety of ways:

- A considerable drop in water-borne diseases, including diarrhoea, was reported by the women's monitoring groups and by local clinics.
- The provision of water cisterns led to households saving, on average, about US\$20 per month. The money saved was used primarily to buy food. In a situation where water facilities are being attacked, the evaluation considered that the provision of household cisterns was an appropriate response, as they are least vulnerable to attack.
- Having water closer to home reduced the danger involved in collecting water and also saved time, both particularly important for women.
- The active involvement of women has increased their knowledge and self-confidence and, for many, this is the first time they have taken on roles in community activities. Men too are accepting women's changing roles and their involvement as equal partners in decision-making and project implementation. Women are having more influence on public health decisions.
- Improved sanitation facilities in local schools have increased girls' attendance.
- Good partnership with Village Councils has led to a fundamental change in the relationship between the Councils and communities, with greater recognition of the importance of broad-based, participatory project planning, implementation, and decision-making. It has also led to contributions being made by people in the community so that extra work could be done.

Oxfam's role in setting up and chairing the Emergency Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (E-WaSH) co-ordination group of NGOs and the Palestinian Water Authority has been widely appreciated. Alongside this, the establishment of a comprehensive monitoring system to collect information from about 700 communities has enabled many NGOs to respond more effectively to the water and sanitation needs in different communities.

In the Kitgum District of **northern Uganda** too, Oxfam has found ways of providing humanitarian assistance to about 120,000 people, despite the high level of insecurity in this 18-year conflict. Strategies have been devised to reach people in camps that are inaccessible to NGO staff because of the activities of the Lord's Resistance Army. This has involved working with local contractors and agreeing with community members and District officials that they will monitor activities. More than 15,000 children have been abducted by rebels in the last year and, because of this, many rural families send their children to sleep in town. Oxfam has provided night shelters, water and sanitation facilities, and hygiene education for people coming into town at night. The programme has been sensitive to the risks that women and girls faced with both sexes sleeping together in open places, and consulted with women and men to find appropriate solutions. As a result, segregated areas in shelters, complete with sanitary facilities, have been provided for women and girls. The programme has also involved women in non-traditional roles. For example, an all-female construction team of carpenters, masons, and labourers was recruited to construct night shelters. Their work has been quite visible and this is beginning to challenge perceptions about what women can do – the local technical college is now targeting women in its advertisements for technical courses. Oxfam's advocacy has also helped bring international attention to this long-neglected conflict.

Humanitarian response, food security and livelihoods

According to the independent evaluation of the Disasters Emergency Committee (DEC) Appeal for Southern Africa, Oxfam and other DEC agencies directly contributed to mitigating a significantly worse food crisis than was actually felt in the region in 2002/2003. In large parts of Africa, we have continued to support communities affected by the droughts in 2002/2003. In Asia too, there are significant programmes with communities affected by long-term or recurrent droughts or floods. Often, people's precarious situation is compounded by years of conflict, marginalisation, or inequitable development. A large humanitarian programme was carried out in Ethiopia during 2003/2004, with expenditure of £3.4 million, as we continued to provide assistance following the 2002/2003 drought. In Zimbabwe, Oxfam's humanitarian programme amounted to £1.4 million and in Mauritania to £1.3 million during 2003/2004¹⁸.

The scale of these emergencies in Africa in 2002/2003 has led to much reflection about how the labels 'humanitarian' and 'development' need to be questioned when dealing with complex crises such as these. Oxfam teams are now developing a much stronger analysis of the complex causes of food insecurity. **In Southern Africa**, the Oxfam team has avoided the temptation to return to 'business as usual' after scaling down from last year's massive response. They have built 'safety-nets' (in the form of food and agricultural inputs where they are necessary), public health activities, and early warning systems into programmes. The overriding consideration has been to design programmes that will be responsive and sensitive to slight changes or future shocks. This involves ensuring we are well prepared to alter and scale-up our interventions efficiently in future humanitarian crises. **In Mauritania**, a lack of in-depth understanding of diversified livelihoods, and separate emergency and development programmes, constrained innovative ways of responding to the food insecurity caused by the 2002/2003 droughts. A drought mitigation programme is now being developed.

In South Asia, livelihoods programmes are increasingly being located in disaster-prone areas, and preparedness activities are being integrated.

This year's Regional Impact Reports also show an increasing sophistication in linking preparedness activities conceptually to risk management and mitigation.

There is much that can be learnt from a number of other countries where Oxfam has been integrating development and humanitarian approaches over a number of years. For instance, **Oxfam's Horn, East and Central Africa Region** has continued to innovate in finding appropriate ways to support livelihoods in areas where people's access to the basic means of subsistence is not secure. The Region has adopted a policy of favouring alternatives to free food aid where appropriate, and has been pushing for changes in approach in some of the countries in the Region where there is most food insecurity, as well as proactively seeking to influence key food agencies. **Oxfam's East Asia Region** has also been changing the design of programmes to combine the best of humanitarian and development approaches.

In Cambodia, Oxfam recently evaluated the programme it has been carrying out with partners in response to a food security assessment undertaken after the severe floods in 2000. The programme has involved disaster management, rehabilitation, and livelihoods components. Certainly, the programme has increased people's assets, they are better-off materially and there have been changes in women's and men's abilities and awareness. Women have gained more power in decision-making and are better able to address their

¹⁸ These figures represent total direct programme spend during 2003/2004 on humanitarian and conflict reduction work in the countries mentioned.

own concerns. Communities also feel that the project has contributed to community cohesion. It remains to be seen whether the gains made are sufficient to sustain people through future natural disasters or community conflicts.

In Bangladesh, the long-term work that Oxfam and its partners have been doing in the *char*¹⁹ areas, to reduce people's vulnerability to flooding, is showing results. Importantly, beliefs that the damaging effects of floods are the will of God have changed, and communities have now come to understand that they can take preventive measures to reduce damage from floods. Of their own accord, communities are looking after the flood shelters, raised villages, and rescue boats provided through the programme. The communities have also recognised that development requires the participation of women as well as men, and the formation of gender development forums of women and men is promoting change. Recently, for instance, women took on labouring work publicly and, importantly, received the same wage as men. The introduction of livelihood options that are suitable for the *chars*, and which discourage migration, are increasing the sustainability of the changes being achieved. People's increased incomes are visible in terms of the improved health of children, the existence of cattle, tin roofs on houses, and the fact that some children going to high-school outside the *char* areas. Advocacy by partners has ensured that government staff are more aware of the Disaster Standing Order, which defines their roles and responsibilities, and in some areas they have committed to share the responsibilities for maintaining the flood shelters and increasing their support to the *char* communities.

Cash for work is now being introduced more widely across Oxfam's food security interventions in humanitarian programmes. **In Rajasthan, India**, women's involvement in activities during a period of severe drought opened-up opportunities for them to assume new responsibilities.

Case study 17: Support for drought-affected families in Rajasthan, India

In the early part of 2003, during a period of severe drought, Oxfam enhanced the activities in its existing development programme to ensure that there were local employment opportunities and that poor and marginalised families had access to food, water, and fodder for small livestock. Eighteen hundred families participated in food for work and cash for work programmes. The timely start of the programme reduced distress migration, incidentally reducing the burden on women who would otherwise have been left behind in the villages. The water-harvesting structures constructed by the communities in 41 villages were professionally designed, and as well as being technically sound were cheaper than government-constructed ones. As a result of this work, there is improved access to water in the longer-term. Provision of fodder prevented deaths or sales of animals, helping to sustain people's livelihoods.

For the first time, women worked as supervisors on the construction sites, where crèche facilities were provided to enable women with small children to work and benefit from the programme. Women and men were equally represented in the Village Drought Relief Committees that played a key role in the selection of people to benefit, programme design, and implementation. This was used as a method to develop the communities' stake in the management and maintenance of the assets being created. The Committees

¹⁹ "Chars" are low-lying islands in rivers.

also enabled people to start demanding their rights and, for example, this led to an increase in the number of tankers distributing water.

Quality and accountability in humanitarian action

Quality of humanitarian response

Sphere standards. Although generally we aim to meet or exceed the Sphere minimum standards, in some cases meeting the standards on a practical level has proved a challenge, as illustrated by some of the case studies. In other situations, it has been possible to meet the standards, even in difficult environments. Sometimes this has involved developing creative new solutions, such as mobile public health teams in **Angola**, or continuing to pursue approaches such as community-based targeting, when this had appeared to be politically unacceptable in **Zimbabwe**. Oxfam's **Horn, East and Central Africa Region** has also used the Humanitarian Charter and Sphere standards as a means to lobby the Kenyan government, with some success, on its national policy on disaster management. This, despite admitting that our own achievement of minimum standards in the Region has, at times, been weak in practice.

Oxfam has continued its contribution to the Sphere Project globally, for instance making a significant contribution in the drafting of the 2004 revision of the *Humanitarian Charter and Handbook*, and being active in the Sphere Steering Committee. A wide-ranging evaluation of the Sphere Project concluded that it has been one of the most important and most successful initiatives in humanitarian assistance. There is a widespread perception among NGOs, donors, and other members of the humanitarian community that the quality of humanitarian assistance programmes has improved in recent years and that this improvement is due, in part, to the Sphere project. The adoption of a rights-based approach by the Project was found to have been a major influence on the thinking and the operations of many NGOs and other humanitarian agencies.

The Good Humanitarian Donorship initiative. This initiative, which will hopefully influence for the better the behaviour of the humanitarian donor community, arose in part from Oxfam's own '*Forgotten Emergencies*' paper. We have had access to the forums where donors have been setting out the principles of being good donors and have been able to have our views taken into consideration there. Changes like these that we see in progress take a long time to happen, and continued involvement will be necessary to get the pay-off.

Technical innovations and new approaches. Oxfam's established niche in public health interventions is evident from some of the programme examples given. Innovations continue to be made, such as the work Oxfam is doing with others to develop a cheap, effective household water filter. The **Dominican Republic** flood response was one of the programmes where filters have been tried. In the **northern Uganda** humanitarian programme, mosquito-proof temporary shelters have been piloted. Support to both civil society and government agencies, to improve public health services, also remains important. For instance, in the **Palestinian Territories**, Oxfam has heavily supported the Palestine Hydrology Group in their comprehensive monitoring of water and sanitation needs of communities. Training government staff in water-testing has led to greater effectiveness in testing and dealing with outbreaks of diarrhoea.

Oxfam's drive to develop alternatives to food aid and the use of innovative and appropriate methods to support livelihoods, have already been mentioned. Our increasing attention to incorporating the reality of the prevalence of HIV/AIDS into our responses has also been described in the section on The Right to Basic Social Services (see page 29); we recognise the enormity of the issues involved in this.

Gender. As shown in some of the case studies, programmes are sometimes contributing to influencing the division of labour between women and men and traditional attitudes about women's roles. Women are gaining a higher status within their families and communities as a result of their involvement in some projects. Programme staff are also sensitive to negative impacts that women's involvement can bring, often in terms of increasing their workload, and see where gains are sometimes not sustained. However, across our global programme, we recognise that we still have weaknesses in ensuring that we consider gender issues at all stages of our planning and implementation of programmes and that we have a good gender analysis on which to base the development of programmes. The increased threat of violence towards women and girls in conflict is an important issue that needs to be addressed in some programmes. The difficulties of recruiting women staff, such as in Iraq last year, provide an additional challenge in some programmes. The development of standards for our programming, ensuring we have data analysed by women and men separately, and ensuring there is gender analysis at the point of programme design are some of the ways in which Regions are seeking to improve their overall practice.

Preparedness. Reflection on our recent humanitarian responses has shown how, in some instances, investment in preparedness has enabled us to make quick, effective responses, and for partners and communities to do so too. The examples from **Bangladesh** and **Bolivia** are good illustrations of this.

We are increasingly assisting local communities to be prepared themselves, and involving local government authorities. A good example of this is a project that Oxfam and Médecins Sans Frontières undertook with a marginal community in **Guatemala City**. Living in a hilly area, and with little or no social services provision, the community experiences problems in the rainy season and from earthquakes. As a result of the project, local people now have a multi-purpose centre that can act as a shelter. The risks they face have also been reduced by supporting the construction of retaining walls, and by undertaking drainage work and solid waste management. The community is also better prepared to look after their own needs if disaster strikes.

Increasingly, preparedness work is also being informed by reflections on past responses, especially our experiences in recent years of working with communities affected by the droughts in Africa and parts of Asia.

Oxfam GB is also part of Oxfam International's world-wide contingency-planning initiative, and has led the process in more than 50 countries. Some country contingency plans are still to be completed and, more importantly, they remain to be tested in practice.

Accountability and protection in humanitarian response

Participation and accountability. Several of the approaches Oxfam promotes, for instance in health promotion work and in the community-based targeting methodology, seek to strengthen mechanisms for accountability to people affected by disasters. Most Regions have examples of where they judge the involvement of local organisations or communities has brought results that would not have been achieved otherwise. In some cases, communities are better placed for the longer-term; in others, humanitarian needs are addressed more effectively. Good examples of community mobilisation and grassroots lobbying are also seen in programmes, for instance in **Mauritania, West Timor, Pakistan**, and with asylum groups in **Wales**. They lead to strengthened representation of people's needs to local and national governments. With support from Oxfam, communities felt more confident to speak up about the causes of their problems and the rights of their communities. However, Regions have identified areas where we need to pay more attention. Oxfam's Horn, East and Central Africa Region, for instance, considers that local communities are still not challenging Oxfam significantly or leading programme design or management. Oxfam's East Asia Region comments, too, on the need for further reflection about the continuum of

material and non-material inputs in programmes, and how to ensure our programmes are ultimately empowering people to be able to claim their rights and satisfy their needs. Another area for reflection is on how we find workable compromises between decisions made by communities about what they need and want, and technical decision-making.

Internationally, through its Humanitarian Department, Oxfam has continued to contribute to efforts in the humanitarian sector generally, to strengthen the accountability of humanitarian agencies to those affected by disasters. Oxfam is one of the founding members of the newly formed *Humanitarian Accountability Partnership International* (HAP-I) and has a seat on the board. We host the ALNAP²⁰ Working Group on the *Participation of Crisis-affected Populations in Humanitarian Action*, which is producing a Practitioners' Handbook on the subject. Oxfam is also one of the members of the Steering Committee for Humanitarian Response (SCHR) that has piloted a Peer Review Process which focused on the organisational actions designed to meet the challenges exposed by the scandal over the sexual exploitation of refugees in West Africa. Peer reviews will now be undertaken within SCHR's full membership.

Protection. We have been developing protection work in the field, at the same time as making protection of civilians a key focus of our humanitarian advocacy work. The trend is away from narrow human rights practice, towards integrating protection as an approach into humanitarian actions. Oxfam's approach is becoming more and more influential in the sector. In **Liberia**, we influenced the humanitarian community as a whole to take into consideration particular threats faced by displaced people. In our **northern Uganda** programme, as already mentioned, the protection analysis that Oxfam made led to a change in design of the sleeping shelters for the 'night-dwellers', in order to reduce women's and girls' risks of sexual assault. In **West Timor** (Indonesia), our protection approach has improved the lives of tens of thousands of refugees who were displaced during the East Timorese conflict. It also made a strong contribution to raising the awareness of government and donors on protection issues, prompting them to change policies and practices, especially in terms of information dissemination. The project showed that collecting and disseminating information on real conditions and the opinions of affected communities in a systematic and credible way can be very powerful and influential.

Humanitarian advocacy. It is difficult to gauge the degree of our influence in most situations, but senior diplomats at the UN and elsewhere sometimes tell us that our contributions have been important. Our advocacy concerning civilians caught up in conflict in **eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo** in 2003 has already been mentioned. Oxfam's media work and policy papers concerning the humanitarian crises in Iraq, Haiti, and Liberia also achieved wide coverage and discussion regionally and globally. In the case of **Liberia**, the powerful eye-witness accounts of an Oxfam staff member in Monrovia, when conflict reached the capital in 2003, were important in communicating the situation to the outside world and supporting Oxfam's lobbying for humanitarian aid and the protection of civilians. Members of the UN Security Council were lobbied for the deployment of a peace-keeping force and about the adequacy of its mandate. Persistent lobbying has continued about the need for a comprehensive programme of 'Disarmament, Demobilisation, Reintegration, and Rehabilitation' and the paper we prepared on Reintegration and Rehabilitation was read widely and contributed to deliberations about the more comprehensive programme that has now been launched.

Much of the international lobbying involves Oxfam International's office in New York. Oxfam GB has acted within the larger network of Oxfam International affiliates, with other INGOs, and through national-level partnerships. In these ways, the audience of advocacy messages has been increased and we have been able to exert more pressure on stakeholders to act with consideration of humanitarian needs, especially protection needs, and standards.

²⁰ ALNAP, the Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance in Humanitarian Action, is an international network of major humanitarian agencies.

Oxfam's 2003 report, *'Beyond the headlines'*, calling for action to protect civilians in neglected crises, was well received in the humanitarian and international community, and was, for instance, quoted by the UN Office for the Co-ordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) in its annual report. However, the war in Iraq has continued to dominate the headlines and the attention of the international community, and there is little sign of any positive change in aid flows. We need to find new approaches that are capable of turning the tide.

An end to 'formal hostilities' in Iraq was declared just over a year ago, in May 2003. At that time there was a feeling that the UN Security Council had failed from many points of view, and there was scepticism about its ability to do anything to protect civilians in the many humanitarian crises around the world. However, its action with regard to eastern Democratic Republic of Congo has shown that concerted action can be taken. Throughout the year Oxfam continued to push for multilateral solutions to humanitarian crises and will continue to do so.

Case study 18: Responding to the war in Iraq

As for other agencies, the war in Iraq presented Oxfam with many challenges. Extensive work was done before the war to receive possible influxes of refugees into Iran, Syria, Turkey, and Jordan and a member of Oxfam staff was seconded to co-ordinate UNICEF's²¹ water and sanitation response in Iraq. We worked closely with UNHCR²² and UNICEF to train local officials and engineers in water and sanitation practices for refugee camps. This helped ensure that the Governments of Syria and Jordan, as well as the UN, were able to effectively and efficiently meet the needs of refugees. It helped us develop relations with governments and gave us access to planning discussions.

Extensive lobbying was carried out, highlighting the potential humanitarian risks of war and the risk that the authority of the UN Security Council would be undermined. We lobbied on the need to uphold International Humanitarian Law in war, should it occur. Oxfam also took a high-profile stance against taking funds from a belligerent government such as the UK's. In the event, very few refugees fled Iraq and the preparations Oxfam made benefited only some 2,500 refugees. Although costly, making preparations were essential under our humanitarian mandate. Perhaps drawing on more sources of information when we were making plans would have led us to different estimates about possible numbers of refugees. We cannot tell in the instance of Iraq. More generally, we feel we should always seek to draw on diverse perspectives and sources of information, both for making preparations to respond and for lobbying.

Advocacy concerning the need to uphold International Humanitarian Law continued during the war. Once the war had ended, we made assessments to determine what Oxfam's response should be in Iraq. These found that, while there was not a conventional acute humanitarian crisis, intervention was necessary because of the suffering which stemmed from long-term structural neglect in the country. However, the high level of insecurity that has continued in Iraq has made working there difficult. This also made it very difficult to hire local women as staff. The projects that have been carried out were small. They have included assistance with water, sanitation, agriculture, irrigation and veterinary services, and moderately sustainable results were achieved. For instance, the sewage pumping stations and water systems that

²¹ UNICEF – the United Nations Children's Fund.

²² UNHCR – the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

were rehabilitated are still working, and in Naziriyah the water department is expanding on some of the projects done. Oxfam also undertook a co-ordinating role with NGOs in Iraq. This helped us influence important debates among humanitarian organisations on matters such as civil-military relations and 'humanitarian space', and influence the NGOs' Co-ordination Committee in Iraq to adopt a minimum standard for adherence to the Code of Conduct²³.

We have continued to lobby about the role of the UN and the need to uphold International Humanitarian Law, including the obligations of the occupying powers. However, with only small projects on the ground, we were not able to draw on local information to the extent that we normally do for our advocacy, and this limited our ability to influence decision-makers.

Work **in the UK** on asylum included a policy paper which challenged UK government plans to transfer or process asylum seekers in overseas centres or 'zones'. This supported alliance-building and high-level lobbying in the UK, European Union, and UNHCR. Our objective is to influence the global asylum system to increase, rather than decrease, the protection of people at risk in general. Our lobbying with others has contributed to tempering the most worrying parts of the UK plans and European Union support for them. Tanzania emerged as the focus for UK bilateral negotiations on these plans. Once alerted to this fact, Oxfam staff in Tanzania made the most of their networks there to put pressure on the government, which is now taking a firm stance against the UK processing asylum proposals in that country.

CONFLICT REDUCTION

As Oxfam is currently undertaking a review of its conflict reduction work, only a brief description of this aspect of our work is given here.

This is the first year during which Oxfam has used its Conflict Reduction Framework for programming, and it is beginning to focus the type of work Oxfam is doing. The major concentration of programme work, in 18 countries, is described as supporting civil society in conflict reduction and peace processes. This often includes working with, or supporting traditional systems and methods. Meaningful community involvement is seen as essential to peace-building, as is the empowerment of local people and organisations to manage processes that lead to a reduction in violent conflict locally. In Rwanda, an innovative form of conflict management training for non-literate women has been piloted with great success. Three of the women trained have now been selected as judges in the traditional *gacaca* courts, where some perpetrators of the 1994 genocide are being brought to trial.

In some areas, for example in Guatemala, programmes support indigenous people's traditional conflict management methods. In Colombia and Guatemala there is also a focus on human rights issues, both through support to partners and advocacy.

In many areas of work, advocacy and support to civil society complement each other. In Ghana, Senegal and Sri Lanka, among others, educational activities, campaigning on small arms, and advocacy go hand-in-hand. In Sri Lanka, Oxfam published research to increase understanding about the seemingly intractable nature of the conflict, while supporting young, local researchers to develop their analytical capacity and understanding of the situation.

²³ Principles of Conduct for The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and NGOs in Disaster Response Programmes

Case study 19: Promoting non-violence in Ghana

Oxfam has given support to local partners in northern Ghana and the National Commission for Elections to implement a peaceful election campaign by using radio programmes. The programme is so successful that in other parts of the country, partners and local communities are asking to duplicate it, and make it national.

Oxfam's local partner, NCCE, continues to make an impact in its proactive non-violence campaign in northern Ghana. NCCE was able to forestall a near clash in Yendi between the two warring parties in the complex chieftaincy conflict. It is estimated that about 120 people might have lost their lives if NCCE had not identified the problem early and used non-violent campaign strategies to curb the disturbances. Oxfam's support for this programme has been applauded by the Regional Co-ordinating Council and the Ghanaian Ministry of the Interior.

In Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Somaliland, Ethiopia, and North Sudan, conflict reduction work has focused on developing the skills of pastoralists in conflict management, as well as promoting their involvement in national planning and policy development. In Kenya, Oxfam has helped develop local peace structures in 14 districts as well as a national-level committee. In most districts, the incidence of conflict has reduced. For example, the commitment of the Turkana District Peace and Development Committee has led to a reduction in internal conflict, particularly between West and South Turkana, and a reduction in the incidence of highway banditry.

In northern Mali, Arab and Kunta communities signed a peace agreement, for which the President of Mali publicly commended Oxfam's contribution.

In the area of development, Oxfam's conflict reduction work in a number of Regions, including the Horn, East and Central Africa, Central America, Mexico and the Caribbean, and East Asia, has focused mainly on livelihoods. In Sudan, the provision of clean drinking water was seen as a means to promote the prevention and resolution of violent conflict.

In both Uganda and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, some conflict reduction activities have been linked to humanitarian response programmes. A variety of other programmes around the world also have conflict reduction objectives, or attitudes, within programmes that are designed to achieve other objectives, such as food security. For example, in Bosnia, Oxfam's livelihoods programme works on the border with Republika Srpska²⁴ and supports conflict reduction by creating a broad coalition of farmers across ethnic divisions. In general, there is awareness throughout Oxfam's work of a need for a conflict-sensitive approach to programming, whether it is designed to reduce levels of violent conflict, or to deal with the devastating consequences of conflict.

Advocacy work has focused primarily on arms campaigning, and on regional arms agreements within the Horn, East and Central Africa and West Africa Regions. In Kenya, Oxfam has supported the development of the Nairobi Declaration and the Nairobi Protocol, and works with journalists and the media to promote awareness and a reduction in the use of arms in society.

In the *Control Arms* campaign, launched in October 2003, Oxfam has joined with Amnesty International and IANSA²⁵ in a joint campaign, with some campaigning activity in at least 70

²⁴ Bosnia and Herzegovina is administratively divided into the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, primarily inhabited by Bosniaks and Bosnian Croats, and the Bosnian Serb-led Republika Srpska.

²⁵ IANSA – International Action Network on Small Arms - a grouping of hundreds of southern NGOs working on arms control.

countries. Over 140,000 people from 186 countries have shown their commitment to the campaign by offering their 'face' in a photograph or picture. It is too early to assess the actual impact of the campaign on the lives of any particular groups of people, but a range of outcomes – such as 8 governments pledging support for the Arms Trade Treaty and several more close to it – shows some progress against our objectives.

The *Control Arms* campaign has been a lynchpin of Oxfam's campaigning work beyond the purely field programme level, although there have also been good links with national programmes in some countries, for example in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo. In West Africa, Oxfam has undertaken some high-profile awareness raising, from local through to regional levels, on the impact of arms. There is now, for example, an action network of local organisations on small arms, and the ECOWAS²⁶ countries in West Africa have also committed to take steps towards a regional convention on small arms.

While the *Control Arms* campaign deals largely with the supply side of the arms equation, Oxfam is also developing a community safety strategy to deal with the demand for arms, and communities' dependence on them for safety and livelihoods.

C New developments

Oxfam International Humanitarian Consortium. In July 2003, Oxfam International established a Humanitarian Consortium, comprising 5 affiliates – America, Australia, Great Britain, the Netherlands, and Spain. These members will work on behalf of all Oxfam affiliates to lead the confederation's humanitarian and conflict reduction work. The establishment of the Consortium represents a commitment by affiliates to invest in assuring the capacity and quality of Oxfam's humanitarian work. The Consortium now has action plans and development plans, including the world-wide contingency-planning initiative already mentioned. Other plans include, for instance, Oxfam GB supporting Oxfam America in Peru, where we mentored them in a response to floods. While this required extra effort and potentially slowed the response, the longer-term benefits of expanding Oxfam International capacity are judged to be valuable. There have been two cases this year when the Humanitarian Consortium has smoothed the way to more effective working relationships between affiliates within a humanitarian response.

Monitoring project. Several Regions make note of weak monitoring of their humanitarian programmes and of the problems this raises both for the strength of the programme and for the ability to track impact. While this is not a new concern, it maybe has a greater prominence in this year's reports. The Humanitarian Department is starting a project to trial monitoring systems in two programmes over the next two years.

D Lessons, issues, and risks

- ❑ Experience has shown us that some of our partners need significant support to be able to engage in humanitarian work and that this requires dedicated investment. We also know that, in some places, we could develop new partnerships with agencies that already have experience of working in emergencies.
- ❑ Programmes in West Africa, Southern Africa, and South Asia have benefited from use of the community-based targeting methodology that Oxfam staff learnt from colleagues in the Horn, East and Central Africa Region. We should ensure that more of such cross-Regional exchange of effective methodologies takes place.
- ❑ It is easy to fall back on habitual ways of responding to and running programmes in emergencies, because to develop and maintain imaginative and different approaches

²⁶ ECOWAS - Economic Community of West African States

takes extra effort and investment – of time and, sometimes, of resources too. However, we need to recognise that efforts to do good quality programming have, at times, led us into levels of complexity which have compromised our effectiveness. There may be several ways to address this: from being content with ‘simpler’ programmes that nevertheless deliver real impact where it is needed, to progressively building in the different dimensions that contribute to good quality as programmes are being implemented.

- Some Regions are reporting that they see gender analysis at the point of programme design as essential for greater impact of projects. We must ensure that gender becomes an essential component of all programmes from the beginning and that it is not just a reporting requirement in some instances.
- Our 2003 report *'Beyond the Headlines'* did not have the influence achieved by a similar report, *'Forgotten Emergencies'* in 2000. The 'War on Terror' has led to firmer political interests in why aid is sent to some places rather than others. With Iraq continuing to dominate the headlines throughout 2003, we saw little sign of any positive change in aid flows towards neglected crises. We need to find new approaches that are capable of turning the tide.
- Even with more resources there will be hard judgements to make about where and when we should concentrate our humanitarian advocacy. There will be occasions when we have to prioritise issues on which we think there is momentum for progress, while leaving aside others which are “stuck”. There are also old – but still relevant – issues about how far we can be public advocates on an issue and still maintain programmes directly helping people on the ground (which may sometimes also involve staff insecurity). We have to judge what will best help most people in any particular situation.
- Where there are chronic and cyclical food security needs to be addressed, as in Ethiopia, this must be done through a long-term approach that includes preparedness, relief, contingency planning, and mitigation activities. There needs to be better integration of our livelihoods and humanitarian work in some countries. We have a great deal of this sort of experience in Kenya and in the South Asian River Basin, among other places. With more awareness of this, we know we can improve learning between Regions and make real advances, but are not yet doing so.
- Iraq this year and Southern Africa last year, as examples, have taught us that at times we need to improve our analysis of situations. We can be drawn into others' analysis, or lack sufficient relevant local knowledge, or just not be sufficiently wide-ranging in the sources we use. The remedies for these three areas of weakness are different, but all require that we be sharper in checking what we are doing at this stage of programme planning.
- Sometimes Oxfam International collaboration processes have hampered the effective delivery of aid. Knowledge and application regarding humanitarian assistance issues vary across affiliates and across countries. With the establishment of the Oxfam International Humanitarian Consortium, these issues are beginning to be addressed. In the case of Oxfam's response to the floods in the Dominican Republic in November 2003 (described in Case Study 13), there was a degree of confusion caused by the roles assigned within Oxfam International, but this was soon sorted out.
- Ratings by programme staff of our performance across the Regions show that we judge the impact we have on people's lives to be higher than our performance in terms of sustainability, participation, or changing policies, practices, ideas and beliefs. The reasons for this, in situations where immediate and sometimes continuing needs are acute, are obvious and understandable. However Regions also note how hard it is to 'prove' our impact, partly because we have not yet got into the widespread habit of setting indicators of impact at the design stage of programmes.

- ❑ It has been possible to achieve wide-ranging popular support in some countries – North and South – where we have invested in campaigning on arms, and through this to make real progress in pressurising governments to make positive change. However, we recognise the need to develop our capacity to campaign in other countries that have considerable impact on the world. We also recognise difficulties of campaigning in many of the countries where we seek to achieve changes.
- ❑ The global 'War on Terror' has exacerbated the possible risks to staff and to our ability to work in some places. Whether these risks continue and spread is a major issue for our humanitarian work. Given the global nature of this issue, we need to develop conflict-sensitive approaches in our work beyond local or national contexts. It is not yet clear what this involves and how it relates to the other issues of "humanitarian space".
- ❑ There are opportunities to link conflict reduction work and humanitarian response, especially from the viewpoint of protection. These need to be further explored as there are currently numerous lost opportunities.

4 The Right to be Heard

A The change we want to see in the world

- ➔ All poor and marginalised people will have an effective voice in influencing decisions affecting their lives, will achieve their civil and political rights, and will enjoy equal status with others.

'Voice poverty' – the denial of people's right to influence the decisions that affect their lives – is a central cause of impoverishment and suffering in the world. Oxfam holds two central concerns in relation to voice poverty and people's right to be heard:

1. Where people living in poverty are systematically excluded from institutions, decision-making processes, and resource allocation decisions, they are less likely to benefit from development investments.
2. Systematic denial of people's right to participate erodes the accountability and effectiveness of organisations, companies and governments, making these institutions much more prone to the corruption, malpractice, and malfeasance that exacerbate poverty.

Oxfam's programme focuses on a) institutional accountability, especially greater aid and budget accountability, and b) capacity building for empowerment.

Our work includes supporting people living in poverty and civil society organisations – especially women's and marginalised people's groups – to engage in policy dialogue at national level. In many of our programmes this involves working with civil society organisations and governments to develop and implement country-owned Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) and Poverty and Social Impact Assessments. Increasingly, the work looks at empowering people to monitor how policies are implemented through the budget process, to ensure that they actually impact positively on the lives of women and men.

The 'right to be heard' is both an end in itself, tackling voice poverty, and a means to an end, which is integral to all Oxfam's programmes, particularly to development programmes around sustainable livelihoods, basic social services, and equity. It is also built into disaster prevention, conflict reduction and, increasingly, into actual relief programmes.

B. Progress towards our objectives

Highlights

- ❑ Indigenous groups in South America and pastoralists in West Africa gaining influence, and government attitudes and policies shifting favourably.
- ❑ Civil society groups growing in strength in order to participate in national Poverty Reduction Strategy processes, but there is still a long way to go to secure people's 'right to be heard' in many places.
- ❑ People's participation in government policy processes becoming institutionalised in some countries, such as Vietnam, where we have undertaken long-term work with civil society and government agencies.

Supporting indigenous communities

Over many years, Oxfam's programmes have paid particular attention to groups which have the least voice, and have pursued strategies to diminish gender inequalities and marginalisation on the basis of identity. Much of the impact seen today in the programmes with indigenous people in Latin America has come from long-standing engagement with partners there. Long-standing work with pastoralist communities in Kenya has also led to considerable change, with stronger pastoral institutions formed, their engagement in policy processes, and greater recognition by the state of pastoral issues. In other countries too – Uganda, Ethiopia, Tanzania, Somalia, North Sudan, Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger – progress can be seen from our engagement with pastoral communities.

In Bolivia, Oxfam has had a long-term relationship with indigenous communities, and particularly with indigenous women. This has focused on strengthening organisations and leadership, and has seen partners from indigenous groups taking proactive roles in local and national politics. Oxfam therefore played an important role in the tremendous success of the last elections, which saw increasing indigenous representation in government and the appointment of an indigenous leader to the post of Minister for Indigenous Affairs. Equally, Oxfam's ongoing support to partners involved in lobbying on the World Bank, International Monetary Fund, and extractive industries, has increased the voice of civil society and contributed to the clear messages on these topics coming out of massive countrywide protests in late 2003. Also, at the urging of indigenous communities, the World Bank Ombudsman is carrying out an audit of the Bolivian extractive company COMSUR, and several communities have recovered collective rights over their territories.

In Brazil, a new decree has rules that the State must follow in the process of issuing land titles for territory traditionally occupied by rural communities of African descent – the descendants of escaped slaves – known as 'Quilombolas'. The decree responds to demands to respect the rights of Quilombolas, and is the result of a Working Group set up by the government in May 2003. Six Quilombola organisations participated, three of which are Oxfam partners. Oxfam has been working for several years with Quilombola communities in Brazil. Their rights to land were recognised in the 1988 Constitution and actions and advocacy over the years have resulted in hundreds of thousands of hectares being demarcated. But each case is disputed and each success has required a struggle. Recently, advocacy efforts also resulted in the government withdrawing a proposal for a USA airbase that could have displaced hundreds of Quilombola families. However, the threat is still there and Oxfam and its partners will keep monitoring negotiations concerning the airbase in order to avoid new displacements.

In Mauritania, Oxfam has worked with the Haratines, the most marginalised community, to analyse constraints and needs so that they can participate in local governance. In relief programmes in Aftout and Affole, Haratine communities have, for the first time, participated in identifying needy beneficiaries, and in distributing food in their communities. From a different angle, Oxfam influenced the government to make consultations over its PRSP and new National Human Rights Plan more participative, and this should assist the Haratines and civil society generally to achieve their rights.

Pastoralists in West Africa have made significant progress in the last couple of years. The pastoral code, the land-use code and the trans-border convention – all crucial to pastoralists' livelihoods and ways of life – have been revised in Mali, Burkina Faso, and Niger. In all of these countries, pastoralist associations are now involved in the management of cattle markets and in resolving security issues, together with local authorities. Engaging with policy makers was almost unheard of in traditional pastoralist communities, but this is now changing. Likewise in Uganda, the government has completely changed its stance towards pastoralism as a result of lobbying by Oxfam partners (see under PRSPs).

Influencing Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs)

Experiences with the development of Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSP) have varied across countries but, in general, a step forward has been made in the space opened up for civil society to engage in national policy-making processes. However, the engagement is often fragile, the right to participation is not yet institutionalised, and the power of donors to influence the final plans is evident. We see instances where civil society has lost faith in the process and persistent efforts will be required to work towards more genuine and robust participatory processes. In other countries we see where longer-term engagement supporting the development of participatory processes with government at different levels, in advance of the introduction of the PRSP processes, is now showing impact.

📁 Case study 20: Strengthening civil society participation in the PRSP process in Indonesia

In Indonesia, Oxfam has played a crucial role in encouraging a broad range of civil society groups to participate in the development of the country's Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper. Working with our partner GAPRI (Coalition of Indonesian NGOs against impoverishment), we have pushed the government to hold wide consultations at a local level and to conduct Participatory Poverty Appraisals and Poverty and Social Impact Assessments. Local Poverty Reduction Committees are to be set up in each of the 425 districts across the country to formulate local poverty reduction strategies in line with the national plan. So far, 40 districts have officially established a committee. One success of the pressure exerted by civil society is that land reform has become a priority in the PRSP. Oxfam's involvement has also created stronger awareness of the need to consider gender issues. The government established a Gender Reference Group and appointed a gender specialist.

However, there have been difficulties along the way. At a late stage in the process of finalising the full PRSP, the government suddenly abandoned the participatory processes that had been agreed. Disheartened, civil society organisations sent a letter of protest to the National Committee for Poverty Reduction (NCPRI) and donors, and threatened to withdraw from the process. Oxfam played an important mediation role at this time. A new agreement was made with the Indonesian government, and NGOs successfully lobbied the NCPRI to set up a team, including all the main stakeholders, to finalise the PRSP. Oxfam and GAPRI have been invited to be NGO representatives in this team.

Our contribution has been recognised by our donor and significant funding has now been agreed for the next three years. This will enable us to scale-up our work at a district level to strengthen the involvement of poor communities in the poverty reduction strategy process.

In Uganda, the government has completely changed its stance towards pastoralism as a result of partners' lobbying. The second PRSP has just been finished in Uganda, the first country in the world to have completed the second round. One key victory is that it is very strong on pastoralism, reflecting this lobbying. It recognises pastoralism as legitimate and appropriate in national policies, whereas before it regarded pastoralism as backward.

In Armenia and Yemen, Oxfam partners have significantly influenced the contents and processes of their PRSPs. Government recognition of civil society as an important stakeholder has opened up new opportunities for dialogue on a range of issues which were formerly closed. Communities have been able to make their concerns felt at all levels. This

has meant local improvements such as local authorities shifting resources to finance a drinking water pipeline in Vayats Dzor region in Armenia, and local authorities decreeing that poor students be exempt from school registration fees and the need to wear new uniforms in Yemen. Civil society involvement has influenced national PRSPs. Anur Al Ahdel of Ghaleel Association said: "The debates with poor people transformed the thinking of local council members regarding development planning. They have confirmed the importance of talking to people themselves to plan programmes to avoid becoming irrelevant." And it has helped partners too make a dramatic shift in thinking. Haj Salih, Director of Al-Gurfa, said: "Owing to the information our organisation received on the PRSP from Oxfam, our views and practices towards helping poor people changed. We shifted our approach from welfare to development-focused work". In Yemen, Oxfam has persistently sought to ensure that gender is addressed throughout the development of the PRSP. Although the final PRSP was disappointing in this regard, continued challenging and collaboration has meant that the government has acknowledged the importance of integrating a gender perspective in the implementation of the PRSP. Oxfam also helped recruit a gender specialist for the new PRS Monitoring Unit and provided training on gender budgeting to staff from the Ministry of Finance.

Monitoring PRSP implementation and national budgets

Now that most PRSPs are completed as documents, work has shifted across the world to focus on monitoring the implementation of policy, and whether resources are reaching local services, such as schools or clinics. While the work Oxfam is doing to support civil society monitor how budgets are spent is new, it shows good potential for providing a practical way in which civil society can hold governments to account.

The work **in Malawi** is cutting-edge. As reported under the Section on Education (page 27), the Malawi Economic Justice Network and other partners have done surveys of clinics, primary schools, and agricultural extension units, to see if extra resources allocated in the PRSP have reached them. They also survey the views of poor women and men about the level of services. Budget out-turns for 2002-03 showed that in the priority areas which were monitored, funds went to the clinics and other services, and were not reallocated, whereas reallocation to other purposes did occur in other areas that were not monitored. This work is demonstrating the key role civil society can play in promoting home-grown accountability mechanisms, tackling corruption and promoting a culture of democratic scrutiny.

In Viet Nam, the national Comprehensive Poverty Reduction and Growth Strategy (CPRGS) has now entered the phase of implementation at the local level. Oxfam's long-term relationships and presence in poor provinces has focused on developing participatory planning and monitoring processes. During implementation of the CPRGS, Oxfam is continuing to strengthen grassroots participation in planning and independent monitoring of local budgets and in development activities at the provincial, district, and commune levels. As a concrete result, local organisations in Tra Vinh province consulted communities over the provincial action plans, and their staff have acquired the skills needed to communicate and advocate about burning issues for poor women and men. More bottom-up planning is happening, there is more consideration of gender in planning, and the need to provide separate data for women and men is accepted. At a national level, Oxfam is supporting VUSTA (Vietnam Union of Science and Technology Associations) to do independent monitoring of the CPRGS.

The accountability of the World Bank and International Monetary Fund

We have continued to lobby the Boards of the World Bank and International Monetary Fund, their rich-country shareholders, and their staff, on a range of issues. Some of these have been country-driven such as macroeconomic policy in Armenia, and others have been

global, such as lack of progress on Poverty and Social Impact Assessments. One major victory was the International Monetary Fund agreeing to set up a team to ensure it engages in these assessments from now on, having refused to do this for the last two years. Another high point was the Oxfam International paper on PRSPs, which brought together considerable country experience and was written by the Oxfam International PRSP team of both programme and policy staff. This paper has been well received by the World Bank, International Monetary Fund, and donors. It is recognised that it is significantly influencing the debate over the second round of PRSPs, for instance with regard to the need for more transparency by donors about the conditions they set and about Poverty and Social Impact Assessments.

Impact in other areas

Civil society **in Malawi** has had a major effect on the shape of changes to the state agricultural marketing board, ADMARC. Under huge pressure from the World Bank, the government decided to privatise it. However, civil society concerns were raised so strongly, using both the media and parliament, that the proposals were adapted to take into consideration the strong social role of ADMARC in providing poor farmers with much-needed inputs, for marketing opportunities and as a source of food. This has been a very significant change of tack by the government and donors alike.

In Peru, the Manhattan Minerals Corporation's project to mine around Tambogrande was finally rejected by the Peruvian government. This project would have adversely affected 70,000 people, but a long campaign of community pressure made the government listen and act.

The focus of Oxfam's programme in South Asia is on livelihoods, gender work, and humanitarian response. But a 'right to be heard' is integral to each programme. The River Basin Programme **in Bangladesh**, for example, which started in 1999, has contributed to organising about 240,000 flood-affected people, of whom most are women, into 1,033 groups in hard-to-reach areas. They meet together to discuss disaster prevention and mitigation and livelihood issues. Knowing their rights, and having the confidence to engage with authorities, is a central plank of the empowerment process. As a result, local authorities are now much more aware of and ready to implement the national 'Standing Orders for Disasters', and they have extended a vaccination programme into the remotest areas.

As reported under the section on Livelihoods (page 19), positive changes in national policy regarding coffee are occurring in Haiti, Honduras, Nicaragua, Guatemala, and the Dominican Republic. They have been strongly influenced by producers making their voices heard. For instance, **in Haiti**, small producers are now recognised as important players by the government, and this is reflected in the Statutes of the National Coffee Institute, which mean that farmers get a proper role in the Institute. This policy development has survived the recent change of government in Haiti. In all countries, helping poor farmers make their voices heard has gone alongside livelihoods work to strengthen agricultural skills, organisational skills, and knowledge of markets.

C New developments

Institutional accountability. The past year has seen a consolidation of Oxfam's work on institutional accountability. Expansion of work on monitoring the implementation of policy is crucial, so that we move beyond victory being seen as success in changing a policy document, even if the policy is ignored. Work on institutional accountability is also vital as an end in itself, as building the capacity of civil society to work with parliaments to scrutinise government is very powerful in promoting democracy and tackling corruption. Malawi was

chosen as the location for a global meeting on budget monitoring in February 2004, because of the cutting-edge work being done there. The meeting brought together staff and partners from 13 countries, who have specific programmes on budget tracking. The meeting showcased excellent work on health tracking in Armenia and Georgia, on education finance in Tanzania and Kenya, and on debt relief resources generally in Ghana and Uganda. Learning from this meeting is being taken forward in partnership with the International Budget Project.

Gender budgeting. Global research into gender budgets has led to focused support for the Yemen and Uganda teams which are working with partners to analyse specific sectors of government expenditure, from a gendered perspective. Yemen is focusing on health, and Uganda on agriculture. These countries have formed a learning group together with Oxfam's UK Poverty Programme. Once the research is finished, it will be shared with other programmes.

Pan Africa Programme. This programme has been evolving since 2000. The most influential work during the past year was on trade, both before and after the World Trade Organisation meeting in Cancún. Networking with Pan African organisations and specific trade delegations in the run-up to Cancún helped to increase the quality and level of engagement and solidarity between civil society and state actors.

There has also been progress on issues of governance and international obligations. Creative work around the G8 meeting provided support to Pan African organisations to do press work from Africa. A solid partnership has been formed with Femnet and Equality Now, to work for the ratification of the Africa Union's Protocol on Women. Oxfam and Femnet were the only civil society organisations present at the launch of the Africa Union Parliament, providing the opportunity to make links and raise the profile of the need to remain accountable to poor people.

However, we have more to do within Oxfam, and with our allies, to build a common analysis of, and vision for, positive change in Africa. It must go beyond standard messages on trade, aid and debt, and obtain better integration of this work with our Regional programmes.

D Lessons, issues, and risks

- If the 'right to a say' is achieved, it doesn't necessarily mean the 'right to be heard' is. In other words, dialogue doesn't necessarily lead to change. The step from one to the other may take years. This was a lesson from an evaluation of an Oxfam International programme in Chiapas, Mexico. If a 'right to a say' was enough on its own, then most countries in Latin America – which have vibrant and strong civil societies – would have achieved much higher levels of equitable human development by now. In places like Bolivia, powerful and entrenched power structures continue to capture the bulk of national wealth and formal politics. In all countries, the power of the donors, and in particular the World Bank and International Monetary Fund, remains huge despite new spaces for dialogue.
- The PRSP process varies across countries, but PRSPs have set a precedent for participation of civil society, which, although limited, is a step forward in most situations. It is important to keep up the pressure to ensure that the second round of PRSPs continues to institutionalise participation and build democracy, and that shifts are made from failed structural adjustment policies to policies that genuinely favour poor people. Donors also need to clearly link their programmes to PRSPs, and not introduce their own secret conditions. If agreed processes of participation are bulldozed, civil society loses faith as we have seen in some countries. Even in countries, such as Uganda, where progress on important issues has been made, core macroeconomic issues may not be addressed. A partner in Uganda remarked: "*We have not been able to challenge any of*

the fundamental issues...[it] feels like window-dressing'. It is a long process – two steps forward, one back (at best).

- Achieving the 'right to be heard' is a lengthy process as we have seen, with many setbacks along the way. Therefore it is important to find 'quick wins' en route – usually local problems being resolved as a result of advocacy with local government. The experience and confidence gained by civil society groups in this way is in itself a major achievement in tackling 'voice poverty'. Slow change may be more genuine and sustainable than change which happens quickly too. The gradual changes in ideas and beliefs about poverty as a mainstream issue which have, for example, been achieved through long engagement in Viet Nam, are more important than the gains achieved through whatever planning process may be currently in fashion. It may also take many years to develop the confidence of poor people to the point that they are able to participate actively in policy events. We have found this in the UK as well as in other countries where we work.
- A 'right to be heard' cannot stop at PRSPs – there are many other policies and strategies, by donors and governments, which overlap and which are as, or more, important. It is critical that the lessons learned through engagement in PRSP processes are seen as generic, and useful for all work on influencing the content and implementation of national policies.
- Despite success in countries such as Yemen and Uganda, gender equity still needs to be stronger in Oxfam's 'right to be heard' work. For example, the division between budget-tracking work and gender budgeting needs to be broken down, so that gender is always considered. Perhaps more importantly, gender must be part of the implementation of programmes, not just their objectives. Otherwise, we will find gender will not figure much in analysing national policies and budgets.
- Oxfam's bias towards scrutinising national government accountability through budget tracking, with less focus on donor accountability, has continued this year. The balance will be addressed as more work is done on the accountability of donors in the context of the Millennium Development Goals campaign in 2005.
- Experience from a number of programmes demonstrates how Oxfam is improving in its ability to work on 'both sides of the equation' – both supporting communities to identify their needs and demand their rights, but also to push and support governments to fulfil those rights. A review of Oxfam's new Programme for Rights, Inclusion, and Development in Peru showed how important it is to support local government in understanding and exercising their responsibilities as duty bearers. However, we also recognise that in some situations not all sections of civil society want 'a say' if it involves talking to the State, and this can challenge us in developing our approach to working with civil society.
- We sometimes underestimate the importance of existing legislation, which would make a difference if it was known about and implemented, so in any programme we should know relevant laws and help poor people know them.
- It is hard to strike the right balance between 'right to be heard' initiatives at a country level, or sub-country level, and advocacy initiatives that have a regional or global approach. This is especially important in 'failed' or 'near-failed' states, where networking even at a local or national level is difficult.
- A lot of 'right to be heard' work is undertaken under Oxfam's other Aims. Therefore developing a team approach is important, for instance to establish indicators relating to a 'right to be heard' that can be applied in livelihood and other programmes. We also need to consolidate our learning about national advocacy and campaigning across our different areas of work in order to build our knowledge about what has been effective.

5 The Right to Equity

A The changes we want to see in the world

- Women and men will enjoy equal rights.
- Ethnic, cultural and other groups oppressed or marginalised for reasons of their identity will enjoy equal rights and status with other people.

Within this aim, the corporate priority is integration of gender issues into all aspects of our work.

Beyond mainstreaming, the South Asia Region is leading programming to establish how Oxfam can work with others to reduce gender-based violence.

We address the denial of poor people's right to have their opinions heard, and exclusion on the basis of identity through our Right to be Heard programme. Specifically, related to diversity, we continue to build the power and voice of ethnic minorities and indigenous groups and support the disability movement in some areas. We will also engage more with black and minority ethnic communities in Britain.

B Progress towards our objectives

GENDER

Mainstreaming gender

As reports on other Aims have shown, although many programmes are demonstrating various gains for women, staff recognise that these cannot usually be said to represent lasting changes in the power relations between women and men. A longer period of time, and changes in various institutions at different levels of society, will be needed for more fundamental change to occur. Nevertheless, this does not detract from the significance of some of the small changes that staff and partners have helped bring about in some very challenging environments and in the face of strong traditions about women's roles. Staff have shown flexibility and persistence in seeking to bring about changes and good awareness, at times, of some of the risks and unintended negative impacts that can result.

The heightened awareness across Oxfam about gender issues has made the critique of our programmes more robust, and we recognise that there are still weaknesses in many of our programmes. Often there has not been a clear gender analysis during the design of programmes, we have not collected data separately for women and men and often this type of information is unavailable from others. It is realised that staff and many of our partners still need support in order to strengthen their ability to 'mainstream' gender into their programmes.

A few examples show the variety of ways in which staff have sought to influence the balance of power between women and men, and women's position in society:

- **In Rwanda**, innovative conflict management training for non-literate women was piloted with great success. Three of the women have now been selected as judges in the traditional *gacaca* courts, where some perpetrators of the 1994 genocide are being brought to trial.
- In a highly conservative community **in Red Sea State, Sudan**, women participated in mid-wife training after effective involvement in the project by local elders, and after Oxfam agreed to give support to the women's husbands so that they could accompany them to the training.

- **In northern Uganda**, a local technical college has started targeting women in their advertisements for technical courses after Oxfam's programme engaged an all-women construction team to build shelters.
- **In West Africa**, one of the most important achievements of the pastoral programme is considered to be the revival of women's associations, and Oxfam's support for the legal recognition of small organisations of pastoral women has removed a significant barrier to their involvement in economic, social, and policy matters.
- In the Asylum and Media project **in Wales, UK**, promotion of an understanding of gender issues among local agencies led to the Welsh Local Government Consortium of Refugees and Asylum Seekers breaking down the analysis of their conference statistics to give figures for women and men. This has prompted the local council to develop a service targeted at asylum-seeking lone mothers.

The work done on the development of our *Trading away our Rights* campaign, focusing on women workers, brought a new depth to the way in which we have been able to integrate gender issues into a campaign. This has shown us that with a strong gender analysis and not allowing the messages to dissipate, it is possible to communicate gender issues simply in a popular campaign.

A number of risks and set-backs are also being identified in programmes:

- **In India**, in the new programme to introduce organic cotton farming, women expressed their concern that a change to organic farming would increase their workload, without a proportionate share of the economic benefits. As a result, the process of establishing a farmers' trading company has been postponed for a year to give time to ensure that women can be properly represented and that men recognise them as farmers.
- **In Albania**, the programme has assisted women to become more involved in trading activities, and they are seen to be influencing decisions within the local trading associations that have been set up as well as having more influence within their homes. However, staff have observed that there is some tendency for men to try to take over the lead of some ventures once well established.
- **In Mali**, an evaluation of the education programme noted that while the *amimatrices* were successfully helping to change the belief that girls have low intellectual abilities and were increasing girls' enrolment in schools, they needed help to challenge, and not reinforce, gender stereotypes.
- **In Badakhshan, Afghanistan**, efforts have been made to consider gender issues during five years of support to communities through an integrated rural development programme and assistance to recover from a long period of drought. Some change has been seen, but there are many obstacles too:
 - Initially men did not allow their wives to take part in kitchen-gardening activities if Oxfam's male agriculturalist was involved, so female health workers and the gender officer ran the activities. However, by the end of this project, men were allowing at least the older women to work directly with the male staff member.
 - Communities say that the lack of female teachers in the majority of schools is the main obstacle to girls going to school. However, gradually attitudes are changing so that in some cases girls are being allowed to be educated up to year three by older male teachers.
 - In food distributions, separate meetings with women were held to identify women beneficiaries and Oxfam negotiated with the World Food Programme to increase the number of distribution points so that they would be more accessible to women. However, it was reported that women had little control over the food once it reached

home. Food is a source of power and sometimes it was kept by village elders or male family members – some then took the food directly to market to sell.

Making policy processes sensitive to gender issues

We recognise that fundamental and lasting changes in power between women and men will only come through change within institutions at all levels of society. Our programmes need to be able to influence policy makers.

In the UK, Oxfam's programme is seeking to build a gender analysis into policy-making and the delivery of anti-poverty and regeneration programmes led by both voluntary and statutory organisations. The ReGender project focuses on empowering women experiencing poverty to be able to advocate for change. About 40 grassroots groups have been trained and have the capacity to engage in influencing local decision-makers. A group from Llandudno, in Wales, has also presented its work to Wales-wide decision makers, and this has given the women confidence to devise a course for decision-makers on the stereotyping of women and men in communities. Oxfam's ReGender project was included as an example in the UK government's National Action Plan on Social Exclusion 2003, and the Head of Communities First in Wales has pledged to do more to bring a gender perspective into this programme, noting that he saw Oxfam as a key partner. Oxfam's partner, the Westminster Women's Budget Group, has convinced the UK Treasury to explore gender mainstreaming in three government Departments.

In Yemen, Oxfam's persistence in seeking to get a gender perspective integrated into the country's Poverty Reduction Strategy Plan has already been mentioned under the section on a Right to be Heard (see page 55). Continued challenging and collaboration has meant that the government has acknowledged the importance of ensuring gender is considered in the implementation of the PRSP. Oxfam also helped recruit a gender specialist for the new PRS Monitoring Unit and provided training on gender budgeting to staff from the Ministry of Finance.

Ending violence against women

Oxfam's South Asia Region is leading the organisation in developing work with partners to empower survivors of violence and to reduce the social acceptance of violence against women. The programmes in Sri Lanka, India, and Nepal are beginning to demonstrate changes on both these fronts.

In Sri Lanka, the programme has supported women's societies, created awareness among women and men on women's rights, and promoted women's access to support services. Women survivors are now managing community-based organisations and men are more openly engaging in discussions and initiatives on ending violence against women. For instance, men played an important role in organising 'white ribbon day'²⁷ in Killonochi. Changes in government support are also being seen, with a centre being established in Vavuniya to provide legal and medical services to survivors. The centre has direct access to the newly established women's and children's desk in the police station.

In Orissa and Jharkhand, in India, the programme works with partners to seek to challenge practices, ideas, and beliefs that perpetuate domestic violence against women. This is done through workshops, seminars, and cultural events, and by working with young people in schools and colleges and existing programmes such as the National Service Schemes. The provision of economic support and counselling to deal with trauma is helping women regain the capacity to lead a full and dignified life. In Khairachatar, a small village in Jharkhand, where dowry was identified as a reason for domestic violence, 12 couples have

²⁷ White Ribbon Day is the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women.

since succeeded in getting married without a dowry. Larger numbers of women and men are joining in village-level activities and events, indicating both the greater mobility that women and girls are achieving and increasing support from men. Persistent interaction with local government and the police has led to domestic violence now becoming a visible crime and one which is seen to require urgency in how cases are treated. This is sending an important message to the community that violence against women is not acceptable.

In Nepal, the programme with partners focuses on the trafficking of women. It involves supporting young women in the slums of Kathmandu to join together in groups, monitoring police cells, raising awareness through cultural activities, bringing survivors together, providing counselling and referral services, and networking and advocacy at national, regional, and global level. Through the support received, some women have regained social acceptance and been reintegrated into their families, they are providing leadership to organisations working on trafficking issues and have a new sense of confidence. Families have started filing cases against traffickers, and some people previously harbouring traffickers have now turned against them. Media is becoming more sensitive and supportive of survivors, and Oxfam partners have contributed to the revision of a national plan of action on trafficking based on the Beijing Platform of Action.

In general, across the programmes, there are positive factors that we hope will help progress and sustain the changes we are seeing. These include changes in attitudes of government and police authorities, the increased confidence and capacities that survivors have gained and the strength of the networks and platforms that are emerging. We are beginning to learn how facilitating the development of community-based means of protection and changing ideas and beliefs are important strategies in this work. However, staff also recognise that we need to be realistic about the time and resources needed to reach the stage when women *want* to change, and that we need a long-term perspective in these programmes.

DIVERSITY

Oxfam GB has decided not to prioritise the development of specific programmes under this Strategic Change Objective. Some of the other affiliates within Oxfam International have a long tradition in this area of work and continue to prioritise it. However, as can be seen from other sections of this report, many of Oxfam's livelihoods, basic services, humanitarian, and 'right to be heard' programmes have a focus on supporting minority ethnic communities and indigenous groups achieve their rights. Prominent in this is the long-standing work Oxfam has done with indigenous communities in South America and the growing work that Oxfam does with pastoralist communities in both the Horn, East and Central Africa Region and West Africa Region.

In the UK, Oxfam is now developing a race equity programme. UK agencies take a broad approach to equalities, and by working on both gender and race issues Oxfam's programme will be more consonant with them.

C New developments

As illustrated by examples elsewhere in this report, Oxfam staff are beginning to see the greater effectiveness that can come from engaging with both women and men in seeking to achieve gender equality. Learning about this has been supported by the Gender Equality and Men project, led by the UK Poverty Programme and the Middle East, Eastern Europe and Commonwealth of Independent States Region. Six Regions have been involved. A position paper on men and gender equity was submitted to the UN Commission on the Status of Women international meeting in New York in March 2004. A panel presenting Oxfam's experience of working with men across the Regions was well received. A publication, *Gender equality and Men; Learning from Practice* is forthcoming. Involvement in

the UN meeting provided good contacts and the potential for further engagement and fundraising for this area of work.

D Lessons, issues, and risks

- Despite a range of examples which indicate the sensitivity and innovation shown by staff in progressing gender mainstreaming in their work, in general there is recognition that we are not consistently addressing gender issues. The establishment of standards, gender analysis in the design of programmes, data collected and analysed separately for women and men, and accompaniment of programme staff and partners are some of the ways in which Regions and Departments are either trying, or identifying as requirements, to strengthen our performance.
- The examples given indicate the sensitivity staff need to have to the cultural context in which they work, in order to find entry points and strategies for beginning to bring about change, and to be able to see where negative impacts are occurring.
- Our experience shows us that we need to work with a wide base of stakeholders, and not just directly with women and men at a community level, in order to bring about change. Working with a wider group of stakeholders at different levels provides space for advocacy, and working in support of authorities can help bring about legal changes, changes in services, and changes in ideas and beliefs. However, starting with direct support at a community level is important in giving women and men the confidence to begin to demand changes.
- Working with men has been more and more recognised within Oxfam as being an important part of gender equality work. Experience suggests that negotiation works better than confrontation and that starting with issues that are more acceptable/easier to deal with serves as a good foundation. It is also seen to be important to give relationships time to grow and, most importantly, to ensure that women come out stronger as a result of working with men.
- The marginalisation on many fronts that is experienced by women from minority ethnic groups and from indigenous communities means that working concurrently on issues of exclusion based on gender, identity and class is both necessary and challenging.

Appendix A: Impact assessment process

Background

Oxfam GB's impact assessment process is about both learning and accountability. The learning extends throughout Oxfam and beyond. We seek to involve communities we work with and partners in our assessments, and to share our learning with others. The process helps us be accountable to those whom we seek to support, to those who support us, and within Oxfam.

A global Programme Impact Report is prepared once a year. It looks at achievements and weaknesses in the programme brought about by actions over a number of years. The global report draws from similar reports prepared for each of Oxfam's eight Regions, the UK Poverty Programme, Campaigns and Policy Division and the Humanitarian Department. These in turn draw from Programme/Project Impact Reports, written by programme staff for a selection of programmes and projects. Findings from recent reviews and evaluations, often involving external consultants, and other evaluative material, also inform our impact assessment.

The process of Programme Impact Reporting by programme staff was introduced five years ago and we have kept the basic assessment questions²⁸ the same over this period, to allow staff to become familiar and confident with them. Overall, we have seen the quality of analysis in both Programme/Project Impact Reports and in the Regional and Departmental reports improve year on year. One question asks for comments about the "cost effectiveness" of our interventions. Staff are encouraged to answer this question, but we are not making this mandatory until we have gained more understanding in this area. Many staff do though take the opportunity to reflect on results achieved and make observations about how resources have been used.

A major challenge in impact reporting is to understand and explain different actors' *contribution* to change. Oxfam seeks to work in partnership and alliance with others, because we recognise that greater impact is likely to be achieved through joint efforts. Nevertheless, we need to try and understand what value we add to the partnerships and alliances we work in, as well as recognise the many other factors that are usually at play. When reporting "successes" in relation to advocacy and campaigning objectives, it is often particularly difficult to tease out the specific influence of individual actors. By listening to what others say about our work, by commissioning evaluations and by analysing and comparing different experiences, we try and make the best judgement we can about the influence we have had.

The process this year

We decided to focus most of our assessments on markets, humanitarian and 'right to be heard' programmes this year. Regions and Departments chose whether to look at other areas of their work. We also decided to concentrate on a smaller number of programme and project assessments than in previous years, and encouraged more discussion and learning to take place. In total, 69 Programme/Project Impact Reports were written. The assessments were made by staff from our eight international Regions, UK Poverty Programme, Campaigns and Policy Division and Humanitarian Department.

More attention was paid to incorporating the findings from recent evaluations into the impact assessment process this year too. However, we still need to make better use of evaluations.

²⁸ We assess: 1. Impact on the lives of poor women, men, girls and boys; 2. Changes in policies, practices, ideas and beliefs; 3. Progress towards gender equality; 4. The involvement and empowerment of those whom we hope will benefit and those who support us; 5. The likely sustainability of the changes achieved. 6. "Cost effectiveness" (not mandatory). Finally, from the assessment: 7. Learning, conclusions and actions to be taken.

We feel we should commission less of them, seek to ensure they are consistently of a high quality, share the learning from them more widely, and follow through the recommendations more rigorously.

The programmes assessed are not representative of the whole programme. In general, well-established work was assessed, although a few newer and innovative pieces of work were also examined to assess progress, and the potential for future impact. When deciding which areas of work to assess, managers would have taken a number of other factors into consideration. For instance, they would have looked at other demands on staff at the time, whether a programme had recently been assessed, and where a programme team – and others – might particularly benefit from the assessment of a programme. Evaluations that had recently been done with the help of consultants were also brought into the overall assessment being made.

Different forms of 'learning event' took place during the process. Sometimes these were linked to making an individual programme assessment, and involved partners, discussion with communities and special collection of information. Other individual programme assessments drew mainly on discussions and information already collected during ongoing monitoring. The majority of Regions, the Campaigns and Policy Division and the Humanitarian Department also held a 'learning event', where individual assessments and evaluations were discussed. A global programme committee of managers discussed several individual programme assessments, and reflected on the broad lessons coming out from the Regional and Departmental assessments that they had just done. Oxfam GB's Trustee Impact Group has discussed the draft global report. These events contributed significantly to the overall analysis done this year and helped staff look more critically at difficulties and weaknesses.

Sharing our learning

The global Programme Impact Report will be posted on Oxfam's website (www.oxfam.org.uk). Several evaluations mentioned in the main report will be available through the website too.

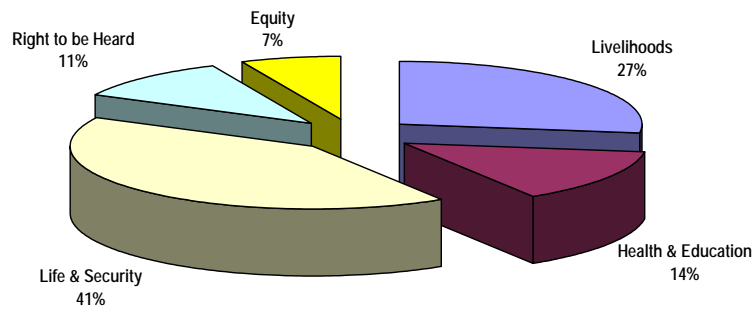
The Regional, UK Poverty Programme, Campaigns and Policy Division, and Humanitarian Department Impact Reports have been posted on Oxfam GB's intranet site.

Individual programme and project impact reports, written over the past five years, are all available to staff through Oxfam GB's Interim Projects Database.

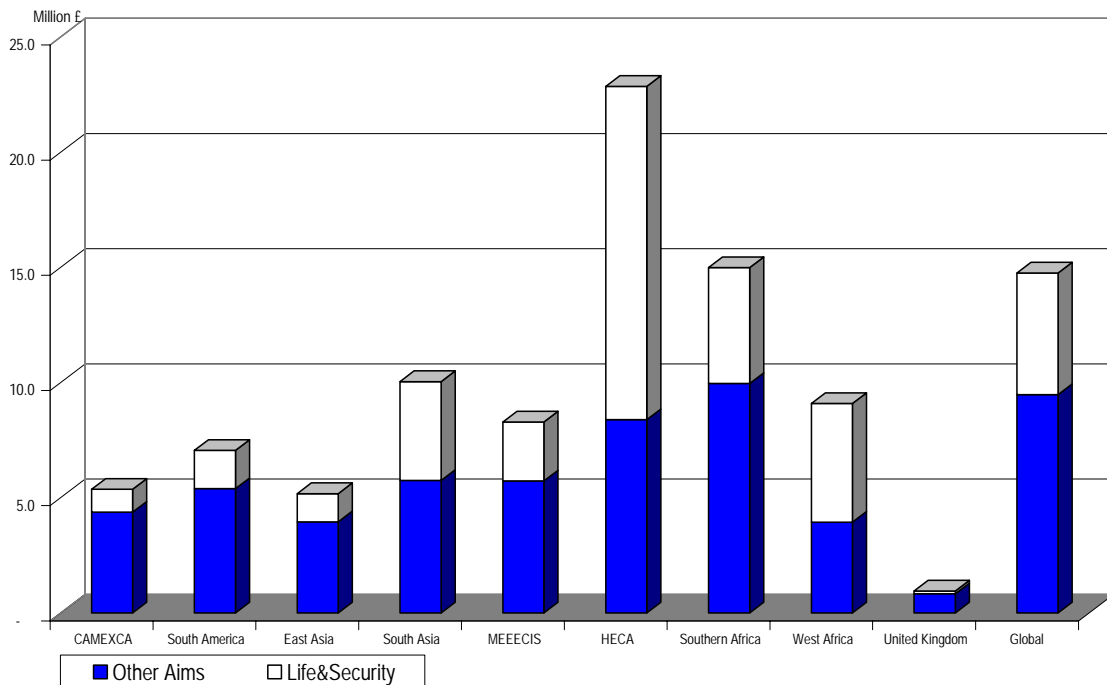
In different forums, we are reflecting too about what we have learnt from the process itself and about the quality of our reports. We shall use these reflections to carry on strengthening our impact assessment process, and to contribute to discussions with other agencies about developing expertise in this area.

Appendix B: Distribution of expenditure by Aim and Region

Percentage Direct Programme Spend by Aim - 2003 / 2004



Direct Programme Spend (Million £) by Region and Global, by Life & Security and other Aims - 2003/04



CAMEXCA – Central America, Mexico and the Caribbean

MEEECIS – Middle East, Eastern Europe and Commonwealth of Independent States

HECA – Horn, East and Central Africa

The total direct programme spend in 2003/2004 was £98.8 million. This represents 82% of total charitable expenditure in the year.

Appendix C: Where we work

<p>CENTRAL AMERICA, MEXICO AND THE CARIBBEAN</p> <p>Significant presence English-speaking Caribbean (Belize, Guyana, Jamaica, Trinidad, Windward Islands) Guatemala Haiti Honduras Mexico Nicaragua</p> <p>Working through other Oxfam affiliates or other actors Cuba, Dominican Republic El Salvador</p>	<p>SOUTH AMERICA</p> <p>Significant presence Bolivia Brazil Chile Colombia Peru</p> <p>Working through other Oxfam affiliates or other actors Argentina Ecuador Paraguay Surinam</p>	<p>THE HORN, EAST AND CENTRAL AFRICA</p> <p>Significant presence Democratic Republic of Congo Eritrea Ethiopia Kenya Rwanda Somalia Sudan Tanzania Uganda</p> <p>Working through other Oxfam affiliates or other actors Burundi</p>	<p>SOUTHERN AFRICA</p> <p>Significant presence Angola Malawi Mozambique South Africa Zambia Zimbabwe</p> <p>Working through other Oxfam affiliates or other actors Namibia Swaziland</p>
<p>WEST AFRICA</p> <p>Significant presence Côte d'Ivoire* Ghana Liberia Mali Mauritania Nigeria Senegal Sierra Leone</p> <p>Working through other Oxfam affiliates or other actors Benin Burkina Faso Chad Gambia, Guinea Bissau, Niger, Togo</p>	<p>EAST ASIA</p> <p>Significant presence Burma Cambodia Indonesia Philippines Thailand Timor Leste Viet Nam</p> <p>Working through other Oxfam affiliates or other actors China Hong Kong Laos Malaysia</p>	<p>SOUTH ASIA</p> <p>Significant presence Afghanistan Bangladesh India Nepal Pakistan Sri Lanka</p>	<p>UK</p> <p>Significant presence England Scotland Wales</p> <p>Working through other Oxfam affiliates or other actors Northern Ireland</p>
<p>Middle East, Eastern Europe, and the Commonwealth of Independent States</p> <p>Significant presence Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Iran*, Iraq*, Kosovo Palestinian Territories-Israel Russian Federation Serbia and Montenegro Tajikistan, Yemen</p> <p>Working through other Oxfam affiliates or other actors Bosnia and Herzegovina Egypt Lebanon Moldova</p>			

Note: Significant presence includes working through partner organisations

* Humanitarian response 2003/04

Appendix D: Further information

Further information about Oxfam's programme can be found on Oxfam's website (www.oxfam.org.uk). Over the coming year, we shall be increasing the number of summaries of programme evaluations available on the website.