
OXFAM STRATEGIC PLAN EVALUATION: SUSTAINABLE FOOD (CG 4) OUTCOME AREA

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ACRONYMS

BRICSAM	Brazil, Russia, India, china, South Africa and Mexico
BtB	Behind the Brands
CAMSA	Common Approach to MEL and Social Accountability
CARP	Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program
CASHE	Commercialisation of agricultural smallholders in Ethiopia
CG	Change Goal
CSO	Civil Society Organization
CSRL	Campaign for Sustainable Rural Livelihood
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction
EB	Executive Board
EC	European Community
ED	Executive Directors
EDP	Enterprise Development Program
EFSL	Emergency Food Security and Livelihoods
EJ	Economic Justice
EWS	Early Warning System
FFH	Food Female Hero
GBV	Gender-based violence
GJ	Gender Justice
ICTs	Information and communication technologies
(I)NGO	(International) Non-Governmental Organization
JCAS	Joint Country Analysis and Strategy
LWF	Land, Water and Food
M4P	Making Markets Work for the Poor
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MEL	Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning
MSN	Multi Stakeholder Network
OAU	Oxfam Australia
OB	Oxfam Belgium
OCA	Oxfam Canada
OGB	Oxfam Great Britain
OHK	Oxfam Hong Kong
OI	Oxfam International
ON	Oxfam Novib (Netherlands)
OPA	One Program Approach
OPAL	Oxfam People Accountability Learning
OPT	Occupied Palestinian Territories
OSP	Oxfam Strategic Plan
RESOLVE	Regenerative Agriculture and Sustainable Livelihood for Vulnerable Ecosystems
ToC	Theory of Change
UN	United Nations
VFS	Voices for Food Security
WIN	Worldwide Influencing Network

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report examines a set of evaluations, *meta* reviews and country strategies pertaining to Change Goal 4, **Sustainable Food**, of the 2013-2019 Oxfam Strategic Plan. This is the first review of CG4, with a second one planned for 2019.

PURPOSE

Going into the third year of this six-year plan, this review asks how Oxfam is doing in terms of its intended shift from service delivery to influencing strategies, and how much progress has been made so far in terms of achieving greater food security, income, prosperity and resilience at a large scale, the expected impact of CG4. In terms of the planned strategic shift from service delivery to influencing, this review also analyses Oxfam Country Strategies (OCS) to gauge whether they are firmly committing to this new way of doing things. Based on these findings, recommendations have been made for Oxfam to further move towards an influencing strategy, rather than direct implementation, to achieve the Sustainable Food Change Goal, and to adapt its evaluation methodology accordingly.

METHODOLOGY

The review focused entirely on a desk study of existing reviews of evaluations and country strategies as well as a set of evaluations of programs (that use some degree of influencing) contributing to income and food security. Only methodologically sound evaluations were reviewed by focusing on indicative program/project outcomes of food security and income, and types of program approaches and influencing efforts. The evaluations span a significant number of Oxfam affiliates (at least seven), seven regions and at least 15 countries.

Since the evaluations selected for this review were conducted between January 2013 and October 2015, the evaluated projects and programs themselves were mostly started and sometimes already finished before the OSP 2013-15 timespan. As a result, the evaluations in this review should not be looked at as if they reflect the new Oxfam (envisioned in the OSP) versus the old, but they are rather a reflection of trends and changes as they have been emerging before the OSP and to a lesser extent during first two years in its implementation.

Most program evaluations included an outcome assessment of indicators of food security and/or income or intermediary outcome indicators along impact chains that were assumed as leading to those impacts (such as increased productivity, access to markets, knowledge, etc.). The campaign evaluations did not report on any such indicators, but focused mostly on effectiveness of influencing strategies (such as advocacy, mobilization, capacity building), their immediate results (responses by different target audiences, from government, private sector, civic society and the public at large), and intermediary outcomes.

KEY FINDINGS

This review shows that there was already a **shift taking place from service delivery to influencing** in CG4 programming, even before the OSP came into effect. The evaluations used for this review indicate that this shift is **far from complete and faces some important challenges**. Long term programs and campaigns are not yet sufficiently linked to maximize influencing and make it the central strategy to achieve the CG4. Programs and Campaigns are still being implemented to a large extent in siloes, and the evaluations available for this review reflect this by focusing on either one or other.

Programs show a shift towards influencing, but **direct delivery and implementation strategies are still prominent**. On the other hand, a number of projects are focusing more on demonstration and learning instead of implementing direct services, and are linking those with advocacy. **Market development programs are gaining traction**, but they do not always fully exploit opportunities to influence market actors and enabling environment. Remaining challenges for programs to make influencing their core strategy include **continuing pressures to achieve short-term results**, an insufficient commitment or ability to reorient the role of projects as small-scale pilots, and **insufficient synergies and collaboration between programs and campaigns** as intended by the OPA.

Campaigns have focused mostly on **building the capacity of civil society** (including farmers' and women's organizations) to claim rights and **influence policy**, but face some critical challenges, including a **lack of focus, follow-up, and local ownership**.

A review of recent OCS shows a **clear commitment towards further extending the shift from service delivery to influencing** to achieve the impact expected by CG4. There is a **much greater focus on advocacy and engagement of farmers groups in decision making** processes, while there is an intention to view **projects as learning and demonstration** pilots to leverage influencing. **Influencing and long-term programming are also seen as linked** instead of separate activities.

Evidence remains scarce about the **extent that CG4 programs and campaigns are successful at improving income and food security at scale**. With only two years into the current OSP one should not expect to observe whether expected impact at scale is already emerging. Moreover, since most evaluations reflect on projects and campaigns implemented before the OSP took effect, the findings can only inform about the results from already existing programs and campaigns that had already started to shift towards increased use of influencing strategies.

Direct **delivery/implementation approaches have only produced modest results** in terms of food security and incomes; indirect **influencing strategies** (like the GROW campaign) are **hardly showing any such impacts**. This is not surprising given the longer time that would be required to see these kind of results, but there are doubts whether this type of impact can be realistically achieved at scale within the timeframe of the OSP, and whether they can even be measured.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Future programming needs to overcome some of the key obstacles that are still preventing a stronger emphasis on influencing. There is a need to **redirect the role of programs further in function of an influencing agenda** (through demonstration, evidence gathering and focus on replicability and scalability). If the main role of programming is indeed to provide evidence and be as such a means towards an end, **more guidance is needed on how programmes need to be designed, implemented (and especially at what scale) and evaluated**, in order to most effectively and efficiently play that role.

It is **not only necessary to move away from direct service delivery, but also from direct implementation to facilitation** of processes that build capacity of smallholders to exert their rights, governments and private sector to take up their responsibilities, and systems to become more inclusive and efficient. **Campaigns and programs need to better linked with one another** to maximize synergies of a OPA. The same applies to future evaluations that need to take a more holistic picture of country strategies to achieving the CG4, and stop evaluating programs and campaigns in isolation, but instead look at the integrated influencing strategy to achieve the CG.

If food security and income at scale remain key indicative outcomes of CG4, then **a new approach to evaluation** is needed, as this impact is not as clearly linked to influencing strategies as it is in direct service delivery. On the other hand, food security and income might not continue to be the best indicators to gauge success, but instead the achievement of certain indirect, intermediary outcomes should be the focus of

evaluations. The focus has shifted on exclusion, inequality and injustice as the real target, more than simply a lack of income. If the most effective solutions lie in people demanding their rights to livelihoods and decent work, then outcome indicators need to be adjusted accordingly.

Country strategies need to more clearly determine which objectives are of highest priority to achieve key intermediary outcomes, and what Oxfam's role should be. Theories of change need to be better understood and articulated, and should include a **better understanding of which intermediary outcomes matter most**, and how they relate to systemic changes. Since impact pathways are seldom linear and predictable, a more flexible implementation is required that allows for continuously adapting actions to new learning.

to October 2015. As is the case for the reviews of indicative outcomes of the other CGs, Oxfam's contribution to income and food security will be measured twice during the OSP lifespan. A second review, covering the period from November 2015 to December 2018, will be completed by 2019. In terms of the planned strategic shift from service delivery to influencing, this review also analyses Oxfam Country Strategies (OCS) to gauge whether they are firmly committing to this new way of doing things.

Change Goal 4 - Sustainable Food

The section serves as a refresher of the objectives, expected impact and strategies under CG4 and is taken directly from the OSP.² 2013-2019 reiterates that the right of poor people to adequate food and sustainable livelihoods has been a cornerstone of Oxfam's work for a long time, at the basis of its rural development work, agricultural innovations and campaigns for international trade justice.

Sustainable Food Objectives for 2019

- More small-scale and marginal producers will **intensify their production** sustainably, **adapt to climate change** and **increase their resilience** to shocks and stresses.
- More **rural women** living in poverty are **economically empowered** and able to influence the decisions that affect them.
- More small-scale producers, both women and men, are able to develop **resilient livelihoods**, with **greater food security**, participate in agricultural **markets**, and prosper from **policies** that promote small-scale agriculture.

Expected impact by 2019

More people who live in rural poverty will enjoy **greater food security, income, prosperity and resilience** through significantly more equitable sustainable food systems.

In order to achieve the objectives and expected impact, the OSP proposes the following commitments (approaches):

Box 1. Influencing Approaches in OSP to Achieve Change Goal 4 – Sustainable Food

- **Promote** scalable agricultural **production systems** that sustainably increase yield, resilience and adaptation to climate change, from subsistence farmers to market-based small-scale producers
- **Enable** communities to **manage land and water resources** sustainably and strengthen the livelihoods of those most chronically at risk of crisis in priority-1 countries
- **Promote** increased **investment in female smallholders**, support rural **women's organizations** and advocate for positive changes in **policies and beliefs about women's roles**
- **Influence states** to attract **investment** and support **development** of domestic markets and challenge the **private sector** to develop **inclusive business** models
- **Empower small-scale producers** to **improve trade regulation**, to enter and **influence Fair Trade** value chains
- **Facilitate** the development of **innovative rural finance models** and consumer and **fair trade movements**, particularly in the BRICSAMs and major cities

- **Influence** governments, business and multilateral organizations to **increase financial flows to smallholder agriculture** and promote policies to benefit the poor by **rebalancing investment and services between small and large scale production**
- **Promote** policies that strengthen resilience through risk analysis, reducing price volatility for basic food commodities and providing protection for the most vulnerable
- **Improve** donor food policies, especially in fragile states

Objectives

With the aim of achieving change at scale Oxfam is **moving from a focus on direct service delivery to an influencing approach** in many areas including its work on sustainable food. The assumption is that targeted influencing at national and global level will leverage increased income and food security at scale, i.e. for more people, sustainably. This first review of progress against strategic objectives represents an opportunity for critical reflection and initial learning on **whether Oxfam is doing the rights things (right)** as well as identify examples of **where this is working**, i.e. to what extent are these strategies successful at achieving the intended impact of improving income and food security at scale. This is the **primary objective** of the review. However, there are two important caveats. First, with only two years into the current OSP it cannot yet be expected to observe whether these systemic changes (and expected impact) at scale are indeed materializing. Second, since most evaluations reflect on projects and campaigns implemented before the OSP took effect, the findings are for the most part limited to examples of the strategic shift already taking place (from service delivery to influencing) and results before the OSP. Therefore, in order to make sure that Oxfam will take a deliberate and effective approach to gauging future achievements in shifting to influencing approaches and achieving the intended outcomes, the **second objective** of this review is to provide guidelines for developing a **comprehensive approach for evaluating progress** against CG4. **This second objective is not within the scope of this report prepared for the Executive Board Meeting, but will be included in a future, amended report.**

The findings are presented in three chapters. The first chapter explores whether “*Oxfam is doing the right things right*”, i.e. whether and how sustainable food programs are shifting from service delivery to influencing to achieve change at scale. The second chapter explores “*where it is working*”, i.e. how CG4 programs and campaigns are successful at improving income and food security at scale. And finally, the third chapter reviews a selection of recent OCS (developed in response to the OSP) to analyse how they are planning to shift further from service delivery to influencing in achieving the CG4.

Intended Audiences and Uses for this Review

The primary use of this review is to provide **Oxfam’s Executive Directors** with:

a sense of the **extent and the ways in which Oxfam is contributing to change** in the outcome area ‘income and food security’

an **assessment of the balance between the outcomes emerging in the report and their resonance with the ambitions set out in the OSP**, and

an **understanding of what Oxfam has to do differently** to be able to contribute to the change we want to see by the end of the OSP

Program Directors may use the information emerging from this review to start thinking about new programming that Oxfam should start to support and any adjustments to the OSP objectives/theories of change. Program staff in regions and in countries may use the findings to improve program quality as well as to speak to local partners and/or authorities about Oxfam and partners work. Knowledge hubs (particularly on Women’s

Economic Empowerment in Agriculture) can use the information to share with their followers to influence programming. MEAL colleagues are encouraged to use the information to support the development of quality evaluation work. MEAL staff will review the process for lessons and discuss the kind of information needed in 2019, and adjust the outcome areas approach as necessary.

2. METHODOLOGY

Given a limited time-frame and the absence of a common evaluation framework for this outcome area, the review focused primarily on a desk study of existing reviews of evaluations and country strategies as well as a set of evaluations of programs contributing to income and food security through influencing. Including both evaluations and country strategies allowed for looking both back and forward and draw actionable lessons and recommendations for programming and program support during the remainder of the OSP timeline (through 2019).

The review drew from existing *meta* reviews such as the OGB review of its Global Economic Justice Portfolio³, an Oxfam Sense-making Exercise of Evaluations conducted between 2013 and 2014⁴ and a recently completed review of Oxfam Country Strategies (OCS)⁵. This synthesised information was also used to identify a set of strong country strategies and high-quality program/project evaluations allowing for a more in-depth reflection on the key questions of this review.

Only recent program and project evaluations, conducted during 2013-2015, were selected. Even though this includes some programs and projects that were ongoing during the initial years of the OSP, the majority of them have been designed and started before 2013. Only evaluations that cover (at least some elements of) an influencing approach were selected for this review. In addition to campaigns (such as GROW) and development projects/programs that include or are connected to influencing objectives and activities. Since it is virtually impossible to determine to what extent the shift towards influencing has taken place across Oxfam affiliates, this selection is deemed acceptable in order to focus on how far the shift is occurring (when it is occurring), and to some extent on what is working. A shortcoming with the majority of evaluations is that they tend to focus either on advocacy/campaigns or on development programs, but almost never on both or the relationship between them (assuming that there was one, as envisioned by Oxfam's One Program Approach). These methodological considerations will be taken into account for developing guidelines for a future comprehensive evaluation framework.

Selection Process of Evaluations

Almost half of the evaluations used for this review had already been selected for a comprehensive Sense Making Exercise⁶ that reviewed evaluations for all CGs (conducted in 2013-2014). The remainder of evaluations related to CG4 were conducted in 2015. The following process was undertaken to make a final selection of evaluations.

First, from the pool of methodologically sound evaluations reviewed in the sense-making exercise, 24 evaluations focusing on food security projects/programs with an influencing component were retained for the current review. Second, from a pool of 13 additional

3 Maes, Jan (2015). Review of Oxfam GB's Economic Justice Programme (2012-2014). Oxfam GB, October.

4 Roper, Laura, Sánchez de Ocaña, Mónica, Smiaroski, Mary Sue and Rocha, Jasmin (2015). Oxfam Sense Making Exercise for a Selection of Evaluations 2013-2014. Oxfam International, February.

5 Wareing, Kate (2015). Oxfam Country Strategies Review. Oxfam International, October.

6 Roper, Laura, Sánchez de Ocaña, Mónica, Smiaroski, Mary Sue and Rocha, Jasmin (2015). Oxfam Sense Making Exercise for a Selection of Evaluations 2013-2014. Oxfam International, February.

evaluations with a focus on sustainable food (some conducted more recently than those retained for the sense-making exercise) ten were retained based on methodological quality and focus on influencing. The selected evaluations were reviewed by focusing on indicative program/project outcomes of **food security and income**, and types of **program approaches and influencing efforts**.

The purpose of this review is not to “add up” outcomes across the confederation, but to reflect a diversity of results related to food security and income outcomes, and of the extent to which a shift is taking place from service delivery to influencing approaches, as envisioned by the OSP. The evaluations span a significant number of Oxfam affiliates (at least seven), seven regions and at least 15 countries. Evaluations range from large multi-million dollar programs to pilot projects with much smaller budgets, and range from targeting a few hundred to more than one million people. The majority of evaluations used qualitative approaches, some used mixed qualitative/quantitative methods. Randomized impact assessments were not available. Finally, most programs evaluated are not solely focusing on improving food security or incomes, often focusing on sustainable livelihoods, market development or economic justice programs.

Limits of the Methodology

Since the evaluations selected for this review were conducted between January 2013 and October 2015, the evaluated projects and programs themselves were mostly started and sometimes already finished before the OSP 2013-15 timespan. As a result, the evaluations in this review should not be looked at as if they reflect the new Oxfam (envisioned in the OSP) versus the old, but they are rather a reflection of trends and changes as they have been emerging before the OSP and to a lesser extent during first two years in its implementation. On the other hand, these practices and programs are likely influenced to some extent by the internal thinking that already existed and ultimately led to the formalization of the OSP. It is difficult to gauge to what extent this strategic intent to shift from direct service delivery to influencing was present in many of the projects and programs reviewed for this report, however, especially because the design often dates from even longer ago.

Quality of the Evaluation Reports

As was the case for the earlier comprehensive sense-making exercise, except for a few cases, only evaluations considered methodologically sound or exhibiting minor quality issues were included in the further analyses. Most reports had already been assessed for quality for the sense-making exercise, and similar quality criteria were applied for the current review. Most evaluations are strong, but it is important to note that they often did not evaluate food security and income outcomes, either because the project/program evaluated did not have clearly stated objectives of food security and individual/household incomes, or because these data were not available, or simply because the evaluation focused more on activities and outputs (including relevance, scale and cost-efficiency) instead of outcomes. Most **program** evaluations included an outcome assessment of indicators of food security and/or income or intermediary outcome indicators along impact chains that were **assumed** as leading to those impacts (such as increased productivity, access to markets, knowledge, etc.). Most **campaign** evaluations did not report on any such indicators close to the expected impact, but focused mostly on effectiveness of influencing strategies (such as advocacy, mobilization, capacity building), their immediate results (responses by different target audiences, from government, private sector, civic society and the public at large), and intermediary outcomes (budget allocations, policies, negotiating power, etc.)

3. ARE PROGRAMS AIMING TO SUPPORT GREATER INCOME AND FOOD SECURITY SUCCESSFULLY SHIFTING FROM SERVICE DELIVERY TO INFLUENCING STRATEGIES TO ACHIEVE CHANGE AT SCALE?

This section explores whether “*Oxfam is doing the right things right*”, i.e. to what extent Oxfam’s sustainable food projects/programs have successfully shifted from service delivery to influencing strategies to achieve change at scale. In order to assess to what extent this shift is taking place, a brief introduction considers how Oxfam defines ‘*influencing*’ and what kind of guidance it provides on how to shift its work further in that direction. Next, evidence is provided of the extent to which the intended shift towards influencing (and OPA) is taking place.

The Theory: Oxfam’s Influencing Concept and Guidelines

Before looking at evidence of how sustainable food programs are moving from direct service delivery to influencing, it is important to clarify what is meant by these two approaches.

Direct Service Delivery (and Implementation) Strategies

Oxfam does not provide a definition of ‘service delivery’, but it clearly refers to programs or projects where Oxfam’s role (and that of its partners) consists of providing services (as well as cash, products, or capital) directly to beneficiaries individually or their organizations. There are several problems with such approaches. Oxfam should not and cannot sustain the delivery of services that are the responsibility of either public duty bearers or the market. And, since these services are often subsidized, they are not sustainable, difficult to scale and likely to distort markets. Few argue that except in certain emergency responses direct service delivery is not good practice. Other forms of direct implementation are less direct interventions, such as training, capacity building of CBOs, women’s groups, local government offices, linking producer groups to processors, etc. However, such *teaching how to fish* (and even how to sell the fish) approaches suffer from similar shortcomings (albeit to a lesser extent) as those with direct service delivery in terms of sustainability and scale.

Rather than defining the boundaries of direct delivery or implementation as compared to influencing strategies, it makes more sense to look at the underlying limitations, which relate primarily to sustainability and scale of desired changes. Due to scarcity of funds, direct implementation approaches are by necessity limited in scale and often unsustainable. This does not mean that direct implementation is always inappropriate or ineffective: such strategies can test and demonstrate new models to be replicated, create new learning or present leveraging mechanisms to reach scale (e.g. jumpstarting a new type of enterprise, market, etc.). Oxfam GB’s *Aim 1* strategy document is helpful in that it lists approaches that it will stop doing in its livelihoods work, such as “engaging in direct provision of services (such as microfinance) and assets (for example livestock), except in emergency situations or unless as an explicit and one-off means of overcoming a specific, identified barrier to improve power in markets (that is, as a means to the end of improved, transformed livelihoods)”, or “that are self-contained and not linked to a wider vision of change that can be self-sustaining after our exit.”⁷

⁷ Oxfam, 2010. *Aim 1 Strategy 2010 –2015: ‘Economic Justice: Sustainable Livelihoods Now and for the Future’*. Oxfam internal document

Influencing Strategies

The OSP refers to influencing as a strategy by proposing a **worldwide influencing network (WIN)** as an expression of **Oxfam's enabling role**, marking "a trend towards working more on influencing authorities and the powerful, and less on delivering the services for which duty-bearers are responsible."⁸ The National Influencing Guidelines⁹ accompanying the OSP describe the rationale for influencing as follows: "*We will **only achieve lasting change** in the lives of the hundreds of millions of people living in poverty **if we use our limited resources to influence and enable others**. Oxfam's work is based on the understanding that unequal power relations are the underlying driver of inequality, poverty and suffering. Addressing these power relations is deeply political and gets to the root cause of poverty and injustice. Oxfam seeks to confront these imbalances of power in order to change policy and practice in ways that improve the lives of men and women living in poverty.*"

Box 2 summarizes the key ingredients of the envisioned **influencing** approach, as described in the National Influencing Guidelines. Note that the first priority of WIN is to achieve much stronger influencing at the national level, which has in the past been underemphasized compared to global influencing.

Box 2 – Oxfam's influencing in a Nutshell¹⁰

Influencing means: systematic efforts to change power relationships, attitudes, and beliefs, and the formulation and implementation of official policies, laws/regulations, budgets, and company policies and practices, in ways that promote more just societies without poverty.

Influencing includes: leveraging of programme experience, advocacy, and campaigning (including coalition building, research, policy development, lobbying, media, digital tools), mobilization (of activists, supporters, citizens), coordinated worldwide communicating and networking, capacity development (of citizens, partners, civil society, duty bearers), partnerships and strategic funding. Oxfam's program work will be key in providing evidence to underpin its influencing work.

Oxfam's role is: to enable transformational change, as convener and catalyst; opening political space, building capacity (mainly of organizations of poor people) and sharing technical expertise, raising funds and public support, leveraging its resources to multiply funds, providing strategic funding to partners and carrying out humanitarian work. Oxfam may engage directly with the state and the private sector, but often, its main contribution is to create safe zones, where people's organizations can discuss problems and solutions with the public and private sectors.

Leveraging is narrowly considered above as one way of influencing, as in leveraging of program experience, but Oxfam increasingly sees leverage as 'working strategically with others in order to lever a bigger change than [it] could ever achieve on our own, [by] developing a rich web of mutually beneficial relationships and alliances.'¹¹ Strengthening dynamic multi-stakeholder networks are seen as increasingly important part of a leverage approach. For the remainder of this report, influencing strategies in general refer to systematic efforts to change (Box 2) the root

8 Oxfam Strategic Plan 2014-2019

9 ____ (2015). National Influencing Guidelines. Oxfam International

10 ibid

11 ____ (2014) Leverage: Reaching scale in our work. Oxfam International

causes of poverty rather than addressing the symptoms and Oxfam's facilitative role in this, while focusing on specific influencing approaches related to the CG4 listed earlier in Box 1.

Evidence from Practice

Are programs aiming to support greater income and food security successfully shifting from service delivery to influencing strategies to achieve change at scale? What are the various influencing approaches embedded in these programs and campaigns? If this shift is not taking place in a significant way, what is holding it back? And lastly, when Oxfam has been successful in shifting its approach, what are promising routes to scale, and what approaches are not working well? This section provides findings from recent evaluations (2013-2015) on programs and campaigns related to sustainable food to answer these questions.

Oxfam has traditionally made a distinction between Programs and Campaigns, while recently making some progress to increase collaboration between the two as part of the *One Program Approach* (OPA). At the time of the evaluations reviewed for this report, these two pillars were still very much strategically and operationally in silos, also resulting in evaluations focusing almost exclusively on only one of these pillars. In the case of campaigns, which are by definition influencing, there is no use in evaluating whether there has been a shift from service delivery to influencing. Instead the evidence can provide insights in changes in approaches used within campaigns, and how they intend to contribute to impacts in food security and income at scale. In the case of programs, the evidence can point to the extent of this shift towards influencing strategies in programs. However, much less evidence has been generated about the extent to which programs and campaigns combined (as envisioned by OPA) result in a stronger influencing strategy to achieve the CG4.

One way to evaluate the extent to which the shift is taking place is by looking to which extent it is present in the CG4 work evaluated. To gauge the contribution of sustainable food programming to WIN, the sense-making exercise found that „influencing was present in just under a third of evaluations, mostly those of campaigning work.“¹² The additional evaluations reviewed for this report show the same trend, with influencing mostly present in campaign work, and to much more modest amount in programs, as will be explained later. One should note, however, that a lack of data on influencing in program evaluations does not necessarily mean that influencing was not a part of these programs; it might simply mean that this was outside the scope of the evaluation.

The sense-making exercise notes that in terms of alignment with OSP, sustainable food programming (with or without influencing components) has been strong in “increasing the productivity and resilience of small scale producers, strengthening the focus on women producers, and influencing national agricultural policy and, to a much more limited degree (under the *Beyond the Brands* campaign), the private sector“, but at the same time, compared to the *Right to Be Heard* CG for instance, “the **centrality of influencing in many projects and program is less consistently evident under Sustainable Food.**”¹³

Influencing Approaches in Sustainable Food Programs

There is a shift towards influencing, but direct service delivery strategies have not disappeared. A review of evaluations conducted between 2010 and 2013 about EJ programs by OGB notes “a **gradual shift** [...] of long-term economic justice programming from reducing direct delivery to reach beneficiaries (focusing on access to better techniques, inputs and markets, awareness raising and collective action), **towards employing more systems approaches, influencing strategies and improved (market) governance**” and “that “over two

¹² Roper, Laura, Sánchez de Ocaña, Mónica, Smiaroski, Mary Sue and Rocha, Jasmin (2015). Oxfam Sense Making Exercise for a Selection of Evaluations 2013-2014. Oxfam International, February.

¹³ ibid

thirds of current EJ programmes intend to influence national change.”¹⁴ On the other hand, a more recent review¹⁵ of **OGB EJ programming found that almost all (evaluated) livelihood projects directly supported the development of productive smallholder agriculture.**

A number of program evaluations reviewed for this report also mention a direct implementation or service delivery, with hardly any links to campaigning or advocacy efforts, or clear intentions for scaling up or replicating. The *Samunnati Program* in Nepal aimed to help people claim their rights to access and utilization of resources and services on livelihood and empowerment, but largely through a **service delivery approach**, including training, capacity building and free services and inputs (seeds).¹⁶ The *Integrated Upland Agricultural Livelihoods Programme* in Laos focused on food security and livelihoods by aiming to address challenges in both production and marketing. Model farmers appeared to have **received inputs and were trained** in extension, but they failed to spread these practices to other farmers, because non-model farmers did not receive the inputs, which the project budget did not support. Even model farmers reported that the provision of inputs, particularly the more expensive breeding stock, was not of substantial assistance.¹⁷ In both cases, the potential to influence others to replicate these projects is low.

On the other hand, **a number of projects are focusing more on demonstration and learning instead of implementing direct services, and are linking those with advocacy.** The pilot phase of the Regenerative Agriculture and Sustainable Livelihood for Vulnerable Ecosystems (RESOLVE) in Bangladesh **focused on creating models to be replicated and scaled up**, to facilitate learning within the region, and to promote evidence for advocacy to achieve policy and practice changes. According to an evaluation¹⁸ the pilot phase was successful in implementing interventions addressing climate change adaptation and resilient livelihoods, **but failed to produce sufficient evidence** to support the effectiveness of these demonstrations due to a lack of action research. As a result, even though advocacy was planned, it was weakened in its ability to move to a program at scale.

Market development programs are gaining traction, but they do not always fully exploit opportunities to influence market actors and enabling environment. There seems to be a strong increase in the number of Oxfam programs aiming to influence markets, which is confirmed by a number of evaluations reviewed. Many of these programs use the *Making Markets Work for the Poor* (MP4) approach, with a clear intention to move away from direct provision towards facilitation of more effective and inclusive markets. However, the degree to which such programs move away from direct delivery of products and services can vary greatly. Oxfam Novib’s *Struggle for Land, Water and Food* (LWF) multi-country project’s included **lobbying the local government to involve** their own staff and resources to deliver the training and provide services, and **created a wider interest among the government**, and may have spinoff effects to other areas,¹⁹ but the main focus of the program was still on provision of inputs and services. The *Women Farmers Access to Value Chains and Climate Change Adaptation*²⁰ project in Malawi also continues to **mix direct services** (to 15,000 poor women,

14 Maes, Jan (2015). Review of Oxfam GB’s Economic Justice Programme (2012-2014). Oxfam GB, October.

15 From reflections by David Bright (OGB)

16 Management Innovation, Training and Research Academy (MITRA) (2014) Evaluation for “Program for Promotion of Self-Help Initiative in the Rural Areas (Samunnati)” implemented by Sahamati in Nepal - Final Report. Oxfam Hong Kong, June. [346]

17 Jones, Michael (2013) Final Review of the Oxfam Hong Kong Integrated Upland Agricultural Livelihoods Programme in Viengxay and Xiengkhor Districts, Houaphan Province, Laos. Oxfam Hong Kong, May.

18 Zijlstra, Pieter Jan (2013) Regenerative Agriculture and Sustainable Livelihood for Vulnerable Ecosystems (RESOLVE). Oxfam Novib, January.

19 Haagsma, Ben and Groverman, Verona (2013) Struggle for Land, Water and Food: Final report thematic evaluation for Oxfam Novib. Oxfam Novib, August.

20 Mughogho, Brussels, Msosa, Chaudley, and Moyo, Thomas (2015). Malawi Women Farmers Access to Value Chains and Climate Change Adaptation. End of Project Evaluation. Oxfam GB, September.

through provision of processing equipment, training and access to markets) **with influencing** (through national level advocacy to improve an enabling environment through harmonization and development of marketing policies to become more inclusive for women) **and strengthening producer associations** to increase their bargaining power.

While some market programs are clearly moving towards influencing, they have not yet been proven, which is at least partially due to the time it takes to pioneer, validate and prove innovations. OGB's Enterprise Development Program (EDP), for example, aims **to influence market systems by designing and piloting an effective social investment model** as a blueprint that can be scaled and/or replicated. However, none of its 14 early-stage, rural enterprises were viable (i.e. profitable) at the time of the evaluation, even though considerable progress in that direction had been made by most.²¹ These enterprises have created significant impact on the lives of individuals and households, who are employed by or participate in these enterprises supply chains or share in ownership (through cooperative businesses for instance), **but as long as scaling up and replication is not taking place, this model will not have realized its full potential to move from direct service delivery to an influencing approach.** EDP might not have yet delivered against its promise of systems leverage (e.g. by enticing other donors and investors to support similar early-stage rural enterprises), it has successfully translated other types of leverage into greater social impact²²: financial leverage (stretching philanthropic funds to create more impact, and attracting more investments for the sector), political leverage (enterprises as vehicles to influence agricultural policy), network leverage (centre for training, inputs, gender awareness), and organizational leverage for Oxfam (skills and learning in market engagement and social enterprise development).

Multi-stakeholder networks approaches are emerging as promising strategies for shifting from direct service delivery towards influencing. An example is described in an evaluation of the Grove to Market program in the West Bank (OPT)²³, showing how such an approach can bring together anyone involved in the agricultural sector, NGOs, cooperatives, women's organizations, policy makers, and private sector actors, to foster dialogue, engage in joint advocacy, and generate partnerships to help the sector develop with a strong focus on women and smallholders inclusion and poverty reduction. Activities can include drafting legislation, monitoring implementation of government agriculture and food security strategies, influencing private sector engagement with cooperatives, or promoting innovative models (for example in rural finance). Promising examples exist in many Oxfam countries, e.g. Armenia and Georgia, and the Occupied Palestinian Territories.

The shift towards influencing is not complete and encounters some significant challenges that need to be addressed. These include pressures to achieve short-term results, an insufficient commitment or ability to reorient the role of projects as small-scale pilots, and insufficient synergies and collaboration between programs and campaigns as intended by the OPA. The evaluations reviewed for this report demonstrate that a shift towards influencing was taking place, but several challenges remained. The need for a longer time for changes to take place was one of the obstacles to make the shift from direct service delivery projects to influencing programs. The OGB EJ review notes that some program managers found "that sometimes the imperative to deliver rapid direct impact at scale inhibits the potential to take a longer-term approach".²⁴ Several interviewees also noted that "a multi-stakeholder process to create

21 Bridges Ventures (2013) Oxfam Enterprise Development Programme Review Summary Report. Oxfam GB, December.

22 ibid

23 Advance Consulting Services (2014). "From Grove To Market" Olive Oil Program External Midterm Evaluation Report. Oxfam GB, January.

24 Bridges Ventures (2013) Oxfam Enterprise Development Programme Review Summary Report. Oxfam GB, December.

(market) governance, increasing producer and women's organizations' voices, can enable or improve governance [...] but will take a longer timeframe than the traditional 3-5 year [...] program"²⁵. The evaluators of OGB's EDP mentioned that it is unrealistic to expect that supported enterprises can move from blueprint to scale within five years or less, and more time is needed to prove the effectiveness and efficiency of this approach.

In some cases, **model interventions were not designed with scale in mind**, or were **not accompanied with high quality action research** to make their promotion (through advocacy for instance) sufficiently convincing. In Bangladesh, the RESOLVE pilot project produced some replicable and easily adopted interventions (such as homestead cultivation for landless households), but other interventions were believed **too costly to reproduce at scale** (such as asset transfers for the very poor) or face greater **market constraints** at scale compared to pilot (often the case when new income activities are promoted).²⁶ Scaling up certain innovations/pilot projects (through influencing or other means) is sometimes unrealistic, because what works at small scale does not necessarily work at larger scale, especially in market access programs. Equally important is the **knowledge management and learning component** of (pilot) programs. The RESOLVE pilot failed to properly evaluate and document effectiveness and impact of the intervention, weakening its role in advocacy. The advocacy component was formulated clearly in the program design, but "taken for granted"²⁷ during implementation. The evaluation of the RESOLVE pilot project suggested that a strategic advocacy plan for the program should have been developed to ensure clear messaging, target groups and expected results.²⁸

Sometimes **the link between pilot project and influencing is weak or unclear**. For instance, Supporting Rural Livelihoods and Employment project by OGB in Western Georgia²⁹ supported 150 households directly through training, advice, capital and productive inputs over a three year period, while another component of the project involved advocating for a more enabling national policy environment for small producers. But the intended improvements in the national enabling environment were at a different scale and would take much longer to take place in order to be of relevance for the pilot project. At the same time, the pilot project itself still relied heavily on a service delivery approach to be sufficiently relevant in reinforcing the intended changes in the enabling environment. A frequently encountered criticism is that there is no strategic framework or clear impact chain that explains how influencing will lead to the desired outcomes. In Oxfam-Solidarité Belgium's Laos program it was unclear to which extent advocacy work "responded to an organized strategy to influence policy development."³⁰ In some cases this is the result of not conducting a deep market system analysis and formulating a logical strategic framework for the program that coherently links the goal of poverty reduction with a focus on sustainable market system change."³¹

Other challenges relate to **implementing** effective influencing approaches. The review of Oxfam Novib's SLW program³² stated that Oxfam and its partners did not have sufficient

25 ibid

26 Zijlstra, Pieter Jan (2013) Regenerative Agriculture and Sustainable Livelihood for Vulnerable Ecosystems (RESOLVE). Oxfam Novib, January.

27 Ibid

28 Ibid

29 ____ (2013). Supporting Rural Livelihoods and Employment in Western Georgia Project Effectiveness Review. Oxfam GB, October.

30 Coronel, Céilia, and Vongsana, Khosada (2013). Final evaluation of Oxfam Solidarity Belgium Laos Programme 2011- 2013. Oxfam Solidarité Belgium.

31 Advance Consulting Services (2014). "From Grove To Market" Olive Oil Program External Midterm Evaluation Report. Oxfam GB, January.

32 Haagsma, Ben and Groverman, Verona (2013) Struggle for Land, Water and Food: Final report thematic evaluation for Oxfam Novib. Oxfam Novib, August.

insights into how advocacy and lobbying contributed to sustainable livelihoods. This is not an isolated issue and will be elaborated on further in the results section. In addition, **partner organizations** might be strong in involving communities in lobbying activities, but might **lack sufficient “capacity** in lobbying ‘upward’ more complex issues.”³³ Developing this capacity takes time. An evaluation of Oxfam-Solidarité Belgium’s program in Laos mentioned that “it was important to adapt methods and tools with the partners in order to adjust to their context and to their capacity. It takes time and efforts to progressively enhance capacities.”³⁴ **Oxfam’s use of gendered market systems approaches** is criticized by some as too heavy-handed, as it **often still involves a lot of direct interventions** in capacity building, access to new markets by investing in new enterprises, etc. The expectation that such efforts will be replicated remains to be seen in most cases. This heavy-handedness also shows up sometimes in a tendency to be overly comprehensive in working at all levels of a system (from local to international, from grassroots producer organizations to governments and companies, from new model development to capacity building and advocacy) “to embed a deeper more transformative change than if we purely worked at one level.”³⁵ This seems overly ambitious, however, and not fail proof given the fact that each of these activities eventually needs a sustainable exit.

In conclusion, some CG4 programs are beginning use influencing approaches, but the shift is far from complete. Direct delivery and implementation is not a thing of the past, and some significant challenges need to be overcome by developing the skills and mindset to use facilitation and influencing approaches in programs, and by embracing much stronger synergies with the influencing approaches that continue to reside in campaigns and advocacy siloes. On the other hand, the reader is reminded that most program evaluations don’t mention such synergies, even though they might exist. At the same time, it is easy to underestimate “influencing work at the heart of Oxfam and partners’ daily practice, which may not be tagged as such. In some cases, this relates to the establishment of successful strategic relationships – with unions, private sector actors and local authorities – to influence changes in their ideas and behavior that may benefit their engagement with small producers.”³⁶

Influencing approaches in Sustainable Food Campaigns

Since campaigns and advocacy are by nature influencing strategies (in comparison to long-term development), they are discussed separately. Unlike development programs, the issue is not the extent to which a shift has taken place from direct service delivery to influencing, but the extent to which the GROW and other campaigns were able to focus on sustainable food and connect to relevant development programs in countries (as envisioned in Oxfam’s *One Program Approach*), as well as the types of influencing (called ‘commitments’ in the OSP to achieve the CG4) being used.

Oxfam launched its GROW campaign in June 2011 to tackle food injustice and transform the food system, in response to the triple challenges of sustainable food production, equity, and resilience. This broad and still ongoing campaign operates at national, regional and global levels, while aiming to be regionally or nationally led, across four thematic areas – land, investment in small-scale agriculture, climate change and food price volatility.³⁷

33 Ibid

³⁴ Coronel, Célia, and Vongsana, Khosada (2013). Final evaluation of Oxfam Solidarity Belgium Laos Programme 2011- 2013. Oxfam Solidarité Belgium.

³⁵ Advance Consulting Services (2014). “From Grove To Market” Olive Oil Program External Midterm Evaluation Report. Oxfam GB, January.

³⁶ Oxfam Canada (2013) Final Evaluation, Agricultural Market Growth Project: Assets, Gender and Economic Empowerment, April 2012-October 2013. Oxfam Canada.

³⁷ OwlRe (2013b) Oxfam’s GROW Mid-Point External Evaluation, Final Report. Oxfam International, October.

This food justice campaign set out to bring about three big shifts³⁸: a new global governance system (where governments' top priority is to tackle hunger and vulnerability, and a changed international governance of trade, food aid, financial markets and climate finance); a new agriculture future (prioritizing public funding on small-scale production in the south); and a new ecological future (equitable access to natural resources and a global deal on climate change). GROW's main focus was on both agricultural policy and corporate practices at the national level. Improved food security and incomes at scale are not mentioned in these objectives, but they are generally recognized as critical in the achievement of food security.³⁹

The following findings are distilled from a mid-term evaluation of the global GROW campaign and Behind the Brands (BtB) initiative, as well as GROW in Honduras, Brazil, Bangladesh, Nigeria, Ghana and West Africa.

The GROW campaign has focused on building the capacity of civil society (including farmers' and women's organizations) to claim rights and influence policy and securing a number of promising commitments from policy makers and multinational food companies to be more inclusive and respectful of the rights of smallholders. A number of pertinent findings related to GROW can be found in the sense-making exercise⁴⁰, and are summarized here. GROW and related campaigns have been impressive in terms of influencing company policies and commitments, government policies related to small-scale agriculture and World Bank policies. The most significant achievement was securing policy changes or commitments on food and land from governments, corporations, and global bodies in addition to involving rural women and smallholders in these processes. One of the key roles for Oxfam has been its ability to act as facilitator and convener, bringing together different organizations in alliances to jointly work on a campaign. Such alliances sometimes yield "successful strategic relationships – with unions, private sector actors and local authorities – to influence changes in their ideas and behavior that may benefit their engagement with small producers".⁴¹

Not all the influencing approaches (CG 4 commitments) are pursued equally, and a lack of focus and follow-up jeopardize further success in the future. The broad focus of the GROW campaign is seen by some as too complex and diverging from the original aim, which is on food justice and an improved food system. In that sense, priorities that emerged from the South (such as agricultural reform) were not conducive to those from the North (such as company policies). Moreover, there was concern about long term monitoring and follow-up of these processes, some of which would span beyond the GROW time frame. This is an important concern, as this might jeopardize achievement of the intended results in terms of an improved and just food system. OPA is either underutilized or not fully mastered, but signs of progress have been noted. In some instances the campaign used the space generated by the program for awareness raising but the program could not get a space within the campaign.⁴² There remains relatively little evidence of engaging the private sector, and there is a lack of tapping into private sector actors (small entrepreneurs, traders or investors) and forging relationships among these actors and its target communities. Access to and use of land and water, critical area for food security, did not receive much attention. Some reasons given were that "the topic

³⁸ Bailey, Robert (2011). Growing a Better Future – Food Justice in a Resource Constrained World. Oxfam International, July.

³⁹ These three objectives fall within the eight dimensions deemed critical to achieve food security by the Food Security Learning Framework. See http://www.ifad.org/hfs/tools/hfs/fs_frameworkpub/foodsecurity.pdf

⁴⁰ Roper, Laura, Sánchez de Ocaña, Mónica, Smiaroski, Mary Sue and Rocha, Jasmin (2015). Oxfam Sense Making Exercise for a Selection of Evaluations 2013-2014. Oxfam International, February.

⁴¹ Oxfam Canada (2013) Final Evaluation, Agricultural Market Growth Project: Assets, Gender and Economic Empowerment, April 2012-October 2013. Oxfam Canada.

⁴² Plataforma Agraria (2014) Evaluación de la Campaña: Cosechemos Justicia para las Mujeres del Campo. Oxfam GB, Abril.

of land rights was very sensitive [...] and that Oxfam did not always have the necessary resources and legal experience.”⁴³

The objectives of national GROW campaigns are generally in line with those of the global campaign but customized to the local context, with some campaign goals receiving higher priority than others. Most pursue a two-pronged strategy by growing or strengthening civil society movements (especially women’s organizations) on family farming and food security on the one hand, and advocating for governments to increase investments in agriculture (in accordance with their commitments to the Maputo declaration calling for public investment in agriculture to reach at least 10% of national budgets), and adopt policies to establish and protect the rights of smallholders, especially women and ethnic minorities.

The following is a more detailed look at how national GROW campaigns have employed different influencing strategies, referred to as ‘commitments’ to achieve the CG4 in the OSP. Some findings from an evaluation of *the Campaign for Sustainable Rural Livelihood (CSRL)*, which predated the GROW campaign in Bangladesh, are included as well.

Table 1. GROW Campaign Influencing Approaches compared to CG4 Commitments

OSP Commitments to achieve CG4	Evidence of Influencing Approaches
Promote increased investment in female smallholders, support rural women’s organizations and advocate for positive changes in policies and beliefs about women’s roles. Facilitate effective economic organization and promotions of women’s voices in the economic sphere	Strong emphasis. Campaigns promoted public (and to a lesser extent) private sector policies and investments in a just and sustainable food system. Much effort went into strengthening civil society movements on family farming and food security, with a particular focus on women’s organizations, often through direct support and capacity building, strengthening institutional, advocacy and campaigning capacity of farmers’ organizations in Ghana.” ⁴⁴ <i>Food Female Hero</i> (FFH) awards were organized “to raise the profile of small scale female farmers.” ⁴⁵
Promote policies that strengthen resilience through risk analysis, reducing price volatility for basic food commodities and providing protection for the most	Strong emphasis. In Nigeria ⁴⁶ , a multi-pronged strategy to achieve this consisted of developing people’s skills and adaptive tools, supporting policies and processes that prepare people for emergencies, and strengthen the relationship between pastoralists and small scale farmers by providing them with platforms for engagement and dialogue. A similar strategy was taken in Brazil to support the resilience of small-scale farmers, especially women through capacity building for their organizations, support direct advocacy, and “do research on the relations of climate change and an unjust and broken food system.” ⁴⁷
Oxfam acts as facilitator or broker and convene multi-stakeholder groups to increase impact by building coalitions for change	Strong emphasis. There is a lot of momentum in most country campaigns to build alliances and convene multi-stakeholder networks. In Nigeria the Voices for Food Security (VFS) coalition (consisting of 16 local civil society groups and small-scale farmers’ organizations) is campaigning for food security and developed a five year strategy.
Influence states to attract investment and support development of domestic	Moderate emphasis. Besides putting pressure on governments to meet their commitments to the Maputo agreement,

⁴³ OwiRe (2013b) Oxfam’s GROW Mid-Point External Evaluation, Final Report. Oxfam International, October.

⁴⁴ Ibid

⁴⁵ Ibid

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Watson, Gabrielle (2015). Oxfam in Brazil GROW Campaign 2011-2014. Review and Future Options. Oxfam, February.

markets and challenge the private sector to develop inclusive business models	there is little evidence of influencing states to attract investments for agriculture or for encouraging the private sector to develop inclusive business models.
Promote scalable agricultural production systems that sustainably increase yield, resilience and adaptation to climate change, from subsistence farmers to market-based small-scale producers	Moderate emphasis. Even if sustainable food programs in the same countries would demonstrate specific innovative agricultural systems, there is no mention of promoting those, which would point to the lack of strong One Program Approach. However, GROW Brazil supported farmers organization “to promote promote just and sustainable agriculture policies, especially on agro-ecology and pro-poor climate resilience [...] which resulted in the enactment of the National Plan for Agro-ecology and Organic Production” ⁴⁸ .
Enable communities to manage land and water resources sustainably and strengthen the livelihoods of those most chronically at risk of crisis in priority-1 countries	Weak attention. Some exceptions are noted. In Ghana, the GROW campaign advocated for policy changes that strengthen the land and natural resources rights of women and other small-scale food producers and to stop investors and corporations engaging in irresponsible large scale land acquisitions.
Influence governments, business and multilateral organizations to increase financial flows to smallholder agriculture and promote policies to benefit the poor by rebalancing investment and services between small and large scale production	Weak attention. Oxfam Ghana promoted private sector financing mechanisms for a national agricultural sector investment plan focusing on small-scale food producers, especially women, and increased quality public and donor financing of the national agricultural sector investment plan focused on small-scale food producers in line with the Maputo Declaration (to devote 10% of its budget to agriculture by December 2015). ⁴⁹
Improve donor food policies, especially in fragile states	Weak attention. The Ghana campaign aims for increased quality donor financing of the national agricultural sector investment plan.
Empower small-scale producers to improve trade regulation, to enter and influence Fair Trade value chains	No mention.
Facilitate the development of innovative rural finance models and consumer and fair trade movements, particularly in the BRICSAMs and major cities	No mention.

Table 1 shows that not all commitments have received the same level of attention. The strongest emphasis was on supporting rural organizations, especially of women, and advocacy for positive changes in policies to include their interests, including policies to strengthen resilience and reduce volatility of food prices. As part of this, Oxfam’s role has increasingly become one facilitator of multi-stakeholder approaches and broker of broad based alliances. There is less evidence about Oxfam’s role in influencing states to support development of domestic markets and challenging the private sector to develop inclusive business models. Surprisingly, relatively little attention appears to go to the promotion of more productive and resilient agricultural models. It is not clear from the evaluations to what extent Oxfam is influencing donor food policies, and there is no mention about improving trade regulation or development of innovative rural finance models. Reasons for emphasizing various influencing approaches different are not given, and might depend on local context and objectives. But there is also a sense that the selection of different approaches is not always based on strong theories of change. Moreover, the sense-making exercise further points out that “while Oxfam is supporting much more influencing work at the national level, **work remains to be done on**

⁴⁸ Watson, Gabrielle (2015). Oxfam in Brazil GROW Campaign 2011-2014. Review and Future Options. Oxfam, February.

⁴⁹ Saragoussi, Muriel (2014). GROW Campaign West Africa: Ghana and Nigeria. Mid-term evaluation. Oxfam Novib, March.

articulation of a holistic model that integrates influencing between global and local level.”⁵⁰

The campaigns evaluated for this report also face some challenges, including a lack of sufficient focus, insufficient follow-up once initial results appear, and lack of local ownership. The first two challenges are interrelated and were raised frequently. Lots of initiatives are taking place, at different levels, and targeted at different audiences, but they are not always coordinated or connected. Some campaigns, but not all, established a theory of change (ToC). Instead of aiming for an overly comprehensive approach to influencing, a carefully designed ToC can help in identifying leverage points that have the potential for systemic changes. Moreover, a ToC is a living tool and needs to be revised periodically as achievements are realized or as circumstances change. Other weaknesses included a lack of synergies with other campaigns and development programs, and insufficient attention to ensure sustainability of the campaign beyond the funding period.

Lack of follow-up is a recurring problem. After making progress in engaging the private sector in land and sugar issues in Brazil, an evaluation cautioned that “failure to walk the last mile with local communities and use Oxfam’s voice to help see the cases through to resolution will reinforce the belief that it is not possible to challenge unjust corporate practices and win.”⁵¹ In Bangladesh, a Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program (CARP) was a key achievement to draw attention to smallholders, but once formulated there was a lack of significant follow-up.⁵² Both evaluations warn that this also presents a potential brand risk for Oxfam.

Ownership and sustainability were identified as a serious concern in the evaluation of the Bangladesh GROW campaign. The evaluators did “not see a clear direction among partners to rise up to the expectation of Oxfam GROW team to own the campaign and to ensure long term sustainability.”⁵³ According to the same evaluation, this is partly due to lack of capacity issue but probably more with political will of the stakeholders. Another challenge has been staff turnover in Oxfam’s campaign teams, which was an issue in Nigeria and Bangladesh. The sense-making exercise postulated that inadequate staffing and high turnover rates may have limited Oxfam’s technical capacity to steer the campaign. Lastly, lack of collaboration with the private sector (on agriculture marketing, pricing infrastructure etc.) falls short from expectations, but “some Oxfam partners and allies question the effectiveness of private sector advocacy to bring about significant change.”⁵⁴

4. ARE RECENT CG4 PROGRAMS IMPROVING INCOME AND FOOD SECURITY AT SCALE?

This section explores “where is it working and under which conditions”, i.e. how successful are CG4 related programs and campaigns at improving income and food security at scale. As has been stated in the introduction, with only two years into the OSP it is unrealistic to expect to observe whether systemic changes at scale are indeed materializing, especially if they are the intended result of a shift away from direct service delivery to influencing strategies, most of

⁵⁰ Roper, Laura, Sánchez de Ocaña, Mónica, Smiaroski, Mary Sue and Rocha, Jasmin (2015). Oxfam Sense Making Exercise for a Selection of Evaluations 2013-2014. Oxfam International, February.

⁵¹ Watson, Gabrielle (2015). Oxfam in Brazil GROW Campaign 2011-2014. Review and Future Options. Oxfam, February.

⁵² Halim, Ujjaini, and Palli, R.K. Mission (2015). Mid-term Review for GROW Campaign in Bangladesh. Oxfam, June.

⁵³ Ibid

⁵⁴ Watson, Gabrielle (2015). Oxfam in Brazil GROW Campaign 2011-2014. Review and Future Options. Oxfam, February.

which predate the OSP. However, even if data on food security and income are scarce, this section explores if any (common) intermediary outcomes were defined in program and campaign designs, if they are achieved, and to what extent they are indicative of achieving anticipated impact in the future.

Even more direct service delivery programs typically show only modest impacts in terms of food security and incomes. Even though it seems reasonable to expect that more direct interventions lead to more direct results within a shorter timeframe, as compared to what can be expected from less direct influencing approaches, the results in terms of incomes and food security are often not impressive. Some evaluations speculate that not enough time has passed for these results to emerge. While the intended impact is often not achieved (in the relatively short time between project and evaluation), most projects/programs are achieving other outcomes (increased farmer participation in value chains, improved access to credit and other resources, even improve material wellbeing, improved attitudes perceptions of women's empowerment and increased female self-efficacy). The comprehensive sense-making exercise states "Oxfam's support is contributing to livelihoods becoming more resilient and helping vulnerable communities, particularly women-headed households, maintain their assets, access food, have better savings, better access to credit, and access knowledge."⁵⁵ But 'contributing to' does not equal 'resulting in' impact, and "while changes in agricultural practices are becoming more generalized, there is mixed evidence that this is translating to better yields and even less evidence that it is leading to better incomes, among other things, because such an increase depends on other significant factors, often outside project control."⁵⁶

This is echoed by a number of evaluations for this review. The evaluation of the *Agricultural Market Growth Ethiopia: Assets, Gender and Economic Empowerment* project, show that most outcomes were successfully achieved, "although **an increase in income was only starting to take place** given the short timeframe of the project."⁵⁷ The OGB EJ review reports **modest household income increases**, noting "that changes in policy or norms take a long time to materialize, and even longer before poor women and smallholders experience tangible, positive outcomes."⁵⁸ Considering that household incomes were predominantly evaluated in direct service delivery programs, the report puts out the **question whether a greater focus on influencing would not further reduce this modest impact on income**, and recommends that "leveraging solutions to income generation or the reduction of negative impacts on income need to be clearly articulated and evaluated alongside increase advocacy in EJ programme design".⁵⁹ And in the case of OGB's Enterprise Development Program (EDP), results include "increased farmer membership, improved access to credit and other resources that increase economic empowerment, improved material wellbeing, improved attitudes towards women and perceptions of women's empowerment and increased female self-efficacy"⁶⁰, but **no evidence was available on improved outcomes for food security and income**.

It is plausible that such intermediary outcomes offer great potential to eventually translate into the intended impact, but additional evidence (which should also be obtained by allowing more time between intervention and assessment) is needed to demonstrate this. When positive results are mentioned, they remain at the scale of the project, and there is no information on how such results will be maintained and scale up through influencing.

⁵⁵ Roper, Laura, Sánchez de Ocaña, Mónica, Smiaroski, Mary Sue and Rocha, Jasmin (2015). Oxfam Sense Making Exercise for a Selection of Evaluations 2013-2014. Oxfam International, February.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Oxfam Canada (2013) Final Evaluation, Agricultural Market Growth Project: Assets, Gender and Economic Empowerment, April 2012-October 2013. Oxfam Canada.

⁵⁸ Maes, Jan (2015). Review of Oxfam GB's Economic Justice Programme (2012-2014). Oxfam GB, October.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Bridges Ventures (2013) Oxfam Enterprise Development Programme Review Summary Report. Oxfam GB, December.

Some **qualitative** program evaluations, however, are more positive about achieving food security and/or income outcomes, but the data are less reliable. An evaluation⁶¹ of the Samunnati Program in Nepal mentions that impacts were observed at the community level including **increased nutrient food production and consumption**, and an assessment of RESOLVE in Bangladesh achieved “a **positive impact on income, food security and nutrition**”, but adds that this is not supported with reliable data. Similarly, Oxfam Novib’s SLW program reports increases in yield and incomes, but those were based on interviews with farmers and not based on quantitative data.⁶²

Campaigns and programs with a demonstrated shift towards influencing offer little evidence so far on improved food security and incomes, but focus on mainly on the immediate results and intermediary outcomes from influencing approaches. As mentioned earlier, it is not realistic to expect to see much concrete evidence of improved food security, incomes and resilience within a few years of influencing strategies within the CG4. In fact, one might even speculate that if such outcomes would appear in such a short time span, the strategy might very well have included some direct services and support. There is no mention in the sense-making exercise about food security and household income outcomes as the result of campaigns. GROW and the Behind the Brands (BtB) campaign “yielded results in influencing policy changes in favor of smallholder agriculture, both at the level of government and private sector (multinationals), but there is no reporting of increased financial flows to smallholder agriculture, let alone improved food security or higher incomes for smallholder farmers.”⁶³ The OGB EJ review shows that “influencing and leveraging change is at the core of EJ’s theory of change [...], but the evidence of achieving changes at scale is limited”.⁶⁴ If impact is mentioned at all, it is hypothesized in vague terms, such as in an evaluation of the BtB campaign that states “that if met, the ‘asks’ from multinationals would have concrete impacts on workers, women and the environment.”⁶⁵ The fact that this evidence is not (yet) available does not mean that such results are unrealistic, but it is concerning that there is no mention of plans to measure those in the future.

Most campaign evaluations mention the achievement of intermediary outcomes, such as increased support to small-scale food producers to build movements, new platforms for civil society dialogues and effective engagement with policy/decision makers, more inclusive agricultural policies, etc. At the time of the evaluations (mid-term evaluation of global GROW campaign and country level GROW campaigns), the achievements were mostly related to developing the awareness and capacity of smallholder farmers and their organizations to engage in policy deliberation, which resulted in some modest policy achievements. For instance, in Brazil⁶⁶ women’s peasant organizations were able to articulate and insert their agendas in wider agricultural policy debates. In Ghana⁶⁷, a network of farmers’ organizations was able to engage in a dialogue with the parliament about funding and policies for smallholder farming. In Bangladesh⁶⁸, a Right to Food Network was established, which helped a law

⁶¹ Management Innovation, Training and Research Academy (MITRA) (2014) Evaluation for “Program for Promotion of Self-Help Initiative in the Rural Areas (Samunnati)” implemented by Sahamati in Nepal - Final Report. Oxfam Hong Kong, June. [346]

⁶² Haagsma, Ben and Groverman, Verona (2013) Struggle for Land, Water and Food: Final report thematic evaluation for Oxfam Novib. Oxfam Novib, August.

⁶³ OwlRe (2013b) Oxfam’s GROW Mid-Point External Evaluation, Final Report. Oxfam International, October.

⁶⁴ OwlRe (2013b) Oxfam’s GROW Mid-Point External Evaluation, Final Report. Oxfam International, October.

⁶⁴ Maes, Jan (2015). Review of Oxfam GB’s Economic Justice Programme (2012-2014). Oxfam GB, October.

⁶⁶ Reference

⁶⁷ Saragoussi, Muriel (2014). GROW Campaign West Africa: Ghana and Nigeria. Mid-term evaluation. Oxfam Novib, March.

⁶⁸ Halim, Ujjaini, and Palli, R.K. Mission (2015). Mid-term Review for GROW Campaign in Bangladesh. Oxfam, June.

commission to draft the first of its kind Right to Food Bill. As mentioned earlier, the most important achievement of the GROW campaign was securing policy changes or commitments on food and land from governments and corporations, and the role played by rural women in achieving these.

These results are still far removed from the objectives of achieving CG4, which aim to intensify small-scale productions systems and make them more resilient, to economically empower rural women, and result in resilient livelihoods, greater food security and participation in agricultural markets. As significant as the initial results may be, there is no guarantee that those outcomes are achievable, as there are numerous unknown hurdles and detours on the way. Some evaluations express a concern that campaign themes shift too often and too soon, and that there is a danger of not following up on these early achievements. The BtB evaluation for instance mentions that it would take time and effort to fill the gaps between intended policies and practices⁶⁹, which is only the beginning phase of an impact chain leading to improved food security of poor people involved in these companies' value chains. The Ghana OCS warns that "a lot has been achieved under the GROW Campaign but will be lost if the campaign were not sustained."

5. HOW ARE OXFAM COUNTRY STRATEGIES PLANNING TO SHIFT TOWARDS INFLUENCING FOR ACHIEVING THE CG4?

Oxfam Country Strategies allow us to look forward and draw actionable lessons and recommendations for programming and program support as we move forward. The following findings are derived from a number OCS and a recent review of OCS. Since they are only strategies, they do not provide evidence about the extent to which a shift from service delivery to influencing is taking place, but they can illustrate how country offices are planning to continue making that shift towards a strong influencing strategy at the core of its CG4 work. The findings are based on a set of OCS⁷⁰ deemed particularly strong in expressing their intention to use influencing as a key strategy for achieving the CG4 among other change goals. Rather than presenting a representative picture, the following analysis is meant to identify good practice and thinking found in high-quality OCSs.

A recent review of OCS⁷¹ indicates a **much greater focus on advocacy on policy issues and on the engagement of farmers groups in decision making** processes, while less direct work is planned with specific groups of farmers to increase productivity and link to value chains. Almost every OCS reviewed states clearly that the **shift from direct programs to influencing is central to its county strategy**, in line with the OSP. The overwhelming focus of planned advocacy and voice work is with state institutions at both national and local levels. The Bangladesh OCS adds that the shift towards more influencing should also become a more significant part of the work that its local partner NGOs will move "from the predominantly **service-delivery approach** adopted by most NGOs in Bangladesh **to a more sophisticated rights-based**, wellbeing focus that leverages service provision to support a more effective state that empowers the poor, enabling them to claim their rights from complementary government, private and third sector providers of services."

⁶⁹ OwlRe (2013a) External Assessment - Behind the Brands. Oxfam International, November.

⁷⁰ These countries are: Bangladesh, Ethiopia, Ghana, Laos, Mozambique, Nepal, Nicaragua, Peru, Vietnam and Zambia.

⁷¹ Wareing, Kate (2015). Oxfam Country Strategies Review. Oxfam International, October.

Development programs are increasingly seen as demonstration pilots to provide evidence and leverage influencing. **Influencing and long-term programming are also seen as linked** instead of separate activities. At the same time, some OCS caution against an advocacy only approach at the risk of 'losing touch' with the women and smallholders whose wellbeing Oxfam is promoting in the first place. The Ghana OCS plans "to incorporate some community based work within project portfolios, with Oxfam role being working within consortia, as facilitator and broker of change (not service deliverer)." The same OCS also adds, however, that **direct service delivery might still have a role**, if no other source available and as long as it remains targeted and time-bound. Such exception remains vague and does not address sustainability of such interventions, leaving the door open to potentially large direct service delivery programs, with limited demonstration potential. The Ethiopia OCS refers to pilot programs "as 'threats of good examples' to inform appropriate influencing actions to bring about change at scale." Not all OCS plan to reduce the role of development programs to piloting innovative approaches as strongly, however. The Peru OCS only goes as far as always combining its programmatic work with campaigns and advocacy.

Most OCSs express a four-pronged approach in their Influencing Strategy, like this one from Vietnam for instance:

1. Leveraging or using Oxfam's program experience to drive large-scale solutions;
2. Advocacy and campaigning (includes coalition building, research, policy development, lobbying, media, and digital tools);
3. Support movements/mobilization of rights-holders, activists, supporters, and citizens (ensuring that women and their organizations are included and their voices heard);
4. Improved governance, building the capacity of institutions to engage the marginalized, and creating spaces for poor or marginalized people to influence institutions;

Most OCS are deliberately planning to move influencing to the center. The Bangladesh OCS intends to embed influencing into all programmes, make it a key element of every role and write it into job descriptions. The Nicaragua OCS plans to focus on structure, culture and skills to make influencing its core strategy. Capacity building is also seen as an essential ingredient to a successful shift towards influencing. The Laos OCS considers its "primary strategic task to help develop a capable, vibrant and viable civil society." Others seem to move away from this kind of continued support and focus more on the other side of the equation, government and private sector. For instance, the Zambia OCS intends to move away from developing the farmers and "linking them to markets to focus on influencing greater investment into the sector from both private and public sector [...] and influencing the policy environment for the development of small holder farmers to ensure access to services, inputs and markets."

Alignment of interests is a major theme, and Oxfam often sees its role as the convener and broke of alliances or multi-stakeholder networks that cut across sectors. The Ghana OCS identifies the State (authorities), traditional authorities and the private sector including civil society as the three groups that can influence policy and investments linked to agriculture, food security and land and natural resources– and states that "change can happen when the interests and incentives of these groups are made to align, and coalitions for change form that cut across them."

On the other hand, OCS tend to lack specific targets and outcomes. "Influencing is embedded across change goals in most OCS documents. [...] but the majority was still very generic about targets and will not be able to assess their success in delivery against the OCS in specific terms."⁷² Some of the reasons for this are that OCS are built on a too generic power analysis and utopian theories of change. "The weaknesses in most strategies are how that visionary change is coupled with a focus on what the most is that can be achieved within a five-year

⁷² Ibid

window.”⁷³ The Ethiopia OCS is much less vague in its five year ambitions as it anticipates and quantifies impact in its main outcome areas by 2020 as follows: “at least a 15% increase in purchasing power (real income) and improved food security, among others.” Such specific (and ambitious) targets for food security and income outcomes are the exception rather than the rule, however.

Instead, some OCS warn that influencing takes time for systemic changes to emerge. The Ghana OCS for instance, mentions that “policy change, reform of traditional practices, etc. cannot be influenced within a short time [...] and this requires that Oxfam and its partners are committed to a long haul when doing advocacy.” They tend to focus on intermediary outcomes rather than the expected impact of the CG4. There are some recurring intermediary outcomes, such as more empowered citizenry, demonstrations of alternative models, more inclusive and effective policies, etc. but these tend to be vague, and they don’t guarantee ultimate success, even though they are plausible steps in the right direction. The role that Oxfam intends to play tends to be equally vague: designing and demonstrating innovative models, facilitating learning, strengthening poor people’s organizations, facilitating alliances. Many OCS also tend to take an overly comprehensive approach by listing an almost endless number of intermediary outcomes, and the activities that are planned to achieve those. Such an overly comprehensive strategy may result in a lack of focus, a tendency to continue direct support to achieve the many intended outcomes, and inability to evaluate success. Most OCS offer generic ‘good practice’ evaluations, but lack a clear focus on which indicators or outcomes need to be monitored to gauge progress towards desired objectives and impact.

6. CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this review was to evaluate how Oxfam is measuring up against Change Goal 4 (Sustainable Food) of the 2013-2019 OSP, as it is going into its third year. The review analysed how successful the shift from service delivery to influencing strategies has been so far, and how much progress has been made in terms of achieving greater food security and income at scale. In terms of the planned strategic shift from service delivery to influencing, this review also analyses Oxfam Country Strategies (OCS) to gauge whether they are firmly committing to this new way of doing things. This is a first review of CG4, and its findings may contribute to additional guidelines for achieving (and evaluating) the expected impact of CG4 by 2020.

In response to the first question, there was already a **shift taking place from service delivery to influencing** in CG4 programming, even before the OSP came into effect. The evaluations used for this review indicate that this shift is **far from complete and faces some important challenges**. Long term programs and campaigns are not yet sufficiently linked to maximize influencing and make it the central strategy to achieve the CG4. Programs and Campaigns are still being implemented to a large extent in siloes, and the evaluations available for this review reflect this by focusing on either one or the other.

Programs show a shift towards influencing, but **direct delivery and implementation strategies are still prominent**. On the other hand, a number of projects are focusing more on demonstration and learning instead of implementing direct services, and are linking those with advocacy. **Market development programs are gaining traction**, but they do not always fully exploit opportunities to influence market actors and enabling environment. Remaining challenges for programs to make influencing their core strategy include **continuing pressures to achieve short-term results**, an insufficient commitment or ability to reorient the role of projects as small-scale pilots, and **insufficient synergies and collaboration between programs and campaigns** as intended by the OPA.

⁷³ Ibid

Campaigns have focused mostly on **building the capacity of civil society** (including farmers' and women's organizations) to claim rights and **influence policy**, but face some critical challenges, including a **lack of focus, follow-up, and local ownership**.

A review of recent OCS shows a **clear commitment towards further extending the shift from service delivery to influencing** to achieve the impact expected by CG4. There is a **much greater focus on advocacy and engagement of farmers groups in decision making** processes, while there is an intention to view **projects as learning and demonstration** pilots to leverage influencing. **Influencing and long-term programming are also seen as linked** instead of separate activities.

Evidence remains scarce about the **extent that CG4 programs and campaigns are successful at improving income and food security at scale**. With only two years into the current OSP one should not expect to observe whether expected impact at scale is already emerging. Moreover, since most evaluations reflect on projects and campaigns implemented before the OSP took effect, the findings can only inform about the results from already existing programs and campaigns that had already started to shift towards increased use of influencing strategies.

Direct **delivery/implementation approaches have only produced modest results** in terms of food security and incomes; indirect **influencing strategies** (like the GROW campaign) are **hardly showing any such impacts**. This is not surprising given the longer time that would be required to see these kind of results, but there are doubts whether this type of impact can be realistically achieved at scale within the timeframe of the OSP, and whether they can even be measured.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

Future programs need to overcome some of the key obstacles that are still preventing a stronger emphasis on influencing. There is a need to **redirect the role of programs further in function of an influencing agenda** (through demonstration, evidence gathering and focus on replicability and scalability). Such a shift requires that programs receive adequate support for communication, research, MEL and advocacy: Oxfam needs to further invest in this and make a case to its donors that their financial support and involvement is equally critical to achieve this.

It is **not only necessary to move away from direct service delivery, but also from direct implementation to facilitation** of processes that build capacity of smallholders to exert their rights, governments and private sector to take up their responsibilities, and market systems to become more inclusive and efficient. This should not only apply to programs but also to campaigns, i.e. to move away from specific outcomes (e.g. commitment by a specific multinational company to respect rights of smallholder farmers) to systemic changes (e.g. improved economic governance in market systems, based on the coordinated efforts of multiple stakeholders).

Both long-term programs and advocacy and campaigning work need to be much closer linked (as envisioned by OPA) and stop being regarded as two separate pillars to achieve CG4. The skills, knowledge, tool, theories of change, MEAL and organizational structures underlying these two pillars (and for that matter also the third pillar of humanitarian response) need to merge further to pursue a holistic market based approach, that can be tailored to local circumstances and adapted frequently based upon new learning and changing circumstances. The focus should be on changing the enabling environment (including norms and attitudes), strengthening civic society, as well as demonstrating replicable or scalable innovations (in business, farm and value chain models, collective action models, public private partnerships, but also in advocacy and campaign models, etc.) through engaging government, civil society, and, more forcefully, the private sector. Since Oxfam alone cannot implement or even

orchestrate such a holistic approach, it needs to set a clear focus for its role, which is increasingly related to supporting multiple stakeholder networks to facilitate systemic changes.

While moving from improving the lives of poor people through direct interventions to facilitating systemic transformations, **direct outcome measures** on Oxfam's target populations, including the CG 4 indicative outcomes, **need to be replaced with indirect, intermediary outcomes** that measure whether market systems are transformed to become more inclusive and fair for the poor. The need for a more holistic market based approach and integration of long-term development programs and advocacy and campaigns also requires that future evaluations take a more holistic approach, instead of focusing on either one or the other (which still seems to be the norm). Guidelines for a new framework to evaluate whether CG 4 is being achieved will be provided in Section 8.

Country strategies need to more clearly determine which objectives are of highest priority to achieve key intermediary outcomes, and what Oxfam's role should be. Theories of change need to be better understood and articulated, and should include a better understanding of which intermediary outcomes matter most, and how they relate to systemic changes. Since impact pathways are seldom linear and predictable, a more flexible implementation is required that allows for continuously adapting actions to new learning.

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