



Moroccan women attend an event organized to support and encourage political participation including running for local election and working in their communities to influence policies. Credit: Ellie Kealey/Oxfam

## INFLUENCING POLICY AND CIVIC SPACE

### A meta-review of Oxfam's Policy Influence, Citizen Voice and Good Governance Effectiveness Reviews



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**Oxfam's Effectiveness Reviews evaluate the impact of the organization's projects on the lives of those they are intended to help. This meta-review uses Qualitative Comparative Analysis to summarize the results of 24 Effectiveness Reviews carried out under the theme of Citizen Voice, Policy Influence and Good Governance between 2011 and 2017.**

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

As Oxfam International progresses to its 2020 goal of establishing a Worldwide Influencing Network, it has prioritized developing an evidence base to inform future programme strategies. This report presents the findings of a meta-review synthesizing the findings of 24 Effectiveness Reviews of Oxfam's Policy Influence, Citizen Voice and Good Governance interventions between 2003 and 2017.

A conventional meta-analysis (such as those carried out by the Cochrane Collaboration or the International Initiative for Impact Evaluation – 3ie) involves consolidating multiple studies of a single type of intervention, with the aim of drawing general conclusions about the effectiveness of that intervention. In contrast, this meta-review draws together findings on the effectiveness of a single organization, Oxfam GB, across 24 projects that aimed at expanding civic space or influencing policies and/or policy processes. The primary source of data for our analysis was Oxfam's 'Effectiveness Reviews', a series of impact evaluations carried out each year since 2011 on randomly selected projects. The projects evaluated were implemented in various locations around the world and were diverse in their scale and activities, using theory-based evaluation designs. The meta-review uses fuzzy-set Qualitative Comparative Analysis (fsQCA) to identify pathways that successfully expanded civic space and/or successfully influenced policy.

Building on Oxfam's Right to Be Heard framework and the broader policy-influencing literature, our analysis investigated which configurations of strategies led to (1) successfully expanding civic space and/or (2) successfully influencing policy, which contribute to Oxfam's overarching objective of 'transforming power relations' (Hopkins, Brady, & Brownlie, 2014; Oxfam, 2013, 2014). Some Effectiveness Reviews evaluated a single outcome, others both outcomes. We identified 22 cases of expanding civic space and 15 cases of changing policy, and 13 Effectiveness Reviews that addressed both outcomes. In order to assess the extent to which the above two outcomes have been achieved, the meta-review explores configurations of the following five possible explanatory conditions:

1. The use of an insider strategy
2. The use of an outsider strategy
3. The prominence of Oxfam's role (vis-à-vis other actors) in influencing efforts
4. The targeting of multiple policy levels
5. The strategic use of a window of opportunity.

The review also identified and gathered information on a number of contextual conditions, including a coding for the degree of civic space in each country. These conditions were not explanatory but helped to contextualize, interpret and enrich the cases.

In this meta-review, we present the results of the fsQCA and discuss what can be learned from them. Overall, the meta-review found that most influencing activities of Oxfam and its partners were successful in both expanding civic space and changing policy, with 15 cases successfully expanding civic space for civil society and eight cases successfully changing policies. The Effectiveness Reviews indicate that the policy-influencing activities of Oxfam and its partners have been successful at expanding civic space (68%) and changing policy (53%). Among the 13 instances in which the same influencing activity was analysed for both expanding civic space and changing policy, half of those that were successful at expanding civic space were

also successful at changing policy (5 out of 10). There was only one instance in which an influencing activity successfully changed policy without expanding civic space.

We identified four pathways to successfully expand civic space and two pathways to successfully change policy. For expanding civic space we find that activities undertaken by Oxfam and its partners are successful when they either (1) strategically use a window of opportunity through an insider strategy; (2) strategically use a window of opportunity led by domestic civil society; (3) target multiple policy levels through an outsider strategy; or (4) actively use an outsider strategy in a more restricted civic space. For influencing policy, we identify the use of an insider strategy as a necessary, but not a sufficient condition. We find that policy-influencing activities are successful when Oxfam's partners either (1) strategically take advantage of a window of opportunity through an insider strategy or (2) gain influence through a combined insider–outsider strategy.

Because of the relatively small size of the sample of Effectiveness Reviews, there are limitations to generalizing findings to the global level. Nevertheless, the meta-review provides important insights for strengthening the evidence base of Oxfam's Worldwide Influencing Network as well as a firm basis for future systematic analyses of the interactions between influencing strategies and contextual specifications.

Finally, the meta-review also provides useful insights about the approach used to measure citizen voice, policy influence and good governance outcomes in these evaluations, and makes recommendations for improving the insights from future Effectiveness Reviews of this kind of work.

This meta-review is structured as follows. Section 2 introduces the theoretical framework that forms the basis for the analysis. Section 3 presents evaluations included in the analysis, the evaluation methodology, and the conditions used to calibrate the model. Section 4 shares the results of the meta-review and discusses learning considerations emerging from the analysis. Section 5 concludes by discussing what can be learned from the results of this meta-review.

## 2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Oxfam is a global non-profit confederation of 20 independent Oxfam organizations working to ‘help create lasting solutions to the injustice of poverty’ (Oxfam, 2013, p. 10). Part of this effort is the creation of a Worldwide Influencing Network (WIN) that is working to transform power relations through efforts to influence policy and expand civic space, and to be a thought leader in such influencing work (Oxfam, 2014).

The transformation of power relations is at the core of Oxfam’s work, and Oxfam has developed its Right to be Heard (RTBH) framework to inform the design of initiatives aimed at transforming power relations. This forms the main theoretical framework for the meta-review. In addition, we draw on several sources to conceptualize, and empirically investigate, Oxfam’s policy influencing, citizen voice and good governance interventions. In particular, we draw on the literature on power dynamics, interest groups, and policy change to conceptualize the policy-influencing process and to identify conditions that may affect policy influencing. Throughout this section, we also consider recent geopolitical trends to situate Oxfam’s policy influencing work in a broader context and to ensure that our key findings inform future strategic thinking by Oxfam and its partners.

This meta-review focuses on two key elements of Oxfam’s RTBH framework: (1) Strengthening civil society’s potential ‘power to’ exert influence through expanding civic space and (2) Bringing about actual policy change (Oxfam, 2014; Provan, 1980). The review consolidates learning across 24 Effectiveness Reviews that evaluate Oxfam’s Policy Influencing, Citizen Voice and Good Governance work and analysed either – or both<sup>1</sup> – of these two outcomes, herein referred to as Expanding Civic Space and Changing Policy.

### 2.1 THE POLICY PROCESS AND THE FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE IT

Policy influencing is an inherently complex process that involves several phases which rarely flow linearly. Before beginning policy-influencing activities, interest groups need to first identify the policy area that they aim to address, and focus the attention of policymakers on that issue. The spectrum of policy topics that one may seek to influence is infinite and, due to issues of bounded rationality and cognitive biases, neither policymakers nor policy influencers can realistically address all topics at the same time (Baumgartner & Jones, 2015; Jones, 2003; Jones & Baumgartner, 2005). Within this context, interest groups, such as Oxfam and its partners, adopt different tactics to direct the attention of policymakers to specific topics of concern, and influence policy and policy processes. For rights-based organizations like Oxfam, effective policy processes should engage citizens in the decision-making process, and they must work to influence the degree to which civil society and citizens have the ‘power to’ do so. Understanding and reacting to power dynamics is an essential part of this engagement, including the power to frame problems, control the flow of information, and protect the status quo (Baumgartner & Jones, 2002, 2015; Gaventa, 2006; Sabatier, 1991). Therefore, a policy-influencing effort that expands civic spaces so that citizens and civil society can actively engage in the decision-making process, thus shifting the balance of power, is a central aim of Oxfam’s policy-influencing efforts (Gaventa, 2006; Oxfam, 2014).

From the perspective of interest groups, the ultimate goal of policy influencing is usually to change a particular policy or to adjust its implementation. Such changes consist of policy outputs such as statutes, budgets, regulations or guidance, and institutional changes to policy implementation. As such, policy influencing seeks to move from the recognition of a policy topic to the crafting of a solution that incorporates the voice of citizens and finally to concrete changes in policy implementation.<sup>2</sup>

What can interest groups do to successfully influence such processes? Different strands of the literature on power relations (Gaventa, 2006; VeneKlasen & Miller, 2002), on the use of insider and outsider strategies by interest groups (Maloney, Jordan, & McLaughlin, 1994), and on the punctuated equilibrium theory as applied to policy change across countries (Baumgartner, et al., 2009; Baumgartner & Jones, 2010) provide important insights into how actors may influence both the expansion of space and policy change. In the subsequent paragraphs, we use the literature to identify several conditions that can contribute to the success of policy influencing, and use these conditions for analysing the Effectiveness Reviews. These conditions are not exhaustive, but they are prominently grounded in the literature, and are linked to the policy-influencing work of Oxfam and its partners (Cairney, 2011, 2013; Hopkins, et al., 2014; Oxfam, 2013, 2014, 2017; Richardson, 2000).

The literature on interest groups suggests two broad categories of strategies to target policymakers: insider and outsider strategies. An insider strategy entails tactics that focus on persuasion and collaboration with targeted policymakers. An outsider strategy focuses on creating pressure from the outside, often by identifying and vocalizing shortcomings of the government or government processes, and highlighting government accountability (Maloney, et al., 1994). Both strategies may entail helping strengthen civil society organizations to expand civic space or influence policy, for example by reframing the problem or bringing attention to new – or previously marginalized – interests, grievances, and legitimate groups within their constituency. Each of these strategies, or a combination of both strategies – be it simultaneously or in sequence – can help to focus the attention of policymakers on a given challenge or solution.

The question of whether to choose an insider or an outsider strategy has figured prominently in the debate about strategies of engagement by different civil society actors in policy processes (Bendell & Ellersiek, 2012). Given the current shrinking space for civil society, and the authoritarian pushback against democracy and human rights in many countries, the relevance of choosing and applying an appropriate strategy remains particularly important (Anheier, 2017; Hopkins, et al., 2014, pp. 30, 39). Interest groups need to assess the appropriateness of the choice between, or the combination of, these strategies in different contexts, with special sensitivity to the social and political capital civil society has vis-à-vis the political regime it targets (Anheier, 2017; Fowler, 2016; Hudson, 2001).

To counter criticism of ‘Western-backed dissent’ (Fowler, 2016), an important consideration for successful policy influencing is how international actors support the actions of domestic civil society. International actors may adopt different roles in influencing efforts. For example, they may support mobilization efforts by domestic civil society by providing coordination or funding, enabling access to global and supranational policy fora to strengthen relationships with policymakers, helping to raise funds, or drawing the attention of civil society and policymakers to the need to expand space or change policies. Such support from international actors may be crucial for the success of policy influencing in country contexts where these actors are highly regarded. Clearly, how international organizations support domestic policy-influencing efforts matters for understanding when these efforts will be successful.



Successful policy influencing may also be facilitated through either subsequently or simultaneously addressing multiple policy levels at local, subnational, national and supranational levels (Beyers & Kerremans, 2012; Holyoke, Brown, & Henig, 2012; UCLG, 2009). Targeting more than one policy level may increase the possibility of being heard because of having a wider audience and a potentially higher probability of finding a window of opportunity or an ally. Likewise, finding a venue sympathetic to the policy topic or where decision-making structures are more permeable and open to new actors or frames of reference may alter the chances of successful policy-influencing. The strategic use of a multilevel approach may be particularly important for civil society organizations in countries and contexts where the policy process at a given level is not well established or is less accessible for domestic civil society. Current geopolitical trends highlight the importance of the strategic choice of targeting multiple levels to expand space and change policies. The use of a multilevel approach is related to transnational activism and advocacy (Arbel, Dauvergne, & Millbank, 2014; Bendell & Ellersiek, 2009; Brands, 2017; Keck & Sikkink, 1999). Other important trends also affect the relevance of different policy levels, such as a focus on non-interventionist cooperation policies by many new donors and national-level solutions, a decline in commitments to multi-lateral policy fora, and a shift towards devolution and decentralized policy-making.

Policy-influencing activities may also benefit from coinciding with important events. These windows of opportunity for influencing actions may – both positively and negatively – shift even stable and restrictive policy regimes (Baumgartner & Jones, 2010; Howlett, McConnell, & Perl, 2017). Windows of opportunity may come about through unexpected and sudden changes, such as natural disasters. For example, the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear disaster facilitated the decision by Angela Merkel to take on the claim of environmental groups and the Green party in favour of an energy transition and the phasing out of nuclear plants in Germany. Windows of opportunity may also come about through regular events, such as elections. Windows of opportunity triggered by regular events are particularly important for policy influencing because interests group can anticipate and strategically capitalize on them (Baumgartner & Jones, 2010). Clearly, influencing actions may be particularly effective if they take advantage of these opportunities and contribute to the reconfiguration of power structures that unfold during and after such windows open up.

In sum, the literature on power dynamics, interest groups, and policy change provides important insights into policy influencing and the conditions that may contribute to its success. Importantly, expanding civic space or changing policy is often the result of a combination of multiple conditions (Baumgartner & Jones, 2002, 2010; Cairney, 2013; Weible, Heikkila, deLeon, & Sabatier, 2012), as in the metaphor of multiple streams coming together (Howlett, et al., 2017). This view suggests that it is unlikely for one single condition alone to suffice for successful policy influencing, either to expand space, or to change policy. Given the complexity of policy-influencing processes, it is important to realize that there may be more than one pathway with more than one condition in order to explain successfully expanding civic space or changing policies.

## 2.2 POLICY INFLUENCING AND OXFAM'S RIGHT TO BE HEARD FRAMEWORK

The conceptual ideas on the policy-influencing process and the conditions outlined above that can facilitate it are closely aligned with Oxfam's Right to be Heard framework (Oxfam, 2013, 2017). Influencing power dynamics constitutes a core part of Oxfam's work (Hopkins, et al., 2014, p. 15; Oxfam, 2014, p. 10). Oxfam's strategic documents and guidelines for policy influencing integrate insider and outsider strategies and recognize the importance of their strategic use (Oxfam, 2013, 2014, 2017). Oxfam has critically reflected upon both the potential and the limitations of its ways of engaging with domestic civil-society partners and its status as an international/external actor. This awareness is shown in its guidelines, which reference the 'debate about the role of Oxfam in influencing in Southern countries' (Oxfam, 2014, p. 7). Oxfam also recognizes the importance of a multilevel approach for policy influencing, referencing national and supranational levels as well as subnational levels (Oxfam, 2014). Finally, Oxfam's Right to be Heard framework points to the relevance of adapting influencing strategies and capitalizing on windows of opportunity. Oxfam's own strategic document recognizes that change 'often emerges at "critical junctures" – windows of opportunity' (Oxfam, 2013, p. 11). Since Oxfam and its partners access different networks and resources to do so, they can strategically align their roles to ensure that they jointly anticipate and strategically plan for windows of opportunity.



## 3 METHODS AND DATA SOURCES

### 3.1 DATA

The dataset for this global report and meta-review was 24 Effectiveness Reviews (ERs) of Oxfam's policy influence, citizen voice and good governance work between 2003 and 2017 – programmes that addressed either one or both of the two key outcomes of this report: the expansion of civic space or the influencing/changing of policies.<sup>3</sup> Effectiveness Reviews were screened and assessed as to whether they reported on an instance of expanding civic space or changing policy. Of the 30 Effectiveness Reviews that could potentially form the basis of our report, we excluded six because they did not separately report on an outcome related to expanding civic space or changing policies.<sup>4</sup> The 24 Effectiveness Reviews included 22 cases of expanding civic space and 15 cases of changing policy. Thirteen Effectiveness Reviews addressed both types of outcome. Each outcome was treated as an independent case. When an Effectiveness Review evaluated activities aimed at both outcomes then this was counted as two cases.

The ERs cover 22 different locations, with 20 reviews focusing on actions that took place predominantly in one country and two reviews that focused on influencing actions with a more regional scope, covering West Africa and the African Union.

### 3.2 METHOD SELECTION

We used fuzzy-set Qualitative Comparative Analysis (fsQCA) to identify pathways that might help us understand how the efforts of Oxfam and its partners successfully expanded civic space or changed policies. Pathways are specific configurations of explanatory conditions. With fsQCA we can distinguish which conditions of our model (or combinations thereof) are necessary and/or sufficient to successfully expand civic space or change/influence policy.<sup>5</sup> FsQCA was chosen for two reasons: first, fsQCA is able to distinguish between a pathway's core, peripheral, and irrelevant characteristics. Thus, fsQCA provides important insights into the relative importance of certain conditions of each pathway. Second, fsQCA provides a nuanced understanding of important complementarities among the different conditions in a pathway. In identifying unique configurations of conditions as pathways to outcomes, fsQCA is capable of dealing with equifinality – the idea that in open systems, a given end state can be reached by many potential means. The ability of fsQCA to account for equifinality and complex interactions reflects the conceptual understanding of policy influencing that is equally complex, multi-dimensional, and requires work across different levels and contexts, employing multiple strategies.

Although there are clear benefits of using a fsQCA approach to help Oxfam and its partners consider which combination of conditions and strategic approaches might work best to achieve their stated objectives, as with any choice of an analytical and modelling approach, it comes with certain advantages and disadvantages. Using fsQCA, we are able to reveal multiple pathways to successfully expand space or change policy. Compared to more qualitative approaches, the results of such an analysis more systematically condenses the breadth of information and experience

documented in the Effectiveness Review, and provides insights into the pathways – or configurations of conditions – that characterize successful influencing activities. While the distinction between necessary and sufficient, as well as the distinctions between core and peripheral conditions, provides some initial indication of a hierarchy in terms of the relevance of conditions, fsQCA does not allow us to specify the relative importance of different peripheral conditions in a given pathway. Moreover, fsQCA did not allow us to analyse the quality, timing/sequencing of strategies or activities.<sup>6</sup>

To apply fsQCA, we prepared the relevant information from the Effectiveness Reviews, in line with our theoretical model, derived from the literature and Oxfam's RTHB framework. As noted above, in this model, we identified two outcome conditions: 1) the successful expansion of civic space and 2) successful policy change influence. We further defined five explanatory conditions: a) influencing through an insider strategy, b) influencing through an outsider strategy, c) the prominence of Oxfam's role in the influencing activity vis-à-vis other actors, d) the number of policy levels that an influencing initiative addresses, and e) the strategic use of a window of opportunity. This transformation procedure is called calibration.

Each outcome and explanatory condition is conceptualized as a set, to which each case may be categorized as a member, or not. The calibration of set-membership flows from the overall definition such that a given case is either *fully in the set* (strongly represents the definition of the set), *more in than out of the set* (represents the set, but is not a strong example of the set), *more out of than in the set* (is predominantly excluded from the set but exhibits some elements of the set), and *fully out of the set* (the predominant aspects of the case do not align with the definition of set-membership). These set-memberships correspond to the following numerical coding: 1.00 (fully in the set), 0.75 (more in than out of the set), 0.25 (more out of than in the set), and 0.00 (fully out of the set) respectively. Unless otherwise stated we calibrated the fuzzy-sets according to this scheme.

In addition to the outcomes and explanatory conditions, we define additional conditions from the Effectiveness Reviews and the cases that are not part of the model but help to contextualize and enrich the case description and the fsQCA results. We explain the conditions, the coding process, and the analysis in more detail in the remainder of this section.

## 3.3 CONDITIONS

### 3.3.1 Outcome Conditions

#### 3.3.1.1 Outcome 1: Expanding civic space

We define the set of cases that deal with expanding civic space as those that explicitly focus on an outcome related to the access, use, or expansion of civic spaces within which civil society organizations and citizens can exert power and have their voices heard on policy topics. The outcome of expanding civic space by establishing, widening, or using political spaces at subnational, national, transnational and global levels<sup>7</sup> aligns with the concept of empowering civil society by creating the preconditions to exert influence.

We assign cases a higher set-membership score based on how stable and lasting the civic spaces are, which is often determined by their level of institutionalization and support. Such spaces may be at different levels of the political system, within different policy communities, and related to different policies and rules (Cornwall,

2002; Gaventa, 2006), depending on the particular claims and objectives of the initiatives. These spaces may take different forms, inter-alia, regarding their level of organization and institutionalization. They may be more or less formalized and may include the involvement of individuals or entire organizations and coalitions.

How spaces are used, and what results from this, were not included in the calibration in order to keep this outcome distinct from the second outcome condition, which looks at changing policy.

### **3.3.1.2 Outcome 2: Changing policy**

We define the set of cases that deal with changing/influencing policy as those that explicitly aim to change policy, e.g. programmes, policies, procedures or budgets of the government, public officials or politicians/parties at any level. This includes changes in the creation of a policy (including rules and regulations) as well as changes in implementation procedures if those changes are institutionalized. Early stages of merely declaring the intention to effect change/set agendas are not considered. The second outcome thus focuses on concrete changes in policies or their implementation (i.e. 'policy outputs'). Such changes may be evidenced by official statements of public policy, enactment or amendment of laws or regulations, changes to budget allocations and/or improved enforcement/implementation (Baumgartner & Jones, 2010; Jones & Baumgartner, 2005). These policy changes are often incremental shifts in a longer-term process that may extend over years or decades (Ostrom, 2011; Weible, et al., 2012; Weible et al., 2011).

The success of a case was seen as reduced if the initial effort focused on changing a particular policy, but the Effectiveness Review evaluated a different policy without a strong argument for the shift in focus.

## **3.3.2 Explanatory Conditions**

### **3.3.2.1 Explanatory A: Influencing through insider strategies**

This explanatory condition defines the set of cases in which Oxfam and/or its domestic civil society partners use collaborative influencing strategies towards targeted government officials and/or politicians related to the outcome of interest. Insider strategies often require the development of social capital and strategic ties to allies in the political arena, for example via existing or newly developed relationships, a status of being recognized as a credible expert, and/or legitimately representing the interests of a segment of the public. Furthermore, from a rights-based perspective, the policymakers are the primary duty-bearers for both the expansion of space and the changing of policies, and thus their collaborative involvement in and ownership of the influencing action is crucial for gaining lasting support.

### **3.3.2.2 Explanatory B: Influencing through outsider strategies**

This explanatory condition defines the set of cases in which the influencing actions reflect strategies to put pressure on targeted government officials and/or politicians related to the outcome of interest, for example by mobilizing previously underrepresented groups, issues or claims through protests/public campaigns or by publicly exposing government shortcomings, e.g. through the media. Such strategies are distinct from cooperation with allies or building social capital within the political arena. An outsider strategy creates pressure on the political sphere from the outside through the public, media, or other influential actors. This strategy often includes public campaigns as well as political action that may be (or is perceived to be) critical, contentious, confrontational, or antagonistic in nature such that it garners additional attention from policymakers, media or the public. Such efforts may also

focus on holding the government and political parties accountable for previous commitments and promises that they fail to keep and deliver upon.

It is important to note that insider and outsider strategies are not simply opposite poles of the same concept. Instead, both strategies may be employed concurrently or sequentially by the same actor or coalition of actors. In fact, 13 of the cases reviewed here apply both insider and outsider strategies. The policy-influencing literature suggests that the two strategies require different resources and have different strengths and limitations. As a result, coalitions of organizations and/or different entry points to the policy process at multiple levels are often required to employ both strategies to full effect (see Maloney et al., 1994). Theoretically, this is one of the strengths of working in a coalition and at multiple levels.

### **3.3.2.3 Explanatory C: Oxfam's role**

This explanatory condition defines the set of cases in which Oxfam plays a strong and prominent role in implementing the overall influencing actions. The role that Oxfam plays in the influencing actions may affect its chances of success. In countries with strong sovereignty-based conceptions of legitimacy, a prominent role by Oxfam may weaken the chances of success of a policy-influencing activity (Offenheiser & Holcombe, 2003; Rubenstein, 2014). In the case of expanding space, a strong role for Oxfam may be perceived as crowding out the voices of local actors (Hudson, 2001; World Bank Group, 2017). However, Oxfam may also play a key catalysing and strengthening role when partners and/or a government is amenable to external support and/or sensitive to international issues and agendas, or if there is not yet a strong local actor on the policy topic.

### **3.3.2.4 Explanatory D: Policy levels**

This condition is defined as the set of cases in which the influencing action targets more than one level of government, policy or political space. Different levels include local, regional (subnational), national and international. Some authors have suggested that local policies are more amenable to influence and that local fora are more accessible to civic actors – especially to those who may be marginalized due to poverty or other exclusionary factors (Holyoke, et al., 2012; Shephard, 2017; Weible, et al., 2012). On the other hand, when national policies provide strong signals regarding social norms, influencing power structures and policies at the national level may be a pre-condition for changes at other levels. Along with Oxfam's own perspective on the added value of linking global, national and subnational efforts, this provides a strong argument for the inclusion of this explanatory condition. This is the only condition that is coded as a 'crisp set' with cases either representing full set-membership if more than one policy level was targeted (1) or full exclusion from the set (0) if only one level was targeted.

### **3.3.2.5 Explanatory E: Strategic use of a window of opportunity**

This explanatory condition defines the set of cases in which the influencing actions took strategic advantage of a window of opportunity. The concept of political opportunity is in line with punctuated equilibrium theory and the multiple streams approach to policy change (Baumgartner & Jones, 2010; Howlett, et al., 2017). The basic premise of the concept is that exogenous factors enhance or inhibit prospects for influencing activities, e.g. for mobilization, for particular sorts of claims to be advanced rather than others, for particular strategies of influence to be exercised, and for movements to affect mainstream institutional politics and policy (Meyer & Minkoff, 2004). The strategic use of available windows of opportunity also links to the concept of targeting multiple levels and venue shopping, since windows of

opportunity may open up at different policy levels and fora (Beyers & Kerremans, 2012; Holyoke, et al., 2012).

### 3.3.3 Effectiveness Review Conditions

Several conditions relate to the Effectiveness Reviews themselves. These include issues of 'Quality' in terms of both the data quality and the degree to which inferences are justified with regard to the review's investigation of policy influencing, which was coded on a four-point scale from high quality with no concerns (4) to large quality concerns (1). We also included descriptive data on the Effectiveness Reviews', such as 'Publication Year', the 'Name' of the influencing actions/project under review, and the Effectiveness Reviews' 'Stage' in order to capture if the Effectiveness Review was conducted during an incomplete project (midline), by the end of a project (endline), or as a follow-up after the end of a project cycle.<sup>8</sup>

### 3.3.4 Contextual Conditions

Finally, information on six additional contextual conditions was gathered. These conditions are not part of the model but help to contextualize, interpret and enrich the description of the fsQCA results. These included: the 'Country/Location' of the influencing action;<sup>9</sup> the 'Continent' of the influencing actions using the United Nations Geoscheme framework; the duration of the influencing actions in years; the primary thematic/'Policy Area' (e.g. poverty reduction, gender, health); a coding of the 'Civic Space' in the country the intervention takes place, characterizing it as being more or less restrictive using a combination of three proxies (the Freedom in the World, CIVICUS Monitor, and Oxfam's internal country coding);<sup>10</sup> and finally whether a 'Women's Organization' is involved in the influencing action, defined as organizations that explicitly focus on women's rights, women's issues or gender.

## 3.4 CODING PROCEDURE

All cases are coded according to the key variables and concepts defined above. Two of the authors independently coded the 24 Effectiveness Reviews and 37 cases for each of the outcomes and explanatory conditions. Because fsQCA is primarily sensitive to whether a case is in or out (i.e. membership score above or below 0.50) we checked the percentage of agreement between the two coders by converting the scores into a binary scale. This procedure yielded an initial agreement of 61.4%. By focusing on the primary subcomponents in complex reports with multiple outcomes, the two coders discussed and resolved any remaining discrepancies. We use these final scores in the analysis.

The same two authors also independently coded the quality of the Effectiveness Reviews, which is the first of the Effectiveness Review 'contextual' conditions. All other Effectiveness Review and contextual conditions were extracted and gathered by only one author. This data extraction process was used for the latter conditions because they were not included in the fsQCA analysis.

## 3.5 ANALYSIS

In fsQCA, all logically possible combinations of absent and present conditions<sup>11</sup> are organized in a truth table for each outcome.<sup>12</sup> Each combination corresponds to one row in the truth table. One reduces the complexity of the truth table by considering the frequency and the consistency of each row. The frequency indicates the number

of empirically observed cases that reflect membership in the conditions that define a specific truth table row, while the consistency displays the share of cases consistent with the given outcome. A value of 1 indicates high consistency; a value of 0.5 or lower, low consistency. For our two analyses, we only included those configurations that met a consistency threshold of 0.8 or higher for expanding space and changing policy. These thresholds are largely in line with the commonly recommended minimum of between 0.75 (Ragin, 2008) and 0.80 (Fiss, 2011) and thus guarantee that the models provide robust findings. To analyse all possible combinations of absent and present conditions, fsQCA uses Boolean algebra. fsQCA reduces the complexity to a minimum set of core, peripheral and irrelevant characteristics, thereby allowing the identification of complex interactions that go beyond two- or three-way interactions (Fiss, 2011).

‘Core’ characteristics interact with all other characteristics of a successful pathway (i.e. for expanding space and changing policy) and therefore cannot be abandoned or altered without abandoning the pathway altogether. In contrast, ‘peripheral’ characteristics are expendable as they merely support and reinforce the success of a pathway (Grandori & Furnari, 2008; Meuer, 2017). Peripheral characteristics may be altered or abandoned if doing so protects the core of a pathway. In addition to the distinction between core and peripheral, characteristics of a pathway may also be irrelevant. Implementing ‘irrelevant’ characteristics creates duplicates as the contributing function of these characteristics may either already be covered by another characteristic – pointing towards a possible substitution effect – or simply not matter in the specific pathway.

## 3.6 ROBUSTNESS CHECKS

We evaluated and ensured the robustness of our findings in three ways. First, because the Effectiveness Reviews provided the raw data for our empirical analysis and were conducted by different consultants, we assessed the extent to which differences in the reviews would influence our findings. We evaluated all Effectiveness Reviews in terms of their information depth and breadth. Our screening suggested that despite some variation, the overall high quality of the reviews gives us confidence in the results. Second, we engaged in an intensive calibration process to develop coding guidelines that ensured comparability across the different reviews and context-sensitivity of our conditions. By drawing on the experience of Oxfam employees and the literature on policy influencing, we based our conditions on the substantive and theoretical knowledge necessary for providing robust results. Third, we tested the sensitivity of the results of our analysis against different model specifications. Because of the small sample size, we did not change the frequency threshold (the frequency threshold for both models is one). However, we altered the consistency threshold for both models. The model explaining pathways for the successful creation of civic space is highly robust to an increase in the consistency threshold from 0.8 to 0.88. Beyond this threshold, the most prevalent pathways S1, S2 and S3 remain unaffected, only pathway S4, covering only one case, slightly changes in its configuration of conditions. The model explaining the change of policy is highly robust to changes in the consistency threshold of between 0.74 and 0.88. Beyond the lower bounds (0.74) additional pathways appear. However, given that the literature strongly advises against thresholds below 0.75, we disregard these pathways in our report. Above the upper bounds (0.88) only the cases covered by pathway P2 change. Overall, the substantive findings of our review are robust given the underlying data quality and the context-sensitive calibration.

## 4 RESULTS AND LEARNING CONSIDERATIONS

We present the results of our analyses for the two outcomes: expanding civic space and changing policy. First, we conducted an analysis of necessity for both outcomes to reveal potentially necessary conditions. Second, we conducted an analysis of sufficiency to reveal pathways to successfully expanding civic space and changing policy.

We begin each subsection by illustrating the findings of the fsQCA analysis with a configuration chart. Before moving on to the results of the fsQCA analysis, we provide a brief overview of the number of successful cases for the two outcomes in Table 4.1. In most cases, the Effectiveness Reviews indicate that the policy-influencing activities of Oxfam and its partners have been successful at expanding space (68%) and changing policy (53%). Among the 13 instances in which the same influencing activity was analysed for both expanding space and changing policy, half of those that were successful at expanding space were also successful at changing policy (5 out of 10). There was only one instance in which an influencing activity successfully changed policy without expanding space. Indicative examples of conditions from the various successful cases can be found in the Appendix in Table .

**Table 4.1: Number of cases of successfully expanding space and changing policy**

		Policy Change Cases			
		Succeeded	Did not succeed	Insufficient data	
<i>Civic Space Cases</i>	Succeeded	5	5	5	Total Civic Space Cases 22
	Did not succeed	1	2	4	
	Insufficient data	2	0	0	
	Total Policy Change Cases	15			



## 4.1 EXPANDING CIVIC SPACE

### Key Messages for Successfully Expanding Space

- The identification and strategic use of windows of opportunity is important for expanding civic space in most contexts. Examples include, linking influencing activities to local and national elections, identifying ongoing legislative processes on the policy topic of concern, and linking to efforts that are supported by funders and national leadership.
- An outsider strategy should, in most cases, be combined with influencing efforts targeting multiple policy levels to be successful at expanding civic space. This pathway is particularly characteristic of cases where civil society actors represent marginalized groups.
- In most cases, the prominence of Oxfam's role is not a defining condition. However, a prominent role for Oxfam may contribute to success in cases with more restrictive civic space.

### 4.1.1 Pathways to Successfully Expanding Civic Space

The analysis identified four pathways to (n=15) successfully expanding civic space:<sup>13</sup>

- **S1. Insider-Opportunity approach** (n=9) – involves either domestic civil society or Oxfam strategically using a window of opportunity through an insider strategy. (Oxfam's role varies across the cases so is not important to success.)
- **S2. Localized-Opportunity approach** (n=5) – domestic civil society strategically using a window of opportunity led by domestic civil society with Oxfam playing a less prominent role
- **S3. Multilevel-Outsider approach** (n=5) – involves either domestic civil society or Oxfam targeting multiple policy levels using an outsider strategy. (Oxfam's role varies across the cases so is not important to success.)
- **S4. Oxfam-Outsider approach** (n=1) – Oxfam plays a more prominent role in expanding space with the support of an outsider strategy and the lack of an insider strategy

The first two pathways include conditions that support the strategic use of a window of opportunity while the last two pathways provide examples of conditions that enable the successful use of an outsider strategy.

The explanation for successfully expanding civic space provided by the four pathways together is highly consistent with a score of 0.96, which is above the recommended threshold of 0.8 (Ragin, 2008; Schneider & Wagemann, 2013). The coverage, too, is exceptionally high at 0.91, indicating that our results explain more than 90% of cases in which influencing activities successfully expanded civic space.

Table 4.2 shows the details of the pathways, including their explanatory conditions and (a selection of) Effectiveness Review and contextual conditions. Each pathway to successfully expanding civic space is labelled as noted above and numbered as S1 to S4.

**Table 4.2: Four pathways to successfully expanding civic space**

	Pathways			
	S1: Insider-Opportunity	S2: Localized-Opportunity	S3: Multilevel-Outsider	S4: Oxfam-Outsider
Insider strategy <sup>a</sup>	●			⊗
Outsider strategy <sup>a</sup>			●	●
Oxfam's role prominence <sup>a</sup>		⊗		●
Multiple policy levels <sup>a</sup>			●	
Window of opportunity <sup>a</sup>	●	●		
Consistency <sup>b</sup>	1.00	1.00	0.94	0.93
Raw coverage <sup>b</sup>	0.65	0.42	0.30	0.24
Unique coverage <sup>b</sup>	0.20	0.04	0.14	0.07
Overall solution consistency <sup>b</sup>	0.96			
Overall solution coverage <sup>b</sup>	0.91			
No. of cases	9	5	5	1
<b>Other conditions</b>				
Report quality <sup>c</sup>	3.00	2.60	3.60	4.00
Duration of influencing activities <sup>d</sup>	5.22	4.50	4.40	3.00
Women's organizations as partners <sup>e</sup>	0.44	0.40	0.80	0.00
<b>Policy area<sup>f</sup></b>				
Civil society	1	0	0	1
Climate change	1	1	1	0
Gender equality	4	2	4	0
Good governance	1	0	0	0
Health care	1	0	0	0
Land rights	1	1	0	0
Poverty	0	1	0	0
<b>Continent</b>				
Africa	5	2	2	0
Asia	1	0	1	1
Europe	1	0	2	0
South America	2	3	0	0
<b>Civic space<sup>g</sup></b>				
Relatively open	3	2	1	0
Transitional	3	3	1	0
More restrictive	2	0	2	1

Notes. Top row labels the pathways to expanding civic space and the left column lists the explanatory variables. a: Large icons represent a core condition, smaller icons a peripheral condition, and no icon means that the condition's presence or absence is not important for the pathway. Filled circles indicate that the condition is present while crossed circles indicate its absence. b: These figures are proportions ranging from 0.00 to 1.00. Consistency represents the proportion of cases that agree with the pathway. Coverage indicates the number of successful cases covered by the pathway while unique coverage is the proportion of cases covered by that pathway alone. c: Report quality is the average score from 1 to 4 (with 4 being high quality) representing the quality of the data and inference in the Effectiveness Reviews with regards to their policy influencing outcomes only—this does not necessarily speak to their quality on other outcome areas. d: The average duration of the policy influencing activities in the cases of the pathway in years—this is an imperfect approximation given Oxfam's tendency to continue work with partners before and after the activities under analysis. e: This is the proportion of cases with a domestic partner organization focusing on women- or gender-related topics. f: The policy area that was the target of the influencing activities was coded inductively until a relatively concise list of policy areas was arrived at. This provides the counts of the number of cases in each pathway that are primarily focused on the given policy area. g: The civic space coding drew from three indices, the Freedom in the World index for the final year of the influencing activities, the CIVICUS monitor for 2017, and Oxfam's programmatic ratings for three countries in 2016. More details can be found in the methods and appendix.

#### 4.1.1.1 Pathway S1: The Insider-Opportunity approach

We refer to the first pathway to successfully expanding civic space as the Insider-Opportunity approach. In this pathway, the strategic use of a window of opportunity by domestic civil society is essential for successfully expanding civic space, while the adoption of an insider strategy supports this pathway. This pathway is not determined by the use of an outsider strategy, the prominence of Oxfam's role, or targeting multiple policy levels. Table 4.3 shows the cases that use this pathway.

*Frequently, space is expanded by combining the strategic use of a window of opportunity with an insider strategy.*

The Insider-Opportunity approach covers the broadest array of countries and policy areas. It includes both contexts where civic society is restricted and contexts where the civic space is relatively open. It includes countries in all continents covered by our dataset and almost every broad policy area. The pathway has the highest coverage (both raw and unique). As such, there is a strong argument to set-up systems to plan for and identify windows of opportunity both when starting a project and as it is ongoing. Furthermore, projects should include an insider strategy when possible. As illustrated by the case of Afghanistan B, and highlighted by the literature on fragile and post-conflict areas (Bush, 1996; Donais, 2009; Komorowska, 2016), local ownership and use of space is crucial. Too much reliance on external actors for an insider strategy may risk preventing local civil society from getting to 'own' spaces. Hence, it seems crucial that after spaces have been built or expanded local civil society gets into the lead and uses them to make their voices heard.

**Table 4.3: Cases using pathway S1 the Insider-Opportunity approach**

Case	Title	Quality	Duration
Afghanistan B	National Solidarity Programme III	4	13
Africa	Promoting Women's Rights Across Africa	3	5
Albania	Local Partnership for Rural Development in Albania	3	3
Bolivia A	Citizen Voice in Bolivia	4	5
Chile & Latin America	Increasing Women's Political Participation	3	5
Ethiopia	African Climate Change and Resilience Alliance (ACCRA)	2	5
Ghana	Towards Free Universal Health Care in Ghana	4	3
South Africa	South Africa Climate Change Advocacy Programme	3	3
Tanzania	Enhancing Effectiveness Through Evidence-based Learning	1	5

Notes. Quality refers to the quality of the Effectiveness Reviews' data and inference about their policy-influencing findings only. Duration refers to the total duration in years of the influencing activities, as approximated by Oxfam. In instances where a case's country is followed by a letter ('A' or 'B') this indicates that there was more than one Effectiveness Review and set of influencing activities for that country.

### Example of the insider-opportunity approach: Afghanistan B

The case of Citizen Voice in Afghanistan provides an example of an Insider-Opportunity approach (S1) (Komorowska, 2016). The aim of Citizen Voice in Afghanistan was to build the capacities of rural communities to make decisions about their own development and livelihoods, and to support (good) local governance. To this effect, the project expanded space for civil society by building, strengthening and maintaining so-called Community Development Councils (CDCs) as institutions for local governance and socio-economic development (Komorowska, 2016, p. 6). This was a nationwide initiative, and Oxfam and its partners worked as one of the implementing partners in Afghanistan. The project cycle began with local elections to select CDC members, followed by a series of training modules to build the newly elected CDC members' capacity. Small grants were allocated to CDCs to let communities set their own development priorities and achieve these objectives with the support of the implementing NGO partner(s).

**Window of opportunity.** The project benefited from a window of opportunity that materialized through a strong interest from international donors in peace building activities in post-conflict Afghanistan. The Afghan Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development launched the project, which was funded by diverse sources, including the World Bank, the European Union, and contributions from OECD DAC donor countries. This substantial international interest brought together an estimated 2.7 billion USD over the course of the programme between 2003 and mid-2015. Thus, the window of opportunity in the context of Afghanistan stems from a strong interest and commitment by (international) donors and external actors.

**Insider strategy.** The project in Afghanistan took advantage of this window of opportunity by adopting an insider strategy. The rather fragmented post-conflict society of Afghanistan and its weakly organized local civil society may explain this focus on an insider strategy. The Afghan Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development launched the project and the case involved collaboration and persuasion between civil society, funders and national officials. The influencing actions targeted policymakers directly through lobbying, proposal development and the provision of information. National civil society organizations took action by targeting national insiders in the Afghan government to gain their support. The project partners also brought civil society organizations into contact with international stakeholders. However, the rather modest role of domestic Afghan civil society in the project led the evaluators to conclude that 'in the visited Community development councils, civil society was weak, imposed by donors to support the implementation of particular projects (water committee, fish shura or environmental shura) or required by law (school shuras). The youth association in Mesh Sufila was the only bottom-up initiative.' (p 29).

When windows of opportunity are linked with external support it is important to develop a strategy to shift to locally driven action in which domestic civil society organizations are leading influencing actions, setting the agenda, and are able to expand their own spaces for policy influencing (Bush, 1996; Donais, 2009). Thus, policy influencing activities can benefit from initially taking advantage of the opportunity presented by the focused attention of funders, the government, or international actors, but then should use that opportunity to work collaboratively with policymakers to expand spaces for the continued civic participation by domestic civil society organizations.

#### 4.1.1.2 Pathway S2: The Localized-Opportunity approach<sup>14</sup>

We refer to the second pathway for expanding civic space as the Localized-Opportunity approach. In this pathway, the influencing activities capitalize on the presence of a window of opportunity by Oxfam refraining from taking a prominent role in the influencing actions. This pathway is not determined by using an insider strategy, outsider strategy, or targeting multiple policy levels. Table 4.4 shows the five cases corresponding to this pathway.

*In contexts with relatively open civic space, windows of opportunity may be effectively utilized for policy influencing without the need for a prominent role by Oxfam.*

It is worth noting that this pathway is not represented in countries where civic space is more restricted. The Localized-Opportunity approach may thus indicate that in countries where locally driven domestic actions are well received by the government, Oxfam should play a more reserved role. Strong visibility of Oxfam's role may risk the action becoming questioned by power-holders on the basis of the perception of it being externally-driven/'Western-backed dissent'. However, in countries where civic space is more restricted, external actors may be more effective in expanding and opening up space for local civil society, for example by using their political clout (see pathway S4 below for an example). Regardless of which segment of civil society is affected by more less-restrictive civic spaces and windows of opportunity, it seems crucial to take these nuances and the unique context of each influencing action into account to find effective strategies.

**Table 4.4: Cases using pathway S2 the Localized-Opportunity approach**

Case	Title	Quality	Duration
Bolivia A	Citizen Voice in Bolivia	4	5
Bolivia B	Influencing of Policy and Public Management Programme	2	NA
Chile & Latin America	Increasing Women's Political Participation	3	5
South Africa	South Africa Climate Change Advocacy Programme	3	3
Tanzania	Enhancing Effectiveness through Evidence-based Learning	1	5

Notes. Quality refers to the quality of the Effectiveness Reviews' data and inference with regard to their policy-influencing findings only. Duration refers to the total duration in years of the influencing activities as approximated by Oxfam. In instances where a case's country is followed by a letter ('A' or 'B') this indicates that there was more than one Effectiveness Review and set of influencing activities for that country.

### Example of the localized-opportunity approach: Bolivia A

The case of Citizen's Voice in Bolivia (Bolivia A) provides a typical example of a Localized-Opportunity approach (S2) (Delgado, 2014). The goal of the project was to promote gender equality in the metropolitan region of Cochabamba, Bolivia. The project was implemented by the Instituto de Formación Femenina Integral, a women's organization based in Cochabamba, and entailed a number of actions to strengthen the leadership and capacity of the women's organizations that constitute the Plataforma de Mujeres por la Ciudadanía y la Equidad (Women's Platform). Moreover, the purpose of the project was to enhance the relationships between the platform and other related networks at regional and national levels. The rationale behind these actions was that a strong Women's Platform would lead to greater participation and influence of women from Cochabamba in political decision-making processes.

Window of opportunity. For this case, a window of opportunity opened when the Movimiento al Socialismo (MAS), led by Evo Morales, won the presidential election in December 2005 and passed the new National Political Constitution (Constitución Política del Estado – CPE) in 2009. The new constitution promoted decentralization and a redistribution of sovereignty to the different territories, local governments, and communities. This opened up civic space for political participation, including for previously marginalized groups, such as indigenous groups and women. As quoted in the Effectiveness Review, a study produced by the Latin American Public Opinion Project (LAPOP), between March and April 2012, found that 'Bolivia is one of the most participatory societies in Latin America, and that in the last few years the country has managed to "establish significant support in electoral, party, protest, civic and community participation"' (Delgado, 2014, p. 17). Together, these constituted a significant window of opportunity that allowed the Instituto de Formación Femenina Integral to effectively implement the project.

Oxfam's role. As a supporting condition, this Localized-Opportunity approach featured a less prominent, behind-the-scenes role for Oxfam. The openness of the state towards civil society participation does not equally extend to International NGOs, such as Oxfam: 'Compared with the open recognition given to the former [Bolivian civil society] as political actors, the latter [International NGOs] are often questioned about the activities they carry out in the country and are occasionally accused of political interference' (p 17). This situation may explain why, apart from its funding role and the facilitation of a debriefing workshop in its office in La Paz, Oxfam refrained from visibly taking the lead in this project. Instead, implementation and communication of the influencing activities was largely left in the hands of its local partner, the Instituto de Formación Femenina Integral.

#### 4.1.1.3 Pathway S3: The Multilevel-Outsider approach

We refer to the third pathway to successfully expanding civic space as the Multilevel-Outsider approach. This pathway includes the parallel presence of an outsider strategy and the targeting of multiple policy levels as core conditions. This pathway is not determined by the use of an insider strategy, the prominence of Oxfam's role, or the strategic use of a window of opportunity. Table 4.5 displays the five cases corresponding to this pathway.

*Successful cases combine outsider approaches with targeting multiple policy levels – a combination that may be particularly relevant when working with marginalized groups.*

The majority of the cases (80 per cent) that correspond to this pathway involved prominent roles for domestic women's organizations. As the primary pathway that highlights the importance of an outsider strategy and the only one to include targeting of multiple levels as a core condition for expanding civic space, this pathway is particularly salient for groups who have less access to the levels of power. An outsider strategy can direct attention to issues that are often not the focus



of those in power – who are usually not members of marginalized groups. Likewise, the combination of such an outsider approach and targeting of multiple levels may be essential for marginalized groups to increase their chances of identifying opportunities to expand their spaces for policy influence by spreading their net widely. However, there is risk of an over-reliance on an outsider strategy among marginalized groups that may result in missed opportunities to exert real policy influence through institutional mechanisms. The case of Liberia provides an example when a change or adaptation of strategy would have been advisable and could have resulted in a more sustained expansion of civic space. In such cases, advice on how to adapt and employ a range and sequence of strategies at different policy levels may have helped the project to sustain the expansion of civic space without losing the capacity to continue to pressure power-holders.

**Table 4.5: Cases using pathway S3 the Multilevel-Outsider approach**

Case	Title	Quality	Duration
Africa	Promoting Women's Rights Across Africa	3	5
England	Routes to Solidarity	4	3
Liberia	Raising Poor and Marginalized Women's Voices in Liberia	4	5
Russia	Advocacy and Campaigning on Climate Change	3	5
Tajikistan	Women Smallholder Farmer Advocacy Campaign	4	4

Notes. Quality refers to the quality of the Effectiveness Reviews' data and inference with regard to their policy-influencing findings only. Duration refers to the total duration in years of the influencing activities as approximated by Oxfam. In instances where a case's country is followed by a letter ('A' or 'B') this indicates that there was more than one Effectiveness Review and set of influencing activities for that country.

### Example of the multilevel-outsider approach: Liberia

The case of Raising Poor and Marginalized Women's Voices in Liberia provides an example for a Multilevel-Outsider approach (Heaner, 2012). The project sought to raise the voices of and expand spaces for women to be politically engaged in Liberia. More specifically, the project sought to expand the spaces for women to hold the country accountable for implementing various elements of the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa, commonly known as the Maputo Protocol. The project successfully expanded space (albeit temporarily) for the voices of key women's organizations to be heard by the Ministry of Gender and Development (MoGD) and President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf. In addition, the influencing activities successfully linked several coalitions of women, specifically through partnership with the Women's Non-Governmental Organisation Secretariat of Liberia (WONGOSOL) and the Women of Liberia Peace Network (WOLPNET). One example of strengthening coalitions was that the Coalition of Civil Society Women in Liberia (COCISWOL) was introduced to the Maputo Protocol through a workshop with WOLPNET and set up an office below WOLPNET's own office. While the influencing activities expanded space for these groups to exert influence and successfully attracted the attention of both the Ministry and the President – these spaces were short-lived and offers of continued dialogue by the Ministry did not materialize. However, the coordination and interaction of the various women's groups appears to have expanded the spaces and amplified women's voices for continued influencing via the establishment of two coalitions, an alliance with a traditional council, and the establishment of the 50-50 club for women (Heaner, 2012).

**Policy levels.** The policy influencing activities made use of multiple policy levels. A supranational policy instrument – the Maputo Protocol – was used by Oxfam and its partners in national policy influencing efforts in Liberia. The national-level activities included supporting women running for national office, a sit-in at the national offices of the Ministry of Gender and Development, and presenting a statement to the President of Liberia at a women's retreat. Subnational activities included specific radio programme spots nightly on the protocol in the county of Grand Bassa, town hall meetings, and workshops and trainings at the local level.

**Outsider strategy.** The overall strategy of the influencing activities was one of putting pressure on the government – particularly on MoGD. The influencing strategy focused on the failings of the Ministry and publicly called for the Minister to step down, relying on pressure instead of persuasion. In one example, when the Ministry did not attend a planned meeting, COCISWOL issued a press release 'indicating their impatience with the Minister and calls for her removal' (p. 19). A march and a sit-in organized at the Ministry was another example of the use of an outsider strategy (p. 19).

#### 4.1.1.4 Pathway S4: The Oxfam-Outsider approach

We refer to the fourth pathway to successfully expanding civic space as the Oxfam-Outsider approach. This pathway combines a prominent role of Oxfam with the absence of an insider strategy as core conditions. An outsider strategy supports the successful expansion of civic space in this pathway. Neither the use of a multilevel approach nor of a window of opportunity play a determinative role in this pathway. This pathway is unique in that the prominent role of Oxfam is a core condition. Although only one case corresponds to this pathway, it provides important insights for Oxfam about when to take on a more prominent role (see Table 4.6).

*A more prominent role for Oxfam combined with a lack of an insider strategy may be important for successfully expanding spaces in contexts with restricted civic space.*

This case represents one of the few contexts where the influencing activities were undertaken in a country with a relatively restrictive posture towards civil society. This may indicate the importance of Oxfam playing a stronger role in such contexts, as

opposed to countries where there is more possibility for domestic civil society to take the lead. The more prominent role of Oxfam may also help serve as a guard against elite capture of civil society spaces in these unique contexts. As exemplified by the Myanmar case, the hand-over of a project requires thorough analysis and planning. Under this approach, Oxfam may seek to more strongly facilitate a transfer of responsibilities to the local partner by brokering relationships to other potential funders and supporters and ensure the continuation and scale of successful projects.

**Table 4.6: Cases using pathway S4 the Oxfam-Outsider approach**

Case	Title	Quality	Duration
Myanmar	Building Equitable and Resilient Livelihoods in the Dry Zone	4	3

Notes. Quality refers to the quality of the Effectiveness Reviews' data and inference with regard to their policy-influencing findings only. Duration refers to the total duration in years of the influencing activities as approximated by Oxfam. In instances where a case's country is followed by a letter ('A' or 'B') this indicates that there was more than one Effectiveness Review and set of influencing activities for that country.

#### **Example of the Oxfam-outsider approach: Myanmar**

The case of Building Livelihoods in Myanmar describes the Oxfam-Outsider approach (van Hemelrijck, 2017). The objective of the project was to expand the space for civil society to gain influence by building strong and viable membership organizations. These were intended to be capable of organizing community members, lobbying township departments and parliament, establishing business relationships with traders and suppliers, and developing civil society networks with local NGOs and membership organizations of other villages. Through membership organizations, the project sought to build and strengthen sustainable livelihood opportunities and the resilience of communities against drought, flooding and other hazards.

**Oxfam's role.** To this effect, the success of the project built on the prominent involvement of Oxfam in collaboration with the domestic implementing partner, the Network Activities Group. Together, and in some regions independently, Oxfam and the Network Activities Group provided trainings and technical inputs, and mobilized other partners and stakeholders. Oxfam prominently 'coordinated the entire project' and directly implemented activities in Thazi (van Hemelrijck, 2017, p. 14).

**Outsider strategy.** In addition, the project displayed one of the defining elements of an outsider strategy by the strong involvement of and large-scale engagement with local communities for the establishment of membership organizations (MOs), which then could exert pressure and hold the government to account. Through trainings and capacity building the project was a large-scale effort to engage citizens, with a reported 39,000 citizens becoming involved with the membership organizations (p. 13). However, the case only had partial set membership with its implementation of an outsider strategy and the membership organizations' potential to become spaces through which the government and political parties are held accountable for commitments, was not fully realized in all cases. The project successfully expanded civic space through MOs for civil society – especially increasing the participation of women in community governance processes (pp. 7, 50) – even 18–20 months after the official exit of Oxfam (by the time of the evaluation). However, the termination of the project – or better the withdrawal of Oxfam's active engagement in the project – was seen as premature by the evaluators and the local partners.

For the project to have sustainable impact, the report suggests that '[I]t needs to be ensured that villages move beyond mere adoption towards adaptation and aggregation of the [membership organization] model. Resources need to be invested carefully to foster the kind of collaboration and cross-fertilization that helps to gain influence, and build capacity and movement' (p. 11).

## 4.1.2 Learning Considerations

The pathways for successfully expanding civic space point to a number of important learning considerations.

**Adjusting strategies and tactics to context when capitalizing on windows of opportunity.** The level of restrictions in place on civic spaces matters when designing a strategy to capitalize on a window of opportunity. In contexts with less restrictive civic spaces, it is more effective for Oxfam's domestic civil society partners to take the lead while Oxfam plays a less prominent role of support. However, in countries with more restrictive civic spaces, a more prominent role for Oxfam can be helpful, depending on the attitudes of national government to external actors. For example, Oxfam can use its own profile to raise the profile, credibility and legitimacy of domestic civil society organizations and networks.

**Using adaptive strategies that are sensitive to changes in context.** Cases that successfully expanded civic space were often those where Oxfam and its partners adaptively changed their strategies to take advantage of new or changing opportunities and to institutionalize or formalize expanded civic spaces. It seems important, then, that activities are designed to scan for new opportunities and be flexible enough to adjust to them when they arise. Additionally, in order to institutionalize expanded civic spaces, it appears important to move from a reliance on external support to domestic sources of support, and from a reliance on personal networks between individuals to broader more institutionalized structures (e.g. regular policy dialogues or parliamentary consultations).

**Targeting multiple policy levels when using an outsider strategy.** In cases where Oxfam and its partners seek to support a marginalized group and to ultimately establish a hitherto marginalized group as a key actor, the Multilevel-Outsider approach requires further attention. Two multilevel combinations that appear among successful cases combine national and subnational policy influencing or combine international and national policy influencing. These Multilevel-Outsider approaches appear to be particularly useful for marginalized groups. For example, marginalized groups can create pressure through a national campaign to raise awareness on a policy topic while simultaneously developing alliances through a more collaborative insider strategy at the subnational level. Another example of the effective use of multiple policy levels and an outsider strategy is the use of international agreements to pressure national policymakers to fulfil commitments to engage with certain marginalized groups. However, if these efforts only deploy an outsider strategy at multiple policy levels it may be difficult to maintain the expanded civic space over the long-term unless accompanied by the development of alliances with domestic sources of support and policymakers. This leads us to our fourth insight on the importance of **putting risk management and mitigation plans in place** when using an outsider strategy to expand civic space.

## 4.2 CHANGING POLICY

### Key Messages for Successfully Changing Policy

- The use of an insider strategy is essential to successfully changing policy in our cases. However, an insider strategy is not in and of itself sufficient, and needs to be accompanied by other strategies. In the cases we reviewed, it is accompanied by a window of opportunity or a combined insider-outsider strategy.
- Oxfam should play a supportive and less prominent role when seeking to change policies – this is more important when changing policy than when expanding civic space.
- There are no cases of Oxfam and its partners successfully changing policy in a more restrictive civic society context. This may indicate the need for more research on how policy processes are influenced in those contexts, that the current strategies of Oxfam and its partners do not translate as well in those contexts, or that space is so restrictive that policy change is not possible at that time.

### 4.2.1 Pathways to Successfully Changing Policy

The analysis of necessity reveals that an insider strategy is a necessary condition for changing policy. In other words, no Oxfam activity has successfully changed policy if it did not include at least some level of an insider strategy. By itself, however, we see that an insider strategy is not sufficient to successfully change policy. Our analysis identifies two major pathways to successfully changing policy:

- **P1** Localized-Insider-Opportunity approach (n=5) – involves domestic civil society strategically taking advantage of a window of opportunity through an insider strategy with Oxfam playing a less prominent role
- **P2** Localized-Insider-Outsider approach (n=2) – involves domestic civil society gaining policy influence through a combined insider-outsider strategy with Oxfam playing a less prominent role.

Together these two pathways provide results that are highly consistent (consistency score 0.87) and cover about two thirds of all cases (coverage 0.63).

Table 4.7 provides the configuration chart with the two pathways to successfully changing policy and is designed in the same manner as described at the beginning of this section.

A condition for both pathways to successfully change policy is the absence of a prominent role of Oxfam as a core condition and the presence of an insider strategy. The concerns of many countries about the (external) political interference through international organizations (World Bank Group, 2017) may explain why Oxfam refrains from an overly strong and visible involvement in policy influencing actions. Indeed, such a choice by Oxfam to play a supporting role that is less prominent is also a key part of its own strategic aim to support domestic civil society and not to supplant it. Successful attempts towards changing policy seem to build on the fact that the actions are driven by domestic entities that are recognized by governments and policymakers as legitimate representatives channelling local needs and demands.<sup>15</sup> From a contextual standpoint, it is noteworthy that there were zero cases of successfully changing policies within a country with a more restricted civic space.

Two additional contributing conditions distinguish the two pathways to successfully changing policy: strategically taking advantage of a window of opportunity in the case of the Localized-Insider-Opportunity approach (P1) and a supporting outsider strategy in the case of the Localized-Insider-Outsider approach (P2).

With five cases, the Localized-Insider-Opportunity approach appears more frequently than the Localized-Insider-Outsider approach, which had two cases. The former includes multiple policy areas while both of the cases in the latter focused on gender-related policies and involved women-focused organizations. These specifications of the two approaches suggest that domestic civil society organizations should lead when taking advantage of windows of opportunity to change policy by an insider strategy in most cases. However, more marginalized groups may need to create pressure through an outsider strategy targeting policymakers.<sup>16</sup>

**Table 4.7: Two pathways to successfully changing policy**

	Pathways	
	P1: Localized Insider Opportunity	P2: Localized Insider-Outsider
Insider strategy <sup>a</sup>	●	●
Outsider strategy <sup>a</sup>		●
Oxfam's role prominence <sup>a</sup>	⊗	⊗
Multiple policy levels <sup>a</sup>		
Window of opportunity <sup>a</sup>	●	
Consistency <sup>b</sup>	0.90	0.93
Raw coverage <sup>b</sup>	0.56	0.44
Unique coverage <sup>b</sup>	0.19	0.06
Overall solution consistency <sup>b</sup>	<b>0.87</b>	
Overall solution coverage <sup>b</sup>	<b>0.63</b>	
No. of cases	5	2
<b>Other conditions</b>		
Report quality <sup>c</sup>	3.20	3.50
Duration of influencing activities <sup>d</sup>	5.00	4.00
Women's organizations as partners <sup>e</sup>	0.40	1.00
<b>Policy area<sup>f</sup></b>		
Civil society	0	0
Climate change	0	0
Gender equality	2	2
Good governance	0	0
Health care	1	0
Land rights	1	0
Poverty	1	0
<b>Continent</b>		
Africa	2	0
Asia	0	0
Europe	0	1
South America	3	1
<b>Civic space<sup>g</sup></b>		
Relatively open	1	1
Transitional	4	1
More restrictive	0	0

Notes. Top row labels the pathways to changing policy and the left column lists the explanatory variables. a: Large icons represent a core condition, smaller icons a peripheral condition, and no icon means that the condition's presence or absence is not important for the pathway. Filled circles indicate that the condition is present while crossed circles indicate its absence. b: These figures are proportions ranging from 0.00 to 1.00. Consistency represents the proportion of cases that agree with the pathway. Coverage indicates the number of successful cases covered by the pathway while unique coverage is the proportion of cases covered by that pathway alone. c: Report quality is the average score from 1 to 4 (with 4 being high quality) representing the quality of the data and inference in the Effectiveness Reviews with regards to their policy influencing outcomes only—this does not necessarily speak to their quality on other outcome areas. d: The average duration of the policy influencing activities in the cases of the pathway in years—this is an imperfect approximation given Oxfam's tendency to continue work with partners before and after the activities under analysis. e: This is the proportion of cases with a domestic partner organization focusing on women- or gender- related topics. f: The policy area that was the target of the influencing activities was coded inductively until a relatively concise list of policy areas was arrived at. This provides the counts of the number of cases in each pathway that are primarily focused on the given policy area. g: The civic space coding drew from three indices, the Freedom in the World index for the final year of the influencing activities, the CIVICUS monitor for 2017, and Oxfam's programmatic ratings for three countries in 2016. More details can be found in the methods and appendix.



#### 4.2.1.1 Pathway P1: The Localized-Insider-Opportunity Approach

We refer to the first pathway as the Localized-Insider-Opportunity approach. It comprises a less prominent role for Oxfam with domestic CSOs leading the way and is supported by the use of an insider strategy and the strategic use of a window of opportunity. This pathway is not determined by using an outsider strategy or targeting multiple policy levels. Table 4.8 shows the cases in this pathway.

*In addition to an insider approach and Oxfam taking a less prominent role, this pathway highlights the importance of planning for and adjusting to windows of opportunity.*

This pathway covers a wide range of policy areas and locations, thus providing a worthwhile example for organizational learning. The importance of taking advantage of windows of opportunity that arise in the midst of a project is particularly noteworthy. It would be helpful to put in place procedures that can assist projects in identifying new opportunities and adjusting their strategies of engagement with power-holders. The need for better processes for agile and integrated planning, monitoring, evaluation, and learning that would enable such adjustments is a common theme across many of the cases. Regarding the combination of conditions exemplified by this pathway, it seems crucial for Oxfam to play a less prominent role with these strategies.

**Table 4.8: Cases using pathway P1 the Localized-Insider-Outsider approach**

Case	Title	Quality	Duration
Bolivia A	Citizen Voice in Bolivia	4	5
Bolivia B	Influencing of Policy and Public Management Programme	2	NA
Chile & Latin America	Increasing Women's Political Participation	3	5
Tanzania	Enhancing Effectiveness Through Evidence-based Learning	3	5
Zambia	Citizen Voice in Zambia	4	5

Notes. Quality refers to the quality of the Effectiveness Reviews' data and inference with regard to their policy-influencing findings only. Duration refers to the total duration in years of the influencing activities as approximated by Oxfam. In instances where a case's country is followed by a letter ('A' or 'B') this indicates that there was more than one Effectiveness Review and set of influencing activities for that country.

### Example of Localized-Insider-Opportunity Approach: Bolivia B

The case of Influencing Policy and Public Management in Bolivia provides an example describing the Localized-Insider-Opportunity approach to successfully changing policy (Murray, 2012). The influencing activities were led by Fundación Jubileo. The evaluation focused on the following two policy related outcomes. Here we focus on the first, the influencing actions which lobbied for the adoption of the notions of sustainable debt and public accountability for external debt. This involved encouraging parliamentarians around the world to sign the Declaration of Cape Town on debt levels, contributions to a parliamentary resolution to conduct an audit of external debts, the creation of a commission to conduct that audit, and lobbying for an official policy on external debt from the Central Bank (Murray, 2012, pp. 17, 24). However, regarding policy influencing on the debt levels of Bolivia, the effectiveness review only focused on the last of these in its analysis and could only point to changes in 'posture' and not policy (pp. 24–25). The most noteworthy example of successfully changing policy in this case was the project's contribution to the passage of a municipal law on social auditing in the Municipality of La Paz (pp. 32–35) with evidence of the powerful influence of the activities of Fundación Jubileo and claims that 'the outcome would not have been possible without Jubileo's contribution' (p. 35).

**Window of opportunity:** This case illustrates the importance of recognizing and taking advantage of a window of opportunity. The election of Evo Morales, the approval of a new constitution, and the promotion of political participation and decentralization, created an ideal atmosphere for supporting a more democratic approach to public debt and municipal policies that allow for greater civic participation (pp. 38–39). In the latter case, a specific opportunity arose to support the proposed social auditing law in La Paz which Fundación Jubileo took advantage of in hopes of creating an example for other localities (pp. 32–35).

**Oxfam's role:** This case provides an example of how local partners took the lead while Oxfam played a less prominent role. Policy influence was almost exclusively exerted by leaving the campaign in the hands of the local partner, the Fundación Jubileo. Oxfam's responsibility was primarily funding and links to regional and international venues with some 'quiet advocacy work' behind the scenes (p. 22–23). In both interviews and influencing activities the key respondents and targeted policymakers primarily referenced the activities of Fundación Jubileo and not Oxfam.

**Insider strategy:** The Fundación Jubileo used the window of opportunity through an insider strategy. High-level Bolivian politicians, the Parliament, the Bolivian Central Bank, and the Ministry of Finance were directly involved in the campaign. The leading figures of the campaign themselves represented prominent figures of Bolivian society, personified in the relationship between Fundación Jubileo's Executive Director, and the chair of Fundación Jubileo who was also the Archbishop of La Paz. More important than the actors involved was the strategy employed by Fundación Jubileo. The focus was on working together with policymakers and the provision of technical support. Fundación Jubileo saw the culture of social mobilization and conflict as an obstacle to achieving their goals.

The influencing activities focused on raising awareness of policymakers and building direct relationships to work 'mutually' on an 'agreed upon agenda' (pp. 17–18). In the case of the passage of the municipal law in La Paz, Jubileo provided technical support to the working groups – which included civil society organizations from La Paz – and the law was actively supported by the municipality.

Comparing the two cases situated in Bolivia, the case of Influencing of Policy and Public Management, and the case of Citizen Voice, provides an important insight: for policy influencing to be successful, it is important to demonstrate that an initiative is led locally and derived from local needs.

#### 4.2.1.2 Pathway P2: The Localized-Insider-Outsider Approach

This second pathway to successfully changing policy also involves Oxfam taking a less prominent role and the use of an insider strategy. This pathway is additionally supported by an outsider strategy and we therefore refer to it as the Localized-Insider-Outsider approach. The pathway is indifferent to whether or not a case targets more than one policy level or whether or not there is a window of opportunity. Table 4.9 shows the two cases in this pathway.

*An insider strategy can be effectively combined with an outsider strategy and a less prominent role of Oxfam to change policy, especially when working on gender policy.*

It is important to note that this pathway was supported by two cases that both focused on gender policies and were led by women's formal and informal organizations in the two countries. This might suggest that when influencing activities are focusing on policy topics related to marginalized communities, a combination of both an insider and an outsider strategy is particularly important. This combination may help direct the attention of policymakers to issues of importance to the community through a more collaborative insider approach while at the same time demonstrating the potential to increase the pressure on power-holders through mobilization and media coverage using an outsider strategy. While the less prominent role played by Oxfam and its manner of engagement with the women's groups and organizations were perceived as empowering, stronger lobbying of policymakers by Oxfam behind the scenes may strengthen the impact in terms of policy change.

**Table 4.9: Cases using pathway P2 the Localized-Insider-Outsider approach**

Case	Title	Quality	Duration
Bolivia A	Citizen Voice in Bolivia	4	5
England	Routes to Solidarity	3	3

Notes. Quality refers to the quality of the Effectiveness Reviews' data and inference with regard to their policy-influencing findings only. Duration refers to the total duration in years of the influencing activities as approximated by Oxfam. In instances where a case's country is followed by a letter ('A' or 'B') this indicates that there was more than one Effectiveness Review and set of influencing activities for that country.

### Example of localized-insider-outsider approach: England

The case of Routes to Solidarity in England provides an example describing the Localized-Insider-Outsider approach to changing policy (Cambridge Policy Consultants, 2012). The Routes to Solidarity project achieved the following three outcomes regarding policy change. First, the most concrete policy change outcome was the change to the official Leeds City Council data collection process by linking gender and ethnicity statistics with the city's Neighbourhood Index, which the influencing actions of the project did contribute to (Cambridge Policy Consultants, 2012, pp. 41–43). Second, the project may have influenced government refugee centres to align their official policies with the Why Refugee Women charter's minimum standards for service delivery to refugee women (pp. 30–31, 63). There was some weak evidence to support an official policy change in procedures to allow for refugees to select their interpreter's gender and changes to minimum standards for refugee women. Third, the project successfully contributed to the development and launch of the Black Manifesto, which may have contributed to official changes in party platforms for both the Liberal Democrats and the Labour Party in the run-up to the 2010 election (p. 37). On aggregate these three policy changes combine to characterize a successful case of policy change.

**Oxfam's role.** Oxfam played only a reserved role in the Routes to Solidarity project. The style and way of working of Oxfam Routes to Solidarity staff was described as 'genuinely empowering' (p. vi) – encouraging and supporting while letting the women themselves lead. The agenda-setting process of the project also reflected Oxfam's reserved role (p. 11). The initial definition of intended outcomes of the project remained generic. The black and minority women's groups themselves defined the specifics of the policy and practice changes. In the case of Leeds in particular, the Leeds BME (Black Minority Ethnic) Women Forum, established with support from Routes to Solidarity, was the main organization engaging with Leeds City Council.

**Insider strategy.** The project applied a combined insider and outsider strategy. The following provides examples of elements of an insider strategy. The project supported the establishment of groups, such as The Women's Solidarity Forum, and encouraged them to take part in local, regional and national lobbying activities that were collaborative in nature – such as workshops in which policymakers are invited – around policies that had previously been identified as pressing. Similarly, BME women who participated in Oxfam's Routes to Solidarity training also formed or led several of these groups while holding political positions. For example, the current chair of The Women's Solidarity Forum is a local Labour Councillor. The Leeds BME Women's forum organized a meeting with the Assistant Chief Executive of Leeds City Council to discuss issues of data collection (p. 41) who 'also champions the city's work on equality and diversity' (p. 43). The interaction and response of policymakers in Leeds was positive and collaborative, with them even inviting the Forum to various local activities (pp. 43–44).

**Outsider strategy.** This insider strategy was supported by an outsider strategy. Although the causal links between the Black Manifesto work and the local work in Leeds was not explored in depth by the Effectiveness Review, it is important to note that the large-scale campaigns to pressure action on BME issues at national level likely provided additional support for the actions being taken in Leeds, especially since the Leeds City Council was dominated by the Labour Party during the time of the activities. An example for the complementary outsider strategy activities being used was Reverend Jesse Jackson's launch of the Black Manifesto at the Houses of Parliament in February 2010. Additional events followed the launch of the Black Manifesto throughout the country. Among these events, the 'Black Britain Decides' event in London in April 2010 had a live video link with the different deputy leaders and more than 2,000 attendees – making it the largest gathering of BME people in Britain (pp. 34–35).

## 4.2.2 Learning Considerations for Changing Policy

The pathways for successfully changing policy indicate that influencing actions are more effective when Oxfam plays a less prominent role in support of its domestic civil society partners being in the lead and when those partners use an insider strategy. Successful cases also highlight how these insider strategies, which are necessary, but not sufficient, can be bolstered by supporting alliances and networks between domestic civil society organizations and leaders and by creating and strengthening institutionalized spaces for interaction and dialogue between civil society and policymakers. When there is no window of opportunity, however, insider strategies may need to be bolstered by an outsider strategy.

**Supporting existing networks of domestic civil society organizations and leaders.** Influencing actions that tap into and strengthen domestic alliances and networks between civic society members and policymakers seem to be particularly effective. Our analysis shows that influencing activities can benefit from collaborating with domestic civil society organizations that already belong to a network with strong ties to policymakers and from facilitating such ties and networks. Oxfam and its partners can effectively apply an insider strategy and collaborate with domestic networks if broad support for the anticipated policy change exists among citizens and network members. However, if this support does not exist, Oxfam and its partners risk that powerful network members may undermine the influencing action. For example, if Oxfam and its partners align with a network to push for women's rights, but then prominent members of the network disagree on a policy topic, then association with these actors may weaken a push for that policy. Thus, such networks can provide powerful support to the use of an insider strategy and effective policy change, but they also carry potential risks to be on guard against.

**Creating institutionalized spaces for interaction between civil society and policymakers.** Institutionalized spaces that are used by domestic civil society organizations and policymakers alike can support an insider strategy and effective policy change. Such spaces can include fora and learning events where both civil society organizations and policymakers play active roles. For example, inviting civil society to share experiences from the lives of those affected by policies and having policymakers share details about the existing laws and structures in place that can be used to address the policy topic, may be particularly fruitful. Oxfam's local partners can benefit from taking on an official role in policy fora – such as becoming members of official consultative groups.

**Combined insider and outsider strategies.** Outsider strategies can be a needed adjunct to insider strategies, in particular when influencing activities are focusing on policy topics related to marginalized communities or when there is no window of opportunity. But there may be scope to support Oxfam staff and partners to better combine and sequence insider and outsider strategies and improve their quality.

## 5 EXPLORING THE MEASUREMENT APPROACH

In undertaking this meta-review, we performed a comprehensive review of current guidelines and documents connected to Oxfam's Right to be Heard framework (include strategic goals, tools, and suggestions for conducting evaluations), as well as an in-depth analysis and coding of the Effectiveness Reviews themselves. Through this work, we have identified a number of considerations that may strengthen or support future efforts to learn from programme evaluations in this space, and identify new insights for Oxfam's influencing, governance and citizen voice work.

**Develop more specific, testable hypotheses.** While the RTBH framework provides a conceptual mapping of common outputs, outcomes and impacts across Oxfam's Right to be Heard programming. Developing specific, testable hypotheses or theories of change for effective policy influencing that can inform programme design and be systematically tested and evaluated would allow Oxfam to identify further insights on the strategic combinations and sequencing of influencing activities. Such hypotheses could be informed by the successful pathways in our report, other literature on interest groups, and the experiences of Oxfam and its partners.

**Distinguish between strategies to expand civic space and change policies.** As the meta-review has made clear, each require distinct strategic elements and/or combinations of these. It is worth noting that at the moment there is more discussion and guidance in the RTBH framework around expanding civic space than there is on changing policy. If Oxfam aims to increase its efforts in this direction, then having a greater focus on changing policy in Oxfam's strategy, guidance and commissioning of Effectiveness Reviews may be worthwhile.

**Emphasize the importance of insider strategies for both expanding civic space and changing policy.** When considering how to use an insider strategy, the work of Maloney and colleagues (Maloney, et al., 1994) may be particularly helpful in supporting Oxfam and its partners analyse their status vis-à-vis policymakers and how that might point towards different ways of implementing an insider strategy.

**Recognize the importance of identifying, planning for, and adjusting to windows of opportunity to expand civic spaces.** This came up as a strong theme in our report. The current RTBH framework and guideline documents could benefit from dedicating more space to planning tools, and Oxfam and its partners could work together to identify planning procedures that encourage the continued identification of and adjustment to windows of opportunity – especially with a focus on identifying windows of opportunity beyond regular and anticipated events.

**More purposive sampling of programmes for evaluation.** Linked to the point above, while the current approach of sampling a random set of projects for Effectiveness Reviews has the benefit of providing an indicative, unbiased snapshot of the effectiveness of Oxfam's work, systematically linking and exploring certain elements of the RTBH framework will require purposive sampling of programmes for review. For example, if Oxfam is interested in understanding which strategies are successful at changing policies in countries with restricted civic space, or what causes failure, then a purposive sampling of several of those countries for in-depth research is required.

**Using mixed methods.** The majority of the Effectiveness Reviews used either a qualitative approach or a quantitative approach exclusively, and many of the Effectiveness Reviews could have benefited from a mixed-method analytical approach. For example, process-tracing studies could include quantitative analysis of media coverage or budget allocations to support conclusions. Meanwhile, many of the quantitative Effectiveness Reviews using propensity-score matching lacked any data on the creation or expansions of civic space or changes to policy. This gap is understandable given that the purpose of the quantitative studies was to understand changes at a community or household level; however, the projects' theories of change often included either explicit or implicit qualitative elements of policy influencing that purely quantitative studies cannot analyse sufficiently. All of the country-level studies that we excluded from this meta-analysis were large-N quantitative studies that lacked data on the two outcomes of interest. The few large-N quantitative studies that were included often lacked the sort of in-depth data that would support strong conclusions. A mixed-method approach might overcome weaknesses of purely qualitative or purely quantitative studies and might generate further insights for Oxfam's policy influencing and for developing better theories of change. While advantages of mixed-method evaluations are evident, the application of mixed-method approaches depends on the availability of evaluators and consultants who are familiar with such approaches and can apply them fruitfully in evaluations.



## 6 CONCLUSION

Oxfam and its partners have a rich set of experiences and data on policy-influencing work in varied contexts. This report captures learning from a subset of those experiences that have been evaluated by Effectiveness Reviews and include cases from Africa, Asia, Europe and Latin America.

Oxfam and its partners were successful in most of their efforts to expand civic space or change policy. Our results suggest that Oxfam is somewhat more successful in expanding civic space (68%) than in changing policy (53%), with the former also being more commonly intended by the programme activities.

The analysis has identified four unique pathways that contribute to the successful expansion of civic space and two pathways to successful policy change. Importantly, the pathways that depict the conditions for successfully expanding civic space differ from those pathways that describe successfully changing policy. This difference shows the importance of applying and combining different strategies for approaching the two goals either in parallel or in sequence.

The four pathways to expanding space highlight the importance of enabling domestic civil society actors to identify and take advantage of windows of opportunity, through both, insider and outsider strategies and their combination. In contrast, the two pathways to changing policy highlight the importance of domestic civil society actors making use of insider strategies to bring about policy change in countries with less restrictive civic space – although it is important to note that the evidence suggests that the use of an insider strategy is a necessary but not a sufficient condition. We find that policy-influencing activities are successful when Oxfam's partners either (1) strategically take advantage of a window of opportunity through an insider strategy or (2) gain influence through a combined insider-outsider strategy.

Among the 13 instances of Effectiveness Reviews that evaluated outcomes for both expanding space and changing policy, there appears to be a stronger dependency of changing policy on expanding civic space than the reverse. Among the 13 instances targeting both outcomes, only one of six cases of successfully changing policy was not combined with successfully expanding space while half of the cases of successfully expanding space also successfully changed policy. The evidence suggests that to change policy you need to have widened civic space, but widening space is not sufficient to lead to changed policy. For changing policies, it seems particularly important to jointly explore entry points for Oxfam's domestic civil society partners to play the primary role in influencing policy. If those exist, then Oxfam can provide an important supporting role from a less prominent position. Meanwhile, in contexts in which the space for domestically led action is narrow Oxfam may be able to leverage a prominent role to help expand space for domestic civil society.

The pathways highlight the utility of configurational analysis and emphasize the importance of multiple conditions working in distinct combinations to lead to successfully expanding space or changing policy. Overall, the different pathways identified here demonstrate that there is no one-size-fits-all approach to effectively expanding space and changing policy, but that the configurations of conditions make the difference. This report provides an overview of how Oxfam and its partners have developed experience using multiple combinations of policy-influencing strategies that can successfully expand space and change policy.

## 7 APPENDICES

### 7.1 DESCRIPTION OF CASES

The tables below provide an overview of the cases included in the analysis of the two outcomes. Table 7.1: lists the 22 cases investigating expanding space and

Table 7.2: lists the 15 cases investigating changing policy respectively.

Table 7.3: and

Table 7.4: present the descriptive statistics for the 15 cases used in the analysis of changing policy.

Table 7.5: lists the excluded Effectiveness Reviews.

Table provides only an indicative selection of activities that correspond to the conditions from a sampling of successful cases.

**Table 7.1: List of cases in the expanding space model**

Case	Title	Quality <sup>a</sup>	Duration <sup>b</sup>	Civic Space <sup>c</sup> <i>FH/CIV/OX</i>	Space <sup>d</sup>	Policy <sup>e</sup>	Pathways <sup>f</sup>
Afghanistan A	Rights in Crisis Campaign Afghanistan	3	3	N / R / T	0.25	0.00	
Afghanistan B	National Solidarity Programme III	4	13	N / R / T	1.00	NA	S1
Africa	Promoting Women's Rights Across Africa	3	5	NA	1.00	1.00	S1, S3
Albania	Local Partnership for Rural Development in Albania	3	3	P / N / NA	0.75	0.25	S1
Bolivia A	Citizen Voice in Bolivia	4	5	P / N / NA	1.00	0.75	S1, S2
Bolivia B	Influencing of Policy and Public Management Programme	2	NA	P / N / NA	0.75	1.00	S2
Chile & Latin America	Increasing Women's Political Participation	3	5	F / N / NA	0.75	0.25	S1, S2
England	Routes to Solidarity	4	3	F / N / NA	1.00	0.75	S3
Ethiopia	African Climate Change and Resilience Alliance (ACCRA)	2	5	N / C / NA	0.75	0.00	S1
Georgia	Effective Civil Society Development	3	3	P / N / NA	0.25	0.75	
Ghana	Towards Free Universal Health Care in Ghana	4	3	F / N / NA	0.75	0.25	S1
Lebanon	Women's Access to Justice	3	6	P / Ob / NA	0.00	NA	
Liberia	Raising Poor and Marginalized Women's Voices in Liberia	4	5	P / R / NA	0.75	NA	S3
Myanmar	Building Equitable and Resilient Livelihoods in the Dry Zone	4	3	N / R / T	1.00	NA	S4
Philippines	Enhancing Access and Control to Sustainable Livelihood Assets	2	6	P / Ob / NA	0.25	NA	
Russia	Advocacy and Campaigning on Climate Change	3	5	N / R / NA	0.75	NA	S3
Scotland	Beyond the Horizon	3	3	F / N / NA	0.25	0.25	
Sierra Leone	Strengthening and Linking Women-Led Efforts	2	3	F / Ob / NA	0.25	NA	

South Africa	South Africa Climate Change Advocacy Programme	3	3	F / N / NA	0.75	0.25	S1, S2
Tajikistan	Women Smallholder Farmer Advocacy campaign	4	4	N / R / NA	0.75	NA	S3
Tanzania	Enhancing Effectiveness Through Evidence-based Learning	1	5	P / Ob / NA	0.75	1.00	S1, S2
Viet Nam	Participatory Poverty Monitoring	2	6	N / C / T	0.00	NA	

Notes. **a:** The quality of the data and inferences of the Effectiveness Review with regard to the outcome analysed in this report graded on a 4-point scale (higher is better). **b:** This is the duration of the policy-influencing activities in years. This duration is imprecise because Oxfam often has previous experience working with local partners prior to the analysed policy-influencing activities. **c:** This provides the rating of the civic space in the given country. The first number is the rating from the Freedom in the World index, which ranges from Free (F), to Partially Free (PF), to Not Free (N) and it is taken from the last year of the influencing activities for all countries, it has the broadest coverage in terms of years and countries. The second rating (CIV) is from the CIVICUS Monitor from 2017 and ranges from Open (O), to Narrowed (N), to Obstructed (Ob), to Repressed (R), and finally to Closed (C). The third rating under Civic Space is Oxfam's own programmatic rating of the countries and is only available for specific countries in 2016 and does not necessarily use comparable methods to evaluate each country, the Oxfam rating ranges from Opening Up (O), to Under Observation (O), to Transitional (T), to Crisis (C). **d:** Space stands for the expanding space outcome and ranges from 1 (fully in the set of successful cases), to 0.75 (partially in the set), to 0.25 (partially out of the set), to 0.00 (fully out of the set). **e:** Policy stands for the changing policy outcome and has the same calibration as expanding space. **e:** The four solution pathways for successfully expanding space are labelled as S1, S2, S3 and S4. A case may be a member of multiple pathways.

**Table 7.2: List of cases in the changing policy model**

Case	Title	Quality <sup>a</sup>	Duration <sup>b</sup>	Civic Space <sup>c</sup> <i>FH/CIV/OX</i>	Space <sup>d</sup>	Policy <sup>e</sup>	Pathways <sup>f</sup>
Afghanistan A	Rights in Crisis Campaign Afghanistan	3	3	N / R / T	0.25	0.00	
Africa	Promoting Women's Rights Across Africa	3	5	NA	1.00	1.00	
Albania	Local Partnership for Rural Development in Albania	3	3	P / N / NA	0.75	0.25	
Bolivia A	Citizen Voice in Bolivia	4	5	P / N / NA	1.00	0.75	P1, P2
Bolivia B	Influencing of Policy and Public Management Programme	2	NA	P / N / NA	0.75	1.00	P1
Chile & Latin America	Increasing Women's Political Participation	3	5	F / N / NA	0.75	0.25	[P1] <sup>17</sup>
England	Routes to Solidarity	3	3	F / N / NA	1.00	0.75	P2
Ethiopia	African Climate Change and Resilience Alliance (ACCRA)	3	5	N / C / NA	0.75	0.00	
Georgia	Effective Civil Society Development	2	3	P / N / NA	0.25	0.75	
Ghana	Towards Free Universal Health Care in Ghana	4	3	F / N / NA	0.75	0.25	
Scotland	Beyond the Horizon	4	3	F / N / NA	0.25	0.25	
South Africa	South Africa Climate Change Advocacy Programme	4	3	F / N / NA	0.75	0.25	
Tanzania	Enhancing Effectiveness Through Evidence-based Learning	3	5	P / Ob / NA	0.75	1.00	P1
West Africa	GROW campaign	3	5	NA	NA	0.75	
Zambia	Citizen Voice in Zambia	4	5	P / Ob / NA	NA	0.75	P1

Notes. **a:** The quality of the data and inferences of the Effectiveness Review with regard to the outcome analysed in this report graded on a 4-point scale (higher is better). **b:** This is the duration of the policy-influencing activities in years. This duration is imprecise because Oxfam often has previous experience working with local partners prior to the analysed policy-influencing activities. **c:** This provides the rating of the civic space in the given country. The first number (FH) is the rating from the Freedom in the World index which ranges from Free (F), to Partially Free (PF), to Not Free (N) and it is taken from the last year of the influencing activities for all countries, it has the broadest coverage in terms of years and countries. The second rating (CIV) is from the CIVICUS Monitor from 2017 and ranges from Open (O), to Narrowed (N), to Obstructed (Ob), to Repressed (R), and finally to Closed (C). The third rating (OX) under Civic Space is Oxfam's own programmatic rating of the countries and is only available for specific countries in 2016 and does not necessarily use comparable methods to evaluate each country, the Oxfam rating ranges from Opening Up (O), to Under Observation (O), to Transitional (T), to Crisis (C). **d:** Space stands for the expanding space outcome and ranges from 1 (fully in the set of successful cases), to 0.75 (partially in the set), to 0.25 (partially out of the set), to 0.00 (fully out of the set). **e:** Policy stands for the changing policy outcome and has the same calibration as expanding space. **f:** The two pathways for successfully changing policy are labelled P1 and P2. A case may be a member of multiple pathways.



**Table 7.3: Descriptive statistics of cases for expanding space**

Conditions	N	mean	sd	min	max
Space	22	0.625	0.334	0	1
Insider	22	0.750	0.299	0	1
Outsider	22	0.489	0.304	0	1
Oxfam	22	0.625	0.334	0	1
Levels	22	0.364	0.492	0	1
Opportunity	22	0.455	0.391	0	1

**Table 7.4: Descriptive statistics of cases for changing policy**

Conditions	N	mean	sd	min	max
Policy	15	0.533	0.364	0	1
Insider	15	0.883	0.208	0.250	1
Outsider	15	0.400	0.311	0	1
Oxfam	15	0.583	0.374	0	1
Levels	15	0.400	0.507	0	1
Opportunity	15	0.650	0.311	0	1

**Table 7.5: Excluded Effectiveness Reviews**

Location	Title
Bangladesh	Effectiveness Review: We Can Campaign, Bangladesh, Effectiveness Reviews Series 2011/12, Oxfam GB, October 2012
Bangladesh	Bangladesh – Diversity and Indigenous Peoples Leadership Project – Not Published – will be published as a paper rather than an Effectiveness Review due to data limitations
Ethiopia	Livelihoods in Ethiopia: Impact Evaluation of Linking Smallholder Coffee Producers to Sustainable Markets, Effectiveness Reviews Series 2014/15, Oxfam GB, November 2015
Global	Oxfam Publishing Team – iLibrary and Policy & Practice Website – Not Published – can be shared
Haiti	Effectiveness Review: Support to Coffee Farmers, Northern Haiti Effectiveness Reviews Series 2011/12, Oxfam GB, January 2013
Yemen	Effectiveness Review: Safe Age of Marriage and Women's Economic Empowerment, Yemen. Effectiveness Review Series 2013/14, Oxfam GB, November 2014

Notes: All of these Effectiveness Reviews were excluded because they lacked explicitly evaluated outcomes on either expanding space or changing policy.

**Table 7.6: Additional indicative examples of influencing activities in successful cases**

Condition	Indicative Examples from Successful Cases
<i>Insider</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify parliamentary allies at the beginning of the campaign and encourage them to make their support public (through pledges or media). (Health, Zambia, Policy)</li> <li>Bring aspiring politicians and their constituents together to discuss the topic. (Health, Zambia, Policy)</li> <li>Identify and make use of existing relationships with target actors: e.g. public officials whose decisions are responsible for the legal and policy framework at all levels and administrative levels. (Public Administration Reform, Bolivia, Policy)</li> <li>Invite local officials to a series of workshops about budgetary responsibilities and operating procedures for Autonomous Municipalities. (Public Administration Reform, Bolivia, Policy)</li> <li>Provide technical assistance to officials regarding proposed legislation about social auditing at the municipal and national levels. (Public Administration Reform, Bolivia, Policy)</li> <li>Share and exchange perspective on social auditing through a series of meetings organized by the government's Commission for the Elaboration of Proposed Autonomous By-Laws. (Public Administration Reform, Bolivia, Policy)</li> </ul>

<i>Outsider</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leverage a wide network of partners and other stakeholders to put pressure on policymakers, including international and regional NGOs, research institutions, leading experts. (Climate Change, Russia, Space)</li> <li>• Mobilize leading environmental, farming/agriculture organizations and activists in Russia to promote climate change and food security issues among the public. (Climate Change, Russia, Space)</li> <li>• Build strong and viable membership organizations capable of mobilizing community members to lobby policymakers. The project developed membership organizations in 64 villages. Take action and provide services that should be the responsibility of the government to create pressure and raise awareness about the lack of government action. (Climate Resilience, Myanmar, Space)</li> <li>• Conduct a sit-in at a minister's office and issue press releases to raise awareness of a lack of action. (Gender, Liberia, Space)</li> <li>• Conduct a travelling event to raise awareness, garner media attention and create pressure – especially if such an event encourages citizens to highlight shortcomings of the current policy regime. (Gender, Africa (regional), Space &amp; Policy)</li> </ul>
<i>Oxfam</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coalition of ca. 14 domestic CSOs are engaged, and policymakers refer to those that are also their constituents (which, in all countries outside of England, would exclude Oxfam). This provides an example of moving Oxfam's role somewhat to the periphery. (Health, Zambia, Policy)</li> <li>• In England, Oxfam brought black and minority women and organizations together for a training that encouraged them to plan their own policy influence agenda and then deliberately stepped back to provide a behind-the-scenes supporting role that women considered to be empowering. The result was strengthened policy influencing at local levels. (Gender and Minority Issues, England, Policy)</li> </ul>
<i>Opportunity</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• South Africa's Conference of Parties' (COP) 17 Presidency created an opportunity and Oxfam adjusted its strategy in South Africa during late 2010 to take advantage of this window of opportunity through to the end of 2011. However, the numerous events in and around the COP may crowd out the contributions of Oxfam. (Climate, S. Africa, Space)</li> <li>• In Chile raising the issue of the representation of women in parliament – and the importance of key gender issues – took advantage of both a local and national election cycles. While elections often create a window of opportunity, the salience of the opportunity was greater than normal in this case because the policy issue being addressed was the need for a more equitable representation of women in politics. Furthermore, support for the work of Corporación Humana (the domestic partner of Oxfam) presented a unique opportunity given its stature within government circles, due in part to its regular publication of The Parliamentary Observatory. (Gender, Chile, Space)</li> </ul>

## 7.2 TRUTH TABLES

The following presents the truth tables for expanding space (Table 7.7:) and changing policy (

Table 10.8).

**Table 7.7: Truth table for expanding space**

Insider	Outsider	Oxfam	Levels	Opportunity	Number	Space	Raw consist.	PRI consist.	SYM consist.
1	0	1	0	0	3	0	0.562500	0.125000	0.125000
1	1	1	1	0	2	1	1.000000	1.000000	1.000000
1	1	1	0	0	2	0	0.615385	0.166667	0.166667
1	1	0	0	1	2	1	1.000000	1.000000	1.000000
1	0	1	0	1	2	1	1.000000	1.000000	1.000000
1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1.000000	1.000000	1.000000
1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1.000000	1.000000	1.000000
1	1	0	1	0	1	1	1.000000	1.000000	1.000000
1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1.000000	1.000000	1.000000
1	0	1	1	0	1	0	0.555556	0.333333	0.333333
1	0	0	1	1	1	1	1.000000	1.000000	1.000000
1	0	0	0	1	1	1	1.000000	1.000000	1.000000
0	1	1	0	0	1	1	0.875000	0.750000	0.750000
0	1	0	1	0	1	1	1.000000	1.000000	1.000000
0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1.000000	1.000000	1.000000
0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0.571429	0.000000	0.000000
1	1	0	1	1	0				
1	1	0	0	0	0				
1	0	0	1	0	0				
1	0	0	0	0	0				
0	1	1	1	1	0				
0	1	1	1	0	0				
0	1	1	0	1	0				
0	1	0	1	1	0				
0	1	0	0	1	0				
0	1	0	0	0	0				
0	0	1	1	1	0				

0	0	1	1	0	0
0	0	1	0	1	0
0	0	1	0	0	0
0	0	0	1	1	0
0	0	0	1	0	0

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**Table 10.8: Truth table for changing policy**

Insider	Outsider	Oxfam	Levels	Opportunity	Number	Policy	Raw consist.	PRI consist.	SYM consist.
1	0	1	0	0	3	0	0.545455	0.285714	0.285714
1	1	1	1	1	2	0	0.750000	0.666667	0.666667
1	0	1	1	1	2	0	0.666667	0.571429	0.571429
1	0	0	1	1	2	1	1.000000	1.000000	1.000000
1	0	0	0	1	2	1	0.800000	0.500000	0.500000
1	1	0	0	1	1	1	1.000000	1.000000	1.000000
1	1	0	0	0	1	1	0.875000	0.666667	0.666667
1	0	1	0	1	1	0	0.750000	0.000000	0.000000
0	1	1	0	1	1	0	0.600000	0.000000	0.000000
1	1	1	1	0	0				
1	1	1	0	1	0				
1	1	1	0	0	0				
1	1	0	1	1	0				
1	1	0	1	0	0				
1	0	1	1	0	0				
1	0	0	1	0	0				
1	0	0	0	0	0				
0	1	1	1	1	0				
0	1	1	1	0	0				
0	1	1	0	0	0				
0	1	0	1	1	0				
0	1	0	1	0	0				
0	1	0	0	1	0				
0	1	0	0	0	0				
0	0	1	1	1	0				
0	0	1	1	0	0				
0	0	1	0	1	0				
0	0	1	0	0	0				
0	0	0	1	1	0				
0	0	0	1	0	0				
0	0	0	1	1	0				
0	0	0	1	0	0				
0	0	0	0	1	0				
0	0	0	0	1	0				
0	0	0	0	0	0				



## 7.3 OUTCOME CONDITIONS CODING/CALIBRATION

### 7.3.1 Outcome 1: Expanding Civic Space

This is the set of cases that *explicitly* focuses on an outcome related to the overall influencing actions' contribution to the access, use, or expansion of spaces in which civil society organizations and citizens can have their voices heard on policy topics. We give cases higher set-membership scores based on how stable and lasting the spaces are. However, the effects of the use of the space are not included in the calibration in order to keep this outcome separate from the policy outcome below.

### 7.3.2 Outcome 2: Changing Policy

This is the set of cases that *explicitly* focuses on an outcome related to the overall influencing actions' contribution to a change in programmes, policies, or procedures of the government, public officials, or politicians/parties at any level (including supranational). Changes can apply to any policy stage after the creation of a policy (including rules and regulations) extending to changes in implementation procedures of those changes that are institutional. However, this does not include early stages of declared intention or agenda setting. In addition, the success of a case was decreased if the initial effort focused on changing one particular policy but then the Effectiveness Review reported on a different policy without a strong argument for the shift.

We coded both outcomes with the following calibration:

- 1.00: Definitely successful
- 0.75: Somewhat successful
- 0.25: Somewhat unsuccessful
- 0.00: Definitely unsuccessful

## 7.4 EXPLANATORY CONDITIONS CODING/CALIBRATION

### 7.4.1 Explanatory A: Influencing Through Insider Strategies (Insider)

This is the set of cases in which Oxfam and/or its domestic CSO partners use collaborative influencing strategies towards targeted government officials and/or politicians related to the outcome of interest. 1.0: Influencing uses insider strategies to prominently engage members of the target government or political parties using a collaborative and persuasive approach. 0.75: Influencing uses insider strategies to engage members of the target government or political parties using a collaborative and persuasive approach, but the efforts are less

prominent, less collaborative in tone and/or less persuasive in nature than those cases coded as 1. 0.25: There is a minor or tangential mention of an insider strategy towards the target government or political parties, but it is tangential, not persuasive, and/or not collaborative. 0.00: There is no evident insider strategy towards the target government or political parties.

## **7.4.2 Explanatory B: Influencing Through Outsider Strategies**

This is the set of cases in which the influencing actions reflect strategies to put pressure on targeted government officials and/or politicians related to the outcome of interest, for example by mobilizing marginalized groups through protests/public campaigns or by publicly exposing government failure, e.g. through the media. Such strategies do not involve developing allies or social capital within the political arena. 1.00: Influencing prominently makes use of outsider strategies, e.g. by mobilizing the public, civil society, and/or the media to create pressure on target policymakers by highlighting the flaws or shortcomings of the current government's or political parties' policies and practice. The outsider strategy uses a contentious, critical, and/or antagonistic tone. The strategy does not attempt to develop social capital or allies within the political arena. 0.75: Influencing prominently makes use of outsider strategies, e.g. by mobilizing the public, civil society, and/or the media to create pressure on target policymakers. The messaging highlights both challenges and opportunities using a more balanced tone compared to cases that are coded as 1. 0.25: A critical/confrontational/antagonistic influencing strategy is not evident, although there may be some small-scale efforts to apply pressure by mobilizing public support or through the media. 0.00: No notable activities make use of outsider strategies.

## **7.4.3 Explanatory C: Oxfam's Role**

This is the set of cases in which Oxfam plays a strong and active role in implementing the overall influencing actions. 1.00: Oxfam's plays a strong and active role on an equal or higher level with staff implementing in country (active). 0.75: Oxfam plays an active role but another organization is in the lead. 0.25: Oxfam provides advice and backstopping support that is primarily remote. 0.00: Project is primarily executed/implemented by others with minimal active engagement from Oxfam beyond initial planning / funding (passive).

## **7.4.4 Explanatory D: Policy Levels**

This is the set of cases in which the influencing actions targets more than one level of government, policy, or political space. Different levels include local, regional, national and international. 1.00: More than one level are the primary targets. 0.00: Primarily one level is addressed.

## **7.4.5 Explanatory E: Window of Opportunity**

This is the set of cases in which the influencing actions took strategic advantage of a window of opportunity. 1.00: A window of opportunity is noted in the Effectiveness Review and the effort takes strategic

advantage of it. 0.75: The Effectiveness Review notes a window of opportunity that the effort reacted to it, but not strategically. 0.25: The Effectiveness Review notes a window of opportunity but the implementing organizations do not align activities (or the action) to take advantage of it. 0.00: No apparent evidence for window of opportunity.

## 7.5 EFFECTIVENESS REVIEW AND CONTEXTUAL CONDITIONS CODING

### 7.5.1 Effectiveness Review Conditions

**Effectiveness Review quality:** The overall quality of the full Effectiveness Review in terms of its evaluation and documentation of the contribution of the influencing actions to the change in outcomes. The two dimensions we considered are the methods used and the strength of the justification for final conclusions. **Coding:** 4 = high quality Effectiveness Review with no concerns, 3 = quite high quality with small concerns, 2 = moderate quality concerns, 1 = large quality concerns.

**Effectiveness Review publication year:** The year that the Effectiveness Review was published on Oxfam's website. If the Effectiveness Review has not been published on the website yet, the year will be when the document was created. **Coding:** Year only.

**Name:** The name of the influencing actions/project as presented in the ER Effectiveness Review title.

**Effectiveness Review stage:** The stage of the influencing actions that are under review. **Coding:** This will be coded as Midline, Endline or Follow-up. Midline will be for any reviews that are conducted before the influencing actions are concluded. Endline will be for Effectiveness Reviews conducted at the end (or near end) of the influencing actions as part of a final evaluation. Follow-up will be coded for Effectiveness Reviews conducted at least six months after the end of the supported influencing actions.

### 7.5.2 Context of Influencing Actions

**Country:** The primary country that the Effectiveness Review focused on. In some cases, the overall programme/project might span multiple countries while the evaluation focused on one context (for example the Chile and Latin America Effectiveness Review focused on Chile).

**Coding:** United Nations Geoscheme framework.

**Continent:** The continent in which the influencing actions predominantly takes place. **Coding:** United Nations Geoscheme framework.

**Influencing Actions' Duration:** The years of the action covered in the Effectiveness Reviews. **Coding:** Start and end year, and duration.

**Primary Thematic Policy Area:** The thematic area of policy that the action is primarily targeting. **Coding:** Inductive coding and possible

aggregation into categories (e.g. health, gender, governance, environment).

**Enabling Environment/Civic space:** The degree to which the primary country of the influencing actions provides an enabling environment for civil society actions. **Coding:** We used several proxies to provide a sense, albeit limited, of how restricted the civic space in the countries in which the cases of policy influencing took place. The primary purpose of these proxies is to provide some context regarding the relative degree of civic space – more or less restrictive – among the countries analysed as this is important to understand what types and combinations of influencing strategies work in different contexts. The first of the three proxy sources that we used was the Freedom in the World index. This covers the political and civic freedoms in all countries and all years in our data (Freedom House, 2006–2017). We used the highest level of aggregation for this index which spans from Free, Partially Free, to Not Free. The index was used because it has the best coverage of countries and years, is the most widely used of the three indices, and has been cited in Oxfam’s own documents as a supplementary resource for determining civic space (along with Oxfam’s own rating and CIVICUS). The data from this first proxy were always taken from the final year of the influencing actions so that we could ensure that the description was as relevant as possible to the case. However, the Freedom House index has been subject to some criticisms including the lack of sensitivity of its 3-point aggregated scale, the broad array of interrelated concepts that are incorporated, the equal weighting of political and civil liberties, a bias in favour of liberal democratic ideals, and the sense that it provides a static rating rather than a dynamic rating that could capture how civic space is changing (Foweraker & Krznaric, 2000; Munck & Verkuilen, 2002). Because of these limitations, we also used two other proxies. The second proxy source was the CIVICUS Monitor for 2017, which is dynamically updated and ranks countries from Open, to Narrowed, to Obstructed, to Repressed, and finally to Closed (CIVICUS, 2017). The most recent year was used because there is no consistent time-series data covering the years in our data. Finally, we referred to Oxfam’s own recent programmatic rating of countries in 2016, although it covers only three countries, and not all years, in our data. The Oxfam ranking ranges from Opening Up, to Under Observation, to Transitional, to Crisis (Oxfam, 2016) and is therefore more dynamic in nature than the Freedom in the World index. However, Oxfam has noted that its internal rating is designed as a programmatic planning tool to be used within countries and thus is not necessarily comparable between countries. None of these provides a perfect solution to classifying the complex concept of how open or restrictive the civic space is and all have limitations; however, overall they tend to correlate with each other and thus provide a helpful, albeit limited, contextual proxy for understanding how one case in our study might compare to another in terms of civic space – for example those in the bottom or top half of one ranking will almost always be in the bottom or top half of the others. Finally, the reader should bear in mind that this contextual condition is not one of our report’s explanatory conditions and therefore a less precise set of proxies is acceptable. Our report’s narrative reflects on any notable patterns that distinguish between more or less restrictive contexts when there is additional data to support such reflections. A detailed breakdown of the civic space for each case and country using the three proxies can be found in Table 7.1: and

Table 7.2: above.

**Women's Organization:** Whether or not the influencing actions involve a partner organization that is focused on women's rights, women's issues, or gender sufficiently at a local level and is mentioned explicitly in the Effectiveness Review. **Coding:** This is coded as 1 if it is explicitly included and mentioned and 0 if not. This is a simplified indicator to capture the gender dimension of Oxfam's work. In particular it is proxy for the involvement of Women's Rights Organizations which Oxfam defines as 'A women's rights organization is one that actively recognizes and works to address gender inequality for the realization of gender justice and women's rights. A women's rights organization is not "just" working on women's issues.' In many Effectiveness Review summaries, it is not made explicit if such an organization is a partner. See also the RBH strategy #6 (RBH Conceptual Framework, p. 5).

## 7.6 LINKING CONDITIONS TO OXFAM'S FRAMEWORKS

The following table maps our report's outcome and explanatory conditions to concepts within the RBH framework.

**Table 7.9: Conditions Mapped to Oxfam Terminology**

Condition	RBH/Oxfam Terminology or Connection
<i>O1 Space</i>	Generic Outcome 2: Poor and marginalized people maintain and/or increase their engagement (power to and power over) with duty-bearers (RBH Conceptual Framework). RBH strategic objective to 'increase [poor and marginalized people's] voice' and the approach of 'public decision- and policy-making spaces' (Hopkins, et al., 2014, pp. 8–9).
<i>O2 Policy</i>	Generic Outcome 1: Policies, practices and mechanisms of duty-bearers (government/private sector/international institutions) have changed in favour of poor and marginalized people and/or negative change has been averted (RBH Conceptual Framework). RBH strategic objective of 'more responsiveness from governments' (Hopkins, et al., 2014, p. 8).
<i>E1 Insider</i>	Oxfam Strategy #2: One of the primary strategies used is 'Engaging with duty-bearers to develop their capacity to be transparent, accountable and engage with civil society and citizens' (RBH Conceptual Framework).
<i>E2 Outsider<sup>18</sup></i>	Oxfam Strategy #1: One of the primary strategies used is 'Global and regional advocacy and campaigning in cooperation with (I)NGOs, movements, trade unions, etc.' (RBH Conceptual Framework). Note: We added the theoretical dimension of antagonism to this as well.
<i>E3 Oxfam</i>	This condition relates to Oxfam's overall goal to work through partnerships and in support of local civil society and raising their voices and empowering them to take the lead. 'Oxfam seeks to support partners and allies in their efforts to strengthen civil society because they have primary legitimacy in their own countries and because we believe that this will have most impact in terms of promoting sustainable change.' (Oxfam, 2014, p. 3). This also links to the 'debate about the role of Oxfam in influencing in Southern countries' (Oxfam, 2014, p. 7).

<i>E4 Levels</i>	The importance of having national and local influencing strategies and not only global strategies is noted in Oxfam's National Influencing Guidelines (Oxfam, 2014, p. 7). Also Oxfam has a 'unique added value [...] as an international actor with presence at all levels' (Oxfam, 2014, p. 8). Finally, Oxfam's recognition of the importance of 'local institutions' and 'decentralization processes' (Hopkins, et al., 2014, p. 12).
<i>E5 Opportunity</i>	Oxfam's influencing risk management tool prompts writing out the Objective/Opportunity for the influencing actions (Oxfam, 2014, p. 46) and the recognition of elections as window of opportunity (Hopkins, et al., 2014, p. 79).

## 7.7 EXCLUDED EXPLANATORY CONDITIONS

Many additional explanatory conditions were considered but not included, primarily due to one of the following three reasons: (1) there was insufficient coverage and variation in the Effectiveness Review; (2) the proposed condition had conceptual overlap with other conditions; (3) there was a comparatively weak theoretical argument for the inclusion of the condition. A list of other explanatory conditions considered can be found in

Table 7.5:.

**Table 7.10: Other explanatory conditions that were considered but excluded**

Condition	Explanation
<i>Opposition Party</i>	If the case targeted the opposition party or not. This outcome was not reported in many cases (low coverage) and was correlated with the insider strategy.
<i>Oxfam Strategy #1 Campaign</i>	The concept did not have much variance across cases and correlated with an outsider strategy.
<i>Oxfam Strategy #2 Engage</i>	This was re-conceptualized as the insider strategy mentioned above.
<i>Oxfam Strategy #3 Evidenced Based Policy</i>	The use of research/evidence to influence policy has strong potential impact on the outcomes. Yet this was not included because it was used by almost all cases without much variance.
<i>Oxfam Strategy #4 &amp; #5 Networks and Collaboration</i>	The idea of working through networks of organizations or enhancing collaboration between organizations overlapped conceptually. As such, we attempted to collapse them into a single operationalized concept of whether or not there were multiple organizations involved. However, we determined that the primary theoretical arguments for multiple organizations is that they can make use of both an insider and outsider strategy (conditions we already had) and that they have a stronger voice (which correlated with the outsider strategy).
<i>Oxfam Strategy #6 Women and Youth</i>	The strategy of supporting women and young people was more descriptive and in the cases correlated more closely with the domain of policy than other conditions and thus was more of a subset of the total cases and not a strong candidate for an explanatory condition. Instead, we conducted contextual coding of the domain of policy and whether or not an organization that focused on women's/gender issues was involved as a partner.
<i>Oxfam Strategy #7 &amp; #8 Capacity and Confidence</i>	These strategies focus on an earlier stage in the policy process – that of increasing the skills and confidence of actors to address a policy area including risk management. While these are important stages in the policy process, they lack variance in the Oxfam cases, correlate with the insider and/or outsider strategies depending on who is trained, and – related to the variance point – were correlated with the type of Effectiveness Review (for example, all large-N studies had capacity building).
<i>Sufficient Resources</i>	Whether the case had sufficient funding and time to carry out the influencing actions was also considered. However, Effectiveness Reviews did not consistently report on this, and using the raw budget as a proxy would not capture whether or not there were sufficient resources considering the context or stage. For example, a policy in a smaller country or one on the brink of changing would need fewer resources than one in a large country or in its infancy. This did not emerge as a particularly important qualitative theme across cases.
<i>Enabling Environment</i>	Our analysis sought to use explanatory variables that would not necessarily be linked to the country in which the influencing actions took place – so that they could provide more generalizable insights for Oxfam. This variable would be linked directly to the country's political context and would not fulfil that criteria. As such, we operationalized this as civic space and used it as a contextual condition as described above.
<i>Policy Theme</i>	The topic that is being addressed is more descriptive than explanatory, especially if we hope to generate insights that are more generally applicable. As such, the policy theme was coded as a contextual condition.



*Policy Complexity*

While it is a truism that a policy that is harder to change might be less likely to change, it is extremely difficult to determine what policy is 'complex' and what policy is 'simple'. Doing so with only the Effectiveness Reviews made this difficult task even harder. While we agree with the theoretical importance of this condition, we did not identify a reliable proxy for coding it.

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## 7.8 META-REVIEW PROCESS

Table 7.11: provides an overview of the phases of this meta-review.

**Table 7.11: Meta-Review Process**

Step	Description	Complete	Notes
<i>Phase 1 Calibration Drafting</i>	One pair (CR & AE) created draft calibration for half of the conditions. Another pair (JM & DS) created the other half.	YES	Some conditions significantly revised or dropped such as the public outreach condition, which was dropped due to its correlation with outsider strategies.
<i>Phase 2 Calibration Validation</i>	Pairs exchanged conditions and applied calibrations to new cases to test the calibration. Revisions were made within each pair and then with both pairs.	YES	Oxfam's contribution was removed from the outcome conditions because Oxfam's role was better situated as an explanatory condition. For contribution, outcomes consider contribution of the overall influencing actions.
<i>Phase 3 Calibration External Validation</i>	The calibration directions were given to Oxfam to test on one case (Liberia) that had already been coded by one pair (CR & AE). Completed by RM.	YES	Overall agreement was sound. Clarifications were provided over the phone and in writing. Adjustments to the coding were made. <sup>19</sup>
<i>Phase 4a Coding Outcome &amp; Explanatory Conditions</i>	Final coding of all Effectiveness Reviews <sup>20</sup> was conducted for quality, outcome conditions, and explanatory conditions using full Effectiveness Reviews (DS & AE).	YES	Coding was done separately and then compared. All discrepancies were discussed until agreement was reached. Agreement was easily reached.
<i>Phase 4b Coding Contextual Conditions</i>	Final coding of all Effectiveness Reviews was conducted for contextual conditions by JM and checked by AE and DS.	YES	Contextual conditions were defined, coding was completed, and we prioritized conditions that were of interest to Oxfam. This was not completed until after the first fsQCA analysis had been run.
<i>Phase 5 fsQCA analysis</i>	The modelling and analysis was conducted in July and then re-run after revisions in September. The preliminary analysis was shared with Oxfam and feedback received.	YES	Initially we did not plan for a second run of the analysis. However, after refining the definition for the first two explanatory conditions we checked all the coding with the new definitions and re-ran analysis, but this did not alter the pathways because the two definitions were almost perfectly correlated in the cases.
<i>Phase 6 Report Writing</i>	A draft final report was provided to Oxfam on 5 October for feedback. The final report was delivered 27 October.	YES	Additional indices for measuring civic space were added at the request of Oxfam (CIVICUS Monitor and Oxfam's own). Other changes were organizational.

Note: AE: Anne Ellersiek; CH: Claire Hutchings; CR: Christian Rupietta; DS: Daniel Shephard; JM: Johannes Meuer; RM: Ruth Mayne.

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# NOTES

1 Thirteen Effectiveness Reviews included outcomes related to expanding civic space and changing policies.

2 Empirical evidence suggests that most changes are small or large – there are very few medium sized changes (Baumgartner et al., 2009; Baumgartner & Jones, 2010)

3 For consistency, we refer to all of these documents assessing the work of Oxfam as Effectiveness Reviews.

4 Lists of cases of expanding civic space, changing policy, and excluded Effectiveness Reviews can be found in the Appendix (Table 7.1;

Table 7.2; and

Table 7.5:)

5 A necessary condition means that an outcome can only occur if a specific attribute of the condition is present. A sufficient condition means that the outcome will always occur if a specific attribute of the condition is present (Fiss, 2007).

6 However, mixed-method approaches, for example combining QCA with process-tracing or statistical analysis, are rapidly developing and may soon provide new opportunities for better understanding the role of temporal orders among conditions (Meuer & Rupietta, 2017a, 2017b; Schneider & Rohlfing, 2013).

7 Because of theoretical parsimony and the available cases, this report only evaluated spaces for influencing political or government entities and not spaces to influence the policies of the private sector or the third sector.

8 Oxfam and its partners may continue with a second cycle of a project or may continue to partner through different projects. Therefore, this classification does not imply that Oxfam has stopped partnering in a given context, but only represents the relative timing of the Effectiveness Review and the activities it is reviewing.

9 All but two cases focused on a particular country. The two other cases focused on influencing action in the African Union and West Africa.

10 These proxies and their limitations are described in more detail in the Appendix (see section 7.5 Effectiveness Review and Contextual Conditions Coding).

11 A condition is absent for a case if the membership score of the case is below 0.50. A condition is present for a case if the membership score of the case is above 0.50.

12 The truth tables are in the Appendix in Table 7.7: for expanding civic space and

Table 10.8 for changing policy.

13 The successful expansion of civic space does not guarantee a change in policy. In some cases, Oxfam's activity led to the successful expansion of civic space, but not to a change in policy. The inverse is also true; in other cases a change in policy came about through the actions of those who already had access to the decision-making space – indeed, the changes sought can be undertaken without any input from the civil society actors involved because of policymakers' independent interest in changing the policy.

14 It is worth noting that the Effectiveness Reviews that report the cases that constitute this pathway have a lower quality score than the other pathways.

15 Interestingly, the less prominent role of Oxfam was also illustrated by the successful policy influencing case in England despite the fact that Oxfam was founded in England. Perhaps this is because the successful policy influencing took place at a local and subnational level in the England case (e.g. in Leeds) and thus Oxfam did not represent those local needs. It is also possible that Oxfam's brand is now primarily international.

16 The first pathway representing the Localized-Insider-Opportunity also includes cases of successfully changing gender-related policies.

17 This case is in pathway 1, but the case itself was not successful. One of the strengths of using QCA is that we can transparently adjust the consistency threshold to allow for different percentages of non-conforming cases. This ensures that insights can be derived even where there are a few outliers.

18 The possibility that a case can use both an insider and outsider strategy is linked to the strength of coalitions and so this possible combination connects with Oxfam's 4th and 5th strategies.

19 We revised the coding for the insider and outsider strategies explanatory variable again in August and September 2017 after we shared the draft results with Oxfam. These later revisions clarified conceptual issues, but did not alter the identified pathways in any substantive manner.

20 For simplicity, we refer to all of the Oxfam evaluation reviews and reports as Effectiveness Reviews.



## Oxfam Research Reports

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## OXFAM

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