

LIFT LIVES FOR GOOD

ACTIONS TO TACKLE INEQUALITY
AND CLIMATE CHANGE

December 2013



LIFT
LIVES
FOR
GOOD



OXFAM

SUMMARY

Oxfam's vision is of a just world without poverty. A world where people feel empowered to improve their own lives, so they can in turn help others in their communities, setting in motion a chain reaction of change. A world where this change spreads and lasts, through political solutions that tackle the root causes of poverty and create societies where empowered individuals can thrive.

We call this lifting lives for good.

This is what Oxfam has been doing for over 70 years. It's about more than just delivering aid. Through our humanitarian work Oxfam offers a helping hand to those in immediate need affected by disasters and conflicts. We also give people the lift they need through development programmes that enable communities all over the world to build a better future. We campaign tirelessly for political change at local, national and global levels, to end the injustices that prevent people from lifting their lives in the long term.

We believe that it is only by creating this chain reaction – one that links grassroots action to global decision making – that we can truly bring about effective, lasting change.

But right now, two major injustices – inequality and climate change – are threatening to stop this chain reaction and undermine the efforts of millions of people to escape poverty and hunger.

By concentrating wealth and power in the hands of the few, inequality robs the poorest people of even the minimal support they need to lift their lives, and means their voices increasingly go unheard. At the same time, through its devastating impact on crops and livelihoods, climate change is undoing poor people's efforts to feed their families and overcome poverty.

The countdown to 2015 – the deadline for meeting the Millennium Development Goals, establishing a new set of global development goals, and agreeing a global deal to curb carbon emissions – is fast approaching. 2015 is also the year of the UK general election. At this critical point in time, Oxfam's message is clear: inequality and climate change are man-made and can be overcome.

The UK – as a G8 nation and a recognized development leader – is uniquely placed to address these major issues of our time, both at home and abroad. The question is this: what will UK political leaders do to tackle inequality and climate change – and lift lives for good?

OXFAM'S CHECKLIST FOR UK LEADERS: ACTION ON INEQUALITY AND CLIMATE CHANGE

On inequality

- Put tackling inequality at the heart of decision making;
- Address the unfair UK and global tax rules that fuel inequality;
- Promote universal free public health care and education services to tackle inequality;
- Support international efforts to advance social protection;
- Promote decent work and a living wage to fight inequality.

On climate change

- Invest in a low carbon future in the UK;
- Support climate resilience and pro-poor low carbon transitions in developing countries;
- Promote ambitious global agreements on climate change;
- Shift finance from fossil fuels and promote sustainable energy access;
- Mobilize finance to fund climate adaptation and a low carbon transition.

1. OXFAM: LIFTING LIVES SINCE 1942

In 1942, against the backdrop of wartime Britain, the Oxford Committee for Famine Relief was founded to supply vital relief to civilians in occupied countries who were suffering as a result of the Allied blockade, which was stopping innocent civilians from feeding their families. Oxfam – as we soon became known – mobilized funds and food parcels for those in immediate need. But we didn't stop there. We recognized from the outset that, to bring about lasting change, humanitarian relief has to be backed up by political solutions that tackle the underlying causes of hunger and poverty. So we campaigned tirelessly for a relaxing of the blockade.

Fast-forward to today, and those founding principles are still at the heart of Oxfam. In the wake of Typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines in November 2013, Oxfam delivered life-saving aid and gave affected communities the immediate lift they needed to get through the crisis. At the same time, at global climate talks in Warsaw, we campaigned for more financial support for the millions of people who are increasingly at risk from such disasters, and for an ambitious global deal to prevent the worst climate change impacts. Our message was clear: Typhoon Haiyan presents a stark warning of what climate change could mean for all of us, and collective, political action is needed now to prevent further suffering in the future.

The belief in a chain reaction – from the individual, to the community, to local, national, regional and global change – shapes Oxfam's development work all over the world. From an innovative dairy programme in Sri Lanka, to a revolutionary system of rice-growing in Liberia and seed-growing cooperatives in Nepal, we are giving people the small lift they need to change their own lives and act as a catalyst to lift the lives of an entire community. This is why in 2012–13 we provided humanitarian assistance to 6.2 million people in 23 countries. It's why in 2011–12, Oxfam supported 250,000 people to improve their access to markets, so they could improve their livelihoods. And it's also why, in the same year, Oxfam provided one million people with information about disaster preparedness and climate change.

Kalpana Oli, Nepal – farmer, businesswoman, mother

'I am close to achieving my dream... Before, other people didn't believe in me, that I could support myself and my family. But now I am doing this hard work and everyone appreciates my effort. They respect me.'

Kalpana has come a step closer to realizing her dream because of an Oxfam-backed project that is giving her, her family, and her wider community a huge lift.

Kalpana has joined Oxfam partner, Pavrita (meaning 'pure' or 'unselfish'), a seed-growing co-operative that supports women farmers to learn new skills and pool resources to grow their own high-quality seed crops.

It was the lift she needed to change her family's future – for good. And the lift that Oxfam gave this remote community has started a chain reaction that's gathering momentum; the co-operative has forged relationships with a major bank, national seed companies, and professional mentors.

But, to achieve change that lasts for good, we know that entire societies, as well as communities, need a lift – and that this requires major political shifts. For innovative development projects to be replicated – at scale – all over the world, this means ensuring there is enough life-saving aid to fund such projects. This is why Oxfam has played a significant role in movements for change – such as Make Poverty History, and the Enough Food for Everyone IF campaign – which pushed successive UK governments to deliver their promise to spend 0.7 per cent of national income on life-saving aid.

Sukitha Kumarapar, Sri Lanka – dairy farmer and businesswoman

‘People come to our co-op every day and ask if they can join. People know now that there are many advantages of being a member of the co-op.’

Sukitha and her family live in Muruganwr, in southern Vavuniya, Sri Lanka. For 30 years her village was on the border of a conflict zone between rebel and government forces. When her family returned from a refugee camp after the end of the conflict, they found houses and roads destroyed, crops ruined, and fields overgrown.

Oxfam has helped to set up a number of dairy co-operatives in the area. A family receives a cow along with training in how to look after it. The milk provides extra nutrition for their children, and the surplus is pooled and sold on to nearby businesses and schools, or used to make a range of dairy products such as ghee, toffee and ice lollies.

Along with her sisters, Sukitha works at her local dairy co-op. During the four years she has been there it has grown to over 300 members. This chain reaction has spurred a revival in the local economy and lifted the lives of many families for good.

For development initiatives to be one part of wider, systemic changes that support people to thrive in the long run, governments need to introduce policies that make change last. This is why Oxfam has also been part of efforts, for example, to call for a Food Security Bill in India that would enshrine the right to food in law and subsidize food for 75 per cent of the population – around 800 million of India’s poorest people.¹

This approach permeates all of Oxfam’s work – setting in motion a chain reaction of change at multiple levels with the power to lift the lives of millions of people, for good.

Susana Edwards, Liberia – farmer

‘It’s better to have your own farm than to have to buy rice. When they empower you and you begin to work, you get a lot of food; through the food you get money, which means the children can go to school.’

Susana Edwards is 53. She lives in one of the poorest regions of Liberia, and she has brought up her family largely alone, in addition to caring for her elderly mother. Like most traditional farmers, Susana found it difficult to grow a decent crop because of pests and poor, dry soil.

Oxfam has worked with communities in Liberia to turn swamps into rice paddies. We’ve supported local families to clear fields and rebuild or repair dams and irrigation systems. But the biggest change is that farmers can plant a new strain of fast-growing rice that can be harvested within just three months. It’s started a chain reaction that will change the future for thousands of Liberia’s poorest people.



2.TACKLING THE ISSUES OF OUR TIME: INEQUALITY AND CLIMATE CHANGE

In Oxfam's work with communities all over the world, it is becoming clear that the chain reaction of change needed to lift lives for good risks being broken by two major and interconnected challenges: inequality and climate change.

Inequality and climate change are born of the same injustice – a gross unfairness in the distribution of the world's resources. The 2013 Global Wealth Report shows that the richest one per cent now hold more than 46 per cent of the world's wealth, while the poorest 90 per cent have just 14 per cent.² The world's richest developed countries account for around 70 per cent of historic carbon emissions since 1850.³ And richer people have bigger carbon footprints – studies suggest that in 2008, over half the world's carbon emissions came from just 700 million high emitters.⁴

Oxfam witnesses daily the injustice of growing inequality, which acts as a barrier to fighting poverty, and the creeping and insidious impacts of climate change on the people we work with.



INEQUALITY

The problem

For decades, Oxfam has worked to increase access to high-quality health care and education. Despite great progress, millions of families in the poorest countries still have to choose which of their children they can afford to send to school, and which must miss out on an education. Meanwhile, millions of people still go without medical help when they need it, putting their lives at risk.

Today, in rich and poor countries alike, there are huge black holes in the government budgets needed to fund these basic services. According to data in the Government Spending Watch

database, the impact of the economic crisis and stagnating aid flows mean that, between 2008 and 2012, more than half of developing countries have reduced their education spending, and two-thirds have seen a decline in health spending.⁵ And in the UK – one of the richest countries in the world – the combination of the recession and the government’s austerity policies is hitting the poorest people hardest and widening inequality. In May 2013, Oxfam estimated that at least half a million people in the UK were reliant on food banks.

Tackling food poverty in the UK

Lorna, 33, works as a dinner lady and lives in Tower Hamlets, London. Even though Lorna works as many hours as she can, putting food on the table for herself and her children has become harder and harder as her income has shrunk in comparison to increasing living costs.

Last June, Lorna travelled to Parliament to raise her concerns about the rise of food poverty in the UK with a group of MPs and Peers at the launch of our report, *Walking the Breadline*.⁶ As a result of our campaigning – together with the Trussell Trust and other charities – an All-Party Parliamentary Group on Food Poverty has been established, which is exploring running a focused inquiry on the rapid growth of food bank use in the UK.

Doing a decent day’s work does not necessarily mean bringing home a living wage. Tea pickers in Malawi are living below the extreme poverty line of \$1.25 a day, even though they are earning the minimum wage.⁷ Inequality of pay is also a serious problem in the UK. Some more progressive companies are starting to do something about this, showing that change is possible. But in 2012, the CEOs of the richest 100 UK companies took home an average of £4.25m and enjoyed an average pay rise of ten per cent.⁸ Yet only six of them paid their employees a living wage.⁹



**IN 2012,
CEOS OF THE
RICHEST 100 UK
COMPANIES
TOOK HOME AN
AVERAGE OF
£4.25M**



**ONLY SIX
OF THESE
COMPANIES
PAID A
LIVING WAGE**

It's not that the money doesn't exist. We're not broke, but we are allowing the richest and most powerful in society to get away without paying their fair share. In Namibia and Bolivia, the richest ten per cent earn 100 times more than the poorest ten per cent.¹⁰ And, as the rich get richer, they also become more powerful – making it even harder for those at the bottom to catch up.

Inequality undermines poverty reduction. If South Africa decreased income inequality by just 10 percentage points, this would lift 1.5 million people out of absolute poverty. But if inequality levels remain static, there will still be more than eight million South Africans living in poverty by 2020.¹¹ Recent findings also suggest that chronic inequality stunts long-term economic growth.¹² Inequality is socially corrosive, morally wrong, and is man-made.

Worryingly, the richest are also able to rig the rules in their favour. Like the rules that allow tax havens to provide secrecy for rich companies and individuals, so they can dodge paying their fair share. Oxfam estimates that governments around the world lose around £100bn in tax from rich individuals because of these 'treasure islands'.¹³ Unfair and secretive tax systems cost developing countries an estimated \$160bn each year, effectively robbing poor people of the services and funds that could enable them to better their lives. In Indonesia, for example, ending corporate tax dodging could help 3.5 million farmers provide food for their families.¹⁴

Keeping the G8 honest on tax dodging

In 2013, ahead of the UK-hosted G8 summit in Northern Ireland, Oxfam joined the Enough Food For Everyone IF campaign, calling for an end to the tax dodging that robs billions of dollars from poor countries every year.

Alongside others, Oxfam called on the UK government to take concrete steps to tackle tax secrecy in the ten UK Overseas Territories and Crown Dependencies that are considered tax havens. Since the G8, these territories have agreed to be bound by an existing global tax treaty, meaning they will have to share tax information with developing countries covered by the treaty

We also campaigned for an end to the practice that allows individuals and companies to dodge tax by hiding their profits behind 'phantom firms'. Thanks to the pressure we put on governments – from public events with media to petitions and rallies – all G8 countries brought an action plan to the summit to tackle this issue.

Income inequality is both driven by and exacerbates other inequalities – the majority of the world's poor are women. The disproportionate impact of poverty on women and girls is no accident. Systematic discrimination against women and girls is both a cause and a result of the inequality that drives poverty. Their unequal position in society translates into less voice and less control over their lives – both in the home and in society at large.

Research commissioned by Oxfam and conducted by Research Now, shows that two-thirds of UK citizens think that the rich have too much power. Citizens of other countries feel the same, and there is a growing demand for change.

The solutions

Free health care and education are strong weapons against inequality. Free services mean that nobody is turned away because they are unable to pay, and act as ‘virtual income’ because otherwise poor people would spend a huge proportion of their income paying for these services directly. In the UK, for example, health care and education are worth as much to the poorest 20 per cent of people as their entire post-tax income.¹⁵

Voting ‘Health For All’ in Zambia

In the run-up to Zambia’s closely-contested national elections in September 2011, Oxfam supported partners to build a ‘Vote Health For All’ campaign. This enabled ordinary families to challenge all the political parties to put health care at the top of their agenda – to improve an underfunded and under-served health care system, which had failed to live up to its potential to fight inequality.

The campaign ran awareness-raising concerts, partnered with local artists and musicians, to spread the word, and organized local meetings where people could challenge their parliamentary candidates directly. It led to huge changes to Zambia’s health system, including the new government increasing spending on health care by 45 per cent in its first budget, ending user fees at health clinics in urban areas, and providing funding for 2,500 more health workers.

Social protection or giving cash top-ups to the poorest people are similarly effective in tackling inequality, by putting money into the pockets of those who need it most. Brazil’s Bolsa Familia cash transfer scheme has won awards for its strong equalizing effect and its positive impact on the lives of the poorest people.

Fairer taxation is itself a weapon against inequality because progressive taxes take more from those who can afford them and invest money in the public good – such as inequality-busting health and education services. Our research shows that a modest increase in taxation of just 0.5–2 per cent across a range of low and middle income countries could raise \$134bn every year, enough to finance the achievement of about one-third of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).¹⁶

Decent work and a living wage for the poorest workers in society are crucial to turning the tables on inequality. Governments everywhere have a responsibility to ensure companies offer decent, stable work, on a living wage, so that the private sector is a force for tackling poverty and inequality. In Brazil, increases to the minimum wage have proven a key factor in tackling poverty and closing the gap between rich and poor.

Promoting women's voices in Nepal

Oxfam's Raising Her Voice programme¹⁷ in Nepal has worked to increase women's participation in community decision-making bodies, contribute to better enforcement of national legislation to protect women's rights, and to better communicate women's rights issues to a wider Nepalese audience.

Since Raising Her Voice began in Nepal in 2008, nearly 1,500 leadership positions in local decision-making bodies have been filled by women; there is evidence of a change in attitude towards women's rights at local and national levels; and the project has contributed to the passing of a national law on violence against women. An awareness-raising campaign has reached more than 89,000 people in three districts alone.

Active and equal citizens who have access to information and freedom to organize themselves can hold their governments to account to introduce policies that tackle inequality. Policies and laws that promote gender equality help to strengthen women's rights and voices to demand more from those in power.

CLIMATE CHANGE

The problem

The world produces enough food to feed everyone. But every day, over 840 million people go to bed hungry. This is a scandal – and climate change is set to make things even worse.

The world's poorest people face the greatest risk from climate change and are already bearing the brunt of its impacts. Climate change was a key factor in the Horn of Africa drought;¹⁸ while in the Sahel, it has led to poor harvests and food shortages for already vulnerable people, and has combined with other factors to increase violent conflict over land and water.¹⁹ The scale and magnitude of Typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines – the strongest storm ever to make landfall, causing widespread devastation – is consistent with scientific predictions of more intense storms as a result of man-made climate change.

Analysis suggests that climate change could increase the number of people at risk of hunger by 10–20 per cent by 2050, compared to a world with no climate change.²⁰ It is estimated that climate change could also increase child malnutrition by 20 per cent, eliminating improvements that may otherwise have occurred.²¹



**THE WORLD'S RICHEST COUNTRIES
ACCOUNT FOR 71.5% OF HISTORIC CARBON
EMISSIONS DESPITE ONLY MAKING UP
17.3% OF THE POPULATION**

Oxfam's work with smallholder farmers in developing countries indicates that creeping changes in the seasons – including longer, hotter dry periods and unpredictable rainfall patterns – are making it harder for farmers to know when best to sow, cultivate, and harvest their crops. Women are especially vulnerable: globally, they do the bulk of farm work, so have to work harder, for longer, and in hotter conditions,²² and must travel further and for longer to fetch water, as more sources dry up.²³

Extreme events today offer a glimpse of potential future impacts. In 2012, the worst US drought in 50 years reduced the maize crop by 25 per cent,²⁴ contributing to global maize price rises of around 40 per cent.²⁵ That same year was the UK's second wettest on record,²⁶ leading to the lowest wheat yields in 20 years.²⁷ The average price of staple foods could more than double in the next 20 years, with up to half of the increase caused by changing temperatures and rainfall patterns as a result of climate change.²⁸ On top of these increases, in 2030 extreme weather events in a single year could bring about further price spikes of a comparable magnitude.²⁹ Food price spikes can be a matter of life and death to many people in developing countries, who spend as much as 75 per cent of their income on food.³⁰ Increases in global food prices also affect poor people on low incomes in the UK, forcing more people to rely on food banks to meet their basic needs.

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change stated in its most recent report that to avoid dangerous levels of climate change, beyond a rise of 2°C, the world can only emit a total of between 800 and 880 gigatonnes of carbon. Of this, about 530 gigatonnes had already been emitted by 2011.³¹ The report also confirmed that the burning of fossil fuels has been the main contributor to the 40 per cent increase in CO₂ concentrations since the industrial revolution.³²

Some 60–80 per cent of the fossil fuel reserves of companies listed on global stock markets is 'unburnable' if the world is to have a chance of not exceeding global warming of 2°C. Yet investment and subsidies continue to prop up the fossil fuel industry. Research shows that fossil fuel subsidies cost over half a trillion dollars globally in 2011, and up to \$90bn in the OECD alone.

For every \$6 of subsidies pumped into fossil fuels, renewable energy enjoys only a \$1 subsidy. This is despite warnings by the International Energy Agency that it is a false economy to delay investment in renewables – that for every \$1 of investment in cleaner technology that is avoided by the power sector before 2020, an additional \$4.30 will need to be spent after 2020 to compensate for the increased emissions that result.³³ This failure to invest in renewables is also despite the fact that fossil fuels often fail to deliver promised benefits to the poorest people. For example, millions of India's Adivasi tribal people live in states such as Orissa, Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh that are being devastated by coal mining. And in South Africa, where the vast majority of electricity is generated by coal, low-income households use only 2.4 per cent of electricity despite making up 25 per cent of the population. In the UK, an over-reliance on fossil fuels and an underinvestment in renewable energy has led to an over-exposure to ever-rising global wholesale energy costs. Such costs make up the vast majority of skyrocketing energy bills, which are forcing the poorest to choose between heating and eating.³⁴

One of the obstacles to kicking the fossil fuel habit is the absence of a fair global deal on climate change. At the climate change negotiations in Durban in 2011, all countries agreed that by 2015 a global deal would be reached to bring down emissions – coming into effect from 2020. But, with less than two years to go, high-emitting countries have yet to come forward with ambitious emission reduction plans, and political rhetoric is shifting from reduction ‘commitments’ to looser language on ‘contributions’.³⁵

Fractious global negotiations are also made harder by the failure of rich countries to pay their fair share to support poor countries to respond to climate change. Global estimates of the costs of adapting to climate change range from around \$27bn to in excess of \$100bn per year.³⁶ Country-level assessments of adaptation costs in Nigeria alone reach \$11bn annually.³⁷ In 2009 in Copenhagen, rich countries committed to providing \$100bn of climate change finance annually by 2020. Yet at the recent talks in Warsaw, richer countries failed to outline a credible plan for who will pay the bill for adaptation, and how to scale up finance towards 2020.

Closing the adaptation finance gap for the world’s poorest countries

In 2010, Oxfam published a report highlighting the ‘adaptation gap’,³⁸ and has campaigned consistently for increased financial support for adaptation. Partly in response to pressure from Oxfam, the UK government has committed 50 per cent of its climate finance to adaptation, and globally the proportion of finance being channelled to adaptation is estimated to have doubled in recent years.

In the Philippines, Oxfam and our partners, Dakila and the Institute for Climate and Sustainable Cities, launched a campaign calling on the national government to set up a climate change adaptation fund. This resulted in a \$25m-a-year ‘People’s Survival Fund’ being approved by the Philippines Congress in June 2013.

The solutions

A global deal to limit emissions. A global deal to limit carbon emissions is needed by 2015 – with all countries, and especially high-emitting countries, coming to the table with robust commitments, in line with what science indicates is needed.

Low carbon development and sustainable, pro-poor energy access. Measures are required to shift public and private finance away from climate ‘bads’, such as fossil fuels, and towards climate ‘goods’, such as renewable energy and low carbon development that benefits the poorest communities. The potential is eye-watering: in Peru, an investment of \$200m in solar energy delivered electricity to 125,000 households.³⁹

Mobilizing climate finance. Meeting the adaptation and low carbon development needs of the poorest countries requires a massive scaling up of public financial support. A clear plan is needed from the richest countries on how they will mobilize the promised \$100bn a year by 2020 in climate finance.

Better preparedness and response in Pakistan

Oxfam is helping to reduce the vulnerability of more than 21,700 people living on the floodplains of the Indus and Chenab rivers in Punjab. Activities include training in disaster management and constructing raised emergency shelters and 'flood friendly' pit latrines. This meant that, in 2010, households received two days advanced warning of floods, rather than the usual one day, giving families more time to prepare themselves and to protect their food supplies and livestock.

Better preparedness and better response. Inevitable changes in the climate, and an increase in the number and intensity of extreme weather events, demands constant improvements in the ability of countries to prepare for, and respond to, disasters. Governments and donors need to invest in planning *before* disasters hit – for example, through better early warning systems, improved processes for identifying and communicating risks, and establishing contingency plans.

Building resilience and adapting to climate change. Reducing the vulnerability of the poorest people to climate change requires wide-reaching adaptation actions that decrease risks and build resilience. It means providing small-scale producers with the tools and training they need to better adapt to a changing climate, and ensuring there are adequate social safety nets in place for those who stand to be most affected.



Building resilience and adapting to climate change in Nepal

In Nepal, Oxfam is working with both communities and district and national planners to increase climate change resilience. This includes introducing climate-tolerant seed varieties and new vegetables to diversify production. We also helped to implement water conservation schemes, including tree planting and rainwater harvesting. Awareness raising is central to the project, including visits to help communities learn from each other as to which adaptation schemes have been particularly successful.

Evaluations showed that 86 per cent of those involved in the project were better able to reduce risk and adapt to a changing climate compared to those who had not been involved.

Compensation for loss and damage. When global warming exceeds 2°C, adaptation becomes more challenging – if not impossible – in many of the poorest parts of the world. Dealing with compensation for loss and damage is therefore crucial. Bolivia has implemented a universal agricultural insurance policy, enabling producers to obtain cover against loss and damage to crops resulting from climate change, costing \$29m and reaching 700,000 people. Ensuring there is a global agreement to provide funds for such compensation schemes is also crucial.

POLITICAL LEADERSHIP IN THE UK

Oxfam is a global movement, and much of our impact comes from working across borders and influencing different centres of power. We also have a proud history of campaigning moments in the UK. From mass mobilizations, such as Make Poverty History, to the Enough Food for Everyone IF campaign, we work with others to call on those in power to do the right thing. The UK government has often – with a bit of pushing – listened. At both G8 summits hosted by the UK since 2000, development has been at the heart of the agenda, and, in 2013, the UK for the first time delivered 0.7 per cent of national income to overseas aid.

But so much more is needed. Oxfam’s message is clear: inequality and climate change are the greatest – interconnected – challenges of this political generation. And this is not only true in terms of international development. In the UK, the growing gap between rich and poor is damaging our potential for shared economic growth and social mobility. Climate change will lead to weather-related shocks both at home and abroad that will put our own food supply at risk, and undermine long-term financial stability.

Every government has a critical role to play in fighting inequality and climate change – both within their own borders and as part of an international community. As a G8 nation and a development leader, the UK has a critical role to play on both these issues. At the time of writing, we are just over 18 months away from a general election and under two years away from the 2015 deadlines to define a new set of development goals and a new climate deal. We ask politicians of all parties to consider their responsibility to look to the future and demonstrate the leadership needed to lift lives for good, at home and abroad.

Specifically we would like to see the UK:

On inequality:

1. Put inequality at the heart of decision making – through committing to measure income inequality and assess policy decisions by their impact on inequality in the UK; and by championing a stand-alone goal to rapidly reduce inequality in the post-MDG 2015 framework.

2. Tackle the unfair UK and global tax rules that fuel inequality – through improving transparency and accountability standards to allow tax information to be shared, and enhancing parliamentary scrutiny of the City of London; increasing taxes on the top one per cent and upping corporate tax rates; establishing a financial transactions tax (a ‘Robin Hood Tax’); and increasing government capacity to tackle tax evasion.

3. Promote universal, free public health care and education services to tackle inequality – through committing UK development aid to strengthen and scale up free public services in developing countries; reversing the drastic and damaging decline in budget support for public services; stopping risky investments by profit-seeking companies in health and education; and promoting a ‘universal health coverage’ goal in the post-2015 MDG framework.

4. Support international efforts on social protection and gender equality – including promoting the need for a Social Protection Floor⁴⁰ in every country, as well as maintaining a focus on women and girls in UK development aid and promoting a stand-alone goal on gender justice in the post-2015 MDG framework.

5. Promote decent work and a living wage to fight inequality – through raising the UK minimum wage to a living wage and setting standards on decent work; supporting the living wage in the UK and overseas by committing to all major government-procured goods and services coming from living-wage employers, and requiring all UK-domiciled multinationals to do the same.

On climate change:

1. Invest in a low carbon future in the UK – through increased investment in low carbon infrastructure and energy, ensuring that the poorest people benefit from schemes to insulate homes and bring down energy bills, and curbing the profits of energy companies.

2. Invest in climate resilience and low carbon development overseas – through using UK development climate finance to promote access to sustainable energy and improve resilience to climate change, especially among small-scale farmers.

3. Promote ambitious global agreements on climate change and sustainable energy access – by taking leadership to achieve a global deal on climate change in 2015 through ambitious EU emission reduction targets, and promoting a climate change goal as part of the post-2015 MDG framework.

4. Shift finance from fossil fuels and promote sustainable energy access – through reviewing and reforming UK fossil fuel subsidies; introducing measures to curb private finance flows to dirty fossil fuels; and leading high-level political efforts to advance sustainable energy access in the poorest countries.

5. Mobilize finance to fund climate adaptation and a low carbon transition – through maintaining the UK’s commitment on climate finance and urging other rich countries to pay their fair share towards the promised \$100bn.

CONCLUSION

Lifting lives for good means creating a chain reaction that empowers individuals and communities to help themselves, and in turn, to demand political change that can lift entire societies.

Oxfam works to promote lasting change from grassroots to global levels – through humanitarian, development and campaigning work. But all of our work stands to be undermined if the two great injustices of our time – inequality and climate change – are not tackled with the necessary urgency.

Inequality and climate change are both the result of the richest and most powerful individuals and countries taking more than their fair share, robbing the poorest of the support they need to build better lives.

Future generations in the UK will be the judge of whether their leaders did enough to tackle these two major and interconnected issues. Will they be able to say the UK did everything it could bust inequality and stop climate change – to lift lives for good?

Notes

- ¹ BBC (2013) 'India upper house passes cheap food plan', 3 September, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-india-23940298>
- ² G. Keating, et al (2013) 'Global Wealth Report 2013', Credit Suisse Research Institute, p.10, <https://publications.credit-suisse.com/tasks/render/file/?fileID=BCDB1364-A105-0560-1332EC9100FF5C83>
- ³ T. Herzog, J. Pershing, and K.A. Baumert (2005) 'Navigating the Numbers: Greenhouse Gas Data and International Climate Policy', World Resources Institute, p.32, http://www.wri.org/sites/default/files/pdf/navigating_numbers.pdf and 'Fair Shares in a Constrained World' (2013) Christian Aid <http://www.christianaid.org.uk/images/fair-shares-in-a-constrained-world-report-november-2013.pdf>
- ⁴ S. Chakravartya, et al (2009) 'Sharing global CO2 emission reductions among one billion high emitters', PNAS, <http://www.pnas.org/content/early/2009/07/02/0905232106.full.pdf+html?sid=00a65f93-9a4e-4dd7-b816-9928d43d59a2>
- ⁵ M. Martin and R. Watts (2013) 'Putting Progress at Risk? MDG spending in developing countries. The Government Spending Watch Report', Oxfam and Development Finance International, <http://oxf.am/Upm>
- ⁶ N. Cooper and S. Dumbleton (2013) 'Walking the Breadline: The scandal of food poverty in 21st-century Britain', Oxfam GB and Church Action on Poverty, <http://oxf.am/UQL>
- ⁷ Oxfam and Ethical Tea Partnerships (2013) 'Understanding Wage Issues in the Tea Industry', <http://oxf.am/wNZ>
- ⁸ The median total remuneration of FTSE 100 bosses increased 10 per cent last year (2011-12) to £3.7m. Survey by Manifest and MMSK, <http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/984c19be-b3ed-11e1-a3db-00144feabdc0.html#axzz2ndejZtAl> and <http://blog.manifest.co.uk/2012/06/5739.html#sthash.RLJnVKIE.dpbs>
- ⁹ Only six out of the 100 FTSE 100 companies pay a living wage (as of 16th December 2013). Living Wage Foundation, <http://www.livingwage.org.uk/employers>
- ¹⁰ D. Itriago (2011) 'Owning Development: Taxation to fight poverty', Oxfam, <http://oxf.am/wN4>
- ¹¹ R. Gower, C. Pearce, and K. Raworth (2012) 'Left Behind by the G20? How inequality and environmental degradation threaten to exclude poor people from the benefits of economic growth', Oxfam, <http://oxf.am/oQa>
- ¹² A. Berg and J. Ostry (2011) 'Inequality and Unsustainable Growth: Two sides of the Same Coin?', International Monetary Fund, <http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/sdn/2011/sdn1108.pdf>
- ¹³ Oxfam (2013) 'Lost tax haven cash enough to end extreme poverty – twice over', press release, 2 May, <http://www.oxfam.org.uk/blogs/2013/05/tax-haven-cash-enough-to-end-extreme-poverty>
- ¹⁴ UN Environment Programme (2011) 'Towards a Green Economy: Pathways to Sustainable Development and Poverty Eradication', UNEP, <http://www.unep.org/greeneconomy/greeneconomyreport/tabid/29846/default.aspx>
- ¹⁵ Office for National Statistics (2013) 'The Effects of Taxes and Benefits on Household Income 2011/2012', press release, 10 July, <http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/household-income/the-effects-of-taxes-and-benefits-on-household-income/2011-2012/index.html>
- ¹⁶ D. Itriago (2011) op. cit.
- ¹⁷ More information on the Raising Her Voice programme can be found on the Oxfam GB website: <http://policy-practice.oxfam.org.uk/our-work/citizen-states/raising-her-voice>
- ¹⁸ F. C. Lott, N. Christidis, and P. A. Stott (2013) 'Can the 2011 East African drought be attributed to human-induced climate change?', Met Office Hadley Centre, http://africaclimatconference.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/B4-09_Lott.pdf
- ¹⁹ UN Environment Programme (2011), 'Livelihood Security: Climate Change, Migration and Conflict in the Sahel', UNEP, pp. 8-9, http://www.un.org/en/events/environmentconflictday/pdf/UNEP_Sahel_EN.pdf
- ²⁰ The research assumes 'a development pathway of continuing high population growth and regional disparity of income'. M.L. Parry, et al (2009) 'Climate change and hunger: Responding to the challenge', World Food Programme, citing W. Easterling and P. Aggarwal (2007) 'Food, Fibre and Forest Products', in M.L. Parry et al (2007) 'Climate Change 2007: Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability. Contribution of Working Group II to the Fourth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change', Cambridge University Press, <http://www.ipcc.ch/pdf/assessment-report/ar4/wg2/ar4-wg2-chapter5.pdf>
- ²¹ G. Nelson, et al. (2009) 'Climate Change: Impact on Agriculture and Costs of Adaptation', International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), <http://www.ifpri.org/publication/climate-change-impact-agriculture-and-costs-adaptation>
- ²² See, for example, Mary Robinson Foundation Climate Justice (2012) 'The Gender Dimensions of Food and Nutrition Security in the Context of Climate Change in Uganda', policy brief, <http://www.mrfcj.org/pdf/2012-11-27-Uganda-Policy-Document.pdf>
- ²³ Oxfam (2009) 'Even the Himalayas Have Stopped Smiling: Climate change, poverty and adaptation in Nepal', Oxfam, <http://oxf.am/wNo>
- ²⁴ OECD/Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (2013) 'OECD-FAO Agricultural Outlook 2013', OECD Publishing, Box 1.1, http://www.keepeek.com/Digital-Asset-Management/oecd/agriculture-and-food/oecd-fao-agricultural-outlook-2013_agr_outlook-2013-en
- ²⁵ Ibid.
- ²⁶ UK Met Office (21 January 2013) 'Statistics for December and for 2012 – is the UK getting wetter?', <http://www.metoffice.gov.uk/news/releases/archive/2013/2012-weather-statistics>

- ²⁷ See National Farmers' Union survey of arable members published in October 2012: <http://www.nfuonline.com>
- ²⁸ Average prices in 2030 compared with 2010 trend prices. D. Willenbockel (2011) 'Exploring Food Price Scenarios Towards 2030 with a Global Multi-Region Model', Oxfam, <http://oxf.am/wNJ>
- ²⁹ D. Willenbockel (2012) 'Extreme Weather Events and Crop Price Spikes in a Changing Climate: Illustrative Global Simulation Scenarios', Oxfam, <http://oxf.am/wN3>
- ³⁰ M. Ivanic and W. Martin (2008) 'The Implications of Higher Global Food Prices for Poverty in Low-Income Countries', World Bank Policy Research Working Paper, <http://elibrary.worldbank.org/doi/pdf/10.1596/1813-9450-4594>
- ³¹ Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (2013) 'Climate Change 2013: The Physical Science Basis', p.9, http://www.climatechange2013.org/images/uploads/WGI_AR5_SPM_brochure.pdf
- ³² Ibid.
- ³³ International Energy Agency (2011) 'The world is locking itself into an unsustainable future which would have far-reaching consequences, IEA warns in its latest World Energy Outlook', press release, 9 November, <http://www.iea.org/newsroomandevents/pressreleases/2011/november/name,20318,en.html>
- ³⁴ For a breakdown of UK energy bill costs, see: M. Chalabi (2013) 'Why do energy bills rise?', the *Guardian*, 11 October, <http://www.theguardian.com/politics/reality-check/2013/oct/11/energy-prices-bills-rise-sse>
- ³⁵ F. Harvey (2013) 'Warsaw Climate Talks set 2015 target for plans to curb emissions', the *Guardian*, 24 November, <http://www.theguardian.com/environment/2013/nov/24/warsaw-climate-talks-greenhouse-gas-emissions>
- ³⁶ T. Carty (2013) 'Adaptation and the \$100 Billion Commitment: Why private investment cannot replace public finance in meeting critical climate adaptation needs', Oxfam, <http://oxf.am/wJp>
- ³⁷ Ibid.
- ³⁸ 'Climate Finance Post Copenhagen: The \$100bn questions' (2010) Oxfam International <http://policy-practice.oxfam.org.uk/publications/climate-finance-post-copenhagen-the-100bn-questions-114104>
- ³⁹ El Ministerio de Energía y Minas del Perú (2013) 'Más de Dos Millones de Peruanos Tendrán Energía Eléctrica a Través de Paneles Solar', 8 July, <http://www.minem.gob.pe/descripcion.php?idSector=12&idTitular=5533>
- ⁴⁰ For more information on the Social Protection Floor please see: <http://www.ilo.org/secsoc/areas-of-work/policy-development-and-applied-research/social-protection-floor/lang--en/index.htm>



LIFT
LIVES
FOR
GOOD



OXFAM