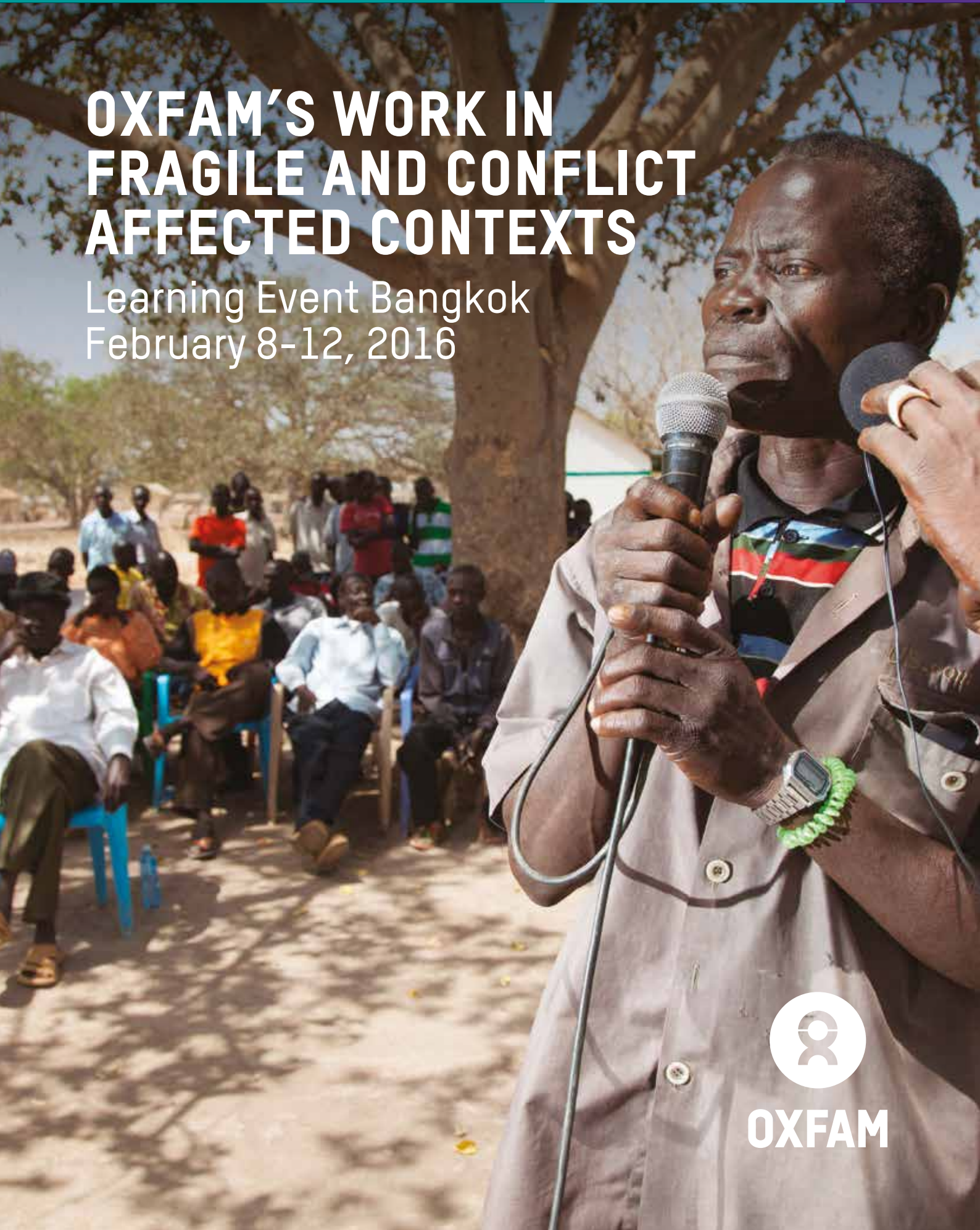


FRAGILE & CONFLICT AFFECTED CONTEXTS

# OXFAM'S WORK IN FRAGILE AND CONFLICT AFFECTED CONTEXTS

Learning Event Bangkok  
February 8-12, 2016



OXFAM

In February 2016, Oxfam hosted its first learning event on Working in Fragile and Conflict Affected Contexts to bring together a range of Oxfam and partner staff to exchange programmatic and operational learning.

A third of the world's poorest, most vulnerable and marginalised people are estimated to live in fragile and conflict-affected countries. Our work in FCACs aims to address their needs, but we recognise the importance of finding different ways to do this in these challenging contexts. In these environments, conflict is often violent, protracted and mirrored across society. These contexts are also among the most challenging for development agencies to work in. There is limited civil society space and capacity, direct threats to staff and partners and in many cases few opportunities to engage or work with the state.

Progress is often followed by setbacks, making it difficult to plan and operate. Transformative change is unlikely within our usual three to five-year strategic planning timeframes and restricted funding cycles. Yet if we are to reach the world's most vulnerable people, we need to address the drivers of fragility and conflict and find ways of working most suitable to navigating these difficult contexts.

The importance of taking time to reflect and learn on our approach to working in Fragile and Conflict Affected Contexts is a priority for Oxfam as a whole.

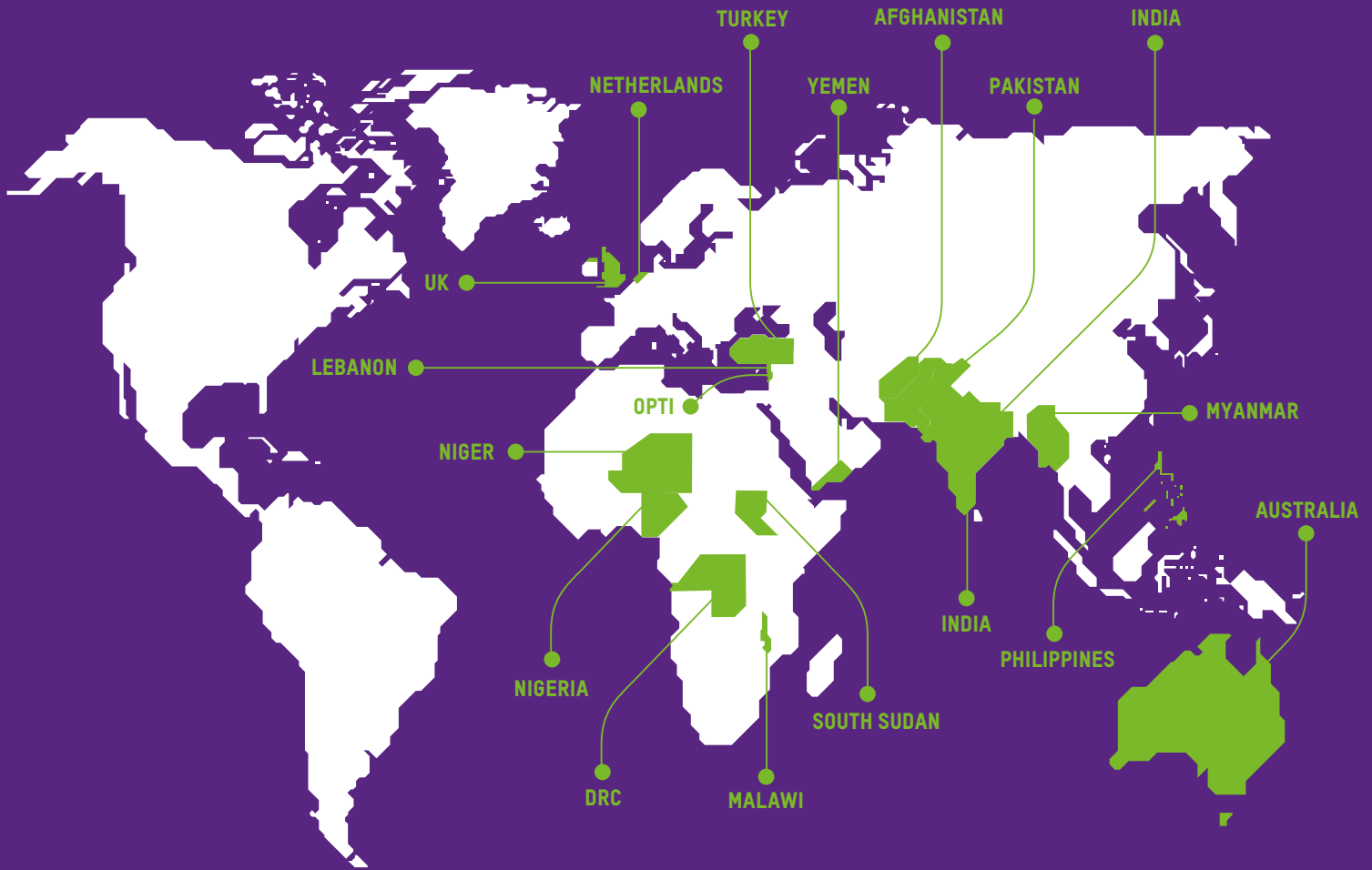
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Some  
really great  
knowledge  
sharing and  
relationship  
building  
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**FRAGILE STATE WHERE THE GOVERNMENT CANNOT OR WILL NOT DELIVER CORE FUNCTIONS TO THE MAJORITY OF ITS PEOPLE, WHERE CORE FUNCTIONS INCLUDE SERVICE ENTITLEMENTS, JUSTICE AND SECURITY**



FCAC EVENT PARTICIPANTS. PHOTO: SOFYA SHAHAB/OXFAM

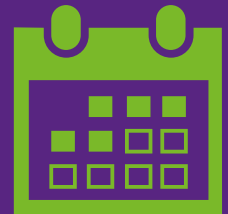
# Who attended?



55  
participants



4  
affiliates



5  
days



18  
different  
countries



3  
partner  
organisations

For the first time in Oxfam's history, programme managers working in some of the most challenging contexts gathered to share insights, learn from each other and shape the way forward for Oxfam's thinking on conflict and fragility. In total 18 countries were represented from Afghanistan to South Sudan, OPTI to Niger. Participants working in Fragile and Conflict Affected Contexts had the opportunity to reflect on how Oxfam has adapted its programming and learn about tools and approaches to improve effectiveness when faced with continuously changing conflict dynamics.

Despite such a wide range of different backgrounds, contexts and approaches, there were some clear overlaps in both the challenges and potential solutions. The event culminated in the kick-off of joint multi-country programme development for future fundraising.

Following feedback from participants during the event, Oxfam has recognised the need for an organisational commitment to the following:

**Greater technical capacity support for countries working in FCACs**

**including:** Technical advisory support for conflict analysis, supporting projects to be more sensitive to changing conflict dynamics, support for improving programme quality, additional support on programme development, mentoring and providing remote support for programme staff working in and on conflict in these contexts.

**Sharing tools and approaches among staff working in FCACs:** Establishing a community of practice for staff working in FCACs and sharing practical tools on Compass that can be used by staff such as guidelines for programming in FCACs, gender and conflict analysis guidelines, induction courses on conflict sensitivity and MEAL guidelines for FCACs.

**Institutional Commitment from Oxfam's Leadership on improving effectiveness and providing support to FCACs:** Following the learning event, a letter was sent to the Executive Directors of all Oxfam Affiliates outlining the urgency for Oxfam to work collaboratively, with suitable systems and standards for working in FCACs and the importance of joining up humanitarian, development and campaigns, to increase effectiveness.

“  
It was great to hear how much people had in common across very different contexts  
”

## CONTENTS

- » Programming in FCACs
- » Conflict sensitivity
- » Gender and FCACs
- » Working with 'unexpected' allies
- » Improving effectiveness
- » MEAL and FCACs
- » Multi Country Joint programme development
- » Contacts
- » Next steps

### PROGRAMMING IN FCACs

Each participating country gave a lively and interactive presentation of their work to kick start the workshop. This gave all staff a chance to reflect on the huge amount Oxfam is already doing in and on conflict and fragility.



PAKISTAN COUNTRY PROGRAMME DIAGRAM. PHOTO: SOFYA SHAHAB/OXFAM

**Pakistan:** (see picture) Participants shared learning from their project to contribute to **human security and good governance** by strengthening the social contract in Pakistan. By using a social accountability and participatory analysis approach, civil society has been empowered to hold local government accountable for law and order and the provision of essential services; and local government has been strengthened to understand and respond to causes of local conflict.

“ I enjoyed learning about conflict sensitivity, teamwork and the One Oxfam spirit ”

**Occupied Palestinian Territory and Israel:** Staff in the OPTI invested time in using the **Reflecting on Peace Practice** methodology. This takes a systems approach to analysing the context, including who is working where, and deciding on where and with whom to intervene. While many factors contribute to conflict in OPTI, staff and partners highlighted the impunity of Israeli authorities as a core issue that needs to be addressed in campaign work.



PARTICIPANTS ENGAGE IN PROGRAMME DESIGN FOR FCACs. PHOTO: SOFYA SHAHAB/OXFAM

“ It was really good to understand the range of our existing work and thinking about future ambitions ”

**India:** Staff chose the **humanitarian response in the conflict**-affected region of Assam as their example of programming in an FCAC. They highlighted the importance of understanding the context and identifying the drivers of conflict. With this analysis, they sought to find connectors and the local capacities for peace, as well as identifying the response’s impact on the conflict dynamics on the ground. They stressed the importance of having an integrated programme which includes livelihoods and sustainable WASH interventions, ensuring a whole community approach that builds on connectors.



CONFLICT SENSITIVE HUMANITARIAN PROGRAMMING IN INDIA. PHOTO: SOFYA SHAHAB/OXFAM

**Democratic Republic of Congo:** Staff from the Within and Without the State programme in DRC identified the importance of creating a safe space for women within the community for **dialogue between citizens and those in power**. They emphasised the threat of a predatory state and the lack of knowledge of people of their rights before the law and what they could expect from the authorities. Their strategy was to develop community action plans which involve both the supply and demand side of local governance, supporting citizens to identify the key issues they need to address in a non-confrontational way with local government.

**Niger:** The presentation highlighted the **conflict spill-over from neighbouring countries** including from Libya, Chad, Nigeria and Mali as well as the existing conflict between pastoralists and farmers and inter-ethnic conflict. They highlighted the challenges of the humanitarian response including insecurity, the high cost of interventions, coordination with other actors and what they have learned about effective cooperation with the government.



PARTICIPANTS GRAPPLE WITH THE DIFFERENT COMPLEXITIES OF WORKING IN FCACs AS PRESENTED BY JO ROWLANDS AND CAT ESSOYAN.  
PHOTO: SOFYA SHAHAB/OXFAM

**South Sudan:** Staff outlined a context of political and physical insecurity, impunity, inter-communal violence and cattle raiding, inflation, weak governance and strong traditional cultural practices. The Within and Without the State programme seeks to promote grassroots dialogue and **build on local capacities for peace**. They also seek to build on the meaningful participation of women in all aspects of governance and improve accountability for local service provision.

What we mean when we say....

**CONFLICT:**

A conflict occurs when there are real or perceived differences between two or more people (i.e. interests, wants, needs, fears, concerns) that cannot easily be reconciled.

**FRAGILITY:**

Things are fragile when order and stability are not maintained, key actors or institutions do not have legitimacy, societal expectations and capacity to meet them are not in balance, and the effects of external and internal shocks on people make survival or improvements in wellbeing difficult. The language of fragility is often used with reference to fragile states, but often fragility might apply to a specific geographic area within a state, and might be used as much in relation to markets or civil society as the state.



Programme design frameworks need to be flexible; to include local context and dynamics



**CONFLICT SENSITIVITY**

Oxfam exists to challenge injustice and promote social change. Often our work introduces new resources to poor communities. Therefore, it's important to accept that we will have an impact on conflict dynamics.

So being 'conflict sensitive' means:

- 1) **Understanding** what conflict is and what it looks like in the places where we work
- 2) **Recognising** that conflict does not just affect us – we affect it too
- 3) **Acting responsibly** by taking practical steps to at least avoid making violent conflict worse

Because contexts differ and can change rapidly, especially in FCACs, we need to **draw on the local knowledge of partners and staff** operating on the ground, building in mechanisms that allow for flexibility so that programmes can adapt quickly. We also need to know how our own programme staff fit into the context to ensure they too are being conflict sensitive. We had an extremely helpful and informative session with CDA – a collaborative learning group which specialises in field-based learning and conflict sensitivity. They led the group in reflecting on key concepts and analysing what a **Do No Harm approach** would look like in different contexts.

Participants from India highlighted the humanitarian response in **Assam** in 2012 which reached 90,000 people (see picture). OGB's fragile states programme coordinator helped conduct a conflict analysis and sensitivity training for the humanitarian programme team and provided support on **how to integrate 'conflict sensitivity' into the project cycle**. What was unique about the Oxfam India approach was the focus on journeying with the same communities from taking an initial conflict sensitive humanitarian approach to meeting immediate needs which lead on to longer term conflict transformation programming addressing root causes.





NISHANT BURAGOHAAN, HUMANITARIAN PROGRAMME COORDINATOR, INDIA. PHOTO: SOFYA SHAHAB/OXFAM

The participants at the event identified some of main **challenges** they face in mainstreaming conflict sensitivity and working more effectively in FCACs:

- Rigid institutional policies and processes that prevent agile and responsive programming
- Lack of an enabling organisational culture and strategies – such as communications, sharing of learning, including from what we get wrong, peer support, knowledge, a safe space for discussion, and incentives to acknowledge mistakes
- The need for better capacity building – including inductions, relevant skill development and the time to apply learning
- Not enough emphasis on accountability – through reviews, reinforcement, and greater oversight and integration of conflict sensitivity in organisational quality standards
- Lack of an enabling external environment from some donors that are more focused on short term restricted funding streams.

**CONFLICT TRANSFORMATION IS THE PROCESS BY WHICH CONFLICTS ARE TRANSFORMED INTO PEACEFUL OUTCOMES. THE KEY EMPHASIS IS ABOUT ADDRESSING DRIVERS OF CONFLICT IN ORDER TO DEAL WITH THE ROOT CAUSES**

Addressing these challenges and building on learning from the conflict sensitivity session, participants identified the following **recommendations** of how to improve our effectiveness in FCACs:

#### Analysis

- We need to invest more in programme design and quality to assess root causes of conflict and relationships between stakeholders as early as possible
- We should not forget to conduct macro as well as micro analysis
- More time and space need to be given to using the 'Do No Harm' methodology and support should be given to each country team to plan a process for getting it right
- When creating budgets efforts should be made to include conflict analysis and Conflict Advisor positions
- Once we have taken stock of current expertise and resources we should embed conflict sensitivity within trainings and existing manuals
- We should learn from the tangible processes used to embed gender justice throughout the organisation – for example ensuring all staff have a conflict sensitivity objective, and use specific indicators relating to conflict sensitivity
- And finally, we need accountability for conflict sensitive programming.

#### Tools you can use for Conflict Sensitivity:

<http://www.conflictsensitivity.org/how-to-guide/> Tools on closing civil society space: <https://sumus.oxfam.org/knowledge-hub-governance-citizenship/wiki/useful-tools-0>

#### Want to learn more?

The UN Staff System College offers a free online course on conflict sensitivity, which offers staff the opportunity to acquire deeper understanding, practical knowledge, and hands-on skills to utilize conflict-sensitive approaches in humanitarian, development, peacebuilding and security work:

<https://www.unssc.org/home/conflict-sensitivity-online-course>



FCAC FUTURES PANEL: PROFESSOR SRISPOMPOB JITPIROMSRI, PAULINE TWEEDY AND DIENEKE VAN DER WIJK. PHOTO: SOFYA SHAHAB/OXFAM

## HEARING FROM EXTERNAL EXPERTS ON PROGRAMME EFFECTIVENESS IN FCACs

A panel of experts were invited to share their **experiences and the trends** they see in their work in FCACs. Professor Srispompob Jitpiromsri, Center for Conflict Studies and Cultural Diversity in South Thailand, Pauline Tweedy from the Asia Foundation, and a participant from the US Institute for Peace in Myanmar took part in a live tweeted panel event. Prof Srispompob outlined how he had found protection for his human rights and peacebuilding work by rooting it in the good quality research at National Universities and working with the media to make the peace talks public. Pauline Tweedy from TAF stressed the importance of ongoing flexibility in responding in a conflict area and that all interventions (for example in WASH) are political and thus agencies need to beware of the impact of their own work. USIP highlighted how they are using technology in FCACs in particular with how to mitigate tensions around the national census process in Myanmar.

## FUTURE TRENDS OF PROGRAMME EFFECTIVENESS IN FCACs:

There was a lot of emphasis on the need to use research and solid data to design programmes and support programme quality in conflict contexts.

One of the ways of using technology to support peacebuilding is the Open Situation Room Exchange. This provides a view of conflict and instability using real-time data analytics from social media and news, structured indices, and forecasts for over 150 countries. The rapid expansion of social media and mobile phones has transformed how people communicate and share information in areas affected by violent conflict. The data associated with these “digital footprints” can revolutionize the ways in which local communities and peacebuilders tackle the drivers of violent conflict.

## GENDER MAINSTREAMING AND GENDER JUSTICE IN FCACs

Women’s rights are at the heart of all that Oxfam does. Working on gender justice in FCACs can be especially challenging, however the rapidly shifting dynamics may also provide opportunities for real change in inequality and power relations between men and women. Ensuring that any context or conflict analysis incorporates good gender analysis is essential to the success and impact of projects.

During these sessions, participants discussed the unique challenges of gender mainstreaming in FCACs, but also reflected on the wide range of work Oxfam has been doing to go beyond gender mainstreaming and take a transformative approach to women’s leadership in FCACs.

### How we think about gender and conflict

1. We need to understand the ways in which conflict and fragility can have different impacts on women and men.
2. We need to understand how unequal gender relations can be a driver of conflict and fragility; for example the South Sudan team shared with us the example of high bride prices leading to cattle raiding in rural communities.

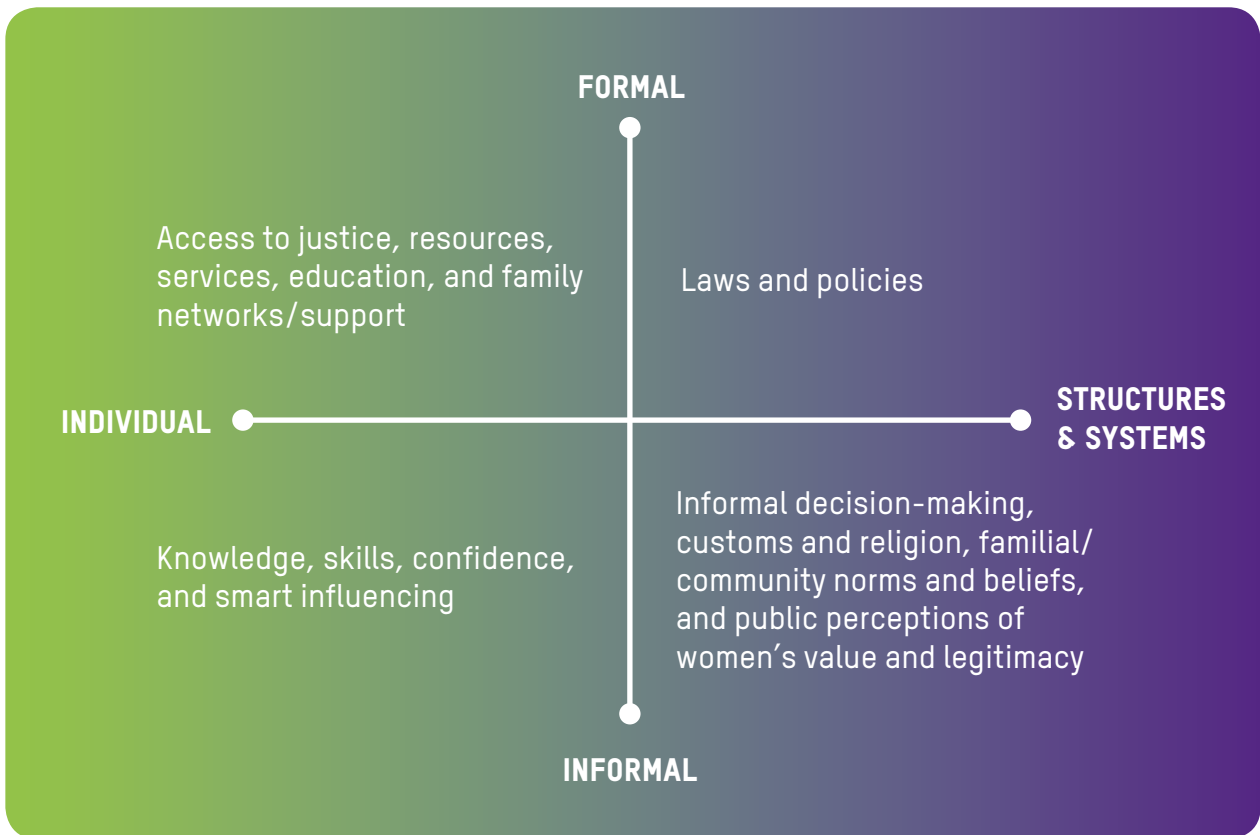


We need to keep on empowering women, but we need to work with men as well. WRO’s should continue to have the support they need, but men should be included



## GENDER MAINSTREAMING IN FCACs:

Utilising the gender justice theory of change enables us to understand the complexity of situations in order to make a greater and more sustainable impact on women's lives:



### SPOTLIGHT ON DRC

The DRC team shared with participants their experience of effective gender mainstreaming in the protection approach, which ensures that the unique protection threats that both men and women are facing are addressed with local power holders. Oxfam has established community protection committees with an equal number of male and female representatives. Recognising the challenge for women to express themselves in these public forums and to talk about specific gender issues, Oxfam also created **separate women's forums** as part of the local structures so that women are able to discuss sensitive issues in a 'safe' space and their suggestions are subsequently included in a community protection plan in line with local authorities. Despite facing some barriers with regards to attitudes and willingness to accept women taking on leadership roles, women now play a key role in raising issues with local authorities and community level work is beginning to influence wider systems and structures leading to gains towards gender equality.



A clear conceptual focus and place for exchange of experiences and practices





POE EI, GENDER POLICY ADVISER, MYANMAR. PHOTO: SOFYA SHAHAB/OXFAM

## SPOTLIGHT ON MYANMAR

Myanmar has taken an integrated approach to gender justice, ensuring that it is incorporated throughout all their programmes alongside the implementation of stand-alone projects whose sole focus is to improve gender justice. In order to raise awareness of the value of women and bring about a change in attitudes and practice, Oxfam identified celebrity musicians as **key influencers** and worked with them to create songs on these issues that were played on the radio, and at bus stations, community meetings and concerts.

## WHAT WE LEARNED:

Participants agreed that although Oxfam has made progress on areas regarding gender equality in FCAC it is still necessary to seek systemic change in the way Oxfam works. We struggled in the gender mainstreaming session to restrict ourselves to the unique challenges of mainstreaming in FCACs, as there is still so much to learn across all our programming.

There were a number of reflections going forward:

- We should seek to build on what is already there with regards to gender justice in communities, among partners and Oxfam programmes, such as existing women's rights organisations, activities, movements, etc
- We need to analyse the way in which we work with women's rights organisations and assess whether it is necessary to build in core funding in support of the work they are doing
- Monitoring of gender justice mainstreaming and changes in attitudes can be especially difficult, consequently we need to explore mechanisms and systems for strengthening this
- For active and effective participation of women in shaping their communities that goes beyond tokenism, it is also necessary to increase the understanding of men with regards to the contribution that can be made by women, especially in decision making processes
- More needs to be invested in research and gender disaggregated data that is effectively utilised to make the case for gender justice programming and policy change



It was really good to have country staff together to share experiences, discuss concepts and make commitments for improving their programmes



## GOING BEYOND GENDER MAINSTREAMING IN FCACs:

Conflict affected and fragile contexts create opportunities and spaces for gender and women's rights programming, we can see many examples in conflict settings where the implementation of international platforms and action plans in national contexts have encouraged women's leadership at all levels of society. The incorporation of gender rights is instrumental in ensuring that conflicts are transformed to peaceful outcomes and women as well as men benefit from these outcomes.

### SPOTLIGHT ON PAKISTAN

Through the Citizens First project in Pakistan, Oxfam has been involved in analysing the **implementation of resolution 1325**, which had not been ratified by the Pakistan government. They opted to utilise CEDAW 30, along with the constitution which does not differentiate between men and women, as a means of engaging with the government. By engaging in dialogues with women at the forefront with key stakeholders and experts at all levels of society from local communities to prominent academics, a better understanding of gender and conflict was achieved especially with regards to the role it plays in conflicts over natural resources, as men are away and the burden for water resource management at the local level consequently falls on women.

### SPOTLIGHT ON MYANMAR

In Myanmar, Oxfam have been working to strengthen networks at the local level to support women's voices and by giving them skills. This has included building the capacity of **women leaders such as political candidates** as the assumption is that they will be champions for raising women's rights and participation. However, this is not always the case as gender equality has still not been a priority for women leaders when attending meetings. To try to combat this, support has not just been limited to training for the women as Oxfam has sought to continuously engage them through invitations to activities they are running and by developing a relationship with them. As the country has a new parliament there is an opportunity for easier entry and to set the agenda for thinking on women's rights. The programme is also keen to engage men to work alongside women to promote this strategy.

#### Tools you can use for gender analysis:

[http://www.c-r.org/resources/gender-and-conflict-analysis-toolkit-peacebuilders?utm\\_content=buffer451ec&utm\\_medium=social&utm\\_source=twitter.com&utm\\_campaign=buffer](http://www.c-r.org/resources/gender-and-conflict-analysis-toolkit-peacebuilders?utm_content=buffer451ec&utm_medium=social&utm_source=twitter.com&utm_campaign=buffer) <http://policy-practice.oxfam.org.uk/publications/quick-guide-to-gender-analysis-312432>

## WORKING WITH 'UNEXPECTED' ALLIES

During the Bangsamoro peace process, Oxfam worked with the Moro Islamic Liberation Front, one of the largest revolutionary groups in the Philippines, through the Bangsamoro Transition Committee. As a result, Oxfam together with its CSO partners, influenced the process and content of the draft Bangsamoro Basic Law by providing its expertise on fiscal policy and in ensuring that development projects secure the interests of small producers. Oxfam facilitated women's meaningful participation in the peace process to ensure that gender justice provisions are included in the draft law.

“

Working with media in communicating with the public, breaking taboos, discussing issues, allowing voices is crucial, but is often overlooked

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SODABA ZAKI, WITHIN AND WITHOUT THE STATE PROJECT COORDINATOR, AFGHANISTAN. PHOTO: SOFYA SHAHAB/OXFAM

“ We choose to partner up with organizations that have legal entities but platforms, movements, other informal groups can play an important role as change agents ”

Participants from Afghanistan highlighted an approach **to working with religious leaders** who became change agents rather than resisting change. As part of the Within and Without the State programme, Oxfam piloted an innovative approach in Afghanistan’s Kunduz province. The programme aimed to mobilize members of the ulema (body of Islamic scholars) to support women’s representation in community shuras (councils), which are important community-level dispute resolution mechanisms across much of Afghanistan. One way they did this was to bring more traditional leaders together with moderates and help them work through Quranic teachings. They also presented how ulema leaders relished the chance to be seen as more relevant to their communities by being involved in contemporary social debates, particularly around the role of women.

How can we increase our analysis and understanding of human motivations? We may need to **change the dynamics and power structures in the way we work with others**. Our support should go beyond the merely financial to examine the other contributions we can bring, especially by adding our voice or by forming an additional layer of protection for those who are speaking out against injustice. We need to create more space for partners to give honest feedback and participate more directly in joint programme design in order to strengthen our work.

We may want to consider working alongside, amongst others:

- Think tanks, universities and prominent academics
- Artists
- Media
- Social and student movements
- Private sector
- Diaspora organisations
- Religious leaders
- The military, armed groups and political arms of military resistance (after thorough risk and context analysis and with senior management approval)

## SPOTLIGHT ON THE PHILIPPINES

During the peace process Oxfam opted to directly engage with the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), the **largest revolutionary group in the Philippines**. Based on Oxfam's good track record of implementing effective projects in MILF territories, the team were able to influence the process and content of the peace agreement, ensuring its acceptability through informal consultations. As a result, Oxfam contributed its expertise on agricultural policy and budgeting while also ensuring that **women were included in the peace process** and there were provisions for gender justice.



There was lots of time to talk, to hear others' experience and start to understand the range of our existing work



## WHAT WE LEARNED:

- Greater flexibility in partnership modalities; allowing for issues such as rapid currency devaluation, engagement with new and emerging groups, and adaptation to changes in context
- We should go beyond the contracts we sign in supporting our partners, for example taking on the dialogue with donors to amplify voices, develop capacities
- To expand the way we think about partnerships we must explore ways of working with informal or loose networks and systems in shifting dynamics and in agile ways
- More work needs to be done to bring embedded capacities in institutions through long-term processes rather than ad hoc trainings
- Enable those on the ground to have a 'no regrets' approach to partnerships, taking opportunities as they arise.

### Tools you can use on partnerships:

<https://sumus.oxfam.org/partnership-policy-implementation-support-kit/documents/ogb-partnership-learning-1-introduction>

## IMPROVING EFFECTIVENESS

The emphasis of the whole event was on capturing learning to improve our effectiveness in FCACs and highlights of some of that learning is included throughout this event report. Key themes that came up consistently were:

### Operational:

The need for adequate staffing, conflict advisors accompanying the programme, supportive leadership, balanced recruitment, conflict sensitivity included in inductions, good contingency planning, clear strategy for fundraising, and review of logistics procedures.



### Partnerships:

We need to work with a variety of allies, including media, Women's Rights Organisations, work with INGOs, local authorities and the UN, research organisations, international financial institutions, private sector, academia, sports teams, religious leaders and diaspora groups.

### Tools:

These could include Reflecting in Peace Practice ([http://cdacollaborative.org/sdm\\_downloads/reflecting-on-peace-practice-1-participant-training-manual](http://cdacollaborative.org/sdm_downloads/reflecting-on-peace-practice-1-participant-training-manual)), Iterative Real Time Evaluations, Making Sense of Turbulent Contexts (<http://participate-mstc.net/what-is-mstc>), community participation in programme design, conflict analysis (see Saferworld Conflict Analysis), use of social media, and specialised MEAL (see MEAL Guidelines WWS).

## MEAL IN FCACs

Participants took part in sessions that explored how MEAL could contribute to conflict sensitive programming by monitoring the impact of a project on its context, and offered concrete guidance. The Common Approach to MEL and Social Accountability was referenced as Oxfam's guide to collaborative and effective, results-focused, and accountable standards, but FCACs present an added layer of complexity to gathering and using data. Linked to the previous session on conflict sensitivity, a practical case study was given to help participants work through the complexities of MEAL in FCACs. Using the example of a road building cash for work scheme which disproportionately benefitted one side of a conflict, participants had to work out how to monitor its impacts for both sides. We worked together to design indicators which would show how conflict sensitive it was for example, showing if armed incidents were increasing as a result of the improved road.

Some participants discussed the challenges they have faced in gathering data from populations in insecure areas, highlighting the importance of good risk analysis and management.

### Tools you can use on MEAL:

<http://policy-practice.oxfam.org.uk/publications/a-quick-guide-to-monitoring-evaluation-accountability-and-learning-in-fragile-c-297134>



PARTICIPANTS WORK TOGETHER TO MAKE A PROGRAMME CONFLICT SENSITIVE. PHOTO: SOFYA SHAHAB/OXFAM

## MULTI COUNTRY JOINT PROGRAMME DEVELOPMENT

Participants divided into groups and developed programmes on specific issues relating to conflict and fragility. By using a 'human face' methodology to develop future multi country programme plans, this encouraged teams to imagine an individual who's life benefit from the intervention and facilitated programme development with that person in mind, rather than focussing on donor priorities or Oxfam strategic areas of intervention.

**Preventing violent extremism:** Participants identified the problem of young people being recruited into violent extremist groups and radical interpretations of religious beliefs. To challenge the pressures young people face in these contexts, vulnerable groups need to increase their resilience to radicalisation with the support of formal and informal tribal, religious and political parties. Participants noted the importance of improving access to education and work, working with key religious change agents to preach values of social cohesion, tolerance and non-violence and increasing the reach and legitimacy of the state to reducing structural and physical violence against civilians.

**Natural resources and conflict:** Regional conflict, poor water management, land grabbing, corruption and climate change were all identified as contributing to conflict over resources in FCACs. Potential solutions include inclusive and transparent governance, stronger social cohesion, accountability of governments and private companies. Oxfam can also link local issues around natural resource exploitation to national and international advocacy campaigns.

**Conflict Transformation and Peace Building:** Participants discussed what the end of the journey would look like as well as stages on the way and who else is on the road. Key stages included access to justice, space for civil society, women's active participation, joint initiatives between ethnic groups and improved communication. They highlighted the need for the right skills in Oxfam, advisory support, supportive donors and flexible funding. Other enabling factors are working better with partners on budgeting and their welfare and clarity around beneficiaries and strategies.

**Women's Participation in Fragile and Conflict Affected Contexts:** The group saw success as being when women have more opportunities to be decision makers at both domestic and community levels and are involved in contributing to a safe and secure environment. They identified the need for change at all levels, including prioritizing research and understanding on gender and peace dynamics. They agreed that monitoring and accountability structures need to be developed at the national level and this data be made public. At the local level they saw the need for attitude changes and inclusive participation within different relevant structures eg in natural resource management. Change can often begin at the domestic level and they identified the need for women to share domestic roles and decision making and have better education opportunities

“

It was really interesting to learn about different contexts and challenges – there was a great mix of people present

”

All the groups identified the need for:

- Changing public perceptions and awareness raising strategies
- Joined up advocacy strategies supported by power analysis
- Consistent monitoring and built in joint research strategies
- Structured and regular opportunities for cross-learning events
- One OI gender, peace and security resource centre/platform
- Funding and fundraising support in country offices
- A strong Oxfam steer to prioritize these issues
- Technical expertise for country office and partners with support from HQ
- Support for multi country programming and programme development strategy
- A common platform for all country offices to interact and share learning
- Unrestricted funding and flexibility from donors to support flexible and adaptive programming
- Honest discussion with donors on the need to have more flexible funding modalities in FCACs
- Better work with partners and communities, including involving them in innovative ways for programme design
- Training on conflict sensitivity and gendered conflict analysis

## CONTACTS:

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## NEXT STEPS:

Learning how we can best work in FCACs is an ongoing process that needs to be continuously developed. We all agreed we need a community of practice and access to shared resources such as tools, MEAL and draft proposals. To ensure the foundations laid during the workshop are built upon, an enabling environment will be created through cross-affiliate collaboration:

**A Leadership Group** will provide high level strategic and systemic oversight of OI work on enabling effective work in FCAC, including: (current contact person Jo Rowlands- [jrowlands@oxfam.org.uk](mailto:jrowlands@oxfam.org.uk))

- Identifying FCAC focal points across affiliates
- Emphasising the importance of a one-programme approach
- Mapping current expertise and resources and ways to access them
- Supporting cross-country learning

**An Advisory Group** (contact person Jo Rowlands-[jrowlands@oxfam.org.uk](mailto:jrowlands@oxfam.org.uk)), including:

- Enabling institutional support
- Developing tools/ approaches
- Developing a Community of Practice
- Providing programme development guidance
- Providing technical support on improving programme quality
- Mentoring and remote support

Text by Richard Chilvers, Annabel Morrissey, Sofya Shahab

*All quotes come from event participants*



  
OXFAM  
des femmes

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Front Cover: MP/public dialogue, Wulu, Lakes state, South Sudan. Photo: Crispin Hughes/Oxfam  
This page: Louise Nyiranoloji, 42, president of the hygiene committee and member of the women's forum, Democratic Republic of Congo. Photo: Eleanor Farmer/Oxfam



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