OXFAM
GENDER IN
EMERGENCIES
STRATEGY

2022-25

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Cover image: Amina Ibrahim, 50, mother of 12 children originally from Qararo (about 30 km from Gunagado). She came here in 2017 after drought killed her family, Aos livestock and an outbreak of AWD (probably cholera) endangered her family. Ethiopia. (Image credit: Pablo Tosco / Oxfam Intermon)
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1. INTRODUCTION

In an emergency, the impact on and experiences of women, men, girls, boys, and people of diverse sexual orientation, gender identity, and expression and sex characteristics (SOGIESC) can be very different. In a response, gender is therefore a crucial factor.

Conflicts and crises radically affect social, economic, cultural and political structures, and can exacerbate existing vulnerabilities and inequalities, such as differing access to services and rights, as well as different levels of control over resources and decisions that affect their lives. For example, women are often expected to be responsible for the private sphere (e.g., unpaid care work, child rearing), and therefore lack adequate representation in community, leadership and political decision-making structures. This lack of representation in the public sphere contributes to the common failure of humanitarian action to understand and respond to the priorities of women and girls. This in turn undermines their ability to survive and recover from shocks, and to develop resilient and dignified lives.

However, this collapse can also create opportunities for change. Power dynamics within households and communities, the gendered division of labour, and gender-based violence could all be worsened or changed by a humanitarian crisis.

If humanitarian actors prioritize gender equality and inclusion during and after crises, it may be possible to consolidate some of the positive changes in gender roles that occurred during an upheaval. If, on the other hand, we treat gender equality as an afterthought, we will inadvertently reinforce gender stereotypes and cause long-standing patterns of inequality to continue.

This Gender in Emergencies (GiE) Strategy for 2022–25 is a framework for more effective humanitarian action that acknowledges and addresses gender in a responsive, appropriate, and equitable manner. It identifies pathways to achieve this for individuals, Oxfam teams and partners, and the confederation as a whole.

Women and girls everywhere are disadvantaged in terms of social power and influence, control of resources, control over their bodies and participation in public life – all as a result of socially determined gender roles and relations. Humanitarian actors have an obligation to promote gender equality through humanitarian action in line with the 2017 Inter-Agency Steering Committee (IASC) Policy on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women and Girls in Humanitarian Action. They also have an obligation to support, through targeted action, the protection, participation and empowerment of women and girls as articulated in the UN’s Women, Peace and Security thematic agenda.
2. CONTEXT

2.1 EXTERNAL CONTEXT

During 2022, 309.7 million people were in need of humanitarian assistance and protection\(^1\). This is the highest figure in decades and is likely to continue growing as millions have been forcibly displaced as a result of climate change, conflict, violence, human rights violations, persecution and other crises.

We are facing looming climate crises exacerbated by inadequate responses from governments, international systems and the private sector driving fossil fuel demands. Currently, violent conflicts and tensions increasingly turn into prolonged states of insecurity and fragility\(^2\). In addition, right-wing, undemocratic and/or authoritarian regimes are closing civic spaces, putting individual rights and freedoms in jeopardy. In different contexts, populist, nationalist and patriarchal authorities are using laws and policies to undermine gains made in gender equality and social inclusion, cracking down on progressive feminist agendas, sowing discord and fragmentation. In 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic, and the global inequity in the pandemic response, including vaccine distributions, caused a long-term impact on the transformative agendas advancing gender justice. Households are struggling to maintain their livelihoods, keep food on the table, and protect themselves from disease. Women, girls, people living in poverty and marginalized groups have borne the brunt of the pandemic.\(^3\)

However, there are also dynamics and interactions that support progress towards gender, racial and social inclusion. Across the majority and minority world, social movements are reacting against authoritarian regimes, mobilizing against patriarchy, and organizing for the rights of marginalized people, in defence of the planet or to claim land and labour rights. For feminists, digital technologies have allowed connections across great distances, allowing them to advance a feminist agenda, mobilize for the recognition of unpaid care work and promote women as leaders in formal political spaces\(^4\). Feminist movements have also striven to form solidarity across traditional divides such as race, nationality, class, and age, as well as recognize the interconnection of issues such as social justice and climate justice.
2.2 THE HUMANITARIAN SECTOR

Thanks to the concerted efforts of activists, women’s groups and committed humanitarians, gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls have become accepted as core to principled and effective humanitarian action. The acknowledgement of the gendered impacts of crises, discrimination, violence, and exclusion before, during and after disasters and conflict is increasingly informing humanitarian programming.

This shift in political will has been framed by the following commitments:

- **The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination** (1981) requires countries to eliminate discrimination against women and girls in all areas and promotes equal rights for women and girls.
- **The Beijing Platform for Action** (1995) identifies specific actions for governments to prevent and respond to violence against women and girls. It explicitly draws attention to the sexual and gender-based violence that impacts women in armed conflicts and natural disasters.
- UN Women, Peace, and Security Resolutions (2000 and subsequent years) emphasize the importance of protecting women in crises, recognizing their vital role in conflict resolution, while demanding that gender concerns be mainstreamed in humanitarian responses.
- **The Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response** (2010) define minimum standards to ensure better quality assistance for people impacted by crises, especially women and girls.
- **The Call to Action on Protection from Gender-based Violence in Emergencies** (2015) is a multi-stakeholder initiative supported by governments, international organizations and civil society organizations (CSOs) to fundamentally transform the way gender-based violence is addressed in humanitarian action.
- **The Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction** (2015–30) recognizes the critical importance of women’s leadership and participation in the formulation and management of all disaster risk reduction policies, plans and programmes. It calls for a gender perspective to be included throughout disaster risk reduction efforts.
- **Goal 5 of the UN Sustainable Development Goals** (2015) aims for gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls.
- **The World Humanitarian Summit and Grand Bargain** (2016) emphasizes investing in local women and women’s organizations to enable their active participation and leadership in humanitarian action. **Generation Equality Forum** (2021) brings together governments, corporations, and individuals to announce investments and policies to achieve a ‘Global Acceleration Plan’, which includes a roadmap for gender equality.
Within the humanitarian system, there is a continued need to shift power and privilege to advance localization efforts and the decolonization of aid. Currently, humanitarian bureaucracies and operations often fail to support local organizations and their humanitarian efforts. There is underinvestment in programmes that specifically address gender gaps. Also, ‘prior to COVID-19, only 8 per cent of gender-related aid dedicated to civil society went directly to organizations in developing countries, of which little was reported to benefit women’s rights organizations’. Additionally, ‘according to global humanitarian funding data in 2016, 2017 and 2018, gender-based violence funding accounted for just 0.12 per cent of all humanitarian funding – which represents only one third of funding requested for gender-based violence’. It is still common to see humanitarian responses that inadvertently disadvantage women, for instance by providing water and sanitation infrastructure that is unsafe for them, or income-generation activities that make their lives more difficult and expose them to gender-based violence.

Among the most significant barriers to localization are:

- a lack of knowledge of specific contexts;
- limited and short-term funding;
- rigid rules and regulations;
- remnants of colonial attitudes; and
- limited ability to engage and co-create humanitarian interventions together with communities.

Consequently, the transformative potential of local women’s rights organizations (WROs), women-led organizations (WLOs) and gender interest organizations (GIOs) in humanitarian action is being trivialized and ignored. There is a need for increased quantity and quality in funding for programmes supporting opportunities for local women’s leadership and participation in humanitarian responses. The strategic role of women, people of diverse SOGIESC, people with disabilities, and marginalized groups in community engagement, intersectional gender and power analysis and influencing is required to make localization a reality.

**Intersectional lenses**

**Understanding Intersectionality**

Different types of oppression – such as racism, sexism and homophobia – do not act independently of one another, but interrelate, to create ‘intersections’ of multiple forms of discrimination.

**Unpacking power and inequality**

Each person has a number of ‘identities’ that define who we are and how we operate in this world. Our various identities determine what advantage or disadvantage we have in a complex social scenario. For example, we can be disadvantaged by multiple sources of ‘identity’ such as our race, ethnicity, gender, social class, religion, education, marital status, etc. Thus, we need to unpack and recognize these multiple systemic barriers to opportunity.

**Reimagining systems and ways of working**

There is an increasing focus in programming on ‘investing in women’ to boost national and global economies. Many organizations and projects still focus on ‘mainstreaming’ women, based on the belief that women’s participation in initiatives will lead to empowerment. However, using an intersectional lens means that all sectors of work (e.g. economic, climate, governance, influencing) can be considered simultaneously in a way that allows for mutual strengthening of work. Gender justice is the core of this work, reinforcing commitment and action of working with the most marginalized people in a community.
In 2018, Oxfam endorsed feminist principles, which became one of the four pillars of Oxfam’s Humanitarian Approach adopted in the same year.

The five key foundations of a humanitarian approach grounded in feminist theory and practice are:\(^1\)

1. It is **people-centered** and recognizes that the community as a unit of analysis can be gender-blind or discriminatory.

2. It recognizes and embraces the concept of **equality of all** people in all their diversity.

3. It meets the **basic needs of all community members** without discrimination, through gender mainstreaming and responding to practical gender needs.

4. It engages with **women as leaders and agents of change** in targeted action to redress the power imbalance, ultimately advancing gender equality and women’s rights.

5. It leaves the legacy of a **changed power dynamic** once the response is over, so that women living in poverty can take control of decisions affecting their lives.
In 2020, Oxfam adopted a 10-year global strategy based on the belief that sustainable systemic change is needed to make the world more equal. Inequality is characterized by capitalism, patriarchy, sexism, racism and caste-based discrimination. These injustices mean that those who live on the margins of society suffer the most.  

Over recent years, Oxfam has undergone considerable shifts in its approach to gender equality, taking an explicitly feminist stance:

We recognize that there is no economic, social, and environmental justice without gender justice. Feminist principles guide all our action and interaction. 

Its current strategy recognizes that:

Patriarchal policies do not just lead to exclusion and exploitation; they often marginalize women and girls; [people of diverse SOGIESC]; refugees and migrants; and people with disabilities or without an education. 

Oxfam is taking a rights-based approach to transforming the dynamics that produce and perpetuate fragility and inequality. At the same time, it supports partners and communities to address their immediate needs, uphold their rights and mobilize the resources they need for immediate and long-term change. By doing so, it hopes to address the structural questions of inequality and injustice in fragile contexts, and to support local actors to respond to them.

To realize Oxfam’s vision for enhanced humanitarian action, we will work with people and communities at risk of conflict and disaster before, during and after crisis, with a special focus on women, girls, people with diverse SOGIESC and the most vulnerable and marginalized groups. As part of this localization work, we will empower vulnerable and marginalized people to lead and create their own sustainable solutions. Working with WROs is key to systemic change.

Such shifts are not always smooth, and Oxfam is grappling with complex issues of power such as racism, decolonization and intersectional feminism as they apply to Oxfam as an organization or to programmes and partners. Although Oxfam has mandates, tools and frameworks promoting a gender- and socially inclusive-approach, this has not always translated into consistent or meaningful implementation.
3. OUR PRINCIPLES

3.1 ENDING INJUSTICE

Patriarchy and other forms of oppression have reinforced each other and sustained discriminatory power relationships.¹⁹

Gender injustice and inequality keep women, men, and people of diverse SOGIESC in poverty by denying them legitimate forms of power, exposing them to discrimination and violence, and eroding the recognition and enjoyment of their rights. We are determined to continue learning how to understand and transform intersecting systems of oppression and exploitation such as patriarchy, colonialism, racism, xenophobia, homophobia, and transphobia.

3.2 LIVING THE FEMINIST PRINCIPLES

Feminism asks questions and searches for answers to end all forms of discrimination, injustices and violations of rights suffered by women and gender non-conforming people.²¹

We are challenging how we work, what we do, and how we engage with the humanitarian sector and beyond by advancing gender justice based on feminist principles. This is rooted in an evidence-based understanding – across human rights, humanitarianism and development – that gender equality and the empowerment of women, girls and people of diverse SOGIESC is the key to deterring and preventing their systemic discrimination, exploitation and abuse in both peace and conflict settings.²²

Oxfam’s feminist principles are included in Annex 1.

We emphasize the intersectionality embedded in feminist principles because we believe that the multiple dimensions of people’s identity shape their lived experiences of privilege and discrimination. Oxfam, therefore, applies intersectional lenses as shown at page 7.
3.3 HUMANITARIAN PRINCIPLES

Doubts persist within the humanitarian sector about whether gender transformative agendas are consistent with some of the sector’s guiding principles, specifically neutrality and impartiality.23 This is informed by the notion that humanitarian action is only about saving lives and reducing suffering. However, lives cannot be saved, and suffering cannot be reduced, if discriminatory and abusive norms and practices are ignored and thus condoned. Whilst Oxfam as a humanitarian organization is operationally neutral (i.e., does not take sides in hostilities), as a rights-based organization, we believe that it is vital to help people meet their immediate needs and to address the underlying causes of crises. Thus, we do engage in controversies in situations where we witness violations of people’s rights under international humanitarian, refugee, or human rights law.

Oxfam aims to uphold humanitarian principles in all its responses, while simultaneously using a feminist approach (see Annex 1). This not only requires us to consciously tackle the inequalities and discrimination within the humanitarian system, but also to openly recognize that alongside commitment, innovation, care, courage and bravery – inequality and discrimination still exist in the humanitarian system.24 A feminist approach ensures that we take inequality and power into account and challenge the humanitarian principles to change and dismantle the very patriarchal and colonial systems from which the concept of humanitarian aid was born.

*Rima Azzaher, sister of Amin Azzahed who was killed in the port explosion, Lebanon.* (Image credit: Pablo Tosco/Oxfam)
4. OUR 2030 AMBITION AND 2025 CHANGE GOALS

4.1 VISION STATEMENT

In 2030, women, men and people of diverse SOGIESC in all their intersecting identities have the courage, resilience and capacities to adapt and respond to crises. Quality humanitarian action supports their immediate needs, while providing safe spaces to lead and act on solutions. They have control over the means and spaces required to meet their needs and realize their individual and collective rights. Oxfam is accountable to affected communities and, while focusing on supporting communities and people in crisis, works with them to address the root causes of gender and power inequalities that exacerbate differential risks and impacts in crisis.

Members of a women’s group celebrate the success of their garlic project. Oxfam and partner NEEDS provided technical assistance for the project, and supported the women’s group with trainings. The women have led efforts to reduce disaster risks and bring essential services to their community. Nepal. (Image credit: Elizabeth Stevens/Oxfam)
4.2 LONG-TERM OUTCOMES BY 2030

The long-term outcomes are designed to illustrate Oxfam’s GiE ambitions as an integral part of Oxfam’s Strategic plan (2020–30).

Outcome 1
RESPONSE NEEDS INTERESTS
Agile and locally generated interventions respond effectively and are accountable to the unique experiences and needs of women, men, and people of diverse SOGIESC in all their intersecting identities, while at the same time ensuring their rights are respected and reinforced during and after crises to reduce inequalities.

Outcome 2
AGENCY LEADERSHIP VOICE
Historically marginalized groups, especially women, girls, and people of diverse SOGIESC have more power in humanitarian action by using their voice and agency to lay the foundation for transforming inequitable power relations in public and private spaces.

Outcome 3
ALLIANCES NETWORKING INFLUENCING
Community-based, local, regional and global feminist networks and alliances effectively engage in response design and coordination, advocate with donors and influence global agendas by amplifying community voices and acknowledging their knowledge and experiences.

Outcome 4
CHANGE IMPACT LEARNING
Oxfam’s GiE capacity to decolonize learning and impact measurement contributes to a locally driven humanitarian response and gender and social change at scale in humanitarian, fragile and conflict settings, leading to people living free from gender-based violence and discrimination.
4.3 THE 2025 CHANGE GOALS

We recognize that the outcomes set to be achieved by 2030 are ambitious. As 2025 is the half-way point, this strategy lays out medium-term goals for improving the quality, consistency and impact of the GiE work of Oxfam and partners.

**2025 Change Goal 1**

**RESPONSE NEEDS INTERESTS**

Oxfam and partners assist affected women, men and people of diverse SOGIESC in all their intersecting identities to access basic services, develop their capacities, engage with humanitarian actors and strengthen their resilience (absorptive, adaptive and transformative capacities).

**2025 Change Goal 2**

**AGENCY LEADERSHIP VOICE**

Oxfam and partners, including feminist WROs, WLOs and GIOs, engage with historically marginalized groups, women, men and people of diverse SOGIESC affected by structural gender inequalities during emergencies, to support their leadership capacities and ability to have a say in decisions that affect their lives.

**2025 Change Goal 3**

**ALLIANCES NETWORKING INFLUENCING**

Oxfam and the humanitarian community accelerate their commitments to the localization agenda and have mechanisms in place to enhance synergies and collaboration with local, national, and regional actors, giving preference to feminist WROs, WLOs and GIOs.

**2025 Change Goal 4**

**CHANGE IMPACT LEARNING**

Oxfam and partners have a better understanding of how GiE contributes to promoting gender justice during crises, the resilience of affected women, men and people of SOGIESC in all their intersecting identities, and how to actively and safely protect them against gender-based violence and discrimination.
5.1 PATHWAY TO 2025 CHANGE GOAL 1:
Response - Needs - Interests

**IF**

- The unique experiences, rights and needs of specific and diverse groups are recognized and incorporated in humanitarian action.
- Women, men and people of diverse SOGIESC in all their intersecting identities are actively involved in identifying needs and priorities, and take a leading role in defining and implementing responses.
- While responding to differential lifesaving needs, we also address the root causes of inequality and discrimination.
- Men and boys are actively involved in addressing issues of masculinity and contributing to gender justice.

**THEN**

By 2025, many more affected women, men and people of diverse SOGIESC in all their intersecting identities will access services, develop capacities, actively engage humanitarian actors and strengthen their resilience (absorptive, adaptive, and transformative capacities).

**BECAUSE**

- Oxfam and partners excel in locally driven, inclusive and agile humanitarian programming based on strong, timely and collaboratively developed intersectional gender, conflict and power analyses.
- Oxfam and partners will have increased funds and improved internal systems to act upon their commitments.
- Oxfam and partners will have human resources and experts informed by feminist principles and designated to support community-based initiatives.
- Localized, two-way consultations and accessible communication ensure strong collaboration and mutual accountability.
5.2
PATHWAY TO 2025 CHANGE GOAL 2:
Agency - Leadership - Voice

IF

- Meaningful participation and leadership by historically marginalized groups of women, men and people of diverse SOGIESC in all their intersecting identities affected by structural gender and social inequalities are strengthened in humanitarian action.
- More transformative community-based leadership capacities are recognized and supported.
- Women, girls, people of diverse SOGIESC and historically marginalized people and their groups and organizations, gain resources and power over their lives and choices in the private and public sphere during emergency and protracted crises.
- Men and boys are involved as allies in the reduction of violence, and are supportive of the meaningful participation and empowerment of women, girls, people of diverse SOGIESC in all their intersecting identities.
- Community spaces and structures, including those promoting gender justice, are in place and ready to take the lead after an emergency.

THEN

By 2025, historically marginalized groups of women, men and people of diverse SOGIESC in all their intersecting identities affected by structural gender and social inequalities, and feminist organizations will have increased opportunities for practising leadership in humanitarian responses and have a greater say in decisions that affect their lives.

BECAUSE

- Oxfam will be transforming its structures to facilitate the sharing of power and resources more equitably across the confederation and in relation to partners and communities.
- Partners and communities will have a much greater say over how and what resources are used.
- Oxfam and partners will create spaces for effective consultation and meaningful participation by affected people, and act upon their input.
- Oxfam and partners will proactively build on affected people’s knowledge and lived experience to identify priorities.
5.3 Pathway to 2025 Change Goal 3: 
Alliances – Networking – Influencing

**IF**

- Relationships and alliances are built and maintained with strong feminist organizations, WROs, WLOs, and other local, regional and global stakeholders.
- Synergies are in place for collaborative, inclusive and coordinated ways of working with local, national and regional actors.
- Influencing supports the priorities of women, men and people of diverse SOGIESC in all their intersecting identities affected by structural gender and social inequalities.
- Collaboration between women and people of diverse SOGIESC in all their intersecting identities is strengthened, and men serve as allies and promoters of equal opportunities in their communities.

**THEN**

By 2025, Oxfam and the humanitarian community will have accelerated implementation of their commitments to the localization agenda and put mechanisms in place to enhance systems and practices for collaborative, inclusive and coordinated engagement with local, national and regional actors, giving preference to feminist organizations.

**BECAUSE**

- Partnerships will be based on principles of power sharing, mutual trust and accountability.
- Feminist WROs and WLOs will demonstrate the means, confidence and recognition to influence humanitarian actors and processes.
- Funding and advocacy for GiE will have increased.
- Humanitarian structures and sectors will have fully embraced the value added by feminist, WROs, WLOs and other organizations advocating for the rights of historically marginalized people and informal groups in crises.
5.4 PATHWAY TO 2025 CHANGE GOAL 4: Change - Impact - Learning

IF

✅ Oxfam and partners acquired stronger individual and collective determination, knowledge and skills to co-create gender and social change with communities.

✅ The social norms and belief systems that enable gender-based inequalities and violence are addressed and challenged.

✅ Women, men, and people of diverse SOGIESC in all their intersecting identities have capacity and opportunity to use their agency to tackle the root causes of discrimination, including structural discrimination, inequality and unequal power dynamics.

✅ Men, women, and people of diverse SOGIESC in all their intersecting identities have the means and confidence to lead in crises and create their own knowledge based on direct experience of crises.

✅ Oxfam is able to recognize and learn from its mistakes and challenges in implementation.

THEN

By 2025, Oxfam and partners will have a better understanding of how GiE contributes to promoting gender justice during crises, promotes the resilience of affected women, men people of diverse SOGIESC in all their intersecting identities, and actively protects them against gender-based violence and discrimination.

BECAUSE

✅ Oxfam’s GiE Standards and feminist principles will be fully endorsed, adhered to and further enhanced at local level.

✅ Oxfam and partners will have improved learning systems, practices and organizational culture through practice and listening to diverse voices.

✅ Oxfam and partners will consistently track case studies, research findings and apply findings to innovate and improve their practices.

✅ Feminist monitoring, evaluation, accountability and learning values, principles and tools will be fully internalized and applied in emergencies by Oxfam and partners.

✅ Oxfam and partners will be fully capacitated to monitor and evaluate change processes.
The Oxfam Gender in Emergencies Standards (2022) (see Annex 2) are the key internal tool by which we set out to realize our gender specific humanitarian ambition for the period 2021–30.

The criteria are used to ensure:

- adherence to Oxfam’s principles and values;
- coherence across the confederation in our work on GiE;
- consistency and scale up through high-quality gender- and socially inclusive-transformative humanitarian action;
- accountability across the confederation and everyone involved in Oxfam’s work, e.g., our staff and volunteers, partners, allies and host governments; and
- linkages to different stages of the humanitarian–peace–development nexus.

Adherence to the Gender in Emergencies Standards (2022) is vital to building the culture, systems and leadership needed to contribute to gender justice in humanitarian action. The standards are in alignment with the change goals (see section 4) in this strategy and present building blocks for change: from gender-sensitive responses to fully transformative.

The standards and strategy together will help us to ensure that Oxfam’s humanitarian work will be of quality and have greater impact.
Annex 1: FEMINIST PRINCIPLES

Power sharing
We recognize power and privilege within the organization, challenge unbalanced power dynamics and actively facilitate the space for people from the global south, particularly women and people from diverse gender identities championing gender equality, to lead.

The personal is political
We recognize that challenging patriarchy, white supremacy, racism, neo-liberalism and colonialism in its various expressions of power abuse, exclusion and oppression, begins with questioning and changing ourselves. We are all inherently part of these larger systems and our beliefs, actions, attitudes and behaviours can either strengthen injustice or advance equality. Individual, institutional and social transformation are interconnected. We acknowledge that there are no private issues.

Feminism is a local–global movement
We understand feminism(s) as a resistance movement that opposes patriarchy throughout the world and its different forms. We recognize the diversity of feminist actors and the importance of not undermining/duplicating/overlooking their work through our actions and policies. We embrace the approach of localization, and recognize our responsibility as an international actor that advocates for ending gender inequality.

Nothing about us without us
We hold ourselves accountable for making sure we do not instrumentalize –use and co-opt for our own purposes – women’s or LGBTQ+ rights issues. Above all, we ensure our allies and the women and gender diverse people impacted by the programmes and campaigns we support participate fully and directly in decisions regarding them, and that we campaign for and with spaces where they speak for themselves.

Engaging with men and masculinities
Feminism is for everyone. We work to address gender norms and structures, including male privilege and toxic masculinity. While women and people from diverse gender identities remain most deeply and profoundly impacted by patriarchy, it can also be harmful to men.

There is no economic, social and environmental justice without gender justice
Eliminating all forms of exclusion and oppression requires us to acknowledge that social and economic progression are interlinked. This means re-thinking our collective wellbeing in terms of positive rights: full participation, full emancipation and complete recognition of others.

Diversity and inclusion – gender mainstreaming and intersectional analysis
We celebrate and encourage diversity, and challenge all forms of discrimination internally as well as within the communities we are working with. We recognize that there is no such thing as a single-issue struggle and emphasize the equality of all people, where being different does not equate to being less than. We believe in the richness that people from different backgrounds bring to our organization.

Safety
We believe in the right to safe environments for all people working in and with Oxfam. This translates to both physical and emotional safety – in both tangible and virtual spaces – where sexual harassment, sexual abuse, sexual exploitation, bullying, mobbing and any other form of power abuse are not tolerated in any way. Additionally, individuals should feel safe in reporting any incidences of abuse of power, knowing that their concerns will be met with the utmost respect, treated with importance and dealt with promptly.

Care and solidarity
We promote a space free of hierarchy and patriarchal norms, and pledge to recognize the authority each one of us holds while respecting our differences. We recognize the importance of personal wellbeing and self-care as a political act of upholding respect for human rights and the rights of others, as well as for the efficiency and sustainability of our work and our person. We commit to taking care, respecting, supporting and lifting each other in solidarity.

Development as freedom
We embrace our freedom and the freedom of those around us to articulate opinions and ideas without fear of retaliation, censorship, or sanction. We value autonomy as a form of agency to act independently, as well as the ability to make our own choices, while recognizing the responsibility that comes with it.

Elimination of all forms of gender-based violence
We recognize gender-based violence as one of the most widespread and prevalent violations of human rights worldwide. We are committed to strengthening our partnerships with feminist and women’s WROs, youth and men, to transform the social norms that reproduce and normalize violence; hold duty bearers accountable to meet international standards, develop, implement and evaluate laws and policies to address gender-based violence; and support survivors in their journey to recovery.
Annex 2: **GENDER IN EMERGENCIES STANDARDS**

Oxfam’s 2022 Gender in Emergencies (GiE) Standards are the key internal tool by which we set out to realize our gender specific humanitarian ambition in alignment with the 2022–25 Gender in Emergencies Strategy.

View the complete Gender in Emergencies Standards here.
Annex 3: GLOSSARY

Decolonizing learning
Oxfam recognizes that the global humanitarian system is built on hegemonic, Western-centric, capitalist, and colonial structures, which result in widespread injustices. The decolonization of learning is an effort to challenge these systems in the way we measure our impact – and ensuring that lessons are not imposed on local communities but rather built from their own agency. It is a process, not a one-off event, of confronting the power dynamics at play and aiming to change them.

Gender
The social and cultural construction of norms and behaviours attributed to people based on their sex. The attributes are learned and changeable over time. Gender can also be understood as an identity - a person’s innate sense of their own gender may or may not correspond to the sex they were assigned at birth, for example, trans men and women and non-binary people.

Gender analysis
The systematic gathering and examination of information on gender differences and social relations in order to identify, understand and redress inequities based on gender. A gender analysis should be integrated into all assessments or situational analyses to ensure that humanitarian interventions do not exacerbate gender-based injustices and inequalities and, where possible, promote greater equality and justice in gender relations.

Gender balance
The participation of an equal number of women, men and non-binary people in an activity or organization, for example representation in committees or any decision-making structure.

Gender-based violence
Violence directed at a person because of their gender. The most common and pervasive form is violence against women, which causes (or is likely to cause) physical, sexual or psychological harm. It includes threats of such acts, coercion and the arbitrary deprivation of freedoms, whether in public or private life.

Gender equality
A situation in which women, men and non-binary people enjoy the same status and have equal conditions, responsibilities, and opportunities for realizing their full human rights and potential – and can benefit equally from the results.

Gender equity
The concept recognizes that women, men and non-binary people have different needs and power, and that these differences should be identified and addressed in a manner that rectifies the imbalances between the sexes. This may include equal treatment, or treatment that is different but considered equivalent in terms of rights, benefits, obligations and opportunities.

Gender interest organization
Organizations with some goals, objectives, programmes or activities related to women’s rights and gender equality (they may or may not be women’s organizations).

Gender justice
The goal of full equality between women, men and people of diverse SOGIESC in all spheres of life; resulting in women jointly and on an equal basis with men defining and shaping the policies, structures and decisions that affect their lives and society as a whole, based on their own interests and priorities. Gender justice commits to taking a gender perspective on the definition and application of civil, political, economic and social rights.

Gender mainstreaming
A strategy that aims to bring about gender equality and advance women’s rights by taking account of women’s concerns and experiences and building the capacity and accountability in all aspects of an organization’s policy and activities. This includes policy and programme development and implementation, advocacy, organizational culture and resource allocation. Gender mainstreaming can thereby result in profound organizational transformation towards gender equality.

Gender standalone programmes
Humanitarian programmes with the sole and primary purpose of advancing gender justice and increasing the ability of women and girls to claim and exercise their rights.

Gender with Age Marker (GAM)
A tool design by the IASC for Humanitarian Coordination to improve gender-equitable programming. By using a questionnaire, the GAM highlights during planning, implementing and monitoring of a project the specific needs of the population based on gender, age and disability.

Intersectionality
A framework for understanding how aspects of a person’s social and political identity combine to create different modes of discrimination and privilege. Intersectionality asserts that different types of oppression – such as racism, sexism and homophobia – do not act independently of one another but interrelate to create the ‘intersection’ of multiple forms of discrimination.

Intersectional lens
Using intersectionality allows a humanitarian to effectively work in gender justice, by unpacking and recognizing various overlapping and systemic barriers to opportunity, and multiple forms of prejudice based on an individual’s identity. Discrimination may arise from the specific intersection of a person’s identity or the accumulation of different types of oppression, which is known as additionality. For example, in the first case, a woman with disabilities may have more difficulty being treated equally in terms of reproductive rights than an abled-bodied woman or a disabled man – an outcome which is based specifically on the intersection of her identities. In the second case, the fact that women tend to be paid less and people with disabilities are less likely to get a job, means that being a woman and disabled is a double disadvantage for finding a well-paid job. Intersectionality and additionality are not the same but can operate in similar ways in reducing women’s opportunities.
Non-binary
This is an umbrella term for people who do not identify as a gender binary and do not consider themselves either men or women and eschew traditional gender roles, regardless of their biological sexual characteristics. A non-binary identity does not correlate to any sexual orientation. Non-binary people often use pronouns other than ‘he’ or ‘she’, choosing instead to use non-specific pronouns such as ‘they’. Other languages have similar adaptations to create space and acknowledge non-binary people. Recognizing gender diversity allows to identify and plan for different needs, which if not may go unnoticed.

Patriarchy
A system of male authority which legitimizes the oppression of women and people of diverse SOGIESC through political, social, economic, legal, cultural, religious, and military institutions. Men’s access to and control over resources and rewards within the private and public sphere derive their legitimacy from the patriarchal ideology of male dominance.

Practical and strategic gender needs
Practical needs relate to the needs of men and women based on their traditional gender roles, while strategic gender needs aim to transform gender relations. As such they tend to be longer-term and intangible, such as changes to relationships, roles and responsibilities. For example, engaging women in how to improve access to water in a camp addresses women’s practical needs of fetching water (makes it easier for women, but does not challenge the assumption that women should fetch water), while increasing women’s participation in decision-making structures of water distribution in a camp would attend to women’s strategic gender needs to have more power, challenging women’s traditional gender role. Attending to women’s practical needs is a first step for addressing strategic gender needs.

Queer
A term used by those wanting to reject specific labels of romantic orientation, sexual orientation and/or gender identity.

Sex
Refers to anatomical, genetic, hormonal, and other characteristics that play a role in reproductive or developmental processes and is used roughly as a classification system to identify people as male or female (or sometimes undetermined or intersex), usually assigned at birth.

Sex-disaggregated data
Data collected on individuals broken down by sex with the aim of highlighting the differences between males and females. The data can also include other aspects of individuals’ identities such as ethnicity, class, caste, age, and disability.

Sexual orientation, gender identity, and expression and sex characteristics (SOGIESC)
This is the agreed term in the humanitarian sector for rights related to individuals whose sexual orientation and behaviour, and/or their gender identity and/or gender expression, deviate from the accepted ‘norm’ in any given context.

Sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA)
In the context of emergency relief, SEA refers to the misconduct of humanitarian workers against beneficiaries. Sexual exploitation is any abuse of vulnerability, power, or trust for sexual purposes; this includes profiting monetarily, socially or politically from the sexual exploitation of another. For example, it includes staff asking beneficiaries for sex in return for relief entitlements or other humanitarian assistance. Sexual abuse is actual or threatened physical intrusion of a sexual nature, including inappropriate touching, by force or under unequal or coercive conditions. This includes overtly sexual remarks, gestures and physical contact.

Social inclusion
The process by which efforts are made to ensure equal opportunities through a twin track approach (mainstreaming as well as targeted approaches to address specific needs and overcome barriers), so that everyone, regardless of their background, gender, age, location, occupation, race, ethnicity, religion, citizenship status, disability, sexual orientation, and gender identity, etc., can achieve their full potential.

Transformation
Fundamental, lasting change. In Oxfam’s gender justice work, transformation refers to fundamental change in the structures and cultures of societies.

Transformative feminist leadership
People with a feminist perspective and vision for social justice who are individually and collectively transforming themselves to use their power, resources and skills in non-oppressive, inclusive structures and processes. Transformative feminist leaders seek to mobilize others around a shared agenda of social, cultural, economic, and political transformation for equality and the realization of human rights for all.

Vulnerability
The susceptibility of a person, group, or society to harm. In an emergency context, it is contingent on an intersection of numerous social identifiers in any given setting (e.g., gender, age, class, caste, religion, tribe and geography).

Women’s empowerment
The process through which women (individually and collectively) become aware of how power structures operate in their lives and gain the confidence to challenge the resulting gender inequalities.

Women-led organization (WLO)
Autonomous local and national organizations that are led by women. They do not necessarily have the objective of gender justice or women’s rights. They challenge patriarchal norms by having women lead.

Women’s rights organization (WRO)
Autonomous civil society, local and national organizations that work on gender justice. These can be organized and registered organizations, but also small unregistered localized women’s groups.
NOTES


8 See https://forum.generationequality.org/sites/default/files/2021-06/UNW - GAP Report – EN.pdf


21 Ibid. p13


23 These doubts are found, for example, in the position of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs’ humanitarian branch of the Swedish government, despite its adoption of a feminist foreign policy. From: FINAL REPORT – Gender Transformative Humanitarian Action: An Internal Discussion Paper for Oxfam Canada Submitted: April 18, 2019, 5 Principal Authors: Delphine Brun and Robyn Baron not for publication.
