

PROGRAMMING ON THE RIGHT TO BE HEARD



A learning companion



OXFAM

REVISED EDITION

CONTENTS

Contents	2
Introduction to the Learning Companion	3
The Right to Be Heard: A Glossary.....	4
1. Introduction to the Right to Be Heard.....	6
Why Oxfam works on the Right to Be Heard.....	6
Change Goal Objectives.....	8
How the five approaches interact.....	9
A note on power and politics.....	9
Our aim.....	10
Underpinning Oxfam’s work.....	13
2. Analysing your programme context	15
Why is power analysis so important?.....	15
What is a power analysis?.....	16
Enhancing your analysis.....	18
• Gender analysis.....	18
• Context/situational analysis.....	18
• How politics and the economy intersect.....	19
Using your analysis	
3. Approaches to Right to Be Heard Programming	28
<u>Cross-cutting themes:</u>	
Gender, Governance and Poor Women’s Rights	30
Build and Protect Spaces and Alliances for Dialogue and Change	39
<u>Strategies and approaches</u>	
1. Organising civil society.....	43
2. Access to information and technology.....	59
3. Public decision- and policy-making spaces.....	64
4. Access to justice.....	77
5. Global citizenship.....	80
4. Strengthening Oxfam’s Ways of Working	89
MEL through the Right to be Heard lens.....	85
Promoting accountability and participation.....	89
Annex – Case study: the Indonesia LISTEN programme	102

INTRODUCTION TO THE LEARNING COMPANION

Oxfam's vision is a just world without poverty. We envisage a society in which people can influence decisions that affect their lives, enjoy their rights and assume their responsibilities as full citizens of a world in which all human beings are valued and treated equally. The Right to Be Heard is a critical part of this vision and underpins the development of all our programmes and our relationships with partners and allies.

Effective Right to Be Heard work is necessarily complex and multi-dimensional, and requires action across different levels and domains, employing a range of strategies. This Learning Companion aims to guide our work and strengthen our focus in this important area. It reflects the Oxfam International change goal on the Right to Be Heard, and is designed to help you think through that complexity and make decisions about the combination of approaches to use to achieve your goals. It is aimed primarily at programme staff, but will also be useful across all areas of Oxfam's work, including humanitarian operations and campaigning.

The Learning Companion is made up of four sections:

Section 1 provides an introduction to the Right to Be Heard.

Section 2 outlines the different types of analysis that can help you better understand the context you are dealing with, and make choices about where to focus your work.

Section 3 gives an overview of the different approaches to Right to Be Heard programming described in the OI Strategic Plan. It provides numerous tools and resources that you can use to support programme implementation.

Section 4 looks at how we can strengthen our own ways of working to improve the effectiveness of our Right to Be Heard programmes. This includes Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL), and some sample indicators for Right to Be Heard programmes.

Each section includes case studies to illustrate key points and provides links to additional tools and resources. Offline users can find a full bibliography at the end of the document.

The Companion is not a step-by-step instruction manual, but has been designed so that you can choose the level of information that you need, depending on your experience, context and stage of programming. It can be read as a whole, or you can move directly to the sections that interest you.

THE RIGHT TO BE HEARD: A GLOSSARY

Right to Be Heard: 'Poor and marginalised people can gain control over their own lives by exercising their right to political participation, freedom of expression and information, freedom of assembly and access to justice'.

Oxfam International Strategic Plan, 2013-19

Governance: The 'rules of the game' that govern political, economic and social life plus 'how the game is played', i.e. who gets to engage in which aspects, and on what terms, including through formal and informal or traditional structures and processes.

Participatory governance: Approaches to governance that actively include ordinary citizens and, particularly, marginalised and excluded groups in shaping what happens and how it happens through governance processes.

Civil society: The range of non-government actors in a society, including faith-based organisations and trade unions, in addition to the more familiar NGOs and community-based organisations. Technically it should include the business sector, but is not often used in this way. Civil society organisations (CSOs) do not necessarily share objectives with Oxfam.

Accountability: The process through which an organisation balances the needs of stakeholders in its decision-making and activities, and delivers against this commitment. This can be upwards (towards donors) and downwards (towards beneficiaries). Accountability is based on four dimensions: transparency, participation, learning and evaluation, and feedback mechanisms that allow the organisation to give account to, take account of, and be held to account by stakeholders.

Social accountability: An approach towards building accountability that relies on ordinary citizens and/or civil society organisations participating directly or indirectly in managing public resources and in exacting accountability from governments and institutions. Mechanisms include participatory budgeting, public expenditure tracking, citizen monitoring of public service delivery, citizen advisory boards, lobbying and advocacy campaigns.

State capture: When a small number of powerful self-interested economic actors (or the military) is able to shape the rules of the game and laws, policies and regulations to its own advantage through illicit and non-transparent provision of private benefits to officials and politicians. This form of corruption is increasingly being recognised as the most damaging challenge in political and economic reform.

Institutions: Any structure or mechanism of social order and co-operation governing the behaviour of a set of individuals within a given human community. The term 'institution' is commonly applied to customs and

behaviour patterns important to a society, as well as to particular formal organisations of government and public service.

Visible power: observable decision-making mechanisms.

Hidden power: shaping or influencing the political agenda behind the scenes.

Invisible power: norms and beliefs, socialisation, ideology, culture.

Power over: power that controls others, directly or indirectly, whether they wish it or not.

Power to: the capability to decide actions and carry them out (skills, tools, knowledge).

Power with: collective power, through organisation, solidarity and joint action.

Power within: personal self-confidence, self-belief and sense of agency, (often linked to culture, religion or other aspects of identity).

1. INTRODUCTION TO THE RIGHT TO BE HEARD

This section:

Explains the reason for and importance of Oxfam's work on the Right to Be Heard

Gives an overview of the Right to Be Heard Learning Companion

Illustrates how the different elements of the Companion interact

Explains how you can use the Companion to inform all aspects of Oxfam's work, whether or not you are working directly on the Right to Be Heard.

WHY OXFAM WORKS ON THE RIGHT TO BE HEARD

The Right to be Heard is about people claiming their right to a better life. Poor and marginalised people can gain control over their own lives by exercising their rights to political participation, freedom of expression and information, freedom of assembly and access to justice. This is the foundation of all that Oxfam believes and does.

Oxfam recognises that poverty is not just about obvious things like inadequate access to food, shelter and education. It is also about vulnerability, isolation, powerlessness, lack of information and restricted access to goods, services and knowledge. Our work is based on the belief that:

- All human lives are of equal value, and that everyone has fundamental rights that must be recognised and upheld at all times.
- People living in poverty should be agents of their own development and, with the right resources, support and training, can solve their own problems.
- Development work needs to go beyond issues of material resources to consider and address the capacity, choices and power required for people living in poverty to enjoy all human rights.

Oxfam's rights-based approach to development means that all of our work should strengthen the ability of men, women and youth living in poverty to demand and protect their rights, and ensure that governments and institutions fulfil their obligations to respect and promote the rights of poor people.

Taking a rights-based approach to development...

Recognises that imbalances in **power relations** contribute to marginalisation and prevent poor people from exercising their rights

Is **participatory**, recognising that all people, including those living in poverty, have a right to be involved in processes that impact on their lives

Recognises that all development actors and all stakeholders are **accountable** to one another

Promotes **equality** and **non-discrimination**, with a particular focus on vulnerable or marginalised people(s)

Is **holistic**, recognising that economic poverty has deeply-felt social, cultural and political causes and effects, and that the spectrum of human rights must be understood together to constitute the basic necessities for a life of dignity and freedom

Recognises that rights also involve **corresponding responsibilities** – the fact that we all have human rights means we are also all duty bearers

Makes use of existing legal systems, and, depending on the context, builds **links** between development goals and international human rights laws.

The Right to Be Heard has very close links to this rights-based approach to development. At its core, it aims to ensure that poor and marginalised women and men are able to influence decisions that affect their lives, claim and enjoy their rights and challenge inequality. There are many recent examples of people asserting their rights in many forms – often through youth-led or women's movements. They are driving positive societal change in the face of economic volatility, social inequality, poor corporate governance and weak political institutions. Yet these rights are threatened in many parts of the world, for example, by conflict or political repression. This makes women and youth especially vulnerable to repression and poverty.

The exact issues vary according to context, but they include governance that is non-participatory, unresponsive to civil society voices, curtails civil and political freedoms, and lacks accountability. It may also be corrupt, characterised by impunity and ruled by patronage, with a precarious and ineffective rule of law. This affects the daily lives of people worldwide, from rural small-holder farmers to urban slum dwellers. Regardless of the forms they take, weak governance and a lack of voice are fundamental issues underlying poverty and inequality.

A number of Oxfam's programmes recognise this and already have a strong focus on voice and active citizenship, participation and accountability, and gender and governance. Others have built in governance components as mechanisms to ensure transparency and accountability in the delivery of quality essential services, including monitoring of budget decisions and spending by governments and communities.

The Right to Be Heard encompasses many elements, including voice, participation, rights, governance, accountability and transparency¹. The Oxfam International Strategic Plan underlines its centrality to Oxfam's mission. It reaffirms the organisational commitment to this area of work – one which is relevant and will be pursued in all programmes² and contexts. However, Oxfam will focus in particular on supporting women and youth as social change leaders, because deep-rooted power inequalities are often gender- and generation-based.

The Right to Be Heard will be key to our work on urban poverty, building the ability of marginalised urban poor people to organise and demand effective and responsive governance and recognition of their entitlement to critical services, social protection and livelihood opportunities. It is an area of work that also involves Oxfam's public and supporters, encouraging them to recognise the consequences of their personal economic, political and social choices. They can purchase Fair Trade products, take actions of solidarity with poor and marginalised people or engage with governments and businesses over issues that affect poor people's lives.

Ultimately, fulfilling the Right to Be Heard means giving the people most vulnerable to poverty and inequality the greatest say in planning their own lives and future.

CHANGE GOAL OBJECTIVES

Oxfam International's Strategic Plan outlines four strategic objectives for the Right to Be Heard change goal. More poor and marginalised people will:

- Increase their voice by understanding and being better able to exercise their rights **to organise, to information, to public participation and to equal justice**
- See more **responsiveness** from governments and the private sector to their interests; and increase their influence and benefit from the policies and legislation of governments on resource allocation, and the policies and practices of the private sector
- Benefit from increasingly **accountable and transparent** governments and private sector because they are better able to demand transparency, fulfilment of pro-poor promises and respect for citizens' rights and the rule of law.

And:

- More citizens will contribute to overcoming poverty and injustice through personal choices as consumers (through, for example, purchasing Fair Trade products), taking action in solidarity with poor and marginalised people and influencing governments and business as **active global citizens**.

¹ See the glossary on page 4 for an explanation of these and other terms related to the Right to Be Heard

² The word 'programme' is used assuming a one-programme approach, and refers to development, campaigning and humanitarian work

The Strategic Plan outlines five approaches that can be used to deliver these objectives:

1. Organising civil society
2. Access to information and technology
3. Public decision- and policy-making spaces
4. Access to justice
5. Global citizenship (this is a stand-alone approach, as well as a cross-cutting theme woven throughout the four previous approaches).

These approaches are covered in detail in Chapter 3, along with two other cross-cutting themes common to all:

- *Gender, governance and poor women's rights* – achieving sustained, widespread changes in attitudes and beliefs about gender power relations, in order to further women's rights and gender justice
- Building and protecting spaces and alliances for dialogue and change – it is critical to Oxfam's work to keep civil society space open.

How the five approaches interact

All too often development programmes focus on 'demand side' (people) or 'supply side' (power holders) approaches in isolation, which fails to reflect the reality of power dynamics and how change happens on the ground. We view the five approaches as being intrinsically interlinked, representing the relationships between the different institutions or centres of power.

Our work is most effective when all five strategic approaches are addressed, so that gains made in any one area aren't undermined by a lack of progress in the others. For example, if our work were focused solely on lobbying government officials at different levels, it could successfully achieve its outcomes but still have little impact on women's lives, if women themselves were unaware of their rights and that they could play a part in making decisions about issues that affect them.

However, work in all five areas doesn't necessarily have to happen simultaneously: for example, improving the transparency of government actors might be the first phase of a programme, with attention to influencing attitudes and behaviours at grassroots level coming later on. The important thing is to be aware of how these approaches interact, to have considered what the impact of your work might be on the other strategic areas and to look for opportunities to join up work that reinforces the overall goal at all levels. This can then be made clear in your theory of change.

A NOTE ON POWER AND POLITICS

Power is a key concept that emerges throughout the Right to Be Heard and is inescapably linked with all areas of Oxfam's work. In particular, we believe that unequal power relations contribute to marginalisation and prevent poor men, women and youth from exercising their rights. We explore what we mean by power further in [Section 2](#).

Work on power is also intrinsically linked to politics. The question of who holds power and how power is exercised is, by nature, political. Any programme that aims to redress imbalances of power and unequal power relations is, therefore, also political. It will be political in taking positions that aim to improve governance through active citizenship, vertical accountability, and improved effectiveness of government and other institutions. It will seek to eradicate poverty and inequality through engaging with the power dynamics and decision-making structures at hand. This work is political in aspiration, in implementation and in outcome. Our programmes seek to analyse who holds power and aim to change power structures for the benefit of the most vulnerable and marginalised people in society.

We shouldn't be afraid of being political: it is essential for achieving our goals. However, we do need to be careful not to be partisan. This means that while we may engage with political actors, such as members of parliament or government ministries, and support political processes, we do so regardless of their political affiliations and not to further the aims of any particular political party. Rather, our goal is to support political actors and processes to uphold the rights and meet the needs of poor men, women and youth.

OUR AIM

The aim of our Right to Be Heard programming is to address unequal power relations and to ensure that the poorest and most marginalised men, women and youth are able to:

- Gain confidence in their right and ability to influence decisions that affect their lives
- Understand their rights and responsibilities and increase their capacity to negotiate with people in positions of power, to claim their rights and entitlements and demand accountability
- Resist the concentration of power in the hands of the elite through collective action, and exposure of corruption and state capture.

Our work is based on the understanding that unequal power relations (between individuals, between men and women, and between different groups in society) underpin and perpetuate poverty. These need to be addressed both at the institutional level and within the complex norms and customs of each society.

We believe that all men, women and youth have the right and the capacity to participate fully in decision-making and development processes. However, the more marginalised people in society – women and girls in particular – are often excluded. We believe that when their contribution is effectively achieved, power relations shift and poverty and inequality can be reduced.

The changes we want to see
Poor men, women and youth: Identify their own needs, problems and possible solutions, and develop

the confidence and skills to be able to articulate these.

- Have access to accurate, relevant and timely information to feed their ideas and actions
- Have knowledge of the rights to which they are entitled, and the ability and spaces to exercise and practise these rights
- Recognise and challenge those customs, beliefs and behaviours that prevent them from raising their voice and/or from being heard
- Have the opportunity and support to become leaders of, and advocates for, their own communities
- Are increasingly active participants in coalitions, alliances and movements through which their voices can be heard
- Have access to justice services and have recourse to legal mechanisms to exercise their rights.

Power holders, governments and institutions:

- Have their own mechanisms to demand accountability from those in higher positions of power, using rules and regulations, complaints, grievance mechanisms and other internal decision-making spaces that they have access to
- Become more accountable and responsive to the needs of poor and marginalised citizens
- Increasingly deliver basic civil, social, economic and political rights to all citizens
- Develop the capacity and the will to engage meaningfully with, and listen to, citizens
- Be more transparent, share information related to public finances and decision-making processes proactively and accurately; ensure this information reaches everyone and is appropriately 'translated' (into local languages, or from written to oral form)
- Deepen their democratic principles, thereby limiting the concentration of power in the hands of the elite, and allowing the voices of poor and marginalised people to be heard
- Ensure formal power structures function effectively, with citizens engaging constructively with power holders through policy and legislative frameworks
- Open up spaces for citizen engagement, responding to influencing and lobbying using sensitive negotiation skills and understanding of local customs.

Businesses and their regulators:

- Change their business models to integrate social and environmental responsibilities into their core operations and planning – including providing meaningful and accessible opportunities for poor and marginalised men, women and youth to express their opinions on decisions that affect them
- Work in the interests of the poorest people in society as well as shareholders and investors, by establishing mechanisms that ensure transparency, accountability and participation (including access to information)
- Establish legal and sector regulations that enable people to see what companies are doing, forces them to answer for their actions, and enable them to hear and take into account the voices and opinions of everyone in society – not just their investors.

Oxfam has an important role to play in helping shift power relations and reducing poverty and inequality. Our expertise lies in:

- Supporting groups to organise and ensuring communities' participation in diagnosing problems and finding their own solutions
- Developing leaders, especially women and young people, to work with their communities to claim their rights
- Supporting the organisation of coalitions, movements and groups so that they become vibrant, independent and legitimate actors in decision-making processes; helping activists and leaders of movements to ensure that the collective voices they represent are heard in the right forums
- Playing a 'connector' role and helping citizen leaders gain access to the spaces where decisions are made. Oxfam can provide guidance, but should support groups to develop their own agendas and determine for themselves how to engage with the power dynamics specific to their context
- Helping citizens to engage constructively with power-holders at all levels through a range of different accountability mechanisms
- Being a role model and being fully transparent and accountable to donors, staff, partners and communities (this is a key condition for promoting accountability in other institutions and partners)
- In many contexts, working directly with formal institutions of governance, and having an 'influencer' role that can contribute to better-functioning institutions that are more responsive to poor people's needs
- Using our 'convening' power to enable dialogue, foster connections and create spaces between citizens and formal institutions at all levels
- At the local level, working through partners to identify the roles and responsibilities of local institutions and strengthen their capacity to fulfil their obligations, particularly following decentralisation processes
- Building the capacity of partners and citizens to engage in participatory governance and upwards accountability mechanisms, promoting transparency and access to information
- Supporting innovation and best practice by corporate leaders, by working with these players in humanitarian and programme work through partnerships, joint projects and mechanisms such as 'learning journeys', as well as through joint advocacy and lobbying, and dialogue and influencing work
- Working against corporate 'blockers' who practise worst standards in business operations and use their influence to maintain poor regulation and standards, through adversarial advocacy and lobbying work, and through dialogue and influencing.³

³ Note that there may be an implicit tension between campaigning work that targets specific companies or corporate practices, and more collaborative programme and humanitarian response work engaging companies in sectors that are areas of Oxfam's campaign work. To offset this, we aim to balance campaign work by both identifying the worst corporate practices in campaign work and giving credit to the best performers, to raise their profile. However, tensions may remain when

The power of combining programming and advocacy: challenging corporate attempts to trademark Ethiopian coffee



In 2007, the Ethiopian government challenged the unfairness of the international coffee market by seeking to trademark the names of its high-value speciality coffee beans. Starbucks – the world’s largest coffee shop chain – voiced its opposition to this. More than 15 million Ethiopians depend on coffee for their living. Yet while they grow some of the world’s finest coffee varieties – such as Harar, Yirgachaffe and Sidamo – they do not receive the premium prices associated with these names. That’s why the Ethiopian government wanted recognition that it owned these premium coffee names.

Our campaigners go into action: After discussions with Starbucks, Oxfam asked its supporters to send a message urging the company to recognise Ethiopia’s ownership of its speciality coffee names. The response was massive. Nearly 100,000 people from around the world voiced their support for the farmers by contacting Starbucks. With Oxfam’s encouragement, the national and international media ran the story too, building pressure on the company to act.

Campaigning works: Our collective efforts raised the profile of this important issue, contributing to securing a landmark deal between Starbucks and the Ethiopian government. This will enable farmers to get a fairer price for their coffee beans and give them more to spend on food, health care and education. This success paves the way for Ethiopian coffee farmers to work with other coffee companies, who will now be under pressure to follow Starbucks’ lead.

• UNDERPINNING OXFAM’S WORK

The Right to Be Heard strategies and approaches outlined are relevant to all areas of Oxfam’s thematic focus. For the most marginalised people, access to productive assets or social protection schemes and essential services typically and fundamentally relate to governance and power issues. Access to information and participation in budget decisions and monitoring are key to ensuring fairness in resource allocation. Access to basic necessities in times of crisis or for vulnerable populations is also related to people’s ability to demand their rights, and to those in power providing responsibly for the people they are supposed to serve. Oxfam’s campaigning can provide powerful channels for poor men, women and youth to make their voices heard. Therefore, integrating a Right to Be Heard approach across our work can provide useful tools to support our goals of gender justice, saving lives, sustainable food, the fair sharing of natural resources, and financing for development and universal essential services. It can also help to build resilience among poor communities, and to provide a useful entry point in contexts where directly addressing governance issues is not possible or might be an organisational risk.

engaging in collaborative programming with companies active in a sector around which Oxfam is campaigning.

Throughout this Learning Companion, the case study examples show how the Right to Be Heard has been applied in different contexts and how related approaches can support different thematic goals. The Companion is a lens for you to use to guide your programme identification, design and implementation and to help you think about how your programme supports poor men, women and youth to have a voice and claim their rights.

Questions for reflection

Take some time to reflect on some of the ideas in this section and think about what they mean for your work. Here are some questions to guide you:

Do you agree that that enabling poor and marginalised people to influence decisions that affect their lives, claim and realise their rights, and challenge inequality is a critical element of overcoming poverty and suffering?

What are some of the key Right to Be Heard issues that relate to your context?

Consider situations that demonstrate the impact of denying people the Right to Be Heard. Was one group particularly affected over others? If so, why?

What are the practical ways in which increasing people's confidence to have a voice are already incorporated in your programme? How effective have these been? What factors have been particularly successful? Which have not?

Think of examples where people have participated in diagnosing their own problems and issues and have sought their own solutions. What factors in particular have helped them do this?

Tools and Resources

The Right to be Heard: an Overview, Jo Rowlands

This paper provides a clear and comprehensive outline of how the Right to Be Heard can strengthen the participation of people in poverty in formulating public policy, and can enable them to hold decision-makers accountable. It outlines some of the forms that power takes.

<http://policy-practice.oxfam.org.uk/publications/the-right-to-be-heard-an-overview-120556>

Quick Guide to Rights-based Approaches to Development

<http://policy-practice.oxfam.org.uk/publications/quick-guide-to-rights-based-approaches-to-development-312421>

2. ANALYSING YOUR PROGRAMME CONTEXT

This section:

Explains why understanding power is fundamental to our work

Explains what power analysis is and how to do it

Highlights other analytical approaches that can complement your power analysis

Explains how to use your analysis.

Why is power analysis so important?

Oxfam's work is based on the understanding that unequal power relations – between individuals, between men and women and between different groups in society – underpin and perpetuate poverty. Unequal power relations manifest themselves in many different ways: from unfair trade regulations that disproportionately benefit rich countries, to social norms that cause young girls to suffer malnutrition because they are only allowed to eat after their brothers have had their fill.

If poor men, women and youth are to participate in decision-making and claim their rights, they must address this inequality at institutional level, as well as within the complex beliefs and practices of each society, and must accurately identify who to influence. To do this, they need to understand enough about how power plays out, what spaces are already open for interacting with power-holders, the constraints on those spaces, and what spaces could be created or claimed. For this reason, power analysis is a fundamental starting point for all our work.

What is power?

We usually think of power as control over others or the ability to carry out one's will, but power can also be more subtle. For example, power can be the strength and capacity that we gain through joining with others towards a common goal, our own self-belief that we can achieve our aims or the courage to adopt a certain course of action. Power can be manifested as:

- Power over: the power of the strong over the weak, including the power to exclude others
- Power to: the capability to decide actions and carry them out
- Power with: collective power, through organisation, solidarity and joint action
- Power within: personal self-confidence, often linked to culture, religion or other aspects of identity, which influences the thoughts and actions that appear legitimate or acceptable.

Power can also take different forms, occur at different levels and be acted out in different spaces – the opportunities, moments and channels, both physical

and virtual, through which citizens can act to influence the policies, thinking, decisions and relationships that affect their lives and interests:

Forms

Visible: observable decision-making mechanisms, institutionalised in formal and recognisable rules, laws, structures and procedures

Hidden: shaping or influencing the political agenda behind the scenes, usually without legitimacy

Invisible: norms and beliefs, socialisation, ideology or culture that shape how we understand our society

Spaces

Closed: decisions made by closed groups

Invited: people asked to participate but within set boundaries

Created or claimed: less powerful actors create or claim a space where they can set their own agenda

Levels

Household

Local

National

Global

What is a power analysis?

In campaigning and advocacy work, power analysis refers to an analysis of the way that change happens in a given context, identification of the key individuals to influence and the best strategies to use to achieve change.

In our Right to Be Heard work, however, we take a broader view of power, and use power analysis to identify and explore the multiple power dimensions that affect a given situation, so as to better understand the different factors that interact to reinforce poverty. As power is not static, it will often cut across the different forms, spaces and levels, and show itself in more than one way. Having a more complete understanding of the power relations at play will help you to identify opportunities for change and appropriate strategies and entry points for your programmes. Ultimately, your analysis will help to identify how far any one programme can go to redress power imbalances and where opportunities and potential limitations might lie.

In all countries, power is linked and dynamic. Depending on the openness of any given society, people may only have glimpses of the connections that knit together the web of power that holds the ruling system in place – between, for example, the media, ruling parties, traditional leaders, key interest groups, the military and the private sector. A power analysis can help reveal these connections.

Power analysis can help you answer questions such as:

- Where do the different centres of power lie in your country and the communities in which you work?
- Who are the powerful actors and institutions, which sector are they in and where are they located geographically? (Identify targets, allies and opponents.)
- What type of power is being used? (Reveal hidden mechanisms of power.)
- What opportunities exist, or what needs to change in order for poor and marginalised people to interact meaningfully with power holders

and to increase their own power? (Find spaces for dialogue and influence.)

- Who makes the decisions that most affect the lives of poor and marginalised people?
- Who has access to and control of resources? To whose benefit?

There are several different frameworks you can use to guide your analysis, outlined at the end of this section. There is, however, no one way to do a power analysis and no fixed or 'right' output – for example, your discussions might result in a diagram or a written report. The important thing is to ask questions that explore all the possible aspects of power that might affect your programme context, and to use the results to guide your programme design and implementation.

The *Chukua Hatua* – or Take Action – programme in Tanzania has been running since August 2010. In its first phase it has trialled a number of approaches to creating active citizenship – that is, citizens who know their rights and responsibilities, are demanding them and are able to search for and access information. The underlying assumption is that if Tanzanian citizens begin to demand their rights and entitlements, the government will be increasingly compelled to respond.

Some pilots have proved successful in catalysing citizens to take action. For example, the active musicians project was very successful in raising the awareness of large numbers of people who then took action, including demonstrating about electricity plans being moved to another district and demanding budget explanations from the district council.

However, this mobilisation hasn't always met with positive responses and when citizens have not been listened to, they have found it difficult to know how to react. Looking at this issue through a power analysis lens has revealed that while village leaders have power over communities, they also have potential to be local activists and to provide a key bridge between communities and government. Therefore, the next phase of the programme will seek to engage directly with village leaders and develop their power to be responsive to their constituents and to demand accountability from higher levels of governance.

Many of the pilots have also struggled with the lack of spaces and forums for citizens to discuss their accountability issues among themselves, and for dialogue with duty bearers on the issues they have identified. The programme had initially assumed that village meetings or village assemblies, which have considerable power, would be the primary space open to villagers. However, further analysis has revealed that often either the meetings are not happening, or they are being closed or controlled by leaders and their supporters. In the next phase of the programme, initiatives will aim to claim spaces in traditional and constitutionally mandated structures and to explore further what informal spaces might be claimed by citizens to discuss issues and contribute to decisions. In addition, a piece of participatory action research will seek to understand the reasons why people choose not to engage in local governance, including aspects of hidden and invisible power.

Enhancing your analysis

Although power analysis is our starting point, there are other types of analysis that can complement it and help you make sense of complex situations by viewing them from different perspectives. This does not mean that you have to do four separate and overlapping analyses, but that you should at least integrate key questions from the different types of analysis into your power analysis.

Gender analysis

All of our work should address gender inequality. For our Right to Be Heard work, this means recognising that poor women are often even more disadvantaged than men within the same social group or community, and need additional support to influence the decisions that affect their lives, to claim their rights and challenge unequal power relations.

The purpose of conducting a gender analysis is to identify the specific aspects of gender relations and inequalities that are present in your programme context, and to examine their implications for programme design and implementation. It should explore questions relating to who has power, who owns and controls resources, who takes decisions, who sets the agenda, and who gains and loses from this. It can look at how women's disproportionate levels of responsibility in the household sphere impact on their ability to participate in the public sphere. It might explore the different ways in which women and men are being denied their rights, the laws and practices that discriminate against women, and the norms and beliefs about women's roles in public life. It can also show the ways these impact on the levels of women's participation in decision-making at all levels.

The centrality of gender equality and poor women's rights to our Right to Be Heard work is explored in more detail in Section 3.

Context/situational analysis

A context analysis looks at your country or programme's general governance environment and broad background. This helps you develop a clear understanding of the context in which you are working, an analysis of how change happens in that context, and consideration of how Oxfam can make the strongest contribution to positive change.

Some key questions include:

- What are the main governance features and issues pertinent to the country in which you work?
- What are the relevant structures and systems at play?
- Who are the key political, economic, legal, social and cultural power holders?
- Who are the different stakeholders and what is their level of influence in both formal and informal governance structures?

- How does change happen and what are the barriers to positive change?
- What governance opportunities and constraints exist?
- What is the impact of the overarching values, ideas and beliefs in your country?

Much of this analysis should already have been carried out in your country strategy (or JCAS), which will include an analysis of the underlying causes of poverty and vulnerability and the areas in which your programme efforts should be focused. However, you should check that there have been no major political, social or economic changes since it was written and that it is detailed enough to provide an accurate and nuanced picture of your context.

Analysing how politics and economics intersect

It is important to understand how political and economic processes interact in a society. This is sometimes referred to as 'political economy analysis' (PEA). It means analysing the distribution of power and wealth between different groups and individuals, and the processes that create, sustain and transform these relationships over time. This requires drilling down more deeply in these areas than in general context analysis, and is critical to achieving meaningful understanding of how they will influence your programme and the problems it seeks to address. Effective analysis of the intersection between politics and economics requires going beneath formal structures. It must reveal underlying interests, incentives and institutions that can both enable or frustrate change, particularly those that relate to the Right to Be Heard.

This analysis can help improve the effectiveness of your work through:

- Developing a shared understanding of the political context in which you work and how it affects your programme strategies
- Identifying obstacles and constraints to effective programmes, as well as opportunities for leveraging policy change and supporting reform
- Identifying feasible development strategies, with realistic expectations of what can be achieved over what timescales, and the risks involved
- In fragile environments, identifying entry points for promoting an inclusive and stable political settlement between state and citizens. This might include measures to promote political reform, strengthen the core functions of the state, or improve the delivery of services that build state legitimacy and respond to societal expectations
- Identifying how you might work outside the state to build progressive change coalitions across civil society, the private sector and the media
- Better understanding the impact of external drivers – such as trade, corruption and the media – on governance and political processes
- Better understanding the political constraints that governments face, working more effectively with them and helping to foster country ownership of development initiatives.

Key considerations in political and economic analysis

High-level economic analysis, with a particular focus on statistics and macro-

economic and political trends, is best left to specialists. In most contexts where Oxfam works, such analysis will already be available, either publicly or by developing constructive relationships with other actors. If this is the case, the kind of analysis that Oxfam needs to undertake to inform its work is not a daunting process. It simply involves drilling down into the power dynamics of a range of players. It does, however, need sufficient time and effort allocated to it. Thorough preparation is crucial, such as:

- discussing the purpose of the analysis
- phrasing the key question it will focus on
- identifying the audience
- choosing an appropriate methodology.

Methods

Critical insights usually emerge when the outputs of various different methods are overlaid, and patterns can be seen. This also enables you to identify gaps in data and knowledge and think about whom to talk to in order to fill them. Key methods for assessing how politics and economics interrelate in your context include:

- Stakeholder analysis

This needs to go beyond the superficial and delve into detail, particularly in terms of understanding different actors' incentives and motivations. Much can be gathered from strategic informal interviews with key informants (such as academic experts, journalists, government officials, etc.). A quick mapping of the networks that staff and partners are able to access can reveal significant sources of information. It is also useful to trawl the data sources monitored by staff, such as journals, websites, and news and information sources. Regular monitoring of Facebook and Twitter accounts also provides useful (although less reliable) information in a fast-changing environment. You need to be open to acknowledging what you do not know, and willing to recognise when further investigation and data-gathering is required.

- Social network analysis (or mapping)

This is an interview-based mapping technique that helps people understand, visualise and discuss situations in which many different actors influence outcomes. It enables people to create maps or networks of influence, clarify their own view of a situation and where influence lies, and develop a strategic response in order to bring about desired change. It helps players to determine which actors are involved in a given network, how they're linked, how influential they are and what their goals are.

Determining linkages, levels of influence and goals allows users to be more strategic about how they act in these complex situations. It helps them answer questions such whether they need to strengthen links to an influential potential supporter, or be aware of an influential actor who doesn't share their goals. This assessment of social relationships may include friendship, kinship, organisational position, sexual relationships or community, within a particular context.

Issues to consider:

- An external perspective

It is not easy to undertake analysis of a context in which you are embedded. Having someone from outside the context to support you through the process is recommended. You must also choose whether to undertake your analysis with Oxfam's existing staff resources or bring in consultants. This involves the usual trade-off between speed and learning. A mix between the two may be most effective. It is crucial for staff to maintain a detailed engagement with both process and findings, so that ensuing decision making is the most appropriate and learning is held within the team. It may seem easier simply to contract consultants, but staff will embed learning into their thought processes far better if they have helped with information gathering and analysis. If staff are carrying out the analysis alone, consider linking them with mentors or coaches from across Oxfam.

- Diversity within the team

To ensure depth and minimise unintended bias, the team carrying out your analysis needs diversity in perspectives, networks, knowledge and skill sets. If all team members were male (or female) or from a dominant ethnic group, for example, this could mean key assumptions were not questioned or other perspectives missed. Analysis teams typically consist of two to four core members. Ideally they will combine national and international backgrounds, with specific analysis and sector experience.

- Level of analysis

Analysis of how politics and economics intersect can be carried out at three levels:

- **Macro- or country**, to enhance general sensitivity to country context and understanding of the broad political-economy environment (including global influences). This can be useful to inform country planning processes and the overall strategic direction of country programmes
- **Sector-specific**, to identify specific barriers and opportunities within particular sectors where Oxfam is working, e.g. health and education
- **Problem-driven**, geared to understanding and resolving a particular problem at project level, or in relation to a specific policy issue.

Analysis should be applied at every level – local and sub-national, as well as national, regional and global. Country-wide analysis of how politics and the economy intersect will inform high-level programme strategy as well as individual project design, and shed light on how the different levels could and should interconnect. The questions to ask will vary for each but some broad areas to look at are:

- The interests and incentives facing different groups in society (especially political elites), and how these generate particular policy outcomes that may encourage or hinder development
- The role that formal institutions (e.g. the rule of law and elections) and informal social, political and cultural norms play in shaping human interaction and political and economic competition

- The impact of values and ideas – including political ideologies, religion and cultural beliefs – on political behaviour and public policy
 - The possible impact and opportunities provided by decentralisation.
- Verifying your findings

It is essential to use diverse sources, and to be careful to triangulate the data, i.e. combine multiple observers, theories, methods and empirical materials. This helps you overcome the weakness or intrinsic biases associated with single-method, single-observer and single-theory studies. It is especially important for informal sources, so that the analysis does not rely on one, unverified source, or on opinions that may not be shared by others. Double- or triple-checking data through different methods or from different sources increases the robustness of your analysis. Regular revisiting of the same sources with the same questions can highlight if things are shifting in the context.

An important need is to create channels for such information to be shared and evaluated. For instance, formally through weekly staff meetings and informally in conversations.

Mapping a fast-changing context: Myanmar

With the release of opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi from house arrest, the beginning of political opening and a surge in foreign investment, Myanmar is changing rapidly. To help poor communities respond, Oxfam needs a thorough understanding of how politics and economics are interacting. So country staff worked closely with an Oxfam global governance advisor and consultants to carry out an analysis that would ensure they understood the forces at play. This would help them design the best possible programmes to navigate the change.

To identify specific questions for the analysis, the Myanmar country team held a meeting to examine issues relevant to the programme (from the changing private sector, to the effect of recent reforms on women). From this, they identified two topics for analysis:

1. How can civil society become engaged with local planning and budgeting processes?
2. How will the economic opening up of Myanmar affect small-scale farmers?

What do we know?

The first step was a rapid internet search, to show the level of information available and to select key texts. To reduce bias, the team purposely selected a mixture of academic papers, blogs, articles and publications from different regions and players (such as INGOs, international financial institutions and donors). Staff also listed journals, websites, news and information sources to which they have access.

A confidential report from a major development programme which had already undertaken macro-level economic analysis and political trends was available to Oxfam, thanks to good working relationships. This gave team members the big picture, freeing them to focus on issues related specifically to programming choices.

Using different tools

Participants worked in two groups, each addressing one of the focus questions. Staff members with diverse backgrounds (e.g. livelihoods, programme management, advocacy and humanitarian response) were involved. This ensured the analysis was relevant to all aspects of Oxfam's Myanmar work.

The groups undertook **stakeholder analysis**, listing key informants from civil society, government stakeholders, the private sector, community members, academic experts and journalists, for focus group discussions and interviews. These informants then identified other relevant interviewees. Mapping the networks that Oxfam staff and partners can access revealed many useful sources of information. They also used **process tracing** to understand the causes of the current context, starting with mapping how local planning decisions are made. This exposed factors such as people's historical reluctance to speak out freely in local decision-making, and the rapidly-changing policy environment, in which new legislation is drafted with incredible speed that doesn't allow civil society to influence outcomes.

Seeing the patterns

The team verified their data by cross-checking (triangulation) with a diverse range of sources. Both questions guiding the analysis revealed similarities, involving the same key actors, e.g. that the way economic investments are made is closely linked with the centralised nature of budgeting and planning. Layering the findings from different methods also highlighted where there were gaps in data and knowledge. It was useful to identify these areas and think about whom to consult to find out. Filling the gaps mainly required finding ways to access informal data sources and working out who could do this.

Keeping it fresh

The team explored how to keep the analysis updated, e.g. through using diverse source and regularly revisiting sources with the same questions, to show change. Crucially, the team put in place channels for information to be shared, primarily in the Country Leadership Team and through weekly staff meetings. Commitment is needed, as in practice, updating analysis and sharing information are a challenge due to time pressure.

Feeding analysis into programme decisions

As a result of the analysis, the Myanmar team is taking some new approaches in its work. These include linking governance and advocacy work, to push for increased transparency in local and national budgeting, and producing a policy brief on making the private sector work for small-scale agriculture.

The process showed the benefits of not taking the 'easy option' of contracting external consultants to carry out analysis exercises. Taking part directly helped staff embed the learning in their thinking. This ensures that subsequent programming is more deeply rooted in an understanding of the context than if others had carried out the analysis.

Using your analysis

The single greatest challenge associated with power analysis is turning your findings into action. Programme choices should be determined firstly by the priorities set out in your country strategy and the OI Strategic Plan. Using these to define your broad programme goals (as described in the OI Programme Framework), you can then use your analysis (in consultation with a range of stakeholders) to help you:

- Develop a more nuanced understanding of how change happens
- Identify your programme's end goal and theory of change
- Identify possible entry points and devise complex strategies for achieving this change, by understanding how different dimensions of power interact
- Decide on the combination of approaches that will be most effective in your context
- Measure the progress and impact of your work
- Adjust your strategies over time.

Analysis in practice: the Indonesia LISTEN programme

In Indonesia's LISTEN programme, the **country context analysis** identified food insecurity as the most critical poverty issue for Oxfam to address. The programme's theory of change identified that the misuse of budget allocations and a lack of community participation in budget processes prevented food security from being enhanced through the Village Block Grant process.

A **gender analysis** showed that women were most likely to experience food insecurity and were excluded from decision-making processes. Although levels of participation were low among both men and women, women faced additional constraints. The programme strategies sought to address these gender issues.

To understand the power dynamics on the ground and design appropriate responses, Oxfam's local partner, CIS Timor, with guidance from Oxfam staff, designed and carried out a **power analysis**. It showed that:

Village leaders were blocking community participation in formal decision-making spaces by withholding information. To address this, CIS Timor produced and distributed leaflets to explain how the budget process worked.

Negative beliefs about women's capacity to engage in the public sphere excluded them from informal spaces. So the programme sought to create new spaces where women could engage on an equal footing with men.

Village leaders lacked power over the budget process, with district authorities withholding a proportion of village grants. Leaders understood that they could benefit from a more participatory budgeting process.

Competition and mistrust between CSOs were preventing them from

working together effectively, so efforts were made to build a CSO alliance that would gain legitimacy with decision-makers. The media was identified as an important informal power holder that could be leveraged to influence formal decision-makers.

Analysis is not something you do just once – the context you work in is not static and the results of your programme are often unpredictable. At the outset of your programme, an initial analysis can help shape the goals. Deeper analysis can help determine the most suitable approaches to focus on. More substantive analysis will pinpoint the most suitable entry points for your intervention. Meanwhile the analysis will also help you to identify project indicators, highlighting what should be measured and how.

Throughout programme implementation and based on evidence from your monitoring data, you can use further analysis to adapt your programme. For example, it can help you examine unintended outcomes and understand, where necessary, why change didn't happen as expected.

Tools and Resources

Power analysis

Power: Elite Capture and Hidden Influence, ActionAid Denmark

A booklet looking in more detail at the different forms of power and how they play out.

<http://www.actionaid.org/what-we-do/democratic-governance>

Finding the Spaces for Change: A Power Analysis, John Gaventa

An article discussing the nature of power relations and how these surround and imbue new potentially more democratic spaces.

<http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display&type=Document&id=2677>

Quick Guide to Power Analysis

A two-page guide to power analysis, including references to further useful resources.

<http://policy-practice.oxfam.org.uk/publications/quick-guide-to-power-analysis-313950>

Powercube: Understanding power for social change

An online resource which includes a framework for analysing the levels, spaces and forms of power, and how they interact with each other.

<http://www.powercube.net/>

Power and Making Change Happen, Carnegie UK Trust

A report based on a programme implemented by the Carnegie UK Trust and the Joseph Rowntree Trust which provides a practical tool and framework for conducting power analysis. It also gives examples of how community groups have applied the results of their power analysis to their work.

<http://www.carnegieuktrust.org.uk/publications/2010/power-and-making-change-happen>

Powerhouse

An online community for practitioners to discuss, debate and explore the many dimensions of power. The website enables you to exchange tools and resources, work with others to develop strategies for change and reflect on your own practice and thinking.

<http://powerhousenetwork.ning.com>

Power Analysis: A Practical Guide

http://www.sida.se/Publications/Import/pdf/sv/Power-Analysis-A-Practical-Guide_3704.pdf

The Net-Map Toolbox

Online toolkit for influence-mapping of social networks.

<http://netmap.wordpress.com/>

Oxfam resources

Oxfam GB's Programme Framework

A complete guide to Oxfam GB's approach to programming. Section 2 looks at programme identification.

Using Power Analysis in Programme Design in Guatemala

A case study showing how Oxfam GB and partners have used the Powercube framework to design a programme that aims to enhance the political and social leadership of young indigenous women in Western Guatemala.

Gender analysis

Quick Guide to Gender Analysis

A two-page introduction to gender analysis, including links to further resources.

<http://policy-practice.oxfam.org.uk/publications/quick-guide-to-gender-analysis-312432>

Gender Equity Building Blocks, CARE

An 8-page guide to gender analysis, including a discussion of useful tools to use in different situations and case studies.

http://www.careclimatechange.org/files/toolkit/Gender_equity.pdf

Learning & Information Pack: Gender Analysis, UNDP

See particularly: Resource 3a: Gender Analysis – What to Do; Resource 3b: Gender Analysis – What to Ask; and Resource 16: Information that a Good Gender Analysis Should Provide.

<http://www.undp.org/content/dam/undp/library/gender/Institutional%20Development/TLGEN1.6%20UNDP%20GenderAnalysis%20toolkit.pdf>

A Guide to Gender-Analysis Frameworks, Oxfam GB

Drawing on the experience of trainers and practitioners, this book contains step-by-step instructions for using different gender-analysis frameworks, and summaries of their advantages and disadvantages in particular situations.

<http://policy-practice.oxfam.org.uk/publications>

Political economy analysis

Guide to Political Economy Analysis, Governance and Social Development Resource Centre.

A comprehensive online resource guide providing pointers to some of the key literature on approaches to political economy analysis and its effectiveness in different contexts, and examples of analyses and tools applied at country, sector and programme level.

<http://www.gsdrc.org/go/topic-guides/political-economy-analysis>

Political Economy Analysis How To Note, DFID

This provides guidance on the contribution of political economy analysis to development thinking, the range of tools and approaches available, and their application to programming.

<http://www.odi.org.uk/sites/odi.org.uk/files/odi-assets/events-documents/3797.pdf>

Diagnosing Public Sector Corruption & Implementing Anti-Corruption Programmes: A Framework for Practitioners, Partnership for Transparency Fund

This paper introduces an analytical framework consisting of five distinct steps to analyse, diagnose, map and assess ongoing or envisioned anti-corruption projects. It encourages practitioners to consider the overall environment and strategic parameters that underlie a specific instance of corruption so as to tailor their project towards achieving the best impact possible.

<http://ptfund.org/2012/04/diagnosing-public-sector-corruption/>

3. APPROACHES TO RIGHT TO BE HEARD PROGRAMMING

This section:

Explains why promoting women's rights and participation, and building and protecting spaces for dialogue and change, are approaches we should take in all our Right to Be Heard programmes

Outlines a range of other approaches that you can take to implement your programme, depending on your goal

Gives case studies, ideas and tools to help you put the approaches into action.

This chapter outlines a number of approaches that can be used to deliver OI's strategic objectives around the Right to be Heard (see page 8). These are the most common and effective of the many approaches available, but you need not be limited to these only. There will always be new or context-specific ideas, so keep exploring new ways that will be effective in promoting the Right to Be Heard in your own programmes and context.

The approaches are examined according to the five main strategies for achieving the Right to Be Heard in the OI Strategic Plan:

1. Organising civil society
2. Access to information and technology
3. Public decision- and policy-making spaces
4. Access to justice
5. Global citizenship.

This section provides an overview of a number of tried and tested approaches to Right to Be Heard programming, together with practical tools for applying them. Think of them as a menu that you can choose from, based on the findings of your power analysis, which will help you decide what is most likely to work. Used effectively and in the right combinations for your context, these approaches should result in more poor and marginalised people exercising their civil and political rights to influence decision-making, by engaging with governments and businesses and holding them accountable for their actions.

There are inevitable areas of overlap between these approaches, for example, arranging a consumer boycott of goods produced by a company that exploits poor farmers may fall under both 'organising civil society' and 'global citizenship'. The approaches influence each other and are not neatly separated. But they can be effective across the range of Oxfam's work and should be considered when integrating governance principles into programmes supporting gender justice, saving lives, sustainable food, the fair sharing of natural resources, and financing for development and universal

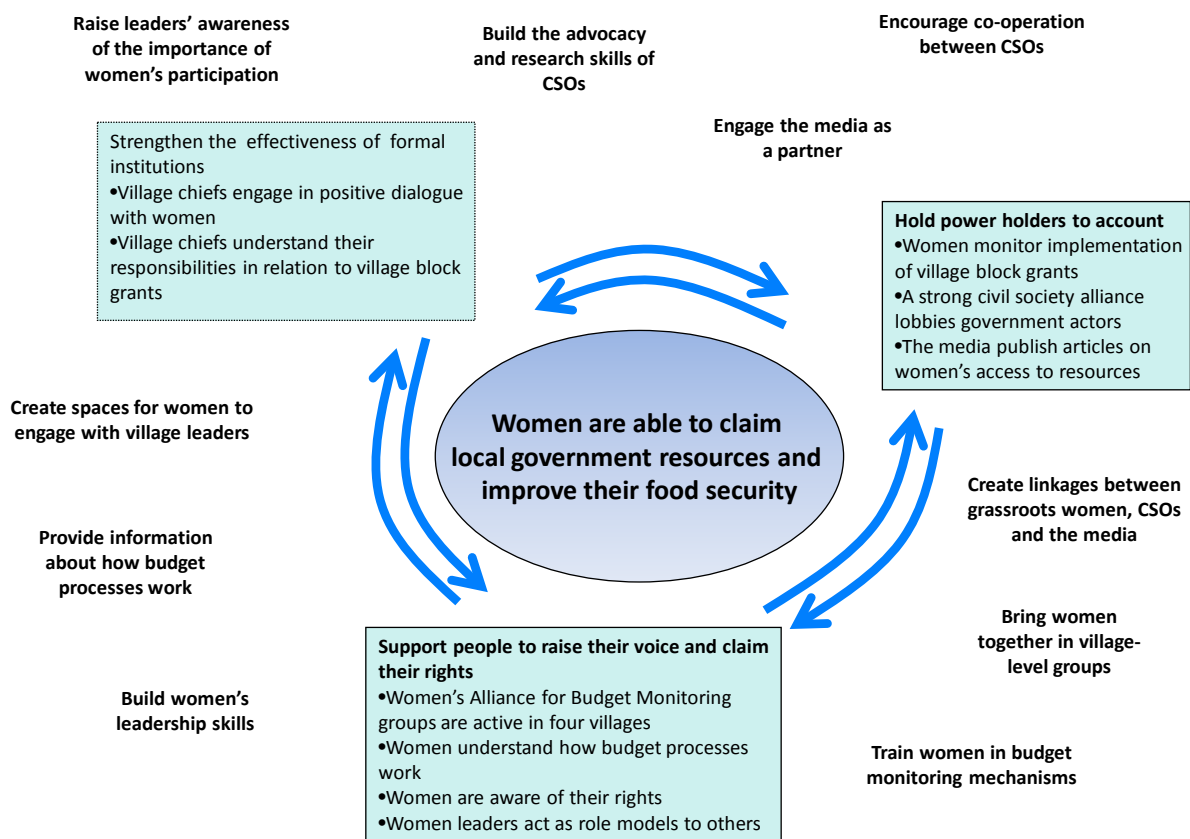
essential services, as well as advocacy and campaigns.

The approaches that you select for your programme will very much depend on your context and end goals – and often you will need to adopt more than one approach simultaneously or sequentially in order to achieve your programme objectives. As well as the fifth approach above – Global Citizenship – there are two cross-cutting themes that are necessary to achieve Right to be Heard objectives:

- *Gender, governance and poor women’s rights* – achieving sustained, widespread changes in attitudes and beliefs about gender power relations in order to further women’s rights and gender justice
- *Building and protecting spaces and alliances for dialogue and change* – it is critical to Oxfam’s work to keep civil society space open.

Your programme should address all these issues wherever possible.

The diagram below returns to the Indonesia LISTEN programme, as an example to help you look at programming through a Right to Be Heard lens. It shows some of the approaches that were selected in order to achieve the goal of increasing women’s ability to claim local government resources and improve their food security.



A note on working in fragile contexts

Many of the approaches presuppose that the state is open to civil society influence and being held accountable, at least to some degree. However, in some of the countries in which we work, democratic space is shrinking or governments lack capacity to respond to citizens' demands.

In these instances, we should not assume that work to strengthen either civil society or institutions is impossible, but we should act with caution and carry out careful analysis to understand what spaces for action exist and where we can be most effective. We should also take steps to minimise the risk to which we are exposing ourselves, our partners and the poor men, women and youth with whom we are working. In some cases we may need to choose a softer entry point, or focus our attention on informal governance channels.

Often when we think of fragility the focus is on governance – the nature of the state (weak government, poor legitimacy), role of elites, limited capacity of civil society groups, corruption, security, or the ability to provide services and public goods. Nevertheless, there may be formal or informal opportunities for influence in such countries. Striking a balance between supporting positive change and managing and minimising risk is the key to effective influencing in fragile contexts.

For further guidance see: [Programming in Fragile and Conflict-Affected Countries: A Learning Companion](#)

Cross-cutting theme 1:

• Gender, governance and poor women's rights

'The absence of women's voices in decisions which affect their lives is not only a problem for women, but is usually a sign of unjust power relations that exclude many men as well.' Professor John Gaventa

One of Oxfam's strategic goals is 'sustained, widespread changes in attitudes and beliefs about gender power relations in order to further women's rights and gender justice'. To achieve this, we need to put women's rights at the heart of all we do. This means that all programmes should conduct a gender analysis and address the specific needs and interests of women throughout all their activities. However, in addition to this, deliberate effort is needed to redress historical discrimination that puts women at a disadvantage in comparison to men. Our Right to Be Heard programmes can address this by:

- Working on the intersection between women's rights and governance
- Supporting women to play an active role in governance processes as participants and leaders.

Work on the intersection between women's rights and governance

Women's exclusion from decision-making and governance processes is closely linked to the denial of women's basic human rights. Being unable to participate in decision-making is, in itself, a violation of women's right to participate in political and public life. Moreover, the violation of other rights presents serious barriers to women's participation. For example, if women do not have official documentation (are denied their right to an identity), they are barred from being able to vote or stand for public office. Similarly, around the world many more girls than boys are denied their right to education, making it much more difficult for women to participate on an equal footing with men in later life. Therefore, programmes that seek to increase women's participation in decision-making and governance are likely also to need to work on other aspects of women's rights.

Many of our programmes have found that violence against women is a specific barrier to women's participation that needs to be addressed. Violence, or the threat of violence, denies women opportunities and choices at many levels. Fear of sexual assault may reduce women's mobility outside the home; domestic violence may prevent women from getting involved in public life; women who succeed in the public sphere may be subject to intimidation by men. Violence also undermines and destroys women's dignity, confidence and self-respect, which may prevent them from seeking out and taking advantage of the opportunities that other women enjoy.

Violence against women in Honduras

Violence against women has long been a serious problem in Honduras but since the coup d'état of June 2009, the level of violence has escalated. Femicide, or the murder of women, is all too common. One woman is killed every 15 hours and just as shockingly, fewer than 2 per cent of cases are ever investigated. The huge increase in the availability of firearms has exacerbated the situation, but the underlying context is one of unequal power relations between men and women. Only 3 per cent of cases of violence against women are brought to trial. This impunity for perpetrators is a reflection of the degree to which the murder of women is tolerated and justified in society. Perpetrators are neither identified nor punished, and justice institutions lack the will and the capacity to prevent or solve cases. Women frequently don't report violence, as they have little confidence that the perpetrator will be tried or brought to justice.

Violence against women is one of the factors preventing women from participating in political life. Women who live with violence or the threat of violence are unlikely to have the confidence or self-esteem needed to participate politically, let alone the mobility, time and resources. When women's consciousness and confidence is raised and they decide to move beyond the confines of the home to participate in public spaces, this often creates tension within the household and beyond. Their aspirations threaten the established order, thus exposing them to the risk of further violence.

The Honduras Programme Coordinator describes how this plays out: "At

national level, including within political parties, discriminatory norms and practices exclude women from resources, and spaces for training and education. Many women lack the power, money, connections and networks to even enter the electoral race. At local level, violence is exercised either to keep women confined to private spaces or, if they are able to take up public roles, define and constrain those roles [to those lacking power and influence]. This impedes any substantial progress for women, and particularly for those who are poor, rural and indigenous, who have to struggle against multiple forms of discrimination and violence in the home and in the public arena. In a world where men command and women obey, women rarely dare to participate in political issues.”

Support women to play an active role in governance processes

Women are often prevented from contributing to decision-making in both the private and public spheres. In many communities and societies, men dominate over women, women’s opinions are not heard or valued, and decision-making structures exclude women. Women face significant barriers to their full and equal participation. These include the disproportionate amount of time women spend on household labour, financial constraints, discriminatory attitudes regarding women’s roles in public life, and harassment and violence.

Our programmes therefore need to take concrete steps to ensure that women are included and actively participate in community-level meetings and decision-making bodies. These may relate to disaster risk management, peace building, water management, grain banks, micro-credit schemes and school management. Women must also be empowered to participate in formal decision-making bodies at all levels – from local councils to national governments.

An equal representation of women is important for a number of reasons:

- Women have a right to participate in public and political life, so it is a matter of justice
- Women have valuable knowledge, skills and experience to offer, which have the potential to benefit the whole community
- Women are often more comfortable talking to other women about their needs and concerns
- Women and men have different needs and experiences, which need to be separately represented so that men’s are not taken as the norm and the basis for decisions. If women’s voices are not heard, their issues will remain invisible and inequality may be reinforced
- Women’s and men’s interests are different and sometimes conflict, and so both should be heard and taken into account in decisions.

There is, of course, no guarantee that women leaders will promote gender equality, and nor should we assume that male leaders will not do so, but there is a clear relationship between personal identity and experience and commitment to a cause. So, while having women in leadership positions does not automatically translate into women’s concerns being put on the agenda, it

does increase the likelihood of this happening. Oxfam's Raising Her Voice programme has shown how women leaders can act in the interests of other women:

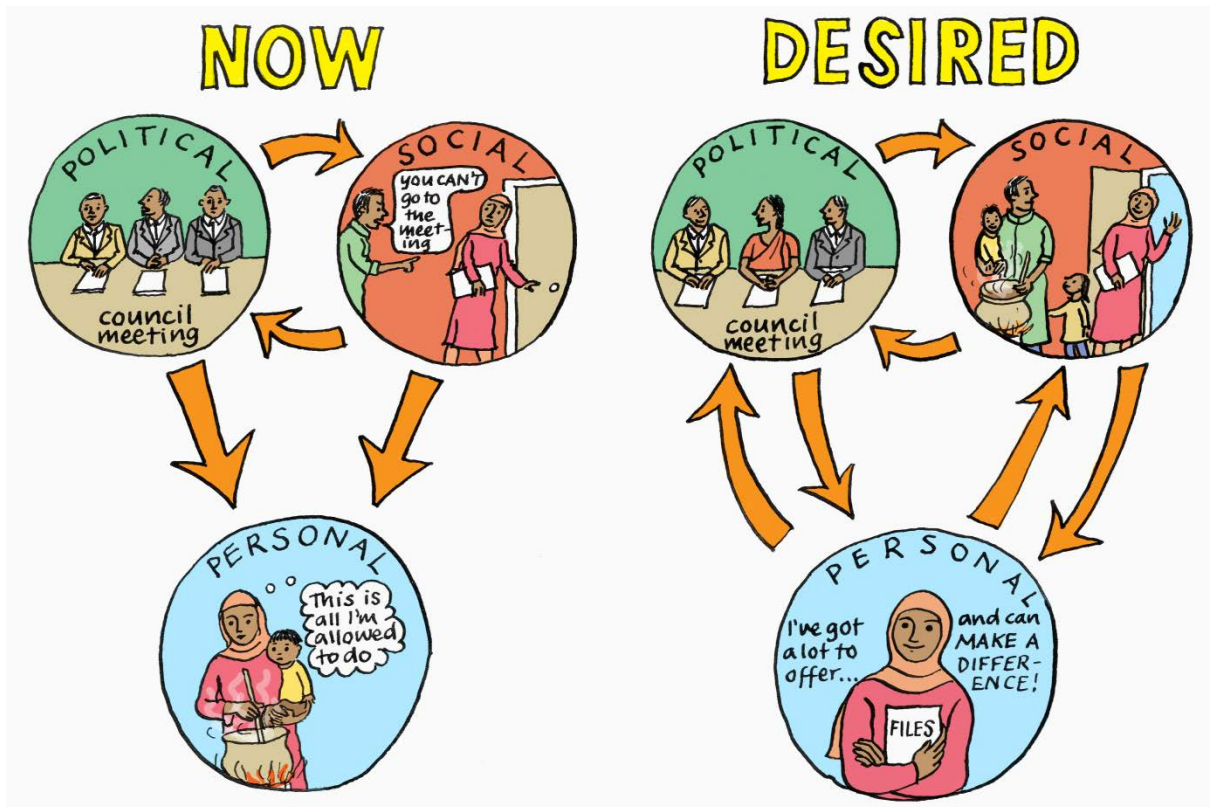
In **Pakistan** the concerted efforts of women leaders in 30 districts have helped more than 105,000 marginalised women to obtain identity cards for the first time, restoring their identity – a first step towards claiming other rights. The lack of official documentation is a major barrier for many women in Pakistan: without identification, they cannot vote, use a bank, buy property, claim their inheritance rights or get a passport.



Ahead of the 2011 parliamentary elections in **Uganda**, members of the Uganda Coalition for African Women's Rights met with the two main political parties, to influence them to address key articles of the African Women's Rights Protocol in their campaign manifestos. Raising Her Voice helped to ensure that reproductive health rights were high on the agenda. Presidential candidates took part in televised debates on the issues and during International Women's Day celebrations, the President spoke out against Uganda's high maternal mortality rate.

In **Nepal**, women have taken on decision-making roles in community forest user groups, school management committees, sub-health-post management committees, and drinking water and sanitation user groups. These community decision-making bodies have a particular impact on women's lives. Women leaders are extremely committed and determined to do a good job. They are beginning to influence decisions that affect women's lives, for example, making sure that water pumps are operating around meal times when water is most needed and lobbying for better access to essential medicines and maternal health care.

Raising Her Voice has identified three broad spheres that influence women's opportunities to participate in decision-making: the personal, political and social spheres. The political and social spheres influence each other, and have a strong influence over poor and marginalised women's abilities to secure their rights. However, the very marginalisation of these women means that they have very restricted power to influence the social and political spheres, as illustrated below:



Therefore, in order to be effective, gender and governance programmes must explicitly redress this imbalance and support poor women to increase their participation and voice in the social and political spheres. This requires working across the spheres and at different levels: local, national and regional/global, employing a range of diverse strategies. For example:

The personal sphere: To lay down the foundations for women's participation in governance structures, women must first gain confidence in their own abilities and realise their potential to contribute to society. At a more practical level, women need to gain the confidence and skills to speak out, voice their opinions, form arguments and negotiate solutions. They also need to learn how decision-making bodies function, the roles played by representatives and how to apply for a position.

The social sphere: Women will struggle to access leadership positions and be effective in them if they do not have the support of the wider community. This can be achieved through awareness-raising activities related to women's rights, and by giving women opportunities to demonstrate their newly learned skills, which can influence beliefs about women's roles and capabilities. It can also be helpful to meet with and encourage influential community members and power holders to support women leaders.

The political sphere: An enabling environment can be created, for example, by influencing quotas for women's participation in decision-making structures, and influencing public opinion via the media. This might also involve working with political parties to convince them to select women as candidates.

Reporting women's rights in Palestine

Women in Palestine are suffering rising social and domestic violence, fuelled by the strain of regional politics and poverty. Yet women's rights are barely covered in the Palestinian media. To tackle this, Oxfam Novib has supported its partner, the Women's Centre for Legal Aid and Counselling (WCLAC), to establish the Media Forum Advocating Women's Rights. This aims to raise media awareness of women's issues and rights, so journalists can influence public opinion and change women's daily life.

The forum was set up through a meeting with 21 media professionals and launched through six workshops for West Bank journalists, to train them in women's rights and incorporating gender issues into their reporting. It is also developing a library related to women's issues and has built relationships regionally and internationally with other women-related media groups.

As a result, media attention to women's issues has risen dramatically. Coverage has included a televised roundtable discussion with 25 experts, workshops at Alnajah and Hebron Universities, and widespread coverage of a WCLAC art exhibition on sexual assault and honour killing. The most widely circulated Palestinian newspaper assigned a female journalist to report gender-related stories and write a column on women's issues.

Social change takes time, but WCLAC is confident the forum will achieve its goals. By involving the media at every stage, from planning to evaluation, it has made the women's rights agenda the media's own.

Supporting women to get into leadership positions successfully is just the beginning of the journey. They also need ongoing support to be effective leaders and to represent the interests of their constituents, and of women in particular. Steps you can take:

- Conduct a gender analysis and identify the specific disadvantages and forms of discrimination faced by women in your programme areas. Ensure that strategies to address these are included in your programme/project plans
- Use the Raising Her Voice model to think about the current balance of your programme and spot any gaps that may prevent you from achieving your goals
- Support individual women to grow in self-esteem and confidence
- Support women to better understand how decision-making bodies function and how they can participate in them
- Ensure that women understand their rights and do not accept violence and discrimination as their due
- Support women to gain the skills and confidence to speak out, voice their opinions, form arguments, negotiate solutions and show leadership at all levels
- Address practical barriers to women's participation
- Address the customs, beliefs and practices that prevent women from having a voice
- Work with men and decision-makers to build acceptance of and support for women's participation in public life
- Lobby for legal reform in countries with laws that disadvantage women.

Further ideas about how you can do this can be found in the Women's Participation Resource Pack, developed for Oxfam GB in Myanmar.

Tools and resources

Programming in Fragile and Conflict-Affected Countries: A Learning Companion

<http://policy-practice.oxfam.org.uk/publications/programming-in-fragile-and-conflict-affected-countries-a-learning-companion-139074>

Organising civil society

A Ladder of Citizen Participation, Sherry R Arnstein, 1969

<http://lithgow-schmidt.dk/sherry-arnstein/ladder-of-citizen-participation.html>

Children's Participation: From Tokenism to Citizenship, Roger Hart, 1992

http://www.unicef-irc.org/publications/pdf/childrens_participation.pdf

Introducing Participatory Approaches, Methods and Tools

<http://www.fao.org/docrep/006/AD424E/ad424e03.htm>

People and Participation.net

<http://www.peopleandparticipation.net/display/Methods/List+of+methods+with+brief+descriptions>

The REFLECT Mother Manual

<http://www.reflect-action.org/mothermanual>

Haki Zetu: ESC Rights in Practice, Amnesty International Netherlands, 2010

<http://www.huridocs.org/2011/02/haki-zetu-esc-rights-in-practice/>

The International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED)

<http://www.iied.org/legal-tools/home>

Gender, governance and poor women's rights

For tools to conduct a [gender analysis](#), see Section 2.

Quick Guide to Women's Participation

Outlines practical steps you can take to ensure that women are able to attend meetings and get involved in committees, as well as make their voices heard.
<http://policy-practice.oxfam.org.uk/publications/quick-guide-to-promoting-womens-participation-312423>

Gender and Decentralisation Programme in Lira District, FAO

A case study examining how women's participation in local councils was promoted in Lira District, Uganda, including the methodology behind the programme used.

<http://www.fao.org/docrep/003/x6090e/x6090e06.htm#TopOfPage>

Supporting Women to Aspire to Election to Political Office in Sierra Leone: The experience of the PACER project

A case study of Oxfam's work on gender and governance in Sierra Leone, highlighting key strategies and lessons learned.
<http://policy-practice.oxfam.org.uk/publications/supporting-women-to-aspire-to-election-to-political-office-in-sierra-leone-the-141912>

Bridge Cutting Edge Pack: Gender & Governance

A compilation of resources containing an overview report outlining the key issues, a Gender and Development *In Brief* bulletin and a supporting resources collection (including summaries of resources, case studies, tools, guidelines, training materials, websites, and networking and contact details).

<http://www.bridge.ids.ac.uk/go/bridge-publications/cutting-edge-packs>

Participatory Gender Analysis, Intercooperation, 2009

<http://www.intercooperation-bd.org/publication.php#manuals>

Resources for Oxfam Staff

Promoting Women's Participation in Decision-Making: A Resource Pack

A guide developed for Oxfam GB in Myanmar, drawing on existing experience and good practice in the Oxfam Myanmar programme. It outlines tools that can be used to develop conceptual thinking around women's participation and suggests strategies that can be used to promote women's meaningful participation in community decision-making.

A Companion to Promoting Women's Leadership and Participation

A guide for programme staff giving a short summary of the issues around women's leadership, examples of Oxfam's work, and some of the strategies being used to promote women's leadership.

A Companion to Promoting Women's Rights

A guide for programme staff giving a short summary of the issues around women's rights, examples of Oxfam's work, and some of the strategies being used to promote women's rights.

A Training Manual for Female Aspirants and Candidates for Local Council Elections: Breaking Barriers, Empowering Women to Participate in Democratic Politics

A manual developed by the PACER programme to support women to stand for election to political office.

Lessons from the Mid-Term Evaluation of Raising Her Voice

Outlines the different strategies that Raising Her Voice projects have used to address the personal, social and political spheres.

Further reading

Learning for Action on Women's Leadership and Participation

This book brings together lessons and experience in building up women's involvement from Oxfam GB and its partners. It illustrates methodological approaches and learning points, covering a range of issues, from women's participation in national elections to female decision-making in community livelihoods initiatives. It also includes a resources section.

<http://policy-practice.oxfam.org.uk/publications/womens-leadership-and-participation-case-studies-on-learning-for-action-115530>

Raising Her Voice case studies

An in-depth case study on Raising Her Voice in Nepal
<http://raisinghervoice.ning.com/page/material-library>

Further information on and resources from the Raising Her Voice Programme

<http://raisinghervoice.ning.com/page/material-library>

Cross-cutting theme 2:

- **Build and protect spaces and alliances for dialogue and change**

In many countries the spaces for dialogue, engagement and activism are shrinking and citizens' ability to participate in social and political life is becoming more difficult and restricted. This may be through prohibitive legislation and regulation, direct harassment or attempts at co-optation by governments, powerful private sector actors with vested interests, or religious elites. This restriction of space for dialogue impacts most heavily on the most marginalised members of society, who have less access to resources, information and legal protection. It can easily exacerbate the poverty and isolation of these groups.

In this context, Oxfam has an important role to play and through all our work should seek to:

- Create and protect spaces for stakeholders from traditional and non-traditional civil society, government and the business sector, to ensure citizen voice and participation.
- Support social movements, unions and other relevant global or national people's groups and influencers (including religious leaders); provide assistance to ensure their protection, and create and support spaces for meeting and dialogue.
- Influence accountability agendas by bringing partners, networks and social movements to national, regional and global forums.
- Build alliances with organisations that have developed specialist expertise in rights-based work on budgets, social accountability, transparency and resource mobilisation.
- Engage local, national and global media as a strategic partner, not just as a vehicle for dissemination of news and stories. Work with investigative reporters and media experts to help develop strong education and advocacy programmes.

Create and protect spaces for dialogue

Spaces are the opportunities, moments and channels through which citizens can act to influence the policies, thinking, decisions and relationships that affect their lives and interests. These spaces have traditionally been physical spaces, such as community centres and associations, but are more and more becoming 'virtual' spaces where people can engage. The spaces in which people can be active are not neutral or static, but are shaped by power relations. These determine what is possible within them, who may enter, with which identities, beliefs and interests. 'Spaces' may be:

- **Closed:** where decisions are made behind closed doors

- **Invited:** where people are asked to participate but within set boundaries
- **Claimed or created:** where less powerful actors claim or create a space where they can set their own agenda.



Our work can address any or all of these, and decisions should be based on a power analysis, which will help to identify appropriate strategies and entry points. Looking at spaces through the lens of power analysis enables strategic assessments of the possibilities for citizens to take action, and how to make the spaces more effective. It can, for example, reveal the range of factors that restrict access to spaces, such as government policies, traditional ideas about who should participate, and limited access to information. It also allows consideration of which of these can be challenged.

The power analysis conducted by the Indonesia LISTEN programme showed that village decision-making spaces were **closed** to women. Therefore, the programme sought to **create** new spaces where women could engage on an equal footing with men. At district level, the CSO alliance was **invited** to participate in governance processes, but programme managers were unclear as to whether there was genuine will on the part of district authorities to strengthen participation, or whether it was a more tokenistic gesture.

Oxfam can use its 'convening' power and experience to enable dialogue, foster connections and create spaces where citizens and power holders can interact at all levels. We can also help citizen leaders gain access to the spaces where decisions are made, and provide support and guidance. But we should take care to support groups to develop their own agendas and determine for themselves how to engage with the power dynamics specific to their context.

Oxfam is also aware that civil society space is closing over 90 countries. Oxfam relies heavily on working through civil society partnerships, which come under threat when our partners come under pressure from their governments. Oxfam's ambitions rely on working in countries where civil society can

organise and activists can be active. We cannot take this space for granted. Its maintenance and protection needs to be on our radar. If our ambitious influencing objectives are to be achieved, we must push back against restrictions and proactively safeguard the operational environment necessary to campaign, provide humanitarian relief and undertake all Oxfam programming.

Support social movements, unions and other people's groups

Oxfam has a long history of working with social movements. In Latin America, in particular, we have a great deal of experience of supporting social movements as key protagonists in the most important processes of change in the region. Social movements are important both as expressions of active citizenship and as dynamic actors in change processes. Therefore, Oxfam can make a strategic choice to work with social movements both as a way of supporting the voice and power of those most affected by exclusion and discrimination, and also as a means of contributing to wider and more sustainable changes.

Among the key lessons we have learned about working with social movements are:

- Social movements have intrinsic value in and of themselves as expressions of active citizenship, and should be supported and encouraged for that reason; they also are instrumental for social justice objectives, especially in relation to reducing inequality.
- A movement may 'fail' to meet its stated purpose, yet be a great success in terms of enabling citizens to engage collectively with state and private sector institutions on a range of issues.
- Successful movements often start as demand-driven; when they make the transition to making proposals, and move from sectoral to broader agendas and to political involvement, their contribution to change processes tends to become more effective.
- Oxfam can play a valuable role in facilitating, opening spaces, linking/connecting and promoting the voices of the most excluded, especially women. But it can also do damage by distorting movements with the weight of its agenda and expertise – so its role is contested by some.
- Work with social movements, on the basis of transparency and respect, demands that we develop stronger capacities for political analysis and that we maintain flexibility in how we work with them, including working with the uncertainty, and sometimes confusion, of open-ended processes.

In addition to directly supporting social movements to organise, Oxfam can play a role in creating debate around people's right to organise and engage in peaceful protest, supporting citizens' freedom of expression, and convincing others to view movements as legitimate players in policy formation. For example, following the Arab Spring, Oxfam published a report critiquing the European Union's new policy in relation to the Arab region, and analysing to

what extent it responded to demands for people-driven reform.

Helping waste pickers find strength in numbers

In Pune, Oxfam India has helped bring about the emergence of a strong collective of waste pickers called *Kagad Kach Patra Kashtakari Panchayat (KKPKP)* – a membership-based trade union working for the rights of over 8,000 waste pickers. Oxfam's multi-pronged approach combined mobilisation of the people, institution building and advocacy over local government policy. With this support, the KKPKP fought for and won municipal endorsement of identity cards for waste pickers, established that their operations would save the city millions of rupees in waste handling costs, and created an autonomous enterprise that provides municipal contract waste management services to the citizens of Pune. These include door-to-door collection, resource recovery, trade and waste processing. Oxfam's role was crucial in the initial organisation of KKPKP, as well as in advocacy with the municipal government and providing continuing support to KKPKP's operations and growth.

Influence accountability agendas

Oxfam works with a holistic influencing model that is focused on the power, attitudes and beliefs that underlie poverty and injustice. It involves public campaigning and advocacy, but extends beyond Oxfam's previous campaigns model to use the whole of our One Programme Approach to contribute to transformative change.

Oxfam can support poor men, women and youth to influence debates at all levels by bringing partners and community leaders to decision-making forums, where they can talk about their first-hand experiences of poverty. This can be an extremely effective way of bringing dry policy debates to life for decision-makers, and helping them understand the impact that policy decisions have on people's lives. In the run-up to the UN climate change summit in Copenhagen in December 2010, a staggering 1.5 million people in 35 countries attended climate hearings organised by Oxfam and our partners. Their collected testimonies were brought to the attention of local and national leaders, and finally to world leaders at the summit.

Commission on the Status of Women

In March 2010, Oxfam GB participated in the 54th session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW), a functional commission of the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). Every year representatives of member states gather at the UN headquarters in New York to evaluate progress on gender equality. For this reason, CSW is one of the highest global policy-making bodies on gender issues.

Participation in the CSW provided Oxfam with the opportunity to influence governments directly and indirectly, to connect with the women's movement, and to become better informed on the issues, organisations and individuals important for women and development. Above all, we supported grassroots women to take their place in these political arenas.

Maite Matheu, Raising Her Voice Programme Co-ordinator in Honduras, accompanied four programme participants to New York. She said: “At the Oxfam side event, it was really fantastic to see the level of empowerment achieved with grassroots women. Elubia, Alba, Amar and Nigar spoke from their hearts and from their own experience, and this made it possible to bring the public close to their stories of leadership and their national context. The impact was so great that many women asked if Oxfam is working in their countries.”

Engage the media as a strategic partner

Many of our programmes make effective use of the media to share the work that Oxfam is doing, but by engaging the media as a partner we can achieve so much more. The media can play a critical role in enabling the voice of poor and marginalised people to be heard, be a powerful partner in advocacy and accountability activities, and influence attitudes and beliefs. In the [Indonesia LISTEN programme](#), the local newspapers had not previously thought of themselves as having a role to play in influencing governance agendas, but were persuaded to start publishing articles which challenged the way village block grants were being implemented.

Engaging the media has also been a strong focus of the Raising Her Voice project in Guatemala:

Claiming a space in the media

Women in Guatemala have little voice in their own communities, let alone in local or national government. The media serves the interests of the white, male-dominated, Spanish-speaking elite and tends to ignore the plight of women and indigenous people. Raising Her Voice is working to break this silence by enabling women’s organisations to be heard – by the public, the media, local authorities and the government.

The project has provided training for women’s groups in communication skills, including radio, press and television journalism. As a result, many rural, indigenous women are now able and willing to speak to reporters and in public. Positive results have motivated the women to expand their knowledge further. Women who previously had no voice now have the capacity to be spokeswomen, to prepare radio programmes and adverts, to interview and be interviewed, to claim public spaces previously denied to women, and to voice their rights and demands as women.

For example, Ixmukané Quiché is training indigenous women communicators through the medium of their own languages. With the support of another Oxfam project it has established the first radio station for women. Similarly, more than 20 journalists have taken part in training courses, with the aim of increasing coverage of indigenous women’s issues, and combating sexist and sensationalist reporting of violence against women. Campaign activities have had good coverage in the local media, although national media interest remains low.

One particular media channel that many of our programmes have used effectively is community radio. Community radio stations are run on a not-for profit basis, often by volunteers. They actively encourage community

participation in running the station and defining the programme agenda, and broadcast on issues that will contribute to local development.

For the Scottish people, by the Scottish people

Oxfam supports the Sunny Govan community radio station which broadcasts from Govan in Glasgow, Scotland. Now known across the city, 'Sunny G' plays a vital role in giving the people of Govan a say – sometimes directly to local politicians or decision-makers – about the issues affecting their community, such as drugs, anti-social behaviour or gang violence. "Community radio is for the people, by the people, to the people," explains the founder and manager, Heather McMillan. "It's about people being experts on their own experience, and actually being able to say that, through time, collectively, we may well become agents of change."



Steps you can take:

Conduct a power analysis to assess existing spaces for dialogue and change, and identify appropriate strategies and entry points for your work.

Use power analysis to inform your work with social movements, in relation to the movement and wider society, and also internally within social movements. Internal conflict is an issue that requires careful response. Issues of autonomy, the influence of funding, relations between social movements and campaigns, and the role of organisations inside social movements also need careful attention.

Look for opportunities to bring poor men, women and youth to talk to decision-makers about the issues that affect their lives.

Build a stronger and more strategic relationship with the media.

Tools and resources

For tools to conduct a power analysis, see Section 2.

Build and protect spaces and alliances for dialogue and change

The Barefoot Guide to Working with Organisations and Social Change

A practical, do-it-yourself guide for leaders and facilitators wanting to help organisations to function and develop in more effective ways, so as to contribute to society. The guide, with its supporting website, includes tried and tested concepts, approaches, stories and activities.

<http://www.barefootguide.org/>

Working with the Media on Gender and Education: A Guide for Training and Planning

A guide to working with the media on gender and education issues, giving practical advice and suggestions of activities to help individuals or groups develop their understanding. Can also be applied to other topics.

<http://policy-practice.oxfam.org.uk/publications/working-with-the-media-on-gender-and-education-a-guide-for-training-and-planning-141496>

Resources for Oxfam Staff

National Influencing Guidelines

Detailed guidance for all aspects of influencing at national level, with many examples.

Civil Society Space and Risk Management

Guidelines on operating effectively, with managed risk, in contexts where civil society space is under threat or shrinking:

<https://sumus.oxfam.org/civil-society-space/documents/folders/civil-society-space-and-risk-management>

Civil Society Space Discussion Paper

A paper examining programming specifically designed to protect or open up civil society space:

Reflections on the role of social movements in processes of change, Oxfam GB

The report from a 2008 meeting in Bolivia, when over 50 social movement representatives and Oxfam staff members came together to learn about the characteristics of social movements and some of their key challenges. They examined how organisations such as Oxfam can best support social movements.

Further reading

Voice: Representation and People's Democracy, ActionAid Denmark

Includes further reading on the idea of 'space'.

<http://www.actionaid.org/what-we-do/democratic-governance>

Blurring the Boundaries: Citizen Action across States and Boundaries, Development Research Centre

This report pulls together over 10 years' research by the Development Research Centre into how citizen action shapes states and societies. Taking a 'citizen's perspective', looking upwards and outwards, this research offers a unique insight into how citizens see and experience states and other institutions which affect their lives, as well as how they engage, mobilise and participate to make their voices heard.

Democracy in Action: Protecting Civil Society Space, Trocaire

In the current global context, hard-won gains towards democracy and respect for civil society activities are highly vulnerable to reversals. Powerful actors do not necessarily respond positively to increases in spaces for participation, or to more vocal and empowered citizens and organisations. There is a worrying trend in the closing of space for civil society and citizen expression in many countries, particularly for those who challenge injustice. This paper details the impact of these trends on the potential for civil society to serve as a catalyst for democratic change and effective governance.

http://www.trocaire.org/sites/trocaire/files/pdfs/policy/Democracy_in_Action.pdf

Power to the People? Reaction's to the EU's Response to the Arab Spring

A paper analysing what the new EU policy entails from a civil society perspective, and to what extent it responds to the current protests and demands for people-driven reform in the region.

<http://policy-practice.oxfam.org.uk/publications-power-to-the-people-reactions-to-the-e-us-response-to-the-arab-spring-189549>

STRATEGIES AND APPROACHES

1. ORGANISING CIVIL SOCIETY

Civil society is the public space between the state, the market and ordinary people, in which people can debate and take action. It includes charities, community schemes, faith-based organisations, campaigning groups, professional associations, interest groups, the media and non-governmental organisations – all both formal and informal. It is the sphere in which social movements become organised and provide appropriate channels for political participation, and where the platforms for people's voices to be heard are found.

We often think of our work to support civil society in relation to strengthening its ability to hold governments accountable. However, civil society has a much broader role to play, and strengthening civil society should be an important goal in its own right. It can, for example, produce trust, reciprocity and networks; create and promote alternatives, and support the rights of citizens and the concept of citizenship.

At the heart of our Right to Be Heard work is the goal that poor and marginalised men, women and youth are able to influence decisions affecting their lives, achieve their rights and challenge unequal power relations. We believe that everyone should be able to take control of their own destiny and challenge the inequality that underpins poverty. With this aim, our programme should seek to:

- Strengthen the capacity of civil society organisations to self-organise around the priorities of poor and marginalised people (in particular women and youth) in both rural and urban settings
- Ensure people understand the roles and responsibilities of governance institutions – and support poor men, women and youth to relate to these
- Ensure people understand their rights and the legal mechanisms to exercise them, including access to information laws and justice
- Build the capacity of leaders to engage with stakeholders and bring out the voices of the people they represent
- Work with youth, women's and indigenous people's organisations, recognising and supporting their own ways of expression and organisation
- Analyse and influence customs and beliefs, attitudes and behaviours
- Build people's power 'within' (themselves), 'with' (each other) and 'to' (demand and achieve fulfilment of their rights)
- Organise to persuade governments to lift restrictive laws that deny civil and political rights and to engage constructively with civil society.

Participation and participatory methods

Our work aims to ensure the participation of poor men, women and youth in their own development – but the word ‘participation’ can be used to mean lots of different things:

Passive participation: People participate by being told what is going to happen or has already happened. It is a unilateral announcement by an administration or project management without any listening to people's responses.

Participation in information giving: The information being shared belongs only to external professionals. People participate by answering questions posed by extractive researchers using questionnaire surveys or such similar approaches. People do not have the opportunity to influence proceedings; the research findings are not shared or checked for accuracy.

Participation by consultation: People participate by being consulted and external agents listen to views. These external agents define both problems and solutions and may modify these in the light of people's responses. Such a process does not concede any share in decision-making and professionals are under no obligation to take on board people's views.

Participation for material benefits: People participate by providing resources such as labour, in return for food, cash or other material incentives. Much of farm research falls into this category, as farmers provide the fields but are not involved in experimentation or the process of learning. It is very common to see this called participation, yet people have no stake in prolonging activities when incentives end.

Functional participation: People participate by forming groups to meet predetermined objectives related to the project, which can involve the development or promotion of externally initiated social organisation. Such involvement tends not to be at early stages of project cycles or planning, but rather after major decisions have already been made. These institutions tend to be dependent on external initiators and facilitators, but may become self-dependent.

Interactive participation: People participate in joint analysis, which leads to action plans and the formation of new local institutions or the strengthening of existing ones. This tends to involve interdisciplinary methodologies that seek multiple objectives and make use of systematic and structured learning processes. These groups take control/ownership over local decisions, giving people a stake in maintaining structures or practices.

Self-mobilisation: People participate by taking initiatives independent of external institutions to change systems. Such self-initiated mobilisation and collective action may or may not challenge existing inequitable distributions of wealth and power.

Oxfam's rights-based approach to development highlights the equal right of vulnerable or marginalised groups to participate in decision-making that affect their lives. We value participation as a means of grounding development itself in the reality of those it aims to support. This is a vital ingredient for advancing more equitable development and universal realisation of rights.

From a rights-based perspective, participation is not something that development ‘does’, it is something development is. We don't use participation in an instrumental way simply because it is good practice, or

leads to better development results, though there is certainly evidence that it does. Instead participation is itself a fundamental human right: to identify, design, implement and evaluate development without the meaningful participation of those it will impact is to fail to accord them equality, dignity and respect.

There are a number of tools and approaches that we can use to support the meaningful participation of poor and marginalised men, women and youth in our programmes. These are broadly referred to as 'participatory methods'. Some of the most popular are highlighted in the tools and resources section below.

An alternative framework for thinking about participation is Sherry Hart's Ladder of Citizen Participation, which has also been adapted by Roger Hart as the Ladder of Young People's Participation. The 'ladder' can easily be adapted to other contexts.

(Source: Pretty's Typology of Participation, in <http://www.fao.org/docrep/006/AD424E/ad424e03.htm>)

Oxfam works with people to help them gain and grow the power to organise, participate and articulate concerns about matters relevant to their development. We can support civil society to recognise its own value, as well as to play a strong role in decision-making and accountability through:

- Supporting national NGOs and coalitions working at grassroots and supporting community organisations to be effective and active participants at national level
- Embedding social accountability approaches in various sectors and working with both civil society groups and local authorities on joint participatory planning and monitoring activities
- Strengthening budget work and economic literacy, both for public authorities and citizens
- Making use of appropriate technologies that enable people's voices to be heard and amplified and that enhance accountability mechanisms
- Helping develop successful models of engagement at the local level that can be used with national government for replication
- Emphasising evidence-based research and ensuring solid research capabilities are available to civil society at country and global level.

Oxfam in Bangladesh – the Campaign for Sustainable Rural Livelihoods

More than 70 per cent of people in Bangladesh live in low-lying rural areas, where extreme weather events such as cyclones and floods present a terrible threat. As well as devastating families, buildings and infrastructure, these events cause saltwater to enter local water systems, which in turn destroys crops and makes farming much more difficult. As a result, farmers face an ongoing battle to overcome poverty. The Campaign for Sustainable Rural Livelihoods (CSRL) is an Oxfam-supported alliance of more than 200 development and civil society organisations. Since launching in 2007, it has addressed issues relating to climate change, agriculture and trade policies, at every level from local to global. CSRL helped to ensure that the voices of vulnerable people

were heard at a pioneering conference on climate change between the UK and Bangladeshi governments in London. Campaign members also briefed parliamentarians, highlighting the importance of climate change policy negotiations. The UK Government committed to a £75 million funding grant to help Bangladesh adapt to the effects of climate change, to be paid between 2008 and 2013. And since then, CSRL has acted as a watchdog to ensure that the government uses this fund effectively.

In addition, CSRL began campaigning for a Comprehensive Agricultural Reform Programme (CARP) in 2008. The CARP policy framework aims to revive and modernise Bangladesh's agricultural sector. It was devised in collaboration with small-scale farmers, entrepreneurs, political parties and non-governmental organisations. CSRL has also campaigned tirelessly to safeguard the interests of small-scale producers.

When tomato farmers in the Rajshashi district lost over half their crop after agribusiness giant Syngenta overcharged them for poor-quality seeds, CSRL responded by lobbying local authorities to take action.

CSRL's message has also been heard at a national level. Bangladesh has become the first country to address climate change issues in its national constitution, and its government has adopted CARP's objectives as their own. Moreover, the Bangladeshi government has asked Syngenta to compensate affected farmers following an investigation by local authorities and discussions in parliament.



Support national NGOs and coalitions working at grassroots, and help community organisations to be effective participants at national level

'Working with others' is central to Oxfam's mandate. By working with a wide range of partners, we can contribute to building a strong, vibrant, independent civil society that can understand, represent and address the rights, needs and aspirations of poor men, women and youth.

We believe that by working with others and pooling our skills, expertise and resources, we can achieve so much more than we would working on our own. This might mean working with small, grassroots organisations that have a much better understanding of the local context than we could ever hope to gain, or joining with well-established national coalitions to reach greater numbers of people with our campaign messages.

Working in partnership means that both Oxfam and our partners contribute something distinctive to the work we are implementing, and that by working together, both will learn from each other and benefit from the relationship. Often, in the case of small NGOs, Oxfam has a role to play in developing their organisational capacity and helping them to become strong, sustainable organisations that will continue to operate without Oxfam's funding. This is an important contribution to building civil society in its own right.

Oxfam also has an important role to play in linking the local level to the

national or even global level, and vice versa. We can bring a national perspective to a smaller, local organisation that will enable it to expand the scope of its work and have a far greater impact than working solely at local level. In other instances, Oxfam has links and influence at local level that our national-level partners can benefit from, for example, by helping them ground advocacy in the lived experiences of poor men, women and youth. Above all, whichever way the linkages work, we can help bring the voices of poor men, women and youth to the attention of decision-makers, so that they can speak for themselves about the issues that affect their lives.

Helping Afghan civil society build peace

In Afghanistan, Oxfam's Within and Without the State (WWS) project is attempting to strengthen civil society by supporting the development of a national network of civil society organisations, the Afghan Civil Society Organisation Network for Peace (ACSONP). WWS is supporting the network, and wider civil society, to make links with power holders and engage in peace-building activities.

ACSONP contains around 100 organisations from provinces across the country and represents many interests, including community and national level organisations working in health, education, peace-building, advocacy, humanitarian work and women's rights. The network has existed since 2006, but Oxfam's support since 2011 has helped to reinvigorate and strengthen it. Oxfam helped initially to analyse its capacity and that of the individual organisations within it, using a self-assessment tool which looked at areas such as advocacy and financial and project management. Based on this assessment, support is being offered to develop a more effective network and to strengthen member organisations.

The network now has a well-developed vision, mission and work objectives, a thriving leadership and a core group of 25 active member organisations. While Oxfam's role is to provide technical support, the network is clearly owned by the organisations themselves. It has agreed a Memorandum of Understanding around how it will work, and drawn up an advocacy strategy and work plan. The membership elected a Chair and a Steering Group, using newly-gained skills in participation and governance. The Steering Group represents the full range of interest groups in the network, including women's rights. Three of the six organisations represented are women's organisations, while the Chair of the network is also a women's organisation.

Oxfam is now supporting ACSONP to make links with wider civil society and power holders, and to engage in peace-building activities. It is conducting community-level action research and facilitating provincial hearings on local peace-building, particularly focusing on the role of women and youth. It is also facilitating engagement of wider civil society in peace-building activities, for instance by holding roundtables on the role of the private sector and conducting pilot projects on private sector engagement.

WWS in Afghanistan is also working with stakeholders at national level to ensure that peace-building strategies engage with civil society. Activities include advocating for an inclusive peace-building strategy, engaging with the High Peace Jirga (council), parliamentarians, key ministers and provincial governors, and conducting research and policy analysis on peace-building activities.

Creating civil society space in Laos

Laos has suffered from a lack of awareness of civil society's role. Many don't realise it can contribute to poverty reduction and promoting the rights of marginalised groups. Civil society itself has been fragmented and lacked capacity, while the government also lacks capacity to work with civil society.

In response, Oxfam Novib partnered with international NGO Cord to develop civil society and government capacity to work together effectively in policy making. Oxfam organised workshops to give civil society organisations (CSOs) organisational training and the chance to network. The project also gave seven key CSOs coaching and mentoring in fundraising, relationship management, strategic planning and M&E. Civil servants were trained in new legislation which regulates CSOs. Oxfam and Cord then created a consortium of INGOs and stakeholders to streamline activities to develop civil society capacity.

As a result, CSOs are better able to organise themselves and run effective programmes. Several have collaborated with local authorities, and civil society networks have been established. There is increased awareness of the role and function of civil society in Laos, as well as of the new legislation, leading to increased CSO registration and recognition. The project has also increased the government's ability to involve CSOs in planning and decision-making. Civil society is becoming more assertive, accountable and inclusive – able to work with the government and other actors towards human rights, gender equality and serving the needs of marginalised groups.

Analyse and influence customs, beliefs, attitudes and behaviours

In every society, there are deep-rooted attitudes and beliefs about different individuals' roles, their abilities and what is deemed to be appropriate behaviour. Often these beliefs view women or other minority groups as inferior, less competent or less valuable than men or the dominant group. This leads to practices that discriminate against them and prevent them from enjoying the same opportunities as others. Often such practices can be so embedded in society that they are seen as normal, and accepted and maintained by the discriminated group themselves. Culture and religion are often used to justify discriminatory beliefs and practices, and to maintain existing power imbalances by implying that they can't be challenged or changed.

Influencing attitudes and beliefs can be difficult and sensitive, particularly when they are closely linked to culture and religion, but we can't expect to bring about change without doing so. It is important to remember that cultural and religious practices are not static and that they can and do change. Moreover, even within a given group, not everyone thinks the same way and there is no single way of doing things.

Changing culture and attitudes in Malawi

In Malawi Oxfam has been supporting the Women's Legal Resource Centre (WOLREC) to work in 120 villages to enable communities to analyse, assess and redefine cultural practices. Fifty facilitators from selected villages were trained in how to hold circle discussions with community members to identify and debate the positive and negative impact of various cultural practices such as initiation, wife swapping, abstinence around pregnancy and menstruation, and sexual 'cleansing'. They then moved to solutions – whether they needed to adjust, enhance or stop such practices, and discussions on how they would hold one another to account. Groups included traditional leaders who, after initial resistance, often became change agents themselves.

The changes made were monitored, evidence of outcomes gathered and fed back to communities so they could judge whether the changes worked or not. WOLREC's baseline survey had shown that violence against women affected 60 per cent of households; after just two years this seems to have been reduced to 25-30 per cent. Women have joined male dominated chiefs' tribunals, increasing their access to justice. The spread of HIV has slowed and more girls are attending school.

Couples now openly talk about their improved relationships, openness and general happiness, as well as explaining in front of everyone how they have changed many harmful cultural practices. After a year or so of the programme, many of the women asked for help to gain more economic independence. Savings and loans schemes were set up in the villages, resulting in family incomes being raised, school fees being paid and family emergencies and shocks being managed.

The power shifts achieved were primarily and perhaps most importantly the power 'within' – assertiveness training for women, sensitisation to rights, convincing communities that they had the power to change practices and take collective action. There were also changes related to the power 'with'. Relations between men and women have shifted: men are open to women making decisions, women are asserting their views and taking responsibility for earning income. Both are able to express their concerns. The power to hold one another to account with bye-laws is being instigated to punish those that don't uphold agreements.

Steps you can take:

Conduct a full analysis in each project area to gain a thorough understanding of the socio-cultural attitudes, beliefs and behaviours that may act as barriers to change

Use participatory methods to stimulate discussion among marginalised groups and to open women's and men's eyes to new possibilities

Use a range of awareness-raising techniques to bring issues to the attention of the affected group itself, and to wider society

Be prepared for some of the negative things you might hear and think of strategies or arguments for responding to them

Collect facts, figures and stories about the situation you want to change to show that the issues are real and relevant

Collect examples of 'success stories' to illustrate that culture is not static, and that different communities do things in different ways

Identify 'champions' and role models who can influence and inspire others

Find ways to engage dominant groups positively to make them feel that they have a role to play in supporting change, rather than feeling threatened by it

Remember that the attitudes and beliefs you are seeking to address are deeply entrenched and that changing them will need consistent attention over time. Don't be discouraged: recognise that small steps forward are significant and celebrate these as successes.

Build people's power 'within', 'with' and 'to'

The poorest and most marginalised men, women and youth have often been subjected to decades of discrimination and neglect, and have extremely low levels of confidence. As a result, they frequently accept their situation as the norm or their fate, and feel powerless to challenge it. Therefore, our programmes will often need to begin by helping people to gain a sense of self-identity, and understand that alternatives exist and that they themselves can be change agents. This is developing their power 'within'.

As a woman participating in the Raising Her Voice project in Nepal explained: *'We [the women] were largely invisible because we could not speak our mind. We could not speak because we were never encouraged to speak by our family and society. We have realised now that it is not as difficult as we thought to break this barrier'.*



Building power ‘with’ in the Jordan Valley

An evaluation of our three-year programme working with young people in the Jordan Valley showed the need to build linkages with other community groups in order to create a more active and unified approach to community development.

Oxfam took video clips which clearly highlighted the different needs in each village. One of the issues was unemployment among women. Women talked about how they used to work in agriculture, but now water resources and land are controlled by Israel, so unemployment is increasing. They highlighted that they wanted a project that was income generating, and stressed that a woman’s role in producing for and feeding her family is very crucial. Other villages highlighted issues of lack of youth activities, electricity, healthcare, agriculture and access to land. They also raised the constraints women face in conservative and traditional villages.

The best outcome of this project was that Oxfam got the people in those villages to think together. “Instead of thinking of water in my backyard, I’m thinking of water for everyone in the village,” said one villager. “I’m not thinking just of how to market my produce, but marketing agricultural produce for the whole village.” (Nivine Sandouka Sharaf, MEEECIS Learning Newsletter, July 2010)

The power ‘to’ is important for the capacity to act, to exercise agency and to realise the potential of rights, citizenship or voice. This can include targeted skills development – for example, training in public speaking for those who have never had the opportunity to participate in decision-making before. It also means finding innovative ways to overcome practical and attitudinal barriers to participation.

Power ‘with’ refers to the strength and synergy which can emerge through partnerships and collaboration with others, or through processes of collective action and alliance building. Oxfam can play a role in bringing people together, including facilitating the connection and solidarity of citizens across social, class, religious or economic differences. We can use participatory methodologies to support people to learn, reflect and find solutions to problems together, and then act on these, fostering solidarity and a sense of collective action.

Promoting youth participation

Youth under the age of 25 represent the vast majority of people (60 per cent) in the ‘least developed countries’⁴. As recent developments from the Arab Spring countries, Senegal, Brazil and other nations show, youth are an important driver of change. However, the places and spaces for them to participate and make their voices heard are often limited by social hierarchies, norms and practices, as well as gender, wealth and place of residence. This can result in the low participation of youth, even in development initiatives intended to address their needs.

There is no universally agreed definition of youth. It is a social and cultural

⁴ UN World Population Prospect 2012 Report

construction bounded by a range of working indicators – such as age, financial dependency, responsibility and emotional reliance on primary caregivers. These vary considerably across cultures and contexts. The relationship between characteristics of youth and their ages can vary across national and regional contexts, and between individuals and their experiences. Like the United Nations and many other organisations such as the UK's Department for International Development (DfID), Oxfam defines 'youth' as people between the ages of 15 and 24.

Youth is a multi-faceted category, and spaces for young people's participation differ depending on their educational, social and economic position; their cultural background, gender and sexuality; life circumstances, experiences and context. The ability of youth to act, to exercise their rights and access services are determined by their circumstances. While youth as a category is often 'excluded' from the public sphere and major political, socio-economic and cultural processes, some youth groups in particular are socially excluded through formal institutions and relations (such as laws and policies) and informal ones (social and cultural traditions, practices, attitudes and norms). Through this exclusion, they are denied access to resources, services and the spaces and opportunities open to other social groups. Meaningful youth participation must be inclusive, which requires both a representative youth group and equity in participation by young people from all social backgrounds.

Supporting and promoting youth as active citizens might appear self-evident, but it demands a significant shift in approach and thinking, from 'doing for youth' to 'doing with youth' and eventually 'doing by youth'. Youth participation entails the active, informed and voluntary involvement of youth in making decisions affecting them and their communities. DfID describes youth participation as a process whereby young people progress to greater rights and responsibilities (citizenship), from being the targets of outreach to being actively engaged in the planning and implementation of development interventions.

Development projects may engage youth, in ascending order of responsibility, as beneficiaries, partners and leaders. The latter involves youth working with adults and becoming development professionals and leading political actors themselves. This is a key goal of youth empowerment processes that must always take into account local contexts, and cultural values and practices. In the global South, where age-based hierarchies are often strong, adult approval is essential for achieving and sustaining youth participation. It is equally important to realise that participation is a political process that requires ongoing negotiation with 'gatekeepers', community and religious leaders and those in positions of authority.

The involvement of youth is fundamental to youth as active citizens and should be integrated into Oxfam's and our partners' structures and processes. Our involvement of youth should provide an example of the democratic processes and institutions that we seek to promote. In many contexts this is challenging and may meet with some community resistance, but plans need to be in place to move from simple consultation to youth-led and managed initiatives. Youth as active citizens interventions would be contradictory without demonstrating high levels of youth engagement. The effort and resources required are high, and this needs to be accommodated within

Oxfam's and partners' organisational plans. The value of maximising youth involvement includes:

- Youth-to-youth communications reduce age hierarchies that tend to characterise adult-youth relations
- Oxfam gains better access to young people, especially those who are more marginalised
- Improved understanding of youth constraints, issues and aspirations
- Peer education provides space for more open and negotiated interventions, and mutual learning that highlights youth perspectives
- Higher levels of youth investment in projects where youth are active in identifying issues, initiating and planning responses, and mobilising themselves
- Youth reap positive benefits in terms of feeling confident, valued and respected when they are treated as equal partners.

Effective targeting of youth is often best accomplished by going where youth are, rather than trying to assemble them at designated 'spaces' chosen by adults.

At the programme level, specific strategies need to be developed, put in place and evaluated to improve the reach and engagement of the most marginalised people in youth as active citizens activities. Equitable participation of diverse social groups needs to be integral. This is especially critical for those in more rural locations. Contextual and cultural constraints are likely to require more customised and creative approaches to involve young women and minorities and ensure equity. The development of more contextually appropriate priorities and projects would need to factor in the lifestyle demands of these groups, including, for example, domestic labour, the relative isolation and distance of rural communities and other particular demands on different young people.

The **use of radio, ICT, social media, dance, music and rapping** has been proved to attract youth, increase communication among them and other stakeholders, improve reach, provide safe spaces for participation and report developments and successes. In general, these can be used for advocacy, participation and communication around youth as active citizens and to support and highlight more traditional intervention practices that combine formal strategies (public hearings, lobbying) with informal strategies (social events).

Strategies to engage and incorporate youth in programmes and projects **require training for both adult teachers and the young people involved.** Consistent with the emphasis on 'active' and the encouragement to 'claim' rights and become agents of change, it is vital that active learning and skills acquisition are key components of training and intervention projects.

Mobilising Mali's Youth

In Mali, part of the *My Rights, My Voice* (MRMV) programme focuses on mobilising youth to claim their fundamental rights. In recent presidential elections, young people were at the heart of MRMV activities, advocating with candidates to obtain their commitment to promoting health and education essential to youth development. Supported by CSOs, they also targeted the public, to encourage voting – especially among youth.

To gain civil society support, Oxfam created a strategic alliance with other CSOs and the media, holding a workshop to coordinate activities. The MRMV programme's Youth Consultative Council was responsible for mobilising and coordinating youth organisations.

Strategies included bringing together 400 young people to film a national TV advertisement inviting people to vote for candidates promoting basic social services. Youth groups arranged a radio discussion and two awareness-raising caravans to tour the capital city. These put on shows in markets, squares and sports-grounds urging people to vote for candidates supporting social service provision. They also organised a press conference to publicise their ideal social service manifesto, and asked candidates to sign cards promising to stick to their pledges over social services. These signed commitments will be used to demand accountability from the new president.

As a result, much of the population – young people in particular – turned out to vote. Young people became aware of their role in claiming their rights in an electoral process, while candidates' awareness of youth issues and CSOs increased. The campaign strengthened the organisational and operational capacities of young people, who are now working towards the creation of a national youth coalition. Given the chance, youth took the initiative and committed themselves to promote their rights.

Steps you can take:

Support poor and marginalised men, women and youth to understand their rights and see their own potential using a range of participatory methods, such as the REFLECT methodology or regular, facilitated discussion groups.

Provide information about rights and how to claim them, opportunities for participation in decision making and the importance of participation.

Support men, women and youth to think about and identify the personal capacities they already have, those they would like to build and those they could help others build.

Support men, women and youth to develop practical skills for participation and leadership – for example, technical skills, project planning, needs assessments, proposal writing, participating in meetings and public speaking. These enable them to present arguments, defend their interests and build support networks.

Offer possibilities to practise these capacities in a safe environment.

Bring poor and marginalised men, women and youth together for 'strength in numbers' and to enable them to build mutual support networks.

Support men, women and youth to develop their critical thinking skills to build a collective analysis of their situation and begin to identify possible solutions.

Tools and resources

Support national NGOs, coalitions and community organisations

Power Tools for Policy Influence in Natural Resource Management, IIED

A website introducing a number of 'power tools' to help marginalised people and their allies have a greater positive influence on natural resources policy, though also applicable to other sectors. Divided into tools for understanding, organising, engaging and ensuring.

<http://www.policy-powertools.org/>

PG Exchange Toolkit

A comprehensive online toolkit providing information on nine different categories of participatory governance practices, including more than 30 individual approaches and tools. Each section includes the benefits of using the approach, challenges and lessons, and a resources section linking to further toolkits. The toolkit covers public information, education and deliberation, advocacy and citizen voice, public dialogue, elections, policy and planning, public budgets and expenditures, monitoring and evaluating public services, and public oversight.

http://pgexchange.org/index.php?option=com_alphacontent&view=aphacontent&itemid79

Tools to Support Transparency in Local Governance, Transparency International

A toolkit to support advocacy and capacity building for the application of the principles of good urban governance. Covers assessment and monitoring, access to information and public participation, ethics, professionalism and integrity, institutional reform, and targeting specific issues.

http://archive.transparency.org/tools/e_toolkit/tools_to_support_transparency_in_local_governance

Building Responsive States: Citizen Action and National Policy Change

This briefing paper and accompanying case studies from IDS explore positive examples of citizen action and highlight how government, donors and civil society organisations can help citizens bring about pro-poor national policy change.

<http://www.ids.ac.uk/go/citizens>

Programme Insights: Speaking Out

A series of 12 papers bringing together experiences, lessons and good practice from Oxfam GB's programmes, describing different ways to strengthen the participation of people in poverty so they become active citizens and shape policy decisions.

<http://policy-practice.oxfam.org.uk/publications/speaking-out-case-studies-on-how-poor-people-influence-decision-making-115592>

Resources for Oxfam Staff

The Partnership Companion

A practical resource for programme staff illustrating what good partnership looks like and giving advice on how Oxfam's partnership policy can be applied.

The Partnership Companion: Introduction

The Partnership Companion: Setting up a Partnership

The Partnership Companion: Selecting Partners

The Partnership Companion: Building Strong Relations

The Partnership Companion: Building and Exit Planning

The Partnership Companion: Learning and Reporting

Social accountability approaches

South Asia Social Accountability Network

Provides an overview of a number of social accountability approaches, and advice on how to implement them.

<http://www.sasnet.org/tools.do>

Affiliated Network for Social Accountability in East Asia and the Pacific (ANSA-EAP)

A website providing information about ANSA-EAP and their social accountability tools.

<http://ansa-eap.net/resources/social-accountability-tools/>

The Public Affairs Centre (PAC)

The centre is globally known for its pioneering Citizen Report Cards (benchmarking studies used to improve public services). It also works on electoral transparency, public works monitoring tools and the recently launched audits of the Right to Information Act and the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act in India.

<http://www.pacindia.org/tool-kits>

Accountability: Quality and Equity in Public Service Provision, ActionAid

Shows how men and women can get involved in demanding accountability for service delivery and provides information on community scorecards, participatory expenditure tracking surveys, budget tracking and social audits.

<http://www.actionaid.org/what-we-do/democratic-governance>

Folio: Customised Learning Modules for Social Accountability and Good Governance, ANSA-EAP

A series of eight learning modules on social accountability, covering understanding of the social accountability framework; the value of social accountability and constructive engagement between government and citizen groups; establishing a pool of social accountability learning facilitators and trainers; training with 'infomediaries'; strategic planning for social accountability initiatives; mentoring and coaching for social accountability; and implementation of citizen report card and community scorecards initiatives.

http://www.ansa-eap.net/assets/792/ansa-eap_folio.pdf

Citizen Report Card Learning Toolkit

An e-learning resource to understand how to apply Citizen Report Card processes.

<http://www.citizenreportcard.com/>

People and Participation.net

Website providing a full list of social accountability mechanisms.

Strengthen budget work

Breathing Life into Democracy: The power of participatory budgeting

A detailed overview of the origins and development of participatory budgeting, why it is important today and its key strengths and weaknesses.

<http://policy-practice.oxfam.org.uk/publications/breathing-life-into-democracy-the-power-of-participatory-budgeting-111969>

Dignity Counts: A guide to using budget analysis to advance human rights

A book providing guidance to civil society organisations and others on how to use budget analysis as a tool to help assess a government's compliance with its obligations to economic, social and cultural rights. It has been designed to provide information to both human rights activists and those involved in applied budget work.

<http://righttomaternalhealth.org/resource/dignity-counts>

How to Do a Gender-Sensitive Budget Analysis

This document draws on data from countries which already have gender-sensitive budgets in place, or are initiating them. It shows the diversity of approaches in different countries, and covers the issues, methods and strategies for the first year of implementing the exercise. It has a strong practical orientation, and includes theory, examples, discussion questions and the basis for a series of structured workshops for practitioners.

<http://www.ndi.org/node/13624>

Budgets: Revenues and Financing in Public Service Provision

A guide to budgets, from the budget cycle, revenue and taxes to fiscal decentralisation and local revenue justice

<http://www.actionaid.org/what-we-do/democratic-governance>

Economic Literacy and Budget Accountability for Governance Handbooks, ActionAid

<http://www.actionaid.org/what-we-do/democratic-governance>

A series of handbooks on different aspects of budget accountability work.

Further reading

Global changes and civil society, INTRAC

A paper exploring the challenges confronting civil society at a time of unprecedented and widely underestimated global change. It contributes to the international debate by setting the scene, describing some of the key changes and looking at ways in which civil society can adapt to them.

<http://www.intrac.org/resources.php?action=resource&id=715>

Capacity-Building: An approach to People-Centred Development

This book considers specific and practical ways in which NGOs can contribute to enabling people to build on the capacities they already possess. It reviews the types of social organisations which NGOs could work with.

<http://policy-practice.oxfam.org.uk/publications/capacity-building-an-approach-to-people-centred-development-122906>

A Ladder of Citizen Participation, Sherry R Arnstein and Children's Participation: From Tokenism to Citizenship, Roger Hart

Two frameworks to guide thinking about different levels of citizen participation in decision-making.

<http://lithgow-schmidt.dk/sherry-arnstein/ladder-of-citizen-participation.html>

Introducing Participatory Approaches, Methods and Tools

A training module on how to apply participatory methods.

<http://www.fao.org/docrep/006/AD424E/ad424e03.htm>

The REFLECT Mother Manual

A guide to using REFLECT methodology, including information on a range of participatory techniques.

<http://www.reflect-action.org/mothermanual>

Haki Zetu: ESC Rights in Practice, Amnesty International Netherlands

A series of booklets giving step-by-step advice on how civil society groups can use African and international human rights instruments in their work with communities at local level.

<http://www.huridocs.org/2011/02/haki-zetu-esc-rights-in-practice/>

The International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED)

A website providing a set of legal tools for citizenship empowerment.

<http://www.iied.org/law>

PG Exchange Toolkit

A comprehensive online toolkit providing information on nine different categories of participatory governance practices, including more than 30 individual approaches and tools. Each section includes the benefits of using the approach, challenges and lessons, and a resources section linking to further toolkits. The toolkit covers public information, education and deliberation, advocacy and citizen voice, public dialogue, elections, policy and planning, public budgets and expenditures, monitoring and evaluating public services, and public oversight.

http://pgexchange.org/index.php?option=com_alphacontent&view=alphacontent&Itemid=79

Tools to Support Transparency in Local Governance, Transparency International

A toolkit to support advocacy and capacity building for the application of the principles of good urban governance. Covers assessment and monitoring, access to information and public participation, ethics, professionalism and integrity, institutional reform and targeting specific issues.

My Rights My Voice

This programme engages marginalised children and youth in their rights to health and education services in eight countries, see

<http://myrightsmymyvoice.ning.com/>

2. ACCESS TO INFORMATION AND TECHNOLOGY

“People do not eat information, but without information they will starve to death”

Priscilla Nyokabi

‘Freedom of information is a fundamental human right (...) and the touchstone for all freedoms to which the United Nations is consecrated’

UN General Assembly resolution 59(I) from 1946

The free flow of reliable, relevant and timely information is a pre-condition to ensure people can participate meaningfully in decisions that affect them, and can demand accountability from those in power. In a rapidly evolving information society, access to information and the capacity to produce, repackage and disseminate it influence social and political power structures to an increasing degree. Information is power and is a central element in empowering marginalised people. It enables them to build knowledge and critical questioning which challenges the powerful. A lack of access to information can prevent poor men, women and youth from understanding their own situations, and therefore from being able to devise possible solutions for themselves.

However, the control and production of information can also be a powerful tool for domination and oppression. Lack of information perpetuates poverty as much as lack of income does. Disadvantaged people, in particular women and minorities, tend to have the least access to information. Additionally, they often lack the capacities, skills and means to share and receive information. Conversely, those in power have the tendency to monopolise information sources to remain in power. One way to keep poor people excluded is to keep them poor in information and therefore poor in knowledge. Interest groups and government officials can nurture a culture of secrecy and public ignorance, holding back information and knowledge in order to maintain their power and the status quo. Bad governance needs secrecy and ignorance to survive. Corruption, wastefulness of public resources and inefficiency in public service delivery can only thrive if there is limited or no access to information on the performance of those in responsible for managing public resources.

The free flow of information is therefore a critical feature to empower marginalised people so that they can make their voices heard and demand accountability. Access to reliable, relevant, understandable and timely information enables people to participate meaningfully in governance, having options explained and making informed decisions. Receiving understandable, relevant and accurate information on time will permit marginalised groups to take an informed stand – e.g. about a new public health service policy, or the impact on the environment and their livelihoods of a dam project in their community. When they can communicate and share their opinion with each other, marginalised people are able to organise themselves and create

solidarity and joint interest groups.

Men, women and youth in the isolated, rural communities of Armenia have limited access to information and little knowledge about new government policies that affect their lives, including what health care they are entitled to. Oxfam GB has been piloting new methods of information sharing – for example, using SMS alerts to raise awareness of the Basic Benefit Package of health care services provided by the state and about the health Ombudsmen to whom community members can apply for free support to restore violated health rights.

Oxfam defines the concept of Access to Information as: *‘accessing, generating, processing and communicating information in the context of governance structures that can contribute to the empowerment of marginalised groups and accountability of duty bearers’.*

We have a role to play in ensuring free information flows are created and protected between marginalised people and power holders, and between marginalised people themselves. This will mean that they are better equipped to exercise their right to seek, receive and share information. Marginalised people will know how to use information that affects their lives, and thereby have the power and tools to hold power holders to account. To achieve this, Oxfam will:

- Use and promote disclosure policies, international standards and laws that guarantee the right to information. This can include work on Access to Information legislation, the Extractive Industries Transparency Index, the ‘Free, Prior and Informed Consent’ Principle, the Open Government Partnership, and advocacy for proactive disclosure policies from inter-governmental organisations. Transparency in aid is another aspect (e.g. advocating for respect of the standards established by the International Aid Transparency Initiative).
- Use budget monitoring and tax justice tools to increase access to budget information. Budgets – on both the income (taxation) and spending side – are a very tangible entry point for understanding the importance of accessing information held by public bodies.
- Enhance the capacity of marginalised groups – especially women and youth – to receive and communicate information with web-based and mobile media. This can help them generate and share their own information, ideas and opinions (citizens’ reporting and citizen journalism). They can also organise and mobilise support and more easily and efficiently. Media users’ security needs to be considered when employing these tools. Advocacy for internet freedom and training in the safe use of online and mobile tools can also be part of Oxfam’s activities. It’s important to be aware that access to technology can be difficult for many communities. Digital information will be of little use in such cases, so take care that information does not bypass these groups.
- Work with and support traditional media (especially radio) to increase the availability and quality of information channels. Traditional media still are a powerful driver to realise the freedom of information. They are key vehicles of communication and expression, therefore the ability of the media to function independently is vital to freedom of information.

Traditional media can help people make informed choices and can be crucial in giving voice to marginalised communities.

- Use strategic litigation, i.e. the courts, to extract and distribute governance- and policy-related information that the government would prefer to keep from public view.
- Enhance access to the information needed by poor people to participate in decision making and to persevere in the event of shocks, stresses and uncertainty (such as early warning, weather and market information).

Make use of appropriate technologies

Public demonstrations, rallies and hearings can all put pressure on duty bearers and draw their attention to the demands of citizens. But in recent years the use of technologies such as mobile phones and the internet have fuelled other forms of public mobilisation and solidarity across the world and have become important platforms that can very quickly expose any lack of transparency. We can harness the power of new technologies at local level to improve the effectiveness of our own programmes, and as tools to promote accountability and mobilise people.

In Cambodia, a pilot project to improve connections between grassroots women leaders found that using mobile technologies yielded some very positive unanticipated outcomes:

Linking up women in Cambodia

Women for Prosperity (WfP) has been an Oxfam partner for many years, and has had a strong focus on promoting women's leadership skills. Oxfam has supported WfP's work to address the challenges women face to participate in formal decision-making processes and that, once elected, female councillors face in being effective as commune leaders.



Nanda Pok is the founder of Women for Prosperity. To organise meetings with the female commune councillors involved in the project, she used to have to make 45 separate phone calls to gather all the women in one place, as they are scattered in different villages. Most of the women did not have their own phones: phones are usually shared within the family or are owned by their husbands.

With a £500 grant from Oxfam's Digital Vision fund, WfP was able to purchase phones for the women commune councillors and provide them with training on how to use SMS in Khmer. The phones are pink, to discourage men from using them. A free tool called Frontline SMS allows Nanda to send mass messages with a click of a button.

The phones were intended to be used to facilitate coordination and communications within the group, and to provide the women with information on the current market price of agricultural commodities, which they could pass on to members of their communities.

As expected, the phones are saving the women a great deal of time, as they no longer have to cycle long distances to speak to other councillors or community members. However, the women are also using their phones

to support community members with all sorts of issues, in particular, to respond to women's needs.

"At night it is very beneficial to have the phone. We can help pregnant women in labour on time," says Seng Chanthou, a female commune councillor from Treal Commune in Baray district, central Cambodia. Another councillor, Chea Kimhong from Angdong Por Commune adds, "When there is a case of domestic violence, the village can call me and I come to help do an intervention immediately. Before they had to travel to my place and knock on my door."

Social and mobile media are increasingly being used by individuals and civil society organisations for civic engagement on a wide range of issues. The term 'social media' refers broadly to internet-based tools and services that allow users to engage with each other, generate content, and distribute and search for information online. Social media offer many benefits:

- The opportunity for people to be meaningfully engaged in social change in new ways, able to interact with thousands or even millions of others.
- A way of engaging more with young people – an audience with which Oxfam hasn't always strongly connected. Youth in the South is often spearheading developments in Information and Communication Technology in their countries, creating innovative solutions adapted to their context.
- A way to facilitate real participation, involving people directly and enabling actions to be taken as a group, rather than at the direction of an outside campaigner.
- They give people real-time access to data, knowledge, expertise and advice to support them to gain the knowledge and confidence they need in order to speak out. Social media can be used in electoral participation, popular campaigns and engagement with political actors and institutions.

'The women of Kuwait had for years been struggling to get full suffrage to no avail. Suddenly, the legislature voted overwhelmingly for women's suffrage. Why? We think in part because many Kuwaiti women were emailing the legislature, and the bottom line was that their emails didn't wear skirts or communicate through burkas. We're in a new age of connected activism in which social media are democratising and transforming social change efforts'.

Source: The Evaluation Exchange, Volume XIII, Number 1&2, Spring 2007, <http://www.hfrp.org/evaluation/the-evaluation-exchange>

The question of the role of social media is not straightforward, however, and they can have their limitations. While internet-based resources, sites and meeting places can echo the voices of the poor, many of the world's poorest and most marginalised people may not have direct access to the social media toolbox. Moreover, the connections made in these virtual spaces are less likely to be as deep or personally relevant to people's own sense of identity as other forms of social engagement, such as unions. For example, while it was social media that got people to Cairo's Tahrir Square in the Arab Spring, it was the deeper ties of football clubs and religious groups that kept them there. Yet

it is clear that social media represents an important set of spaces that can be used to boost and strengthen civil society.

Tools and Resources

Our Rights, Our Information: Empowering people to demand rights through knowledge; Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative;

This is a useful guide, with many examples explaining how to work with the right to information (in its conventional sense, i.e. accessing information held by public bodies) and how this right can be instrumental in claiming other rights.

http://www.humanrightsinitiative.org/publications/rti/our_rights_our_information.pdf

Guides and Manuals for community radios, AMARC

Oxfam partner AMARC, the World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters, supports and contributes to the development of community and participatory radio. The website includes many useful guides and manuals, including how to strengthen women's empowerment through community radio.

<http://www2.amarc.org/?q=node/603>

Toolkits and Guides for using ICT for social change, Tactical Tech

Tactical Tech's mission is to advance the skills, tools and techniques of rights advocates, empowering them to use information and communications to help marginalised communities understand and effect progressive social and political change. They offer many practical guidelines for using ICT, including a security guide on its safe use.

<https://www.tacticaltech.org/projects?type=8>

Oxfam Resources

Evaluation of Oxfam Novib's Priority Theme: Access to Information

This evaluation includes many examples of how Oxfam works on Access to Information in Myanmar, Nigeria and Egypt.

3. PUBLIC DECISION- AND POLICY-MAKING SPACES

The efforts of poor and marginalised people to raise their voices and demand their rights will only be effective if governments and other institutions are prepared to listen and able to respond. Formal institutions, and how they interact with citizens, are central to successful development. These include state institutions, such as the legislature, judiciary, police and military, and other forms of recognised governance structures, such as local councils and committees. At local level, strengthening the capacity of institutions benefits members of the communities they serve, but also benefits the key players in the institutions themselves. These entities can often be powerless in the face of dominant central or illegitimate power holders.

Oxfam needs to work with these institutions so they can provide a channel for poor men's and women's voices to be heard. This way, they can become effective, able to fulfil their duties and responsive to what citizens are saying. Therefore, it is as important to work to strengthen and support authorities as it is to strengthen civil society. We can achieve this balance through:

- Encouraging women, young and indigenous people, and other vulnerable groups to participate in decision-making processes that affect their lives
- Encouraging poor and marginalised people to strive for political leadership
- Promoting social accountability tools (such as participatory monitoring) to monitor and influence public decisions and ensure that poor people benefit from revenue flows (including from extractive industries)
- Working with elected representatives and government officials to understand their roles and responsibilities and strengthen their skills to deliver their roles effectively
- Encouraging co-operation and collaboration between civil society and local authorities
- Investing in understanding decentralisation processes, and providing assistance to all stakeholders to fulfil their roles and obligations
- Paying particular attention to newly-elected women representatives, to support them to be effective leaders and to represent the interests of poor and marginalised women
- Strategic use of campaigning and advocacy.

Encouraging vulnerable groups to participate in decision-making processes

Oxfam can encourage and support activities that help poor men, women and youth to participate in decision-making that affects their lives, by helping them understand governance processes and opportunities where their voices may

be heard. It is important that citizens understand how public meetings, committees, political parties, rallies, voting, civil protest and election campaigns work and how to prioritise where their efforts can best be targeted. This will enable them to participate in an informed and effective manner.

We can support poor men, women and youth to work out how they could and should relate to formal and informal governance institutions and processes at local, national and global levels. This may be through their vote, their contribution at a public meeting, their role in a school committee, their requests for and use of public information or their ongoing civil engagement.

Significantly, voters often don't see holding legislators to account as their responsibility, therefore we need to work on changing attitudes towards engagement with institutions, as well as providing tools for doing so.

Voicing demands in Uganda

How did a group of Ugandan cotton farmers persuade the country's president to stabilise cotton prices? Like many other community groups in the country, they used the Citizens' Manifesto to express their demands and participate in decision-making over issues affecting their lives.

The manifesto is promoted through a project supported by Oxfam Novib which aims to strengthen citizens' capacity to demand political accountability. It lists their constitutional rights, empowering them to address Uganda's governance challenges and reminding them to express their will over how they're governed.

The project involves civil society actors, from NGOs and professional associations to unions and youth movements. Through grassroots institutions, it trains and encourages people to express their aspirations as clear demands shared with leaders, from local to national levels. This gives them the skills to engage with decision-makers effectively.

Oxfam and its partners trained grassroots CSOs to promote the Citizens' Manifesto within local communities. These CSOs in turn have trained 10,000 people, who can now use the manifesto to express their specific demands to elected leaders. A key element in the project's success has been help from Oxfam to access information. This means people can carry out informed advocacy, in a voice that demands to be heard.

Build leadership capacity

Oxfam should build the capacity of leaders at all levels, especially of women and young people, to have the confidence, knowledge and information necessary to engage with various stakeholders and legitimately bring out the voices of the people they represent.

We can play a role in identifying and nurturing poor men, women and youth with strong leadership potential, and in building their skills and capacity to speak out on behalf of their peers. This could range from very practical skills, such as public speaking and critical thinking, to supporting them to identify

whom to engage with and how to engage in a constructive way. For example, Oxfam's Raising Her Voice project in Nepal saw a big shift in gender relations at household level once women learned how to formulate an argument and clearly explain to their husbands their reasoning for or against an issue. This is a skill that they can now also use to represent women's interests in community-level decision-making bodies.

It is also important to support leaders to act as spokespeople for their constituency, rather than using their new position to further their own interests or maintain the status quo. And they need to be equipped to cope as a leader, develop self-care mechanisms and deal with resistance, criticism and efforts to undermine them, so that they are able to be effective in their roles and not become discouraged.

Zimbabwe's girls club together

In Zimbabwe, Oxfam Novib and its partner Girl Child Network are creating girls' empowerment clubs within schools. Coordinated mostly by female teachers, these champion the development and empowerment of girls, and are led by the girls themselves. There are over 350 clubs with 20,000 members aged up to 16, spread nationwide in both urban and rural areas. Communities are also involved, through events and awareness campaigns.

The clubs fight to improve the position of girls in society and give them a voice. They support girls in all spheres of home, school and community, aiming to empower them to resist harmful cultural practices, such as early forced marriage, virginity testing, sex initiation and gender stereotypes that favour boys over girls. They also offer career guidance and a 'Women as Role Models' programme to instil confidence and leadership skills. Girls learn about their rights and can speak out when these have been violated (especially in cases of sexual violence). The clubs have channelled many reported cases of abuse and been key in teaching communities that abusing girls is wrong. Members also enjoy artistic activities.

The clubs have proved hugely popular with schools and pupils. Their number is expanding, with some girls even saying they want to change school to one with a club. Success factors include strong support from schools and government ministries, involving the community from the beginning, and thorough training for club coordinators. Above all, the project has succeeded by including girls in its design and implementation. Their participation in decision-making is crucial, giving them ownership and driving the enthusiasm to overcome their challenges.

Embed social accountability mechanisms

Civil society can play an important role in holding governments to account and demanding transparency in the way they spend their money and provide services. There is a growing range of social accountability mechanisms it can use do so.

Social accountability mechanisms enable civil society actors to engage with processes such as policy making, service delivery, budget preparation and analysis, expenditure tracking and performance monitoring of service provision. There is a wide range of social accountability tools, including:

Participatory budgeting is a mechanism or process through which citizens participate directly in the different phases of budget formulation, decision-making and monitoring of budget execution. Public budgeting can be instrumental in increasing public expenditure transparency and in improving budget targeting.

Independent Budget Analysis demystifies the sometimes highly technical language of official budgets and opens up to public scrutiny the often opaque budgetary process. Budget analysis is closely linked with the process of budget formulation, as it aims to generate debate on the national budget and influence the budget that is ultimately approved.

The Public Expenditure Tracking Survey (PETS) is a quantitative survey of the supply side of public services. The unit of observation is typically a service facility and/or local government. The survey collects information such as facility characteristics, financial flows, outputs (services delivered) and accountability arrangements. As quantitative exercises that complement qualitative surveys on consumers' perceptions of service delivery, PETS have been very influential in highlighting the use and abuse of public money.

Citizen Report Cards are participatory surveys that solicit user feedback on the performance of public services. They can enhance public accountability through the extensive media coverage and civil society advocacy that accompanies the process.

Community Score Cards are a community-based monitoring tool for exacting social and public accountability and responsiveness from service providers. By linking service providers to the community, citizens are empowered to provide immediate feedback on the service.

A citizen's charter is a document that informs citizen's about the service entitlements they have as users of a public service (procedures, costs and charges), the standards they can expect (timeframe and quality) and remedies available for non-adherence to standards.

Public hearings are formal public meetings at the community level where local officials and citizens have the opportunity to exchange information and opinions on community affairs, such as community budgets.

Citizens' juries are a group of selected members of a community who investigate complex issues and make recommendations or action proposals to decision-makers.

Social Audit (sometimes also referred to as Social Accounting) is a process that collects information on the resources of an organization. The information is analyzed and shared publicly in a participatory fashion. Although the term "Audit" is used, Social Auditing does not merely consist in examining costs and finance – the central concern of a social audit is how resources are used for social objectives.

Links to further information on all of these approaches are available in the [tools and resources](#) section.

Empowering participatory budget monitoring in Georgia

The collapse of the Soviet Union led to difficult times for the independent state of Georgia as it made the transition from a centralised to a market economy, and from a communist to a democratic system. People had no experience of making decisions, even at local level, or of participating actively in local government. Oxfam GB has worked with the Association of Disabled Women and Mothers of Disabled Children (DEA), with support from the Association of Young Economists of Georgia (AYEG), to implement budget monitoring projects in Zugdidi District, one of the poorest municipalities in the country.

The Local Budget Monitoring project aimed to introduce participatory principles into budgetary processes and raise public awareness about budget monitoring. The idea was to build a new kind of civil society, where each member would feel responsible for the community's budget and able to participate in its formation, based on the needs of a particular community.

DEA mobilised the local population in all 30 villages of the district, and established interest groups in each, made up of 10 to 15 socially active villagers who wanted to get together to influence or participate in the development of their community. But they lacked the skills or practical experience to participate in local budget monitoring, and so groups of committed individuals formed community committees.

DEA assisted these committees to develop statutes, co-ordinated twice-monthly meetings, and, together with AYEG, conducted local budget monitoring training. AYEG's role at the start of the project was very important in providing capacity-building training and training in grassroots advocacy and lobbying, as well as assisting DEA in analysing the budget data they managed to collect. The goal was to develop the skills and abilities of committee members on budgetary process issues, as well as help them to understand organs of local self-governance, and to undertake advocacy and lobbying. The committees prepared their recommendations and submitted these to the *Gamgeoba*, the executive branch of local self-government. The community groups were very successful in working directly with local government. Since 2005, 85 per cent of recommendations from the committees have been taken on board. The relationships between local self-government representatives and communities improved, and there was increased transparency in the budgetary process. Members of the Local Budget Monitoring project have even been offered some office space in the Zugdidi local self-governance building, to set up a resource centre that will provide the population with information on the new tax code, budgetary processes and other enquiries. This is clear evidence that the local government is satisfied with the project.

Perouza, a public committee member from a village in Zugdidi, describes the budget monitoring and its impact on the local community: "Before participatory budget monitoring, nothing that the government did was transparent. Now the government has to show the budget to us, which means it is open for discussion with the public. This has had an impact on our lives: as a result of our participation, decisions by the local authorities are no longer taken behind closed doors. We know best what the problems on the ground are and our suggestions have made this budget more reflective of real concerns – our problems and our vision".

From: [A New Way of Working: Community Participation in local budgeting in Georgia](#), Oxfam GB



Work with elected representatives and government officials

Sometimes poor and marginalised men, women and youth are denied their rights through deliberate discrimination, but more often than not the situation is much more complex and nuanced. Governments might fail to meet the basic needs of their citizens because they don't fully understand how a policy affects poor men, women and youth, because corruption at the local level diverts resources away from those who most need them, or because policies are not effectively implemented.

Oxfam can help identify where blockages lie – e.g. with civil servants, technical services, politicians or local councils. And we can work with government officials at all levels to help them understand their roles and responsibilities, and strengthen their skills to deliver their roles effectively. This could include:

- Targeted capacity building for officials on a specific issue, for example, on how to deal sensitively with women who have suffered domestic violence
- Advice on engaging with citizens and using social accountability mechanisms to support improvements in service delivery
- Piloting new models of service delivery that, if successful, governments can replicate
- Linking citizens and officials, or providing officials with evidence, so that they can understand the impact of policies on the ground.

Claiming the right to food in India

In 2011, India's government suddenly cancelled many eligible people's entitlement to subsidised grain from the Public Distribution System. Families like Sankaliya's were forced to sleep on an empty stomach, despite her hard work as an agricultural labourer. Instead of two Rupees per kilo of rice, she had to pay an inflated 15 on the open market, leaving no money to buy pulses or oil.

More than 300,000 people's entitlement cards were cancelled in Sankaliya's home state of Chhattisgarh alone. In response, Oxfam India and its partner, the Right to Food Network, organised a public hearing on food security, enabling Sankaliya and 200 other people to speak out over the cancellation of their subsidy cards. The hearing involved Supreme Court Commissioners' Advisors across four Indian states, who faced a unified outburst against the use of unfair criteria to exclude people from food entitlements.

The Right to Food Network also collated numerous case studies and lobbied the authorities. As a result, the Chhattisgarh state government reinstated entitlement to subsidised rations. In December 2012, it passed the Food Security Act – the first of its kind – extending subsidies to almost 90 per cent of the state's population. Through speaking out, people like Sankaliya won the means to protect their food rights.

Encourage co-operation and collaboration

While the ability of people to raise their voices can be strengthened and governments can be supported, it is the *interaction* between these two that will lead to active and real change for the societies involved.

Through local partners, Oxfam can facilitate early dialogue and cooperation between communities and local power holders. This enables respective struggles, constraints, roles and responsibilities to be well understood, and plans, budgets and monitoring mechanisms to be developed jointly.

Oxfam can also support and encourage authorities to view citizen participation as positive and useful – and as something which can help the authorities themselves be more effective and legitimate. Government agencies and civil society can work together to analyse the underlying causes of poverty, for example, in order to establish a common mindset and enable collaborative work in planning future actions in an atmosphere of mutual trust.

Invest in understanding decentralisation processes

Decentralisation has the potential to devolve power and decision making to citizens and foster a more efficient system of service delivery. However, local officials may not have the knowledge and experience needed to implement policies that have been developed and written at national level, or know how to go about involving poor and marginalised people. Through working with partners, Oxfam can support local decentralised authorities by 'translating' rules and procedures, and making systems and processes more accessible.

Understanding decentralisation in Turkana, Kenya

Turkana County is situated in the northwest of Kenya and has a population of almost 900,000. It is hot and dry, and water is often scarce. Its people are nomadic herders who depend on their cattle, camels, goats, sheep and donkeys for a living. They have learned to live in the harsh landscape and have a strong sense of kinship and community. With 94 per cent of the population living below the poverty line, Turkana is one of Kenya's poorest counties. In partnership with the European Commission and local partner the Turkana Women's Advocacy and Development Organisation (TWADO), Oxfam is implementing the Community Engagement in Good Governance project. This aims to ensure that the rights of poor and marginalised women and men are assured through their integration into political, social and economic systems at all levels.

Kenya has a system of devolved budgets, where the use of funds is decided by a local committee rather than by central government. The Local Authorities Transfer Fund (LATF) provides funds to local authorities to improve public service delivery, financial management and accountability, and to reduce outstanding debts. Each year, 5 per cent of national income tax receipts are allocated to the LATF. Local authorities are supposed to combine the LATF monies with their own local revenues to implement services and investments at local level.

The project has worked through local government officials, who often do not know enough about the LATF or other funds to be able to administer them effectively. Councillors did not have the capacity to formulate strategies or to make key choices, but instead tended to intervene on an ad hoc basis, often at the implementation stage. In practice, much decision-making was informal, while formally approved budgets were not adhered to due to the lack of financial resources, or because of misappropriation of funds.

Oxfam designed a capacity-building package aimed at giving local authority officials the knowledge and skills needed to enable them to work effectively. This consisted of training on good governance, social accountability and citizen participation, along with support to develop a strategic plan. During the training, lack of planning quickly emerged as one of the major causes of confusion. Local authority officials were therefore supported to develop five-year strategic plans (2009–13), which were subsequently approved by the Minister for Local Government.

Officials also developed:

A **service delivery charter** outlining the purpose and the standards of services expected from the municipality

A **clients' charter** outlining the services provided by the municipality – such as road maintenance, rubbish collection and school bursaries – and payments for council services such as business permits and burial fees

A **citizens' scorecard** to monitor and audit councils' performance.

These documents were disseminated to the communities through public meetings organised via a local network of civil society organisations.

As James Lobwin, development officer at Turkana County Council explains, "Today our operations are more focused and projects are in line with the strategic plan. The service charter has enabled communities to be more aware of council operations and the services offered. Now we have more people coming to make enquiries about how they can access

services such as school bursary funds, grants to community development initiatives, and even how to participate in monitoring the projects run by the council.”

Source: ‘Where does the money go?’ – [Citizen participation in Turkana county, Kenya](#), Oxfam GB

Support newly-elected women representatives

Earlier in this section, we looked at the importance of involving women in political processes as participants and leaders. Women are increasingly gaining access to decision-making processes at all levels as elected representatives, but often find that their ability to set the agenda, influence decisions and be effective leaders is limited. This might be because they lack leadership skills, or are manipulated by male relatives or excluded from decision-making processes. Under these circumstances, there is a risk that women will become demotivated if they are unable to work on an equal footing with their male counterparts and earn their respect. Men may dismiss women’s role in decision-making if women are unable to demonstrate results.

Supporting Nepal’s new women leaders

Many of the women involved in Oxfam’s Raising Her Voice project in Nepal have recognised the challenges of leadership. One woman explained that she had been selected to join the Drinking Water and Sanitation User Group committee as it needed a woman representative, but she didn’t understand how the committee worked and was scared to attend meetings. Through the project she has learned skills that have helped her improve her participation. She is now able to put across her views, but would still like further support to improve her effectiveness. As another woman explains: “After I got elected to the Community Forest User Group executive committee, I wanted to control deforestation, which is a huge problem in our village. So I was quite vocal in favour of prosecuting those who felled trees illegally. However, in reality, I do not have any idea about the rules and process of how this is to be done and it keeps bothering me.”

Women in the project have identified a number of areas where they need further support. This means ongoing skills development in areas such as public speaking; deeper knowledge of what is expected of them once they have taken on roles; and greater knowledge of relevant policies and procedures related to the committee’s area of focus, for example, hiring teachers. What is evident, however, is that although women have identified gaps, they have a strong desire to learn. A further challenge is to stop women from overburdening themselves. Some women with higher levels of education or greater family support for them to be active in public life have found it difficult to balance their capacity and time.

A further challenge is to stop women from overburdening themselves. Some women with higher levels of education or greater family support for them to be active in public life have found it difficult to balance their capacity and time. They need support to help them not to take on too much and to prioritise where their efforts can best be targeted.

Therefore, we shouldn't just seek to support women to take up leadership positions. Once they are elected, we must provide ongoing support so they can establish their legitimacy as leaders, genuinely represent the interests of their constituencies (poor women in particular) and resist co-option or intimidation from vested interests.



Steps you can take:

- Ensure that women fully understand what their new role entails and how the body they are elected to functions
- Promote training in leadership, focusing on topics such as debating, negotiating, conflict management and team-building
- Promote training on technical issues such as procedures and mechanisms for decision-making, including unwritten 'rules'
- Support women to interact with other woman leaders so that they can learn from each other, gain self-confidence and establish relations
- Set up a mentoring scheme so that women have someone they can turn to for advice and support
- Promote exchanges between women decision-makers at local, regional and national levels
- Promote exchanges between civil society and women decision-makers
- Identify a specific project or issue that women can work on together, so they can achieve something jointly and demonstrate their capabilities.

Strategic use of campaigning and advocacy

Oxfam defines advocacy as 'the process of influencing decision-makers to change public policies and practices in ways that will have a positive and lasting impact on the lives of men and women living in poverty'. This might involve calling for new policies and practices, changing existing ones or even demanding their elimination. Advocacy can take place at different levels, from local through to international institutions, and can incorporate a variety of tools

and approaches. These include public campaigning, lobbying, media work, popular mobilisation and challenging social norms.

Advocacy compliments development and humanitarian work as part of Oxfam's one-programme approach to ensure the sustainability of change. While it is possible to achieve significant change through development and humanitarian work, advocacy may allow us to increase the scale of our impact and challenge national and international power structures that contribute to poverty and inequality. It is therefore an important strategy for Right to Be Heard work.

A common point of confusion is that advocacy and the Right to Be Heard are one and the same thing. This is not the case. Advocacy is certainly a useful strategy that can be used – alongside others – to help us achieve our Right to Be Heard goals, but it can also be used in other programme contexts. For example, to reduce the impact of disasters, Oxfam is lobbying for rich countries to pay money for adaptation to protect poor people's livelihoods, help with disaster prediction and build defences. While this is important work which, if successful, will improve the lives of thousands of poor men, women and youth, it is advocacy on behalf of poor people rather than being done in such a way as to enable poor men, women and youth to influence decisions affecting their lives.



In trying to influence decisions from local to national level, effective advocacy needs both the capacity of civil society to carry out advocacy activities and the capacity of authorities to respond. Both these areas have been explored in more detail in previous sections.

Zambians vote for Health For All

Every day, people in Zambia are put at risk by a poorly organised and severely underfunded health care system. Clinics across the country regularly face 'stock outs', meaning they run out of essential, life-saving medicines. The country also has a chronic shortage of health workers. One in 10 children dies before their fifth birthday and 17 per cent of adults are living with HIV and AIDS, so it's vital that Zambians get the health care system they deserve.

In September 2011, Zambia held closely contested national elections. These offered an important opportunity to secure desperately needed reforms to the country's health system. The Vote Health For All campaign used the elections to spread its message. It aimed to support communities raise their concerns about health care at national level, helping people to discuss key issues with aspiring candidates and those already in power. The campaign set out to ensure that health care – especially access to medicines – was placed at the top of the political agenda. But it also aimed to persuade all parties to promise to increase health spending in line with the Abuja Declaration on Health, which commits African Governments to spend 15 per cent of their budget on improving the health sector.

Working alongside local partners, Oxfam supported thousands of Zambians to get their views on health care heard. At community level, local artists and musicians helped to spread the campaign's messages through song, drama and poetry. Oxfam's partners also organised a series of local meetings for voters to discuss health issues with parliamentary candidates. During these meetings candidates were invited to make a public pledge to improve health care if they were elected.

At national level, the campaign was launched with a large concert in the capital, Lusaka, backed up by media coverage highlighting the challenges that Zambians face in accessing health care. Other activities included a press conference with presidential candidates and the release of a policy report that caught the attention of many high-profile political figures.

The Vote Health For All campaign has led to important changes in Zambia's health care system. The new leader of the country, President Sata, having expressed his support for the campaign, repeated this commitment during his acceptance speech. And these were more than words – they led to the new government increasing spending on health care by 45 per cent in its first budget. The country's Minister of Health also set a 90-day deadline to remove user fees from all health centres, pledged to end stock-outs of vital medicines in clinics across the country and promised that the new government will cover the costs of an additional 2,500 health workers.

Oxfam can also support civil society to make its voice heard even more widely by disseminating messages, policy asks and calls to action through campaigns, linking national and regional agendas to global advocacy strategies. Wherever possible, our goal should be to support poor men, women and youth to speak for themselves and represent their own issues, rather than others speaking on their behalf.

We should be particularly careful to base advocacy work on evidence

collected on the ground, and ensure that it is based on the real, voiced needs of poor men, women and youth. We also need to be careful about whose voices are being heard and whose interests are being represented. Without thorough research and analysis, we risk reinforcing inequalities, creating resentment in the communities we aim to support, or wasting scarce resources.

Tools and resources

Practical ways to engage with your community, Improvement and Development Agency for Local Government

A website aimed at local government officials outlining methods and tools to use to engage with the local community. IDeA encourages local government to view community empowerment as being about motivated people actively engaged in making a difference to the places they know best, and highlights the role that local authorities should play in supporting residents to know how they can get involved.

http://www.local.gov.uk/web/guest/localism-act/-/journal_content/56/10180/3510950/ARTICLE

Building National Campaigns

This book draws on Oxfam International's experience of supporting national labour rights campaigns initiatives at local and national levels. It includes learning points and examples of good practice, and offers a menu of approaches and activities.

<http://policy-practice.oxfam.org.uk/publications/building-national-campaigns-activists-alliances-and-how-change-happens-115412>

Advocacy Tools and Guidelines: Promoting Policy Change, CARE

Written for programme managers, this is a step-by-step guide to planning advocacy initiatives, with advice for successful implementation.

http://www.careclimatechange.org/files/toolkit/CARE_Advocacy_Guidelines.pdf

World Bank Sourcebook on Social Accountability

http://www.worldbank.org/socialaccountability_sourcebook/

World Bank: Mapping Context For Social Accountability

http://siteresources.worldbank.org/EXTSOCIALDEVELOPMENT/Resources/244362-1193949504055/Context_and_SAcc_RESOURCE_PAPER.pdf

Affiliated Networks for Social Accountability

<http://wbi.worldbank.org/wbi/content/affiliated-networks-social-accountability-ansa>

4. ACCESS TO JUSTICE

Increase awareness of rights, legal mechanisms and access to information laws, and support access to justice

Access to justice can be defined as people's capacity to seek and find solutions for individual or collective problems, through formal or informal legal institutions, according to human rights standards. Access to justice is not confined to accessing formal legal institutions and the non-state customary legal system, but entails a fair and implementable legal framework, as well as procedures that are accessible and deliver appropriate remedies. Crucially for Oxfam, access to justice relates to both empowerment of people as well as accountability of institutions.

In many of the countries in which we work, there is legislation in place which supports the rights and interests of poor and marginalised men, women and youth. Many governments have signed up to global and regional human rights treaties. But often, implementation is weak and citizens are unable to benefit from the protection such legislation should afford them. Lawyers, courts and the judiciary are generally considered distant institutions far removed from people's day to day reality, and are rarely seen as the guardians of citizen rights or as an independent check on government power.

Poor men, women and youth are frequently not even aware that they have rights, so raising awareness is often the first step towards their being able to claim them. In addition to knowing the rights to which they are entitled, it is also important for poor and marginalised people to know about and be able to access the legal mechanisms they can use to claim their rights, access justice and, where necessary, receive support to overcome barriers. Oxfam will rarely undertake direct litigation, but has an important role to play in supporting coalitions and networks, and facilitating connections with legal services. Above all, we will use legal strategies to enable civil society to use the law to uphold the human rights of poor and marginalised people and achieve pro-poor development.

An important distinction is the difference between procedural and substantive justice. **Procedural justice** deals with aspects of equality before the law, fair trial and the right to legal defence. **Substantive justice** deals with the question of how just or unjust laws are, or the quality of the outcome achieved through a particular legal process.

For Oxfam, key access to justice areas of focus in terms of procedural justice are:

- Women's rights and gender equality
- Land rights
- Civil and political rights violations
- Issues related to Access to Information, claiming and receiving information from both the government and the private sector

- Discrimination and exclusion from social services such as education, health care, water and humanitarian assistance

In terms of substantive justice, for Oxfam this primarily relates to undertaking legal advocacy strategies in the following areas:

- Fairness of laws relevant to any Oxfam work and using advocacy and public-interest litigation to achieve legal reform
- Addressing the criminalisation of poverty
- Undertaking public interest litigation to achieve legal reform in areas such as the right to food; extractives; climate change, and access to information and services.

An area of particular concern is the gender aspects of access to justice. In many countries where we work, women are denied the same access to justice as men. Oxfam therefore supports legal aid, rights awareness and public litigation initiatives that primarily benefit women who are marginalised from usual legal systems.

Helping Yemeni women seek legal equality

Women in Yemen do not have the same access to justice as men. Each year, hundreds of women are imprisoned for 'moral crimes'. There is little free legal support for female prisoners, and many are mistreated and stigmatised. Oxfam partner the Yemeni Women's Union (YWU) is working to ensure that the legal system protects the rights of vulnerable women, by raising awareness about legal rights, providing legal aid, and supporting female prisoners. YWU's female lawyers are playing a growing role in empowering women and advocating for women's rights. For 20-year-old Najwa, who was imprisoned for six months after running away from her husband, Oxfam's legal protection programme was a lifeline. Without the support of YWU's female lawyers, Najwa and many other women would most likely face long or indefinite prison terms.



Of course, a denial of rights can be due to more than just a lack of knowledge on the part of citizens. Several factors can contribute to the barriers that poor men, women and youth experience in claiming their rights and accessing legal mechanisms and justice. These include:

- a lack of political will to uphold rights
- direct or indirect discrimination against certain social groups
- corruption
- vested interests
- a lack of knowledge among duty bearers about how to fulfil their role.

Accordingly, access to justice is broader than a lack of legal awareness or inability to access legal services. Rather, it encompasses the inherent fairness,

equity and accessibility of the justice system, in terms of the overall framework, the quality of justice received and the accountability of judicial duty bearers.

Tools and Resources

Legal empowerment in practice: Using legal tools to secure land rights in Africa

A book exploring land rights, the use of paralegals, legal literacy training and awareness-raising, and public interest litigation in Africa.

<http://pubs.iied.org/12552IIED.html>

A Guide to Using the Protocol on the Rights of Women in Africa for Legal Action

This manual provides step-by-step guidance for using the Protocol as a legal tool to uphold women's rights at both national and regional levels. It provides information on use of the Protocol in cases brought before domestic courts; bringing complaints of violations of the Protocol to regional mechanisms, and analysis of violations of the Protocol to assist practitioners in drafting complaints on these issues. There are also summaries of key cases to give practitioners a sense of international and regional jurisprudence on women's rights.

http://www.equalitynow.org/sites/default/files/Manual%20on%20Protocol%20n%20Women%20Rights%20in%20Africa_EN.pdf

Local Governance Self-Assessment – Guidelines for Facilitators, Inter-cooperation

A tool to support local communities to understand better what local governance is concerned with, to voice their opinion regarding the current governance situation and take action to improve local governance functioning.

Programming for Justice: Access for all. A Practitioner's Guide to a Human Rights-based Approach to Justice

A UNDP comprehensive programming guide that aims to help practitioners design human rights-based access to justice projects. It introduces a holistic model of access to justice, provides guidance on how to programme and prioritise access to justice strategies, and maps a large number of capacity-development strategies for justice system institutions and processes.

<http://regionalcentrebangkok.undp.or.th/practices/governance/a2j/tools/>

Community-Based Paralegals: A Practitioner's Guide

An Open Society tool to assist in the design of new paralegal programs, improve existing ones or learn more about paralegals and the legal empowerment of the poor.

<http://regionalcentrebangkok.undp.or.th/practices/governance/a2j/tools/>

5. GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP

Oxfam works to help citizens become more involved in democratic processes, hold those with power to account and gain decision-making power themselves. This means influencing the relationships and attitudes needed for building accountability, transparency and responsiveness. We work to help citizens become active and empowered, so they can help shape public debate by asking questions and stating their views. It also means influencing power-holders so they meet their demands and duties responsibly and responsively.

We can achieve this through:

- Encouraging Oxfam supporters to act as global active citizens through personal choices and actions. They can do this as consumers of energy and food, through Fair Trade products, and through their actions as employees and employers. They can also act as political constituents on issues of aid, social justice, transparency and accountability,
- Supporting organisations of poor and excluded people (in particular women and youth) to link with other organisations and activists. This enables them to learn from each other and collaborate on joint campaigns for people's participation, civic awareness of global challenges, and pro-poor policies.
- Supporting the most vulnerable people to participate in processes and debates that identify and manage risks and uncertainty.

What does Global Active Citizenship mean?

Global citizenship is a social trend which fosters a new model of citizenship actively engaged in and committed to making the world a more equitable and sustainable place. Often we link the idea of 'active citizenship' with a local dimension of empowerment and becoming a relevant actor in everyday problems that affect our communities. But in an increasingly interconnected world, the sense of 'community' is evolving, with the local dimension of active citizenship enriched with a global perspective of solidarity, empowerment and action for change.

Global citizenship raises a new model, based on people who:

- are aware of the multi-dimensional challenges facing us in today's world
- recognise themselves and others as people with dignity, rights and responsibilities, and with the power to drive change
- take responsibility for their actions and are outraged by injustice and any form of human rights abuse
- believe justice only can exist if everyone's human rights are fulfilled
- respect and value gender equality, diversity and the multiple identities and sense of belonging of people and communities

- are interested in understanding and spreading how the world works at economic, political, social, cultural, technological and environmental levels
- participate in the community at a range of levels, from local to global, and are mobilised with the aim of making the world a more equitable and sustainable place, where human rights are enjoyed by everyone
- contribute to building an active citizenship which fights against inequality by aiming for the redistribution of power, opportunity and resources.

Global citizens try to learn and be informed, analyse reality and promote new thinking within the communities they belong to. They reject political and social systems based on imposition or cultural assimilation. From Oxfam's perspective, it is vital to build capacity so that people are empowered to claim fulfillment of their rights – as well as those of others worldwide.

Global citizenship is also important to the OI operational goal of establishing a Worldwide Influencing Network (WIN), a holistic model that will build pro-poor constituencies in strategic countries. Through this network, Oxfam will put power analysis and gender equality at the centre of its influencing strategies targeting powerful interests.

Three pillars for building Global Active Citizenship

There are three key way in which Oxfam supports Global Active Citizenship:

1. Education

Oxfam promotes education for global citizenship, including dedicated space in schools and communities for the formation of participative citizens who seek active, ethical responses to the challenges of the world today. This involves:

- Encouraging the multi-dimensional development of people: education that develops the whole personality (rather than just focusing on the jobs market), guided by ethical values of solidarity and justice. It involves concepts such as learning to coexist and learning to transform (ourselves, the community, the world).
- Generating a global vision in which citizenship extends beyond a closed context (city, country), and the world is viewed as everyone's common space. This leads to new concepts of personal identity, involving respectful dialogue with other cultures and identities, and respecting the dignity of other people and cultures.
- The global-local perspective of justice and solidarity, in which students recognise themselves as important players in social transformation. Whether in their immediate (local) setting or from a more global perspective, people need to be able to assess reality, and use tools and methods to tackle it.

Education is never neutral. It always has a perspective on the context in which it is immersed, validating or questioning power relations. Education is therefore vital to the maintenance or transformation of the power structures that rule global society.

2. Empowerment

Oxfam needs an integrated approach to beneficiaries and supporters as catalysers of deep social transformation. We can achieve this by providing them with:

- Information and learning tools for self-organisation, networking and reinforcement of their ability to impact other people and society as a whole
- Tools that help them understand and play their role as global citizens, improving their consumption patterns, influencing and lobbying governments and companies, and becoming transformation agents working alongside other people and social movements
- Opportunities to participate in public debates and decision-making spaces, to demand that governments and companies change their policies and strengthen practices towards redistribution and solidarity
- Opportunities for connection, communication and collaboration with people we work with in the global South, to exchange experiences and knowledge, and build a sense of belonging to a global movement for change.

3. Working with others

In rich and poor countries alike, people are beginning to realise their strength and capacity to challenge the vested interests that perpetuate the injustice of poverty. Oxfam believes that people living in poverty who claim their rights and make their voices heard constitute enormous potential for real change. To harness that potential, we must devote real effort to linking with others – social movements, trade unions, digital communities and faith-based organisations – both transient and established. And we must engage with constituencies who have not previously been involved in issues of poverty and development.

We will join with networks of citizens, consumers, producers, communities, social movements and civil society organisations who demand change from governments, multilateral institutions, the UN and companies. Through our decisions and the choices we all make as consumers, political and business incentives will shift. Oxfam will work with others to help build momentum for change, whether it comes by leading low-carbon lifestyles, buying Fair Trade goods, or demanding change in the streets or through the ballot box.

Bridging social movements

Global Active Citizenship offers the opportunity to generate and strengthen a worldwide social movement for justice, based not on a 'givers-receivers' model but on horizontal networking. Interesting fields which Oxfam affiliates are exploring include:

- *Exchange platforms*: a central aspect of raising awareness of global

issues is generating spaces for exchange and dialogue. Some affiliates are already working on proposals that generate such spaces as part of formal education programmes or wider global platforms (often electronic).

- *Reversed development:* the global economic crisis since 2008 has meant northern social movements are facing difficulties that their southern counterparts have been struggling with for many decades. This is opening a space to learn from their experiences and successes. Oxfam could play a role in connecting and bridging social movements with matching needs and experiences, using our unique global structure and offering spaces for co-learning, sharing resources and creating synergies among organised citizens.
- *Global-local advocacy and advocating overseas:* Oxfam helps generate social pressure for reinforcing government overseas development budgets. The recent economic crisis has meant cuts also being made in budgets for domestic social policies. This has created a sense of competing interests. Global active citizenship asks for socially responsible policies everywhere, offering deeper understanding of world dynamics and generating cross-country solidarity and empathy.
- *Reaching the Diasporas:* working with migrants from specific countries on key political issues also strengthens advocacy capacity, drawing in migrant communities to put pressure on their governments, as well as building capacity and raising awareness. It opens a space for migrants to take active part as global citizens, both in their native country and their current home context.
- *Engaging business:* advocacy directed at the private sector is of growing importance, as business is increasingly recognised as a central actor for global change (but one that can be approached from the local perspective). Organised and aware citizens can support actions and campaigns led by Oxfam towards private corporations, or can initiate their own actions (with support from Oxfam as information provider and advisor on strategy and capacity building).

Communication for Change

Engaging people as Global Active Citizens requires a long-term process based on dialogue and finding common interests between Oxfam and its audiences. The model in which Oxfam holds 'the truth', the alternatives and offers closed options for supporting them is being replaced by programmes with more flexibility. These incorporate and support people's initiatives, helping develop autonomous movements that may go far beyond our organisational reach. Useful communication approaches for engaging global citizens include:

- *Teaching the teachers:* Some affiliates have formal education programmes for teachers so they can promote global citizenship education. These programmes may have a clear policy component,

aimed at achieving the inclusion of global citizenship in the official curriculum. They help refine a comprehensive approach to building global citizenship. Teachers can also develop and adapt materials, and act as community leaders bridging local and global actions.

- *Improving management of supporter databases:* Many information systems and social networks provide analytical tools to help better characterise supporters. These are essential for building supporter relations plans and communication strategies that take into account people's interests, values and behaviour. Oxfam affiliates, partners and social movements we support can gain interesting insights by analysing such information and adapting strategies to new knowledge gathered.
- *Empowering leaders and organisations:* Many affiliates have developed leadership curriculums as a way to empower and strengthen engaged supporters and volunteers. These cover a broad variety of themes and methodologies on the local-national-international axes. They are also a valuable source for identifying good practice in the promotion of global active citizenship.
- *Playing a supporting role:* Oxfam can provide resources and opportunities to support individuals and organisations' own initiatives, with a clear vision of enabling them to be active drivers of change in their own contexts and with their own rationale. Sometimes Oxfam needs to lower its own voice and let others take ownership of initiatives.

Harnessing global voices for Guatemala's farmers

Guatemala's suitability for biofuel production has recently driven local and multinational companies to claim large tracts of indigenous and peasant lands. Thousands of people have been displaced without compensation, resulting in widespread hunger and social conflict. In 2011, in the remote Polochic Valley, security units hired by a private company forcibly evicted 769 families, while the government turned a blind eye.

In response, Oxfam launched a campaign to demand compensation for the displaced families, while highlighting the global land-grab issue through the GROW campaign. It combined international action at both political and public levels, with strong national action taken with local partners and allies. Diplomatic lobbying and media work complemented support for events such as a farmers' march from Polochic to the capital, after which the president promised to give evicted families compensatory land.

When these promises were not fulfilled, Oxfam launched an international online petition, gaining over 100,000 signatures from people in 55 countries. Alongside local allies, it presented the petition to the government and demanded a meeting, at which the authorities promised to address the land claim. Faced with mass action and diplomatic pressure, in October 2013, the president finally gave the first 140 Polochic families land titles in a new location, and guaranteed relocation for the remaining families. National action and pressure from global citizens together forced the president to listen to civil society instead of big business, resulting in justice for the Polochic families

4. STRENGTHENING OXFAM'S WAYS OF WORKING

Oxfam's Right to Be Heard work requires us to put a strong focus on our own ways of working. This is so that we ourselves uphold the principles outlined in the Right to Be Heard change goal of the OI Strategic Plan. It also helps us to be as effective as possible while working in rapidly evolving and complex contexts. We should pay particular attention to:

- Recognising that change often happens in subtle or erratic ways, and can build up slowly
- Learning from experimentation and adopting a transformative approach for wider influence
- Managing the risks inherent in a situation where people are demanding rights in a way that challenges the status quo
- Promoting our own accountability to beneficiaries ('downward' accountability) and leading by example in the development sector
- Valuing voice, participation and inclusion at every stage of the programme cycle
- Ensuring that regular opportunities to reflect and learn with partners and other key stakeholders are built into all we do.

These are all closely linked to monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL). All of Oxfam's programmes should use monitoring and evaluation to maximise their effectiveness and improve accountability to stakeholders, but they are particularly pertinent to our work on the Right to Be Heard.

Looking at MEL through a Right to Be Heard lens

MEL practices have improved in recent years, but Oxfam is working to become a better learning organisation. We aim to facilitate and use evidence-based innovation, learning and knowledge management to increase the quality and impact of our programme work and that of our partners. MEL enables us to strengthen our capacity to meet agreed programme standards and use our collective programme support resources and tools effectively. It helps us to be fully accountable for our achievements and failures.

To do this, we need to define a focused learning strategy based on the Right to Be Heard change goal, and share learning and good practice through networks of staff. This will help create a reflective culture founded on evidence-based learning from frontline programme experience. This can easily be fed into new programme policy and guidelines and used to influence external stakeholders. By ensuring that programme standards and external, sector-wide standards become the benchmarks for assessing programme quality, we can best ensure that the Right to Be Heard is powerfully woven

into Oxfam's work. We must build staff and partner capacity to carry out systematic, high-quality monitoring and evaluation, based around a cross-affiliate model of pooled resources. Strong MEL will enable us to focus programme support on areas of innovation and work that need to be driven forward; reward innovation and risk-taking, and learn from failure.

Integrating reflection into your practice

Oxfam Australia (OAU) periodically undertakes deeper reflection on its work, as part of its commitment to effective programming and positive development change. This takes the form of annual reflective learning events, linked strategically to our external change goals, and engaging stakeholders at all levels.

In 2013 OAU reflected on its central commitments of 'active citizenship and accountability'. Through a series of locally-organised, regional events, OAU staff and representatives from Oxfam affiliates in Sri Lanka, Australia, Southern Africa and Vanuatu, reflected on their learning and experience in this space and their specific contexts. They then looked to the future, to: 1) develop regional recommendations for active citizenship strategic priorities for the next three years; and 2) provide recommendations for how these priorities can be implemented. These were fed back to OAU's senior leadership team and have informed current strategic planning processes.

These events provided time and space for staff at the regional level to look back on their work using evidence from programmes, research and evaluations. This valuable reflection then informs future programmatic priorities, ensuring no learning is overlooked or lost.

Through partnerships with innovators and pioneers in this field, Oxfam is developing robust, 360-degree accountability tools for reporting to key stakeholders. Across the confederation, it is collecting evidence, testing assumptions and conducting pilots with communities, to consolidate and improve public reporting.

The OI Programme Framework gives full guidance on all aspects of monitoring, evaluation and learning. However, there are some things to look out for specifically in Right to Be Heard programming.

Working with change and complexity

Much of our work on the Right to Be Heard is necessarily complex: it involves employing a range of strategies at different levels, from local to global. Many of the contexts in which we work are rapidly evolving and unpredictable. Change happens over the long-term, often in ways that are unanticipated. Against this backdrop, regular monitoring, reflection and learning can help us:

- Question our assumptions and see things from a new perspective
- Judge our progress and make adjustments to our approach, if necessary

- Look beyond our day-to-day programme activities, to consider whether we are bringing about positive changes in people's lives
- Increase our ability to respond to new challenges and opportunities
- See what is working and why, so that we can continually improve our programmes, and apply this learning to new pieces of work
- Highlight gaps and what is not working, so that we can avoid repeating mistakes
- Identify any negative trends so that we can quickly see if power dynamics are moving in the wrong direction and react accordingly
- Set realistic timeframes for realising our desired impact
- Build trust, respect and openness in relationships, both within Oxfam and with stakeholders and partners.

The first step is to develop a **theory of change** for your programme, which expresses how you expect change will happen. Developing a theory of change **involves understanding enough about how change happens in a particular** context to identify what short- and long-term outcomes are needed to bring about an intended impact. It also means understanding what Oxfam, in collaboration with others, can do to bring about these outcomes. Your theory of change should be grounded in your power analysis, and your project designed so that it takes account of issues you've identified.

Does your theory of change identify...

Which citizens you are focusing on? Are there particular groups of people you want to work with – for example, those of a certain age, sex, geographic location or employment status?

The situation of your target group at the beginning of the project? (Were they 'civically engaged' before you met them? Where do they get their information? What do they think of state institutions? What issues do they care about? And if they mobilise already, why do they do so and on what issues?)

If you have multiple outcomes you are seeking to achieve, do you expect one to come before another? Is one more important than another?

Source: [McGee and Gaventa](#)

As your work progresses, your monitoring will test your theory of change. If change doesn't happen as anticipated, regular monitoring will show this at an early point and enable you to make adjustments to your programme approaches.

In order to make these kinds of judgements, you should set and measure **process, output and outcome indicators**. Often in Right to Be Heard work, the process you follow can be just as important as the end result, and your indicators should seek to measure whether the process itself is empowering and participatory for poor men, women and youth.

In Right to Be Heard programmes and projects, you might find yourself trying to measure things that are not easily measured. However, you can address this by being as specific or descriptive as you can about what you are seeking to achieve. Try to avoid general terms such as 'empowerment' and think about

what you really mean by these. For example, an Oxfam programme on HIV and AIDS wanted to measure ‘reduced stigma’ against people living with HIV. Staff identified a number of effects of stigma, such as HIV patients travelling to distant towns for treatment to avoid recognition by people they knew, and used these to formulate their indicators. In many cases, you may need to involve other stakeholders, particularly people from marginalised groups, to understand what success would mean for them.

A mix of **qualitative and quantitative methods** can help you measure the less tangible aspects of Right to Be Heard programmes. Using just quantitative measures is likely to give you an incomplete picture – for example, counting the number of women who have been appointed to a decision-making body doesn’t tell you about the quality of their participation. But by combining this with an assessment of qualitative aspects, such as their perceived ability to express their opinions during meetings, you will get a clearer idea of whether women have increased their decision-making power.

Mapping change resulting from Oxfam’s work

One method that has been used effectively in Oxfam programmes is Outcome Mapping (OM), a methodology for planning and assessing development programming that is oriented towards change and social transformation. OM provides a set of tools to design and gather information on the outcomes, defined as behavioural changes, of the change process. OM helps a project or programme team learn about its influence on the progression of change in its direct partners. It therefore helps those in the assessment process think more systematically and pragmatically about what they are doing. They can then adapt and manage variations in strategies to bring about desired outcomes. OM puts people and learning at the centre of development and accepts unanticipated changes as potential for innovation.

In Tanzania the *Chukua Hatua* – or Take Action – programme has been trialling a number of approaches to creating active citizenship. It has used OM to help it respond to the changing complexities of its context and to capture deviation from its intended outcomes and indicators, both positive and negative. OM has enabled the programme to spot trends in behaviour change which either it had not anticipated or which have been significantly influenced from outside.

Recently, researchers have been looking at the intersection between participatory and quantitative methods – and how ‘participatory numbers’ (quantitative data gained through participatory methods) can produce high-quality and meaningful statistics. People are able to generate numbers through estimating, calculating, measuring, comparing, valuing and scoring. This information can be aggregated and even subjected to statistical analysis. This is a particularly exciting idea for Right to Be Heard programming, where such data could be used to make a convincing case to policy makers.

You should also think about how aspects of different Right to Be Heard approaches can feed into and strengthen monitoring. For example, the data collected during your initial power analysis can contribute to your baseline study, which gives information about your programme’s starting point. Or social accountability methods such as citizen scorecards can themselves be used as a source of data on effective institutions.

Monitoring and managing risks

All of Oxfam's programmes should assess and manage potential risks to staff, partners, poor and vulnerable people and Oxfam's reputation and effectiveness. They need to strike a balance between supporting positive change and minimising risk. In complex contexts – particularly in fragile and conflict-affected contexts – and in situations where our work is challenging the status quo, the risks involved are heightened. This makes forward planning, risk assessment and regular monitoring all the more important, so that we do not expose ourselves or others to unnecessary risk, and are able to respond quickly if things do go wrong.

Promoting accountability and participation

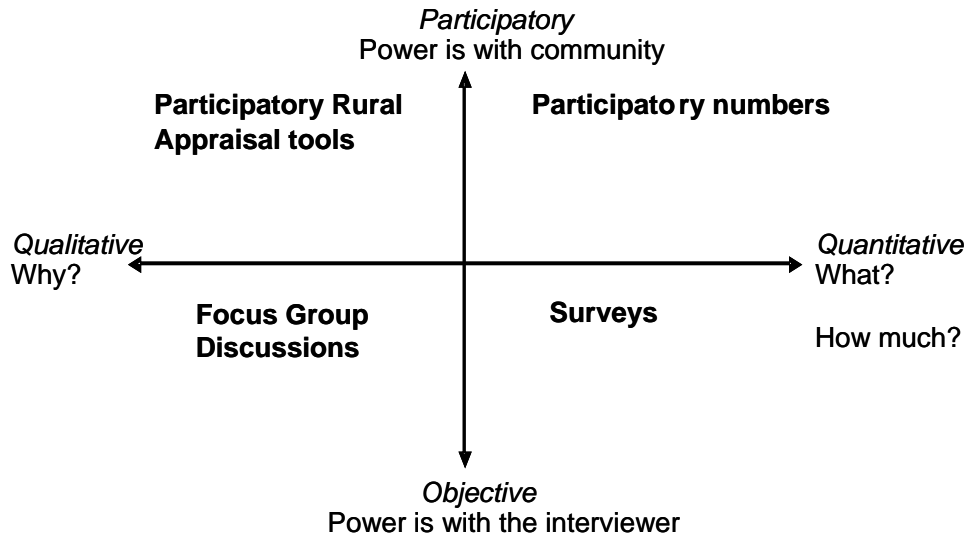
The methods we choose for our monitoring, evaluation and learning can be important tools for promoting our own accountability and encouraging participation. Oxfam's vision of a just world without poverty will best be realised by promoting active citizenship and gender equity, and by being more accountable in the ways we govern ourselves and treat each other. Accountability, both to communities living in poverty and to our supporters, donors and other external stakeholders, is an ethical and effective basis for our relationships and will contribute significantly to greater programme impact. It is important that Oxfam promotes and shares learning about accountability internally and externally, with examples of learning-based change

In Oxfam, accountability is based on four dimensions: transparency, participation, learning and evaluation, and feedback mechanisms. These allow us to give account to, take account of, and be held to account by stakeholders. This is particularly important when it comes to our relationship with people living in poverty, where there is a power imbalance, with nearly all the power being ours. For example, you should be conscious of who is making decisions, identifying priorities and doing the measuring, and how information is being shared. Think about how you can use MEL to support equitable power relations within your project.

As much of our work is about holding power holders to account, it is critical that we lead by example, and demonstrate accountability to the poor men, women and youth with whom we work. By demonstrating transparency and honesty, Oxfam strengthens its legitimacy and integrity – for example, through open information policies, strong communications, independent stakeholder feedback and user-friendly complaints mechanisms.

How we work with people is every bit as important as *what* we do. People need to know what they can expect from us in terms of our behaviour and our values. And they need to know that they have the right to let us know if they are unhappy with what we are doing or how we are behaving (and that we want to know).

By the same token, as our work seeks to increase the ability of poor and marginalised men, women and youth to influence decisions that affect their lives, we should seek to ensure that their voices are heard when making judgments and decisions about our projects and programmes. Include them in these processes and then, when selecting your data collection methods, there are various tools that you can use to promote community participation in monitoring. The diagram below gives an overview of these.



Campaigning for residents' rights in Peru

Communities living near Peru's La Oroya metallurgical complex, run by Doe Run Peru (DRP), had long suffered the effects of environmental pollution, as the company repeatedly failed to meet legally imposed emissions targets. Despite this, in 2011, a government extension of DRP's operating permit looked likely. In response, Oxfam America and its Peru office joined forces in a campaign to highlight environmental and health issues and lobby the government to reject DRP's application for a permit extension.

The campaign aimed to influence national and international public opinion to put pressure on Peru's government about the public health and environmental risks. Oxfam targeted the media and the general public, and found allies in the Peruvian and US Congresses. It convened a network of local organisations, the *La Oroya Platform for Change*, and played a coordinating role among members. It also ensured messages disseminated matched the platform's objectives and reduced the risk of controversy and conflict. The Peru office also coordinated activities between Peru and the US. The platform published press releases and interviews, receiving widespread media coverage. Social media were also key in creating a snowball effect for campaign messages.

The campaign influenced members of Congress in Peru and America, both directly and via social pressure. At public hearings and forums, people affected by contamination gave testimonies. As a result, by mid-2012 Peru's government had changed its position, refusing DRP a permit extension. An alternative operator was granted a permit for La Oroya. After the campaign, Oxfam continued discussions with the authorities to ensure real commitments on environmental issues, monitoring the results.

The campaign's success lay in the collaboration of organisations in the La Oroya Platform for Change. This gave local people a strong voice, but also broadened the campaign's relevance, making it an issue for all Peruvians.

Building MEL capacity in Right to Be Heard programmes

Oxfam is a people organisation: we depend on our staff and volunteers and must value, understand and inspire them. For people to be able to deliver strong Right to Be Heard programmes, we must ensure that organisational leadership, culture, processes and systems are all aligned behind the goal of helping poor and marginalised people claim their right to a better life.

Programme staff must be well equipped to work collaboratively within and across teams, in a global network of organisations. They need to be able to share effectively their learning and experience from Right to Be Heard programmes. They need 'soft' skills such as brokering, convening, influencing and negotiating – and to help partners and communities develop these skills. True accountability requires trust, realism and honesty, with role models and leadership from the highest levels. We must encourage innovation and agility in MEL from Right to Be Heard programmes. It's important that programmes have effective systems and processes to enable people to collaborate, share knowledge and learn together.

Sample Indicators for Right to Be Heard programmes⁵

The following are some sample indicators that you may consider using in your Right to Be Heard project or programme. This list is not comprehensive – it is simply a starter and reference, which may be helpful as you develop your monitoring plans.

Outcome: Women play an active role in governance processes as participants and leaders

Possible indicators:

- Number of women involved at different levels of decision-making or of an organisation
- Level of confidence to speak out expressed by women participants
- Number of times that women's issues are raised during meetings.

Example: Speaking out in council meetings

Five of the 10 participants in the council leadership meeting were women. However, when we observed three meetings, we realised that women spoke only 20 per cent of the time. When we fed this back to the council, they were surprised. They decided that they would monitor meeting agendas and discussions, to ensure all participants had adequate opportunity to feed in – before and during the meeting.

Outcome: Spaces exist for stakeholders to engage in an inclusive and supportive way

Possible indicators:

- Number and range of stakeholders who know that different decision-making spaces exist
- Ability to access different spaces expressed by stakeholders
- Breadth of participation in decision-making spaces (who is invited to participate, which groups are represented?)

⁵ Adapted from and built upon the Literature Review by Cathy Shutt.

- New spaces created or claimed by excluded men, women and youth
- Men, women and youth from marginalised groups can identify spaces where they have expressed their opinions.

Example: Doubling women’s decision-making

At present there is no elected local government in Nepal. Therefore, the project aims to increase women’s participation in four community decision-making bodies: community forest user groups, school management committees, sub-health post management committees, and drinking water and sanitation user groups. These bodies have been targeted due to the impact their decisions have on women’s lives. Project participants learn how these organisations function, the roles played by representatives and how to apply for a position. As a result, 258 women have taken on decision-making roles in these four organisations, increasing women’s participation from 28 per cent to 43 per cent. An additional 145 participants have taken leadership roles in other community-level committees, such as parent-teacher associations.

Outcome: Partners, networks and social movements influence accountability agendas at national, regional and global forums

Possible indicators:

- New actors introduced to forums
- Quality of engagement between new actors and forum
- Evidence of take-up of new actors’ ideas or input into forums

Example: Helping indigenous people to network

As part of our project, we brought representatives from four indigenous organisations – including two women’s groups – to a weekend forum. Two of the partners gave presentations at workshops where turnout was small, but the audience was influential. Three of the attendees (including both women) asked questions of other panel speakers. They felt that making connections was one of their big goals in attending and that they did a lot of networking that will pay off in future. They were happy to report that they collected 42 business cards and gave out 132 over the weekend.

Outcome: Strengthened capacity of local public authorities and elected representatives to deliver on their responsibilities

Possible indicators:

- Number of officials expressing increased knowledge and understanding of their responsibilities to citizens (of rules, regulations, laws, importance of participation and constructive engagement)
- Demonstrated ability to engage genuinely and consult with their constituency
- Dissemination of information by authorities
- Responsiveness in terms of budget allocations / resource responses to community claims
- Number of policies or practices revised to support rights of citizens
- Level of citizen trust in institutions / citizens’ perception of quality of state interactions

Example: Customary beliefs and women’s rights

Oxfam has supported a process to integrate customary beliefs into the official

judicial system, which has improved indigenous people's opportunities to access justice. Cases of women's rights violations have been resolved under this new model and it has been officially recognised as a better way to defend indigenous women's rights. More than 445 civil servants (265 men, 182 women) have been trained in the approach.

Outcome: Authorities and other actors influenced through use of social accountability approaches.

Possible indicators (outcome):

- Breadth of media coverage on a targeted issue
- Number of policy reforms or new policies introduced
- Improvement in provision and quality of service through citizen monitoring

Example: Focusing media attention

In the Indonesia LISTEN project, local CSO group the NTT Policy Forum successfully promoted debate in the local print media. In total, 21 articles on women's access to public budgets were published from November 2010 to January 2011, showing the increased capacity of the Forum to engage the local media as a strategic partner.

Output: Social accountability approaches embedded in our programmes

Possible indicators (process):

- Social accountability processes undertaken
- Number and/or diversity of citizens involved in these processes
- Number of proposals presented to authorities
- Quality of citizen monitoring and oversight

Example: Monitoring councillors' promises

Election trackers have been trained in 40 villages and are recording, tracking and following up on promises made by councillors, with mixed response.

Output: Poor men, women and youth understand their rights and the legal mechanisms to exercise them

Possible indicators:

- Number of men, women and youth expressing awareness of existing rights, laws and mechanisms
- Number of men, women and youth expressing understanding of how justice or accountability processes work
- Number of men, women and youth expressing understanding of the roles and responsibilities of institutions in upholding their rights
- Availability or accuracy of public information on rights and legal mechanisms
- Lobbying activities conducted by marginalised men, women and youth to claim their rights

Example: Legal advice on rights

Over 650 legal consultations have been provided to vulnerable men and women in 30 target communities. Increased demand for legal advice from these communities has resulted in the resolution of a number of cases. For example, 130 community members were provided with advice on consumer rights and 63 per cent of cases resolved in their favour.

Output: Poor men, women and youth use Access to Information laws to claim their rights

Possible indicators:

- Frequency of use of existing mechanisms (number of petitions, requests or complaints made)
- Success rate of petitions, requests or complaints (percentage heard and granted)
- Length of time for a new request, petition or complaint to be processed/fulfilled
- Quality of information provided through access to information (accuracy, comprehensiveness)
- Amount and quality of information published proactively by government and the private sector (e.g. on budgets, expenditure, taxes received and paid, lists of beneficiaries of schemes and selection criteria).

Example: People's right to know

With our partner, we commissioned a survey on people's knowledge of Access to Information laws and the district education system. More than 675 people completed the survey in three districts, and the results were the same for most people and groups – except for government workers, who knew much more than anyone else. More than half of people knew about access to information, but most seemed to think it applied only to journalists and NGOs. More than 75 per cent did not know that individual people could make Access to Information requests, and less than 10 per cent knew that you could request school admission decisions. It's no wonder there were only two such requests in these districts in the last year.

Output: Leaders, especially women and young people, have the confidence, knowledge and information necessary to represent their constituency

Possible indicators:

- Number of targeted leaders (or women, or young people) expressing increased knowledge, information or confidence
- Observed, non-verbal behaviour of participants during challenging situations (for example: posture, eye contact, positioning in room, willingness to speak)
- Number of times targeted leaders raise issues relating to the development of their community (or women, or young people) in meetings

Example: Building power within

At the half-way check-in with our leadership programme participants, our mentors sat down with each participant and looked at two things: their self-reports and their colleague feedback. Maria noted that she feels much more confident, though her colleagues haven't noticed any change. When asked to explain her new confidence, Maria explained that she was not yet willing to lead meetings – but she felt much less anxious about participating and sharing her opinion with others.

Tools and resources

Programming in Fragile and Conflict-Affected Countries: A Learning Companion

Section 2 takes a detailed look at working with and managing risk.

<http://policy-practice.oxfam.org.uk/publications/programming-in-fragile-and-conflict-affected-countries-a-learning-companion-139074>

Accountability Starter Pack

A guide on how to implement activities that are accountable to people and communities. It is primarily aimed at country-level staff responsible for implementing development or humanitarian projects and programmes. It provides an introduction to Oxfam GB's approach to accountability and an explanation of its Minimum Standards on Accountability, including 'how-to' guidelines and good practice examples.

http://policy-practice.oxfam.org.uk/~media/Files/policy_and_practice/methods_approaches/monitoring_evaluation/Accountability_Starter_Pack_for_web.ashx

Outcome Mapping

A website providing a number of resources on Outcome Mapping, including an overview brochure and frequently asked questions, as well as more in-depth practitioner resources.

<http://www.idrc.ca/EN/Resources/Publications/Pages/ArticleDetails.aspx?PublicationID=1004>

Who Counts? The Quiet Revolution of Participation and Numbers, R Chambers

This paper provides an overview of the way in which participatory approaches and methods can generate quantitative ('participatory numbers') as well as qualitative data.

<http://www.ids.ac.uk/files/Wp296.pdf>

Shifting Power? Assessing the Impact of Transparency and Accountability Initiatives, R McGee and J Gaventa, IDS, November 2011

<http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display&type=Document&id=4209>

Oxfam America's Impact Heartbeat (video and document)

MEL guidance on longer-term programme Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XLZT-L2W7d4>

Oxfam Resources

Analysing and Reviewing Data, Oxfam GB's Programme Framework

Section 4 gives detailed guidance on collecting, analysing and reviewing data.

Increasing our Accountability to Communities through Programme Monitoring: A Guide for HECA Programme Managers

A practical guide to addressing accountability through our programmes.

Novib's RBA Toolkit

In 2005, the Research and Development Bureau undertook a study to explore how Oxfam Novib and counterparts apply a rights-based approach. This report contains 23 case studies described in the course of the project. The introduc-

tion contains background information on the rights-based approach, as well as describing the choice and methodology of the case studies, summarising their most striking outcomes and finishing with a set of reflections.

Thematic Hubs as Mechanisms for Organisational Learning

This Oxfam Australia Learning Paper explores different models of organisational learning, drawing on examples from NGOs in Australia and Europe to highlight how different organisations have focused their learning and the various vehicles used. It also briefly explores some conceptual models for translating knowledge into organisational learning and changed practice. The last section of the paper shares Oxfam Australia's experience of implementing a learning mechanism tied to its organisational priorities – the four Change Goal Hubs: Gender Justice, Economic Justice, Active Citizenship and Accountability, and Essential Services.

Further reading

Measuring Results, Governance and Social Development Resource Centre

This guide introduces some of the core debates and considerations for development practitioners involved in designing and managing M&E activities in governance and social development programmes. It introduces key tools and approaches, provides case studies of applying different methodologies, and presents lessons learned from international experience of M&E in a range of developing country contexts.

<http://www.gsdrc.org/docs/open/ME5.pdf>

Monitoring and Evaluation Wiki, AWID

An online resource aimed at stimulating experience sharing and building a body of practical knowledge and experience of M&E in terms of measuring gender equality (or other related human rights issues). There are two primary sections. The first is for individuals working on M&E or assessments to share thoughts, struggles or successes with other members of the community. The second is a compendium with descriptions of major M&E frameworks, approaches and tools used to track social change and justice, along with the link to their original source. It also provides a brief overview and critical analysis of their strengths and weaknesses.

<http://awidme.pbworks.com/w/page/36050854/FrontPage>

Citizen voice and state accountability: Towards theories of change that embrace contextual dynamics, ODI

This paper provides a critical analysis of a series of citizen voice and accountability case studies in order to develop patterns of observation and thought lines. When put together, these form an analytical framework for developing theories of change for citizen voice and accountability projects. The analytical framework focuses attention on how to explore, understand and explain change as it occurs in a dynamic context, and how this can help in the formation of more realistic citizen voice and accountability objectives and the resultant outcomes.

<http://www.odi.org.uk/sites/odi.org.uk/files/odi-assets/publications-opinion-files/7557.pdf>

Measuring Empowerment in Practice, World Bank

This paper presents an analytic framework that can be used to measure and monitor empowerment processes and outcomes. The measuring empowerment (ME) framework illustrates how to gather data on empowerment and structure its analysis. The framework can be used to measure empowerment at both the intervention level and the country level, as a part of poverty or governance monitoring.

http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTEMPowerment/Resources/41307_wps3510.pdf

ANNEX – CASE STUDY: THE INDONESIA LISTEN PROGRAMME

Throughout this Learning Companion we refer to the Indonesia LISTEN programme to illustrate different aspects of the Right to Be Heard Framework and how it can be applied. This is the full case study.

The Indonesian government introduced Village Block Grants (ADD) as a means of **decentralising** resources and giving autonomy to village-level decision-making. The district government allocates a Village Block Grant of £5,700-£7,700 per village per year, which can be spent according to local priorities. Decisions about how to spend the grant should be made through a process of **community consultation and participation**. However, in practice, a **lack of accountability** and transparency often means that the ADD budget is used by village and sub-district elites to satisfy their own interests.

The Local Initiative to Strengthen and Empower Women (LISTEN) project was a pilot in four villages of East Nusa Tenggara province to **promote women's participation** and interests in grant allocation. The project was particularly concerned to support women to claim resources to enhance food security during periods of drought and food price rises.

A **power analysis** conducted by local partner CIS Timor at the start of the project showed that women faced significant constraints to participating in both formal and informal decision-making **spaces**. Both were dominated by male elites, who had **negative beliefs** about women's capacity to participate in the public sphere.

Lack of access to information about the ADD process was a further barrier to participation. Village chiefs did not share information with community members and failed to follow district government guidelines on participation in ADD planning and implementation. District officials assumed that village chiefs would follow the prescribed process and did not demand accountability. Meanwhile, the **local media** had potential to support local development through publishing public information, but did not understand that it could play an important role in promoting accountability and good governance. Therefore, many women and men at village level did not know that the grants existed, let alone that they should have a say in how the resources were spent.

Finally, **civil society organisations** working in the area were fragmented and often in competition with each other. Meaningful collaboration among CSOs was rare, meaning that there was no coherent civil society action to hold decision-makers accountable.

Against this background, the LISTEN project had three main strategies: to

create spaces for women to participate in community decision-making processes, to **build the capacity of civil society organisations** to support women to be listened to by decision-makers, and to strengthen CSOs' **ability to influence public opinion** and policy debates.

Building the skills and confidence of women to claim their rights

In each village, the project brought women together in groups called the Women's Alliance for Budget Monitoring (KPPA), each with around 10 to 20 members. CIS Timor developed simple leaflets to help the women understand how the budget process worked. The women learned how to **monitor** the implementation of block grants: they interviewed community members, identified activities funded by the block grant, and compiled a report. The women then asked the village government for the opportunity to present their findings to the village chief and traditional leaders at a **public hearing**.

The knowledge and experience the women gained through the monitoring process, and their improved access to accurate information, gave them **confidence** to talk about the budget with village leaders. The KPPA members had varying levels of education but they supported each other during the monitoring and were able to produce a strong, **evidence-based report**. Through taking part in a practical exercise, the women gained improved **awareness of their own rights**, saw that these were being neglected and were able to communicate this. Some women, such as Nelcy Pelondou in Raknamo village, emerged as particularly **strong leaders**, providing positive role models for other women.

Presenting the findings of the monitoring to village leaders had a dual purpose: it acted as an **accountability mechanism** for effective implementation of ADD and challenged male leaders' assumptions about women's capacities and role in decision-making. Village leaders recognised the accuracy and objectivity of the women's findings, and gained information that they could use to address the challenges of effective ADD implementation. The greatest success was in Fatubaa village, where authorities reallocated budget to support women to buy farming equipment and seeds in response to the KPPA's findings.

Strengthening civil society to support women's rights

The project brought CSOs together and formed a **civil society alliance**, the NTT Policy Forum, to strengthen the skills, capacity and confidence of members to work effectively together and influence decision-makers and public opinion. The number of alliance members steadily increased to 22, creating a strong movement for the promotion of women's rights.

A key area was building the research capacity of forum members, which changed their approach to influencing decision makers, and improved their relationships with them. Previously, their advocacy had been based on opinions, but research enabled them to build a solid argument based on evidence and facts to influence debates. This increased their confidence to **engage in lobbying**, and also gave decision-makers a more positive image of their work. A concrete achievement was the successful lobbying of the Timor Tengah Utara District parliament to pass a District Regulation on Food Security, committing to realise food security for women and poor households

in the district.

The NTT Policy Forum also successfully built **relationships with the local print media** and persuaded them to play a more active role in holding government to account. In total, 21 articles on women's access to public budgets were published from November 2010 to January 2011, which gave the issues greater visibility and began to influence policy debates. Through linking the village women's groups with the NTT Policy Forum, the alliance could **support women's voices to be heard** more widely, for example, by helping the women to talk about their experiences in the media.

The NTT Policy Forum has **gained legitimacy** and is now consulted by the provincial and district government during policymaking processes, to contribute CSOs' perspectives on development challenges in the province. Being recognised by decision-makers is an important step towards influencing the government on women's rights. However, it remains unclear at this stage to what extent decision-makers are genuinely open to influence.

Strengthening institutions – the missing piece of the puzzle?

The project focused its work on two key principles of the Right to Be Heard: supporting people to raise their voice and claim their right, and holding power holders to account. Although it made some significant gains, there are still challenges that need to be addressed for women to be able to fully participate in decision-making and ensure their food security needs are met.

A more explicit focus on **strengthening the effectiveness of formal institutions of governance** may allow greater progress. For example, the KPPA has proved to be an effective mechanism for village women to contribute to the budget process and has potential to bring significant changes to the lives of women, but needs to be integrated into the village government structure to be sustainable.

At village level, CIS Timor worked hard to gain the support of village chiefs for the project. Initially suspicious about the women's activities, they eventually changed their minds and provided opportunities for women to engage in dialogue with them. They also welcomed the opportunity to develop greater understanding of their responsibilities in relation to ADD, as they had received little support from their district-level counterparts.

On the other hand, while the project has sought to influence district-level authorities through lobbying and the media, it has not engaged directly with them. District officials still withhold public information from CSO members despite the existence of the Public Information Disclosure Act. They continue to divert public budgets for their own purposes – for example, to fund election campaigns. These are significant barriers to good governance which it will be difficult to address indirectly.

We are grateful to ActionAid Denmark for allowing us to use content from **The Just and Democratic Governance Series**, a set of resource books which aims to support the work of civil society activists in their struggle to reduce poverty and fulfil people's rights. The series supplements ActionAid's Human Rights-Based Approach (HRBA) and focuses on key challenge areas identified in ActionAid's governance work.

These resource books can be found at: <http://www.actionaid.org/what-we-do/democratic-governance>

ActionAid also runs training courses based on the key themes in these books at the TCDC Training Institution in Arusha, Tanzania. For more information, please visit <http://www.mstcdc.or.tz/>



© Oxfam GB, September 2012, updated November 2013

Cover photo: Woman from the Gambia, tells of her experience of 'semester' marriage, in which migrants come home or stay abroad and instruct their parents or family to find a wife for them, and the long-term effects of the gender-based violence that she suffered in the marriage.

© African Centre for Democracy and Human Rights Studies

This learning companion was originally written by Adrienne Hopkins with contributions from Carol Brady and Ali Brownlie. The illustrations are by Teresa Robertson. The 2013 version updated and edited by Stephanie Debere with support from Jo Rowlands, with contributions from Oxfam America, Oxfam Australia, Oxfam GB, Oxfam Intermón and Oxfam Novib.

This publication is copyright but the text may be used free of charge for the purposes of advocacy, campaigning, education and research, provided that the source is acknowledged in full. The copyright holder requests that all such use be registered with them for impact assessment purposes. For copying in any other circumstances, for re-use in other publications, or for translation or adaptation, permission must be secured and a fee may be charged. Email policyandpractice@oxfam.org.uk.

The information in this publication is correct at the time of going to press.

Published by Oxfam GB under ISBN 978-1-78077-560-9 in April 2014.