



STATEMENT ON MODERN SLAVERY

Oxfam GB

FINANCIAL YEAR 2022/23

This is Oxfam GB's eighth annual statement under the UK Modern Slavery Act 2015, covering the reporting period April 2022–March 2023. The Act requires organizations with a turnover of more than £36m to make a public statement on steps being taken to identify and prevent modern slavery and human trafficking, covering direct operations, supply chain and business relationships.

SIGNED

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This statement can be accessed via our home page and downloaded from <https://www.oxfam.org.uk/about-us/plans-reports-and-policies/modern-slavery-act-statement/>

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FOREWORD

In this reporting period **we investigated but found no cases of modern slavery or human trafficking in our operations, supply chain or business relationships**. We recognize that this does not mean that we know beyond doubt that no harm was done.

Oxfam GB's mandate to reduce poverty and inequality means that we work in some of the most challenging contexts across the world. During the reporting year, it has been particularly shocking to see the extent to which the global context has contributed to increasing vulnerabilities to exploitation and abuse. In September 2022 global estimates of the prevalence of modern slavery and human trafficking were updated from 40 million to 50 million people.¹ This increase is likely to reflect some of the effects of the climate and biodiversity emergency, the COVID-19 pandemic and lockdown measures, and the war in Ukraine and the consequent cost of living crisis. In East Africa alone, 28 million people are facing extreme hunger.²

In May 2022 the numbers of people forcibly displaced from their homes and livelihoods were reported to have reached an unprecedented 100 million.³ This was accompanied by predictions that this number could rise to one billion people by 2050, due to the effects of climate change, biodiversity loss and social polarization.⁴ The majority of people who are forcibly displaced have done the least to contribute to the climate emergency. Racialized and marginalized groups (especially women and girls) are disproportionately affected by modern slavery and human trafficking.⁵ And part of what makes these extreme abuses so easy to hide in plain sight is a widespread lack of awareness and/or lack of willingness to proactively address abuses of power and wealth.

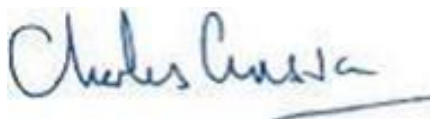
The International Organization for Migration states that securing people's migration status, so they can work in the place where they end up and access the support they need, decreases their vulnerability to being trafficked.⁶ In Oxfam's experience, this approach makes sense, alongside robust implementation of asylum law, tackling racism and our campaign which asks polluters to pay for loss and damage.⁷

Oxfam continues to work towards changing structures that fail to tackle discrimination and keep people living in poverty and more vulnerable to harm. International estimates indicate that the proceeds of human trafficking accrue disproportionately to higher-income countries. These countries are where more than half of all forced labour occurs.⁸ And since 86% of that forced labour is imposed by private actors,⁹ we continue to encourage companies to do good business¹⁰ and call for governments to level the playing field to require them to take steps to do no harm to people and planet and pay the full costs of doing business.¹¹ In August we outlined some alternative economic models for supporting a radically more equal, kinder, more sustainable and more feminist world in the present, while offering redress for historical damage and inequalities.¹²

This year we are committing to new three-year objectives. These are outlined in Table 1 and have been tightly defined to reflect the decisions that Oxfam GB can make while we continue our journey to improve how our global confederation works. We believe these objectives will take us further towards tackling modern slavery and human trafficking in ways that deliver our commitment to becoming a safe, feminist and anti-racist organisation and shape our approach to achieving climate justice.



Dhananjayan Sriskandarajah, CEO
Oxfam GB



Charles Gurassa, Chair of Trustees
Oxfam GB

1. ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE, BUSINESS AND SUPPLY CHAINS

Oxfam GB is one of 21 independent affiliates that, together with the international secretariat Oxfam International (OI), make up the Oxfam confederation. The descriptions of our organizational structure, business and supply chains and our intention to transform Oxfam GB to become part of a single global network comprising equitable and interdependent organizations have not altered since previous statements.¹³ We are prioritizing the shifting of power and resources to the Global South, and relevant updates are outlined in our Annual Report and Accounts.¹⁴ Our supply chain information remains similar to last year and an up-to-date list of our retail suppliers can be found in the same place online [here](#).

Previous statements have reported how Oxfam GB has carried out human rights due diligence¹⁵ by centring the person and the environment in which they live.¹⁶ We aim to integrate these considerations into everyday decisions, behaviours and performance measures across the organization and in our supply chain and business relationships. However, we recognize that going beyond the traditional compliance approach to address internal governance gaps¹⁷ continues to be a bold aim for many of the individuals who implement Oxfam's work.

2. HUMAN RIGHTS DUE DILIGENCE

OVERVIEW

Meeting our charitable objectives of preventing and relieving poverty requires us to address the systems of power that keep people in poverty. Our efforts to keep people safe, advocate for women's rights, tackle racism and inequality and fight poverty are closely interlinked.¹⁸

Oxfam stands alongside a growing number of other actors (businesses, investors, governments) calling for mandatory human rights and environmental due diligence (mHREDD).¹⁹ The aim is to ensure that companies, governments and the public sector take responsibility for the human and environmental impacts and costs of their activities.

Oxfam has been committed to implementing the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (UNGPs) since they were agreed in 2011. Then in 2019 the gendered dimensions of the UNGPs were outlined because:

'[W]omen and girls experience adverse impacts of business activities differently and often disproportionately. They also face additional barriers in seeking access to effective remedies. Moreover, because of intersecting and multiple forms of discrimination, different women and girls may be affected differently by business activities in view of their age, colour, caste, class, ethnicity, religion, language, literacy, access to economic resources, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, residence in a rural location, and migration, indigenous or minority status. It is, therefore, critical that measures taken by States and business enterprises to implement the UNGPs are gender responsive.'²⁰

Oxfam understands that modern slavery and human trafficking are highly gendered, with notable trends apparent in how women and girls are affected in different ways to men, boys and people with other gender identities.²¹ In efforts to improve how we address these gendered impacts, we are committed to embarking

on a fully **intersectional approach**, which acknowledges that each person has intersecting identities. We recognise how various parts of identity – such as race, sex, gender, sexuality, class and ability – overlap to create unique experiences of oppression or privilege.²²

Intersectionality:
the recognition of how various parts of our identity – such as race, sex, gender, sexuality, class and ability – overlap to create unique experiences of oppression and privilege.

In this reporting period (1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023), Oxfam GB has deepened its dialogue with its partners, Oxfam country offices and Southern Oxfam affiliates, to help flesh out how the organization will deliver its vision of a radically better world.²³ The aim is to listen and understand to mitigate potential backlash against the transformation we seek. Lessons learned are now being applied to how we can more proactively manage these transformational processes and protect and respect the particular needs of our colleagues who are Black, Indigenous, People of Colour or LGBTQIA+.²⁴ These are also the people who are often left with the task of flagging up harm and encouraging Oxfam to respond in line with its stated priorities.

We recognise that for Oxfam GB to evolve and continue to improve as an organization, it is important that we listen, explore and learn from each other's experiences. Through thoughtful and compassionate dialogue we can create new and better ways of working together to help better active out charitable aims.

METHOD

To date, our internal HRDD has been informed by our membership of the Ethical Trading Initiative (ETI)²⁵ and the Corporate Justice Coalition (CJC)²⁶ and participation in the board of the Modern Slavery Registry, which was set up and managed by NGOs until the UK government took on that role.²⁷

As Oxfam's confederation continues to evolve, we have taken a particularly pragmatic approach in setting Oxfam GB's next three-year commitments. We continue to assess overall and country-level risks on particular issues as per previous statements.²⁸ Our assessment of actual and potential risks and identification of new three-year objectives were informed by this desk-based work and also by ongoing dialogue between Oxfam GB support staff and those who deliver Oxfam GB's programmes. This has included making the most of opportunities, including in-person and online events as well as through regular ongoing communication between individuals and teams. However, we were careful not to make further demands on people delivering Oxfam programmes in communities across the world or those who are busy developing and testing decolonized approaches. We have defined objectives **focusing on decisions which are in the control of Oxfam GB**: since Oxfam GB is taking these decisions, it can commit to delivering these objectives.

We acknowledge that we need to follow inclusive processes which centre the people we aim to support, so that we know that our objectives are the right ones and our actions are having the intended impact. We aspire to be in a better position by the start of the next three-year cycle to increase the inclusivity of this process.

RESULTS

The latest global figures²⁹ suggest that being discriminated against is more of a risk factor for being trafficked or held in modern slavery than we had previously assumed – even for people who are not living in poverty. These estimates compel us to listen more carefully and consider how power and identity can intersect to form barriers to reducing poverty for different individuals and communities, and then to respond, on people's own terms, to support solutions aimed at meeting their needs and addressing the barriers they face.

It is estimated that worldwide the number of people held in modern slavery at any one time is 49.6 million.³⁰ While forced migration is only one avenue through which people can become vulnerable to this form of abuse, it is concerning that the number of people forced to leave their homes and livelihoods behind (due to social polarization and the effects of the climate and biodiversity crises) has already reached 100 million and may increase to one billion people by 2050.³¹

These numbers, although shocking, will never communicate the full horror of these experiences for the survivors – or for those who did not survive.

The International Organization for Migration (IOM) states that securing migration status, so that people can work in the place where they end up and access the support they need, decreases their vulnerability to being trafficked.³² However, the UK has taken a contrasting approach of creating a hostile environment.³³ The Illegal Migration Act outlines provisions to remove from the UK persons who were in breach of immigration controls when they entered, including unaccompanied children and victims of slavery or human trafficking.³⁴ It also removes certain protections and human rights claims, meaning that people held in modern slavery or subject to trafficking will not be able to access assistance or support in the UK unless they had complied with immigration rules on entry to the country. The UK has also been without an Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner since April 2022.

In July 2022 Sir Mo Farah revealed that he was trafficked to the UK as a child, under a false name, to work in domestic servitude. Many people paid attention to this news because of Sir Mo’s spectacular athletic achievements, which include winning 10 global championship gold medals.

But even for a widely admired public figure, this disclosure was particularly brave. Despite having grown up in England, UK immigration laws meant that Sir Mo could not be certain how authorities would react. He claimed that his decision reflected a desire to live freely, without the burden of having to hide his history. He described how that desire outweighed even the discomfort of uncertainty that his disclosure left him and his family facing.

Tragically, few of the stories of the 50 million people estimated to be held in modern slavery today will ever be heard. And even for those brave enough to speak out, outcomes may include further challenges, such as facing racism, deportation, re-trafficking or enslavement.

This is the context in which Oxfam makes its UK procurement decisions.

Oxfam’s humanitarian responses have provided insights into how trafficking gangs are taking advantage of people as they are forcibly displaced, such as:

- East Africans having to migrate to access food and water due to drought caused by climate change
- Syrians, Yemenis and Ukrainians fleeing war
- Rohingya fleeing persecution in Myanmar
- Congolese seeking unpolluted farming land as the race for transition minerals plays out.³⁵

While there is little public data available, international estimates show that the profits of forced labour are disproportionately accumulating in the higher-income countries that are also responsible for most climate-related pollution.

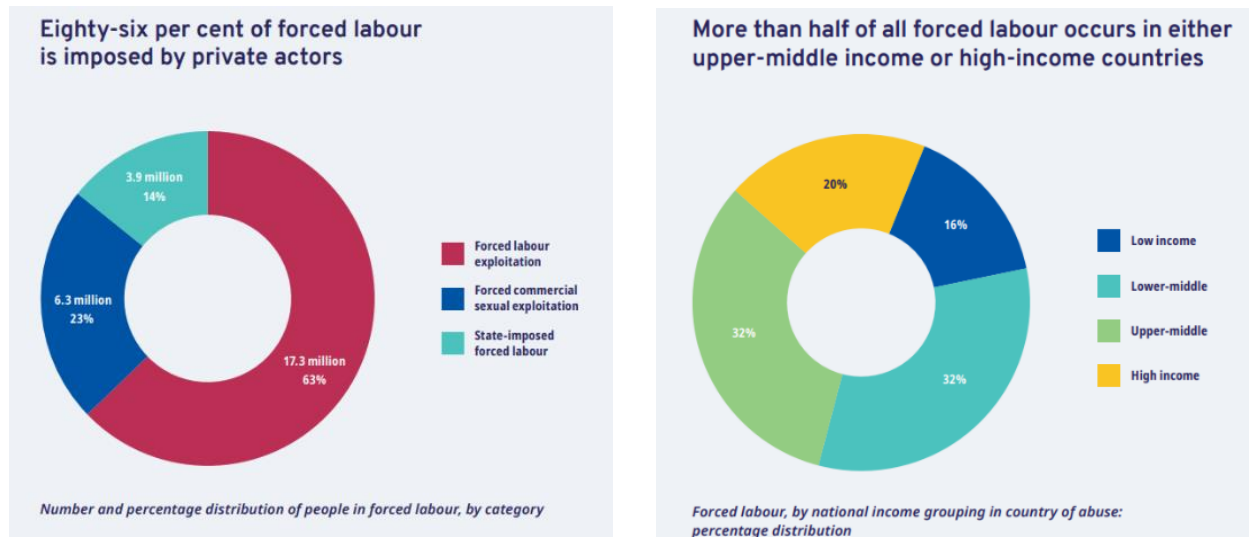
Figure 1: Annual profit per victim of forced labour per regions (US\$)



Source: ILO.³⁶

Updated global figures show that 86% of forced labour is imposed by private actors, including companies, and that, contrary to dominant assumptions, **more than half of all this forced labour happens in wealthier countries.**³⁷ Often these abuses are hidden in plain sight: perhaps within the local factory that supplies your household goods, makes your clothes or produces your food, or the place you get your takeaway food, get your nails done or your car washed, or it might be your neighbour’s domestic worker.

Figure 2: The majority of forced labour is imposed by private actors and in wealthier countries



Source : ILO, Walk Free, IOM.³⁸

Oxfam GB’s core risks, and how we aim to address them, are outlined below in Table 1. This commitment will sit alongside our work to encourage companies and governments to take actions that genuinely mitigate and repair harm.

We are aware that the process of aligning what we say with what ultimately gets done requires committed champions at senior level. We also know that, by definition, transforming the way we work will often contradict individuals’ previous professional experience and knowledge. Therefore, we expect to experience resistance and attempts to maintain previous targets or ways of working as people are required to work outside their comfort zones. Work to proactively integrate ethical and environmental considerations into incentives (such as performance, financial or commercial incentives) and also into the everyday decisions made by all those delivering Oxfam’s work requires consistent help from senior leaders. This is what ensures that our work genuinely aligns with the transformation we seek and that prompt action is taken when it is not.

When senior leaders deliver in this way, all staff get the message that it is safe to follow a transformative path, and that they will be supported through often very challenging and personal processes of change. This is what enables co-created and innovative solutions to be developed – with partners, within Oxfam GB and across the Oxfam confederation.

Over the past few years, we have demonstrated some progress towards making this fundamental shift in pockets of work, which can inspire change in other areas. For example:

- defining a single approach to safeguarding and tackling fraud and corruption across all of Oxfam’s work;
- delivering training on being an active bystander, on safeguarding, safe programming, anti-fraud and corruption and supporting the people delivering Oxfam’s work to ‘Speak Up’ if they have a concern;
- working with communities to identify where barriers remain to reporting misconduct by anyone delivering our work and what solutions could work better and for whom;
- our Common Approach to Partnership Assessment (CAPAS) aims to provide coherent engagement across different Oxfam teams at country and community levels, and to support the development of genuinely decolonial and feminist partnerships;
- a newly designed Learning and Accountability Framework, which measures the impacts of our programme work, including the decolonization of our partnerships;
- integrating mitigation of modern slavery and human trafficking into the design of our humanitarian responses;
- co-creating joint action plans of mutual accountability with our retail suppliers and providing commercial incentives when demonstrable improvements for people and planet are achieved.³⁹

We recognize that despite some progress and good practice, Oxfam GB’s oversight of its human rights and environmental impacts remains fragmented across teams, which continue to use diverse measures and reference points. There is still inconsistency in performance management and incentives to encourage the

integration of these areas into our everyday decisions for individual leaders and staff and across our operations, including our supply chains and business relationships. In many cases there is no performance management encouraging this transformation. There are also areas where actions continue to reflect mindsets that compound barriers to the transformation we seek – for example, praising the meeting of financial targets without being explicit how the human and environmental costs of generating those returns have been mitigated or addressed. Recruiting new and senior staff with the right knowledge and experience of enabling this kind of transformation of core decisions and practices continues to be a challenge.

SUMMARY OF RISKS, OBJECTIVES AND PLANNED ACTIONS: OCTOBER 2023–MARCH 2026

We acknowledge that tackling modern slavery and human trafficking requires continuing work to ensure that our systems routinely prompt each individual delivering Oxfam’s work to recognize that it is possible for harm to be caused, even by actions taken by someone who intended to do good. We also know that proactive steps are required to seek out harm done, to report concerns and to apply learning from across the organization, so that we integrate organizational learning about what works to mitigate harm throughout our everyday decision-making.

Oxfam GB acknowledges that these processes require continuous learning, especially where any harm done through our operations, supply chain or business relationships affects people who have previously been overlooked, for example due to discrimination. We recognize that some of the worst abuses are the most hidden and that they require well-informed, skilled and proactive action to identify and address. In this respect Oxfam GB is on a learning journey.

Table 1 outlines the main risks we have identified and our objectives and planned actions to address those risks. The supply chain objectives build on previous work in these areas and the programme objectives seek to address the increasing global numbers of people held in modern slavery and those on the move who are more vulnerable to harm. We will report against these commitments over the next three years.

Table 1: Summary of risks, objectives and planned actions, October 2023–March 2026

Supply chain	
Risk 1	<p>The increase in global figures of people held in modern slavery, added to an increase in numbers of people on the move indicate an increased risks of forced labour or other forms of harm in our international operations supply chain.</p> <p>An example of how this risk could happen:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff sourcing the goods and services required to carry out Oxfam’s programme work might not identify this risk or report their concerns about potential harm done in the supply chain. • Under-reporting hampers clear oversight and increases risks that vulnerable people might fall through the gaps.
Objective	<p>People sourcing the goods and services required to carry out Oxfam’s work have clear guidance regarding best practice in working responsibly with suppliers to manage and mitigate risk of harm in our supply chains and in how to raise concerns about potential harm done.</p>
Planned actions	<p>The Operations Improvement and Delivery (OID) Team and Ethics Team will work alongside other affiliates and country teams to:</p> <p>3.1 Update the Supply and Logistics Manual that is used by most Oxfam affiliates;⁴⁰ aiming to update alignment with Oxfam GB’s latest decolonial, anti-racist, ethical and environmental aims.</p> <p>3.2 Produce guidance on renting vehicles to contribute to improving how we address the risks to drivers employed by agencies (recruitment, terms and conditions of employment).</p> <p>3.3 Produce guidance outlining potential risks to agency workers, including information about the ‘employer pays’ principle.⁴¹</p>

Risk 2	Oxfam GB sources new products to sell in its shops and online. The business strategy of its Sourced by Oxfam (SbO) Team is based on an ethical and environmental framework. ⁴² If we do not fully integrate ethical and environmental concerns into our everyday business decisions, we will not have the transformative impact we aspire to. One core risk is that dominant commercial norms mean that we might rush through decisions which require a new approach. Undertaking due diligence maps the potential impacts we may have and informs the action plans we define together with our suppliers. But this takes time, which is needed if we are to develop our understanding of our impacts on the environment and on people working in our supply chain – and to design improvements over time.
Objectives	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ensure ongoing training, reflection and support for SbO retail staff to integrate ethical and environmental considerations into their everyday business decisions, in collaboration with suppliers. 2. Continuously improve and consolidate the design and implementation of commercially appropriate systems and track changes in impact over time.
Planned actions	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Recruit additional staff capacity to support the Supply Chain and Sustainability Manager, Buying Manager and wider SbO Team to integrate ethical and environmental considerations into their everyday decisions, systems and incentives. 2. Develop senior-level championing of this commitment to integration. 3. We will continue to use the Ethical and Environmental Framework and in particular its human rights roadmap⁴³ to work with retail suppliers and create joint action plans of mutual accountability with the aim of improving our ethical and environmental impacts. We will report on key areas of change and learning. 4. We will share learning on similar attempts at integration across other Oxfam teams.

Programmes	
Risk 3	The impacts of the climate crisis will fuel further displacement. That displacement makes people more vulnerable to harm and is compounded by racism and other forms of discrimination, which makes people more vulnerable to modern slavery and human trafficking. There is a risk that Oxfam doesn't adequately understand these increased threats and vulnerabilities.
Objective	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Recognize and address internal as well as external values and systems that contribute to racial and climate injustice. 2. Underpin all climate justice efforts with an understanding of how this displacement, discrimination and responses interact . This understanding can then be used by the Ethics and Procurement Teams to improve our impact. 3. Promote and prioritize a reparative approach to addressing climate harms.
Planned actions	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Oxfam GB's Climate Justice Workstream will work in conjunction with the Research and Evidence and Racial Justice Teams and other partners to understand, build an evidence base and articulate how racial and climate injustices are linked and reinforce each other. This analysis and narrative will explore and inform external engagement and internal systems, approaches and practices and will help map a way forward for Oxfam GB to address areas where climate and racial injustice may be embedded across our supply chains. 2. The Climate Justice Workstream's work on climate finance for both adaptation and loss and damage will integrate an aim to shift the narrative from climate finance being labelled as official development assistance to it being understood as compensation and eventually as reparations. The Racial Justice Team will support this aim, especially on reparative approaches, both internal to Oxfam and also externally.

IDENTIFICATION, REMEDY AND MITIGATION

Key updates on Oxfam GB's work to identify, remedy and mitigate modern slavery and human trafficking across our operations, supply chains and business relationships are summarized below.

IDENTIFICATION

- **Identification: company-level complaints mechanism**

Our online form for reporting misconduct⁴⁴ has now been translated into 14 languages, allowing for easier reporting in countries outside the UK. For information on the number of notifications received through company reporting and whistleblowing mechanisms, see our Annual Report and Accounts.⁴⁵

Oxfam GB requires that people implementing its work must report any concern they have regarding all forms of abuse, exploitation and harassment. Such things go against our values, and we will do all we can to prevent them from happening and will tackle them rigorously when they do, enabled by strong processes of reporting and survivor-centred investigation and action. Furthermore, we will hold those responsible to account.

In this reporting period, Oxfam GB did not identify any instances of modern slavery or human trafficking in its operations, supply chains or business relationships.

Oxfam knows that not identifying modern slavery or human trafficking is not necessarily the same thing as none existing. The Global Safeguarding Team continues to work closely with the Global Humanitarian Protection and Safe Programming Teams to assess and manage our operational risks. These teams manage how Oxfam GB identifies modern slavery and human trafficking and how to report and manage potential cases safely and effectively.

Oxfam GB understands **forced marriage** as a form of modern slavery and defines it as when persons have been forced to marry without their consent. A marriage can be forced through a range of different mechanisms, including physical, emotional or financial duress; deception by family members, the spouse or others; or the use of force or threats or severe pressure. **Child slavery** is the enforced exploitation of any person under the age of 18 years of age for their labour, used for someone else's gain.⁴⁶

Oxfam GB recognizes poverty as a driver of forced marriage. In the complex contexts where we work, communities may depend on marriage arrangements to sustain family income. However, Oxfam does not tolerate modern slavery or any form of abuse from our staff and partners, and we investigate all allegations of abuse and sexual misconduct.

Across all our operations, supply chains and business relationships in this reporting period, we received two allegations of suspected forced marriage. Oxfam is supporting development programmes in countries where child marriage is prevalent, and aims to influence change that will provide families with alternative opportunities for economic stability.

Where there is a high risk of trafficking and sexual exploitation, we work with country teams to ensure that staff adhere to the code of conduct and Oxfam policies on protection from sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment (PSEAH).⁴⁷ We have completed staff consultations with national and international staff to understand the complexities of child marriage in fragile contexts. The consultations completed in March 2023 (the end of this reporting period) sought to identify survivors of trafficking or child marriage within our own teams and to ensure that staff can safely report any staff member who breaches the code of conduct. We aim to send a message that forced marriage and exploitation are not acceptable, and we will provide support to anyone affected.

There was also one case of alleged child labour reported, involving a community-based organization. The country team engaged with the partner on the issue, and the Regional Safeguarding Advisor supported the country team to improve due diligence and work together with partners towards preventing future occurrences.

Where we have identified any kind of exploitation in our programmes, we have supported the survivor and ensured that their safety, health and medical needs were met. We have also provided psychosocial support and redress to help them rebuild their life. We have for several years now adopted a survivor-centred approach to investigations. This means that we respect survivors' wishes, ensuring they have informed choice at each stage of the investigation.

We report on safeguarding and tackling corruption in our Annual Report and Accounts. Internally, Oxfam GB shares anonymized quarterly summaries which brief staff on the number of anti-corruption, safeguarding and human resources investigations that are happening and a broad overview of how they are resolved. These summaries also signpost staff to further resources and function as a regular reminder to staff that they are required to report any concerns. At confederation level, there is also a biannual report, *Integrity at Oxfam*, which provides a similar update and overview and reminder to all staff but goes further to address gender justice, people and culture, safe programming and governance.⁴⁸

- **Identification: managing excess donated textiles**

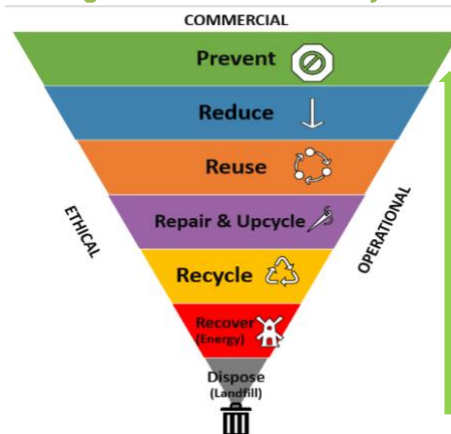
In this reporting period, Oxfam GB investigated concerns raised about the human and environmental impacts of the end use of excess donated textiles which we were not able to sell through our shops in the UK or online.

Although we did not find any evidence of labour rights or modern slavery harms in our direct supply chain, this investigation updated our understanding of the wider impact that the second-hand textiles sector has on both people and planet. As a result, we ceased all direct exports of textiles. We set up a working group to investigate the latest available options which could have the most beneficial impacts and also be commercially viable enough to raise money to fund Oxfam’s programmes across the world. We anticipate that a new plan will be put in place in the next reporting period.

We are using a waste hierarchy model to inform how we assess our options. Traditional approaches have tiered the order of managing waste according to what is best for the environment. The idea is to move ‘waste’ up the hierarchy, so the most preferred actions are represented at the top of an inverted pyramid (Figure 3). The best case is to prevent waste happening, for example not to produce items that could end up as waste. If that is not possible, the next best option is to reduce the quantity produced and consumed – and so on, until the last option is to consider the most responsible ways to dispose of waste.

Oxfam GB is using this waste hierarchy model in a non-traditional way, since we are aligning with the UNGPs by integrating consideration of human rights impacts at each level alongside our assessment of environmental impacts and commercial and operational viability.

Figure 3: Waste hierarchy



REMEDY

- **One Oxfam survivor-centred approach**

Oxfam GB has been actively contributing to developing a single confederation-wide approach to survivors. We anticipate that this will be integrated into our confederation-wide approach to safeguarding.

MITIGATION

This section explains some key areas of work to make our programmes safer.

- **Mitigation: integration of actual and potential ethical and environmental impacts into our retail sourcing decisions**

The Sourced by Oxfam (SbO) team buys new products for sale in our UK shops and online. We have explained in previous statements how our sourcing team implements the Ethical and Environmental Supplier Framework,⁴⁹ together with suppliers.⁵⁰ The Human Rights Roadmap is one of three tools we use to assess the starting point of any supplier relationship.⁵¹ This tool forms the basis of a joint action plan which is tailored to key supplier relationships and defines a set of specific timebound actions for Oxfam and its suppliers to ensure clarity on who will do what, when and why, and to enable Oxfam and its suppliers to hold each other mutually accountable for the human rights impacts in Oxfam’s retail supply chain.

During our ongoing dialogue with suppliers, we have learned about the impact of integrating ethical and environmental concerns into our commercial decisions. For example, for one product range, we engaged with a supplier together with its producer group to identify the root causes of delays which had occurred throughout the year. Together, we scenario planned all potential variables.

This resulted in defining a more accurate lead time required per product and also the optimal timing for Oxfam to place its orders. For any future order, we agreed to order two months earlier, i.e. to change from placing an order six months prior to receiving the goods to eight months prior. We also agreed to split the delivery into two batches for this year. The producer group had suggested that this would be a realistic timeframe for the artisans to make the products that we order.

These changes are expected to alleviate the workload of artisans and avoid clashing with their other responsibilities, to ensure that the product quality remains high throughout the entire production process. Through this collaborative effort, we deepened our knowledge of the production process, improved our order management and the quality of our products and also improved our relationship with the individuals working in our supply chain. We hope that this will make it more likely that they will raise difficult issues with us in future – and that we can resolve any future challenges collaboratively.

‘When we got this fund, it was the first time that we felt we were an independent organization... nobody forced anything on our activities.’
Eman Shannan, Founder of Aid and Hope, Occupied Palestinian Territory

Vijay Goyal, who makes some of the recycled rugs that we sell, described the impact that this had had on him and his fellow workers: ‘The standard of living of the producer group I work with has improved. Since the work that Oxfam provides has become more secure, it has helped producer groups to grow their businesses. For example, more are sending their children to school. We feel assured we will be paid as agreed and on time, and that helps us to focus on purchasing raw materials in advance and on improving product quality. As a result, we have been able to provide work opportunities to workers. As a collective we have provided financial assistance to our members. I have purchased two new handlooms.’

Similarly, this decision has had an impact for Pawan Kumar, from whom we buy textiles: ‘Oxfam’s orders have helped me to build up my own workshop. I used to only engage others ad hoc. But now I have steady orders, I can provide steady work to others and pay them a fair wage.’

Another key supplier reported that using this framework and its regular dialogue with Oxfam ‘has made us so much more aware of how our actions impact our factories. We know that our small factories really appreciate our business and we have stayed loyal to them and supported them to be approved by our customers. For example, we worked with [a textiles factory] to help them explain their social insurance situation and in getting approval [to supply a major UK retailer]. My growing knowledge in issues such as working hours and social insurance (thanks to the Oxfam project) has really helped. The large-volume orders will make a difference to this factory’s revenue.’

And in another case a supplier told us: ‘We have been developing a really good relationship with [one of the manufacturing sites]. The communication is now very open and this factory is planning [much more rigorous social auditing] on our request. We now feel confident to discuss our ethical work with them and introduce the idea of a worker well-being audit.’

Oxfam recognizes that more is needed to mitigate abuses such as modern slavery and human trafficking. When people working in our supply chain are faced with such threats, we believe that building trust through open dialogue and providing predictable work and a fair wage contributes to reducing vulnerability, since they are in a better position to say no.

- **Mitigation: Women’s Rights Fund**

The primary objective of Oxfam GB’s Women’s Rights Fund is to shift power and resources to women’s rights organizations, so they can invest in their own priorities.⁵² The fund enables Oxfam to explore the balance between managing risk, being compliant and being truly flexible and adaptable. There are some internal changes required for Oxfam GB to simplify its processes and ways of working so that they match the ambition for the Fund, particularly as it grows.

Our partner organizations may be small, but they have considerable technical expertise in areas where Oxfam does not. We are gradually understanding more about how much we have to learn from them.

In its first two years of operation, through a combination of financial investment, training and ongoing accompaniment, the Fund has enabled partner organizations to lay strong foundations, including organizational policies, practices and systems. We are particularly encouraged by the fundraising success of partners and by their significant growth in confidence. One indicator of this was that in 2022 these partners raised a total of US\$383,300 to fund their own work. Training on finance, logistics, communications, fundraising and safeguarding continues, and will focus on partners who will be leaving the Fund at the end of 2023.

While we cannot predict whether or in what ways the work of these organizations might reduce women’s vulnerability to exploitation, including modern slavery and human trafficking, we know that women themselves are best placed to decide what is needed and what works locally.

When partners first join the Fund, their safeguarding capacity is assessed so that Oxfam teams can incorporate any training needed into the fund management cycle. However, though safeguarding is a priority for Oxfam, it is not necessarily front of mind for all partners. There is a balance to be struck between partners' priorities and Oxfam's responsibility to ensure that appropriate safeguarding systems are in place. Even partners who work with survivors of violence may not, at first, see the need to establish safeguarding policies and practices for their own organizations as a matter of priority. Nonetheless, all WRF partners have now received safeguarding training and refreshers, in line with each country's safeguarding plan.

Oxfam, through its global safeguarding team and country focal points, remains actively engaged in assisting with investigations and follow-up actions where necessary.

3. POLICIES RELEVANT TO MODERN SLAVERY AND HUMAN TRAFFICKING

During this period our internal Equality, Diversity and Inclusion policy was updated⁵³ and a new internal Trans Inclusion policy was launched in January 2023, together with additional guidance. We see each of these as relevant in that they seek to reduce overall threats and vulnerabilities to harm. In a culture where these practices are routinely integrated into our decisions, we anticipate improvements in how we identify, redress and reduce vulnerability to modern slavery and human trafficking.

In September 2022, Oxfam GB presented its survivor policy, its experience supporting survivors in complex situations and case studies to a safeguarding peer network. It was well received and has led to a single confederation-wide approach to survivor support being developed and translated into Arabic, French and Spanish. This is still being finalized, but it will become an annex of the current confederation-wide safeguarding policy, alongside additional implementation guidance which will also be developed in the next reporting period. We expect that once this is rolled out it will support consistency in survivor-centred investigations across Oxfam.

4. TRAINING

Following on from previous statements, our training on the Code of Conduct, Safeguarding and Safe Programming is ongoing.

We understand that reporting only our training inputs (such as the number of people trained) is insufficient. Therefore, in this reporting period, we focused on developing our understanding of what Oxfam GB can do as part of the Oxfam confederation to deliver the impact we seek and where we can make the most difference. This has resulted in prioritising raising awareness within Oxfam GB about race, racism and reparative justice. We anticipate that a better understanding of these issues amongst our staff will enable us to improve how we tackle modern slavery and human trafficking, through rooting our everyday decisions in our commitment to being safe, feminist and anti-racist.

NOTES

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- ¹¹ Oxfam. (1 December 2022). *European countries water down landmark EU law to clean up business*. Press release. <https://www.oxfam.org/en/press-releases/european-countries-water-down-landmark-eu-law-clean-business>
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- ¹⁴ For example, see the foreword to *Oxfam GB Annual Report 2020/21* and section starting on p.94: <https://www.oxfam.org.uk/documents/540/Oxfam-Annual-Report-and-Accounts-2020-21.pdf>
- ¹⁵ For example, see the foreword to *Oxfam GB Annual Report 2020/21* and section starting on p.94: <https://www.oxfam.org.uk/documents/540/Oxfam-Annual-Report-and-Accounts-2020-21.pdf>
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- ²¹ 'Trafficking is highly gendered; women and girls are more susceptible to trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation, forced marriage and domestic servitude, while men and boys are more commonly victims of trafficking in the fishing and mining industries.' IOM. (2021). *World Migration Report 2022*, Chapter 10, op. cit.
- ²² This concept was created by Kimberlé Crenshaw with the aim of understanding how Black women experience both racism and sexism, either separately in any given incident or both at the same time. See, for example, K. Crenshaw. (2016). *On Intersectionality*. YouTube video. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DW4HLgYPIA>; and K. Crenshaw.

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- ²⁹ ILO, Walk Free, IOM. (2022). *Global Estimates of Modern Slavery: Forced Labour and Forced Marriage*, op. cit.
- ³⁰ ILO, Walk Free, IOM. (2022). *Global Estimates of Modern Slavery*, op. cit. According to this report, 49.6 million people were living in modern slavery in 2021, of whom 27.6 million were in forced labour and 22 million in forced marriage. Of the 27.6 million people in forced labour, 17.3 million were exploited in the private sector, 6.3 million in forced commercial sexual exploitation and 3.9 million in forced labour imposed by state.
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- ³² See, for example, IOM. (2021). *World Migration Report 2022*, Chapter 10, op. cit., p.5. 'The decision of the Colombian Government in February 2021 to regularize Venezuelan migrants who were irregularly in the country with a 10-year temporary protection status constitutes a major step forward in improving their protection and safety, and decreasing their vulnerability to human trafficking.'
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