



OXFAM SUSTAINABLE LIVELIHOODS GRANT SCHEME 2009-2011 GUIDELINES/CRITERIA & NOTES FOR APPLICANTS

Oxfam has supported a number of pilots focusing on Sustainable Livelihoods throughout the UK. These have sought to improve understanding of poverty and disadvantage, and to increase the effectiveness of anti-poverty measures. Oxfam now wishes to offer opportunities to Welsh Communities to incorporate this approach into their work.

We are looking for a range of projects which can utilise the Sustainable Livelihoods approach to enhance activities aimed at supporting local communities to reduce poverty and disadvantage.

For web version: We provide an explanation of what we mean by the Sustainable Livelihoods approach here: [\(link\)](#)

For text version: We provide an explanation of what we mean by the Sustainable Livelihoods approach at the end of this document.

Application guidelines

In order to apply for a grant it is essential that you clearly demonstrate that your project will do the following:

- incorporate the Sustainable Livelihoods approach to enhance impact for local people, better meeting the community or individual needs
- develop a more in-depth understanding and evidence of the way in which local people experience poverty, including the mechanisms and coping strategies individuals and communities use to get by and manage their poverty
- be accessible to the most vulnerable members of the community, addressing issues of diversity, taking into account the needs of different groups within your community, in particular the needs of men and women and the needs of minority groups.
- show how it will support participants to develop personal and common solutions to the issues identified, relating to their experiences of poverty.
- benefit communities in Wales.

In addition, successful projects will be required to attend two networking events and two training event (approximately 4 days –costs will be covered by Oxfam) during 2010 for the purposes of collaboration, and to share learning and experience with other practitioners. We will also use these events to debate the implications for wider anti-poverty policy.

When can you apply?

The closing date for applications is Friday 25th January 2010. Applications must be received in full with supporting information. The successful applicants will be informed by the first week of February.

How much can you apply for?

You can apply for any amount up to £25,000.

Grants of up to 100% may be awarded; however groups are encouraged to apply for part funding for their project and seek the additional funding they require from other sources. You must tell us in your proposal the status of any other funding, showing whether it is secure or not.

If your project will cost more than the amount you are asking for, it is important that you provide us with the breakdown and the contribution you require

Who can apply?

We are looking for community groups or voluntary organisations, which are committed to supporting growth, progression and development in residents – whether in a defined geographic community or a 'community of interest'. Oxfam particularly encourages applications from women's organisations, and from organisations representing ethnic minority communities, refugees and migrants.

Applicants will need to demonstrate that they have a track record of delivering high quality support and/or direct services to communities and are committed to promoting inclusion and participation.

Projects may be delivered in partnership, but one partner must adopt the lead partner role, and will be responsible for delivery of the project and financial management.

Exclusions:

We will not make grants for:

- the personal support of individuals in need
- building, buying or repairing buildings
- business development or job creation schemes
- general appeals
- providing care for people
- work which has already been done
- academic research
- work which we believe should be funded from statutory sources, or which has been in the recent past
- work outside Wales

What documents must you submit?

Organisations wishing to make an application for an Oxfam grant must send copies of:

- Your last three months bank statements
- A governing document / constitution

You must also demonstrate that they have:

- A bank account in the name of your group, which requires at least two unrelated people as signatures

And must be able to:

- spend the grant within one year of receipt, with all expenditure concluded by end March 2011 at the very latest.
- demonstrate your activity is legally charitable.

How to apply

Application form can be downloaded from the website or you can contact the Oxfam Cymru Cardiff Office for a hard copy and must be signed by a trustee or management committee officer.

We will also ask for two independent referees.

If you would like to discuss your application or require any extra support you can contact:

Maria Mesa Mmesa@oxfam.org.uk

Frances Thyer Fthyer@oxfam.org.uk

Telephone number: 0300 200 1269

Web: www.oxfam.org.uk/cymru

IF YOU RECEIVE A GRANT FROM OXFAM CYMRU

We will write to you explaining the terms and conditions of the grant and payments arrangements.

You will also receive guidance on how we would like you to report back on your progress during the life of your grant. One of the things we will ask you to think about as you develop your application is how you will judge whether your work has made a difference. So when you report back to us we want to hear about your assessment of the work you are undertaking, and about important milestones you have reached. We are also interested in learning about 'what works' and about what doesn't!

If unsuccessful feedback will be given on request. Decisions will be final and are not negotiable.

What is the Sustainable Livelihoods Approach?

The Sustainable Livelihoods Approach (SLA) is a method of understanding the experiences of people living in poverty and disadvantage. It is a participatory approach, which is based on the belief that people experiencing poverty have abilities and assets that can be used to help them manage and improve their lives. It has been used effectively in the southern hemisphere by international

development organisations and brought to the UK by Oxfam and others with international experience.

In the UK Oxfam has worked closely with a number of partner organisations and supported them to apply the approach in the UK in areas as diverse as Thornaby on Tees, the Peak District, South London, Govan Hill in Glasgow and Splott and Riverside in Cardiff. These projects have supported peer researchers to explore the lives of people living in their communities and then to turn the learning into action both in the community and in changing the policies that affect people's lives. They looked at how men and women, and different ethnic minority communities, are vulnerable, and build and use assets differently.

The projects gave the local organisations – some of who had been working in their areas for many years – new insights into the effect of poverty on people's lives. These insights challenged some of their own perceptions and understanding of residents' lives. It also ensured that the actions taken following the research were based on what local people identified as important and was based on what people could do rather than what they couldn't.

Poverty in Wales is often characterised as a combination of powerlessness and material deprivation, with the result that discussions about poverty do not consider the assets and positive strategies that people experiencing poverty employ to get by and overcome some of the obstacles in their lives. The Sustainable Livelihoods approach is different because it takes the strengths, capabilities and assets which people have available to them as its starting point rather than focussing on what people do not have.

The Sustainable Livelihoods Approach looks at people's existing assets and how they use them to build a sustainable livelihood. It looks at five key areas of people's lives which taken together give a rounded picture of their everyday reality.

- Human assets – education and skills, mental health, physical health
- Social assets – family and friends, relationships, voluntary work, involvement in community organisations and faith groups, business associations
- Public assets- statutory services, public transport, community buildings
- Financial assets – income from employment, benefits, access to financial services, pensions
- Physical assets – housing, access to vehicles, basic white goods, computers, the local environment (green spaces etc)

The approach uses the Livelihoods ladder to help identify how secure, long term and effective peoples strategies are for creating a sustainable livelihood. The livelihoods ladder has four stages;

- surviving,
- coping

- adapting
- accumulating

People can move along the ladder at different times in their lives. One key factor in determining where people are on the ladder is the extent to which a person's livelihood is able to withstand shocks - events and situations beyond the control of the individual, such as relationship breakdown, bereavement, loss of a job or the loss of key household goods such as a cooker.

People experiencing poverty have fewer buffers and are more vulnerable to such events and shocks. The aim of the approach is very much to explore how people can move on from having a survival strategy to a more sustainable livelihood and become more resilient to external events.

The Sustainable Livelihoods approach is people focussed and aims to work with individuals and households to consider their situation and support them to create a sustainable livelihood for them and their families. In addition to this there are some early pilots looking at using the approach to consider community assets and we are interested to find out how the approach would work in group settings.

The majority of the UK based projects have used the Sustainable Livelihoods Approach as a means of finding out personal information and supporting the individual or family to use this information to make the changes they see fit to improve their lives. In the case of some participants the approach has proved life changing and for some it has simply confirmed what they already knew and helped them manage difficult situations.

Oxfam believes the Sustainable Livelihoods approach has much to offer anti-poverty work in Wales. There are a range of national and local initiatives and projects (notably of course Communities First) which give Welsh communities opportunities to tackle the priorities and issues which concern them and we believe that the Sustainable Livelihoods approach can complement and enhance existing work in some areas because:

- It brings a reality and a human face to the experiences of people living in poverty, which can enrich and broaden the understanding of local circumstances and therefore our understanding of what the solutions might be.
- The more rounded picture provided by a Sustainable Livelihoods approach challenges many of the deeply held negative views about the individuals and families living in areas of greatest need. In particular it challenges the deeply held perceptions of many, that people experiencing poverty contribute little to society.

- Sustainable livelihoods approach is a useful tool in explaining how policy makers misunderstand poverty and consequently put in place unhelpful or counterproductive policies to deal with it. It can be used to develop more appropriate policy responses based on an understanding of the strategies and choices that people have to make to survive.
- Provides a clearer understanding that not everyone experiences poverty in the same way, people from different backgrounds, cultures and ethnic groups can experience poverty differently and use particular strategies to cope and survive.

Bydd Ddyngarol  **Oxfam**

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