



# A RIGHTS IN CRISIS GUIDE TO INFLUENCING

THE WHO, WHAT AND WHY OF  
HUMANITARIAN CAMPAIGNING



**OXFAM**

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Millions of Yemenis are suffering from a water crisis and have to walk long distances to collect a few litres of water for their families. Photo: Hind Aleryani/Oxfam, July 2015



# 1 INTRODUCTION

Welcome to **A Rights in Crisis Guide to Influencing**.

This guide is an essential resource for all those wanting to understand how the humanitarian system works, who to influence and what issues to campaign on in order to ensure respect for the rights of women, men, girls and boys at risk or affected by conflicts and disasters.<sup>1</sup>

This guide has been produced by Oxfam's Rights in Crisis Campaign as an essential resource to guide Oxfam staff, partners, allies and anyone involved in humanitarian influencing work – whether you are working at country, regional or global level. It draws on Oxfam's more than 60 years of humanitarian programming, campaigning and advocacy work.

This document complements and should be used alongside the **Oxfam Influencing for Impact Guide** (internal to Oxfam) – a step-by-step guide to designing and implementing high-impact influencing, campaigning and advocacy strategies on a range of issues (not limited to humanitarian issues).

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<sup>1</sup> See Oxfam (2013) 'Policy Compendium Note: Oxfam's Role in Humanitarian Action'.

## LINKS AND RESOURCES: WHERE TO GO FOR THE RIGHT GUIDANCE

- » **A Rights in Crisis Guide to Influencing** (this guide) is about understanding:
  - **WHO** to influence in order to prevent or respond to humanitarian crisis situations – such as governments, donors, private sector actors and NGOs; and
  - **WHAT** issues you may need to influence them on – such as the right to assistance and protection, civil-military interaction and gender justice in humanitarian contexts.

### FOR OXFAM STAFF:

- » **Oxfam Influencing for Impact Guide** is about understanding **HOW** to go about influencing others to achieve your goals – no matter what the issue is. This includes designing an influencing strategy and understanding a range of influencing tools – such as media and communications, advocacy and lobbying, popular mobilization and digital campaigning.
- » **Oxfam Humanitarian Policy Notes** are concise Oxfam positions on a range of humanitarian issues. These notes are referenced throughout the Oxfam Rights in Crisis Influencing Guide.
- » **Oxfam National Influencing Guidelines** provide internal guidance to Oxfam staff on how to engage in influencing work on all issues at the national level.
- » Oxfam's **Humanitarian Dossier** sets out Oxfam's approach, policy and programme guidance for humanitarian work.
- » These guidelines and other internal tools can be found via the **Influencing Hub** on SUMUS.

# 1.1 OXFAM'S HUMANITARIAN COMMITMENT

## FIND OXFAM POLICY POSITIONS AND STANDARDS

- » Oxfam (2013) '[Policy Compendium Note: Oxfam's Role in Humanitarian Action](#)'
- » Oxfam (2013) '[Humanitarian Dossier](#)' (in English, French and Spanish) – internal to Oxfam

Humanitarian advocacy and influencing have been a core part of Oxfam's mandate ever since the organization was set up in 1942 to provide relief assistance to civilians in Nazi-occupied Greece. From the outset, Oxfam challenged the UK government's wartime policy of blockading Nazi territories – and with it the concept of 'total war'.<sup>2</sup>

Since this time Oxfam has become a global confederation of affiliate organizations and the Oxfam International Secretariat, working together with partners and local communities in more than 90 countries. Humanitarian action continues to be a core component of its work.

Oxfam delivers vital assistance to save lives, alleviate suffering and support community efforts to stay safe in crisis situations – whether created by war or disasters such as drought, floods, earthquakes and famine. Oxfam also aims to prevent loss of life in future emergencies by reducing risk and increasing preparedness for disasters as part of its development work.

The organization has built up considerable institutional knowledge and capacity to deliver assistance in particular areas of emergency response, including water, sanitation and hygiene promotion (WASH), emergency food security and vulnerable livelihoods, emergency shelter and community-based protection.

Oxfam's 2014–19 Strategic Plan commits to an ambitious agenda to address the growing humanitarian challenge, with the ultimate goal that:

**Fewer men, women and children will die or suffer illness, insecurity and deprivation by reducing the impact of natural disasters and conflict. Those most at risk will have exercised their right to have clean water, food and sanitation and other fundamental needs met, to be free from violence and coercion, and to take control of their own lives in dignity.**<sup>3</sup>

Humanitarian influencing is critical to achieving this goal.

<sup>2</sup> For more on Oxfam's early humanitarian history, see E. Cairns (2012) '70 years of change' or M. Black (1992) *A Cause for Our Times*.

<sup>3</sup> Oxfam, 'The Power of People Against Poverty', Goal 3: Saving lives, now and in the future.

## 1.2 THE HUMANITARIAN CHALLENGE

Globally we are witnessing a rise in the scale and frequency of humanitarian crises and their impacts on vulnerable people. The gap is widening between humanitarian needs and the ability or willingness of governments and international humanitarian actors, including NGOs like Oxfam, to meet them.

### What's the problem? Shocks, stresses, fragility and inequality in the 21st century

- Since 1980, reported weather-related disasters have increased by 233 percent where records are available,<sup>4</sup> and between the 1970s and 2000s the drought-affected proportion of the earth doubled.<sup>5</sup>
- Disaster losses globally have topped \$100bn for three consecutive years (2010–12), far outstripping humanitarian aid.<sup>6</sup> Without efforts to account for and address disaster risk, the world can expect losses from disasters to double by 2030.<sup>7</sup>
- Available data, while limited, indicate that disasters caused by natural hazards kill more women than men, particularly in major calamities.<sup>8</sup>
- Food security crises are becoming more protracted. In 2010, 19 countries in Africa alone reported having experienced food security crises in at least eight of the 10 previous years. In 1990, only five countries reported this kind of protracted emergency.<sup>9</sup>
- Some 1.5 billion people – more than one in five people around the world – are currently living in areas affected by fragility, conflict or large-scale violence.<sup>10</sup>
- Most civilian deaths are predicted to occur among the millions of people caught in 'conflict traps', their lives marred by repeated cycles of fighting.<sup>11</sup>
- 81 percent of disaster deaths are in low- and lower-middle-income countries – although these countries account for only 33 percent of disasters.<sup>12</sup>
- In 2014, for the first time since World War II, more than 50 million people were displaced from their homes around the world.<sup>13</sup>

4 CRED (2012) 'Disaster Data: A Balanced Perspective'. Note that some of this increase is likely due to better reporting.

5 A. Dai et al. (2004) 'A Global Dataset of Palmer Drought Severity Index for 1870–2002', p.1125.

6 UNISDR (2013) 'Towards the Post-2015 Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction'.

7 United Nations General Assembly (2013) 'Implementation of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction'.

8 E. Neumayer and T. Plümper (2007) 'The Gendered Nature of Natural Disasters'.

9 IFRC (2011) 'World Disaster Report 2011', p.126.

10 World Bank (2011) 'The World Development Report 2011'. An estimated 21 percent of a total global population of 7.142 billion, based on United States Census Bureau estimates.

11 An estimated 73 percent of the world's bottom billion have been through a civil war or are in one. See P. Collier (2007) *The Bottom Billion*, p.32.

12 UNDP/UNICEF/Oxfam/GFDRR (2014) 'Disaster Risk Reduction Makes Development Sustainable'.

13 UNHCR (2014) 'Global Trends 2013', p.2.



## 1.3 HUMANITARIAN INFLUENCING

In order to address these growing challenges, powerful duty bearers, such as governments, the UN and regional organizations, need to be held accountable to their humanitarian obligations.

This is why humanitarian influencing is so important. The ultimate aim of humanitarian influencing is to improve the lives of women, men, girls and boys at risk or caught up in humanitarian crises and to help them raise their voices and claim their rights. Effective humanitarian influencing work can contribute to the following:

- Changes to policies (laws, norms, official rules) as well as practices (the way in which these policies are or are not applied) that increase conflict and disaster risk;
- Better implementation of policies that would help poor people to cope with crises;
- Enhanced impacts of life-saving humanitarian assistance and sustainable long-term development work;
- More active participation of those who are often excluded from decision-making processes in crisis situations – including through amplifying the voices of affected communities;
- Increased accountability of governments, donors and other duty bearers to ensure that people affected by crises can access life-saving assistance and protection in accordance with their human rights and needs;
- Strengthened global, national and local civil society and more open civil society space;
- Enhanced organizational brand profile, which can help to generate additional support and funds for organizational aims and objectives.

### 1.3.1. ADDRESSING ROOT CAUSES

Humanitarian influencing should help draw attention to the injustices that lie at the heart of humanitarian crises:

- The injustice of poverty, which leaves millions of people vulnerable and exposed in times of crisis;
- The injustice of gender inequality, which leaves women marginalized and at risk of abuse in emergencies;
- The injustice of racist, ethnically motivated and sectarian violence, which can escalate into conscious, shocking crimes like genocide;
- The injustice of climate-related disasters and environmental degradation, which disproportionately affect the poorest communities who have contributed least to the problem;
- Socio-economic inequality and power imbalances, which fuel conflict and undermine resilience.

By tackling these root causes and exacerbating factors, we can help to prevent humanitarian crises and the suffering they cause.



Women in Buporo IDP camp, Eastern DRC, attend an Oxfam supported protection forum in December 2014. Credit: Eleanor Farmer/Oxfam.

## 2 PRINCIPLES AND STANDARDS

Humanitarian influencing is guided by rights-based values and core humanitarian principles – with an emphasis on upholding the rights of all people to protection and assistance in times of crisis. It is often necessary and appropriate to ground humanitarian arguments in international laws and standards.

## 2.1 INTERNATIONAL HUMANITARIAN LAW

The four Geneva Conventions and their two Additional Protocols are the basis of **international humanitarian law (IHL)**, which applies during armed conflict. The fourth Geneva Convention concerns the protection of civilians during war, and prohibits combatants from targeting them.

War crimes are serious violations of IHL as well as customary crimes, including rape, recruitment of children, hostage taking, targeting aid workers or blocking supplies, making demilitarized zones the object of attack, using human shields, slavery, collective punishments and using starvation of civilians as a method of warfare.<sup>14</sup>

Under IHL, parties to conflict must protect and meet the basic needs of civilians in territory under their control, and must allow impartial humanitarian organizations access to meet those needs (see **section 4.3** on humanitarian access).<sup>15</sup>

IHL provides a basis of rights and obligations from which to engage with duty bearers – both parties to the conflict and other states with responsibilities.<sup>16</sup> Importantly, duties under IHL apply both to armed state forces and to armed non-state actors (see **section 3.9**).

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14 See the ICRC website at: [https://www.icrc.org/customary-ihl/eng/docs/v1\\_cha\\_chapter44\\_rule156](https://www.icrc.org/customary-ihl/eng/docs/v1_cha_chapter44_rule156)

15 Geneva Convention IV Articles 10, 17; Additional Protocol I Articles 69, 70.

16 For a comprehensive resource on IHL provisions, see the ICRC War & Law website at: <https://www.icrc.org/en/war-and-law>

## 2.2 CORE HUMANITARIAN PRINCIPLES

The Red Cross drew up a set of seven '**fundamental principles**' for its humanitarian action in 1965. Of these, four are generally recognized as being core to humanitarian action: humanity, impartiality, independence and neutrality. These four principles are enshrined in UN General Assembly Resolutions,<sup>17</sup> and all UN member states and UN humanitarian agencies are obliged to respect them. According to the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA),<sup>18</sup> they are defined as:

- **Humanity (also often called the 'humanitarian imperative')**: Human suffering must be addressed wherever it is found. The purpose of humanitarian action is to protect life and health and ensure respect for human beings.
- **Impartiality**: Humanitarian action must be carried out on the basis of need alone, giving priority to the most urgent cases of distress and making no distinctions on the basis of nationality, race, gender, religious belief, class or political opinions.
- **Independence**: Humanitarian action must be autonomous from the political, economic, military or other objectives that any actor may hold with regard to areas where humanitarian action is being implemented.
- **Neutrality**: Humanitarian actors must not take sides in hostilities or engage in controversies of a political, racial, religious or ideological nature.<sup>19</sup>

Oxfam's programme and influencing work in emergencies is underpinned by a commitment to humanitarian principles. These principles are often at the heart of some of the most difficult humanitarian dilemmas that Oxfam and others face – how can we ensure our independence, how can we respond to the neediest groups without being perceived as partial, when should we speak out on political issues for humanitarian reasons? As well as striving to uphold humanitarian principles ourselves, we also react when we feel that governments, elements of the UN humanitarian system or other duty bearers under international law are failing to uphold them.

### GUIDANCE

#### Oxfam and neutrality

Oxfam does not take sides in hostilities or align itself with political parties or parties to a conflict. Nevertheless, Oxfam does not claim to be a neutral organization: Oxfam is a humanitarian organization.

The Oxford English Dictionary defines neutrality as 'The state of not supporting or helping either side in a conflict, disagreement, etc.', and to this extent Oxfam does behave in a neutral way. However, the formally accepted definition of neutrality in the context of humanitarian principles is different. As set out by OCHA, neutrality is defined as: 'Humanitarian actors must not take sides in hostilities or *engage in controversies of a political, racial, religious or ideological nature*' (emphasis added). It is this second half of the definition that Oxfam cannot abide by and is why it is not a neutral organization.

The most vulnerable people in any disaster are the least powerful and the poorest. As a rights-based organization, Oxfam believes that it is vital both to help people meet their immediate needs and to address the underlying causes of vulnerability. Poverty is fundamentally a result of socio-political choices. Therefore in order to tackle the causes of vulnerability Oxfam must

17 **UNGA resolution 46/182** (1991): 'Humanitarian assistance must be provided in accordance with the principles of humanity, neutrality and impartiality.' **UNGA resolution 58/114** (2003) added independence as a fourth key principle underlying humanitarian action. Note that these principles echo references in the Geneva Conventions (e.g. **Geneva Convention IV**, Article 10) to humanitarian action and impartiality.

18 Find out more: **OCHA (2010) 'Humanitarian Principles'**

19 Some NGOs, while committed to giving impartial assistance and not taking sides in hostilities, do not consider that the principle of neutrality precludes undertaking advocacy on justice issues related to political and ideological questions. This is recognized in the **Core Humanitarian Standard**, p.8 (see **section 2.4** on codes and standards).



speaking out against policies that contribute to poverty, marginalization, inequality and other forms of injustice. These issues are often controversial – for example, championing women’s rights in some countries and cultures.

Some organizations, including the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) and OCHA, argue that the second part of the definition is directly linked to taking sides in a conflict and not to all other aspects of the work of an organization. However, Oxfam believes that it is more straightforward to be clear that we will take a stand in favour of people’s human rights.

It is important to be explicit about our non-neutral status to avoid accusations of hypocrisy. An online World Humanitarian Summit (WHS) consultation in January 2015 found that 70.5 percent of respondents (out of around 200 participants) disagreed with the statement ‘most humanitarian organizations can credibly claim to be neutral’, and 70.1 percent said that they should therefore cease claiming to be neutral. Claiming neutrality but taking up policy positions and conducting advocacy campaigns risks accusations of hypocrisy directly undermining how we wish to be perceived and in turn risks limiting our access to those in need.

Oxfam is committed to the Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and NGOs in Disaster Relief and the Humanitarian Charter in Sphere (see [section 2.4](#) on codes and standards). Neither of these specifically references neutrality in the delivery of principled humanitarian assistance. Neutrality is an agreed principle of the Core Humanitarian Standard, but based on the rationale of IFRC and OCHA there is a clause stipulating that the interpretation of neutrality does not prohibit rights-based advocacy.

In sensitive and insecure environments Oxfam understands the importance of not taking sides – and in that sense being perceived as neutral – in order to ensure that the most vulnerable women, men, girls and boys are able to access our assistance.

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## 2.3 HUMAN RIGHTS

International human rights law (IHRL) applies in all contexts. Even in emergencies or war, core ‘non-derogable’ rights cannot be suspended or limited. These include the right to life and the right not to be tortured or treated in an inhuman or degrading manner.

IHRL is enshrined in the **Universal Declaration of Human Rights** (UDHR), the **International Convention on Civil and Political rights** (ICCPR) and the **International Convention on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights** (ICESCR) – together known as the ‘International Bill of Human Rights’.

IHRL also incorporates dozens of other global and regional instruments.<sup>20</sup> Critical global instruments in crisis situations include the **Genocide Convention** and the **Convention Against Torture** and other conventions focusing on specific rights holders, such as the **Convention on the Rights of the Child** (CRC) and the **Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women** (CEDAW). Regional instruments such as the **Maputo Protocol**,<sup>21</sup> the **European Convention on Human Rights** (ECHR) and the **American Convention on Human Rights** also contain important provisions relating to rights in crisis situations in their respective jurisdictions.

The particular rights of refugees and other displaced people are set out in the **1951 Refugee Convention** and the **UN Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement**, as well as in regional conventions and declarations.<sup>22</sup>

### GUIDANCE

#### Oxfam’s commitment to a human rights-based approach

At the core of all of Oxfam’s work is the rights-based approach. In this approach, human rights and dignity determine the relationship between duty bearers and individuals and groups with valid claims according to IHRL.

Within the framework of a rights-based approach, in emergency response Oxfam is committed to prioritizing the rights of women, men, boys and girls to life with dignity. We will help people affected by disasters to have their voice heard. We will support people to claim their rights and hold duty bearers to account for the provision of quality assistance and protection from violence, coercion and deliberate deprivation.

Oxfam believes that the right to life and security – while taking precedence in an emergency – must be linked to other rights if people are to take control of their lives and raise themselves out of poverty. Integrating humanitarian, development and influencing work increases our potential to have a lasting impact on the lives of people caught up in crisis.

<sup>20</sup> For a full list of IHRL instruments, go to the UNHCR website at: <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/Pages/TreatyBodies.aspx>; or the International Justice Resource Center at: <http://www.ijrcenter.org/research-aids/international-human-rights-instruments/>.

<sup>21</sup> Otherwise known as the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa.

<sup>22</sup> Such as the African Union’s Kampala Convention, the **IDP Protocol** of the Great Lakes Stability Pact, the Council of Europe’s Committee of Ministers Recommendation Rec(2006)6 and OAS General Assembly AG/RES. 2417 of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights.

## 2.4 CODES AND STANDARDS

The humanitarian and human rights principles underpin a number of other codes and standards that most established NGOs, including Oxfam, and many governments have endorsed.

The **Code of Conduct** for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and NGOs in Disaster Relief sets out 10 commitments. These expand on the core humanitarian principles, with additional undertakings to respect culture and custom, build local capacity to respond to emergencies, involve beneficiaries in programme management, reduce vulnerability to future crises, be accountable to both donors and recipients of aid and maintain the dignity of those affected by crisis in all communications.

**The Humanitarian Charter**, agreed by a wide range of humanitarian agencies in 1997, draws on IHL and IHRL to set out basic principles. The Charter summarizes three basic rights to be observed and protected by humanitarian agencies: the right to life with dignity, the right to receive humanitarian assistance and the right to protection and security. The **Sphere Standards** outline minimum standards and indicators for quality humanitarian assistance as a practical expression of the principles in the Humanitarian Charter. They include both sectoral and general quality standards and principles of protection.

The **Core Humanitarian Standard on Quality and Accountability (CHS)** sets out commitments that organizations and individuals involved in humanitarian response can use to improve the quality and effectiveness of the assistance they provide. Launched in December 2014, it is the result of the **Joint Standards Initiative (JSI)**, in which the **Humanitarian Accountability Partnership (HAP) International**, **People In Aid** and the **Sphere Project** joined forces to seek greater coherence for users of humanitarian standards. The CHS essentially amalgamates and replaces the 2010 HAP Standard in Accountability and Quality Management, the People In Aid Code of Good Practice in the Management and Support of Aid Personnel and the Core Standards section of the Sphere Handbook.

Promoting global adoption and adherence to humanitarian standards and principles is vital, particularly given the proliferation of different actors involved in humanitarian response (see **section 3**: 'Who's who in the humanitarian arena').

### CASE STUDY 1 Promoting Sphere standards in China

Oxfam is one of the Sphere focal points in China, taking up the responsibility to promote the Sphere Project's principles and standards among civil society and other humanitarian actors in the country.

With endorsement from the Sphere Project, Oxfam translated the Sphere Handbook, 'Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Humanitarian Response' (2011 edition), into Chinese and published this Chinese version. The handbook was launched at a press conference in Beijing and Oxfam has used it since then to promote Sphere standards to NGO and government partners at county, provincial and national levels in mainland China and Hong Kong.

Several Sphere trainings were run with local authorities and NGO partners in the poorest provinces that are prone to the most frequent disasters. Participants committed to comply with Sphere standards in their future humanitarian responses. Oxfam has supported other actors to conduct Sphere trainings for Chinese government officials (e.g. officials from the Chinese Center of Disease Control) by providing them with free copies of the Chinese-language handbook.

Oxfam also works in cooperation with local partners to promote Sphere minimum standards during emergencies. For example, after the Ya'an earthquake in Sichuan province in 2013, Oxfam worked with a partner organization to set up water supply recovery projects and temporary latrines in the poorest and most remote areas affected. Tests were conducted on water quality

and quantity before and after project implementation, to ensure that all projects complied with Sphere standards. The latrines were also designed in accordance with the minimum standards set out in the Sphere Handbook.



Oxfam Hong Kong introduced the Sphere Project and the Chinese translation of the Sphere Handbook at a press conference in Beijing. Credit: Zhang Cheng Gang

## LINKS AND RESOURCES

- » [Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights \(OHCHR\)](#) – for a full list of International human rights instruments and their monitoring bodies
- » ICRC [War & Law website](#) – for a full list of IHL provisions
- » OCHA (2010) '[Humanitarian Principles](#)'
- » K. Mackintosh (2000) '[The Principles of Humanitarian Action in International Humanitarian Law](#)'





Ruth (name changed), 4, collects drinking water from an Oxfam tap stand in a camp in Eastern DRC in December 2014. Credit: Eleanor Farmer/Oxfam

## 3 WHO'S WHO IN THE HUMANITARIAN ARENA?

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This section provides an overview of who is involved in humanitarian action and tips and strategies for engaging with and influencing the myriad of players. These include affected communities and wider civil society; national governments; military forces, peacekeeping operations and armed non-state actors; regional organizations; the UN and the international humanitarian system; government and philanthropic donors and the private sector. All of these actors have key roles to play in humanitarian crises and can be supported and influenced in order to improve the situation for people affected by conflicts and disasters.

## 3.1 AFFECTED COMMUNITIES

The first responders in any emergency are families and communities. Often they are the only actors present and able to respond, and will do so spontaneously – opening up their homes to family members, neighbours and sometimes complete strangers in need, forming search and rescue parties or rebuilding damaged infrastructure.

Affected communities are also the stakeholders best able to guide other local, national and international humanitarian efforts so that they target those most in need and provide the right kinds of protection and assistance.

Ensuring that affected communities have a voice and a clear role in decision making about humanitarian priorities is therefore critical for effective humanitarian action. Affected communities also have the right to information to enable them to make informed choices about the response. It is therefore critical for organizations like Oxfam to ensure that any humanitarian advocacy and influencing work is informed by and supports affected communities to access information and have a voice. Engagement with affected communities for this purpose can be done in a range of ways; for example:

- Community meetings and consultations (coordinated with other humanitarian actors so that the same communities are not continually consulted by different actors);
- Surveys involving affected community members, such as protection surveys (see [section 4.2](#));
- Supporting affected community members to form committees that can advocate for what they need (such as WASH committees – see [section 4.1.1](#));
- Sharing information through digital and social media, traditional media (e.g. radio), leaflets, information briefings and other forms of communication;
- Participatory programming approaches – such as Participatory Capacity and Vulnerability Assessments (PCVAs), which are the first step in developing community-based disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation programmes.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> See Oxfam (2012) 'Participatory Capacity and Vulnerability Analysis: A Practitioner's Guide'.

## 3.2 CIVIL SOCIETY

### FIND OXFAM POLICY POSITIONS AND STANDARDS

- » Oxfam (2013) '[Oxfam Policy Compendium Note: Civil Society in Fragile and Conflict-Affected States](#)'
- » Oxfam (2013) '[Oxfam Policy Compendium Note: Oxfam's Role in Humanitarian Action](#)'

Oxfam defines civil society broadly as 'everything between the citizen and the state' – from community self-help groups to trade unions and business groups, media, church and religious groups, youth and women's movements and peace campaigners – as well as national and international NGOs both within and outside the given country, and other transnational groups (such as refugees, asylum seekers, stateless people and diaspora groups). Communities affected by emergencies (see [section 3.1](#) above) are also part of civil society.

As a member of international civil society, Oxfam places support for national and local civil society at the heart of its values and work. Without a strong and vibrant civil society, the power of duty bearers – including states, corporations, non-state armed groups and the international humanitarian community – often goes unchallenged. With a strong civil society, citizens can come together to claim their rights, and ultimately make society more equitable.

Members of civil society play a vital role in humanitarian crises – as early responders, peace builders and rebuilders and as agitators for long-term change to prevent future crises. Civil society can:

- Encourage active citizenship, particularly among marginalized groups, and help to amplify their voices;
- Act as a 'watchdog' to make the state more accountable to citizens and others affected in times of crisis (e.g. refugees);
- Conduct research and present policy advice and alternatives;
- Influence other humanitarian responders to effectively meet the protection and assistance needs of communities on the ground;
- Provide services – including humanitarian assistance – to complement the state, fill gaps where necessary and showcase innovations that the state could adopt at scale;
- Fundraise and provide critical financing for response – including through donations and private remittances.

### 3.2.1 PARTNERING AND ALIGNING WITH NATIONAL CIVIL SOCIETY IN EMERGENCIES

Research commissioned in 2013 by a group of international NGOs (including Oxfam) found that partnering with local and national civil society organizations (CSOs) in emergencies can improve the relevance, appropriateness and effectiveness of humanitarian assistance and enable better transitioning between resilience, response and recovery.<sup>24</sup> With humanitarian crises expected to go on increasing in number and complexity, it is clear that the formal international humanitarian system needs to engage more systematically in support of national civil society efforts.

24 ActionAid, CAFOD, Christian Aid, Oxfam, Tearfund (2013) 'Missed Opportunities'.

Crises can strike in countries that have strong and active civil society networks or in countries where civil society is weak and constrained, which will influence the role that CSOs play. For example in Pakistan, which has a history of CSOs as strong as almost anywhere in the world, civil society has played a central and organized role in humanitarian action. In other places where CSOs are struggling to survive – for instance where governments seek to suppress criticism – their role is often less visible, although they may still be highly active behind the scenes.

### Oxfam's approach to partnerships

Oxfam is committed to working increasingly 'through the capacity of other organizations, partners and communities' in order to ensure more effective crisis response.<sup>25</sup> While the extent to which we work with partners to deliver humanitarian assistance and protection varies from country to country, partnerships lie at the core of how we understand our role.<sup>26</sup>

Oxfam aims to consistently engage with and support the humanitarian influencing work of national and local CSOs. This is because we believe that national and local actors have primary legitimacy in their own countries and because we believe that this will have the most impact in terms of promoting long-term, sustainable change. Increasingly, Oxfam is partnering with women's rights organizations (WROs) in disaster preparedness and response, as a way of ensuring that issues affecting women and girls are automatically brought into the design of a humanitarian response. Working with WROs also helps to improve the overall gender analysis that is critical to an effective response.

Partnerships are mutually empowering relationships, focused on impact, mutual growth and accountability, organizational development and institutional strengthening. Oxfam's partnerships commonly include contractual relationships which are nevertheless based on trust and evolve through dialogue, shared experience and a deep commitment to achieving sustained changes in the lives of vulnerable and marginalized people.

To be an effective partner for national and local CSOs, it is important to understand the conditions under which they are operating, and their capacity to respond. It is also vital to be aware of power imbalances and to seek to embed mutual accountability into the partnership from the outset, in order to avoid a donor/beneficiary-type relationship.

## 3.2.2 SUPPORTING ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP AND SOCIAL MOVEMENTS

In addition to formal partnerships with CSOs, Oxfam is committed to supporting social movements through engaging with national people's groups and influencers (such as religious leaders), convening, linking and enabling safe spaces for meeting and dialogue, as well as providing training and material support and assistance to collective efforts.

The aim of this work is to foster active citizenship and advance the right of all people to be heard, but working with social movements is also key to effective humanitarian action. For example, organizations that support social movements for gender justice and women's economic and political participation are better placed to work with informal women's groups in times of conflict and disaster, and therefore better able to address the gendered impacts of crises and promote transformational women's leadership in the response (see [section 4.4](#) on gender justice in crises).

<sup>25</sup> Oxfam, 'The Power of People Against Poverty', Goal 3: Saving lives, now and in the future.

<sup>26</sup> See Oxfam (2012) 'Working Together: Oxfam's Partnership Principles'.



## CASE STUDY 2 Within and Without the State

Within and Without the State (WWS) is a five-year Oxfam programme funded by the UK's Department for International Development (DFID) which seeks to pilot innovative approaches to working with civil society in a number of fragile and conflict-affected contexts, including South Sudan, Yemen, Afghanistan and the Occupied Palestinian Territory (OPT) and Israel.

In South Sudan, WWS has supported national civil society engagement with the government and other duty bearers through efforts to build trust and understanding between the two: working with the state on constitutional matters, lobbying for change and encouraging citizen involvement in governance.



MP and public dialogue in Wulu, South Sudan, February 2013. Credit: Crispin Hughes.

In the OPT, WWS has also been working with civil society groups to promote gender equality and equal rights for people with disabilities. Oxfam has trained CSOs in advocacy skills, so that they can lobby the authorities to resolve disputes over water and electricity.

In Afghanistan, Oxfam is working with the Afghan Civil Society Organizations Network for Peace (ACSONP), a national network of over 70 CSOs, to strengthen their capacity to help build peace. ACSONP helps civil society play a catalytic role in peace negotiations at the provincial level. One example was the Parwan peace hearing in August 2012, which brought together CSOs and influential actors such as the provincial governor (previously a warlord), the chief of police, the head of the provincial parliament and media representatives. Participants discussed everything from violence against women to the role of the provincial parliament in promoting inclusive peace. The Parwan hearing opened up an important dialogue between CSOs and a diverse range of stakeholders – dialogue that is necessary for building peace and addressing social exclusion, particularly of women.

In all its programmes, WWS focuses on building local capacity and raising the voices of women and youth in holding duty bearers accountable. Oxfam often also works with foreign governments and international organizations like the UN to use their influence on the national state to build 'space' for civil society, e.g. through positive legislation on civil society, media and trade unions. For example, it has lobbied foreign governments to allow Afghan CSOs a voice in various national and international processes and conferences relating to the country.

Find out more: R. Chilvers (2014) ['Promoting Active Citizenship in Fragile States - Four Lessons'](#) Policy & Practice Blog

## LINKS AND RESOURCES

- » Oxfam (2014) ['Programming on the Right to be Heard: A Learning Companion'](#)
- » Oxfam (2012) ['Working Together: Oxfam's Partnership Principles'](#)
- » ActionAid, CAFOD, Christian Aid, Oxfam, Tearfund (2013) ['Missed Opportunities: The Case for Strengthening National and Local Partnership-Based Humanitarian Responses'](#)
- » ActionAid, CAFOD, Christian Aid, Oxfam, Tearfund (2013) ['Missed Again: Making Space for Partnership in the Typhoon Haiyan Response'](#)
- » Oxfam (forthcoming 2016) ['Influencing for Impact Guide'](#), section 3.5 on alliance building and partnerships.

## 3.3 GOVERNMENTS

### FIND OXFAM POLICY POSITIONS AND STANDARDS

- » Oxfam (2013) 'Crises in a New World Order'
- » Oxfam (2012) 'Oxfam Policy Compendium Note: The Accountability of National Security Forces to Civilians'

States are the primary duty bearers responsible for meeting the humanitarian needs of their citizens and of refugees and other non-citizens in their jurisdictions. National and sub-national governments are also often the biggest responders to disasters.

States often have huge government machineries which can be deployed very rapidly, with people already on the ground in affected areas. However, government aid may be less visible than international forms of assistance and may not be delivered in accordance with international humanitarian principles (see [section 2.2](#)).

Any international humanitarian response must respect government capacity and be designed where possible to complement and support the government's own humanitarian efforts, in line with international principles and standards. The extent to which this is possible will vary considerably depending on the context and government in question.



Noveline Pinote, who is 7 months pregnant, prepares a fishing net by the shore in Poo, the Philippines. Oxfam has called upon the Philippine government to recognize women fisher farmers in rehabilitation efforts following Typhoon Haiyan in November 2013. Credit: Tessa Bunney/Oxfam.

### 3.3.1 ENGAGING WITH DIFFERENT NATIONAL GOVERNMENTS

Despite the vital role of national governments in humanitarian crises, aid agencies have too often been disengaged from them.<sup>27</sup> This is especially the case in fragile and conflict-affected states, where direct engagement with national authorities can often be difficult.

The right approach for engaging with and influencing national authorities will largely depend on the capacity and willingness of the state to respond to humanitarian needs. While confident and effectively governed states may welcome civil society advocacy, others may discourage it. Influencing strategies must be sensitive and responsive to these dynamics and adopted on the basis of **careful risk analysis** (an assessment of the context and an understanding of why a state might be willing or unwilling to engage and respond). Oxfam works in two ways: firstly to influence duty bearers into responding to emergencies, so that men, women and children in need or at risk are offered assistance and have their rights respected; secondly, by addressing and ultimately remedying the political and structural root causes of their vulnerability.

**Figure 1** breaks states into four different typologies: those willing and able to meet their responsibilities to provide assistance to communities in times of crisis, and willing and able to engage with the wider humanitarian community and civil society in this endeavour; those neither willing nor able, where space for civil society is severely restricted; those able but unwilling; and those willing but with such low state capacity that they are not in a position to adequately respond to a crisis at scale.

**FIGURE 1: International response options for varying combinations of state willingness and ability**

<p><b>Able but unwilling state</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support to parts of government that are more willing to respond and engage</li> <li>• Direct operational response in major crises</li> <li>• National/international advocacy for improved state performance and legislative reforms as needed, primarily through support to national CSOs and other key influencers</li> </ul>	<p><b>Willing and able state</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Operational support in major crises only</li> <li>• National advocacy for improved state performance as needed, primarily through support to national CSOs</li> </ul>
<p><b>Unwilling and unable state</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More work in alliance with others based on analysis of perception, acceptance and risks (including CSO partners, other INGOs, UN, non-traditional entities such as private sector, etc.)</li> <li>• Operational response where possible in small and medium-sized crises as well as large</li> <li>• Advocacy for international support</li> </ul>	<p><b>Willing but unable state</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• State capacity building and support for other national/local actors</li> <li>• Operational response where local capacity is insufficient</li> <li>• Advocacy for international support</li> </ul>

It should, however, be recognized that this matrix provides only a two-dimensional view, when the reality is often more complex. Most countries fall in or between multiple categories at different times – especially given that political cycles mean that governments are not static. In addition, at times states may be willing and able but also party to a conflict and therefore still disqualified as credible humanitarian actors and partners in humanitarian work. Therefore these typologies should be regarded as an indicative guide for ways to engage with different types of governments at different points in time.

## Multiple forms of engagement

Even where national governments are generally willing and able to prevent and respond to crises, civil society actors have a vital role to play in engaging with them. This is because political dynamics and constraints can influence the extent to which even highly capacitated and engaged national governments prioritize the needs and rights of people caught up in crisis situations.

As demonstrated by the case study on Bangladesh (see **Case Study 3**), in countries where capacity and willingness are generally high, there are a variety of creative and effective options available to influence the state.

### **CASE STUDY 3** Influencing the Bangladesh government in response to floods

In 2011–12, floods in Bangladesh affected over 900,000 people and completely destroyed some 50,383 homes.<sup>28</sup> Despite the scale of the emergency, the floods received little political or media attention nationally, and none internationally. Oxfam judged that while the government had the capacity to respond to the crisis at scale, its willingness to do so was constrained by a lack of public attention to the crisis and by fears that a full-scale response would be unaffordable.

To address this, Oxfam raised the public profile of the disaster by sending a professional photographer to cover the floods and exhibiting the photos at a high-profile Bangladeshi gallery. The exhibition, coupled with media coverage and lobby meetings around it, raised the profile of the disaster considerably with the public and political leaders. This increased profile resulted in more immediate government assistance to flood-affected communities in the form of grants, local government distributions and work to improve embankments and drainage, as well as longer-term initiatives to improve tidal river management.

At the same time Oxfam worked with communities, national civil society partners, key government officials and donors to demonstrate to the government that a significant proportion of the shelter needs of those displaced by the floods could be covered at relatively low cost. In partnership with the government, Oxfam supported partners to deliver 12,000 flood-resilient homes and latrines – 10 percent more than planned – under budget and in less than a year. In addition to the direct benefits of this shelter programme for communities, this initiative opened doors with national and local leaders, including local MPs and the Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief. This increased political access enabled Oxfam and other civil society partners to influence the government's commitment to delivering cost-effective and resilient shelter assistance at scale to people affected by floods in the future.

This experience shows the importance of engaging state authorities at multiple levels and in a variety of ways for greater influence – from lobbying and influencing through the media to relationship building through direct partnerships with government authorities.

## Dealing with restrictive space

Unwilling states will always pose the greatest challenge, but even in countries where there appears to be limited space for civil society advocacy, it is still possible to engage with and influence the humanitarian policy and practice of governments. This can be done by wisely selecting the issues to work on, engaging parts of the government that are more sympathetic to the issue and partnering with others to reduce risks and increase influence. For example, in Oxfam's experience, engaging with and influencing the policies of local government authorities is often possible even in countries where national government authorities are openly hostile to NGOs.



## Capacity building

In countries where governments have low capacity to prevent and respond to crises, but a high willingness to do so, influencing will often take the form of capacity building so that they gain the ability to respond, or advocating for more support from other humanitarian actors (such as the UN or partner governments) so that the most vulnerable people have access to assistance and protection in the face of increasing crises.

In order to ensure that this kind of support and assistance actually contribute to increasing state capacity, it is vital that NGOs and other humanitarian actors coordinate their activities with government authorities themselves. Too often, NGOs, partner governments and other humanitarian actors go it alone, or provide support to state authorities in the form of one-off capacity-building initiatives that are not connected to one another.

Oxfam often seeks to play a brokering role to bring together the various actors to facilitate more coordinated engagement with governments around capacity building and response (for an example, see [Case Study 4](#)). In many other cases this function will be performed by the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) (see [section 3.5.1](#)).

### CASE STUDY 4

## Brokering and coordinating with government and civil society in Vanuatu

Vanuatu is highly exposed to natural disasters and the impacts of climate change. While the government of the South Pacific island nation is committed to addressing these issues, as a least developed country (LDC) and small island developing state (SIDS) Vanuatu has low capacity to meet the enormous challenge. A large number of humanitarian and development actors are working in Vanuatu, but historically they have not coordinated or collaborated effectively with each other or with the government.

In 2011 Oxfam decided to focus its Vanuatu programme on brokering and coordinating between government, NGOs and civil society for better humanitarian and resilience outcomes. The Vanuatu Humanitarian Team (VHT), a group of NGOs and Red Cross and UN agencies led by Oxfam, aims to strengthen national and provincial coordination and build the capacity and ability of non-government and government actors to better coordinate and maximize their collective capacities for improved humanitarian response.

The VHT has led to closer and more productive engagement with the Government of Vanuatu on disaster and climate policy and has resulted in better-coordinated responses – evidenced by the 2015 response to Cyclone Pam, which affected 166,000 people, and the 2014 response to Cyclone Lusi, which affected 20,000 people. It has helped to facilitate more effective and timely decision making and better use of collective resources, resulting in improved quality of assistance to disaster victims.

One respondent to an endline evaluation of the VHT commented:

**'Overall the sector has come forward in leaps and bounds in two years. The VHT has done an amazing job in coordination; getting people together, getting people to the table to talk about coordination. That's started the momentum and I think it'll continue.'**<sup>29</sup>

29 See presentation by Paolo Malatu, VHT Coordinator for Oxfam in Vanuatu. P. Malatu (2014) ['The Vanuatu Humanitarian Team'](#), p.11.

### 3.3.2 ENGAGING WITH LOCAL AUTHORITIES

National governments are not monolithic entities. Effective influencing of government structures requires a good understanding of who holds formal and informal power, as well as who has a mandate for developing policy and making and implementing decisions, and at what level: national, state, provincial, county, village, etc.

In many contexts states have highly decentralized governance structures, with local authorities assuming a great deal of responsibility in times of humanitarian crisis. Being closer to citizens than other public institutions, local authorities are often key catalysts for change. In emergencies they are usually first responders, along with affected communities. As noted above, the proximity of local authorities to local constituents can mean that they are a more strategic entry point for engaging with government in contexts where there is restricted civil society space.

Building relationships and trust with local authorities is an important strategy for influencing government policy and practice relating to humanitarian crises, as demonstrated by **Case Study 5**.

#### CASE STUDY 5

### Partnering with local authorities in responding to the Syria refugee crisis in Lebanon

Oxfam Italy began working in Lebanon after the conflict between the country and Israel in 2006, with a focus on post-emergency interventions aimed at restoring social and economic conditions. This work involved partnerships with several municipalities and unions of municipalities.

Municipalities in Lebanon are entrusted with a broad range of tasks. The law stipulates that any work having a public character or utility within the area of the municipality falls under the jurisdiction of the Municipal Council. However, municipalities have to deal with administrative and fiscal constraints: most of the 985 municipalities, of which 70 percent are small (fewer than 4,000 registered inhabitants), do not have the capacity to provide many of the services they are mandated to deliver. Almost 400 municipalities do not have a single employee and another 400 have very weak municipal administrations.

With the outbreak of the Syria conflict in 2011, Oxfam Italy began providing humanitarian assistance to Syrian refugees in Lebanon. Between 2013 and 2014 it reached 78,000 Syrian refugees (of whom 40,014 were women and girls) with assistance including food vouchers, cash for rent, cash for work, WASH and education services and protection programmes. Most programmes were conducted in partnership with local municipal partners, including the Union of Municipalities of Zgharta, the Municipality of Bcharre and, more recently, the municipalities of Ghazze and Andaket.

Oxfam Italy judged that, in the Lebanese context, working through local authorities would be vital. This was because Syrian refugees were dispersed throughout municipalities rather than in camps, and bypassing or substituting for municipalities would endanger the authority and legitimacy of local authorities and would ultimately be less sustainable.

As a result of this partnership approach with local authorities, Oxfam has developed a deeper knowledge of the territory and needs of local communities; improved the knowledge and capacity of local authorities to implement humanitarian strategies; helped to enhance local municipal governance, which will have long-term benefits; and helped to influence changes to local regulations relating to disaster preparedness and management (which, it is hoped, will help to trigger changes to national policies).

There have also been a number of challenges, including a lack of long-term donor investment in supporting work with local authorities; the need for municipalities to look not only at humanitarian response issues but also at wider development needs in their territories; and general bureaucratic hurdles that have caused delays in the implementation of activities.

These challenges require a shift to more long-term capacity-building support, which Lebanese

local authorities have been demanding from international partners for some time. Such capacity-building support is vital, given that Lebanese local authorities are on the frontline of the Syrian crisis and will continue to be so for a long time to come.

For the full case study, see Oxfam Italia (2014) '[The Partnership with Local Authorities in Responding to Humanitarian Crisis: The Case of Lebanon – Lessons Learned and Recommendations](#)'.

### 3.3.3 ENGAGING WITH THE STATE SECURITY SECTOR

The state security sector includes all entities involved in upholding the rule of law (such as police forces and gendarmeries, judicial and penal institutions), maintaining national defence (such as armed forces), intelligence services and civil authorities responsible for oversight, such as the parliament, the executive, and the defence ministry.<sup>30</sup>

Security forces can be a source of protection for populations and a tool of stability for governments, or they can be a source of instability and abuse. The accountability, professionalism and effectiveness of national security and police forces, particularly in situations of conflict and post-conflict transition, are essential to protecting civilians from violence and crime. Poorly trained security services also pose problems to aid agencies and hinder humanitarian access (see [section 4.3](#) on humanitarian access).

To help address these issues, civil society actors operating in humanitarian contexts need to have a good understanding of civil–military coordination standards and principles (see [section 3.8.2](#) on civil–military relations).

#### LINKS AND RESOURCES

- » Oxfam (2012) '[Crises in a New World Order: Challenging the Humanitarian Project](#)'
- » Humanitarian Policy Group (2009) '[Towards Good Humanitarian Government: The Role of the Affected State in Disaster Response](#)'

30 See OECD DAC (2005) '[Security System Reform and Governance](#)'.

## 3.4 REGIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

Regional groupings of states complement global and national actors in a range of crisis-related roles, from mandating peacekeeping missions to mediating peace negotiations, as well as setting humanitarian policies and cross-border coordination of humanitarian action and disaster risk reduction (DRR). For example, the African Union Peace and Security Council – created in 2003 – regularly mandates and manages the deployment of peace operations on the African continent, under authorization of the UN Security Council. The AU has also been regularly involved in brokering peace negotiations.

Other regional organizations have played key roles in negotiating for increased humanitarian access. For example, after the devastating Cyclone Nargis in 2008, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) stepped in to directly manage the response and negotiated with the Myanmar government to allow aid into the country.<sup>31</sup> Since then, ASEAN has played a much larger role in disaster management and emergency response.

Oxfam increasingly engages with regional organizations such as the AU and ASEAN to advance its humanitarian influencing work (see [Case Study 6](#) and [Case Study 7](#)). For a summary of regional organizations around the world, see Annex 1.

### CASE STUDY 6 Oxfam's Liaison Office to the African Union

Oxfam sees the AU as a key institution for realizing the social, economic, political and cultural rights of all Africans. It has long supported the emergence of strong civil society coalitions in Africa to engage the AU, including on peace and security issues. Oxfam was one of the first INGOs to establish formal ties with the AU, establishing an Oxfam Liaison Office to the African Union in Addis Ababa in 2007. The Liaison Office helps Oxfam and its partners to leverage greater influence over the AU in several ways:

- By convening civil society meetings and supporting partner advocacy, for instance at the annual summit of AU Heads of State;
- By building relationships with influential individuals and departments at the AU who can provide informal insights on how countries are presenting their positions in Addis, and how advocacy is being received;
- By providing advance notice and understanding of processes we may wish to influence;
- Through ongoing monitoring to spot opportunities, track evolving agendas and ensure that country-level and global advocacy on relevant issues is informed by credible analysis of AU thinking and possibilities.

Oxfam worked with partners to produce the [African Union Compendium](#) (2nd Edition, 2014), a comprehensive guide to the AU and how to engage with its various organs and departments. The Liaison Office provides copies of the Compendium and training on the AU to civil society partners and to diplomats as a way of increasing transparency and accountability of the AU to African civil society.

For more information, visit the [Oxfam International Liaison Office with the African Union Facebook page](#).

31 See Y.-K. Creac'h and L. Fan (2008) 'ASEAN's Role in the Cyclone Nargis Response'.

## CASE STUDY 7 ASEAN Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response

The ASEAN Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response (AADMER) was signed three weeks before the shocking Indian Ocean tsunami of 2004, but it only entered into force in 2009. The agreement included a commitment to involve 'all stakeholders' – including local communities and NGOs – in disaster management efforts.

Using this as a hook, a coalition of CSOs, including Oxfam, lobbied the ASEAN secretariat and member nation ambassadors to recognise the **AADMER Partnership Group** (APG), a CSO coalition aimed at facilitating civil society dialogue with governments around the implementation of AADMER, particularly in the interests of marginalized and vulnerable groups. Oxfam is the lead convener of the APG and has seconded a staff member to coordinate it and to provide advice to ASEAN on AADMER implementation.

The work of the APG has led to a number of achievements:

- The ASEAN Committee on Disaster Management has agreed to develop a framework for partnership with CSOs, with the APG facilitating the process.
- APG advisors have drafted a range of AADMER implementation strategies (training, knowledge management and so on) and co-organized activities such as the ASEAN Day on Disaster Management, highlighting the role of women in DRR.
- APG activities at the country and regional levels have increased public and civil society awareness of AADMER, which was previously known only to specialized agencies of government. AADMER had previously been used by country actors in Myanmar, for example, to engage with the national government on humanitarian concerns.
- The APG has demonstrated to ASEAN that there is a 'non-threatening' way of engaging with CSOs, and showed CSOs that there is another way for civil society to engage with ASEAN apart from lobbying and mass actions.
- The group's mapping of the many organizations implementing disaster risk management (DRM)/DRR programmes at national and regional levels has brought greater visibility to this work within ASEAN.

Source: Information provided by Lan Mercado and 'From Poverty to Power' blog by Duncan Green (2012) '[Meetings with Remarkable Women: Lan Mercado's Journey from Megaphone to Microphone](#)'.

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## 3.5 THE INTERNATIONAL HUMANITARIAN SYSTEM

### FIND OXFAM POLICY POSITIONS AND STANDARDS

- » Oxfam (2013) '[Oxfam Policy Compendium Note: Oxfam's Role in Humanitarian Action](#)'
- » Oxfam (2008) '[Oxfam Policy Compendium Note on UN Integrated Missions and Humanitarian Action](#)'

Understanding the global humanitarian architecture is crucial to being able to influence the international community's response to a given crisis. This section gives an overview of the main structures in the international humanitarian system, which engages a wide range of institutions and actors working at global, regional, national and local levels.

### 3.5.1 KEY UNITED NATIONS INSTITUTIONS

The **UN Security Council** is the only global institution which can make legally binding decisions on matters of international peace and security. With agreement from its members, it passes resolutions relating to crises, including mandating peace operations and observer missions, putting in place sanctions and condemning the actions of states. It has five permanent members (the 'P5'), all of whom have the right to veto any resolution. These are France, the UK and the USA (often collectively referred to as the 'P3'), China and Russia. It also has 10 geographically dispersed elected members that are voted in for two-year terms.

The **UN General Assembly** works through six main committees on issues including disarmament and security, international law (including treaties), the environment, social affairs, human rights and budget. The Third Committee deals with human rights and country-specific situations, and is generally the most relevant for humanitarian issues.

The other main UN bodies include the **Economic and Social Council** (ECOSOC) and the **International Court of Justice** (ICJ).

The **UN Secretariat** is based in New York and is led by the UN Secretary-General. It houses a number of departments and offices relevant to humanitarian response, in particular the **Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs** (OCHA), the **Department of Peacekeeping Operations** (DPKO) and the **Department of Political Affairs** (DPA).

An enormous variety of UN agencies, offices, programmes and funds collectively make up the UN humanitarian system. At the global level, Oxfam is actively engaged with a number of UN agencies in its main areas of expertise, particularly the **UN Fund for Children** (UNICEF) on WASH, the **UN High Commissioner for Refugees** (UNHCR) on protection, and several bodies on food security: the **World Food Programme** (WFP), the **Food and Agriculture Organization** (FAO) and the **International Fund for Agricultural Development** (IFAD).

### The United Nations humanitarian system

The **Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs** (OCHA) is headed by the **Emergency Relief Coordinator** (ERC), who also has the title of Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs. OCHA has headquarters in New York and Geneva, various regional offices and operational offices in over 50 countries. It coordinates humanitarian action, produces and shares information on humanitarian situations, and coordinates and tracks humanitarian funding.

The ERC leads the **Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC)**, the primary international mechanism to coordinate the various organizations involved in emergency response. Often perceived as a UN body, it actually aims to encompass all international humanitarian

assistance. The IASC develops standards, guidance and policy for UN and non-UN humanitarian partners. Its 18 members<sup>32</sup> include UN agencies, the Red Cross/Red Crescent Movement and three inter-agency platforms representing NGOs: the **International Council of Voluntary Agencies** (ICVA), **InterAction** and the **Steering Committee for Humanitarian Response** (SCHR). Oxfam is a member of all three consortia.

The IASC meets twice a year at 'Principals' (Chief Executive) level and three or more times a year as the Working Group (which works primarily on policy and strategic issues) and the Emergency Directors Group (EDG) (which addresses operational issues). Most of the agencies involved are present in both Geneva and New York and play a key role in policy development both within and outside the IASC. Oxfam often participates in the EDG and the Working Group on behalf of one of the consortia of which it is a member.

The UN refugee agency, **UNHCR**, is based in Geneva and is particularly important as it leads the response in refugee settings (discussed in more detail below). The **Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights** (OHCHR), also in Geneva, leads the UN's work to protect human rights, including through monitoring compliance with international standards and promoting the defence of all human rights across the UN system.

**UN Women** and the **United Nations Population Fund** (UNFPA) are also key institutions for addressing gender issues in humanitarian crises, particularly sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) and reproductive health issues, as well as promoting women's participation in relief, recovery and peacebuilding efforts.

There are also a number of organizations working specifically on disaster risk reduction (DRR). The **UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction** (UNISDR) is the coordination focal point in the UN system, with the aim of stepping up action and international cooperation on DRR. It is led by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Disaster Risk Reduction. UNISDR undertakes a range of activities to advocate on and coordinate DRR work, but does not implement directly. Every two years, UNISDR convenes the Global Platform on DRR and produces the **Global Assessment Report** – an invaluable source of analysis and data.

The **Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery** (GFDRR) is a World Bank multi-donor trust fund. It is influential at national level, working with governments, and promotes DRR within the Bank.

The **UN Development Programme** (UNDP) has always had a key role in implementing DRR at national level, and this has increased with the DRR focus of its 2014–17 strategic plan. One important programme is the **Capacity for Disaster Reduction Initiative** (CADRI).

## CASE STUDY 8 Oxfam engagement with UN institutions on humanitarian issues

Oxfam regularly engages with UN institutions in order to inform and influence their policies and practices relating to humanitarian affairs. Examples include:

- Engaging with UN Security Council members to influence the content of UN peacekeeping mandates – such as advocating for stronger provisions relating to the protection of civilians (see **section 4.2.3**);
- Engaging with members of the UN General Assembly to promote the development of new international legal frameworks that better address and prevent conflict and disasters. For example, Oxfam campaigned with others for a global Arms Trade Treaty, negotiated through the UN General Assembly (see **section 4.5.3**);
- Influencing the humanitarian practice of UN agencies – such as advocating for improved UN leadership, faster delivery of relief or improved quality of assistance.

32 Technically INGOs are permanent invitees rather than members, but in practice this makes no difference.

## 3.5.2 RED CROSS/RED CRESCENT MOVEMENT

The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement is the largest humanitarian network in the world, made up of 100 million members, volunteers and supporters worldwide. The movement consists of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) which operates in situations of armed conflict and other situations of violence; the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), which responds to natural disasters; and Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies operating at the national level in 189 countries.

The Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement is a unique international institution, distinct from the UN system and NGOs.<sup>33</sup> The Red Cross plays a complementary role to other actors but, due to its interpretation of its mandate and neutrality, can be limited in its ability to share information and collaborate with humanitarian actors engaging in human rights advocacy, such as Oxfam.

## 3.5.3 INTERNATIONAL ACTORS AT NATIONAL LEVEL

Whenever a major emergency occurs, or in countries/regions facing chronic or recurring crises, the ERC, in coordination with the IASC, appoints a Humanitarian Coordinator (HC). The HC is the most senior UN role in the country-level response. The HC reports to the ERC and is responsible for a fast, effective response, acting as the interface with the host government, promoting humanitarian access, overseeing coordination (generally through the cluster approach – see [section 3.5.4](#)) and advocating on behalf of affected populations. They also manage in-country pooled funds where they exist.

Usually the HC role goes to the UN Resident Coordinator (RC), who is often also the head of the UN Development Programme (UNDP) in-country. This creates a 'double-hatted' Humanitarian Coordinator/Resident Coordinator (RC/HC) post, with a dual mandate to support the national government on development on the one hand, while promoting an effective, well organized and principled humanitarian response on the other.<sup>34</sup> The HC or RC/HC sets up and leads the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT).<sup>35</sup> The HCT is responsible for developing and agreeing common strategies on issues related to humanitarian action. HCs also lead the HCT in deciding the most appropriate coordination solutions for their country.

## Humanitarian Country Teams

HCT membership may vary between countries, but will usually consist of one or more government humanitarian representatives, the head of OCHA, heads of cluster lead agencies (see [section 3.5.4](#) below), NGO/INGO representatives and sometimes in-country heads of other UN agencies, donor government representatives and representatives of the Red Cross/Red Crescent Movement. Oxfam is often a member of HCTs (as of writing, about half) and this is an important avenue for influencing the practice of other humanitarian agencies as well as coordinating efforts.

Often there is significant overlap between HCTs and the UN Country Team, which includes heads of UN agencies only. Government and donor involvement in HCTs has become increasingly common since this structure was developed in the mid-2000s. While in some contexts this is a positive development, it can also create challenges. For example, humanitarian actors may not be able to be completely open or frank in front of donors or government actors, particularly where the government is party to a conflict or donor governments have political or security interests in the country. Thus Oxfam argues that HCT composition should be determined on a context-specific basis.

33 Find out more at: <http://www.redcross.int/>

34 For full details of the HC's role, see IASC (2003) '[Revised TORs of the Humanitarian Coordinator](#)'.

35 See: IASC (2009) '[IASC Operational Guidance on Humanitarian Country Teams](#)'.

## Integrated missions

In countries with a UN peacekeeping mission, a Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG) is appointed to lead the mission, managing both civilian and military components. Over the past decade the UN has moved towards integrated missions, which can bring the RC/HC under the direct management of the SRSG, generally giving them a third 'hat' of Deputy to the SRSG (DSRSG).

By blurring the lines between humanitarian and military/political action, integrated missions can create challenges for the delivery of principled humanitarian assistance (see [section 3.8.2](#) on civil–military coordination).

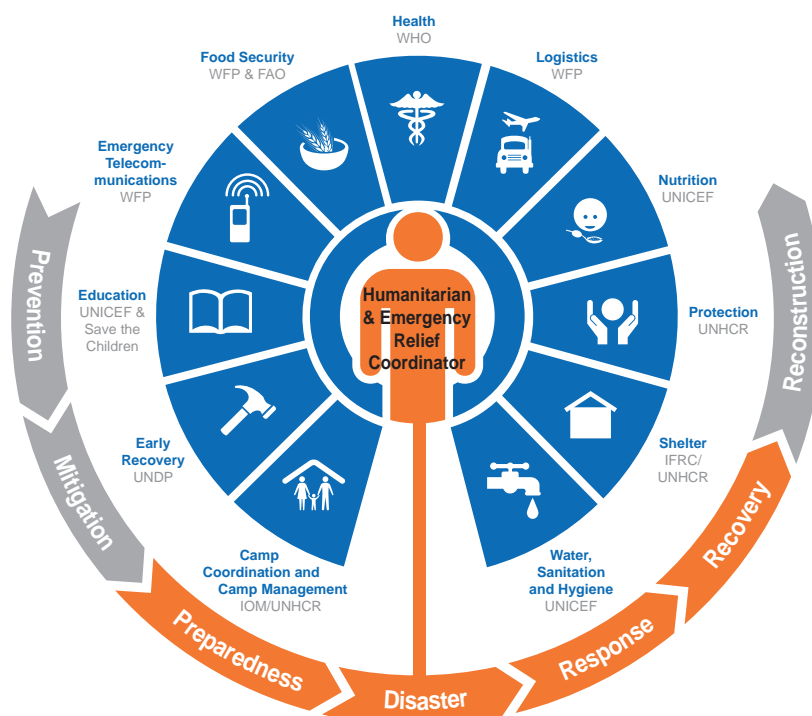
### 3.5.4 THE CLUSTER SYSTEM

The cluster approach was launched in 2005 as a response to perceived failures of coordination and duplication in the response to the 2004 Asian tsunami and other crises. The clusters were used for the first time in the 2005 Pakistan earthquake and have been adopted in most major emergencies since. The cluster system applies in response to the humanitarian needs of non-refugees (in refugee situations UNHCR is mandated to take the lead; see [section 3.5.5](#)).

#### Global clusters

There are 11 global clusters, with allocated UN agency cluster leads (plus non-UN co-leads for the education and shelter clusters) (see [Figure 2](#)). Global clusters are responsible for pooling international capacity to ensure effective advocacy, adequate technical support, system-wide preparedness and enhanced surge capacity. Oxfam is an active member of various global clusters in Geneva, and uses the clusters to push for humanitarian reforms at the global level.

**FIGURE 2: Global clusters**<sup>36</sup>



36 Source: [UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs](#).

Some of the global clusters also oversee 'sub-clusters' on particularly important issues. For example, the Gender Based Violence (GBV) sub-cluster sits under the Protection Cluster, which is overall lead for GBV in emergencies.

## National clusters

National clusters coordinate interventions in the various sectors at a national level. They are intended to support service delivery, provide a platform for agreeing common approaches, and avoid gaps and duplication of services. They also undertake planning, outline funding needs to donors and advocate on key issues of concern. They are a crucial forum for influencing the actions of other humanitarian actors and facilitating collective advocacy efforts.

The cluster system is activated differently in each context to suit specific needs and to complement existing government coordination structures as appropriate. The HC/HCT may choose to set up clusters for sectors where there is no global cluster or may choose to merge two or more clusters. National disaster legislation specifies a role for clusters in some countries, such as the Philippines.

There is some evidence that the cluster system has improved coordination and strengthened the professionalism of humanitarian action as a whole by improving understanding of quality standards and accountability, including by developing ways of working, tools, handbooks and guidelines. See, for instance, '[Cluster Approach Evaluation 2 – Synthesis Report](#)' (GPPI/URD, 2010). However, there are many shortcomings: cluster leadership is sometimes weak and poorly resourced and coordination with national actors is frequently challenging, despite being flagged in every major emergency as a priority. One approach identified to improve effectiveness and transparency is co-leadership of clusters by NGOs, though Oxfam's position is to support cluster lead agencies rather than take up co-leadership roles itself. See, for instance, '[NGO Cluster Co-Coordination Manual](#)' (NRC, 2014) and '[DRC protection cluster co-facilitation: lessons learned](#)' (independent report for Oxfam/Save the Children, 2012). Oxfam also regularly advocates to UN cluster coordinators to address leadership and coordination concerns (see Case Study 9).

Oxfam is an active member of various clusters at the country level, particularly the WASH, food security and protection clusters. Oxfam's 2010 report '[The WASH Factor](#)', on engaging with the WASH cluster, draws out best practice and challenges.<sup>37</sup>

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37 Oxfam (2010) '[The WASH factor](#)'.



## CASE STUDY 9 Role of civil society in effective functioning of clusters – Pakistan



Ali Hassan and Mamta Hassan stand with their children outside the tent that they lived in following their home being destroyed by floods in Pakistan in July 2010. Credit: Timothy Allen.

Monsoon floods starting in July 2010 caused a colossal disaster in Pakistan. The collective efforts of the Pakistani government, UN agencies, international NGOs and local relief organizations brought vital emergency relief to millions of people. Yet weaknesses in the cluster system also resulted in delays, gaps and diminished effectiveness in the early stages. As an active member of the WASH cluster, Oxfam entered into dialogue with UNICEF as cluster lead agency to address specific sectoral concerns in August. After a review of progress one month later many of the issues identified had been addressed:

**Cluster surge staffing** – Oxfam was concerned about inadequate staffing and dedicated leadership to manage WASH cluster coordination. After dialogue with UNICEF, staffing levels were increased. The global cluster coordinator was deployed for a period and, while international technical advisors were still lacking, cluster members were invited to second experts in support.

**Dedicated cluster leads** – UNICEF WASH cluster coordinators at national and regional levels were relieved of their other UNICEF duties in order to focus on inter-agency coordination. This demarcation was aided by moving the national cluster out of UNICEF premises in Islamabad and into the OCHA offices.

**Transparency in the cluster's allocation of funds** – In the early stages of the response, UNICEF was allocating around 80 percent of WASH cluster funds to its own programmes, despite other agencies being better placed to deliver assistance in some areas. This decreased to around 50 percent after discussion with UNICEF.

**Information management and sharing** – Information managers were deployed to the regional (but not the provincial) level, and dedicated information management capacity for the national cluster significantly improved information sharing through the cluster website.

**Collective accountability** – Oxfam designed a formalized complaints mechanism to enable communities to hold WASH cluster members to account, and piloted it in one programme area with a view to wider adoption.

### 3.5.5 REFUGEE CONTEXTS – NON-CLUSTER OR DUAL SYSTEMS

The UN General Assembly has **mandated** UNHCR to coordinate the humanitarian response in refugee situations. Other UN agencies (particularly WFP) also have an important role to play in refugee settings.

UNHCR uses a more centralized coordination mechanism than the cluster approach. This has caused some overlap and confusion in crises where there are elements of the response which fall under the cluster system (such as responding to the needs of internally displaced persons (IDPs)) and others that are UNHCR-led and focus on refugees. This is the case in most major crises. Oxfam recognizes the mandates of both OCHA and UNHCR, and advocates for a focus on effectiveness over individual mandates.<sup>38</sup> In 2014 UNHCR developed a number of documents to explain its Refugee Coordination Model (RCM), which aims to make its coordination mandate clearer and more integrated. In all cases it is imperative to have clear, predictable and standardized coordination mechanisms that are well understood by those providing assistance and protection.

#### LINKS AND RESOURCES

- » Oxfam (2012) '[Crises in a New World Order: Challenging the Humanitarian Project](#)'
- » UNHCR, [Coordinating Assistance](#) webpage
- » ICVA [resource page on coordination and leadership](#)
- » IASC information pages on [clusters](#) and the [Transformative Agenda](#)

38 See, for example, UNHCR, '[Refugee Coordination Model](#)' and '[Refugee Coordination Model – Frequently Asked Questions](#)'.

## 3.6 DONORS AND FUNDING MECHANISMS

### FIND OXFAM POLICY POSITIONS AND STANDARDS

» Oxfam (2007) '[Oxfam Policy Compendium Note on Humanitarian Funding](#)'

The effectiveness of any humanitarian response depends significantly on resourcing. Just as there are multiple actors involved in the delivery of humanitarian assistance, so too there are multiple sources of funding. Donors may be governments or private institutions and individuals, and they channel funds via intergovernmental institutions (such as the UN, World Bank, ECHO, etc.), NGOs, national governments, the private sector or increasingly directly to individuals (for example, through remittances).

### 3.6.1 GOVERNMENT DONORS

Government donors provide the majority of humanitarian assistance, funding over 70 percent of international humanitarian response since 2007.<sup>39</sup> Donors in the Development Assistance Committee of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (**OECD DAC**) have historically provided the majority of international humanitarian assistance from governments.<sup>40</sup>

In 2013 the United States was the largest humanitarian donor, followed by the EU institutions, the UK and Turkey.<sup>41</sup> Outside of the OECD DAC, 'non-traditional' donors include Russia, Brazil, South Africa and a number of Middle Eastern governments. Non-DAC donors' contributions to humanitarian action are increasing: for example, in 2013 Turkey and Kuwait were the most generous humanitarian donors as a percentage of gross national income (GNI).<sup>42</sup>

Many governments fund humanitarian aid interventions directly, as well as via multilateral agencies. In addition to their 'assessed' contributions to the overall UN budget, many government donors make 'unearmarked' or core funding grants to individual agencies on the basis of their national policy priorities; some do the same for specific Red Cross/Red Crescent organizations and NGOs. Funding mechanisms vary, as do percentages of funding allocated to NGOs, the UN, etc. Government funding streams also vary in terms of flexibility and donor 'visibility' requirements; and while some donor agencies, such as DFID and ECHO, tend to have a stronger field presence and understanding of context, others operate more from country capitals.

Government donors are often key influencing targets, whether in the affected country, in their national capitals or in the global coordination hubs of Geneva and New York, where many aid-related decisions are made.

Government donors will have a say over what issues are prioritized within a given response and how the response may be structured and implemented. They will often also have existing relationships and influence over national governmental actors, UN agencies and others. Influencing these donors and the manner in which funding is channelled through them to end recipients is therefore critical to improving humanitarian effectiveness.

<sup>39</sup> Development Initiatives, 'Global Humanitarian Assistance Report 2013', p.19.

<sup>40</sup> Over 90 percent in 2007–12: *ibid.*, p.19.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, p.30.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*

## Top 15 government donors to humanitarian assistance in 2014

- **United States:** USAID (particularly the Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA), and the Office of Transition Initiatives (OTI)) and State Department's Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (BPRM)
- **European Union:** ECHO and Europeaid
- **United Kingdom:** DFID and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office
- **Turkey:** Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- **Japan:** the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA)
- **Germany:** the Auswärtiges Amt and Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)
- **Sweden:** SIDA
- **Canada:** the Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development – formerly the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA)
- **Norway:** the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD) and Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- **France:** Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- **The Netherlands:** Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- **Denmark:** Danish International Development Agency (Danida)
- **Switzerland:** Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC)
- **Australia:** Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT – formerly AusAID)
- **Kuwait:** Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development

Source: Global Humanitarian Assistance (2014) 'Global Humanitarian Assistance Report 2014'

## Donorship principles and initiatives

Many of the major donors have established donorship principles and multilateral forums that can be leveraged in order to influence their practice. Oxfam and other NGOs regularly advocate with these donors on their performance against these agreed principles.

The Good Humanitarian Donorship (GHD) Initiative was launched in 2003 as a forum for donors to promote good practice in humanitarian financing. Under the GHD, a group of 36 major donors have agreed to a set of 23 principles and good practices, which offer a useful basis for NGO engagement. For example, the principles include a commitment to allocating humanitarian funding 'in proportion to needs and on the basis of needs assessments',<sup>43</sup> which is a useful entry point for influencing donor responses to underfunded or neglected emergencies.

The 2007 European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid sets out the values, guiding principles and policy scope of the European Union's humanitarian aid, with a view to increasing its capacity to help people suffering in crisis zones across the globe.

The OCHA Donor Support Group (ODSG) is a group of donors who coordinate and provide advice on policy and financial issues to OCHA. The group has a high-level meeting annually, which can be a good opportunity to engage participants on critical humanitarian policy issues.

## UN funding mechanisms

The humanitarian reform process initiated by the UN in 2005 led to the establishment of a number of UN-led pooled funds to which government donors regularly contribute. They include the following:

- The **Central Emergency Response Fund** (CERF) is a global pooled fund, to which donors have contributed about \$4bn since its inception in 2006. About two-thirds of this money has been allocated to sudden-onset crises under the fund's 'rapid response' window, and the remainder to 'underfunded' crises that have struggled to attract traditional donor funding. NGOs can only access these funds as an implementing partner for a UN agency.
- **Country-based Pooled Funds** (CBPFs) – formerly known as Emergency Response Funds (ERFs), Common Humanitarian Funds (CHF) or Humanitarian Response Funds (HRFs) – allocate funding based on identified humanitarian needs and priorities at the country level in line with the Humanitarian Programme Cycle (HPC). Allocations go to UN agencies and the International Organization for Migration (IOM), national and international NGOs and Red Cross/Red Crescent organizations. To avoid duplication and ensure a complementary use of available CBPF funding, allocations are made taking into account other funding sources, including bilateral contributions. Humanitarian Coordinators oversee the CBPFs, while OCHA or UNDP provides day-to-day management and financial administration. Full details on how CBPFs work can be found in the [Operational Handbook](#), at UN OCHA [Emergency Response Funds](#) or the UNDP Multi-Partner Trust Fund Office [MPTF Gateway](#).

As of 2015 ERFs and CHFs are being merged into a single CBPF structure, but this is still in transition and may vary from context to context.

The effectiveness of pooled funds in disbursing funds rapidly has been mixed. Oxfam therefore regularly encourages government donors to hold the UN accountable for the performance of pooled funds, as well as to maintain a diversity of funding channels in order to enable an effective humanitarian response and reduce transaction costs. This includes providing rapid disbursements of funding directly to NGOs and CSOs and affected governments.

Every year OCHA launches a Global Humanitarian Overview – which is essentially a consolidated humanitarian appeal of needs and requirements in countries launching [inter-agency Strategic Response Plans](#) (SRPs). SRPs replace the earlier [Consolidated Appeal Process](#) (CAP) – or Flash Appeals for sudden-onset emergencies – providing a more robust process for humanitarian programme coordination and planning.

Oxfam participates in SRPs/CAPs/Flash Appeals whenever country teams have the capacity to do so, in order to help us to highlight our own funding requirements to key donors and to ensure that appeals represent the full range of humanitarian needs and response activities. While SRPs are not funding mechanisms per se, as they do not channel funds to agencies or implementing partners, they do inform donor funding decisions.

## Donor accountability and 'fair share'

Oxfam regularly advocates for donors to give their fair share to humanitarian appeals, in order to address the common problem of underfunded appeals, which result in vastly unmet humanitarian needs.

A vital mechanism for holding donors accountable to their fair share is OCHA's [Financial Tracking Service](#) (FTS) – a global, real-time database that records all reported international humanitarian aid (including that for NGOs and the Red Cross/Red Crescent Movement, bilateral aid, in-kind aid and private donations). All FTS data are provided by donors or recipient organizations.



Oxfam often uses FTS data, cross-referenced and doubled-checked with other sources, to put together a 'fair share analysis' for a given crisis. A fair share analysis compares how much money each donor has given to a particular crisis, against an estimate of what they should give on the basis of their relative wealth, as measured by GNI and the total funding sought for the crisis. The basic premise is that all donors should give their fair share to ensure that emergency appeals are fully funded, on the basis of their capacity to contribute rather than other geo-political or economic considerations: the assumption being that the richer the donor, the greater their share of the total funding.

Fair share analysis allows this proportion to be calculated for a given set of donors. Each donor's fair share can then be contrasted with their actual contribution. It also allows for comparison between different donors. For this reason, fair share is usually coordinated at an Oxfam International level with the participation of all Oxfam affiliates, in order to ensure that accurate and up-to-date information on the contributions of all donor governments is included.

## GUIDANCE

### How to do a fair share analysis

#### Step 1: Setting the parameters

What is the total amount that donors need to contribute? UN appeals are a good starting point, but they do not always represent total need. The ICRC may have a separate appeal, as may some national governments. In the case of the Syria crisis, for example, total need was calculated using appeals from OCHA, UNHCR, ICRC, IFRC and the Government of Jordan, for a total of \$5.88bn.

Who are the major donors you would expect, or want, to contribute? Think about which governments you will want to target, as well as those donors who can reasonably be expected to provide assistance. The focus is often on the 28 major donor governments that make up the Development Assistance Committee (DAC), but other constellations of donors are possible. For Oxfam's analysis of contributions to the Syria crisis in 2013, Arab donors and other high-income non-DAC countries like Russia were included as well.

What percentage of total need are the targeted donors responsible for? Depending on the set of donors targeted, you may need to establish what proportion of total need they can be considered accountable for. This may also vary from crisis to crisis. For example, it is generally accepted that Arab donors are responsible for a larger share of assistance for crises in the Middle East.

#### Step 2: Calculate the donors' fair shares

Once you have established total need and which donors will be included in the analysis, the next step is to calculate what each country's fair share of the total need should be. A country's fair share is based on its 'wealth' as measured by gross national income. Add together the GNI of all the targeted donors and calculate the percentage for each individual donor. Germany's GNI, for example, was 8.39 percent of the total DAC GNI in 2010.

Depending on which donors are included in the original list, you may also need to establish a fair percentage of the total need for which they, as a group, can be reasonably held responsible. For example, in the fair share analysis for the 2013 Syria crisis, 60 percent of total need was attributed to DAC donors. Each donor's fair share is then calculated by applying the same percentage to the calculated needs. So Germany would be expected to contribute 8.39 percent of the DAC share of any appeal.

#### Some useful statistics

- In 2010, DAC countries accounted for 63 percent of global GNI.
- In 2012, DAC countries committed 66 percent of funds channelled through UN appeals.
- In 2012, 67 countries contributed 69 percent of DAC official development assistance (ODA).
- In 2011, DAC countries were responsible for 73 percent of humanitarian aid flows.

### Step 3: Calculating the donors' actual contributions

Before you can begin assessing a donor's performance against their fair share, you need to establish a credible source of information for contributions. OCHA's Financial Tracking Service (FTS) is one possible source. This is a systematic and reasonably reliable source of information on aid contributions (as distinct from pledges), and it also captures assistance given outside of UN appeals. Using the FTS has the added benefit of reinforcing Oxfam's call for transparency, as it is available publicly and is updated regularly. However, reporting to the FTS is voluntary and many donors do not always provide up-to-date information. For this reason, it is recommended that FTS data should be cross-checked with targeted governments before using the results publicly.

In addition to bilateral contributions, imputed shares of multilateral assistance such as the CERF and EU commitments need to be attributed where relevant. These can be calculated from each country's contributions to those funds. For EU member states, another source of information on funding is the [European Emergency Disaster Response Information System](#) (EDRIS).

### Step 4: Final calculations

Once you have calculated each donor's fair share and actual contribution, you can measure performance against expectation and make comparisons between countries. For example, by August 2013 Germany had given 54 percent of its fair share of the total needs for the Syria crisis.

### More resources

The data sources you are most likely to need to make the calculations are:

- OCHA's [Financial Tracking Service](#), showing all reported international humanitarian aid
- The World Bank's [GNI lists](#) for most countries
- The list of [current OECD DAC donors](#) and the [DAC's Creditor Reporting System](#)
- Annual [contributions to CERF](#)
- Member state [contributions to the EU budget](#) and [EDRIS](#)

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A fair share analysis is only a rough guide, but it can be a powerful way of highlighting which donors are leading and which are lagging behind. It can also provide a benchmark to guide how hard Oxfam should push individual donors to give more funding to a particular crisis. Oxfam has used these analyses to generate significant media attention for underfunded humanitarian crises, and feedback from donors indicates that it can influence donor behaviour.

## CASE STUDY 10 Fair share of funding for the Sahel food crisis

In 2012 Oxfam sought to put pressure on donor governments to provide their fair share of humanitarian aid in response to the food crisis in the Sahel region. In the UK Oxfam ran an email campaign calling on the then Secretary of State for International Development, Andrew Mitchell, to increase UK funding for the crisis. Almost 10,000 emails were sent, also copying in campaigners' local MPs. The UK government initially increased its contribution to the Sahel by £10m, and later increased this by another £5m, which then amounted to the UK providing its 'fair share' of funding towards the UN appeal.



Aissata Abdoul Diop, a member of the Diawoud community women's cooperative, shows how maize ears have dried up in the drought stricken plantations (March 2012). A lack of rain and rising food prices meant people living in the Mauritanian Sahel were at risk of food insecurity. Credit: Pablo Tosco/Intermon Oxfam.

## Inter-agency engagement with government donors

Donor behaviour can be influenced in a multiplicity of ways, including through direct advocacy and campaigning, which is often most effective when done in collaboration with other humanitarian actors (see [Case Study 11](#)). Direct policy and programmatic engagement is particularly important with new or non-traditional donors, as they may have less institutional capacity and knowledge about how to deliver assistance in accordance with humanitarian principles and standards.

## CASE STUDY 11 Joint NGO efforts to influence Australia's humanitarian policy

In 2014, following a decision by the newly elected Australian government to amalgamate the Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID) into the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), 13 Australian humanitarian NGOs joined forces with the Australian Council for International Development (ACFID) to influence the government's newly structured humanitarian aid programme. The group produced a joint report, written by Oxfam and World Vision, which analysed the strengths and weaknesses of Australia's current humanitarian policy and practice, and made recommendations on ways to improve the effectiveness of its humanitarian action now and into the future.

The group were able to meet with a number of key decision makers, including the head of DFAT, to discuss the report's recommendations and the future of Australia's humanitarian action in detail. The report was widely read by DFAT staff and a number of its recommendations have subsequently been incorporated into Australia's humanitarian policy and practice. These include the maintenance of a separate humanitarian division within DFAT; greater prioritisation of DRR in Australia's new aid paradigm; and continued support from Australia's Foreign Minister for prioritization of humanitarian funding, albeit in the context of an overall reduced Australian aid budget.

Read the report: ACFID (2014) '[Humanitarian Action for Results](#)'

### Influencing through funding negotiations

Donor practice can also be influenced during negotiations around funding agreements – whether through bilateral agreements or consortia agreements with other NGOs. For example, NGOs can negotiate to ensure that humanitarian principles and standards are upheld in funding agreements. Oxfam maintains strong relationships and partnerships with a number of the top 15 government donors to humanitarian assistance for 2014 (outlined on page 39), for example [DFID Programme Partnership Arrangements](#), the [ECHO Framework Partnership Agreement](#), SIDA and DFAT, to name just a few. These relationships can be leveraged for influence.

NGOs can also influence donor approaches by refusing to be associated with unethical or unprincipled practice (see [Case Study 12](#)). Some NGOs keep their share of government funding to a minimum at all times as a means of facilitating operational independence.

## CASE STUDY 12 Refusing to accept funding – the case of the Iraq War

In March 2003 Oxfam member affiliates decided that in order to avoid the risk of being used as an instrument of foreign policy, they would not accept funds for relief work in Iraq from any government that took part in the Iraq invasion.<sup>44</sup> This included the United States, the United Kingdom and Australia. Oxfam also refused to operate in areas of Iraq under military control. Oxfam affiliates instead focused on fundraising from non-combatant nations, the EU, the UN and individuals. Oxfam also advocated strongly for funding for relief operations and post-war reconstruction to be channelled through the UN.

Oxfam's strong and united position on this issue generated significant media coverage and enabled it to speak boldly about the disastrous humanitarian consequences of the Iraq War and the responsibilities of belligerent parties.

44 N. Cater (2003) 'Oxfam to Shun Iraq Funds from Belligerent States'.

## 3.6.2 PRIVATE DONORS

Individual and private institutional donors provided more than a quarter of all official humanitarian assistance in the period 2007–12.<sup>45</sup> These funds are mostly channelled via NGOs, and the majority come in the form of individual voluntary contributions – from very small regular giving to larger philanthropic grants and major donor gifts. Some NGOs, such as Oxfam, also raise funds through trading (charity shops and other private enterprises).

Individual financial supporters are important partners in emergencies and should not be overlooked by campaigners. NGOs can mobilize financial supporters to take other types of action – such as signing petitions – in order to influence decision makers in relation to a particular type of crisis. For example, Oxfam often asks people who donate to humanitarian emergencies to sign petitions calling for more governments to give their fair share to a particular crisis.

Migrants and diaspora communities are also significant private donors in emergencies through the provision of remittances back to family and friends in crisis-affected countries. Remittances now account for 21 percent of total international resources for the largest recipients of humanitarian assistance, and are the largest source of international funding for Pakistan (66 percent of all international flows), Sri Lanka (51 percent), Jordan (43 percent), Haiti (39 percent) and Lebanon (38 percent).<sup>46</sup> Enabling private remittances to flow into high-risk and fragile contexts is a vital humanitarian imperative (see [Case Study 13](#)).

### CASE STUDY 13 Keeping remittances flowing into Somalia

Every year, Somali migrants around the world send approximately \$1.3bn to friends and families at home, dwarfing flows of humanitarian aid to the country. It is estimated that more than 40 percent of families in Somalia receive some form of remittance. This money is integral to their survival and is spent on necessities such as food, clothes and medicines. Oxfam has worked in collaboration with Somali and other international organizations to raise concerns about the risks of banks and regulators inadvertently undermining this lifeline and driving it underground, as interpretation of anti-money laundering and counter-terrorism legislation becomes tighter and banks, fearing prosecution under these regulations, become more risk-averse. As a result of large-scale campaigning in 2014, the UK government adopted a 'Safer Corridor' approach to remittances going to high-risk countries, aimed at ensuring that the flow of money continues.<sup>47</sup>

## 3.6.3 TIPS FOR INFLUENCING DONORS

- Work collaboratively with humanitarian programme and funding colleagues involved in donor engagement and fundraising: they will know how donors work and who might be allies.
- Ensure that you have accurate figures and analysis, and be prepared to defend them to journalists or donors. Donors frequently challenge the facts and figures that Oxfam has collected on the humanitarian financing situation, particularly press releases, but this can be countered by clearly indicating sources and double-checking with donors themselves.
- Maintain good direct relationships with donors, and ensure that they are made aware of funding needs (including Oxfam's own) in private before making public statements or criticisms.

45 Development Initiatives (2013) 'Global Humanitarian Assistance Report 2013', p.30.

46 Ibid., p.93.

47 For more on this, see Oxfam blog post: E. Pomfret '[Keeping the Somalia lifeline open: fragile progress](#)' and [Oxfam's Somalia page](#).

- Understand the policies, behaviour and operational models of each donor you are trying to influence. Donors will have greater respect for our arguments when we can demonstrate that we are aware of their national context and institutional limitations.
- Work closely with clusters and Humanitarian Country Teams to ensure that donors are receiving unified and coherent messages on funding gaps or challenges.
- Work with affected communities to highlight their voices and provide practical examples to illustrate the human impact of donors' decisions. For example, provide details of who and how many beneficiaries are affected by a lack of funding and in what way. This is even more effective when presented collaboratively with other agencies.
- Be ready to provide operational details to defend positions – for example, being able to explain that you are advocating for a donor to fund expatriate salaries because the implementation of a particular response requires a specialist skill.
- Ensure credibility through the quality and timeliness of our own programmes, funding proposals and reports. Advocacy on humanitarian financing can easily be undermined if donors observe ineffective internal communication (across programmes, finance, funding and advocacy staff or at country, regional and headquarters levels).

## LINKS AND RESOURCES

- » [Global Humanitarian Assistance](#) reports
- » DARA, [Humanitarian Response Index](#)



## 3.7 PRIVATE SECTOR

### FIND OXFAM POLICY POSITIONS AND STANDARDS

» Oxfam (2012) '[Oxfam Policy Compendium Note on the Private Sector and Humanitarian Relief](#)'

The private sector plays a critical and growing role in humanitarian crises – from small-scale businesses helping to regenerate markets post-disaster, to national companies providing supplies and logistical support, to multinational companies providing philanthropic assistance or paid commercial services. Private sector actors are increasingly undertaking hands-on activity in disaster relief. For example, in the wake of Typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines in 2013, Philippine companies reportedly contributed over \$45m in funds, goods and personnel.<sup>48</sup> Foreign businesses also added more funds and contributions in-kind, as well as innovative assistance such as surveillance drones with photographic, video and thermal imaging capabilities that could fly over streets blocked by debris.

Oxfam supports private sector involvement in humanitarian assistance where it contributes positively and builds on the efforts of the humanitarian community. The private sector brings distinct skills and competencies, and is likely also to bring new practices and perspectives to the humanitarian aid community. However, it is also important to recognise that certain commercial practices can fuel conflict, exacerbate the impact of crises and increase people's vulnerability to hazards, for example by causing resource competition, environmental degradation or displacement due to development projects.

### 3.7.1 ENGAGING WITH PRIVATE SECTOR ACTORS IN HUMANITARIAN CONTEXTS

Given these risks, private sector actors involved in humanitarian preparedness and response should commit to and conduct their activities in accordance with humanitarian principles and standards such as the [Red Cross Code of Conduct](#) (see [section 2.2](#) on humanitarian principles). Private sector actors present in fragile and insecure settings must also abide by relevant corporate accountability mechanisms to ensure that they do not exacerbate conflict, such as the [Voluntary Principles on Security and Human Rights](#).<sup>49</sup>

Oxfam has adopted processes for its own engagement with the private sector that it recommends to other humanitarian NGOs. These include screening potential private sector partners to address ethical concerns, potential conflicts with Oxfam's mission and humanitarian principles, and conflicts of interest for the company.

48 See Oxfam (2013) 'Typhoon Haiyan'.

49 The Voluntary Principles are the only human rights guidelines designed specifically for extractive sector companies and are highly relevant in fragile and conflict-affected situations.

## 3.8 MILITARY FORCES AND PEACEKEEPING MISSIONS

### FIND OXFAM POLICY POSITIONS AND STANDARDS

- » Oxfam (2012) '[Oxfam Policy Compendium Note on Provision of Aid by Military Forces](#)'
- » Oxfam (2014) '[Oxfam Humanitarian Policy Note: UN Integrated Missions and Humanitarian Action](#)'
- » Oxfam '[Oxfam Policy Compendium Note on Multi-Dimensional Military Missions and Humanitarian Assistance](#)'

In some cases, governments may deploy national military personnel and assets in fulfilling their primary responsibility for meeting the needs of their citizens in an emergency. In certain cases it may also be appropriate to use foreign military forces to help provide this assistance, as they may have essential capabilities such as air transport to move people and goods.

The UN Security Council often also mandates peacekeeping forces to perform tasks proximate or directly relevant to humanitarian assistance – such as supporting humanitarian access, the protection of civilians and maintenance of security around refugee camps and other places of aid distribution (see [section 4.2.3](#) on protection and peacekeeping). The presence of multiple military forces in an emergency context can create a fraught situation, and requires careful coordination and management under civilian-led control.



The military provide first aid to evacuees in the Philippines following flash floods in December 2011. Credit: Ralph Jacinto Quiblat/Oxfam.

### 3.8.1 MILITARIZATION OF AID

The OECD DAC has noted that 'the use of the military can, at times, politicise the delivery of humanitarian aid and threaten the neutrality, impartiality and independence of that aid'.<sup>50</sup> When the crisis is an armed conflict – or a disaster in a conflict setting – those risks obviously increase. The need for a clear separation of the roles of civilian and military actors is implicit in the IHL principle of distinction between civilians and combatants.<sup>51</sup>

Yet, in many instances, military forces have not taken sufficient care to distinguish themselves from humanitarian agencies, or have 'blurred the lines' between the military, political and humanitarian functions of the international response to different crises. The trend towards structurally integrated UN missions creates particular challenges in this regard.<sup>52</sup>

Aid budgets can also become skewed towards donors' military and political interests rather than needs on the ground, as funding follows the deployment of forces.<sup>53</sup> Military actors also generally lack the experience and expertise to ensure that assistance meets the needs of the most vulnerable people and does not do unintended harm. However, these issues vary considerably across military institutions, and it must be noted that a number of military forces have developed significant expertise and capacity to support civilian-led emergency relief operations in a principled manner.

Oxfam is committed to using its relationship with the UN Security Council, national governments, peacekeeping and stabilization missions and other military power holders to advocate for a clear distinction between military objectives and humanitarian delivery and to ensure that humanitarian aid is not politicized.

#### CASE STUDY 14 Quick Impact Projects in Chad

Peacekeeping and stabilization missions often undertake 'Quick Impact Projects' (QIPs): short-term, low-budget actions designed to promote community acceptance of peacekeepers or military forces, or 'win hearts and minds'. Often these projects are similar to or duplicate humanitarian interventions, but they can lack relevant expertise and grounding in humanitarian principles. They can therefore create problems for communities and humanitarian organizations.

The 2007–10 UN Mission in the Central African Republic and Chad (MINURCAT) was one example, often deploying military personnel to dig wells. NGOs were concerned that the QIPs blurred the distinction between MINURCAT and humanitarian agencies, which were also digging wells for communities in need. NGOs were also concerned that the QIPs were not based on a comprehensive assessment of needs, but on where the military contingent was based and who they talked to. Some of the QIPs also exacerbated community-level conflict when wells were dug in areas under the control of a particular group, who then charged for their use. In some cases communities were also not being trained to repair pumps when they broke down.

**DPKO guidelines on QIPs** specify that projects should be coordinated with UN humanitarian and development agencies to avoid duplicating or undermining the efforts of others.

50 OECD DAC (1998) 'Civilian And Military Means Of Providing And Supporting Humanitarian Assistance During Conflict', p.6, p.32.

51 See ICRC '[Customary IHL](#)', Rule 1.

52 See Oxfam (2014) 'Humanitarian Policy Note: UN Integrated Missions and Humanitarian Action'.

53 See, for instance, Oxfam (2011) 'Whose Aid Is It Anyway?'.

## 3.8.2 CIVIL–MILITARY COORDINATION

**CIVIL–MILITARY COORDINATION** is the essential dialogue and interaction between civilian and military actors in humanitarian emergencies that is necessary to protect and promote humanitarian principles, avoid competition, minimize inconsistency and, when appropriate, pursue common goals. Basic strategies range from co-existence to cooperation. Coordination is a shared responsibility facilitated by liaison and common training.<sup>54</sup>

Oxfam's position is that foreign military forces, including UN peacekeeping operations, should not provide relief or development assistance, other than in exceptional cases. Governments should follow the accepted international standards to judge those exceptional circumstances, and determine how military forces should act. These standards are the Guidelines on the Use of Foreign Military and Civil Defence Assets in Disaster Relief (the '[Oslo Guidelines](#)') for natural disasters and the separate UN guidelines for conflicts (the '[MCDA Guidelines](#)').

In accordance with these guidelines, all foreign military provision of aid should be:

- A last resort when no comparable civilian alternative exists;
- Clearly distinguished from military assets used for combat or security;
- Under civilian direction and coordination;
- Limited in time and scale, with a clear exit strategy into a civilian response.

Oxfam also holds that in order to maintain their impartiality and independence, humanitarian agencies should not participate in military-led teams; accept funding from forces or defence departments; or accept money from any fund dedicated to military objectives, or that allows a donor to claim an agency's support for military or counter-terrorism objectives.

Open dialogue should be maintained between NGOs, governments, regional and international organizations and the military to keep humanitarian principles at the core of civil–military relations. Any coordination with a party to an armed conflict demands extreme caution, care and sensitivity, as actual or perceived affiliation with a belligerent might lead to a loss of perceived neutrality and impartiality for the humanitarian organization. Beyond coordination, in principle there should be no cooperation with belligerent forces; this should be countenanced only as a last resort in extreme and exceptional circumstances.

### Guidelines for integrated missions

Since 2008 the UN has followed a policy of integrating peacekeeping missions with the other functions of the UN at country level in conflict and post-conflict situations. The aim of 'integrated missions' has been to maximize the UN's impact through greater strategic coherence. However, Oxfam and other humanitarian agencies remain concerned that such integration can challenge the independence and impartiality of humanitarian action – particularly when integration goes beyond a shared vision and planning frameworks to 'structural integration', where UN humanitarian, peacekeeping and political functions are under a single management line (see [section 3.5.3](#) above) or visibly integrated (i.e. through co-location).

<sup>54</sup> See UN OCHA (2007) 'Guidelines on the Use of Foreign Military and Civil Defence Assets In Disaster Relief'.

Since 2013 the UN has itself recognized the risks inherent in these approaches in its Integrated Assessment and Planning (IAP) policy.<sup>55</sup> This UN policy sets out safeguards to mitigate the risks of military or political priorities influencing humanitarian action. These include the UN ensuring that:

- Humanitarian action should normally be separate from a UN political or peacekeeping mission;
- Visible association between UN humanitarian and other objectives should be minimized in conflicts and fragile contexts;
- Before deciding on any integrated approach, a thorough assessment of risks should be made, involving national and international NGOs;
- Assessments should be regularly reviewed, leading to changes where necessary.

## Country and regional guidelines

In addition to the global guidelines outlined above, regional and country-based civil–military guidelines have been developed in some jurisdictions, such as the **Asia-Pacific Regional Guidelines for the Use of Foreign Military Assets in Natural Disaster Response Operations**.<sup>56</sup>

Engaging in the development of these context-specific guidelines can be an important way to ensure that they instil humanitarian principles. In Afghanistan, for example, Oxfam led a working group to develop country-specific civil–military guidelines, which were signed by humanitarian agencies and ISAF military forces. In Chad, in response to INGO concerns that the humanitarian community lacked experience in managing civil–military relations ahead of a joint UN/EU peacekeeping deployment in 2008, Oxfam recruited an INGO adviser to train UN and aid agency staff and negotiate ways of working with the peacekeepers.

For context-specific guidelines to be most useful for humanitarian advocacy purposes, they need to be endorsed not only by the humanitarian community and government authorities but at the highest levels of military command. When such guidelines are endorsed at the highest levels, they can be a powerful tool to which military forces can be held accountable.

## LINKS AND RESOURCES

- » OCHA (2007) '[Guidelines on the Use of Foreign Military and Civil Defence Assets in Disaster Relief](#)' ('Oslo Guidelines')
- » UN (2003) '[Guidelines on the Use of Military and Civil Defence Assets to Support United Nations Humanitarian Activities in Complex Emergencies](#)' ('MCDA Guidelines')
- » UN (2008) '[Civil–Military Guidelines and Reference for Complex Emergencies](#)' (an overview of OCHA and IASC civil military tools and guidelines)
- » OCHA (2013) '[OCHA on Message: Civil–Military Coordination](#)'
- » UN (2013) '[United Nations Integrated Assessment and Planning Handbook](#)'
- » Government of Australia, '[Same Space Different Mandates, Civil Military Guide](#)'

<sup>55</sup> United Nations (2013) '[Policy on Integrated Assessment and Planning](#)', approved by the UN Secretary General on 9 April 2013.

<sup>56</sup> For other guidelines, see [OCHA's civil–military coordination web page](#).

## 3.9 ARMED NON-STATE ACTORS

Armed non-state actors (ANSAs) can be understood as armed groups 'with a basic structure of command operating outside state control that uses force to achieve its political or allegedly political objectives'.<sup>57</sup> They are often referred to as rebel groups, armed opposition groups (AOGs) or non-state armed groups (NSAGs).

The proliferation of ANSAs has been one of the defining challenges of humanitarian crises in the past 20 years, with humanitarians now often working in situations where multiple ANSAs are operating. ANSAs vary enormously – including in what they do and in how they behave towards civilians. It is worth noting that ANSAs may also be involved in providing services to the population or in disaster response, which raises issues of civil–military distinction (see [section 3.8.2](#) above).

While many ANSAs appear to have reckless disregard for the damage and distress they cause to vulnerable populations,<sup>58</sup> it is important to remember that ANSAs do not necessarily cause greater harm to civilians than state armed forces – which is often presumed to be the case. While Oxfam respects the authority of the state, we believe that it is our responsibility to criticise abuses by state and non-state actors in an impartial manner. For example, in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Oxfam has spoken out about abuses perpetrated by police, army and ANSAs (see Case Study 15).

### CASE STUDY 15 **Armed groups in the Democratic Republic of Congo – only part of the problem**

Since 2007, Oxfam's annual protection assessments in eastern DRC have all found civilians to be threatened by ANSAs and state armed forces alike, which it has consistently highlighted in its advocacy.

Oxfam's assessment in 2012 exposed alarming levels of abuse of men, women and children by a variety of armed groups, including through forced recruitment, forced labour and continuous illegal taxation. In areas subject to attack by ANSAs, people described killings, looting and abductions as being rife. In areas largely controlled by the state, people reported exploitation, including extortion under threat of violence, by the very state officials who are supposed to protect and support them.

In northern Masisi, the small market town of Kashuga was attacked 12 times between April and July 2012 by the Congolese army and two rebel groups. The fighting was for control of illegal tax revenues imposed on local people selling or buying goods at the weekly market.

For the DRC protection assessment report, see: Oxfam (2014) '[In the Balance: Searching for Protection in Eastern DRC](#)'.

### 3.9.1 ENGAGING WITH ANSAS

Organized armed non-state actors are bound by IHL, including Common Article 3 of the Geneva Conventions and 1977 Additional Protocol II, both of which apply specifically to non-international armed conflict. The 1998 [Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement](#) also include many references to IHL norms that are legally binding on both states and ANSAs. The [African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons](#) (the Kampala Convention), adopted in 2009, directly addresses the behaviour of ANSAs.

57 DCAF and Geneva Call (2015) 'Armed Non-State Actors: Current Trends and Future Challenges'.

58 University of Oxford (2011) '[Armed Non-State Actors and Displacement](#)', *Forced Migration Review*, Issue 37.



These international legal frameworks can be useful tools for influencing the behaviour of ANSAs; however, direct engagement can be difficult, particularly where they are proscribed groups (see [section 4.3.3](#)). Humanitarian organizations seeking to engage with ANSAs directly should have sound institutional policies, procedures and expertise to do so. For example, Oxfam has an anti-diversion and abuse policy which puts in place rules for meeting with ANSAs, including having other agencies present and taking notes of what has been discussed.<sup>59</sup>

Various international initiatives have sought to moderate the behaviour of ANSAs. For example, under the monitoring and reporting mechanism on grave violations against children in armed conflict established in 2005 by UNSC [Resolution 1612](#), organizations (state and non-state) can be 'listed' as violating core children's rights.<sup>60</sup> In 2010, [Resolution 1960](#) established a similar mechanism for conflict-related sexual violence. Oxfam and other humanitarian organizations that bear witness to abuses perpetrated by state and non-state armed actors have an important role to play in providing information through such mechanisms.

## LINKS AND RESOURCES

- » Humanitarian Policy Group (2012) '[Talking to the Other Side: Humanitarian Engagement with Armed Non-state Actors](#)'
- » A. Bellal et al. (2010) '[Towards Engagement, Compliance and Accountability](#)', *Forced Migration Review*, Vol. 37
- » ICRC (2011) '[International Review of the Red Cross, 2011-No. 883 – Engaging Armed Groups](#)'

59 See Oxfam '[Oxfam's Commitment to Prevent Aid Diversion](#)' for information about the policy.

60 See more about the monitoring and reporting mechanism via the [Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children in Armed Conflict website](#).



Oxfam distributes hygiene kits in Sankhu, Nepal following the April 2015 earthquake. The kits contain a bucket for clean water, a bar of soap, oral rehydration salts, and towels. Credit: Aubrey Wade/Oxfam.

## 4 WHAT HUMANITARIAN ISSUES DO WE CAMPAIGN ON?

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This section examines a range of key issues that regularly arise in humanitarian crisis contexts and can undermine people's ability to claim their rights, be safe and access assistance.

First this section explores the right to assistance and the right to protection – the core of people's rights in crisis situations. It then explores related issues, such as humanitarian access, gender justice in crises, conflict prevention and resilience and disaster risk reduction.

## 4.1 THE RIGHT TO ASSISTANCE

As with any human right, national governments are the principal guarantors of their citizens' right to life. Guaranteeing that right depends on two principal things. First, effective and accountable states must take responsibility for reducing the number of preventable deaths in emergencies. They must do so by investing in effective civil defence, early warning and communications that will allow them to respond in emergencies, as well as investing in long-term measures to reduce their citizens' vulnerability to shocks. This may be beyond the capability of some states – failed states, states with limited capacity, or those simply overwhelmed by the scale of needs. But most governments are in a position to make this choice, as positive examples of successful adaptation by poor states like Cuba have shown. Second, active citizens must demand assistance, and long-term changes to reduce their vulnerability, from local authorities and other aid providers – and take them to task when they fail to provide it.<sup>61</sup>

Oxfam holds that in conflicts and disasters people have the right to demand and receive life-saving humanitarian assistance and protection in accordance with their needs. The inherent right to life is enshrined in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR)<sup>62</sup> and the right to an adequate standard of living is enshrined in both the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR)<sup>63</sup> and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), which codifies:

**The right of everyone to an adequate standard of living for himself and his family, including adequate food, clothing and housing... recognizing the fundamental right of everyone to be free from hunger.**<sup>64</sup>

Under IHL, parties to conflict must protect and meet the basic needs of persons within their territory of control, and they should allow impartial humanitarian organizations access to meet those needs.<sup>65</sup> Deprivation of basic needs, such as food and medicine, can constitute a war crime or crime against humanity.<sup>66</sup>

The UN General Assembly upholds the responsibility of states to provide assistance in times of emergency:

**Each State has the responsibility first and foremost to take care of the victims of natural disasters and other emergencies occurring on its territory. Hence, the affected State has the primary role in the initiation, organization, coordination, and implementation of humanitarian assistance within its territory.**<sup>67</sup>

When national governments are unable to provide assistance and protection, or need support to do so, Oxfam holds that the international community has a responsibility to help, including through funding humanitarian action by disaster-affected governments, local and national NGOs, UN agencies and others.

61 Excerpt from Oxfam (2009) 'The Right to Survive'.

62 ICCPR, Article 6(1).

63 UDHR, Article 25.

64 ICESCR, Article 11.

65 Geneva Convention IV, Articles 10, 17; Additional Protocol 1, Articles 69, 70. See Governance, Social Development Humanitarian Conflict (GSDRC) [website](#) for more information on humanitarian assistance protections under IHL.

66 Additional Protocol 1, Article 54; ICC Statute, Article 7(1), 7(1)(b), 7(2)(b).

67 Resolution 46/182 (1991) 'Guiding Principles on Humanitarian Assistance', 19 December 1991, Annex, para. 4.

## 4.1.1 WATER, SANITATION AND HYGIENE

### FIND OXFAM POLICY POSITIONS AND STANDARDS

» Oxfam (2013) '[Oxfam Minimum Requirements for WASH Programmes](#)'

WASH incorporates: **water** (clean water supply for human consumption and household needs); **sanitation** (excreta disposal, solid waste management, drainage, vector control) and **hygiene** (community mobilization and engagement, information, education and communication, hygiene kit distribution and health data monitoring).

Oxfam's advocacy on WASH has tended to focus on the availability, quality and accessibility of WASH services in emergencies, in accordance with humanitarian standards such as Sphere.<sup>68</sup> WASH advocacy also necessarily examines issues relating to equality and rights – given that the poorest and most marginalized people have the lowest levels of access to water and sanitation, and that poor women are often most at risk of violence when searching for water.

### The right to water and sanitation

Everyone has a right to safe drinking water and sanitation. Several UN resolutions affirm this right as essential to realizing other fundamental rights, including life and human dignity, an adequate standard of living, health and adequate food.<sup>69</sup> In times of armed conflict, it is prohibited to attack, destroy, remove or render useless drinking water installations, irrigation works or any other objects that are indispensable for the survival of the civilian population.

### Dimensions of access

Despite significant advances over the past decade, some 748 million people still do not have access to clean, safe water<sup>70</sup> and 2.5 billion lack access to adequate sanitation.<sup>71</sup> Nearly half of all ill-health suffered by people in developing countries is caused by a lack of access to clean water and sanitation. Inadequate water supply and poor sanitation in emergencies increase the risks to people's lives.

Guaranteeing access to water and sanitation in emergencies is complex and can require significant advocacy with government authorities or other aid agencies. There are a number of dimensions of access:

- **Physical accessibility** – meaning that services must be available within the immediate vicinity of people in need;
- **Economic accessibility** – meaning that any costs or charges related to service provision must be affordable for all;
- **Safe accessibility** – meaning that services must be accessible in a safe manner, including for particularly vulnerable groups such as unaccompanied children, and including at high-risk times such as during the night;

68 See The Sphere Project (2011) *Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Humanitarian Response*, [Minimum standards in water supply, sanitation and hygiene promotion](#).

69 For example, Human Rights Council Resolution A/HRC/15/L.14, September 2010; UN General Assembly [Resolution 64/292](#), July 2010. See also General Comment No. 15 of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (2002), which interprets the ICESCR, in particular Article 11, the right to an adequate standard of living, and Article 12, the right to the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health, confirming the right to water in international law: 'The human right to water entitles everyone to sufficient safe acceptable physically accessible and affordable water for personal and domestic uses.' The General Comment is not legally binding, but the Committee has the authority to interpret the provisions, clarifying content, and confirming issues that may have been disputed.

70 United Nations (2014) 'The Millennium Development Goals Report 2014', p.44.

71 *Ibid.*, p.45.



- **Non-discrimination** of access on the basis of race, gender, language, religion, political or social group, property, birth or other status;
- **Information accessibility** – meaning the power to seek, receive and impart information concerning water and sanitation services;
- **Sustainable access** – meaning that services can be accessed to meet required needs, without depleting essential resources or causing environmental degradation.

In Oxfam’s experience, issues of discrimination, equality, equity and vulnerability require particular attention. Public health advocacy must be based on a sound analysis of who is vulnerable, including women and minority groups. In many contexts, a lack of cultural sensitivity in designing WASH services can increase people’s vulnerability. For example, a failure to provide separate latrines for men and women or to ensure adequate privacy for female sanitation facilities, particularly in traditional and religious societies, may mean that women are unable to access these services safely – or at all.

## CASE STUDY 16 Integrating influencing into WASH programming in the Philippines



Temporary shelter in the San Jose district, Tacloban, the Philippines following Typhoon Haiyan in September 2014. Credit: Simon Roberts.

After Typhoon Haiyan struck the Philippines in November 2013, the City of Tacloban was one of the most devastated areas. UNHCR distributed tents as an immediate response to address the shelter needs of affected families. This led to the emergence of numerous ‘tent cities’ along roads, in vacant lots and where homes once stood.

The emergence of these tent cities created serious concerns about the adequacy of WASH services, and the risk of epidemics. Oxfam, together with Action Contre La Faim (ACF), UNHCR and Barangay (small administrative unit) leaders, immediately advocated to revise the way that tents were allocated to better control where they were sited, and to plan for appropriate WASH services. As part of these efforts, water bladders and trucking services were quickly mobilized, communal latrines and other sanitation facilities constructed, WASH committees set up and a programme of hygiene promotion activities started. These measures were essential in ensuring proper access to drinking water and reducing public health risks amongst the IDPs.

Advocacy by Oxfam and other agencies also resulted in the development of a standardized checklist to ensure that adequate WASH and other services were available *before* families were moved to temporary or transitional settlements.

## LINKS AND RESOURCES

- » Sphere Handbook sections on [WASH](#) and [shelter and NFIs](#)
- » Global WASH Cluster (2009) '[The Human Right to Water and Sanitation in Emergency Situations](#)' – The Legal Framework and a Guide to Advocacy', ACF/Global WASH Cluster
- » [Right to Water website](#)
- » Oxfam is a member of [End Water Poverty](#), which in turn is a member of [Sanitation and Water for All](#)

## 4.1.2 EMERGENCY FOOD SECURITY AND VULNERABLE LIVELIHOODS

### FIND OXFAM POLICY POSITIONS AND STANDARDS

- » Oxfam (2006) '[Oxfam Policy Compendium Note on Food Aid](#)'

The right to adequate food and the fundamental right of everyone to be free from hunger are enshrined in a number of international instruments, including the [UDHR](#)<sup>72</sup> and the [ICESCR](#).<sup>73</sup> Despite this, one in eight people around the world – over 805 million people – is food-insecure.<sup>74</sup> Most of this stems from broader livelihoods and development crises. Conflict can also be a major driver of food crises, as was seen in Somalia in 2011 and South Sudan in 2014. 'Food and nutrition insecurity' is a complex term which means that, over the course of a year, a household does not have the means to either grow, buy or prepare enough quality food in order to maintain a nutritious diet. This ranges from not having the tools to grow food or the income to purchase food, to physically being unable to get to market to buy food, to not having enough cooking pots, safe water or fuel to prepare and digest food – and to do so year on year.

### Slow-onset food crises

In countries where governments have failed to invest adequately in reducing people's vulnerability to changing political, socio-economic and environmental circumstances, even modest external threats or cyclical events (such as late or heavy rains, or price fluctuations), can trigger acute and widespread suffering.

The timing of response in slow-onset food crises is critical to avoid the destruction of livelihoods and the worst-case scenario – famine. Often by the time the public and the media are aware of a food crisis, it is too late for effective prevention. For example, the late response to early warnings in the 2011 drought in the Horn of Africa contributed to the full-scale hunger and livelihood crisis that spanned Ethiopia, Kenya and Djibouti – and to famine in Somalia. Humanitarian influencing on food security and livelihoods must therefore aim to sound alarm bells at an early stage in the crisis, highlight the root causes of food insecurity and ensure that decisions are made which lead to humanitarian response initiatives that

72 UDHR, Article 25.

73 ICESCR, Article 11.

74 FAO (2014) 'The State of Food Insecurity in the World 2014'. 'Food security' was defined at the 1996 World Food Summit as existing 'when all people at all times have access to sufficient, safe, nutritious food to maintain a healthy and active life'.



address the cause and effects of a crisis.<sup>75</sup> Oxfam is working to ensure that we are better prepared before a crisis in our own programming by planning for these likely shocks in our ordinary development work, so that we are prepared to act as soon as we know that an event, such as late rains, may lead to bigger consequences for households.

## Tackling complex causes

The causes of malnutrition and food insecurity are complex, and so too are the responses. Food aid alone is not a solution, and for over 30 years Oxfam has been at the forefront of challenging the status quo of food aid and highlighting its potentially harmful effects.<sup>76</sup> In fact, direct food aid – the direct distribution of food to households (typically in the form of grain, pulses and oil) – is quite rare in Oxfam programming and is a ‘last resort’ in our emergency food security work.

Instead, we use a mixture of responses. Delivering food directly to a household meets their immediate food needs, but does not enable them to support themselves in the longer term. So we have to understand the reasons for food insecurity and then explore the different ways to either prevent or overcome it now and ways that the household can withstand shocks in the future.

For example, this may mean supporting households to improve their income, so that they can purchase food. It may mean working with communities on plans to restore roads that are washed away each year by flooding, so that they can reach the market to sell their produce and buy food. Or it might mean working with community groups so that they can make savings together to support each other when they experience a death or illness in the family, for example. And we work on preparedness, with households, in our own programming and with national actors, so that institutions (governments, donors, NGOs), respond early enough to prevent a shock becoming a crisis.

This means that advocacy on food security must address these wider issues too, and we must be able to engage with different actors early enough when we need to see action once we have identified a shock – before we have seen the impacts and have pictures of people on the ground. It also requires advocacy at different levels for different types and stages of interventions prior to and during emergencies.

## Programme interventions

Emergency Food Security and Vulnerable Livelihoods (EFSVL) work is aimed at assisting people who are prone to, or affected by, humanitarian crises to:

- Overcome acute food insecurity by helping them to meet their immediate, minimum food needs when there is a crisis;
- Address chronic food insecurity – support households to ensure their long-term food security;
- Support their livelihoods and ways to earn income so that they can recover from and withstand future shocks;
- Ensure that this can be maintained over the long term – by linking into longer-term programmes and opportunities (linking to the work done by our development teams).

Without adequate nutrition, a person cannot be deemed ‘food-secure’. However, Oxfam does not work on direct clinical nutrition interventions (such as therapeutic feeding, which UNICEF or MSF might do). We work more holistically on nutrition, ensuring the means to a balanced diet, including safe water and hygiene practices. Hence we link closely to our WASH colleagues, who are core to this.

75 See Oxfam and Save the Children (2012) ‘A Dangerous Delay’.

76 See, for example, Oxfam (1982) ‘Against the Grain’.

The types of analysis we use for the design and monitoring of EFSVL interventions include a combination of analysis, particularly market analysis, livelihoods analysis and some basic nutrition analysis. We include gender analysis and risk analysis and then we select indicators and tools to measure each area of programme intervention. We use early warning systems to monitor upcoming crises and use other types of analysis prior to an expected shock so that we can act early to avoid a crisis. Oxfam itself has developed many of these tools, such as some of the pre-crisis market analysis that we do, and the 48 Hour Tool, which can be used to do assessments 48 hours after a crisis. We typically work together with other partners to design, use and monitor these tools.

Depending on the results of the analysis, typical EFSVL responses include:

- Cash transfer and market access programmes, e.g. cash-for-work, vouchers and cash grants – so that households can purchase from the market, and the markets continue to exist;
- Food distributions, i.e. general food distributions, dry supplementary feeding;
- Increasing assets, such as supporting agricultural livelihoods e.g. distributing seeds and tools, helping households with livestock restocking;
- Protecting assets, such as vaccinations for animals and building small roads and walls to protect against floods;
- Capacity building, e.g. agricultural extension, business skills training;
- Support to and implementation of social protection systems, often working with and through governments.

In all our short-term work we have to think about the impacts on the long term and undertake activities that can start to build long-term development. We also work heavily in preparedness and planning to see what interventions can be taken early, before a shock happens, so that we can prevent it becoming a crisis. And we work closely with our WASH and also our development colleagues, to build resilience into our programmes.

Oxfam places great emphasis on promoting the full participation of the people involved in its programmes – empowering communities and individuals by enabling them to have a voice to determine their own livelihoods, plans and future to rebuild their livelihoods. This includes a particular focus on working with women and marginalized groups. We do this by working closely with communities – often our staff come from or live with the communities we work with. We facilitate discussions within communities to enable the needs and voice of the most marginalized to be heard, and we ensure that our structures are transparent and that communities we are working with can feed back on the interventions that are happening.

Advocacy and media work can be a great support to EFSVL activities, by raising issues that we need to advocate for at different levels. Often programming includes activities to influence the UN, governments and donors to change their policies, so that we can carry out more effective programming or ensure the most appropriate types of ‘aid’ for households. Advocacy work also has a strong role to play in raising warnings early enough with the correct actors so that action can be taken before a crisis develops. EFSVL technical staff can provide information to support advocacy work. This may include country-level strategic advocacy around locations and types of intervention, or it may be high-level strategic advocacy aimed at influencing donors funding EFSVL work.

Oxfam has been one of the leading agencies in adopting a ‘cash first’ approach for humanitarian response. This is because direct food assistance is rarely needed if markets are working. It is better to help households to continue to use these markets, by providing them with the cash to make their own choices as to what they need to purchase, as well as to continue demand for the markets. Food aid does not provide this dignity of choice, and it typically destroys customer demand for the market altogether. Oxfam was one of the founding steering committee members of the Cash Learning Partnership (CaLP), which promotes timely and quality cash and voucher programming in humanitarian responses through capacity building, action research and advocacy. Working through CaLP, Oxfam

has helped to institutionalize the use of cash transfer programming in humanitarian responses.<sup>77</sup> We have also been leading the use of market assessments to underpin our choice of response, because we recognize that the continued function of market systems is fundamental to households' ability to purchase their basic needs. Understanding how the market system for food goods and produce is working means that we can target where and how much we need to intervene to help households overcome a shock.

## CASE STUDY 17 Advocating for alternatives to food aid

During the 2005–06 food crisis in southern Africa, Oxfam's food security analysis and market assessments in Malawi and Zambia showed that people were going hungry mainly because they were too poor to buy food. Rather than distributing food aid, Oxfam launched a cash-based response and raised awareness among UN agencies and donors about alternatives to in-kind food aid. Within six months, nearly all donors had adjusted their funding policies to include support for cash programmes, and WFP had appointed a technical expert to roll out cash- and voucher-based interventions across the region.

Oxfam has also engaged with WFP globally to challenge over-reliance on in-kind food aid. WFP's 2008–11 Strategic Plan marked a historic shift from in-kind food aid to food assistance, using a more nuanced and robust set of tools (including cash and vouchers) to respond to hunger. Oxfam also works with other organizations in the **Cash Learning Partnership** (CaLP) to improve the quality of emergency cash transfer and voucher programming across the humanitarian sector, through research, capacity building, information sharing and advocacy.

## LINKS AND RESOURCES

- » FAO (2005) '[Right to Food Voluntary Guidelines](#)'
- » [Cash Learning Partnership website](#)
- » Oxfam (2011) '[Growing a Better Future](#)'
- » Oxfam's [GROW campaign website](#)

### 4.1.3 SHELTER

Oxfam has been working in the emergency shelter sector for decades – providing emergency shelter and temporary housing, and sometimes permanent housing. While shelter is not one of our programme priorities, Oxfam staff will often need to speak about shelter issues, and provide support to national CSOs around permanent shelter needs and concerns.

Advocacy on the right to shelter should be based on a good analysis of its key components: the availability of services, facilities, materials and infrastructure; affordability; habitability; accessibility; tenure; location; and cultural appropriateness. It should draw on the views and preferences of women and men affected.

#### The right to shelter and housing

The right to adequate housing is enshrined in the **UDHR**<sup>78</sup> and most of the key human rights treaties and conventions that followed it. This right also applies in emergency situations, as reiterated and further detailed in other tools and instruments, including the **Geneva Conventions**,<sup>79</sup> the **Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement** (18b) and the **IASC Operational Guidelines on the Protection of Persons in Situations of Natural Disasters** (section B.2).

<sup>77</sup> See, for example, CaLP, 'Making the Case for Cash'.

<sup>78</sup> UDHR, Article 25.

<sup>79</sup> Article 147, IV Geneva Convention, and Article 14, AP II.

Shelter is a critical determinant for survival in the initial stages of a disaster. Beyond survival, shelter is necessary for security and personal safety, protection from climatic conditions, resistance to disease and in order to access the right to privacy. It is also important for human dignity and to sustain family and community life as far as possible in difficult circumstances.

## Housing, land and property rights

Advocacy on shelter needs is often inextricably linked to housing, land and property issues and to related rights such as access to natural resources. These can be highly complex and contested issues in the aftermath of a disaster. For example, in the aftermath of a typhoon governments may opt to resettle communities away from coastal areas. Such policies may aid in disaster risk reduction but may also unintentionally undermine community livelihoods, food security and connections to traditional lands.

It is vital that governments consult meaningfully with communities about post-crisis shelter reconstruction and resettlement plans in order to minimize harm. Often this will require advocacy to government authorities, in close collaboration with affected communities. For example, in the aftermath of Typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines, Oxfam supported local partners to advocate for land tenure issues to be better addressed in the government's recovery and reconstruction plans (see Case Study 18).

Since in most countries women own just a fraction of the land and property, it is also important that post-crisis shelter programmes prioritize their access to both shelter and land tenure. For example, Oxfam targeted female single-headed households in Sri Lanka to receive housing following the 2005 Indian Ocean tsunami, resulting in a considerable increase in women's ownership of houses and land.<sup>80</sup>

### CASE STUDY 18 Land tenure security in post-Haiyan recovery in the Philippines

After Typhoon Haiyan in 2013, Oxfam worked alongside Philippine NGOs to advocate for the government's recovery efforts to address the widespread land tenure insecurity that makes poor Filipinos more vulnerable to the impact of disasters.

The advocacy drew attention to the fact that almost a third of the people affected in one of the regions hardest hit by the typhoon were informal settlers, and that displaced people without legal claims to land were more likely to lose their livelihoods and fall into poverty because of eviction or the threat of eviction. They were also more liable to return to unsafe areas in a bid to make a living, and without action to address the root causes of their vulnerability could form a residual caseload requiring long-term assistance. People without secure tenure are more at risk of eviction when land is valued for other purposes, such as tourism.

Oxfam and partner NGOs highlighted safeguards in existing Philippine law for groups vulnerable to tenure insecurity, including women and fishing communities, and called for a national land use plan and shelter assistance guidelines to provide guarantees of ownership or long-term occupancy to informal settlers and lessees.

For more information, see Oxfam (2014) '[Beyond Safe Land: Why Security of Land Tenure is Crucial for the Philippines' Post-Haiyan Recovery](#)'.

80 See Oxfam Australia (2009) 'Breaking the Shackles'.

## LINKS AND RESOURCES

- » Sphere Handbook [section on shelter and settlement](#)
- » Oxfam policy papers focused on shelter needs: Oxfam (2012) '[Haiti – The Slow Road to Reconstruction](#)'; Oxfam (2014) '[Beyond Safe Land: Why Security of Land Tenure is Crucial for the Philippines' Post-Haiyan Recovery](#)'
- » IDMC publications on [housing, land and property rights](#)

### 4.1.4 TIPS FOR INFLUENCING ON ASSISTANCE ISSUES

Influencing on assistance issues can and should happen at all levels, from engaging with local authorities in the crisis zone to influencing national government response coordination and the practice of international donors. In all cases, influencing strategies need to be informed by and built on the perspectives and needs of affected communities. Tips include:

- Make strategic use of programme data and needs assessments, food security assessments and market analysis for influencing purposes. Ensuring that the voices and priorities of affected communities are captured in these documents and incorporated into advocacy plans and communications is key to making sure that they are amplified by influencing activities.
- Actively use sectoral clusters at the national level as a platform to influence other humanitarian actors, governments and donors on humanitarian assistance priorities.
- Capture and share positive programme experiences, outcomes and lessons in order to influence the practice of other humanitarian agencies and donors.
- Involve advocacy/campaigns/communications staff in programme assessments and evaluations so that they have a concrete understanding of the assistance needs of communities.
- Always reinforce the rights of communities to demand and receive assistance in accordance with their needs and the responsibilities of states and other duty bearers to provide that assistance.

## 4.2 THE RIGHT TO PROTECTION

### FIND OXFAM POLICY POSITIONS AND STANDARDS

- » Oxfam (2008) '[Improving the Safety of Civilians: A Protection Training Pack](#)'
- » Oxfam (2012) '[Oxfam Policy Compendium Note: The Role of UN Peacekeeping Missions in the Protection of Civilians](#)'
- » Oxfam (2012) '[Oxfam Policy Compendium Note on Accountability of National Security Forces to Civilians](#)'
- » Oxfam (2007) '[Oxfam Policy Compendium Note on Protecting Refugees, IDPs and Asylum-Seekers](#)'

### 4.2.1 PROTECTION

**Protection** encompasses all activities aimed at ensuring full respect for the rights of the individual in accordance with the letter and the spirit of the relevant bodies of law, i.e. human rights law, international humanitarian law and refugee law.<sup>81</sup>

It is about improving the safety of civilians by understanding and responding to specific kinds of widespread and systematic threats: violence (e.g. arbitrary killing, torture and rape), coercion (e.g. forced recruitment and sexual exploitation) and deliberate deprivation (e.g. blocking access to basic services and appropriation of land).

The state has the primary responsibility to protect people who fall under its jurisdiction. Some governments try to meet these obligations in good faith and work with the international community and civil society to do so. Others offer protection selectively or not at all, or are themselves perpetrators: sponsoring violence, coercing sections of the population or deliberately depriving people of their basic rights.

The international community also has a responsibility to support states to meet their protection obligations, particularly in relation to mass atrocities such as genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes and ethnic cleansing. The **Responsibility to Protect** brings together existing points of international law to clarify that governments and the international community at large may take action to support, encourage or pressurize the state to fulfil its duty in these circumstances and, where these efforts fail, may also intervene directly, with UN Security Council authorization.<sup>82</sup>

Beyond states, a number of international actors, including ICRC, UNHCR, OHCHR and UNICEF, have specific mandated obligations in relation to certain aspects of the protection of civilians (e.g. refugee and child protection). UNHCR leads the global protection cluster (see [section 3.5.4](#) on the cluster system).

NGOs are not legally mandated, but are often the implementing partners of mandated actors. Furthermore, the proximity of NGOs to communities means that they may be well placed to understand their protection needs. The **Sphere Standards** include protection principles, and the **ICRC Professional Standards for Protection Work** set out guidelines for action.

In practical rather than legal terms, protective action is taken first and foremost by communities themselves, for example by negotiating, adapting their livelihoods or fleeing. The efforts of all state and non-state actors should recognize, respond and, where appropriate, support these community coping mechanisms.

81 S. Gioi Caverzasio (ed.) (2001) 'Strengthening Protection in War'.

82 For reflections on Oxfam's engagement with the Responsibility to Protect principle, see E. Cairns (2014) '[R2P RIP?](#)' From Poverty to Power blog.



**GUIDANCE****Oxfam's commitment to protection in humanitarian action**

The protection of civilians in conflict and disasters is one of the central themes of Oxfam's influencing work in crisis situations, and advocacy is an essential means of improving protection. Oxfam requires all its humanitarian programmes to be 'safe programmes' that avoid inadvertently doing harm and are conflict-sensitive. In addition, Oxfam will integrate specific protection activities into humanitarian programmes where protection threats exist and where Oxfam is best placed to respond – which will always include advocacy at different levels.

The strategic combination of community-based fieldwork and international advocacy is widely regarded as Oxfam's greatest strength in advancing protection. As such, Oxfam commits to improve collaboration between protection and policy staff to ensure that our global, national and regional advocacy work on protection helps people in crisis to have their voices heard by those in power and to hold duty bearers accountable to their protection responsibilities.

Oxfam's protection work has to date mostly focused on conflict settings, but it also applies to fragile contexts with high rates of armed violence, such as Colombia, and disaster situations such as Haiti, where many of the same issues arise (e.g. gender-based violence or forced evictions of displaced people).

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## 4.2.2 ROLE OF THE SECURITY SECTOR IN PROTECTION

In order to fulfil their responsibility to protect civilians, states need effective, accountable and representative security services (see also [section 3.3.3](#) on the state security sector). An unaccountable and ineffective security sector can make communities vulnerable, perpetuate cycles of violence and undermine assistance and development.

In many conflict and post-conflict settings, the systems for providing security and justice to citizens are under-resourced or dysfunctional. Armies and police forces in such contexts are often unable to protect communities and may themselves be a source of insecurity. Justice systems are also frequently ill-resourced, corrupt or inaccessible to those who need them most. Most national security sector institutions are highly male-dominated, which has implications for their representativeness and responsiveness to the needs of women.

Security Sector Reform (SSR) has increased in prominence since the turn of the millennium and entails the process of developing a security sector which respects human rights and is efficient, transparent and under democratic control. SSR should therefore include both top-down and bottom-up governance and be informed by rights-based principles – not just technical fixes to train armies or equip police forces.

Oxfam's influencing work on SSR focuses on the accountability of national security services to civilian authorities and the civilian population they are mandated to serve.<sup>83</sup> In particular, Oxfam aims to support communities to influence the behaviour of local forces; influence ministries and politicians at the national level to adopt and implement reform plans; and call on donors and multilateral organizations to prioritize and resource appropriate and coordinated SSR.

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83 See Oxfam (2012) 'Policy Compendium Note: The Accountability of National Security Forces to Civilians'.

## CASE STUDY 19 Promoting gender-sensitive police reform in Afghanistan

In a context of widespread physical, sexual and psychological abuse against women, there is evidence that Afghan women are more likely to report crimes to policewomen. Yet women make up just 1 percent of the Afghan National Police force (ANP).

Oxfam has been working with Afghan partner organizations to change attitudes towards violence against women both within communities and in the police force. The programme promotes support for female police officers by informing local leaders about how the police should protect women and the role that policewomen can play in this, including supporting female victims of violence.

A 2013 Oxfam report entitled '[Women and the Afghan Police](#)' proposed a number of actions to address the barriers to female participation in the ANP. As a result of the report and lobbying, the Afghan Ministry of the Interior and UNDP have agreed to implement many of the recommendations, including building separate facilities for women officers, developing a gender strategy, increasing access for policewomen to professional training opportunities and establishing regular reports on issues facing policewomen. The ministry has since reported an increase in the number of female police in the ANP and has appointed the first female chief of police in Kabul.

### 4.2.3 PROTECTION AND PEACEKEEPING

In 1999, following failures of UN peacekeeping missions to protect civilians in Rwanda, Bosnia and Somalia, the UN Security Council agreed [Resolution 1265](#), for the first time acknowledging the importance of civilian protection and mandating 'the protection of the civilian population' as an explicit task of UN peacekeeping missions. Today, very few UN peacekeeping missions are deployed without an explicit mandate to 'prevent' and 'respond to' threats to civilians, using both civilian and military means under Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter.

The challenge has been translating these mandates into meaningful practice by diverse peacekeeping personnel in difficult situations. The DPKO/DFS (Department of Field Support) has developed tools to address this challenge, including its policy on the Protection of Civilians in UN Peacekeeping developed in 2015, which followed reviews into protection and peacekeeping by DPKO and OCHA. The Concept of Operations (CONOPS) guides UN missions with protection mandates to:

- **Protect through dialogue and engagement:** e.g. conflict resolution and mediation between parties to the conflict; persuading the government and other relevant actors to intervene to protect civilians; public information and reporting on protection of civilians; and other initiatives that seek to protect civilians through public information, dialogue and direct engagement;
- **Protect from physical violence:** e.g. through the show or use of force to prevent, deter or respond to situations in which civilians are under threat of physical violence. These actions should be informed by and implemented in close coordination with civilian sections of the mission;
- **Establish a protective environment:** e.g. through reform to the national/host government police, judicial and defence sectors.

In addition, the [human rights due diligence policy on UN support to non-UN security forces](#) requires peacekeeping forces not to support (sections of) national security forces where they are engaging in human rights violations against civilians.

The detail of how peacekeeping personnel should put their protection mandate into practice is left to the individual peacekeeping missions. For each mission, the military Concept of Operations sets out the tactics and resources that the mission will employ to fulfil its mandate, and the Rules of Engagement set out detailed instructions guiding soldiers' day-to-day behaviour in implementing their peacekeeping duties.

As well as influencing the mandate of peacekeeping operations at the Security Council level, organizations such as Oxfam can advocate for protection to be prioritized in Rules of Engagement, and hold peacekeepers to account for implementing these. Oxfam has worked to influence peacekeeping missions to better protect civilians in DRC, Sudan, South Sudan, Central African Republic, Chad and elsewhere. A recurrent focus of this advocacy has been improving the responsiveness of peacekeeping missions to communities' own protection concerns, through better engagement with the people they are mandated to protect.<sup>84</sup>



Men and women pay close attention in a training session in Mpati camp, DRC in February 2012. The Oxfam protection team is running a training session for members of village protection committees and “agents du changement” (change agents). Credit: Caroline Gluck/Oxfam.

84 See, for instance, Oxfam (2010) ‘Engaging with Communities’.

## CASE STUDY 20 Collaborative advocacy with the protection cluster in DRC

Some of Oxfam's most successful protection-related advocacy in DRC took place in parts of the north-east of the country between 2010 and 2012. Bottom-up reporting of police and military abuse reinforced top-down pressure for security sector reform. Oxfam and local partner organizations were able to relay and amplify concerns and recommendations from the community level to national and international forums, in particular through membership of the national and provincial protection clusters.

By pooling information and analysis through the clusters and linking with wider calls for security sector reform, protection actors helped to secure government action to curb abuses and ultimately a real change in relations between communities and the security services in some areas.

The protection cluster has also been a key focus of efforts in recent years to improve the responsiveness of the MONUSCO peacekeepers to protection concerns. Cluster members use a 'protection matrix' of major threats to civilians as a basis for influencing MONUSCO's decisions on where and how it deploys a protective presence to deter violence. Cluster recommendations draw on members' direct contact with affected communities, and regular meetings to update the protection matrix have maintained pressure on peacekeepers to respond to local priorities and concerns.

### 4.2.4 TIPS FOR INFLUENCING ON PROTECTION

Influencing for protection can and should happen at all levels, from the grassroots to the UN Security Council. Influencing locally can mean advocating for local authorities or community leaders to protect or stop abusing civilians, or supporting vulnerable groups to understand their rights to protection. Internationally, it may involve campaigning for UN Member States to act to prevent atrocities.

But influencing for protection is about more than advocacy and campaigning – in certain circumstances it may include capacity building and supporting national authorities to fulfil their protection role, e.g. through training police forces on the laws relating to gender-based violence (GBV).

Key tips for influencing on protection issues:

- Work closely with protection field staff (where deployed) to carry out protection analysis and liaise with communities at risk.
- Work closely with the Protection Cluster at country level to promote a coherent approach to protection threats.
- Recognize the complexity of protection risks that communities face. Do a thorough analysis of protection threats and needs in your area before attempting to influence around them.
- Ensure that you have reliable information on protection threats. Do not act on rumours.
- Do a risk assessment. Protection-related influencing can involve risk to programmes, beneficiaries, staff and other agencies. It is critical that these risks are actively acknowledged and managed.
- Seek dialogue with people at risk. Ensure that they have an opportunity to participate in designing influencing strategies that affect them and can access vital information to help them mitigate exposure to risks.
- Understand the international and national laws, policies and frameworks applicable to protecting people in a given context – and work with at-risk populations to use them to hold duty bearers to account.

- Oxfam is committed to implementing the ICRC's Professional Standards for the management of sensitive protection information, which it helped to develop. Oxfam has carried out very effective advocacy based on field assessments and surveys that do not collect sensitive personal information.
- Oxfam does not normally collect sensitive personal information. A clear rationale for doing so is required, and any such data collection should be carried out in accordance with professional, ethical and legal standards and with advisory support from specialists within Oxfam (e.g. humanitarian policy, protection and legal teams). Sensitive information should be collected only where there is a strong rationale to do so, and where risk management processes and the requisite capacity, skills, information management systems and protocols are in place.

## LINKS AND RESOURCES

- » World Vision (2012) '[Minimum Inter-Agency Standards for Protection Mainstreaming](#)'
- » ICRC (2013) '[Professional Standards for Protection](#)'
- » Oxfam (2008) '[Improving the Safety of Civilians: A Protection Training Pack](#)'
- » P. Wynn-Pope (2012) '[Evolution of Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict](#)', Oxfam Australia and Australian Civil Military Centre
- » Oxfam (2010) '[Engaging with Communities: The Next Challenge for Peacekeeping](#)'
- » Oxfam (2010) '[No Will, No Way: US-funded Security Sector Reform in the Democratic Republic of Congo](#)'
- » **SSR publications** of the Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF)
- » UN (2013) '[Human Rights Due Diligence Policy on UN Support to Non-UN Security Forces](#)'
- » DPKO/DFS (2010) '[Draft DPKO/DFS Operational Concept on the Protection of Civilians in United Nations Peacekeeping Operations](#)'

## 4.3 HUMANITARIAN ACCESS

As discussed in [section 4.1](#) and [section 4.2](#), communities affected by conflict and disasters have the right to receive assistance and protection. Despite this, one of the key challenges for humanitarian actors is ensuring that people can access the support they need. While there is no formal legal definition for the notion of humanitarian access,<sup>85</sup> it is widely considered a ‘fundamental prerequisite for humanitarian action’.<sup>86</sup> It is related to the broad concept of ‘humanitarian space’, which is the operating environment in which people’s right to receive protection and assistance is upheld.

Oxfam’s advocacy on humanitarian access should always seek to emphasize the needs and rights of communities to access protection and assistance, as well as the challenges that Oxfam and other humanitarian agencies face in enabling those communities to access assistance. This will help ensure that communities rather than aid agencies remain at the centre of advocacy efforts.

### 4.3.1 ACCESS CHALLENGES

In many emergencies, particularly in conflicts, communities and in particular marginalized groups struggle to access the protection and assistance to which they are entitled. Humanitarian agencies may also face problems sustaining access over a period of time, or when attempting to negotiate such access with all parties to a conflict. In non-conflict disaster settings too, a lack of infrastructure, extreme weather conditions and remote locations can also make access extremely challenging.<sup>87</sup>

In recent years, many humanitarian agencies have viewed ensuring sustained and sufficient humanitarian access for populations in need as the biggest challenge to effective humanitarian action.<sup>88</sup> The Syria crisis in particular has brought access challenges into sharp focus, with millions of vulnerable people inside the country unable to access the aid they desperately need.

While there is no single or simple reason why humanitarian access has become more complex and controversial, some of the factors include:

- Increasing fragmentation and complexity of conflict, with multiple armed groups often fighting in a context of shifting alliances. This makes it harder for people in need to move freely to access assistance, and for humanitarian agencies to negotiate access to vulnerable populations;
- Linked to this, dangers inherent in some of the strategies that humanitarian organizations can adopt in their efforts to maintain access in highly insecure environments. Where community leaders are asked to mediate with armed groups on behalf of aid agencies, the unintended result can be a transfer of risk to the community;<sup>89</sup>
- Growing threats to the independence and impartiality of humanitarian agencies in recent years, with the lines between humanitarian action and political or military intervention becoming increasingly blurred (see [section 3.8.2](#) on civil–military coordination). While causation is hard to prove, at the same time humanitarian workers<sup>90</sup> and communities have increasingly come under attack;

85 See F. Schwendiman (2011) ‘The Legal Framework of Humanitarian Access in Armed Conflict’, footnote 1.

86 UN News Centre (2007) ‘Ban Ki-moon’s speeches’.

87 See, for example, BBC News (2013) ‘North India Floods’.

88 F. Schwendiman (2011) ‘The Legal Framework of Humanitarian Access in Armed Conflict’.

89 See Humanitarian Policy Group (2012) ‘Talking to the Other Side’.

90 See Humanitarian Outcomes (2012) ‘Aid Worker Security Report 2012’; ReliefWeb (2013) ‘Un Humanitarian Agency Reports Sharp Rise in Attacks Against Aid Workers in Afghanistan’; Humanitarian Outcomes (2015) ‘The Aid Worker Security Database’.



- The introduction of counter-terrorism legislation, which has arguably made some humanitarian agencies more risk-averse, leading to self-censorship<sup>91</sup> and an unwillingness to work in certain areas or with certain communities;
- The growing number of humanitarian agencies on the ground and ensuing challenges for coordinating access;
- The enormity of disasters affecting massive numbers of people, including those that take place in densely populated urban areas, such as the 2010 earthquake in Haiti and the 2013 typhoon in the Philippines;
- The overlap between disasters and conflicts.



Thirty six porters hired by Oxfam deliver relief material by foot to the remote village of Laprak, Gorkha District, Nepal. The road is inaccessible due to landslides following the April 2015 earthquake. Credit: Sam Spickett.

### 4.3.2 INFLUENCING APPROACHES ON ACCESS

As noted in [section 2.1](#), under IHL, parties to a conflict must protect and meet the basic needs of persons within their control. In situations where they are unwilling or unable to do so, they must facilitate impartial relief operations and allow rapid and unimpeded passage of aid, equipment and personnel. In [Resolution 46/182 \(1991\)](#), the UN General Assembly called upon states whose populations are in need of humanitarian assistance to facilitate the work of inter-governmental and non-governmental organizations in implementing such assistance, 'or which access to victims is essential'.

Impeding humanitarian access for people in need violates IHL. Oxfam and other humanitarian actors must be free at all times to negotiate with all parties to a conflict (including non-state groups) to ensure the impartial and independent delivery of assistance. It is critical that access negotiations are well coordinated, and for this reason [OCHA](#) should normally be the first point of engagement for Oxfam at the field level to raise access challenges.

91 K. Mackintosh and P. Duplat (2013) 'Study of the Impact of Donor Counter-Terrorism Measures on Principled Humanitarian Action'; IRIN News (2013) 'Counter-terrorism Laws Can Hurt Humanitarian Action'.

## The importance of objective monitoring

Humanitarian access can be controversial, and states or non-state actors may deny that they are preventing agencies from accessing vulnerable populations and vice versa. This means that successful advocacy on access must be based on objective data and analysis of who is not getting what, and why.

**OCHA's Access Monitoring and Reporting Framework** is a useful tool for this. Humanitarian agencies can use it collectively to identify types of access constraints (from bureaucratic impediments such as restrictions on the movement of staff and goods, to insecurity caused by military operations to direct threats against humanitarian workers or political interference in relief activities). By agreeing on measurable indicators for each type of access constraint that is relevant in the particular context and consistently collecting information, agencies can monitor trends on access and use this information to inform advocacy or negotiation strategies.

OCHA monitors and reports on access in more than a dozen countries. Dedicated capacity is rare, but is particularly useful in contexts that require ongoing access negotiations. Oxfam country teams operating in a context with limited or deteriorating humanitarian access can lobby OCHA to create a working group that assumes responsibility for implementing this framework or (in the absence of a capable and well-resourced OCHA office) form an NGO working group for the purpose. The analysis produced can provide an evidence base for advocating with those preventing access, or others who can influence them.

## Diplomatic negotiations

Humanitarian access is a negotiated business, which can be helped or hindered by the diplomatic interventions of states and multinational bodies. Careful risk assessment and power analysis should guide advocacy strategies on access, in order to avoid causing unintended harm or backlash.

### CASE STUDY 21 Delicate negotiations in the wake of Cyclone Nargis, Myanmar

Cyclone Nargis hit Myanmar's Ayeyarwady Delta and Yangon Division in May 2008, killing 140,000 people and destroying homes and schools, as well as farmland, cattle, fishing ponds and equipment, and leaving the vast majority of survivors struggling to make ends meet. The situation was compounded by the government's initial reluctance to allow international humanitarian workers to enter the country, despite the urgent need for agency surge capacity to meet the enormous humanitarian needs. Vocal international protest, particularly from European governments, was largely ineffective at breaking the impasse.

Oxfam's analysis of the regional context indicated that ASEAN would have greater influence on the Myanmar government than most Northern governments. Based on this analysis, Oxfam lobbied the ASEAN Secretariat and its member countries to negotiate and persuade the Myanmar government to grant humanitarian access. Following negotiations through ASEAN, the Myanmar government agreed to establish a tripartite group consisting of itself, ASEAN and the UN, which coordinated the relief operation and ensured humanitarian access to aid agencies. This move paved the way for more assistance to reach affected populations.

## The role of the UN Security Council

Views differ on the extent to which the UN Security Council should either be involved in pushing for access or be a lobby target on access issues. One major concern is that access should always be guaranteed, and that seeking UNSC endorsement might undermine that premise by implying that access needs to be mandated in special circumstances.

There are also concerns regarding the efficacy of such resolutions, given that access is based on a level of consent/acceptance from the host government or parties to a conflict, without which it is very difficult to work in accordance with humanitarian principles. However, active consent is not always necessary. Many credible humanitarian actors work in contexts without active consent, taking the transparent route of informing all parties to the conflict and in effect securing tacit acceptance.

## Preserving space for negotiation and voice

In the interests of independence and operational security, it is important that humanitarian actors preserve their ability to negotiate directly with all parties to a conflict and not outsource responsibility for access negotiations to political actors. For example, the role of peacekeeping missions in this regard is to contribute to a security situation where access is possible, not to negotiate access on behalf of humanitarians.

Sometimes humanitarian teams or partners are able to negotiate access to areas controlled by militias at a very local level. This needs to be borne in mind when considering international advocacy. Private advocacy with trusted targets as opposed to international campaigning may be the most appropriate approach when faced with access issues.

Sometimes humanitarian agencies feel that there is a trade-off between speaking out publicly on sensitive issues and obtaining access in a given context. Usually there is not an 'either/or' choice to be made, however: a nuanced contextual analysis, consultation with programme staff and thorough risk assessment can provide the basis for designing an influencing strategy that complements intervention on the ground.

### LINKS AND RESOURCES

- » OCHA's [access resource page](#)
- » [UNSC documents](#), including the Secretary-General's annual reports on the protection of civilians
- » OCHA (2011) '[To Stay and Deliver: Good Practice for Humanitarians in Complex Security Environments](#)'
- » ALNAP (2011) '[Humanitarian Access in Situations of Armed Conflict: Field Manual](#)'
- » Conflict Dynamics International [Humanitarian Negotiations Information Portal](#) (HNIP)

## 4.3.3 IMPACT OF COUNTER-TERRORISM LEGISLATION ON HUMANITARIAN ACCESS

Most UN member states have introduced counter-terrorism laws based on UNSC [Resolution 1373 on counter-terrorism](#) of 2001, and many also had pre-existing regulations. Through these laws, governments may freeze assets of, prohibit transactions with or even criminalize 'material support' to individuals or groups that they designate as terrorists.

## Impact and risk

New counter-terrorism law can complicate humanitarian access in countries where certain armed groups have been proscribed or designated as terrorists, such as Somalia, Afghanistan, the Philippines and Colombia.

While the nature and extent of the constraints vary based on the country imposing them, humanitarian organizations have stressed the following adverse impacts in particular:<sup>92</sup>

- Bureaucratic 'due diligence' requirements and licensing processes can impede agency capacity to provide a timely response in emergencies, and some – such as beneficiary and some forms of partner vetting – can threaten staff security and perceptions of organizational neutrality, while potentially excluding people in need on non-humanitarian grounds.
- The threat of criminal liability, reputational harm and funding cuts if the agency is held to have provided (or is even accused of having provided) 'direct or indirect' 'financial', 'economic' or 'material' support to a designated terrorist organization can deter humanitarian intervention in areas where such groups are present (and where civilians may be in greatest need) and partnering with local organizations (when this may offer the best chance of reaching the most vulnerable people).
- The threat is exacerbated by broad or vague definitions of what constitutes 'direct or indirect' 'support', which might cover the engagement with armed groups necessary to secure access to communities or 'taxation' of suppliers by those groups, over which the agency has no control. It is, though, potentially a criminal offence if Oxfam's assets end up with a proscribed organization, no matter how this may have occurred. Moreover, institutional donors may withhold funding in environments where they are unwilling to accept the legal risk associated with interaction with various groups, even if Oxfam believes that it is capable of managing that risk.

## Humanitarian access in contexts where there are designated groups

Oxfam's position is that humanitarian agencies must be free to talk to any party that controls territory or access, including proscribed organizations, to ensure the delivery of humanitarian aid to those in need. Most countries do not have regulations that prohibit individuals or organizations from talking to representatives of 'proscribed' organizations, although some donor countries have 'no contact' policies which apply to their own nationals and NGOs. Oxfam seeks to resolve such obstacles to principled and effective humanitarian action where they arise, through dialogue with donors and other implementing organizations, while taking steps to reduce the risk of diversion of the aid it provides in high-risk contexts. It has an 'Anti-Diversion policy' outlining steps it takes to prevent this from happening.<sup>93</sup>

Oxfam affiliates have been active in lobbying their governments, the donor community and UN institutions on the impact that counter-terrorism regulations have had on humanitarian action and in closing the space for civil society. Oxfam has supported inter-agency research and advocacy on these issues, including around draft legislation in the USA (see Case Study 22).

92 See in particular K. Mackintosh and P. Duplat (2013) 'Study of the Impact of Donor Counter-Terrorism Measures on Principled Humanitarian Action'; NRC/HPG (2012) 'Tools for the Job: Supporting Principled Humanitarian Action', p.25; InterAction (2012) 'Impact of Legal Restrictions on Humanitarian Action'.

93 See Oxfam '[Oxfam's Commitment to Prevent Aid Diversion](#)'.

## CASE STUDY 22 InterAction advocacy on counter-terrorism and humanitarian action

An estimated 750,000 people were affected by famine in Somalia in 2011. Many of them lived in areas controlled by armed opposition groups, at least one designated as a 'terrorist' group by a number of donor governments, including the USA, UK and Canada. Somalia is subject to a UN Security Council sanctions regime, but humanitarian action was exempted by UNSC Resolution 1916, which was then incorporated into EU regulations and the legislation of EU member states. However, no such exemption existed under US criminal or civil law.

Humanitarian NGOs were concerned that domestic counter-terrorism laws in donor countries, in particular the USA, would render principled humanitarian action impossible. This also had an impact on funding to UN agencies. The NGO platform InterAction lobbied the Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC), a section of the US Treasury Department, for a special licence, which was eventually issued for USAID and State Department partner organizations but did not cover other NGOs in Somalia.

InterAction has since worked closely with Members of Congress to obtain bipartisan support for the 2013 Humanitarian Assistance Facilitation Act, which would amend the criminal law statute and sanctions laws to provide a humanitarian exemption. The bill has not passed but has already proved useful to aid dialogue with government officials and donors on the challenges that counter-terrorism legislation presents for humanitarian action.

In 2014, OFAC issued guidelines on 'Sanctions and Humanitarian Assistance', which clarify that the US government does not wish to impede humanitarian action and that providers of bona fide humanitarian assistance are not priorities for sanctions enforcement.

## LINKS AND RESOURCES

- » K. Mackintosh and P. Duplat (2013) '[Study of the Impact of Donor Counter-Terrorism Measures on Principled Humanitarian Action](#)'
- » InterAction (2013) '[Impact of Legal Restrictions on Humanitarian Action](#)'
- » NRC/HPG (2012) '[Tools for the Job: Supporting Principled Humanitarian Action](#)'
- » Humanitarian Practice Network (2007) '[Terrorist Lists and Humanitarian Assistance](#)'

## 4.4 GENDER JUSTICE IN CRISES

### FIND OXFAM POLICY POSITIONS AND STANDARDS

- » Oxfam (2013) '[Oxfam Humanitarian Policy Note: Gender Issues in Conflict and Humanitarian Action](#)'
- » Oxfam (2013) '[Oxfam Humanitarian Policy Note: Violence Against Women and Girls in Emergencies](#)'

Gender inequality is the deeply entrenched belief that women are fundamentally of less value than men. To transform unequal power relations between men and women, it is important to challenge and change existing social attitudes that hold that women are of less value and address social norms, structures and conduct that accept inequality as 'normal'. Times of crisis can present both opportunities and threats to women's rights, and as such a 'gender-just' approach to humanitarian influencing is vital.

**Gender justice** is the goal of full equality and equity between women and men in all spheres of life, resulting in women, jointly and on an equal basis with men, defining and shaping the policies, structures and decisions that affect their lives and society as a whole, to reflect their own interests and priorities.

### 4.4.1 GENDERED IMPACTS OF CRISES

Emergencies can affect women, men, girls and boys in radically different ways. If humanitarian interventions are not planned with gender dynamics in mind, the needs of those most under threat may not be adequately met, and opportunities for positive change will be lost.

Almost all violence and abuse in crises is highly gendered – targeting and impacting on men and women in different though inter-related ways. For example, civilian men and boys may be attacked as potential 'enemies' in conflict or be forcibly recruited by armed groups. At the same time violence against women and girls (VAWG) almost always increases in times of crisis because of existing gender inequalities and rates of domestic violence,<sup>94</sup> the breakdown of law and order, risks associated with displacement and being in unsafe environments like camps, and impunity for sexual violence, abuse and exploitation. A lack of livelihood options can often lead to increases in early and forced marriage, survival sex and other negative coping mechanisms.

Women are frequently excluded from directing and benefiting from relief and recovery and peace-building efforts. Where they are included, the ramifications of this for their welfare and family and community relations are not always taken into account (see Case Study 23). Integrating gender equality and women's rights into humanitarian influencing work is therefore critical at all stages – from research and policy development to designing advocacy and campaigning strategies to monitoring and evaluation (M&E).

<sup>94</sup> For example, in Haiti, Human Rights Watch found that displacement increased the vulnerability of women and girls to SGBV, but in a context where they already faced quite high levels of both GBV and domestic violence. See Human Rights Watch (2011) 'Nobody Remembers Us'.



## CASE STUDY 23 The complex impact of gender in the Syria refugee response

A 2014 [Oxfam survey](#) of Syrian refugees in Za'atari camp in Jordan highlighted some of the ways in which displacement can create different problems for men, women and children. The survey found that government restrictions preventing refugees from working without a legal permit, under threat of deportation, had a gendered impact. While many men work illegally, they are more likely to face deportation if caught, so families attempt to minimize the risk by sending women and children to work, mostly as agricultural labourers, as they are more likely to get off with a warning.

Men described feeling humiliated and depressed at not being able to support their families. Some opted to encourage their wives either to work or to seek assistance, while others prevented them from doing so. Some women in the latter case suffered growing frustration as they felt under pressure to provide for their families. Yet when they did take on employment opportunities, they often felt overwhelmed with the combined responsibilities of carer, breadwinner and interlocutor with humanitarian agencies.

One impact of these pressures, combined with cramped living conditions and financial insecurity, was a widespread increase in family arguments and domestic violence, against women and children in particular. Meanwhile, fears about the safety of girls and young women were also reported to be causing them – voluntarily or under pressure from parents – to restrict their movement outdoors, as a coping mechanism to increase their protection.

### 4.4.2 LEGAL AND POLICY FRAMEWORKS FOR GENDER EQUALITY

A range of laws, policies and agreements exist to protect women's rights, both at times of 'peace' and in conflict and humanitarian situations. International protections include the 1979 Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women ([CEDAW](#)),<sup>95</sup> which guarantees women the exercise of all human rights and fundamental freedoms on a basis of equality with men, and the specific criminalization of rape and other forms of sexual violence in the [Rome Statute](#) of the International Criminal Court.<sup>96</sup> Alongside national laws and policies, a series of regional commitments and standards can also be invoked (see guidance below).

## GUIDANCE Regional instruments for advancing gender justice

- [African Union Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa](#) (2004)
- The Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People's Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa ([Africa Women's Protocol](#), 2005)<sup>97</sup>
- The 1994 [Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of VAW \('Convention of Belém do Pará'\)](#) focuses on all forms of VAW, with reference to state responsibilities and legal measures for prevention and remedy.
- The [Windhoek Declaration and Namibia Plan of Action](#) (2000) promote gender mainstreaming in multi-dimensional peace operations.
- The 2011 [Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence](#) includes a provision on gender in conflict.

<sup>95</sup> See also Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (2013) '[General Recommendation No. 30 on Women in Conflict Prevention, Conflict and Post-Conflict Situations](#)'.

<sup>96</sup> Article 7(1)(g) defines such acts as crimes against humanity when committed as part of a widespread and systematic attack against any civilian population; and Article 8(2)(b)(xxii) states that those who have committed rape and other forms of sexual violence can be tried for war crimes.

<sup>97</sup> R. Gawayana and R. Mukasa (2005) 'The African Women's Protocol: A New Dimension for Women's Rights in Africa', *Gender and Development Journal*, Vol. 13, Issue 3.

Major gaps nonetheless remain between government commitments to international agreements and real impact on women's lives. Civil society has a vital role to play in holding states to account for existing obligations, while continuously pushing to enhance the legal protections available to women and girls.

## The Women, Peace and Security agenda

Since 2000 the UN Security Council has agreed a raft of resolutions on women, peace and security. These focus on four aspects: conflict prevention, protection of women and girls from conflict-related abuses, women's participation in conflict management and gender-sensitive relief and recovery (see Case Study 24).

### CASE STUDY 24 UN Security Council resolutions on women, peace and security

- **Resolution 1325** (2000) provides for women's increased participation and representation at all levels in managing conflict; attention to the special protection needs of women and girls in conflict; and a gender perspective in all prevention and peace-building efforts and in UN programming and missions. In 2004 the UNSC called on member states to develop national action plans (NAPs) for implementing Resolution 1325;<sup>98</sup> some have collaborated on regional action plans,<sup>99</sup> and national civil society has played an important part in developing and monitoring NAPs in many countries.
- **Resolution 1820** (2008) recognized sexual violence in conflict as a threat to international peace and security, and called for improved protection and prevention.
- **Resolution 1888** (2009) called for the deployment of Women Protection Advisors in UN missions and the establishment of a Special Representative to the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict.
- **Resolution 1889** (2009) called for women's increased participation and representation at all levels in conflict and peace building, including in UN peace operations, and for the UN Secretary-General to propose specific performance indicators to track implementation of UNSCR 1325.
- **Resolution 1960** (2010) called for an end to impunity for sexual violence in conflict, and set up new prevention tools for the Security Council, including a listing mechanism for perpetrators; it encouraged increased deployment of female military and police personnel in UN missions and training on SGBV for all personnel.

More recent resolutions that reinforce the women, peace and security agenda include Resolution 2106 (2013) and Resolution 2122 (2013).

## Sexual and gender-based violence

There is wide and growing recognition that violence against women and girls is aggravated in all emergencies and humanitarian crises. In 2013 a DFID-led process highlighted this through the Global Call to Action on GBV in humanitarian crises, to which many donors and other agencies (including Oxfam) are signatories. Now led by the US State Department, the **Call to Action** commits signatories to 12 general actions to prevent and respond to VAWG in emergencies before waiting for evidence of specific instances to emerge.

98 For a full list of NAPs, see <http://www.peacewomen.org/e-news/article/nap-initiative>.

99 E.g. the **Pacific Regional Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security** 2012–15.

### 4.4.3 TIPS FOR ADVANCING GENDER JUSTICE IN HUMANITARIAN INFLUENCING



Women attend class and weapons training at the Kabul Police Academy, September 2013. The training will take six months, and they will learn about weapons, general policing, rule of law and gender and human rights training. On graduation, they will be placed in police stations throughout Kabul city. Credit: Ellie Kealey/Oxfam.

Advancing gender justice and women's rights is central to humanitarian influencing. This can be done in a number of ways, including mainstreaming gender equality in advocacy and campaigning; supporting and partnering with women's rights organizations on influencing; designing programmes to challenge attitudes and beliefs that undermine gender justice and equality; empowering women so that they are aware of their rights and raise their voice; and contributing to strengthening laws and policies that protect women's rights in crisis situations.<sup>100</sup>

<sup>100</sup> For further guidance on incorporating a gender analysis in the design and implementation of influencing work, see Oxfam National Influencing Guidelines, pp.39-41 (internal to Oxfam).

## Principles for mainstreaming gender

Analysis and consideration of the gendered causes and impacts of crises should be mainstreamed throughout humanitarian influencing, applying the following basic principles:

- All humanitarian influencing strategies should be based on sound **gender analysis** (see guidance below), to understand the differential causes and impacts of crisis on women, girls, men and boys.
- A good gender analysis must analyse the gendered nature of violence and abuse, the inter-relational aspects of gender relationships and the intersection between gender and other elements of identity such as ethnicity, disability, sexuality, etc. Good gender analysis in crisis situations will recognize that men and boys may also face specific threats such as execution and forced recruitment, with secondary implications for their families.
- Gender inequality issues must be addressed at all stages, from the research and policy development phase onwards.
- Women and girls represent the majority of poor people. This means that policy propositions and strategies must recognize and respond to their specific public policy needs.
- Gender analysis and concrete propositions (policy 'asks') on women's rights must underpin policy, advocacy and campaigns rather than being added as an afterthought.
- Arguments for policy attention to women's rights on the basis of pay-offs for other goals (economic growth, poverty reduction, health and nutrition, etc.) may be necessary as part of a broader strategy of gender advocacy, but should remain secondary to rights-based arguments linked to the implementation of key international women's rights agreements.
- Strategic, long-term alliances, based on mutual respect and accountability, should be built with relevant women's rights advocates, organizations and networks on specific policy issues to strengthen gender analysis and gender justice propositions.
- Building a gender justice perspective into policy and advocacy work requires dedicated time and resources: budgets for research and specialist technical advice, investment in relationships with women's rights organizations and recruitment of gender-sensitive staff.
- Policy, advocacy and campaigns managers should use organizational policies and tools, including performance management, to mainstream gender in the work of their teams. Where these do not exist, they should be developed.

### GUIDANCE

#### Key gender analysis questions

- Who has power?
- Who owns/controls resources?
- Who makes the decisions?
- Mobility of men and women (whether women know the places of shelter, local service centre, where they can complain if they have concerns, etc.)
- Who sets the agenda?
- Who gains, and who loses?
- Which men, and which women?
- ...And why...? (unpack assumptions, beliefs, attitudes)
- What are women's practical and strategic needs?

## Working with women's rights groups

Women's rights and feminist movements, organizations and networks are important for advancing gender justice in humanitarian crises, and working closely with them, including to build capacity and provide funding, can support their efforts to bring about change.

### CASE STUDY 25 Supporting a coalition of women's groups in Sri Lanka

The Women's Coalition for Disaster Management (WCDM) was set up by local and international NGOs and UN agencies in early 2005 to respond to gender concerns arising in the post-tsunami disaster response in eastern Sri Lanka. It soon became a space for women to raise their issues and those of their communities.

Since its inception, the network has taken a number of actions to address rights violations in the context of disaster and conflict response. These include support for raising cases of involuntary resettlement, addressing lack of protection and privacy for women in bathing areas in camps, developing guidelines on gender sensitivity in disaster response and lobbying for women's land rights, women representatives on camp committees, participation in post-disaster structures and a mandate for these structures to address gender concerns. WCDM set up GenderWatch, an action group which relayed women's reports of domestic violence, sexual harassment and discrimination in the tsunami displacement camps to international agencies and the government, pressuring for justice and remedial action.

WCDM has also supported local women's organizations in their wider work on gender, including through training and advice, centralizing reports and conducting and synthesizing empirical research on a range of issues across different geographic areas. With 26 member organizations and a flexible and informal management culture, the network has been successful in scaling up rapidly (and down again) to respond to identified rights concerns.<sup>101</sup>

### LINKS AND RESOURCES

- » IASC (2006) '[Women, Girls, Boys and Men: Different Needs – Equal Opportunities](#)' (Gender Handbook in Humanitarian Action)
- » [PeaceWomen](#) website: lists local, national and global [organizations](#) working on these issues, and advocacy and education [tools](#) for implementing UNSCR 1325
- » [NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security](#): links women's rights actors working in conflict settings with UN policy makers, and provides a useful participation and gender [checklist](#) for (draft) UNSC resolutions
- » Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (2013) '[General Recommendation No. 30 on Women in Conflict Prevention, Conflict and Post-Conflict Situations](#)'
- » Oxfam (2012) '[Ending Violence Against Women, An Oxfam Guide](#)'
- » IASC, [gender e-learning course](#)
- » Global Protection Cluster (2010) '[Handbook for Coordinating GBV Interventions](#)'

101 C. Roche et al. (2005) 'Bottom-Up Accountability and the Tsunami'; and Oxfam Australia (2009) 'Breaking the Shackles'.

## 4.5 PREVENTING CONFLICT

### FIND OXFAM POLICY POSITIONS AND STANDARDS

- » Oxfam (2014) '[Oxfam Humanitarian Policy Note: Conflict Transformation](#)'
- » Oxfam (2013) '[Oxfam Policy Compendium Note: Civil Society in Fragile and Conflict-Affected States](#)'
- » Oxfam (2007) '[Oxfam Policy Compendium Note on DDR](#)'

### 4.5.1 CONFLICT TRANSFORMATION

**CONFLICT TRANSFORMATION:** the process and desired outcome of addressing the key drivers of destructive conflict with action to transform the institutions and discourses that justify and reproduce direct, cultural and structural violence at the global, national and local levels. Conflict transformation 'acknowledges the need for addressing power imbalances and recognises a role for advocacy and the importance of voices that challenge the status quo. Its concern with direct, structural and cultural violence is thus also highly relevant from a rights perspective'.<sup>102</sup>

**CONFLICT SENSITIVITY:** working IN the conflict, trying to minimize negative impacts that could fuel it and to maximize positive impacts of programming. This implies taking responsibility for the unintended negative consequences of aid programmes.

**PEACE BUILDING:** working ON the conflict, trying to contribute to peace and reduce the drivers of conflict. Peace building within the conflict transformation framework thus consists of special activities addressing political and social transformation.<sup>103</sup>

Conflict transformation is about making a concerted effort to change the underlying conditions that promote violence, in order to achieve peace and human security.<sup>104</sup> Conflict transformation approaches must be rooted in thorough conflict analysis, which includes:

- Identifying the key driving factors, stakeholders and actors in the conflict, at the national, regional and, where appropriate, international levels;
- Analysing the dynamic nature of the conflict, and the inter-relatedness of the different factors and actors/stakeholders;
- Identifying strategic entry points for programming, based on the analysis and mandate of the organization;
- Monitoring successes and failures of previous efforts for conflict transformation and integrating these lessons into future programming.

Oxfam is increasingly adopting advocacy and influencing strategies at the country level to support conflict transformation, often in partnership with national civil society partners. In Oxfam's experience, in developing conflict transformation strategies, including advocacy work, it is necessary to identify and target interventions to engage key people and institutions whose position, power and influence make them critical to either the continuation or resolution of conflict. It is also important to ensure that there is strong public support for the change proposed (e.g. a specific law or peace agreement). A project that disregards either of these groups is less likely to succeed.<sup>105</sup>

102 M. Parlevliet (2011) 'Human Rights and Conflict Transformation'.

103 P. Woodrow and D. Chigas (2009) 'A Distinction with a Difference: Conflict Sensitivity and Peacebuilding'.

104 Human security focuses primarily on protecting people. **UNDP** defines seven components of human security: economic, food, health, environment, personal, community and political.

105 Ibid.



An understanding of gender relations, roles and responsibilities is fundamental at each stage – from conflict analysis and planning to implementation and phasing out – in order to contribute to realizing women’s rights and gender equality as conditions for a just peace.

## CASE STUDY 26 Addressing tribal conflicts in Pakistan

Under the ‘**Peace My Right**’ campaign, Oxfam and its partner organizations are working to build a peaceful society in Pakistan by promoting peace as a basic human right. The campaign is being implemented in three provinces – Sindh, Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa – and utilizes both traditional and innovative methods to resolve issues at the local level and to promote harmony amongst citizens.

Khairpur district in Sindh province, for example, is an area characterized by tribal feuds and a fragile law and order situation. Rival tribal groups reportedly have both licensed and unlicensed weapons, and a number of people have been killed in revenge attacks as part of a feud over land that had lasted for nine years and had led to violent clashes. As a result of the dispute, one of the groups had had to leave their ancestral lands and settle elsewhere.

The Bhitai Social Welfare Association (BSWA) has been working to promote peace in Khairpur, using a traditional approach called *Merr Minth Qafilo* in Sindhi. This is a tribal practice for resolving local feuds in which a group of people from different backgrounds tries to bring together rival parties to resolve their differences peacefully. This practice, which involves men, women, elders and community and spiritual leaders talking with rival parties, offers a space for reconciliation and the resolution of disputes through arbitration.

At the request of the two parties, BSWA held a *katchehri* (meeting of elders) in Taj Muhammad Narejo village, where locals suggested a two-pronged strategy of negotiating with elders of the rival parties, coupled with a counselling visit to the members of the two sides currently held in prison to convince them of the need for a resolution that would let both sides live in peace once they were released. The strategy worked, and both parties accepted the arbitration of an influential spiritual and political leader. Both parties agreed to observe a ceasefire, as a result of which local communities felt more secure.

### 4.5.2 PEACE PROCESSES

In traditional diplomacy, peace processes refer to the negotiations between political and military representatives of conflict parties with the aim of ending violent conflict. Given the complexity of today’s conflicts, the variety of actors involved and the interconnectedness of conflict dynamics at local, regional and national levels, peace processes that are exclusively state-led are rarely able to address these different dimensions of conflict in a comprehensive way.<sup>106</sup> To overcome this shortcoming, peace processes today often take place at different levels, involving different parts of society. These levels are often referred to as track 1, 2 and 3 mediation.<sup>107</sup>

<sup>106</sup> C. McKeon (2005) ‘Civil Society Participating in Peace Processes’.

<sup>107</sup> For a brief description of the different tracks and examples, see EPL0 (2013) ‘EU Support to Peace Mediation’.

For Oxfam, the following are likely to be issues of concern in countries where peace processes are taking place:

- **Comprehensiveness** – what issues are dealt with during negotiations and included in an eventual peace agreement? E.g. sharing of power and resources, accountability mechanisms for past human rights violations, reform of security and political systems, etc.
- **Inclusiveness** – are all belligerent parties given the opportunity to participate and are political and social groups affected by conflict, such as women, youth and representatives of minority groups, represented and able to participate?
- **Implementation** – are there accountability mechanisms that ensure that peace agreements are implemented and lead to sustainable peace, and is there a role for civil society in monitoring implementation?

The ability of humanitarian organizations like Oxfam to take a policy position on these issues will depend entirely on the context. In some contexts it is entirely appropriate and necessary for NGOs to support local and national civil society to engage in peace processes so that their voices are heard and concerns addressed. On this basis Oxfam has provided guidance and support to civil society groups involved in a number of peace negotiations, including South Sudanese civil society groups as well as Afghan and Syrian women's organizations.

## LINKS AND RESOURCES

- » **Berghof Handbook for Conflict Transformation:** updated resources and analysis
- » **Conciliation Resources web page:** reports on community-based conflict transformation efforts
- » Institute for Inclusive Security '**Nine Models for Inclusion of Civil Society in Peace Processes**' (includes short case studies of civil society involvement in different roles and on different tracks)
- » Kvinna till Kvinna (2011) '**Make Room for Peace: A Guide to Women's Participation in Peace Processes**'
- » UN (2012) '**UN Guidance for Effective Mediation**'

### 4.5.3 ARMS CONTROL

The irresponsible global trade in arms and ammunition and weak domestic arms controls in many countries are significant factors fuelling conflict and insecurity. Africa is estimated to lose \$18bn a year through armed violence – roughly the annual volume of development aid to the entire continent. Armed conflict shrinks an African nation's economy by 15 percent as a result of violence and insecurity,<sup>108</sup> and resulting crime levels discourage outside investment.

Additionally, corruption in the defence industry is estimated to cost \$20bn per year. The US Department of Commerce estimates that the arms trade accounts for some 50 percent of all corrupt transactions globally, although the value of arms traded annually does not exceed 1 percent of global trade.<sup>109</sup>

Oxfam's campaigning and advocacy on this issue has sought to reduce the adverse humanitarian impact of arms at global, regional and national levels.

<sup>108</sup> Oxfam (2007) 'Africa's Missing Billions: International Arms Flows and the Cost of Conflict'.

<sup>109</sup> Transparency International (UK) (2006) 'Preventing Corruption in the Official Arms Trade'.

## The Arms Trade Treaty

The Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) entered into force on 25 December 2014 to become the first legally binding international treaty regulating international transfers of conventional arms and ammunition. While it is an imperfect instrument, it provides an important basis for global action to control the conventional arms trade – a new global norm against which states' practice will be measured by other states and by international civil society. Oxfam campaigned for well over a decade to achieve the ATT, and the campaign provides valuable lessons on how to achieve impact through global treaty-making processes (see Case Study 27).

The ATT obligates states to place effective controls on international transfers of conventional arms, ammunition and parts and components. It explicitly prohibits the authorization of arms transfers under certain circumstances, including where it is known that they would be used to perpetrate war crimes, genocide, attacks on civilians or other grave breaches of the Geneva Conventions.

Where the prohibitions do not apply, before authorizing an arms export, states must conduct a comprehensive risk assessment and consider risk mitigation measures. Risks assessed include serious violations of IHL or IHRL, breaches of conventions on terrorism and organized crime (which includes corruption), GBV and violence against children. This standard will make it harder to bring arms into many countries where human rights are abused.

The Treaty also addresses the risk of arms being diverted from legitimate use into the illicit market, outlining possible actions, including denying export authorization. It is hoped that this provision will do much to control the illicit flows of small arms and light weapons that have been so damaging in conflicts in Africa in particular.

States parties must submit annual reports on authorized or actual exports and imports of arms covered by the Treaty, improving transparency and allowing civil society to hold states to account. To do this they must establish legislation and regulations; establish national control lists of arms, ammunition and equipment; and provide adequate oversight of the operation of the arms trade. This will contribute to improved governance.

Civil society pressure and oversight will be necessary in order to ensure that the Treaty is implemented and ultimately works to reduce the irresponsible trade in deadly weapons. This includes:

- Campaigning for governments to ratify or accede to the Treaty;
- Pushing governments to implement the Treaty into domestic law;
- Using the Treaty to hold governments to account, particularly in cases where states parties violate its provisions and engage in irresponsible arms transfers.

To pursue these endeavours, Oxfam continues to work with the Control Arms Coalition – a network of over 150 NGOs around the world dedicated to ending death and armed conflict caused by the irresponsible trade in arms.

## CASE STUDY 27 Making history with the Arms Trade Treaty



Arms control campaigners take an armoured tank through the streets of London (June 2012) to call for an Arms Trade Treaty. Credit: Mike Kemp/Oxfam/Amnesty International.

In April 2013, Oxfam and its allies in the Control Arms Coalition celebrated a fantastic campaign achievement with the adoption of the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) by an overwhelming majority at the UN General Assembly. By September 2014 over 50 states had ratified the Treaty, triggering its entry into force on 24 December 2014.

The ATT is the first internationally binding agreement to regulate the \$85bn annual trade in arms and ammunition, and will help protect millions of people living in daily fear of armed violence and at risk of rape, assault, displacement and death.

When the campaign was launched, only three countries supported the idea of an arms trade treaty. It took a decade of tenacious campaigning to prove the international community wrong.

Throughout the long process of consultations, committees, regional meetings and General Assembly resolutions, the campaign coalition ensured that the voices of those affected by conflict and violence were heard, and lobbied for the strongest possible treaty. A truly global campaign encompassed social change events from Mali to Cambodia, workshops and seminars in 100 countries, hundreds of media interviews and articles, reams of analysis and draft treaty language, and round-the-clock lobbying to persuade governments to make the treaty happen.

### 4.5.4 DISARMAMENT, DEMOBILIZATION AND REINTEGRATION

The disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) of former fighters into civilian life is intended to stabilize post-conflict countries and prevent a resurgence of armed violence. DDR programmes have become an integral part of post-conflict reconstruction and peace building, targeting several hundred thousand ex-combatants from more than 30 countries over the course of a decade.

DDR is complex – involving political, legal, administrative, organizational, financial, logistical and security aspects that must be taken into account at each stage – and pitfalls are numerous. Post-conflict countries are extremely challenging contexts for any

intervention. But its importance is proven: a failure to disarm – as in Central America and Haiti in the 1990s – leads to persistently high levels of armed violence, fuels organized criminal activity and hinders reconstruction and rehabilitation. Conversely, successful disarmament in post-conflict Bosnia has contributed significantly to preventing a resurgence of armed violence or conflict there.

## CASE STUDY 28 Oxfam's advocacy on DDR in DRC

In 2008, a peace deal was agreed between the government of DRC and most armed opposition groups in the country. Importantly, the agreement provided for ex-combatants to be demobilized and reintegrated into civilian life, but past DDR efforts in DRC had been largely ineffective.

Oxfam drew on its own programme experience of supporting the reintegration of Mai Mai fighters to argue for more attention to the 'R' component of 'DDR' as a basis for sustainable conflict reduction, applying internationally recognized standards. Advocacy centred on involving communities in programme design and implementation, targeting women combatants and women and girls associated with armed groups, taking local economic potential into account in planning reintegration support, screening for human rights abusers and making provision for justice and reconciliation at community level.

The 2006 **UN Integrated DDR Standards** (IDDRS) set out policies, guidelines and procedures drawn from past practice and experience. They define reintegration – often a problematic component – as:

**...the process by which ex-combatants acquire civilian status and gain sustainable employment and income. Reintegration is essentially a social and economic process with an open time-frame, primarily taking place in communities at the local level. It is part of the general development of a country and a national responsibility, and often necessitates long-term external assistance.**

Many aspects of the IDDRS echo learning from Oxfam's own experience of community-based reintegration, although sadly often there is insufficient funding and a lack of donor attention paid to this aspect. Therefore advocacy and influencing can be an important strategy for ensuring that well-resourced and effective DDR takes place. Given the complexities of DDR processes, it is critical that any advocacy and influencing work on this issue is based on sound conflict analysis, developed in collaboration with programme staff and integrated with protection and conflict transformation programmes.

## LINKS AND RESOURCES

- » [Oxfam's ATT work](#) – website page
- » [Control Arms website](#)
- » [UN DDR resource centre](#), including the [UN Integrated DDR Standards](#)

## 4.6 RESILIENCE, RISK REDUCTION AND CLIMATE ADAPTATION

### FIND OXFAM POLICY POSITIONS AND STANDARDS

- » Oxfam (2009) '[Oxfam Policy Compendium Note on Social Protection](#)'
- » Oxfam (2009) '[Oxfam Humanitarian Policy Note on Disaster Risk Reduction](#)'

Building resilience, reducing the risk of disasters and adapting to climate change are urgent humanitarian priorities – with increasing hazards (due to climate variability and other factors), increasing exposure of people to risk (as populations grow and concentrate in high-risk areas) and high levels of vulnerability among the poorest people.



Residents from the 40 Bari Colony community, Bangladesh participate in a drain clearing rally in November 2014. Volunteers are mobilizing the community into cleaning away household waste which currently ends up in drains causing water-logging and localized flooding. Credit: Tom Pietrasik/Oxfam.

### 4.6.1 RESILIENCE

**RESILIENCE** is the ability of women, men and children to realize their rights and improve their well-being despite shocks, stresses and uncertainty.<sup>110</sup>

Resilience is a much broader concept than just surviving, coping or 'bouncing back' after a crisis. Disaster risk reduction (DRR) and climate change adaptation (CCA) are crucial elements of resilience building (see [section 4.6.2](#) below), but it is also about broader structural changes within and between states to reduce the vulnerability of the poorest people and to redistribute risk more evenly amongst populations.

110 Oxfam (2013) 'No Accident: Resilience and the Inequality of Risk', p.9.



## Resilience and power

Oxfam argues that action to build resilience needs to recognize the role of power and politics: an understanding that people are vulnerable to these risks because they are politically, socially or economically excluded and hence have little access to resources, influence, information or decision-making power. Inequality is hardwired into disasters, so that poor people and poor countries suffer much more. Globally, rich countries reap the benefits of producing carbon emissions and excessive speculation on food commodities, while poorer countries suffer the consequences.

Resilience implies redistributing the risk – enabling disadvantaged groups, including women, to access more reliable services and support and more actively engage in decision making so that their vulnerability and exposure to risk are reduced. It also implies more flexible and responsive long-term development efforts by governments and international actors that reduce risk while supporting inclusive growth. This requires more development investment in high-risk contexts, and more and better coordination and joined-up thinking between development and humanitarian actors.

## Building resilience

While resilience building cannot entirely replace the need for humanitarian response, it is more affordable and effective to manage risk beforehand than to repair the damage afterwards. However, political commitment and investment in risk reduction and resilience building remain relatively low – with funds for DRR continuing to be very small compared with humanitarian response, and the majority of funding being provided by just a handful of donors. Advocacy to promote increased investment in resilience building and risk reduction is therefore often essential.

The precise advocacy approach will depend on the context and the particular types of risks and vulnerabilities, but may include pushing for:

- More effective social safety nets and welfare measures to build the resilience of the poorest people in society;
- Development approaches that are attuned to risk and abide by safeguards to avoid inadvertently increasing risk (such as major infrastructure programmes that make local communities vulnerable to flooding);
- Better use of early warning and early response systems to track and prevent slow-onset crises;
- A particular focus on working with women and marginalized and disadvantaged groups to build resilience – given that these groups are most vulnerable to shocks and stresses;
- More responsive action from states to protect communities in times of conflict;
- Greater investment in DRR and CCA approaches (see [section 4.6.2](#)).

Contemporary debate about resilience gained significant momentum in the wake of the Horn of Africa food crisis and the devastating famine in Somalia in 2011. Donor interest in resilience building has grown in recent years, as evidenced by initiatives such as **AGIR** in West Africa, **SHARE** in East Africa, **USAID's crisis modifier** and **DFID research into the cost-effectiveness of multi-annual humanitarian funding**.

## CASE STUDY 29 Women's livelihoods in Armenia

Despite Armenia's economic growth, many small rural communities are actually becoming poorer. Women are hardest hit, especially in border areas like Vayots Dzor, where refugees from Azerbaijan make up a significant percentage of the population. Many men have migrated to Russia to find temporary work and many women run households alone, working on the land to support their families. Traditional beliefs perpetuate inequality and often prevent women from taking part in the formal economy and in decision making.

Since 2010 Oxfam, alongside local partner Business Support Centre (BSC), has been promoting sustainable livelihoods amongst vulnerable and refugee communities in Tavush and Vayots Dzor regions. So far, thousands of small-scale farmers have seen their incomes rise by up to 30 percent by working through cooperatives, while levels of inequality and women's unemployment have decreased, and business ownership and women's status have risen.

The farmers have increased their knowledge and changed their practices in managing cooperatives, cultivating climate-resilient and marketable crops and marketing produce, using new technology (cold storage, drip irrigation), post-harvest management and new agricultural techniques. In addition to raising their standards of living, these new agricultural practices and women's increased power through engagement in cooperative management structures have built community resilience to withstand future climate-related shocks and stresses.

Nune Avagyan, mother of three and now president of a cooperative in Vayots Dzor, says, 'I was excited to join the Vankadzor agricultural cooperative... Now we are not just three women from a poor rural community, but we are three female leaders who see the light at the end of the tunnel, and we are three powerful elements of our change-seeking society.'

## Social protection

**SOCIAL PROTECTION** refers to a variety of formal and informal mechanisms and policies that meet people's basic needs so that they can deal with risk and vulnerability. It encompasses support to see people through periods of vulnerability, which everyone can face at times in their lives, and to enhance the social status and rights of marginalized groups.

Social protection is a necessary element of resilience, a core responsibility of national governments and a basic right for all people, rooted in the [UDHR](#)<sup>111</sup> and International Labour Organization (ILO) **Convention 102 on Social Security (Minimum Standards)**. However, the overwhelming majority of social protection is provided by communities – from remittances, which eclipse all funds provided by foreign aid, and by community insurance schemes, such as burial societies and savings and loans groups. The formal aspect of social protection encompasses both direct and indirect transfers – such as government subsidies or income support – through employment schemes, pensions or child grants, amongst others. Some mechanisms can be both private and government-led, such as pensions or insurance schemes. Then there is government policy that enshrines people's rights to such assistance, such as labour laws governing employment conditions and minimum pay or rights for informal sector workers.

In many of the contexts in which Oxfam works, social protection is about ensuring that the most vulnerable and marginalized people are included by supporting community care systems and advocating with governments for their right to basic assistance. Oxfam pilots or provides technical assistance to governments to help establish large-scale safety nets that can provide regular assistance to address chronic food insecurity and, critically, that can scale up in times of crisis and emergency.

## CASE STUDY 30 A nationally implemented safety net plan to deal with local shocks – Kenya

Nearly half of Kenyans live below the poverty line; 1.5 million people are chronically food-insecure and have relied on emergency relief to meet their basic needs. While the highest levels of vulnerability to food insecurity are in the arid and semi-arid lands (ASAL), half of Kenyans at risk live in rapidly growing urban informal settlements, where 50 percent of people lack access to safe and affordable drinking water. Female-headed households are particularly affected as they are less likely to have access to a stable income.

In 2009, Oxfam initiated and piloted the Urban Safety Net Programme (USNP). Using mobile phone banking, this provides monthly cash transfers of \$12.50, alongside business development activities, to 5,000 of the most vulnerable households in two informal settlements of Nairobi for periods of 6–8 months.

The Hunger Safety Net Programme (HSNP) provides bi-monthly cash transfers to the poorest 10 percent of households – 60,000 households – in northern Kenya. It is funded by multiple donors and implemented under the National Drought Management Authority. Although it is currently run mostly by INGOs and the private sector, the government is increasingly taking responsibility for the programme. Oxfam has participated in the HSNP, engaging in targeting and registration activities since 2008. The rains failed in 2013 and the HSNP is now scaling up its breadth of coverage, demonstrating that it can respond to shocks.

There are a number of challenges involved. Accurate targeting is extremely challenging in contexts with extremely high poverty levels (over 90 percent in some HSNP areas) and with limited donor and government funds: the most accurate, accountable and transparent mechanism to target the very poorest people (evaluated to be community-based targeting) can have very high time and logistical costs. Achieving objectives with transfer programmes is tricky: sharing of resources dilutes the value of transfers, while such programmes are also an attractive political tool. Ensuring government ownership can be politically and financially complex, especially for marginalized areas of the country, and requires considerable investment in capacity building. Complaints mechanisms are crucial to the accurate targeting and accountability of the programme, but are frequently seen as a subsidiary to the core programme.

Nevertheless, there have been significant achievements. Under the USNP, 50 percent of households are involved in a small business, and 83 percent have transitioned away from needing cash transfers. Negative coping strategies (prostitution, child labour, etc.) have decreased, while school enrolment has risen. The cash transfer approach has been adopted by the Ministry of Labour and Social Services and extended to other Kenyan cities and towns.

All this has helped to build resilience. The government enacted the National Social Protection Policy in 2012, on the back of considerable advocacy and technical support. Oxfam's technical assistance to the government has helped bring a focus to urban poverty and achieve a comprehensive National Safety Net Programme; due to the working and technical relationship that Oxfam has built with the government, it is viewed as one of its key partners. The Urban Programme has been adopted and extended by the Ministry of Labour and Social Services to other cities such as Mombasa, with ongoing Oxfam support. In response to the failed rains of 2013, the HSNP scaled up its breadth of coverage in 2014, reducing the need for emergency assistance and proving that the programme can respond to shocks.

**Further reading:** Oxfam (2011) '[Nairobi Urban Social Protection Programme](#)' and Oxfam (2011) '[Kenya Hunger Safety Net Programme](#)'.

While much thinking on resilience has focused on natural disasters or food crises in non-conflict settings, multiple stresses are also frequently present in complex emergencies where people are also caught up in conflict. Resilience in conflict means empowerment of the women and men most affected by risk and the removal of conflict-related barriers to development. This approach can also be closely linked to protection programming (see [section 4.2](#) above).

### CASE STUDY 31 Building resilience to conflict in Colombia

Work at household, community and national levels has strengthened the resilience of Colombian communities in the Samaniego region affected by 'confinement' – situations where armed actors close access to villages for prolonged periods, leaving villagers unable to tend their fields, harvest or plant crops or travel to market. Oxfam and its partners have:

- Helped villagers to develop kitchen gardens, which have enabled them to remain in their villages during periods of confinement. This reduces the risk of them losing their land through forcible displacement – a frequent occurrence in Colombia;
- Strengthened organizational and community networks to address the problem of anti-personnel mines laid by illegal armed groups – raising awareness, sharing information, identifying where the mines are and mapping safe routes, thus enabling access to fields and markets and protecting livelihoods;
- Lobbied the national government to change the rules to ensure that basic rights are protected. The Colombian Constitutional Court has now laid out the obligations of state institutions to provide humanitarian response in situations of confinement.

## 4.6.2 DISASTER RISK REDUCTION AND CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION

### Disaster risk reduction

**DISASTER RISK REDUCTION** is the concept and practice of reducing disaster<sup>112</sup> risks through systematic efforts to analyse and manage the causal factors of disasters, including through reduced exposure to hazards, reduced vulnerability of people and property, wise management of land and the environment and improved preparedness for adverse events.<sup>113</sup>

DRR is a core component of building resilience in high-risk contexts. DRR efforts are proven to reduce disaster mortality and economic losses and protect long-term development gains.<sup>114</sup> International standards on DRR have evolved over the past two decades, starting with the 1994 **Yokohama Strategy**, which was strengthened through the 2005–15 **Hyogo Framework for Action** (HFA) and the **Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–30**. The Sendai Framework is a multilateral plan whose expected outcome is 'the substantial reduction of disaster risk and losses in lives, livelihoods and health and in the economic, physical, social, cultural and environmental assets of persons, businesses, communities and countries'.

<sup>112</sup> Oxfam avoids the term 'natural disaster' because disasters are always a combination of a hazard (e.g. cyclone, earthquake) and a community's vulnerability to it. The hazard may be natural, but the disaster is man-made.

<sup>113</sup> UNISDR (2009) 'UNISDR Terminology on Disaster Risk Reduction'.

<sup>114</sup> See e.g. Oxfam and Tearfund (2010) 'Cost Benefit Analysis for Community Based Climate and Disaster Risk Management'; World Bank and United Nations (2010) 'Natural Hazards, Unnatural Disasters'.

These efforts reflect a shift in perspective, from responding to disasters to taking action to prevent them and mitigate their impact. Interest is also growing in establishing a legal duty for governments to prevent disasters, in addition to their duty to respond. In 2013, the International Law Commission developed **draft articles** on disaster prevention as the possible basis for an international convention.<sup>115</sup>

Despite these international agreements, implementation to date has suffered from a general failure by national governments to prioritize DRR politically and financially. This is partly because DRR has not been 'owned' or mainstreamed by the development sector, but dealt with primarily as a humanitarian issue, often by a national disaster management authority working in isolation from other relevant ministries. Another factor is that disaster losses are insufficiently accounted for, so without a basis for realistic cost-benefit analysis and risk management planning, governments tend to under-invest in preventive measures.

While there has been progress on national legislation and institutional and policy development on DRR, this has not been matched by systemic change to reduce risk at the local level. National policies are being weakened by failures of national and local implementation, due in part to a dearth of funds and capacity locally, as governments focus their resources on economically productive areas at the expense of the marginal and rural.

Donor governments too have fallen short. Between 2006 and 2010 only 2 percent of OECD DAC humanitarian assistance went to DRR, well short of the 10 percent recommended in 2009 by the UNISDR Global Platform for DRR, and only 0.5 percent of government development aid went towards DRR.<sup>116</sup> While funding for DRR has been increasing, its levels are still appallingly low, with the lion's share of DRR financing provided by just a handful of donors.<sup>117</sup>

## CASE STUDY 32 Urban vulnerability in La Paz, Bolivia

In La Paz, 45 percent of the urban population live in high-risk areas, on steep unstable slopes, often in areas cleared by previous landslides. Oxfam has been working with the city's mayor, local authorities, donors, NGOs and communities on a landslide preparedness project which has raised awareness among at-risk settlements. It has advocated for emergency funds and has developed a model displacement camp for potential victims with 360 temporary shelters, a communal house, a school and water services.

This proved its value when people were evacuated before a major landslide in 2011: although thousands of houses were destroyed, no one died or was injured. Yet losses of more than \$92m – over half the annual municipal budget and close to the total 10-year investment in prevention – highlighted the need for further action on DRR.<sup>118</sup>

## Climate change adaptation

**CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION (CCA)** refers to the actions that people, governments and institutions take in anticipation of, or in response to, unavoidable impacts of climate change. This can include adapting what is done and/or the way that it is done – for example, preparing for increasingly intense storms or better managing water sources in a drying climate.

<sup>115</sup> For a comprehensive overview of the legal basis for DRR, see the [sixth report of the International Law Commission on the protection of persons in the event of disasters](#), May 2013.

<sup>116</sup> D. Sparks (2012) 'Aid Investments in Disaster Risk Reduction', p. 11. Note that 'development aid' is defined as total ODA (excluding debt relief) minus humanitarian aid.

<sup>117</sup> J. Kellett and A. Caravani (2013) 'Financing Disaster Risk Reduction'.

<sup>118</sup> Oxfam (2012) 'Bolivia: Landslide Prevention and a Warning For La Paz'; and The Bartlett Development Planning Unit, 'Exploring Oxfam's Room for Manoeuvre to Address the Production of Urban Risk'.

DRR and CCA are closely linked, given that changing climatic conditions are a key factor increasing disaster risk globally. Efforts to adapt to climate change therefore necessarily intertwine with efforts to reduce disaster risk, including the risk of extreme weather events, such as floods, droughts and intense storms. CCA also relates to efforts to address long-term changes that will impact on communities over time, including rising temperatures, changing seasonal patterns, unpredictable rainfall patterns and rising sea levels.

There are a number of international frameworks, agreements and processes relating to climate change adaptation and mitigation that are comprehensively covered elsewhere, including most importantly the **United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change** (UNFCCC).

Commitments made by governments in climate negotiations can be effectively leveraged in humanitarian influencing efforts, and weather-related emergencies are often critical times to reinforce messages about CCA and mitigation. For example, at the Warsaw climate talks in 2013 Oxfam highlighted the shocking impact of Typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines as evidence of the need for governments to deliver on their promise to provide increased climate financing to help poor countries cope with the effects of climate change.<sup>119</sup>

### 4.6.3 ADVOCACY TIPS ON RESILIENCE, DRR AND CCA

Oxfam recognizes that, collectively, there has been substantial progress in addressing risk and building resilience through development and humanitarian efforts in recent years. But with the risks and the human, economic and environmental costs continuing to grow, a step change is required to make communities safer and more resilient to shocks, stresses and change. The following are tips for influencing governments, donors and other relevant actors on this issue:

- Resilience is by definition a cross-cutting issue – it straddles the development/humanitarian divide and concerns the global, national and local inequalities that make people vulnerable to risks. Influencing strategies thus need to look beyond traditional humanitarian actors and solutions and engage with development actors and institutions and ministries of health, welfare and urban planning, etc.
- DRR and resilience are seen, wrongly, as technical programming issues; the reasons why people are vulnerable have more to do with politics and power than specific hazards. Advocacy needs to bring in the political issues of inequalities (particularly in income and gender) and power.
- DRR, CCA and resilience are often seen as separate areas of programming and receive different streams of funding. At the country level, however, these approaches should be linked as much as possible – separate funding arrangements can undermine programme effectiveness. Influencing should push for donors to adopt more flexible and responsive funding approaches that address the risks present in a particular context.
- DRR is often seen as exclusively a humanitarian issue, which it is not. Humanitarian funding for DRR is generally available only after a disaster, not before; some preparedness work is then possible, but the timeframes are too short to build capacity and resilience. It is important that DRR is prioritized in long-term development work alongside CCA and other resilience-based approaches.
- Given the politicization of the climate change debate, it is critical to be precise and accurate when referring to climate science in influencing work. While we cannot attribute specific disasters to climate change, we can often say that climate change makes disasters more likely. Scientists often say that climate change ‘changes the odds’, suggesting that carbon emissions caused by humans are increasing the probability of extreme events and that some events may not have happened without human influence.

119 See e.g. Oxfam press release (2013) ‘What Can Governments Do at the UN Climate Talks in Wake of Philippines Typhoon Haiyan’.



- Influencing efforts must focus on holding governments accountable for reducing risk and building resilience, with a particular emphasis on investments at the local level and a focus on women and other vulnerable or marginalized groups.
- Donors too must be held accountable to their commitments to resource DRR, CCA and resilience – and to put their money where their mouths are. This includes wealthy governments contributing their fair share towards climate funding – particularly given their disproportionate responsibility for global carbon emissions.
- Poor business practices of some private sector actors can significantly undermine community resilience to shocks and stresses – for example, where mining operations result in community displacement or environmental damage. These poor practices must be called out to governments, consumers and investors, and companies should be held accountable to human rights standards.

## LINKS AND RESOURCES

- » IFRC et al. (2014) '[Early Warning, Early Action: Mechanisms for Rapid Decision Making](#)'
- » Oxfam policy papers: Oxfam (2013) '[Learning the Lessons in the Sahel](#)', Oxfam (2012) '[Averting Tomorrow's Global Food Crisis](#)', Oxfam (2013) '[No Accident: Resilience and the Inequality of Risk](#)'
- » Oxfam (2011) '[Programming in Fragile and Conflict-Affected Countries](#)' (Oxfam programme policy guidelines)
- » Institute of Development Studies (2012) '[Resilience: New Utopia or New Tyranny?](#)'
- » [IFRC web page on disaster law](#)
- » ISDR's [Global Assessment Reports](#)
- » The World Bank (2014) '[World Development Report 2014 on Risk and Development](#)'
- » Oxfam (2012) '[A Dangerous Delay: The Cost of Late Response to Early Warnings in the 2011 Drought in the Horn of Africa](#)'
- » Oxfam '[Introduction to Disaster Risk Reduction: A Learning Companion](#)'
- » Gender and DRR: Oxfam (2012) '[The Disaster Crunch Model: Guidelines for a Gendered Approach](#)', C. Sweetman (Ed.) (2012) '[Post-Disaster Humanitarian Work](#)', Gender and Development Journal, Vol. 20, Issue 2.

# ANNEXES

## ANNEX 1: SUMMARY OF REGIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

### AFRICAN ORGANIZATIONS

**The African Union (AU)** is an Africa-wide regional organization, with a membership of 54 states and a mandate to 'promote peace, security and stability in the continent'.<sup>120</sup> Its **Constitutive Act** entered into force in 2001 and includes respect for sovereignty and non-interference, but also the right to intervene in a member state in cases of war crimes, genocide and crimes against humanity, and the right of member states to request intervention to restore peace and security. Since its establishment in 2002, the AU has launched peacekeeping operations in several countries, some jointly with the UN, such as UNAMID in Darfur.

The AU has nine organs plus the Peace and Security Council (PSC), which was created in 2003. The PSC makes decisions relating to the promotion of peace, security and stability in Africa, as well as on humanitarian action and disaster management. Another key organ is the AU Commission, the executive body, which includes a number of departments that deal with humanitarian issues. Of particular relevance is the Department of Political Affairs, which oversees the Division for Humanitarian Affairs, Refugees and Displaced Persons.

There are also a number of **sub-regional economic and political organizations** in Africa, including the Southern African Development Community (**SADC**) and the Economic Community of West African States (**ECOWAS**), which have both intervened militarily in conflicts, and the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (**IGAD**), which has taken conflict prevention, peace mediation and humanitarian roles.<sup>121</sup>

### ARAB AND ISLAMIC ORGANIZATIONS

The **League of Arab States (LAS)** is made up of 21 member states in North Africa, the Horn of Africa and the Middle East. It was formed in 1945 for political and economic coordination and to mediate disputes involving its member states. In practice its membership is divided on political issues such as Palestinian rights and conflict in Sudan and Syria.

The LAS promotes DRR in key regional policies on climate change, the environment and disaster management coordination mechanisms. It supports the regional and national implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA) and in March 2013 held the first Arab Conference on DRR.

The **Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC)**, comprising Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates (UAE), was founded in Abu Dhabi in 1981. The GCC's stated aim is to foster peace and security in the region and economic integration among member states. All GCC members are also members of the Arab League. With their emergence of the UAE and other Gulf states as major humanitarian donors, OCHA set up an office in Abu Dhabi to coordinate their humanitarian assistance and to enhance transparency.<sup>122</sup>

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<sup>120</sup> For an outline of key AU institutions, see Oxfam (2014) 'African Union Compendium'.

<sup>121</sup> Other sub-regional groupings include the **Arab Maghreb Union (UMA)**, the **Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA)**, the **Community of Sahel-Saharan States (CEN-SAD)**, the **East African Community (EAC)** and the **Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS)**.

<sup>122</sup> OCHA's liaison office in Dubai reports on humanitarian operations.

The **Organization of Islamic Cooperation** (OIC) was established in 1969 and comprises 57 countries with large Muslim populations on four continents. It is based in Saudi Arabia and aims to promote political and economic cooperation and to act as the ‘voice of the Muslim world’. The OIC provides humanitarian assistance to countries affected by disasters, conflict and instability, directly and through accredited NGOs, including in areas that are off-limits or less accessible to the UN and Western NGOs (e.g. Somalia, Myanmar). In 2008 the OIC established the Islamic Conference Humanitarian Assistance Department (ICHAD), which acts as a link between NGOs from member states and international coordination mechanisms.

## ASIAN REGIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

The South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (**SAARC**) was created in 1985, and its eight member states work together to enhance economic and social development in the sub-region. As disasters pose a great development challenge for all SAARC countries, member states agreed a **SAARC Comprehensive Framework on Disaster Management and Disaster Prevention**; this, however, is facing challenges due to bilateral conflicts and border issues between them.

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (**ASEAN**) was formed in 1967 and has 10 member states. The purpose of ASEAN includes maintaining and enhancing peace, security and stability in the region,<sup>123</sup> through policies of ‘non-interference’ and an emphasis on conflict prevention and preventive diplomacy. After the devastating Cyclone Nargis in 2008, ASEAN made the bold step of directly managing the response and negotiating with the Myanmar government to allow aid into the country.<sup>124</sup> Since then, ASEAN has played a much larger role in disaster management and emergency response.

The ASEAN Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response (**AADMER**) is a legal framework for all ASEAN member states. It seeks to provide effective mechanisms to reduce losses from disaster in ASEAN countries and respond jointly to emergencies. In 2012, ASEAN opened a hub for humanitarian aid in Jakarta – the ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on disaster management (**AHA Centre**) – to facilitate regional cooperation and coordination on disaster management among member states and with relevant UN and international organizations.

Oxfam contributes to improving the ASEAN Secretariat’s institutional capacity by supporting mechanisms for CSOs to collaborate on implementing AADMER.

## EUROPEAN AND WESTERN GROUPINGS

Several European regional bodies work on issues of relevance to humanitarian response. The **European Union** is an economic and political partnership with a variety of institutions and departments relevant to foreign policy and humanitarian response. Laws are made by the **European Parliament** (directly elected by European citizens), the **Council of the European Union** (representing member states) and the **European Commission**.

Security policy is dealt with by various European institutions, but another key player is the **North Atlantic Treaty Organisation** (NATO), which uses political and military means to ensure the collective security of its members.

123 ASEAN (2007) ‘**The ASEAN Charter**’, Article 1(1).

124 See Y.-K. Creac’h and L. Fan (2008) ‘Asean’s Role in the Cyclone Nargis Response’.

## LATIN AMERICAN AND CARIBBEAN ORGANIZATIONS

There are three intergovernmental organizations in the region dedicated to coordinating disaster-related activities, disseminating information and bringing national decision-makers together to discuss regional initiatives. The largest, oldest and most active is the Central American **Coordination Centre for Natural Disaster Prevention** (CEPRENAC), founded in 1988, the **Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency** (CDEMA), established in 1991, and the **Andean Committee for Disaster Prevention and Assistance** (CAPRADE), created in 2002. Each is an intergovernmental network with a permanent Secretariat. All three state their primary mission as improving disaster prevention and preparedness through regional planning, information, training and coordination. In addition, in Latin America there is the Regional Working Group on Risk, Emergencies and Disaster (REDLAC), which is a regional adaptation of the IASC, focused on coordinating all humanitarian actors (UN, donors and INGOs) to ensure the quality and impact of humanitarian interventions in the region.

## PACIFIC REGIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

The **Pacific Islands Forum** (PIF) was formed in 1971 (originally as the South Pacific Forum) and has 16 member countries across the north and south Pacific region, with Timor-Leste as an observer. Its highest-level assembly is the annual Leaders' Meeting of heads of state. Peace and security matters are dealt with by the Forum Regional Security Committee (FRSC), an annual intergovernmental meeting of senior security officials. In 2000 PIF leaders committed to the **Biketawa Declaration** on collective response to crises in the region, which has resulted in regional assistance missions, e.g. to the Solomon Islands in 2003 and Nauru in 2004. PIF's security and humanitarian policy tools include the 2012–15 **Regional Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security**.

Regional cooperation on climate change, disaster management and risk reduction issues in the Pacific are dealt with by the **Secretariat of the Pacific Communities** (SPC), founded in 1947. The SPC comprises 22 Pacific island countries and territories, as well as Australia, New Zealand, the United States and France. An Applied Geoscience and Technology Division is mandated to provide technical and policy advice and support for DRM in the sub-region.

The **Melanesian Spearhead Group** (MSG) is a sub-regional group that includes Fiji, Papua New Guinea, the Solomon Islands and Vanuatu, with a Kanak political party (Front de Libération Nationale Kanak et Socialiste) from New Caledonia as an observer. The MSG deals with similar issues to the PIF but, unlike the PIF, it includes the government of Fiji.

## OTHER GROUPINGS

Further groups and institutions focus on finance and economic policies. The **G20** comprises the finance ministers and central bank governors of 19 member countries and the European Union. The G20 meets annually, focusing on the global economy and financial regulation and reform, as well as issues of relevance to development and food security. The G7 works similarly but comprises just Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the United Kingdom and the United States (Russia is currently suspended), although European Union representatives and heads of international financial institutions also attend.

The **Non-Aligned Movement** (NAM) was founded in 1961 to represent the interests of developing countries in relation to global politics and the Cold War. More recently it has focused on issues of globalization, trade and investment, debt, HIV and Aids, South–South cooperation and other issues on the international agenda.

## ANNEX 2: LIST OF ACROYNMS

AADMER	ASEAN Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response
ACFID	Australian Council for International Development
ACSONP	Afghan Civil Society Organizations Network for Peace
ANSA	Armed non-state actor
AOG	Armed opposition group
APG	AADMER Partnership Group
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
ATT	Arms Trade Treaty
AU	African Union
BMZ	Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (Germany)
BPRM	Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (USA)
CADRI	Capacity for Disaster Reduction Initiative
CaLP	Cash Learning Partnership
CAP	Consolidated Appeal Process
CAPRADE	Andean Committee for Disaster Prevention and Assistance
CBPF	Country-based Pooled Fund
CCA	Climate change adaptation
CDEMA	Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
CEPREDENAC	Central American Coordination Center for Natural Disaster Prevention
CERF	Central Emergency Response Fund
CHF	Common Humanitarian Fund
CHS	Core Humanitarian Standard on Quality and Accountability
COMESA	Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa
CONOPS	Concept of Operations
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
CSO	Civil society organization
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
Danida	Danish International Development Agency
DFAT	Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (Australia)
DFID	Department for International Development (UK)
DFS	Department of Field Support (UN)
DDR	Disarmament, demobilization and reintegration
DPA	UN Department of Political Affairs
DPKO	UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
DRM	Disaster risk management
DRR	Disaster risk reduction
EAC	East African Community
ECCAS	Economic Community of Central African States
ECHO	European Commission Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection Department
ECHR	European Convention on Human Rights
ECOSOC	UN Economic and Social Council

ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
EDRIS	European Emergency Disaster Response Information System
EFSVL	Emergency Food Security and Vulnerable Livelihoods
ERC	Emergency Relief Coordinator
ERF	Emergency Response Fund
FAO	UN Food and Agriculture Organization
FRSC	Forum Regional Security Committee
FTS	Financial Tracking Service
GBV	Gender-based violence
GCC	Gulf Cooperation Council
GFDRR	Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery
GHD	Good Humanitarian Donorship
GNI	Gross national income
HAP	Humanitarian Accountability Partnership
HC	Humanitarian Coordinator
HCT	Humanitarian Country Team
HFA	Hyogo Framework for Action
HPC	Humanitarian Programme Cycle
HPG	Humanitarian Policy Group
HRF	Humanitarian Response Fund
IAP	Integrated Assessment and Planning
IASC	Inter-Agency Standing Committee
ICCPR	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
ICESCR	International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
ICHAD	Islamic Conference Humanitarian Assistance Department
ICJ	International Court of Justice
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
ICVA	International Council of Voluntary Agencies
IDDRS	Integrated DDR Standards
IDMC	Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre
IDP	internally displaced person
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
IFRC	International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
IGAD	Inter-Governmental Authority on Development
IHL	International humanitarian law
IHRL	International human rights law
IJRC	International Justice Resource Center
ILO	International Labour Organization
IOM	International Organization for Migration
ISAF	International Security Assistance Force (Afghanistan)
JICA	Japan International Cooperation Agency
JSI	Joint Standards Initiative
LAS	League of Arab States
LDC	Least developed country
M&E	Monitoring and evaluation
MINURCAT	UN Mission in the Central African Republic and Chad



MSF	Médecins sans Frontières
MSG	Melanesian Spearhead Group
NAM	Non-Aligned Movement
NAP	National action plan
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NFI	Non-food item
NGO	Non-government organization
NORAD	Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation
NRC	Norwegian Refugee Council
NSAG	Non-state armed group
OCHCR	Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
ODA	Official development assistance
ODSG	OCHA Donor Support Group
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OFAC	Office of Foreign Assets Control
OFDA	Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance
OIC	Organization of Islamic Cooperation
OPT	Occupied Palestinian Territory
OTI	Office of Transition Initiatives (USA)
PCVA	Participatory Capacity and Vulnerability Assessment
PIF	Pacific Islands Forum
PSC	Peace and Security Council (AU)
QIP	Quick Impact Project
RC	Resident Coordinator
RCM	Refugee Coordination Model
REDLAC	Regional Working Group on Risk, Emergencies and Disaster
SAARC	South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SCHR	Steering Committee for Humanitarian Response
SDC	Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation
SGBV	Sexual and gender-based violence
SIDA	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
SIDS	Small island developing state
SPC	Secretariat of the Pacific Communities
SRP	Strategic Response Plan
SRSR	Special Representative of the Secretary-General
SSR	Security Sector Reform
SWA	Sanitation and Water for All
UDHR	Universal Declaration of Human Rights
UMA	Arab Maghreb Union
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNGA	United Nations General Assembly
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	UN Fund for Children

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UNISDR	United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction
UN OCHA	UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VAWG	Violence against women and girls
VHT	Vanuatu Humanitarian Team
WASH	Water, sanitation and hygiene
WDCM	Women's Coalition for Disaster Management
WFP	World Food Programme
WHS	World Humanitarian Summit
WRO	Women's rights organization
WWS	Within and Without the State

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