

Oxfam Strategic Steer.

2012/13 – 2014/15

The Strategic Steer is designed to inform staff across the organisation about the key priorities for the next three years so that they can shape their work accordingly. It is based on our understanding of how the world is changing for poor people and how we believe we should respond. The priorities are determined by bringing together what is being developed locally, for example through National Change Strategies (now developing to be the Joint Country Analysis and Strategies, JCAS, across OI Affiliates in country), in plans of individual departments and with a perspective from senior levels in the organisation on external changes in our world and how Oxfam needs to develop to remain relevant and effective.

This version replaces the one issued last year. Of course, this new steer looks a further year forward, and there are some changes to our objectives as we see more clearly what we need to do. However, we have kept the changes to a minimum. Next year, 2012, we will be working across the Oxfam International confederation to produce our Strategic Plan for April 2013 onwards. So instead of focussing on major changes now, we want people to really think through how we can set that new OI Strategic Plan, and our OGB plan as part of it, to be most relevant and achieve the greatest impact. The few changes in this strategic steer are highlighted in this document. You can throw away any earlier strategic documents as this one brings together all you need in one place.

The most important overall change from our previous plans is our greater integration in Oxfam (meaning the Confederation of all the affiliates). This is most obvious in our country programmes as we move to a single management structure but this is having implications for many of our policies and systems, whether this is the need for a unified Code of Conduct for staff, or the ability to work across different information systems. Our campaigns have, largely, been OI campaigns for a number of years now, but the structures for managing these campaigns are becoming increasingly integrated. Oxfam has now been defined as a global integrated network of organisations. Staff are accountable to Oxfam GB but also accountable within Oxfam as a whole. Good judgement in balancing the different needs and requirements is needed. All of us need to keep our focus on the passion that binds us: making the greatest impact we can in overcoming poverty and suffering.



Ikai Nayapar and her parents look to the future in Turkana, the largest and poorest district in Kenya. Oxfam is delivering food aid and vouchers to keep people alive during the prolonged drought that the region is experiencing, a result of climate change and lack of government investment.
Credit: Rankin/Oxfam

Our mission

Oxfam works with others to overcome poverty and suffering

Our beliefs

- All human lives are of equal value.
- Poverty makes people more vulnerable to conflict and natural disasters.
- People's vulnerability to poverty and suffering is increased by unequal power relations, based on, for example, gender, race, class, caste and disability.
- In a world rich in resources, poverty is a morally indefensible injustice which can and must be overcome.
- With the right resources, support and training, people living in poverty can solve their own problems.

The way we work

Empowerment: Everyone involved with Oxfam – whether contributing to our work or benefiting from it – should feel empowered to help end poverty.

Inclusiveness: We listen to and are open to everyone's view.

Accountability: Through our results focused approach, we hold ourselves accountable in everything we do – and we expect the same high standards from others. We recognise that our own empowerment only comes with accountability.

Our approach

All our work is under-pinned by a rights-based approach. We believe that all people have social, economic, political, and civil rights, as well as rights under humanitarian law. To overcome poverty and suffering, and related injustice, including the implications of climate change, we work to ensure that these rights are fulfilled and protected. We believe that given resources and power, people can solve their own problems; so we support self-reliance, not dependency. We also recognise wider, national, regional and global issues that need to be tackled. Our work on the ground informs both our analysis of issues and our campaigning work to secure lasting change. We work in three main areas: saving lives through

emergency response; long-term development work; and campaigning. These different approaches are intertwined, mutually-reinforcing and need to be used together to achieve lasting change. We are always seeking to have the greatest impact but this does not usually mean establishing large-scale programmes ourselves, but ensuring our work leverages lasting change at scale through collaborating with others. This increasingly means our staff playing more of a convening, brokering role. This demands us all to be clear in our strategic intent and our theories of change, but agile enough to respond to opportunities for change as they appear / develop.

Our World

The context of our work to overcome poverty, suffering, and injustice, changes constantly. Oxfam needs to understand these changes and react with agility and effectiveness to maximize our impact with poor people.

Our analysis builds on the work done by the OI Global Team, our own leadership, and trustees, which identifies three dominant themes for our work in the next period: volatility, scarcity, and new political dynamics. Increasing inequality is inherent in all three themes, and remains a core driver of the poverty and suffering we seek to address.

Volatility: In the last five years, many poor and vulnerable people have lived through devastating shocks, a number of which look set to worsen in the coming decade. 2008 saw a food-price spike that left 100 million more people hungry, created primarily by biofuel demand, climate change, and increased meat consumption. In 2011 we have seen food prices rise again and we know that this will be continuing in the future, as the struggle over land and water intensifies. Many poor people have also faced a rising number of climate-related shocks that have destroyed their livelihoods, and the number of poor people affected looks set to increase 50 per cent by 2015. The global economic crisis has also brought recession and uncertainty to poor women and men. And of course this is not over yet, with an ongoing crisis in the Eurozone area and loss of growth in the US and in the emerging economies.

Our main concern must be for poor people but these economic circumstances also bring uncertainty to our own funding base. We believe however, that we have been prudent in our planning, recognising the risks.

Our drive and investment in adaptation, disaster risk reduction, and social protection must be re-doubled. We need to enhance and adapt our humanitarian response with partners. Volatility can also create opportunities for discontinuous, abrupt change, such as the opportunity now to push for a Financial Transaction Tax to raise up to \$400 billion annually for poverty and climate change, from speculative and casino trading. Extreme events can also galvanise unprecedented social action nationally, and we need to work hard to not lose the moment for change. The response to volatility means that our programmes must help poor people become more resilient, as always putting poor women's rights at the heart of our work, not least because they are usually disproportionately affected. In this era of scarcity, the control by women of their assets is becoming yet more precarious.

Scarcity: There is a rising sense that our economic and social development model, North and South, is in dire need of reform or re-conception. It has been based on the false assumption of inexhaustible natural resources, which has driven unsustainable consumption patterns. Population growth will also impact on resource depletion. These trends threaten the security, livelihoods, and food justice of poor people. The global economic crisis has left many governments, South and North, with a major fiscal gap threatening the provision of essential services, and elements of social protection on which some of the poorest depend. Our UK Poverty Programme is now seeing rising distress in poor communities across the UK.

In response, as part of Oxfam International we have launched the GROW campaign, a major new global campaign focussing on food justice in a resource constrained world. This brings together land, water and climate change issues but using food

as 'the lens' through which we see the impact on poor people. The campaign was launched in June 2011 around the world and has been adopted by all Oxfam affiliates. The launch achieved high media visibility globally and we are geared up to step up public engagement on the issues of land grabs and climate change in the remainder of 2011.

There has already been a lot of enthusiasm for this campaign from staff who have heard about it, not least because so much of our work in countries relates to food as part of rural livelihoods work and because in so many countries poor people are food insecure.

New Political Dynamics: We are entering a multi-polar world where power is reconfiguring. New actors and voices are also emerging in nations, challenging old ideas. This is creating both great opportunities and challenges to our goals, and our change models. The growing influence of the BRICSAM* and G20 countries has enormous potential to bring half the world's population together and define a common destiny. But there is also potential for this to become another closed elite of countries, less concerned with the plight of the poorest.

The events of the ongoing 'Arab Spring' proved both unexpected and inspirational, demonstrating the enduring strength of 'people power' in even the most adverse situations. Although it will take years for the full impacts to become clear, it is already apparent that the upheaval will lead to profound social and political change in areas such as justice, accountability, democracy and gender rights. Events in North Africa and the Middle East also brought home the unique opportunity for transformational change provided by such political and social 'shocks'. We need to be agile to adapt our programming as opportunities for change arise, e.g. in supporting women's rights and in supporting peace processes as well as people affected in countries like Yemen.

New actors have also emerged in the development world: global companies, who seek to transform their core business model to marry their drive for profit, with their responsibilities to the people and planet in their supply chain; 'philanthrocapitalists' and social entrepreneurs; charitable foundations in north and south, and new southern-led civil society coalitions using digital technologies for influence. Also, Brazil, China, India and Arab countries have grown rapidly as donors.

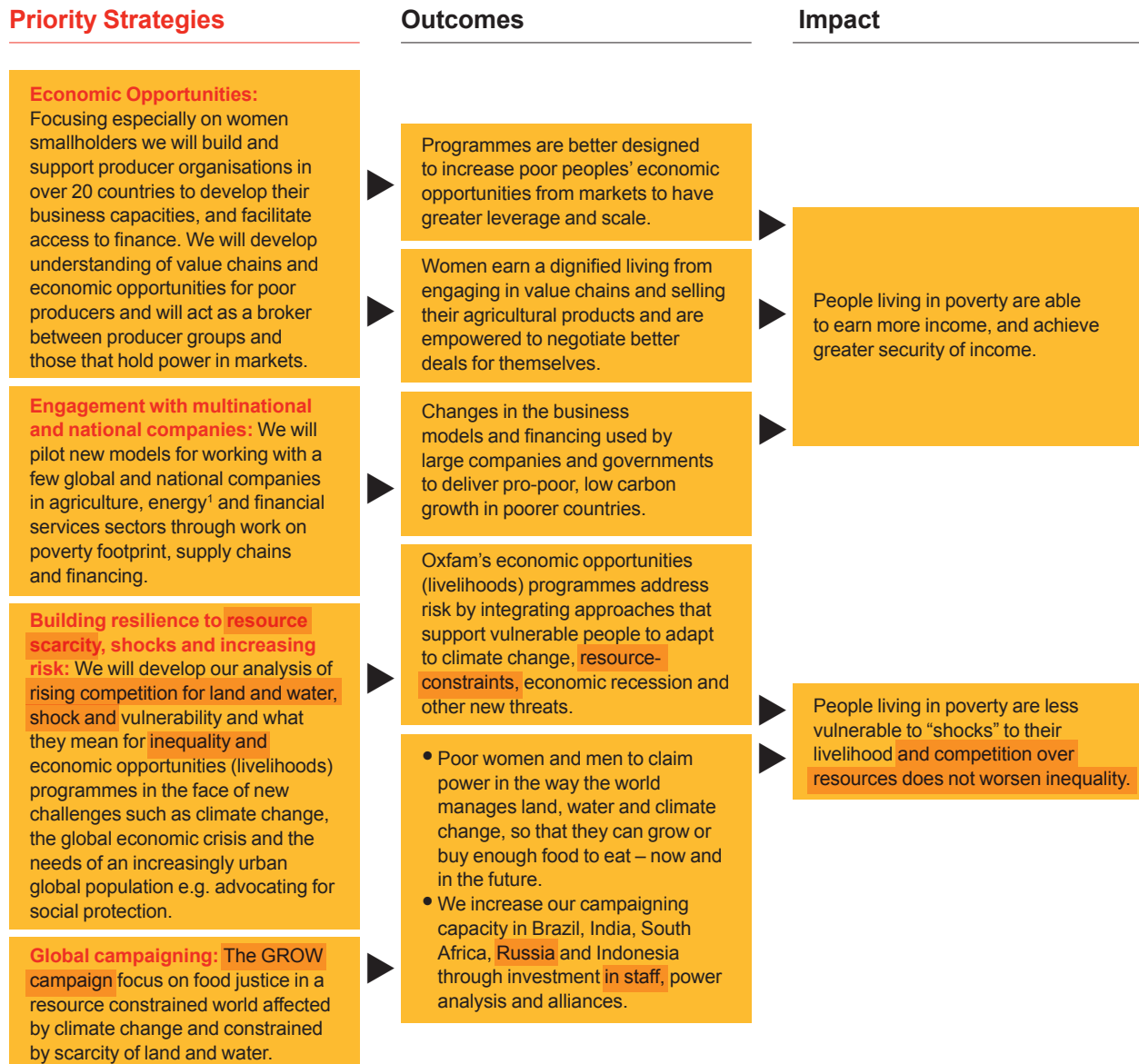
In response, we need to demand effective global and national governance to address the threats from inequality, volatility and scarcity and their impact on poverty and suffering. We need to invest in influencing the G20, but also in the voices and assertiveness of the poorest countries. We can deepen our collaboration with dynamic and new civil society actors. We can become a powerful networker and convenor of diverse, progressive actors including the private sector and social entrepreneurs seeking innovative and effective solutions to poverty and suffering.

To make the changes we want to see in the world we need many people to be engaged, to 'Be Humankind'. We want to draw on peoples' concern for others, and their sense of wanting to be part of a wider global community. As we align behind one global brand identity, using the same look and feel in all the countries we work in, our external communications will express Oxfam as 'practical visionaries' for a fairer world.

* BRICSAM: Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa, and Mexico – key emerging economies.

Aim 1: Right to Economic Justice

Our goal: To ensure the rights of people to have food and income security that is sustainable for their future, and for the environment. We want to see the proportion of people living in extreme poverty (on less than \$1/day) halved, by 2015, in all countries of sub-Saharan Africa, South and East Asia, and Latin America; and a marked reduction in the extreme disparities in wealth within and between countries.



Why have we made these strategic choices?

Scarcity: Poor people are witnessing intense competition for land, water, atmospheric space for carbon (climate change), and energy.

Climate change: Poor people are being hit first and worst by climate change. We expect major financial flows to become available over the next 10 years.

New approaches to respond to the effects of climate change, resource scarcity and global economic recession (e.g. on social protection): Only the richest three per cent of people in the world are covered by insurance.

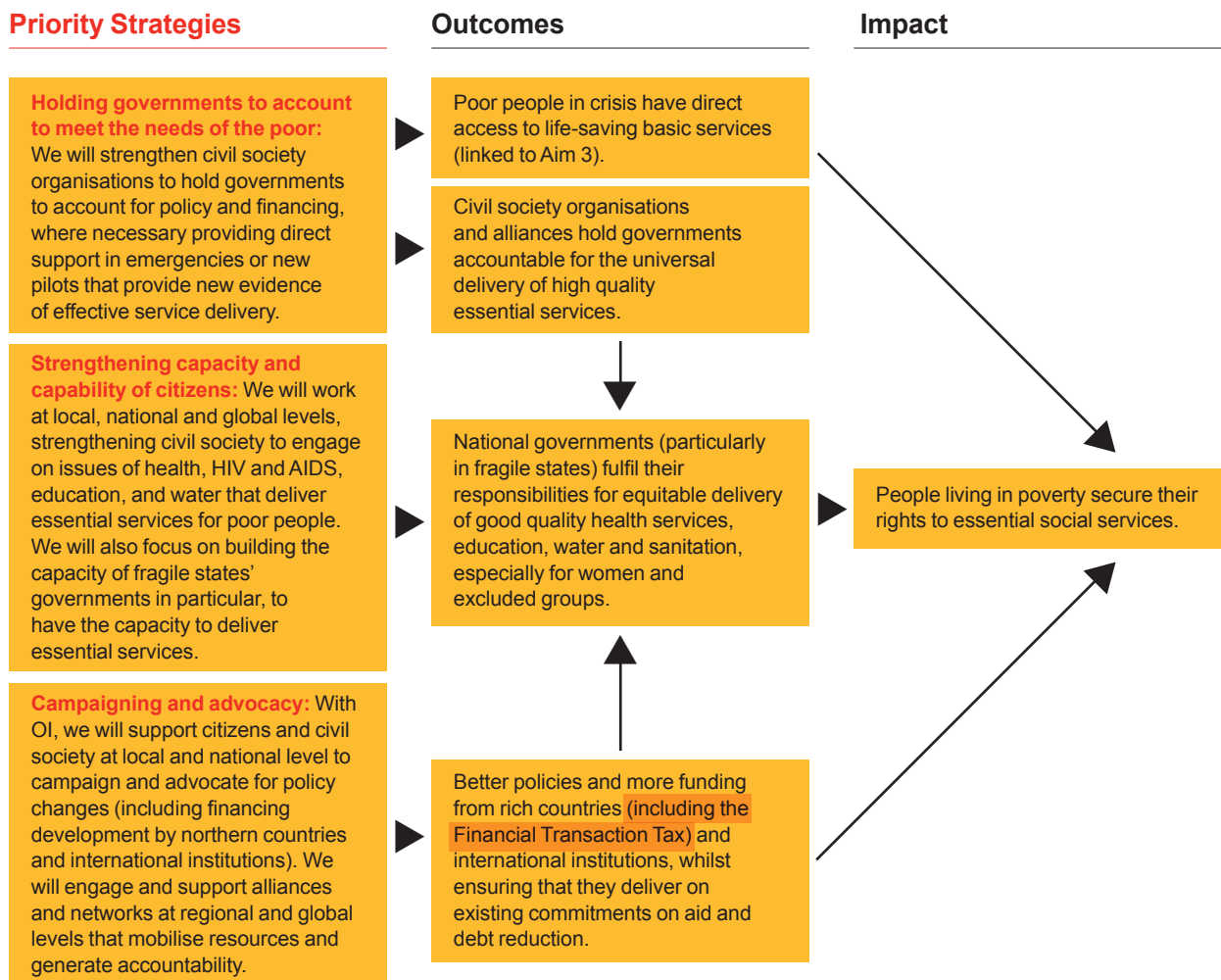
Focus on women: The majority of the people living in poverty globally are women.

Private sector engagement: Nine out of ten jobs in the developing world are in the private sector.

¹The intent in working with renewables is to develop ground rules so that poor people can take advantage of this sector for both income as well as energy. The intent is not to start a new programme on access to energy for poor people.

Aim 2 – Right to Essential Services

Our goal: To ensure people’s right to equitable access to quality essential services, particularly education, health care and water, through our work on meeting needs in crises, strengthening capacity, and campaigning for the provision of essential services and its financing, and to strengthen people’s ability to hold their governments to account.



Why have we made these strategic choices?

Development Finance: The global economic crisis, more vocal aid scepticism, and broken promises from donors, requires greater assertiveness on aid effectiveness and innovative financing.

Free Public Services: Around half a million women die in pregnancy and childbirth, one billion people have no access to clean water, 30 million people in developing countries live with HIV/AIDS, and 770 million people are illiterate, 65% of whom are women.

Fragile states: The poorest billion people live in fragile states where access to essential services is so very limited and yet critical for security and the stability of those states.

Aim 3 – Right to Life and Security

Our goal: All women and men in humanitarian crises will be assured of both the protection and the assistance they require, regardless of who or where they are or how they are affected.



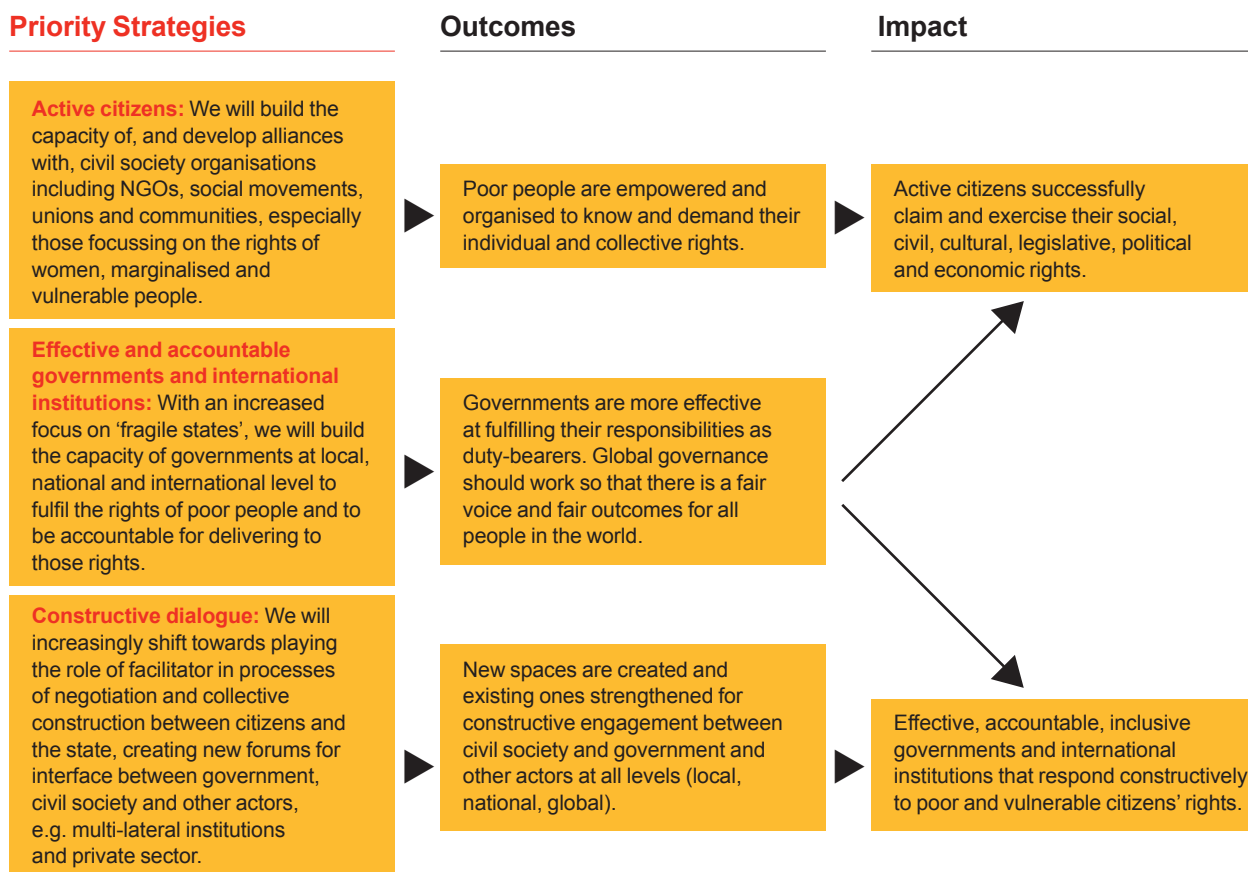
Why have we made these strategic choices?

Climate Change: Whilst conflict continues to affect poor people, climate change will also increasingly affect the most vulnerable. Disaster Risk Reduction becomes more important in this context as does the need to build local capacity in addition to improving global leadership.

Operational Response: Whilst we seek to enable national governments and local partners to respond in emergencies, Oxfam will continue to respond directly where appropriate and necessary to ensure all people exercise their right to life and security.

Aim 4 – Right To Be Heard

Our goal: Our aim is that poor and marginalised people are able to influence decisions affecting their lives, including using their civil and political rights to achieve social and economic rights and to challenge inequality. As a rights-based organisation, Oxfam seeks to ground all of its work in strengthening the ability of people living in poverty to demand and defend their rights, and ensuring that governments and institutions fulfil their obligations to respect and protect the rights of poor people. All of our work should increase the ability of poor and marginalised women and men to be heard, and we are committed to improving our own accountability to them.



Why have we made these strategic choices?

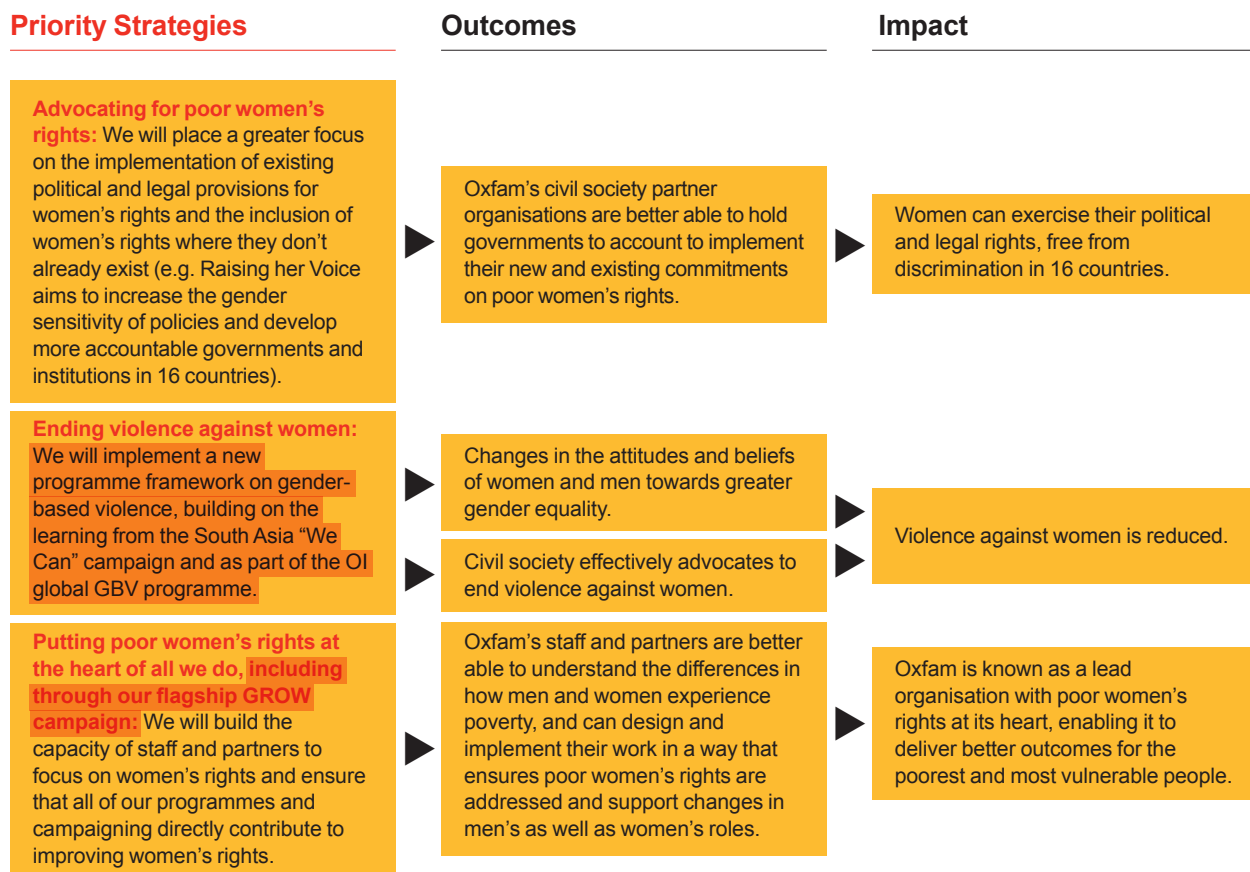
Right to be heard across all our work: In order for change to be sustainable, active citizens including poor and marginalised women and men, need to have voice in their own society. We need to ensure all our work, whatever the aim, amplifies and adds value to poor people's voices. In this way, Oxfam's work on the right to be heard is a means to an end, as well as an end in itself. People power can be harnessed to achieve the goals that Oxfam as a whole is working towards – such as holding governments to account to

deliver education for all. However, in this section we highlight in more detail the work we do on supporting civil society as an end in itself. Essentially, this means that we work to assist people in their own struggles for justice, greater equality and better governance. The specific goals, informed by a set of principles and a shared framework of values, may be very different in different countries such as rights for indigenous peoples or for small-scale fisher folk, monitoring how local government units spend their budgets etc.

Effective states: are critical to tackling poverty and inequality. It is often more effective to work with willing governments to build their capacity to deliver quality services rather than only holding them to account.

Aim 5 – Right To Gender Justice

Our goal: Many more women will gain power over their lives and live free from violence through changes in attitudes, ideas and beliefs about gender relations, and through increased levels of women’s active engagement and critical leadership in institutions, decision-making and change processes.



Why have we made these strategic choices?

Violence against women: Gender-based violence is a fundamental barrier to women achieving their rights, and causes more deaths and disability among women aged 15 to 44 than cancer, malaria, traffic accidents, and war.

Women’s economic, legal and political rights: Many countries have great policies on women’s rights, they’re just not implemented, more work is needed to ensure women’s economic rights are built into policies on assets and entitlements.

Putting poor women’s rights at the heart of all our work: Women work two-thirds of the world’s working hours, and produce half of the world’s food, yet earn only ten per cent of the world’s income, and own less than one per cent of the world’s property. Putting poor women’s rights at the heart of our programme will require clear programme focus and design choices to ensure impact on poor women’s rights.

We want to be a highly effective organisation. To achieve this we need to: look for ideas and solutions inside and outside our sector; challenge ourselves about what is working and what is not; work collaboratively with each other to deliver and ensure our processes are simple and robust.

The current global economic crisis means we have to continue to focus on reducing costs. It also requires us to be agile and innovative in those areas we think will bring the greatest change and impact for poor people. This means:

Investing in our people

- We will continue to develop our skills and approaches in people and project management, across OI as well as in OGB.
- We will focus on our values (empowered, accountable, inclusive) and will ensure that staff understand what is expected of them in our Code of Conduct.
- We will enhance our ability to work collaboratively within and across teams, and outside in other sectors.
- We will remain committed to achieving greater impact in our work through valuing and leveraging the diversity of our staff and our supporters.

Developing our programme

- Collaboratively develop and implement joint Oxfam country analyses and strategies with strong power and vulnerability analyses and deep understanding of how change happens.
- Continue to improve the way we learn and share what works and what does not.
- Continue to focus on results with accountability, especially to the people themselves. We need to embed and refine our output, outcome and value for money reporting.
- We need to further develop our people skills and business systems to be more agile, to respond to our changing environment (e.g. OI, increasing restricted funding, growing our leverage role).

Improving our communications

The world of communications is changing and we need to be able to communicate with all our stakeholders in ways that are appropriate to them. This means:

- Digital technology provides us with opportunities to radically improve the way we communicate – from our interaction with financial supporters through to engaging with digital communities about poverty.
- We need to work harder on enabling our supporters to feel more emotionally connected to Oxfam and its cause.

- We need to engage with the business and financial sectors, philanthropists and other 'new influentials' in ways that convince them of our effectiveness. We need to convince them of the importance of sustainable development and this will require us to be able to demonstrate our results and accountability more clearly to them.

Developing within Oxfam International

- We will continue to implement a single management structure for all Oxfams operating in one country. This entails significant change management support.
- Maximising opportunities for greater programme impact through OI.
- All affiliates will align behind one global brand identity, using the same look and feel, and expressing our values and positioning in the same way. This will strengthen integration of our communications globally and will allow staff to feel the truly global nature of the Confederation.
- We will work to improve the ways of working within Oxfam International, encouraging our staff to demonstrate the behaviours of delivery, accountability, realism, honesty and trust.
- We will develop humanitarian capacity and leadership within OGB and OI.
- We will work collaboratively within OI to explore opportunities to increase overall income for the Confederation.

Securing our resources

We will maintain and if possible grow our income over the next three years. We expect there to be an increase in the proportion of restricted funding (from institutions and from individuals) which means making sure our internal systems work well to meet the demands of restricted funding. To grow our resources we need:

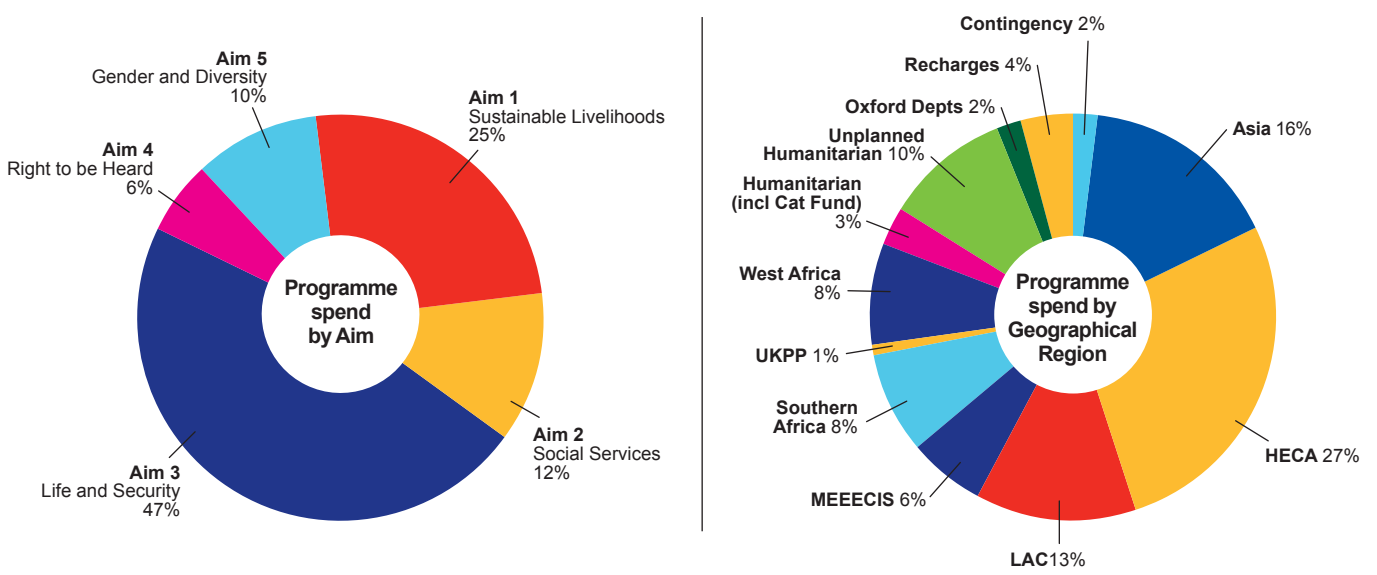
- To maintain income from regular givers, using new and innovative ways to recruit new regular givers and continue to provide good supporter care to our existing givers.
- To develop our community fundraising, establishing supporter groups across the country
- To continue to diversify our institutional funders, both governments and foundations.
- To continue to develop the shop network so that it represents Oxfam's unique values, behaviours and mission; and enabling volunteers, customers and donors to understand and represent Oxfam to make even more unrestricted income.

Reducing our carbon footprint

We know that climate change is affecting poor people earliest and worst. If we are to challenge others on carbon emissions and on global policies to reverse climate change then we have to practise what we preach.

- Each year we will continue to set and deliver targets to manage responsibly our carbon footprint.

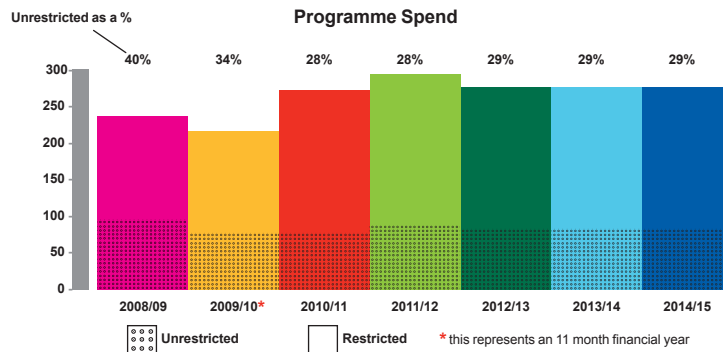
The facts



Programme Spend

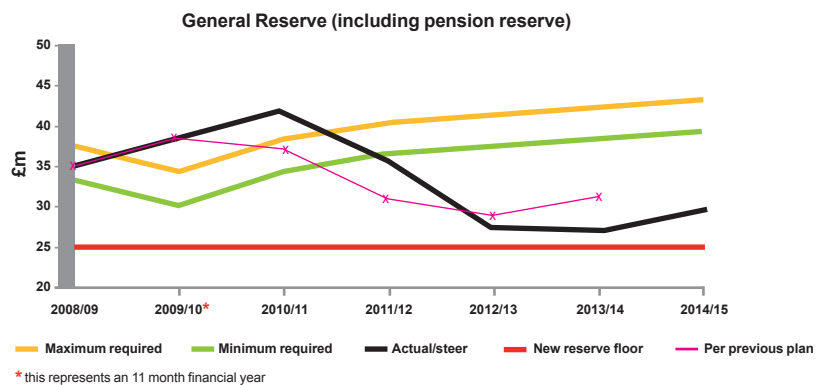
During the period of the steer programme spend reduces in 2012/13 and 2013/14 before increasing to reach £278.4m by 2014/15.

Unrestricted programme spend as a proportion of total programme spend remains constant at 29% over the steer period.



General Reserve (incl. pension reserve)

We had higher than expected income in 2010/11, so started this year ahead of Plan. But a combination of lower income growth, investments and an extra £3m into Programme means our reserves will fall close to a new reserves "floor" of £25m during the steer period.



Chair: Karen Brown
Vice chair: Sandra Dawson
Honorary Treasurer: David Pitt-Watson
Chief Executive: Barbara Stocking DBE

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