

DfID - Oxfam GB

Partnership Programme Agreement

Second Review Report 2002/2003

Supporting poor people to gain access, power and fair prices in markets.

Promoting quality of humanitarian assistance and protection for people affected by conflict and natural disasters.

Supporting poor people's right to be heard and promoting accountability of governments and other institutions.

December 2003



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Oxfam GB Regions with acronyms/abbreviations used

Central America, Mexico and the Caribbean (CAMEXCA)

South America

The Horn, East and Central Africa (HECA)

West Africa

Southern Africa

South Asia

East Asia

The Middle East, Eastern Europe and Commonwealth of Independent States (MEEECIS)

The UK Poverty Programme (UKPP)

Notes on concepts and terms used in the PPA Review Report

- This report primarily relates to the work of Oxfam GB, but we sometimes just use the term Oxfam because of the increasing collaboration of Oxfam GB with other affiliates in Oxfam International. All affiliates share the same Strategic Change Objectives and overall strategies, and important areas of work, such as the Make Trade Fair campaign, described in this report, are being implemented by affiliates across the Oxfam family. Where financial figures are given, it is made clear that these relate to Oxfam GB, or it is specified otherwise.
- Programme expenditure given for each Strategic Change Objective includes grants and programme management and support costs, including staff involved in work with partners and advocacy. Where costs for individual programmes are given, these represent grant costs. The term 'grant' is used here in relation to both the cost of a programme or project managed by one of Oxfam's partners and to those managed by Oxfam directly.
- Financial figures relate to the year May 2002 – April 2003, unless otherwise stated. These are provided to give some idea of the scale of Oxfam's work in different areas. However, the programme analysis often relates to a longer period – sometimes relating to activities undertaken before the financial year 2002/03 and also including some analysis of achievements after the end of 2002/03.
- The words shown in italics in the Outcome Indicators are modifications to the indicator made during the first review process in 2002.
- Some of the indicators against which we are assessing progress represent a high and strategic level of change. We recognise that such change usually depends on many forces and actors. Fundamental to Oxfam's approach is working with partners and allies. Thus, while we judge we have contributed to the changes described in this review, we are not attributing change only to our actions.
- The Outcome Indicators mark different aspects of progress needed for sustainable change to be achieved for poor people in relation to each strategic objective. The interdependence of the indicators is evident. This year, we have therefore decided not to provide examples against each indicator separately. The case studies often show how more than one indicator is being addressed within a project or programme.

1 Introduction and management overview

Introduction to the Partnership Programme Agreement review

This is the second review of DFID's Partnership Programme Agreement (PPA) with Oxfam GB. It mainly reports on achievements and issues identified through Oxfam's Programme Impact Reporting and Annual Reporting processes 2002/03 – i.e. up until April 2003¹ - but some significant programme events and developments beyond this time are also included. An explanation of Oxfam GB's Programme Impact Reporting process and how it has developed over the last four years can be found in Appendix A.

The PPA covers particular aspects of programme work under three of Oxfam's strategic aims: the Right to a Sustainable Livelihood; the Right to Life and Security; the Right to be Heard. All programme expenditure under these three aims represented about 81 per cent (or £91m) of Oxfam GB's overall programme expenditure of £112m during the financial year 2002/03. In order to show the PPA objectives in the context of Oxfam's overall programme, a listing of Oxfam's five strategic aims and the nine Strategic Change Objectives (SCOs) related to them is provided in Appendix B. A breakdown of expenditure by SCO for 2002/03 is also given. Other financial information in the report relates to the financial year 2002/03 too, unless otherwise stated, and has been provided to give some idea of the scale of Oxfam's different areas of work. However, the programme work relevant to the changes being described in this review may go back several years or may have continued into the current financial year.

The three priority strategies within the PPA are:

- *Supporting poor people to gain access, power and fair prices in markets.*
- *Promoting quality of humanitarian assistance and protection for people affected by conflict and natural disasters.*
- *Supporting poor people's right to be heard and promoting accountability of governments and other institutions.*

Progress made against each of these strategies is reported in sections 2, 3, and 4 of this report.

Developments and challenges in managing the programme

Integrated programming and becoming a 'global campaigning force'

The linking of programme work at a community level with advocacy, media and public campaigning activities became much stronger over the period. This can be seen clearly in the review of our work on '*Supporting poor people to gain access, power and fair prices in markets*', which includes Oxfam's Make Trade Fair campaign. It is also evident under the other PPA priority strategies. This year, the report shows more influence occurring at a national level in many countries, more support to southern governments to take-up issues internationally and popular campaigning in the South becoming strong and engaging large numbers of people.

The development of partnerships and alliances, old and new, in the South and North, are central to these achievements. Campaigning as Oxfam International also significantly extended the reach and scale of influence we brought to bear. However, we know that weaving together activities at local, national and international level is unfinished business and we have much still to improve. In particular, we need to continue to learn about issues

¹ The Annual Reporting process relates to Oxfam GB's financial year, May – April. The Programme Impact Reporting process also takes place after the end of each financial year, but seeks to analyse the contribution Oxfam has made to bringing about change through actions over a number of years.

of 'ownership' and control, and about working in a participatory way, in South-North partnerships. We also need to ensure that actions in the South are supported long enough to see through policy changes.

Oxfam's programmes have gone through substantial change over a period of several years in order to achieve this more integrated programming, aligned to our framework of Strategic Change Objectives. Oxfam's Regional structure has also taken time to develop. But with more focus and direction now in our programmes, we need to reassert the importance of planning long-term support to partners and communities in many instances. Our Programme Impact Reporting last year showed that, while positive change was being brought about by many projects, it was often fragile and incomplete. Supporting people living in poverty to act with others, and grow in confidence and strength through this, is an important strategy for assisting them to achieve fundamental change in their lives. The ideas and beliefs of different constituencies often need to change too. This can take a long time.

Humanitarian assistance and protection

Oxfam GB continued to consolidate developments and innovate in a number of aspects of its humanitarian programme, e.g. in its traditional strong areas of public health, in preparedness activities, in developing a 'protection approach', in linking work on the ground to advocacy, in integrating gender and in promoting and applying standards and accountability mechanisms. It also proved to be a challenging year, in which we did not respond to some new emergencies as well as we might have done in terms of scale, capacity or speed. There are many reasons for this, the key ones being:

- The transition to Regions taking responsibility for humanitarian responses, with support as necessary from the Humanitarian Department and other teams, was still incomplete.
- We failed to attract and retain sufficient quality staff to manage humanitarian programmes.
- The new global security environment is challenging to operate safely in. Our management of security has improved, but management time spent dealing with security, and the delays to programming this causes, affect our response capacity. (For example, programme work was repeatedly suspended in Afghanistan, the Palestinian Territories, Sudan, the Democratic Republic of Congo and Angola.)
- There are many new emergency 'fronts' (e.g. Iraq, Southern Africa, Aceh), while old ones continue (e.g. the Democratic Republic of Congo, Liberia, Afghanistan). Oxfam struggles to respond effectively in so many situations.
- Donor funding is unpredictable and not proportional to need.

Programme learning

There were some good examples of learning being shared across Regions last year. For instance, Oxfam GB's experience in East Africa of developing a community-based targeting methodology for use in emergencies was shared with three Regions, as well as with other agencies. A strategic review of Oxfam GB's work on gender in 2001/02 was followed by the development of action plans by Regions and central Departments and a global workshop for key staff to share experiences and good practices. Across Oxfam GB, there has been increased attention to strengthening our gender practice since the review.

But we know we still need to ensure programme staff and partners have time to reflect, learn and share their experiences with others. We also need to get better at seeking opportunities to learn from others outside Oxfam. We have further work to do to design impact indicators and improve our monitoring to help us learn as programmes are implemented. A review last year of how 'programme learning and development' is supported in Oxfam GB is helping us address these issues. Changes now being introduced include the establishment of a

'programme resource centre' within our Programme Policy Team to facilitate communication and learning across the international programme.

Improving the management of our programme

Within our international programme, we need staff who are capable and supported to take decisions as near as possible to the point of impact. While our regionalisation process moved power from Oxford to regions, it also reduced the authority of countries to make decisions. It has now been recognised that we need strong country teams as well as effective regional management centres. Specific initiatives to help us recruit and retain the right people and to provide them with systems that support their work are described below. Most important, however, is our emphasis on clear decision-making and communication throughout our programmes and strong line management that is being applied with increasing rigour: in the short term this is very time-consuming and has increased the level of staff turnover. In most regions, we do now have the right teams in place at Regional Management Centre and country level and we are developing more effective ways of working.

Considerable progress has been made in reducing the number of overdue donor reports and improving our contract management. Internal reporting has been rationalised to reduce bureaucracy and the quality of reports has improved.

A Global Reward project is being implemented to improve Oxfam GB's ability to recruit and retain key staff and to support a new relationship with staff, which encourages longer careers with Oxfam. Human Resource staff capacity in the Regions has been strengthened to help achieve the aims of the project.

A new financial management system (PeopleSoft) is now in place across the programme. A new programme management system (OPAL – Oxfam Programme Accountability and Learning) is being rolled-out across the Regions in 2003/04 to improve programme accountability and learning.

Cost effectiveness

In December 2002, the 'Getting things done' initiative was launched, with a particular focus on Headquarters. Teams and departments have engaged in looking at what they do, how they do it and where improvements can be made to make Oxfam GB more cost-effective. Corporate improvements made as part of the 'Getting things done' work include a clearer and simpler Strategic Plan and Corporate Objectives, with better communication of these, and firmer prioritisation of new initiatives.

Oxfam International

Advantages of campaigning as Oxfam International have already been mentioned. One clear benefit is the strengthening of our advocacy at the International Financial Institutions, the UN and in Europe. This has come from the development of Oxfam International advocacy offices. Oxfam GB has continued to invest in strengthening these. There are examples of successful collaboration between Oxfam affiliates in campaign teams too and within Regions at a programme level. However, frustrations also persist in many places and transaction costs are often too high. To seek to address this, Oxfam International agreed a new 'architecture' last year, which is now being implemented. Part of the new, simpler, 'architecture' is a Humanitarian Consortium of five Oxfam affiliates who will normally work on behalf of all affiliates to lead the family's humanitarian and conflict reduction work, including programmes, media and advocacy. The establishment of the Consortium represents a commitment by affiliates to invest in assuring the quality and capacity of Oxfam's humanitarian work.

Risk management

During the year, named senior managers led control actions to address each area of risk included in Oxfam GB's corporate risk register. We consider the key risks faced during the year were:

- The statements and positions we adopted, and agreed within Oxfam International, on the high profile conflicts and humanitarian crises in Iraq and the Palestinian Territories.
- The impact of the economic slowdown and the risk of weak reporting to donors on fundraising.
- The scandal concerning sexual abuse of beneficiaries in West Africa – Oxfam was not implicated in this, but took steps (e.g. the introduction of a staff code of conduct) to manage the risk of our own staff involvement in future.

The risk register was reviewed and updated and then endorsed by Council. The current risk categories are: fraud, scandal, 'what we say', programme delivery, fundraising and recruitment and retention of staff.

2 Progress against strategic objectives

2.1 *The Right to a Sustainable Livelihood: global trade rules and ethical trade*

Priority strategy:**Supporting poor producers to gain access, power and fair prices in markets**

Outcome indicators:

A: Improving access to markets for small producers in programme areas.

B: Increasing the influence of civil society, especially poor women and men, *on local institutions*, national trade policies and regional/global trade agreements affecting their livelihoods.

C: Greater accountability of *trading corporations* and institutions governing trade rules and *policies affecting trade*.

D: Growth in pro-fair trade consumer movement and increased offer of fair trade products in Britain.

A Programme expenditure

About 26 per cent of Oxfam GB's total global programme expenditure in 2002/03 was directed towards the Right to a Sustainable Livelihood. This amounted to about £29m.

B Key areas of activity during the year

Over the last year, Oxfam's 'power in markets' programme developed on a number of fronts and a big step forward was taken in integrated programming, i.e. linking work at a community-level with wider campaigning actions. Action related to the Make Trade Fair Campaign, which was launched by Oxfam International in April 2002, has been an organisational priority.

The Livelihoods Programme Strategy. Building on programme experience, a Livelihoods Programme Strategy was developed and approved by Oxfam GB's Council in April 2003. Ideas at the core of Oxfam's vision for sustainable livelihoods are that:

- All human beings have economic rights as part of their fundamental human rights.
- Power imbalances in markets are fundamental causes of poverty and reversing such power imbalances has the potential to lift millions out of poverty.
- This can happen both by people organising to gain more power in markets and by governments and other organisations redistributing resources and regulating/managing markets to rebalance power.
- It is crucial that economies are managed to achieve growth with equity, with special attention to women's economic rights.

The strategy has helped clarify to staff how programme actions at different levels – from local to international – will interact to bring about change, including by campaigning, based on strong evidence, in order to influence the policies and practices of others and bring about wide impact. We shall focus our efforts on the following three strategic themes:

- ❑ Pro-poor agricultural development, especially focusing on increasing the power of poor producers in local, national and international markets.
- ❑ Increasing the power of women workers, especially those working in global trading chains, to increase security and improve employment and working conditions.
- ❑ Improving livelihoods in the informal sector in urban areas.

The Make Trade Fair Campaign. The main areas of the Make Trade Fair campaign since its launch have concerned:

- Improving access to markets for poor countries.
- Stopping agricultural dumping.
- Preventing damaging new rules on foreign investment and competition coming on to the WTO agenda.
- Achieving better livelihoods for poor farmers trading in commodities, especially coffee.
- The reform of TRIPS, focusing on poor people's access to medicines.

The campaign has marked a big step forward for Oxfam in terms of building alliances, campaigning with partners and allies in the South, and in the scale of popular support generated in the North and South. Key international events where Oxfam sought to influence debate include the Johannesburg Earth Summit, the EU Summit in Copenhagen and Trade Ministers' meeting in Brussels, the annual meetings of the World Bank and IMF, the G8 Summit, the Least Developed Countries Conference in Bangladesh, the African Union Ministers of Trade conference, the High Level Round Table of the International Coffee Organisation/World Bank, the Global HIV/AIDS Conference in Barcelona, "mini-Ministerials" and the WTO Ministerial Summit in Cancun. Oxfam also supported and participated in the World Social Forum in Porto Alegre and key regional events, e.g. concerning negotiations on the Free Trade Area of the Americas.

Oxfam recognises that changing European trade policies requires political shifts in key member states, not just in the UK, but our resources have been concentrated mainly in the UK. In order to address this, Oxfam now has a lobbyist in Paris and is negotiating an alliance on trade with a leading French NGO. We have also put more resources into Oxfam Germany, where a good Trade Justice Movement is taking shape, and into our Oxfam International Brussels office, partly in anticipation of EU enlargement. In addition, we are putting more resources into our Oxfam International Geneva office, where opportunities for working with both developed and developing country delegations are expanding.

Transition to a market access programme. An important part of the transition from Oxfam GB's Fair Trade programme to a market access programme has been the promotion of the Fairtrade mark into mainstream markets and removing the Oxfam brand from products that could carry this mark. Opportunities for key producer partners to access markets have also been created by setting up new and different types of supply chains linking them with the commercial sector.

There has been investment during the year on learning and staff development on markets interventions. A Market Access training course, developed in conjunction with Traidcraft, has been run for staff and partners in four Oxfam Regions to date (West Africa, HECA, South Asia and MEEECIS). A series of easy-to-read booklets – the *Market Access Parables*² - has also been written, recognising the power that stories can have in promoting learning. The parables include lessons from Oxfam's Fair Trade programme as well as from new experiences of linking producer groups with mainstream commercial actors. Case Study 2, below, is a summary of the *Organic Rice: a route to self-reliance* parable.

² *Cocoa: Best of the Best*, the story of the Kuapa Kokoo farmers' co-operative in Ghana; *Coffee: Stirring things up*, how Peruvian farmers gained power in the coffee market; *Honey: a flourishing business*, how Oxfam's partnership with a UK-business has opened up Fairtrade opportunities for small-scale beekeepers; *Honey: a golden opportunity*, how beekeepers in Zambia overcame EU regulatory hurdles to enter directly into the international honey trading market; *Incense: the sweet smell of success*, the story of small-scale incense producers in Bangladesh; *Organic rice: a route to self-reliance*, how a network of Indonesian rice producers developed a secure local market for their produce.

C Progress report

Developing Oxfam's market access programme

Building poor people's assets, capacities and influence

Across the Regions, there are examples of where small producers have gained greater power in markets, primarily through building organisational and marketing capacities. Though most livelihoods projects are *either* markets-based *or* assets-based, some examples are beginning to emerge where the two come together and where the success of this is evident. For example, in Georgia, a new project was launched to address the specific needs of kiwi fruit farmers from Samegrelo region who were involved in Oxfam's microfinance programme. Producer groups were formed, technical training given and collective marketing initiated, which helped them pool their resources, negotiate for better prices and reduce the costs of sales. As a result, in this initial phase of the project, forty small farmers have doubled their income.

Other examples are provided in case studies 1-4 below, illustrating different aspects of supporting poor women and men to gain greater 'power in markets'.

Case study 1 illustrates how *collective analysis and action helped a marginalised group* of women and men in Madhya Pradesh to acquire assets and then begin to improve their income from marketing.

Case study 1 Working with marginalised communities to acquire assets and increase income from markets: fisherfolk in Madhya Pradesh, India.

In Teekamragh district of Madhya Pradesh, there are more than 1,000 ponds, constructed by the Chandela rulers, who ruled the region around the 10th and 11th centuries. The ponds are the primary source of livelihood for the fisherfolk, who are on the lowest rung of the caste hierarchy. However, their livelihood prospects are affected by drying of the ponds through silt deposition, lack of maintenance, and control of the ponds by dominant interests in the villages. Through collective efforts, the fisherfolk have been able to take control of 28 ponds from upper caste people. They also demanded, and gained, farming rights from the district administration over the 132 ha of land that emerges when water recedes in the summer. This has increased food security for 11,000 fisherfolk. The collective efforts of the fisherfolk co-operatives have also resulted in the State agreeing to allocate resources directly to them and they have received other financial resources from UNICEF and the government. New ponds have been constructed and seven of these are controlled exclusively by women's co-operatives, enabling 300 women to gain ownership of a productive resource for the first time. By working together, the fisherfolk have been able to increase their bargaining power in the nearby market too, increasing their income from marketing by 25 per cent so far. Further marketing opportunities beyond the region are yet to be explored.

The impact achieved is especially notable in an area where discrimination on the basis of caste and gender is rampant. Oxfam GB's role has been to support community mobilisation and to develop the skills of the groups to analyse their socio-political situation and take decisions accordingly. Apart from this, the groups manage most of the activities – e.g. microfinance schemes and equipment management – themselves.

Case study 2 illustrates the impact of growing *higher-value crops* on poor producers' income and the importance of *producers taking business responsibility and marketing collectively*.

Case study 2 Organic rice: a route to self reliance for Indonesian farmers

As cheap imported rice has become available, small farmers on Java have experienced falling prices for their rice crop. Many found themselves spiraling into debt as they were forced to borrow money at high interest rates to survive. Oxfam GB has been supporting them to secure better incomes from their rice production.

With the help of KMFT (the Consortium of Fair Trade Society, of which Oxfam GB is a member), the farmers transferred to organic agriculture, enabling them to grow a higher-value rice crop and reduce their reliance on multi-national agro-chemical companies for seeds and fertilisers. Their organic production has also enabled the farmers to harvest and sell fish from the paddy fields. They started to sell their milled rice through KMFT's shop, Sahani. A series of workshops on costing and pricing, quality assurance, and business planning helped build the farmers' business knowledge and confidence to meet the demands of organic production. Oxfam GB also supported Sahani to expand both its range and the number of its customers and build a viable and sustainable business. The traditional rice varieties grown by organic farmers attract a much higher price than high yielding varieties on the local market. Consumers prefer the traditional varieties for their flavour and their longer shelf-life – to the extent that conventional high yield varieties are not sold in “up-market” shops. In 2000, KMFT then took the bold step of passing the ownership of Sahani over to the farmers, giving them a real stake in the business and more incentive to ensure that the business was profitable. Sahani now works with 1,000 farmers and their families. It still sells directly through the shop to families, food co-ops, and NGOs, but it has also developed a more profitable base of larger-scale customers. The bulk of its rice is now sold to local supermarkets.

Case study 3 illustrates the importance of looking for, addressing and learning from *unintended, negative impacts* that can occur.

Case study 3 Small business success but unintended impacts too - Azerbaijan

With support from Oxfam GB's Access to Markets and Finance programme in Azerbaijan, about 1,400 internally displaced families are now engaged in small businesses, and their incomes have increased. However, recent programme research has identified cases where parents have taken children out of school to help in the family business. It is hoped to address this issue through the “poverty reduction” strategies that are planned. It has also been noted that, because of poor drainage systems in most communities supported by the programme, some businesses are having an adverse effect on the environment. For instance, this is the case in leather production where chemicals used are draining into agricultural land. We intend to lobby the government to improve drainage systems in rural areas.

Case study 4 shows how Oxfam's Caribbean team and partners *identified and analysed the barriers farmers face* in accessing markets. They used a simple toolkit that has been developed, working in association with the Intermediate Technology Development Group. The toolkit aims to help staff and partners undertake organisational assessments of business capacities and identify key barriers in markets-based programmes. The use of the toolkit in the Caribbean is being shared with all Regions.

Case study 4 Assessing barriers to accessing markets – the Caribbean.

Oxfam's Caribbean team and their partners underwent an exercise to identify the barriers Caribbean farmers face in selling their produce to local hotels and resorts. Current trading policy and practice results in 75 per cent of produce being purchased from outside the Caribbean region. As a result of the exercise, a number of areas that needed tackling at island-state and regional levels were identified.

For St. Lucia:

- Farmer ownership/representation in the planned privatisation of the national marketing board.
- Promoting private sector engagement at both product distribution and hotel level, and the business case for trading with small-scale producers.
- Strengthening the capacity of farmers' representation in policy processes and farmers' trading organisations.
- Influencing local information providers to develop production and purchasing data that can be accessed and interpreted by farmers.

At regional level:

- Advocating for a regional trade framework around agriculture in the short term and the formation of the Caribbean single market in the long term.

A programme to address these issues is now being established and a workshop in St. Lucia brought together Government, the private tourism sector and farmers, to agree how interventions in the above areas could be developed. The intention is that learning from the programme will be promoted within the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) as a model for sustainable change in agricultural production in Caribbean small island-states.

Increasing the offer of Fairtrade-marked products.

By working with UK-based commercial partners willing to become licensees of the Fairtrade mark themselves, we have enabled some producers to access broader market opportunities on 'fair terms'. At the same time, we removed the Oxfam brand from products which could carry the Fairtrade mark. This work has provided valuable models and useful learning, both for producer groups in engaging directly with the commercial sector and for our commercial sector partners to begin to gain a first-hand appreciation of the issues faced by marginalized small-scale producers. An example is the linking of our Mexican partner, the Fairtrade-registered honey producer, Flor de Campanilla, with a commercial honey packer, Cotswold Honey, based in the UK. Cotswold Honey is now marketing their own commercial brand of Fairtrade honey, replacing the Oxfam-branded product with one which is available to all their mainstream customers. The parable *Honey: a flourishing business*, tells this story about taking Fairtrade-marked honey into a mainstream commercial market.

The work to link partner organisations directly into Fairtrade supply chains within the commercial sector has also provided a springboard for more broadly-based, future work with the food processing and manufacturing sector. The next phase will involve approaching selected food manufacturers to develop new and more innovative ranges of 'manufactured' food products, which can carry the Fairtrade mark and thereby offer a wider variety of products to a broader range of consumers. In parallel, and in the longer term, the objective is to raise awareness of 'trading fairly' and trading issues for marginalised producers, not only with the rapidly growing consumer movement, but also with the food processing and manufacturing sector. Until now this sector has received relatively little attention.

Phasing-out from a trading relationship with partners

In 2000/01, the last full year of Oxfam GB's Fair Trade programme, orders were taken from 94 producer groups. Phasing out from a trading relationship with them, as Oxfam promoted a broader market access approach, was a challenging process. Twenty seven of them had already developed to the extent that they no longer depended on Oxfam orders. Most of the others were given support of different kinds, e.g. funding to participate in trade fairs, consultant help on quality assurance or product design, seed capital. However, with some of the less sustainable businesses, our interventions were not sufficient for transition by the groups into new productive activities, and incomes decreased. External factors also sometimes had a negative effect, e.g. in the case of craft producers in Zimbabwe, the deteriorating economic and political context prevented them accessing anticipated new markets which had been researched (see case study 5).

Case study 5 Deteriorating opportunities for craft producers in Zimbabwe

In the transition from the Fair Trade Programme, Oxfam GB sought to assist four craft producers, with whom we had been working through their umbrella organisation (RUDO), to access new markets. Following visits to Botswana and Namibia, which exceeded expectations in terms of the sales that could be expected for the producers, the objective was to enable them to build a sustainable business by attending regional trade fairs in neighbouring countries. However, in the event this was rapidly followed by the deteriorating economic and political situation in Zimbabwe. The complete lack of diesel to go anywhere, hyper-inflation and the non-availability of even the most basic items, such as dyes for handicrafts, has meant that the proposed strategy is not currently viable.

Helping producers to enter international markets

Oxfam is also working to support producers to enter international markets more broadly, not only via the Fairtrade mark. This includes looking at how other ethical labels (eg the Forestry Stewardship Council certification system) promote trade with small-scale producers. A new initiative, which promotes the use of sustainable timber by Kenyan wood carvers and seeks to link them with socially responsible international importers, is described in case study 6. In last year's PPA Annual Review, we reported on work in Zambia (told in the parable *Honey, a golden opportunity*), which focused on helping beekeepers to overcome EU regulatory hurdles and successfully enter directly on to the international honey trading market.

Case study 6 Accessing international markets for products made from sustainable wood - Kenya

A new initiative during 2002/03 is the Kenya Good Woods programme, funded and designed by Oxfam GB and the Worldwide Fund for Nature (WWF). The Kenyan partner organisation involved in the programme has supported farmer groups to trade sustainably-produced Neem timber to two co-operatives. Trade has begun to develop between 800 farmers and a woodcarving co-op of 3,000 carvers, replacing illegally-logged rare hardwoods with sustainable farm-grown Neem timber. The Kenya Gatsby Trust is providing the co-op with business development services to help the carvers gain access to the UK export market for their products and Oxfam GB is facilitating linkages to socially responsible UK importers.

The project aims to work with 1,800 farmers on trade in sustainable timber and develop collective trading in tree and vegetable crops.

Promoting ethical trading

Oxfam continues to engage with the corporate sector through the Ethical Trading Initiative (ETI) - an alliance of companies, NGOs and trade unions, which primarily exists to share experience and promote learning about implementing international labour standards in the international supply chains of UK retailers and brands.

We have been participating in a project to produce and test guidelines for dealing with home-workers in ETI members' supply chains. This successfully leveraged better practices by suppliers and retailers and was instrumental in securing an amendment to the UK National Minimum Wage Regulations, making home-workers and other piece-rate workers eligible for the full National Minimum Wage. The project exposes the weak implementation of the ETI Codes by retailers, and their resistance to meeting the costs of raising standards. This threatens to undermine gains made and to prejudice the livelihoods of home-workers, both in the UK and internationally. The vulnerability of home-workers and the weakness of UK labour law is also evident, as, in our experience, home-workers seeking to claim their rights to the National Minimum Wage invariably lose their work. In 2004, Oxfam will campaign for better enforcement mechanisms and stronger employment rights for home-workers, and the eventual ratification of the ILO Convention on Home Work by the UK.

We consider that our efforts to develop Fairtrade markets on the one hand and efforts to promote 'ethical trading' on the other are complementary. However, we see that some retailers may use their stocking of Fairtrade products as an excuse for not improving standards in their other (i.e. non-Fairtrade) supply chains. One major UK retailer started developing a large number of own-brand Fairtrade products in 2003. Over the same period it made its Ethical Purchasing Manager redundant and withdrew from the ETI Home Work project (above), threatening its success. We shall seek to address this type of risk in 2004, using our influence in the Ethical Trading Initiative and other forums.

A new initiative with the private sector is an applied research project to be undertaken by Oxfam and a major multinational food company. The research will seek to explore the links between wealth creation and poverty reduction through the experiences of the company's operations in Indonesia. It will focus on value chain analysis, company policies and

practices, macro-economic impacts and the social implications of marketing and brands. As a result of the research, it is expected that concrete proposals will be identified to facilitate improved access to markets on fair terms by poor people.

Increasing consumer support for Fairtrade products in the UK

Sales of Fairtrade-marked products in the UK rose by 90 per cent between 2000 and 2002 and there was a rise from 24 per cent to 33 per cent of the population understanding what the Fairtrade Mark stands for. Oxfam staff, supporters and campaigners, working closely with the Fairtrade Foundation and other allies, have contributed in a number of ways to these significant changes.

Increased consumer understanding and demand is being promoted through the Fairtrade towns, universities and workplaces initiative. This began with a campaign led by the local Oxfam group in Garstang in Lancashire, and resulted in the town declaring itself 'the world's first FairTrade Town' in May 2000. Following this, the Fairtrade Foundation launched a Fairtrade Town Goals and Action Guide for campaigners wanting to turn their own area into a Fairtrade Town, City or Zone. Oxfam campaigners and partners, together with the Fairtrade Foundation, have now helped other towns, including Derby, Nottingham, Leicester and Bolton, to achieve Fairtrade status and more towns, villages and cities around the country, including London, are currently seeking status. Initiatives to promote Fairtrade Universities and Workplaces have followed, with Oxfam and the Fairtrade Foundation publishing guides for this. In October 2003, Oxford Brookes University became the first university to be awarded Fairtrade status.

Campaigning to Make Trade Fair

Research, relationships, access to policy makers and popular support

The Make Trade Fair campaign has contributed to putting the development dimension of international trade squarely on the agenda around the world, and Oxfam has become a strong voice on the issue in the North and South. The Trade Report, *Rigged Rules and Double Standards*, has become a reference-point in many debates on trade, and research on concrete examples of unfair trade practice has enabled Oxfam to develop well-respected policy papers and offer credible arguments and advice in a range of forums. Since the launch of the campaign in April 2002, twenty four trade briefing papers and notes have been prepared, five parliamentary briefing papers and a company briefing paper.

The Trade Report also generated critical comment from some of Oxfam's partners and allies (e.g. within the Trade Justice Movement of which Oxfam is a member and with Focus on the Global South), especially about interpretations of Oxfam's position on 'market access' and free trade policies. Dialogue has clarified positions and there has been good collaboration with those, and other, allies during the year.

We collaborated closely throughout the year with other BOAG agencies, producing short briefing papers and lobbying UK Members of Parliament and civil servants. For instance, we gave evidence jointly on international trade issues to the Parliamentary Select Committee on Development, whose report reflected our views, notably our opposition to extending the WTO mandate to cover investment and competition and our call for deeper reform of European agricultural policies. We also participated actively in the UK Trade Network (UKTN), which coordinates NGOs on trade policy issues.

Building new alliances has been important too in the development of the Trade campaign. The Global Alliance on Coffee and other Commodities, which has been brought together, has a membership of over a 100 producer and consumer groups, trade unions and environmentalists.

Strong relationships with key developing countries have been built through the launch of the campaign. Senior diplomats and ministers, e.g. from Cambodia, India and Uganda, have acknowledged the importance and quality of Oxfam's research. In a plenary session at the WTO Cancun meeting, the Cambodian Trade Minister, referring to Oxfam's paper on Cambodia's accession to the WTO, remarked "*I would encourage all trade ministers to read this paper from beginning to end.*" The Indian Minister of Trade wrote to Oxfam saying the studies on EU milk subsidies and coffee "*provided valuable insights to policy makers and helped provide.....non-traditional and innovative solutions in today's context.*" In Uganda, the President said in a speech that Oxfam's campaign on trade had changed his thinking.

Southern country governments have also felt supported by the scale of Oxfam's "Big Noise", the petition calling on decision makers to 'make trade fair'. More than four million people around the world have signed-up, with large numbers in some countries in the South. For instance, through the energy of Oxfam partners in Bangladesh, 250,000 joined in just a few weeks and, at the launch of the campaign, over 200 people gathered at one of the busiest intersections in Dhaka, forming a human chain with a 100 metre long Make Trade Fair banner.

At the WTO Cancun Ministerial Summit, Oxfam and its partners and allies contributed to strengthening the attention given to the arguments and interests of developing countries and people living in poverty. We judge that factors contributing to this include:

- The strength of relationships and access to policy makers developed during the year.
- Our focus on specific issues that have concrete impact on the lives of poor people.
- Mary Robinson's membership of the Oxfam team.
- The support of Chris Martin of Coldplay throughout the campaign.
- The evidence of popular support that the Big Noise demonstrated.
- The media coverage generated at Cancun and simultaneously by Oxfam supporters across the globe.

Oxfam and Coldplay presented the Big Noise petition to G20 trade ministers at their first major press conference at the Summit. The fact that the G20 invited Oxfam on to the platform to do this, prior to taking questions from journalists, was a testimony to the global profile that Make Trade Fair had built up. It reinforced our standing with the press and governments as a campaign force.

The New York Times commented "*Non-profit organisations, led by Oxfam International, have tried to turn the hallways here into spontaneous debates on the fairness of agricultural trade*".

Linking activities at different levels to bring about changes in policies and practices

There is tangible evidence from programmes that linking activities to bring about policy and practice changes at multiple levels can work – this is a key achievement. Regional teams and Campaigns and Policy staff have worked together on country- and region-specific policy analysis and popular campaigning, leading to increased access to policy-makers and important new alliances. This has been possible where there was already strong local capacity and partner networks. For example, the trade network in Bangladesh supported the Ministry of Commerce's successful lobbying of Canada to grant duty-free access for ready-made garments. Coffee farmers and their organisations, with whom we had been working for a number of years, became active participants in the campaign about coffee, both within their own countries and internationally (See case study 7 below). And, in countries in West Africa, popular support was mobilised about the situation of cotton farmers, leading the Trade Minister for Senegal, Aïcha Agne Pouye, to say at an African Union press conference at the WTO meeting at Cancun "*Before I came to Cancun I was handed a petition of 2,400 Senegalese citizens and a parliamentary statement from MPs urging me to keep the Doha*

development obligations at the forefront of the negotiations. I feel very powerful at this moment“.

Progress on main issues

The WTO Summit in Cancun

The collapse of the talks at Cancun was, in Oxfam's view, a lost opportunity to change the way trade works so that it benefits everyone and not just rich companies and countries. The refusal of the EU and USA to live up to promises to put an end to unfair agricultural subsidies, and Europe's insistence on trying to introduce new issues on to the WTO agenda against the wishes of poor countries, led to the breakdown of the talks. However, the unity of developing countries, led by Brazil, India, Kenya and China, in refusing to accept a deal that would fail the world's poorest people, marked a turning point in dynamics at the WTO. The support that campaigners across the world, including Oxfam, gave to the demands of developing countries, added to the weight of argument.

No “new issues” on the WTO Doha Development Round agenda

Oxfam and other civil society campaigners supported developing countries in their refusal to start negotiations on new issues, including investment and competition, at Cancun. The impasse over these issues eventually triggered the collapse of the meeting.

Prior to the Cancun meeting, as part of the Trade Justice Movement, Oxfam contributed to shifting UK policy on these issues through a mass lobby of 500 Members of Parliament in June 2003.

Agriculture – ending rich country subsidies and dumping; WTO Agreement on Agriculture which protects and promotes domestic food production

Progress is disappointing on agricultural issues despite the attention generated in different forums. President Chirac's call, early in 2003, for a moratorium on subsidies on agricultural exports to Africa was welcome although it did not go nearly far enough. Oxfam staff met several times with the French government, including with President Chirac and his advisers, in the run up to the G8 summit in Evian, to persuade them to take an ambitious approach to trade reform and to increases in international aid. However, we judge that we had little influence on the EU's Common Agricultural Policy mid-term review, and no date has been agreed internationally for phasing-out agricultural dumping by rich countries.

Oxfam contributed to making cotton a key test of the WTO's 'development friendliness', both before and at Cancun, although no concrete decision was made at Cancun because of the collapse of the talks. The Economist (in a Special Report on the Doha Round, 20 September 2003) reported "*prodded and encouraged by nongovernmental organisations (NGOs), especially Oxfam, a group of four West African countries - Benin, Burkina Faso, Chad and Mali - managed to get cotton included as an explicit item on the Cancun agenda*". We judge that having cotton on the agenda played a prominent role in fostering unity among developing countries against subsidies and putting pressure on the USA. Oxfam contributed to the pressure that built up on the issue through careful research, existing programme efforts to support the organisation of cotton farmers, providing advice to government and farmer representatives, supporting farmers to participate at the WTO meeting in Cancun and stimulating public attention to the issue of subsidies through considerable media coverage.

Oxfam's work on cotton is expanding with national market programmes developing in India and Tajikistan as well as in West Africa. Research is also being done to identify how to create functioning and certifiable fair and organic cotton product supply chains, from southern producing countries to Europe.

Improving and stabilising commodity prices – campaigning on coffee

In our campaigning to improve and stabilise commodity prices, we have invested most of our attention in coffee, and progress has been made on some fronts. There is little controversy now about the causes of the coffee crisis, in which farmers are selling coffee beans at less than the cost of production, supply has outstripped demand and farmers face many barriers to diversification into other markets. However, action to date by the major coffee roasters and from global economic and political leaders has been disappointing.

When Oxfam started to campaign globally on coffee in September 2002, we had strong local partners with whom we had been working for a number of years. In last year's PPA Review, a case study was provided on Oxfam GB's work with coffee farmers in Haiti. Their progress over the last year, as they became involved in the campaign, is reported in case study 7.

Case study 7 The Haiti coffee campaign – increasing producer control over the setting of prices

In Haiti, local partners and national NGOs worked together with Oxfam to lobby the government successfully for the creation of a national coffee institute. Small producers' representatives form a majority on the board, and the institute is accepted by the state and private sector.

The strength of the institute is attributable to the strength of the coffee co-operatives, which Oxfam has supported for a number of years. Our partners have also increased their income through the co-operatives' improved export marketing strategy, resulting in increased numbers of children in school, increased food consumption, and the ability to access credit during the hunger period. Attention to gender issues is bringing advances in terms of women's representation in decision-making bodies, control of resources and working conditions, and women's specific demands are being raised in campaigning. Producers are now convinced of the importance of campaigning and are better able to link local, national and international processes. One tangible result is increased producer control over the setting of prices at the national level.

The Oxfam team in Haiti writes "*This is a clear example of the impact that is possible when advocacy, campaigning and project work come together*".

Aspects of the campaign which have helped generate pressure to address the crisis include:

- The bringing together of a broad Global Alliance on Coffee and Commodities, proposing a rescue plan of short and long-term solutions to address the crisis.
- Strong research supported by Oxfam's programme work with coffee farmers.
- Having capacity and support to launch the campaign in more than twenty locations spread across all continents.
- Targeting of the major coffee roasters.
- Building relations with staff and management in influential international organisations and thus gaining access to key debates on commodities, such as the High Level Round Table organised by the International Coffee Organisation and World Bank.
- Attracting widespread media coverage, popular campaigning by Oxfam supporters, especially in the USA and Great Britain, and being able to generate popular support for specific actions (e.g. that Nestlé withdraw a claim for compensation from Ethiopia – see case study 8 below).

Case study 8 details where progress is being made.

Case study 8 "Mugged: poverty in your coffee cup" – an international campaign

- Several governments (Ethiopia, Brazil, Colombia) and coffee roaster Nestlé are supporting the rescue plan. Significant interest has been shown by the EU, World Bank and UNCTAD.
- The European Parliament, Spanish Parliament and the US Congress and Senate have passed resolutions demanding action to help coffee farmers.

- University campuses and schools across the USA are switching to Fairtrade coffee, Starbucks has doubled its Fairtrade purchases between 2002 and 2003 and Dunkin Donuts has brought in a Fairtrade range. In the UK, "Fair Trade universities" and "Fair Trade towns" are also expanding in number (see section on "Increasing consumer support and the offer of Fairtrade products in the UK" for more detail - page 11) and the Co-operative Group has switched all its own-brand instant and ground coffee to Fairtrade, boosting the value of the UK Fairtrade coffee market by 15 per cent, or £4m, and returning a total of £750,000 to growers.
- Significantly increased prices are being paid to some coffee farmers by two of the four biggest coffee roasters, and Proctor and Gamble has agreed to introduce a Fairtrade coffee range.
- Oxfam stimulated 44,000 people in 239 countries to e-mail and write to Nestlé in a two-week period to protest about the company's claim against the Ethiopian government for compensation payments of US \$6m. The claim related to a company nationalised by a previous government twenty seven years ago and not owned by Nestlé at that time. After Oxfam's action, and other pressure had been brought to bear, Nestlé backed-down, reducing its claim to US \$1.5m and agreeing to donate this back to be spent on the food crisis in Ethiopia.

Cutting the cost of medicines

In last year's PPA Review Report, a case study described the progress made in the Cut the Cost campaign. The story is updated here in case study 9. Despite disappointment at the lack of progress on the reform of TRIPS (Trade-Related aspects of Intellectual Property Rights), pressure from Oxfam and others about poor people's lack of access to medicines has continued to help influence the pharmaceutical industry and the UK Government. Good working relationships have also been maintained with some southern governments. We have seen greater concern develop in the UK media about the cost of medicines and Oxfam has supported the production of a powerful television documentary and newspaper coverage about HIV/AIDS and the cost of medicines.

In our advocacy on lack of access to medicines, the differential impacts on men, women, girls and boys have been emphasised, e.g. the specific negative impacts of gonorrhoea on women in terms of stigma and a higher risk of HIV/AIDS.

Case study 9 Cutting the cost of medicines

The WTO agreement on drugs patents, reached just prior to the Cancun meeting after two years of wrangling, was something of a disappointment, as it perpetuates legal obstacles for developing countries trying to obtain affordable medicines. However, Oxfam, with other NGOs and developing countries, helped ensure the deal was not too restrictive, stopping the USA and pharmaceutical lobby from excluding many diseases.

Oxfam's international campaigning with others, as well as the greater availability of generic medicines in the market, has contributed to more international pharmaceutical companies accepting the concept of selling medicines at reduced prices to developing countries and dropping prices significantly. From a price of about \$10,000 per patient per year for antiretroviral drugs, the price has fallen to about \$160 for generics and about \$800 for brand medicines in developing countries. There are more people already using the medicines in Africa and, at these reduced prices, donors, governments and the UN are planning programmes to make the medicines more widely available. President Bush quoted the fall in prices in his announcement of a \$15b Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief.

In March 2003, major international institutional investors agreed benchmarks for judging whether pharmaceutical companies are improving access to medicines in the developing world. The standards cover policy in the areas of pricing, intellectual property protection, research and development, and information disclosure. Oxfam was a member of the advisory committee for the development of the framework.

The UK Government-sponsored Commission on Intellectual Property Rights reported last year and the report reflected much of Oxfam's analysis.

Finally, although Oxfam has a small national programme base of work on medicines, we are

contributing to progress being made in several countries. For example, in Pakistan, the network on drugs, which we have supported for several years, lobbied the government and the tax on twenty essential medicines has been lifted. In Thailand, where we support partners doing local programmes and lobbying, a court ruling against the Bristol-Myers Squibb company removed their exclusive right to make the HIV anti-retroviral drug DDI (didanosine), enabling the local state-owned drugs firms to sell it at half the price. Additionally, the Thai Government health service started to cover the costs of HIV/AIDS drugs and treatment, sufficient initially to support 9,000 people. In the Philippines, the government has sought Oxfam's support, recognising that our international campaigning on TRIPS - and now wider campaigning on Make Trade Fair - is relevant to their own efforts to make medicines accessible to poor people.

D Lessons, issues and risks

- ***Integrated programming.*** Despite the big step forward made in weaving together activities at local, national and international level, this is unfinished work. There are important issues to address in terms of:
 - Supporting action in the South long enough for policy change to be achieved – often beyond the time when northern campaigning has achieved what it can. Not taking on issues if there is not the capacity to follow through.
 - Oxfam Regions feeling able to adapt global campaigns to their local context. Undertaking joint analysis by Regions, Campaigns and Policy Division, and our partners to balance considerations of the importance of the issue in a country, the likelihood of a country contributing to influencing internationally and the possible benefits to local programmes of engagement in campaigning.
 - Being sensitive to issues of 'ownership' and control, and to working in a participatory way, in North-South partnerships. Engaging with others at an early stage of analysis and planning. Engaging with others about the evolution of campaigns and making decisions about how long to continue. Nurturing alliances to achieve and maintain impact; ensuring we are not being, or considered to be, 'extractive' in our relationships with others. Managing the dynamic between 'listening' and 'getting things done'. Recognising the leadership role that international agencies can play. Considering the issue of 'branding' in our campaigning with others.
 - Ensuring staff have the necessary skills in political analysis to understand the power dynamics in a situation and to strategise to bring about change.
 - Improving communication internally to see the synergies possible between our actions in different places, North and South, and to inspire one another.
- ***Prioritisation.*** Our ability to create success in local/national campaigning means that prioritisation of our engagements becomes even more important – for example, Haiti will need to continue to campaign on coffee whatever the level of global campaigning on the issue. Regions recognise the need to increase focus – whether geographically or according to subject – to meet the time and capacity requirements of more strategic, 'joined-up' programming. This will be supported through the implementation of the global Livelihoods Strategy, approved by Council in April 2003.
- ***Influencing ideas and beliefs – the time-frame for change.*** Regions emphasise that bringing about sustainable change depends largely on being able to influence ideas and beliefs – and that this requires an empowering, participatory approach. This cuts across our work at all levels and on all topics, from trade policy issues to local communities fighting against discriminatory beliefs. But, not all of our partners are committed to an empowering approach. We shall need to become more explicit and strategic about seeking to bring about changes in ideas and beliefs. Programmes will need long time-

frames for working with communities and we need to share understanding and good practice among staff about beneficiary and partner participation.

- **Sustainability.** We are not analysing the different dimensions of ‘sustainability’ consistently across the organisation – most projects reported only on financial sustainability rather than the sustainability of change, which involves political, social, environmental and other factors. However financial sustainability is critical and we should consider whether new initiatives to tackle this in some programmes can be replicated, e.g. by guaranteeing loans, as CAMEXCA did for the coffee co-operative Central in Honduras.
- **Gender equality.** Oxfam GB Regions identify many examples of improved access to assets and participation of women, showing good evidence of gender mainstreaming in livelihoods. In the UK, the Women’s Budget Group and others have contributed to changes in the tax and benefits system resulting in significant numbers of people, particularly women, being better off. In Gitega, Burundi, Pauline, a woman community development committee leader says “*I never thought that one day, a woman like me, a widow, could call the community together and they would discuss for hours with me leading them.*” However many Regions still perceive that they are under-performing on gender – indicating both stronger analysis and the higher profile that gender has acquired across the programme. For example some Regions warn against a simplistic approach that can lead to additional burdens on women’s time (South America), or alienate men (MEEECIS). Many Regions have allocated specific resources to strengthen work on gender over the next year.
- **Sharing good practice and accessing expertise from others.** Continued work is needed to share good practice in markets-based programmes, especially as we meet the challenges of success. Larger businesses and microfinance programmes will require access to services (e.g. related to export marketing or financial services), which are beyond our capacity, and we must facilitate access to others with the necessary expertise. We should share experiences of how markets can be opened to some of the least advantaged groups by integrating work on building assets and market issues. Through recruitment and training, we aim to ensure staff have sufficient understanding of marketing to be able to support partners at different points in the value chain, helping them access expertise from others as necessary.
- **The WTO Doha Development Round.** Prospects appear grim for delivery of the WTO Doha Development Round by December 2004 after the collapse of the Cancun Summit and the intransigence of rich countries on key issues such as agriculture. However, the potential for positive change is now greater, thanks to the new assertiveness of developing countries. In order to ensure that developing countries act as a bloc and that smaller developing countries are not marginalized, greater understanding will be needed between the new G20 group (with core countries being Brazil, India, South Africa, China and Argentina) and African and low-income countries.

2.2 The Right to Life and Security: improving the quality of humanitarian assistance

Priority strategy:

Supporting action that assures the quality of humanitarian assistance and protection for people affected by conflict and natural disasters.

Outcome indicators:

A: Affected populations adequately protected and needs met in Oxfam emergency programme areas.

B: Sphere standards for quality of response met in Oxfam managed programmes – *dissemination and practice*.

C: International community better co-ordinated and more accountable to affected populations in situations of conflict and natural disaster.

A Programme expenditure

About 40 per cent of Oxfam GB's total global expenditure in 2002/03 was directed towards Saving and Protecting Lives. This amounted to about £45m. Grant expenditure on humanitarian work was about £6m less than in 2001/02, and less than anticipated. Partly this reflects the different humanitarian crises around the world in the two years, but we also failed in some of our programmes to respond on the scale we might have done, or had planned.

B Key areas of activity during the year

Major assistance and protection programmes, including advocacy

Humanitarian response work was undertaken in over 40 countries. More and more, advocacy about people's right to assistance and protection went hand-in-hand with direct programme work on the ground. The food crises in Africa in 2002/03 led to some of our major responses. In the Southern Africa Region, almost £13m was spent on humanitarian and livelihoods grant programmes in 2002/03, compared to less than £5m the previous year. More than £4m of this was spent in Malawi, much of it linked to the food crisis: the programme included food distributions, agricultural support and public health activities.

Significant public health programmes were implemented, often benefiting people affected by conflict. In Liberia, a programme totalling about £1.8m, during 2002/03 and the first half of 2003/04, benefited about 120,000 people. In the Palestinian Territories, the programme has totalled about £600,000 between 2002/03 and into 2003/04, benefiting about 100,000 people directly and many more indirectly.

We invested considerable resources during the period when there was a threat of war in Iraq, during the war and since, seeking to prepare and respond directly in the best way we could. We also engaged in advocacy about the likely humanitarian impact of war and about upholding the Geneva Conventions in the conduct of war.

Focus of programme response

Oxfam GB has continued to concentrate its humanitarian programming in its traditional strong areas of 'public health' – spanning water, sanitation, health promotion and food security and nutrition – and to coordinate our efforts with others to ensure that essential public health needs are met. We are developing our expertise in relation to malaria control activities. Sometimes, we take on a wider range of activities (e.g. emergency shelter) if critical needs are not being met and we believe that we are best placed to help meet those needs. We see that a 'humanitarian protection approach' can make an important impact in conflict situations and this is becoming more established in our programming.

Developing good practice

We undertook a *Public Health Review*. This reflected back to us the fairly positive picture of Oxfam GB's public health work that others in the humanitarian sector hold. The principal technical recommendations do not indicate that substantial changes are needed. However, we need to pay more attention to addressing the institutional recommendations concerning the giving of advice, the strengthening of Regional capacity, the process of learning and programme development, and defining the range and limits of Humanitarian Department technical support.

A set of *Guiding principles for response to food crises* was produced following the completion of the food aid research and review project in 2002. The principles set out Oxfam's livelihoods approach to food security and will support our assessments and programming as well as advocacy with donors and the United Nations World Food Programme to change policy and practice. Food security assessment guidelines have been produced as one of the first activities to implement the guiding principles.

A review was undertaken of the past three years' work developing our expertise and response in malaria control activities, and a strategy for future programming and *malaria guidelines* were developed as a result. The strategy highlights the need to continue to focus on sub-Saharan Africa where morbidity and mortality from malaria are highest. Oxfam programmes will continue to promote community education and mobilisation around the use of individual protection methods, complemented by additional interventions to control epidemics where this is appropriate. Confidence in, and influence from, our approach has been growing.

A policy and manual on *Mainstreaming and Integrating HIV in Emergencies* has been developed. The manual has been disseminated throughout Oxfam's country programmes together with training materials. There is evidence that the guidelines have been used effectively to influence programme design in both Southern and Central Africa. A mechanism is in place to ensure that learning from new programme initiatives is closely monitored to enable it to be consolidated into future strategy development.

Efforts have continued to apply the *gender standards and guidance* developed over some years, although we recognise that that this has not yet led to consistent good practice in programmes. Deployments of Humanitarian Department staff with a specific gender brief into two Regions in Africa seem to have brought some rewards, for example in the health programmes in Sierra Leone. Externally, Oxfam's standards are well regarded; an anecdote is that many ECHO staff carry around the little green card of 'indicators for gender aware response', and have had the Little Gender Handbook translated into French.

Developing quality and accountability in the humanitarian sector

Oxfam has continued to engage in major sectoral initiatives about standards, accountability and learning in relation to humanitarian programmes. Although progress continues to be made through these efforts, effort is still needed on implementation to carry through the commitments now established.

The Sphere Project is drawing to a close. Oxfam has continued to serve on its Management Committee and made significant contributions to the revised edition of the handbook, specifically the water and sanitation chapter, but also by integration of protection and gender considerations. We have sought to use the Sphere standards as a lever for both programme improvement and advocacy with others.

Oxfam has supported and contributed to the *Emergency Nutrition Network's* quarterly bulletin, the *Field Exchange*, the only newsletter for emergency nutritionists.

The *Protection Project*, which we undertook between 2000 and 2002, has developed into a permanent function and focus for Oxfam. At a global level it is providing a framework for humanitarian advocacy and campaigning. At local and national levels, a team of Protection

Advisers and focal points are piloting protection as an approach to programming. Protection by its very nature demands long-term strategies to deliver its greatest impact, and internally Oxfam continues to have work to do to focus its specific role, but the direction is strong. Externally, Oxfam's approach is beginning to have an influence in the humanitarian sector. Two specific examples are the adoption of the Oxfam framework for protection by OCHA in Indonesia for its training, while ICRC has recognised the approach as making a valuable contribution to sectoral thinking.

Oxfam has continued to contribute to efforts in the humanitarian sector generally to strengthen accountability to beneficiaries and claimants, focussing on specific support to, and practical participation with, three external bodies: the *Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance (ALNAP)*, the *Humanitarian Accountability Project (HAP)* and the *Sphere Project* (as mentioned above). On the completion of HAP early in 2003, Oxfam became a founding member of the permanent *Humanitarian Accountability Partnership International*, set-up to promote self-regulation of the sector in accountability. The challenge for the coming year is to draw up and start to implement a viable 'accountability action plan'.

Oxfam is also one of the members of the Steering Committee for Humanitarian Response (SCHR) taking part in a *peer review process*, focusing on the organisational actions designed to meet the challenges exposed by the scandal over the sexual exploitation of refugees in West Africa.

Oxfam's approaches to health promotion and community-based targeting also promote accountability.

Emergency preparedness and management of emergencies

Regional Preparedness Plans now exist and are being implemented in every region. Funds totalling £400,000 gave a much-needed boost to the speed at which action plans could be advanced. Further investments will continue over the coming period to build the required capacities. A process of learning from the variety of preparedness activities in which we have been engaged has also started. This will be done both through internal review, and also in consultation with a range of partners, communities, governments and other actors.

Emergency Management Plans (which identify people responsible for managing a response in high-risk countries) have been put in place, and a framework for the development of potential emergency managers has been designed. Secondly, an *emergency simulation exercise* has been run in two Regions. Both of these initiatives have resulted in increased realism at a regional management level and a commitment to prioritise preparedness.

Efforts to improve the management of staff safety and security, and the implementation of the *Security Policy*, have continued. The *appointment of security focal points* in each Region is helping to strengthen security management standards. Although a number of serious security incidents have occurred, on the whole they have been successfully resolved, resulting in few injuries and no deaths of Oxfam staff. Incidents have included: detention; kidnap threat; armed robbery and armed ambush; carjacking; mob violence; and physical assault.

New logistics supply procedures and a new system, FACTS (Field Asset Control System), have been introduced to improve cost-effectiveness, transparency and accountability to Oxfam and our donors. Training workshops on the procedures and FACTS have been carried out in five Regions and will continue through the next year. Other agencies have shown interest in the system and are adapting for their own use.

Oxfam International's Humanitarian Consortium

In July 2003, the Oxfam International Humanitarian Consortium was set up, comprising five Oxfam affiliates (America, Australia, Great Britain, the Netherlands and Spain). These members will work on behalf of all Oxfam affiliates to lead the family's humanitarian and

conflict reduction work, including programmes, media and advocacy. The establishment of the Consortium represents a commitment by affiliates to invest in assuring the quality and capacity of Oxfam's humanitarian work.

C Progress report

Developing Regional capacity and collaboration across Oxfam

As usual, Oxfam's humanitarian programme during 2002/03 embraced a number of large-scale response programmes to new emergency situations, as well as significant ongoing responses in areas of chronic vulnerability or conflict, or to aid rehabilitation.

Regions normally take primary responsibility for managing humanitarian programmes, with assistance as required from the Humanitarian Department, the Campaigns and Policy Division and other parts of the organisation. Now that Regions are developing this capacity, we would only occasionally expect the Humanitarian Department to take on responsibility for managing an emergency programme. Certainly, Regions are now showing improved management of the more predictable and ongoing emergency programmes that they can plan for, but, in 2002/03, we experienced problems in the management of our response in some major crises where it was difficult to predict and plan for the scale-up required. Major disasters often challenge the way we do things, sometimes at very short notice. In these situations, good teamwork across Departments and Divisions is often required for an effective and timely response and, while we have examples of where this has happened, we also have examples of confusion over roles and weaknesses in working relationships across teams.

Some of the management challenges that we still need to address are evident in the programme examples presented below. However, the examples also demonstrate how Oxfam strives to meet high standards, innovate and learn in its programming.

Linking direct response on the ground with advocacy

We are becoming more experienced at linking our direct humanitarian response work on the ground with wider advocacy about people's rights to humanitarian assistance and protection. Analysis from programme areas, lobbying in country, programme staff giving eye witness accounts in the media, lobbying through Oxfam International offices in Brussels, Washington and New York and lobbying by Oxfam GB and other affiliates in their home countries can be used in combination to good effect. Work with the Oxfam International New York office included briefings in front of the UN Security Council on Iraq, Angola, Democratic Republic of Congo, Sudan, Liberia, diamonds and Southern Africa. Case studies later in the section about Mauritania, Southern Africa and the Palestinian Territories provide examples of programme work on the ground linked with advocacy. Other examples are provided here:

- After the ceasefire agreement in Angola in April 2002, Oxfam lobbied the UK Government (DFID, Members of Parliament and Members of the House of Lords), EU and UN to draw attention to the massive humanitarian needs in the country and the window of opportunity that existed. The Oxfam team in Angola organised a network of national and international NGOs to meet with high-level UN delegations on a number of issues. The Oxfam team also wrote to the World Bank about plans for demobilisation of UNITA soldiers and their families and how gender had not been taken into consideration. We do not know how far pressure from humanitarian agencies, including Oxfam, and the public – and the inclusion of Angola in the Disasters Emergency Committee Appeal for the Southern Africa food crisis – influenced DFID's decision to increase its prioritisation level for Angola and to put in more staff and resources. The EU also raised its emphasis on Angola, allocated new money and started actively to seek new partnerships.

- Oxfam's humanitarian work in Liberia responded to the new situation in mid-2003, when conflict reached the capital, Monrovia. Oxfam's twenty five Liberian staff worked as much as possible to bring clean water to some of the estimated 250,000 people displaced by the fighting. This included: trucking and pumping water to homeless families sheltering in the city's Samuel K. Doe sports stadium; building emergency toilets in the stadium to try to stop the spread of disease; distributing buckets for water and soap to homeless families; working with local hygiene trainers to teach displaced families in camps how to avoid disease. Powerful eye-witness accounts from Oxfam staff member, Sam Nagbe, during this period were important in communicating the situation in Liberia to the outside world and in supporting Oxfam's lobbying of the international community about protection, humanitarian funding and the deployment of an adequately mandated peace-keeping force. Oxfam made presentations to the UN Security Council, who passed a resolution to send a force of 15,000. Oxfam staff have witnessed a clear reduction in human rights' abuses in and around Monrovia since the arrival of the first troops, but the rural areas are insufficiently protected, and we continue to lobby on this.
- In September 2003, Oxfam launched a policy paper '*Beyond the Headlines: An agenda for action to protect civilians in neglected conflicts*'. The paper analyses how direct attacks on civilians are part of the harsh reality of most conflicts across the globe. It shows that substantial humanitarian aid is given where it is a political priority, but very little in some other humanitarian situations, and how the same political calculations seem to determine how much effort the international community makes in protecting civilians caught up in conflicts. It analyses how human rights considerations are being overridden in the fight against terror and how the independence and impartiality of humanitarian aid is under threat. The paper was well received within the international community. Notably, the UN Office for the Co-ordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) asked Oxfam whether it could use some of the analysis in the paper in its annual report on protection to the UN Security Council.
- Together with partners, Oxfam helped draw attention and attract donor funding to food crises in countries and areas not in the media or donor spotlight, e.g. in Mauritania (see case study 10) and on the Atlantic coast of Nicaragua, where the situation of isolated indigenous communities was not being recognised.
- Oxfam undertook extensive lobbying and media work about the possible humanitarian impact of war in Iraq, based on our experiences assisting the rebuilding of Iraq after the last Gulf war, and our assessments of the situation prior to the recent conflict. We raised a strong voice saying that any military moves that broke International Humanitarian Law or led to excessive deaths of civilians would be unacceptable to the wider public. As war began, our advocacy turned to the conduct of war and the upholding of the Geneva Conventions. While it is difficult to assess the influence we had, we know that the positions we took enhanced the respect of many people for Oxfam.

Preparedness and co-ordination

There is a wide range of preparedness activities across the Regions, from work to develop the capacities of local communities in disaster management, to wider engagement with governments and other key players. These activities are well established in some countries and the benefits can be seen, including the strengthening of co-ordination mechanisms in many instances:

- Within our preparedness activities for floods in the South Asia River Basin programme (West Bengal and Bangladesh), shelters and raised cluster villages have been developed. The value of this has been recognised by communities and government, and they are now replicating these on a larger scale.

- Innovative practices are to be found working with partners and communities. For instance, in coastal Andhra Pradesh, on the east side of India, Oxfam GB has supported partners to encourage the most vulnerable to seek to insure themselves and their possessions, paying part of the insurance premium themselves. This is only one small part of a much wider preparedness programme comprising capacity building, documentation and asset building. At a national level, the Government of India invited Oxfam GB to join the sub-committee on community-based disaster preparedness and a draft national plan has been developed.
- Over a period of years, Oxfam GB has developed experience in drought management activities in East Africa, as reported last year. Strategies have included initiating the development of a famine early warning system, seeking to integrate preparedness activities into development programmes and the establishment of relationships with a wide network of NGO, governmental and donor agencies, allowing timely responses to take place.
- In Uganda, secondment of a staff member into the Office of the Prime Minister has supported the development of a draft bill on disaster management and increased Oxfam's credibility to influence at that level. Two other secondments of Oxfam GB staff within the HECA Region, which support inter-agency developments for humanitarian response, are to UNHCR in Tanzania and to Operation Lifeline Sudan/UNICEF for South Sudan.
- Disaster management activities in the Philippines, Cambodia, Indonesia and Viet Nam all involve community-based approaches and activities which seek to influence government disaster management policy and practice, including the representation of vulnerable people in government policy-making and planning. Success is being seen in terms of people's organisations being recognised, afforded legitimacy and respect and being asked for their views. In Indonesia, Oxfam GB has contributed significantly to the development of the national disaster management plan; a draft law has now been written.
- Risk maps and analysis of vulnerabilities and capacities carried out by Oxfam in Haiti have now been published and are being used as a decision-making tool by donors, agencies and governmental organisations in country.
- In Ecuador, emergency preparedness projects in the coastal region, that is vulnerable to flooding, combined direct measures (e.g. the establishment of chlorine treatment and distribution centres to improve water supply) with preparedness activities focusing on public health promotion and capacity-building of local emergency committees. Greater community awareness of risks and possible mitigation measures was seen as a result. Elsewhere in the South America Region, the key role that young people in Peru took in preparedness activities is considered to be a useful strategy that could be adopted more widely.
- In Yemen, Oxfam GB began a humanitarian preparedness co-ordination group for NGOs. This became more active than the official co-ordination group and pushed the latter into action.

Case studies 11 and 13 about humanitarian programmes in Southern Africa and the Palestinian Territories also mention Oxfam's contributions to co-ordination in these situations.

However, we know that we, and our partners, are still insufficiently prepared for appropriate and timely responses in some situations. This has been particularly the case with some of the major food crises in the last year, as shown in case study 10 on Mauritania and case study 11 on Southern Africa. It was also the case when the Nyiragongo volcano in Goma, Democratic Republic of Congo, erupted in January 2002. The independent evaluation of the DEC Goma Crisis Appeal found that all DEC agencies were unprepared in terms of

evacuation, rescue or contingency plans. Nevertheless, Oxfam played an important, initial role in co-ordination before handing over to others. The evaluation concludes *“An indicator of successful co-ordination is the fact that the agencies that attended the initial co-ordination meetings during the first hours of the disaster still constitute the core of the current co-ordinating committees. A special mention should go to Oxfam, who, in the very first hours of the exodus, opened up a co-ordination point, physically gathering the operators together.”*

Standards and accountability

As already mentioned under section B above, Oxfam has continued to engage actively at a global level in the main initiatives on standards and accountability in the humanitarian sector. Within the Regions, we have continued to work on improving our own accountability and programme standards as well promoting good practice among others.

Sphere standards

The Sphere standards and Humanitarian Charter continue to take root in programming and advocacy in the Regions. Often the preparedness work described across Regions has involved training about Sphere for Oxfam staff, partners and allies. For instance, increasing understanding and respect for Sphere standards among UNHCR, and its implementing partners, has been an important activity within the secondment initiative of an Oxfam staff member to UNHCR in Tanzania. However, in this instance as well as in others, it has been noted that availability of sufficient funds is key to the achievement of the standards.

In Nicaragua, Oxfam, together with our partner, Centro Humboldt, lobbied the Government to adopt the Sphere standards. The Council of Ministers agreed to their incorporation into the work of different ministries involved in disaster management and response. Advocacy was also found to have a positive effect in Brazil, where alongside our response programme to floods, the state government’s response was monitored, encouraging notions of accountability as well as recognition of the importance of clear beneficiary selection criteria and processes.

From self-assessments and evaluations, we find mixed results in our own programmes in terms of how far we have been able to meet Sphere standards. We also see a critical appreciation of the standards developing among staff. For instance:

- In the HECA Region, awareness of Sphere standards has been promoted as part of Oxfam’s rights-based approach, but staff have found it difficult to explain to claimants when these standards cannot be met because of inadequate resources. The Region also notes that in some situations (e.g. in the repatriation programme in Eritrea) the standards can promote systems and structures that are not sustainable by communities.
- In a refugee programme in Baluchistan, Pakistan, it was reported that we were not able to meet the Sphere standards for water delivery and that even those amounts might not have been sufficient when temperatures rise.
- Also in Baluchistan, it was noted that Sphere standards were reached for food distribution in the drought response programme in Nushi, and that the standard is higher than the normal food intake in the community.
- In Sierra Leone (see case study 12), an unexpectedly large influx of internally displaced people, returnees and refugees from neighbouring Liberia meant that Sphere standards were not met, but regular assessments of population numbers and community assessments of priorities were then introduced to try and address this.

Gender equality

Programme staff are demonstrating a more critical self-assessment of how well they have been able to address gender issues in programmes, and there are examples of progress

being made in some cases. Some of the positive examples are linked to the use of Oxfam's Community-based Food Targeting and Distribution methodology. The HECA Region's experience of developing this methodology has been shared with Pakistan, Senegal and countries in Southern Africa during the year, with positive effect, including on gender issues. For example, in Nushki, a conservative area of Pakistan, it was reported that men came to accept the participation of women, who were involved in establishing criteria for food distribution and in the relief committees. Through their involvement, the women became more knowledgeable about economic issues and grew in confidence in challenging the opinions of men. However, programme staff note that sustainability of these changes cannot be judged at this stage. Case studies 10 and 11 on the food crises in Mauritania and Southern Africa also refer to the benefits from using the methodology.

Staff also recognise that while participation of women can be good in itself, it is not usually sufficient to change power imbalances between women and men. In some programmes, potential negative consequences of women taking a more active role are being recognised too.

- Southern Africa notes that pursuing simple numerical participation can increase women's workload and, in specific instances, expose women to abuse or violence.
- In Brazil, a large number of women participated in Oxfam's house construction project after the floods in 2000. This was seen to challenge attitudes and was commented on by many local people who visited the project. The skills that the women acquired through the programme enhanced their self-esteem and confidence and some of them began taking a more assertive role regarding partners in their domestic situation. Programme staff consider this might be the reason for the much more negative comments about the project from men, compared to women, during the evaluation.

We need better analysis in our programmes of impact and changes in gender relations from the point of view of both men and women.

Examples of programme response

A number of examples are provided below of significant humanitarian programmes that were active during 2002/03. Most of these are from Africa, where the largest scale programmes were implemented last year. Oxfam's work in the Palestinian Territories is also reported on. These examples illustrate how we are trying to improve the quality and impact of our humanitarian programmes on a number of fronts and the challenges we often still face.

Food crises in Africa

Each of our Regions in Africa responded to food crises during 2002/03, to differing scales and experiencing a variety of challenges.

Case study 10 describes Oxfam's response to the drought in Mauritania. This has been chosen to show the importance of good teamwork. Collaboration between the small Oxfam team and local partners in Mauritania, the Regional Management Centre, Humanitarian Department, Campaigns and Policy Division, Marketing Division and Oxfam International helped draw the attention of others to the scale of the emergency, enabled an effective response to be mounted and influenced the practice of others in food distributions.

Case study 10 Response to the drought in Mauritania

Poor seasonal rains in the southern savannah region of Mauritania culminated in the complete failure of the July to September rains in 2002. This placed enormous strain on families who would normally live off the crops they harvested and sell the excess to make money for purchasing other provisions to get them through to the next harvest. It was estimated that around 800,000 people were directly affected by the drought and that there was widespread loss of livestock. Oxfam launched its emergency response in November 2002, in the Aftout and Affolé regions of southern Mauritania. Considerable work was needed in the early stages of the drought to raise awareness within the

humanitarian and donor communities about the extent of the crisis. This involved close work between Oxfam GB programme, advocacy, communications and fundraising teams.

During the period up to January 2003, the planting period in Mauritania, Oxfam GB distributed seeds and tools through its long-standing partner Nissa Bank, a women's cooperative. This was followed by five distributions of World Food Programme (WFP) food over a period of nine months. From a small micro-credit development programme, Oxfam scaled-up to implement an emergency programme of more than £1 million, distributed £761,000 of WFP food and benefited 32,500 people over a period of about twelve months.

The programme used the Community-based Targeting approach to food distribution, in which communities prioritise and make decisions. The approach was first used by Oxfam GB's West Africa Region in 2001/02, in Senegal, drawing on the experience of Oxfam GB's East Africa staff. Careful planning of the scale-up and successful collaboration between Oxfam's Regional Management Centre, the Humanitarian Department and other organisations operating in the area enabled Oxfam not only to introduce the community-based approach itself but also to influence the way others carried out distributions.

In the initial stages of the response, Oxfam GB staff and partners lacked the necessary capacity for assessing humanitarian needs. This raised the issue of emergency preparedness in the Region. Major progress has since been made in developing preparedness plans, working closely with partners of Oxfam GB and other Oxfam affiliates.

In Southern Africa, large-scale programmes were mounted in Malawi, Zambia and Zimbabwe, in response to the food crisis last year. Working with partners, almost one million people were reached. More than £10 million has been committed to this response in 2002/03 and up until the end of 2003. Case study 11 highlights some key achievements from the programme, a number of the challenges we faced and the learning gained through this experience.

Case Study 11 Responding to the food crisis in Southern Africa

Oxfam's response to the food crisis in Southern Africa combined five elements:

- Immediate response to food needs.
- Increased support to food production in the short and medium term.
- Capacity-building of others to respond through diverse strategies.
- Public health measures to maximise and safeguard the impact of food-based interventions.
- Advocacy, learning and innovation to address structural problems and protection issues.

Advocacy papers drew together the immediate and long-term causes of the suffering, including the toll of unequal trade policies and subsidies. They were widely read and served as a reference point for many policy-makers (being quoted in the House of Lords), journalists and academics. All lobbying in the UK on Southern Africa was done with other aid agencies, including Save the Children, CARE and Christian Aid. A joint paper was written with Save the Children on 'HIV/AIDS and Food Insecurity in Southern Africa', which seemed to be influential in relation to US policy and funding to the Region.

Staff from East Africa helped Southern Africa staff learn about, and use, Community-based Targeting for distributing both food and seeds and tools. Oxfam GB's teams in Malawi, Zambia and Zimbabwe all report the benefits of using this approach. A large number of village relief committees were formed and existing groups also became involved. For instance, in Malawi, more than 300 village relief committees were established and increasingly community-based care groups became involved in the distributions of seeds and tools in order to target families affected by chronic illness. The committees agreed with Oxfam the criteria for selecting the households that would receive assistance and then drew up lists of beneficiaries and managed the distributions. The criteria agreed included vulnerable households as a result of chronic illnesses such as TB, malaria and HIV/AIDS, child-headed households and older people caring for orphans. Monitoring showed that the criteria were followed well and that there were few problems with food losses. The programme ensured that women were actively involved in the village committees and in receiving rations. The building of village structures and the widespread understanding that was achieved in communities about the criteria used in the

distributions were generally considered to be positive achievements of the programme.

However, distributions were often delayed – weaknesses in preparation of proposals and accessing funding were two factors. Others included difficulties with some suppliers of seeds, delays in approval of imports and late receipt of some trucks in Zambia. Sufficient planning and lead-time to allow for the complex procurements related to seasonal cropping are crucial in programmes involving agricultural inputs. Climatic conditions after planting, including prolonged dry spells and then flooding in Zambia for instance, also affected the impact the distribution of seeds and tools had in the different countries. Time spent caring for sick household members affected some households' ability to cultivate and weed land and the erratic food aid pipeline made it difficult at times to synchronise seeds and food distributions to minimise the risk of seeds being partly eaten because of hunger. Despite all these constraints, the food distributions and seeds and tools programmes did show positive results. For instance, different parts of the overall programme reported: rates of malnutrition staying low during a period when they had been predicted to be high; increases in maize yield; irrigation support making more land available for winter cropping and the promotion of more vegetable crops; the seed package allowing more drought-resistant crops to be introduced and a more sustainable system of enhancing soil fertility to be developed through growing cereal, legume and tuber crops.

Extensive public health activities were carried out. These included: provision of new water points and latrines as well as repairs and improvements; provision of rainwater collection systems; training of water management committees; training of trainers for child-to-child education and health education together with health personnel. The design of latrines reflected the views of women and men and, where people with disabilities were involved, their particular requirements were identified. The programmes certainly increased access to uncontaminated water and monitoring activities have indicated improvements in hygiene practices. More generally, we feel a wider acceptance is developing in the humanitarian community about the necessity of public health interventions at times of food shortage, especially in areas of high HIV/AIDS prevalence where the risk from opportunistic infections is greater.

Oxfam GB played a variety of co-ordinating roles in the different districts where we worked in the three countries, sought to promote Sphere standards and shared Oxfam's Community-based targeting methodology with others. Some training about the prevention of sexual exploitation of women and children in humanitarian crises was also undertaken.

This major response challenged Oxfam GB in terms of some aspects of management capacity, internal co-ordination and the understanding of country teams about humanitarian programming. In addition to factors already mentioned, the absence of obvious triggers to the emergency and the level of our own organisational demands for assessments contributed to our response being slower than we would have wished. Experience gained now by country teams should lessen risks associated with lack of clear analysis in future. Lessons were also learnt within Oxfam GB about communications and division of responsibility between the Regional Management Centre, Humanitarian Department and country teams. As a result of these experiences, the Region now has much greater capacity to support humanitarian programmes and the country programmes have improved understanding of humanitarian action.

In Ethiopia too, Oxfam responded to the food crisis, which is estimated to have affected about 14 million people in 2002/03. Although we were slow in scaling-up, by July 2003 the programmes being implemented by Oxfam America, Oxfam CAA (Australia), Oxfam Canada, Oxfam Intermon (Spain), Oxfam GB and Novib (Oxfam Netherlands), together with their partners, had a value of more than £4.3 million.

Public health responses in conflict

The programme examples from Sierra Leone and the Palestinian Territories illustrate a range of challenges in providing humanitarian assistance to people affected by conflict.

Case study 12 Public health assistance to war affected communities in Kailahun District, Sierra Leone

The Kailahun District of Sierra Leone was isolated by conflict for ten years but is now accessible and safe. The project, which started in early 2002, originally aimed to assist a population of about 41,000 people in twenty three communities in the District, giving access to water and sanitation facilities and promoting good hygiene. However, unexpectedly large numbers of internally displaced people, returnees and refugees from neighbouring Liberia came into the District during the period of the programme. As a result, the number of communities to be targeted and the expected number of beneficiaries were revised. Altogether, forty communities participated in the project and indirect beneficiaries are estimated to be about 95,000 people. Oxfam GB has worked in the District previously, so the project built on previous work in some communities.

As a result of the project, communities now have access to safe water and sanitation facilities, but these are insufficient for all the people now living in the area and Sphere standards were not met. However, there is a massive improvement on the previous situation: for most communities it has provided the first access to safe water since the end of the conflict. Single-pit family latrines had been proposed originally, but community mobilisers found that custom calls for separate latrines for women and men in the family. After discussion with communities, it was decided that double-pit family latrines, to be shared between neighbouring households, would be a culturally appropriate solution. With the increase in population that occurred, on average the project provided one latrine for 90 residents. On the basis of learning from this project, it was concluded that new projects should provide more latrines to fewer communities, even where the need is widespread, as this is more likely to ensure a health impact.

A qualitative impact assessment by an Oxfam staff member from outside the Sierra Leone programme found that communities reported a reduction in diarrhoeal and skin diseases in children and adults, and individual interviews indicated real change in people's hygiene practices. Women and men continue to use the training given in various health-related activities. Women and men worked together on the project and talk more about the work – although women still feel overburdened by reproductive tasks. Consultation about, and participation in, the project was good in general, although competing demands on the communities' time appeared later in the project, especially from shelter projects being implemented by other actors in the same area, as well as from farming activities. This had a significant effect on the latrine construction timetable. However, we also see the communal spirit that has been developed continuing in other shared community work such as the building of churches and schools.

Learning from the project also led to the introduction of regular assessments of population numbers and community assessments of priorities in order to address unmet needs. The programme wants to strengthen its work on gender. Finally, there is no government policy in Sierra Leone to protect and sustain the water sector and advocacy with others on this is proposed.

Oxfam's programme work in the occupied Palestinian Territories has been undertaken in very difficult circumstances on occasions. For instance, in the village of Madama, Oxfam sought to support the community to access water from the springs above the village, their only source of water, but vandalism by settlers of repairs at the springhead and to the pipes occurred several times. Three Palestinians carrying out repairs were also shot at and wounded. Finally, the springhead and pipes were covered in concrete and heavy stones were set into the mix for further strength. The work was completed under the protection of unarmed international volunteers. The village leader told Oxfam that, during the time when damage to the water source was occurring and before the village had support from outside, he had considered resigning as village leader because he could not help his community. With assistance from outside, he would continue because he could see some progress being made. While sustaining community leadership may not be an explicit objective in programmes such as this, we should recognise the crucial importance of helping to give hope to people.

Case study 13 summarises how direct programme work, a co-ordination role and advocacy combine to increase the impact we can achieve. In this case study, we are also able to highlight some of the findings from a recent evaluation.

Case study 13 Response to the conflict in the Palestinian Territories

Oxfam GB has been working with Palestinian partners on a series of emergency water, sanitation and hygiene programmes since July 2001. The latest phase of the programme was launched as a result of the continuing deterioration of conditions in the Palestinian Territories following the intensification of Israeli Defence Force (IDF) operations in the spring of 2002.

Access to water worsened due to curfews, closures of villages and towns, movement restrictions, deliberate damage to infrastructure, restrictions to supply, and contamination by the IDF and settlers. Incomes also collapsed, as closures prevented Palestinians from working in Israel. Safe water for many households was either too expensive or not available.

The programme, working mainly with village committees, reached about 100,000 people directly and benefits many more indirectly as they use schools and hospitals. An evaluation of the six month programme, which was extended a few months, concluded that it had accomplished a great deal in a short period, while working under extremely difficult conditions.

The programme included investments in repairing damaged roof water storage tanks, constructing household and community cisterns, repairing household cisterns and damaged networks, developing alternative sources of water and providing water tankers. The interventions did increase the availability and affordability of water to households in programme villages, although the evaluation did not find an increase in consumption. Collecting water became a more secure activity, a particularly important factor where women are the primary collectors. By bringing water closer to people's homes, the programme also saved people time. In the case of women, it was found this time was mainly used for other domestic tasks.

Water saving, sanitation activities and public health training activities were also undertaken. The evaluation found improved awareness about water cleanliness and local health hazards among villagers where training had been carried out. Training also stimulated a demand for more knowledge, e.g. women's groups wanted training on women's health and other women's issues. The evaluation found that staff had an excellent rapport with participants in the training and that there was a good basis to develop these activities further. For instance, in terms of hygiene in the home, it was suggested the public health team needed to learn more about existing practices in the locality and how these might have been affected by changes in water supply. At a community level, it was suggested more could be done to ensure hygienic conditions in schools, known to be of concern to children, especially girls.

The evaluation suggested that, in an environment where the authorities and settlers are involved in cutting and contaminating water supplies, provision of household cisterns is probably the option usually most likely to be of longer-term benefit to vulnerable people.

It was found that Oxfam GB's role in setting up and chairing the Emergency Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (E-WaSH) co-ordination group, comprising NGOs and the Palestinian Water Authority, was widely appreciated. In general, E-WaSH had enabled a rapid and co-ordinated response to be made to immediate needs and the evaluation recommended that Oxfam GB should continue its co-ordination role. It recommended Oxfam GB also pay attention to enhancing the capacity of all member agencies to respond effectively to problems in the water and sanitation sector. It was recognised too that continued attention to transparent and fair selection processes by village committees is important in an environment where provision of cisterns to individual households is the most viable option of improving water supply.

Oxfam's commitment to co-ordination heightened our profile and helps our advocacy efforts. Advocacy included preparation of two Oxfam International policy papers on the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. Examples from *'Forgotten Villages'* were used in the Report of the UN Secretary General's Special Envoy for the Humanitarian Situation in the Palestinian Territories to highlight the impact of the conflict on the Palestinian population.

D Lessons, issues and risks

- ***Added impact can be achieved through good teamwork and clarity in roles.*** Good collaboration between programme staff in Region, the Humanitarian Department, the Policy and Campaigns Division and Oxfam International, as appropriate, has been shown to increase the impact we can contribute. Angola, Mauritania and Palestinian Territories are all examples of where this has been the case. As reported in the last PPA Review, we defined roles and responsibilities in emergency response in 2002, recognising that these needed clarification as our new Regional structure became established. Although this has helped develop good collaborative working practices in some responses, as just indicated, it still requires more time and a lot of work for Regions to take on the responsibilities and be accountable as intended. Meanwhile, continuing support, of the right form, from the Humanitarian Department is also needed. We see this as the way to assure Oxfam's ability to respond effectively both to humanitarian situations where we have been able to plan (i.e. in areas of chronic vulnerability or conflict and in ongoing programmes) and to crises where it is difficult to predict and plan for the scale-up required.
- ***The scale and speed of our response may sometimes suffer while striving for quality.*** Oxfam has defined high standards and principles for the quality of response we aspire to make – e.g. using Sphere standards, collaborating with others, assessing protection issues, incorporating a gender and HIV analysis, developing advocacy strategies, using participatory methods, strong accountability. In our efforts to achieve high standards and principles, we must ensure that we do not compromise our ability to respond speedily and to scale. In some of our responses, it has proved hard to get all the different, necessary dimensions right. Weaknesses can lead to inadequate funding, which itself then leads to reduced standards, as mentioned in the case study about our Southern Africa response to the food crisis. But there is progress too, with East Asia reporting better quality programmes and more impact through greater emphasis on accountability and standards.
- ***Current efforts to address key weaknesses in management are vitally important.*** Different aspects of management and internal decision-making have sometimes been weak. In some countries, with our most challenging humanitarian programmes, we have experienced difficulties recruiting staff to, and ensuring continuity in, key posts (e.g. Angola, Mano River Union countries in West Africa, Democratic Republic of Congo, Afghanistan). Donor contract management also requires further attention and strengthening.
- ***Preparedness activities need to be continued.*** While some preparedness activities are well-established and showing good results, we have seen weaknesses in our preparedness for some major responses. Improved monitoring of the implementation of preparedness plans needs to be undertaken by both the Regions and the Humanitarian Department in the coming year, as well as a review of the effectiveness of our preparedness work.
- ***Monitoring, evaluation and learning.*** We have more to do to turn our Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Framework into coherent plans and actions for humanitarian programmes. This includes working on indicators and getting monitoring right, both to improve programme quality and to meet the expectations of donors.
- ***Linking our humanitarian work to programming under other Strategic Change Objectives.*** Several Regions note the need to continue efforts to plan our programmes in an integrated way across Strategic Change Objectives, recognising that structural factors, such as long-term marginalisation of vulnerable communities and weak state structures, clearly affect the impact and sustainability of both preparedness and response interventions. A good understanding of the links between emergency work and

other parts of our programme is needed, as well as greater focus on strategic options within contingency and preparedness planning processes.

- ***Consequences of the 'war on terror'***. The new global security environment is proving challenging to operate safely in, and has affected our response capacity in a number of places, including Iraq. We are concerned that the 'war on terror' could lead to aid being an instrument of foreign policy, with implications for the impartiality and independence of humanitarian response. Impartiality and independence in response are fundamental to our identity and must be maintained in all that we do.

2.3 *The Right to be Heard*

Priority strategies:

Supporting poor people to have the skills, resources and access required to influence government and institutional policies and practices affecting their lives.

Influencing governments, multi-laterals, and non-governmental organisations to employ practices that allow poor people to participate effectively in the design, implementation and evaluation of the programmes and policies affecting their lives.

Outcome indicators:

A: Greater aid and budget accountability to poor people in programme areas.

B: Governments actively seek to involve poor people in the development of national poverty reduction strategies and decentralisation plans.

C: Poor people and civil society groups have the skills and resources to influence government policies in the interests of poor people.

A Programme expenditure

About 9 per cent of Oxfam GB's total global programme expenditure in 2002/03 was directed towards the Right to be Heard. This amounted to about £10m.

B Key areas of activity during the year

National Poverty Reduction Strategy processes. Oxfam has continued to support civil society's engagement in national Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) processes in a number of countries. With most PRSP formulation processes now complete, interest and activity is moving towards monitoring their implementation. This has naturally led to more work and advocacy on budgets, with partners working to ensure that resources are allocated to agreed poverty priorities and that these resources are actually spent and not lost through donor failure, corruption or inefficiency. Specific budget tracking exercises are being supported in Malawi, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Kenya and Zambia. About ten Oxfam partners attended the International Budget Project (IBP) annual conference in Mexico in March 2003 and material from our different programme experiences with budget monitoring has been posted on the IBP website. Oxfam staff and partners also participated in an international conference on macro-economics and PRSPs, which we jointly organised in Washington with the International Food Policy Research Institute, New-Rules for Global Finance and Eurodad. Bank and Fund staff joined participants for part of the discussions.

Work is underway on a substantial paper, entitled '*From "Donorship" to Ownership*' (forthcoming January 2004), which will be submitted to the global IMF/World Bank PRSP review process, being carried out by the Independent Evaluation Office and Operations Evaluation Department of the IMF and World Bank.

In addition to monitoring governments by supporting budget advocacy, we have worked with others to take stock of PRSP content and its relationship to the accountability of both donors and the World Bank/IMF. This has involved, for example, research in Honduras demonstrating that the PRSP fails to tackle vital issues such as the coffee crisis and the poverty impact of further trade liberalisation, and that continued conservatism by the IMF has led to the suspension of vital aid and debt relief. Across country programmes, strategic interventions are being made according to the situation. For example, in Viet Nam, it is clear that the PRSP will not make much of an impact unless its emphases and principles are embedded in the government's own domestic planning processes. Oxfam GB has therefore been involved in influencing the Ministry of Planning and Line Ministries in pro-poor policy-making as a direct follow-up to our participation in the PRSP process from the beginning.

Lastly, we are also seeking to consolidate our experience of influencing PRSP processes, and to apply that in countries that are just starting out on the PRSP formulation process or are entering the second round. As reported in case study 14, we feel that this has positively influenced the second round of planning in Uganda, for instance bringing the previously taboo topic of defence expenditure into the domain of public debate. Two pivotal countries now formulating PRSPs, and where we are applying our learning, are Indonesia and Nigeria.

Other work on government and institutional accountability. There continues to be a wide range of programme work beyond the PRSP processes, aimed at increasing government and institutional accountability at local and national levels, often in countries where decision-making and revenue-raising have been decentralised. Working on the accountability of private sector entities or companies is a small, but important, part of the programme and examples are mentioned later.

Capacity building of civil society organisations for empowerment. From Burma to Kenya, Oxfam GB is supporting partners in improved management and programme design and delivery, through stand-alone projects or targeted organisational development support. In addition, in order to strengthen our 'capacity building of CSOs for empowerment programme', Oxfam GB is entering into a 'strategic partnership' with INTRAC. The aim is to establish a coherent framework and approaches for capacity building, promote learning across programmes in a strategic way and make use of the specialised knowledge of INTRAC and its allies in the regions. We are identifying the specific needs of each region and the scope of the work required to strengthen civil society organisations to engage meaningfully in PRSP processes and other macro policy issues. A consultant is working on the project.

Gender and institutional policy processes. There have been robust efforts on gender analysis and mainstreaming in Regions, especially in East Asia, HECA, MEEECIS and CAMEXCA. Attention to gender budgeting is one example of how some Regions are seeking to address gender through our accountability projects.

It is recognised that there is a need to develop staff skills in gender analysis and mainstreaming, so learning events have emphasised consideration of gender, focusing on practical aspects in relation to policy work and budgets.

Global influencing and linking local to global. Oxfam's influencing work with the International Financial Institutions has continued to focus on the issue of debt, macroeconomic policy, liberalisation policies and the need for poverty and social impact analysis (PSIA) at the design stage of sectoral reforms. We have also continued to support civil society actors in some countries to advocate globally about the PRSP for their country.

Our influence on PRSP processes has been strengthened through the creation of an Oxfam International initiative on PRSPs, which builds synergies between the work of all the Oxfams in this area. Within this joint initiative, Oxfam GB is making an intensive investment in eleven countries³, and this is supporting the scale-up of programmes in these places, learning between programmes and links to wider advocacy. In-depth country studies (in Georgia, Ghana, Honduras, Cambodia and Viet Nam) have also been carried out and are being used in the Oxfam International submission to the IMF and World Bank review of their role in the PRSP process, mentioned above.

In addition, Oxfam has continued to advocate and campaign globally, in alliance with others, on specific issues, especially for donors to finance the Education for All Fast Track Initiative, on accountability within the humanitarian aid system (reported under the Right to Life and

³ Honduras, Nicaragua, Bolivia, Uganda, Zambia, Malawi, Ghana, Georgia, Armenia, Viet Nam, Cambodia.

Security) and on trade rules, including patenting issues and social responsibility within the pharmaceutical industry (reported under the Right to a Sustainable Livelihood). In an effort to improve the accountability of the UN system, drawing on our country-level experiences across the world, an input was submitted to the 'UN Panel of Eminent Persons on UN-Civil Society Relations'.

Democratising development practice. Working with others and participation are central to our strategy to achieve poverty reduction and in our Right to be Heard programme. Therefore, as a first phase of considering democracy in development practice, we are beginning to develop some minimum standards for our relationships with partners and their participatory practices within programmes. In a second phase, we will broaden this out to a wider debate about minimum standards within other NGOs working on poverty reduction or right-based approaches to development. Oxfam's UK Poverty Programme is leading in the development of this work.

A debate is ongoing in Oxfam to clarify what we understand by a 'rights based approach' in campaigns, development and humanitarian work. A paper has been written to stimulate and steer discussion and, together with the Danish Institute of Human rights, a dialogue day was organised for Oxfam staff and International NGOs. We are participating in the research and debate on 'A Rights Based Approach to development and its implication on NGOs' being coordinated by INTRAC. We have also participated in international workshops and conferences on the topic, organised by the Save the Children Alliance, UNESCO and the Economic and Social Rights Network (ESCR-Net), and are an active member of the UN-organised 'Practitioners Forum on Human Rights and Development' in East Asia.

'Mainstreaming' a Right to be Heard. As well as having programmes where 'a right to be heard' is the primary objective, Oxfam seeks to integrate consideration of this issue into all its programming across the Strategic Change Objectives. This 'mainstreaming' can be seen to be widespread across the global programme, but we need to do more to assess its impact and draw out lessons.

C Progress report

Strengthening institutional accountability and poor people's engagement in the PRSP process

Our work to support civil society organisations to engage in PRSP processes has shown us the unprecedented political space being opened up for civil society engagement in government policy making processes, but also the many challenges and weaknesses in the processes too. The case studies and examples that follow illustrate how we have been seeking to tackle issues where problems are commonly faced. For example:

- ***The engagement of marginalised groups and poor people.*** Finding ways of supporting the involvement of women and men living in poverty and marginalised groups, and ensuring the representation of their views is crucial, given that we know participation in policy development processes can often be dominated by urban-based NGOs and think-tanks, without a constituency.
- ***Influencing the content of plans.*** Early experience showed that the content of final PRSPs was often disappointing in terms of representing the concerns put forward by civil society, so we have sought to support partners to pursue their concerns about the content of the plans at all stages in the negotiations about PRSPs.
- ***Promoting attention to gender issues.*** Even when gender issues have been raised during the planning process, they often 'evaporate' from final plans, so support to partners to pursue gender equality concerns has been another focus.

- Engagement of civil society in budget analysis and monitoring expenditures. Supporting civil society groups to engage in analysing budgets and monitoring expenditure as plans are implemented is the new challenge and one where good progress has been seen in some countries.

As we reported last year, Oxfam has been involved for several years supporting the development of Uganda's poverty reduction planning process, managing the Participatory Poverty Assessment Project (UPPAP) within the Ministry of Finance and working with partners to influence specific areas of government policy. In case study 14, we report on developments over the last year, during which Oxfam GB phased-out from its involvement with UPPAP, handing it over to the Ugandan Government.

Case study 14 Government accountability and poor people's influence on policy making in Uganda

Oxfam GB actively and strategically engaged with the preparation of Uganda's third Poverty Eradication Action Plan (PEAP), which serves as the country's PRSP. Uganda is the first country in the world to complete one full three-year PRSP. This therefore offered the first chance to apply lessons learned in the first round, both in Uganda and globally, and ensure that our input, and that of our partners, was strategic, targeted and focused on maximising our influence, while also pushing to increase the space for interaction.

Firstly, the second round of UPPAP was successfully completed, in time to influence the formulation of the new document. One of the interesting findings was the blanket endorsement by poor people of the removal of user-fees in health. NGOs (including Oxfam GB as highlighted in our PPA Annual Review last year) had expressed concern at the removal of fees without a solid plan on how to budget for the increased demand. However, in the event, clinics have registered 100 per cent increases in attendance even when there are no drugs available, and UPPAP showed that even in the absence of medicine poor women and men still value getting a free diagnosis and prescription. The completion of the second UPPAP report coincided with Oxfam GB phasing out its involvement and handing over management of participatory poverty assessments to the Ugandan Government.

Another major improvement in the second round of UPPAP was a systematic analysis of gender and the gendered element of policy messages coming from poor people. This was combined with a clear strategy by the NGO forum, supported by Oxfam GB, to ensure that gender is fully integrated into the new PEAP, including further research, lobbying and advocacy.

Lastly, this new process saw not just a higher quality of input by civil society to the spaces already available, but also a conscious attempt to broaden that space for dialogue into more contentious policy areas. Particular success has been gained in the area of defence policy, which until recently was completely closed to civil society involvement. Good quality and challenging research on the situation in Northern Uganda demonstrated the failure of security forces to secure the area despite substantial increases in defence spending. The research was commissioned by a new Civil Society Coalition for Peace in Northern Uganda, of which Oxfam is a leading member, and it had a dramatic impact, in many ways saying what a lot of people in the Government and donor community had long felt but were unable to say. This led to civil society's inclusion on the PEAP security working group, and a dramatic increase in the remit of that group to look at vital issues regarding defence expenditure and security.

In the Caucasus, Oxfam has played a pioneering role in promoting space for civil society participation in the PRSP processes, with different government attitudes in Armenia, Georgia and Azerbaijan influencing the experiences and outcomes. Case study 15 reports progress since the last PPA Review. This includes excellent budget analysis work in Armenia and Georgia, carried out by partner organisations of young economists, and widely disseminated causing considerable public debate and scrutiny.

Case study 15 Influencing PRSP processes in the Caucasus

Oxfam GB's work around PRSPs in the Caucasus has continued to focus on involving poor people in policy making, with varying degrees of success.

In Armenia we have seen considerable input to the PRSP from civil society partners. The final draft PRSP was influenced in significant ways by proposals coming from Oxfam GB's programme experience e.g. on community-based primary health care financing and micro-credit provision. Other suggestions from partner agencies were also included, e.g. on inclusive education for people with disabilities, community-based support for elderly people, policies aimed at refugees and internally displaced populations and recommendations in the spheres of employment and public administration. In addition, research on pro-poor economic growth enabled Oxfam GB and its partner EDRC (the Economic Development and Research Centre) to bring about a shift in the strategic approach of the paper. This shifted from seeing economic growth as the only source of solving poverty-related problems, to seeing the targeted elimination of inequality, with a fair distribution of income, as the core of the macro-economic strategy. However, the IMF pushed for a redraft of the document and the chapter on macroeconomics in the final version now follows their direction. Civil society will be pursuing its arguments through the negotiation process for the new IMF structural adjustment loan to be negotiated in June 2004.

In Georgia Civil Society lobbying led to an improved participatory process, but it remained severely lacking.

Once the PRSPs were completed, our support focused on monitoring of the plans, with a training workshop held for partners from Georgia, Azerbaijan and Armenia. In Azerbaijan and Armenia, work has since begun to develop different mechanisms for civil society to monitor PRSP implementation, focusing mainly on budget tracking of finance allocated to health. In Azerbaijan, the leading 'Azadliq' newspaper noted that the budget analysis and public expenditure monitoring work done by Oxfam and partners "*made a wave and echoed through society*".

Budget monitoring work has been particularly successful in Malawi, where we support the Malawi Economic Justice Network. There is clear evidence that money is reaching pro-poor activities due to civil society analysis and scrutiny. Case study 16 reports progress in the past year.

Case study 16 Budget monitoring in Malawi

Following the completion of the PRSP, the Malawi Economic Justice Network, together with civil society networks in Education, Health and Agriculture, has been tracking the Priority Poverty Expenditures promised by the Government. They have done surveys of health clinics, primary schools and agricultural extension units, to see if extra resources allocated in the PRSP have reached the grassroots. They have also carried out report-card surveys to get the views of poor women and men on the provision of services. In both instances they then lobbied on the results together with Parliament, targeting Government and donors. Budget outturns for 2002-3 show that, in the priority areas monitored, funds were not reallocated, whereas reallocation did occur in other areas that were not monitored. This demonstrates the key role civil society can play in promoting homegrown accountability mechanisms.

In our work in the UK, we see many of the same challenges in supporting civil society participation in policy processes as in other countries where we work. A visit by five UK partners and four Kenyan partners to Uganda provided an opportunity to learn from one another. The UK partners returned with a clearer sense of what they wanted to achieve in terms of influencing national policy processes and increased confidence to do this.

Case study 17 reports on work with the UK Government and partners to encourage the participation of people experiencing poverty in the development of the National Action Plan for Social Inclusion (NAPSI). Chris Burston, the civil servant responsible for the NAPSI in the Government's Department of Work and Pensions gave feedback to Oxfam, saying:

"The difference Oxfam has made, that probably wouldn't have been picked up, is the distinction between consultation and participation.....It takes it into partnership. Oxfam has been prepared to

enter into partnership – for example inviting us to that seminar.....this has given us more of an understanding rather than just telling us.....We are more aware of gender as an issue....What we are doing on the NAP is affecting how we are thinking about anti-poverty strategy more broadly.....We are selling the benefits of the NAP (the participatory and international focus) to others in the policy community....Oxfam has made a major contribution”.

Case study 17 also provides an update on our work with Salford Council in the UK. Last year we reported positive results from our support to the Council in carrying out a Participatory Appraisal to inform their bid for major generation funds from the UK Government’s New Deal for Communities initiative. This year, we highlight the problems observed in sustaining participatory approaches into the implementation phase, raising issues for Oxfam in terms of how long we need to stay involved in order to support the institutionalisation of change.

Case study 17 Working with government poverty reduction initiatives in the UK

National policy making. Oxfam, with partners, has sought to promote the participation of people experiencing poverty in national policy making in the UK, focusing on the requirement on the Government to produce a 2003 National Action Plan for Social Inclusion (NAPSI) as the lever. Oxfam’s support to the Social Policy Task Force (a grouping of UK NGOs set up to follow the development of the NAPSI) has enabled the European Anti-Poverty Network and UK Coalition against Poverty to lobby the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) about the participation of people experiencing poverty in the NAPSI process. This persuaded the DWP to host a Participation Working Group, made up of Government, grassroots and voluntary sector representatives. Oxfam and partners were also involved in organising local workshops around the UK that identified issues for inclusion in the National Action Plan for Social Inclusion. A common issue raised in these workshops was debt and financial exclusion. The DWP had originally not intended to include this issue, but due to lobbying by Oxfam and partners through the Participation Working Group, it is now in the NAPSI.

Local government policy making. As reported last year, Oxfam GB has been working with Salford Council, and a partnership group of different agencies and stakeholders, as they made a bid to central government for a significant urban development programme under the New Deal for Communities initiative. In particular, Oxfam GB promoted and supported a Participatory Appraisal (PA) to inform the bid. The bid was successful.

An external evaluation of the work concludes that the PA was a genuinely participatory process and the needs and preferences of the community were reflected. However, little attempt is now being made to involve residents in the design of projects being implemented and decision-making processes are no longer being influenced by the community. The Council, rather than the partnership group, make most of the decisions.

Introducing the PA was seen as innovative and risky by the Council, so Oxfam made the judgement early on that prioritising gender too could have jeopardised the whole project. Not surprisingly, weaknesses remain in attention to gender issues.

The PA attracted national attention and has been influential in these terms. But the challenge for Oxfam is to decide how long we should invest in projects – balancing the time required to achieve the strategic influence we seek and the time required to make local participatory decision-making processes sustainable.

Good examples of efforts to address gender inequalities within the PRSP process come from Honduras and the Yemen. In Honduras, Oxfam GB has been working with a key women’s organisation, Visitacion Padilla, in generating information from a series of regional consultations regarding the views of women on a range of issues related to the PRSP. Visitacion Padilla sits on the PRSP consultative council nationally with the government and donors, and it is hoped that the findings of the regional consultations will be incorporated in the annual update of the PRSP. Recent discussions between Oxfam and the Honduran Ministry of Finance suggest that this is a strong possibility.

Experience in relation to the Yemen PRSP process are described in Case study 18.

Case study 18 Promoting a consideration of gender in the Yemen PRSP process

Development of the PRSP in the Yemen started in 2000. Oxfam GB lobbied for a gender analysis to be done and for women to be represented on the Technical Committee set up by the Government to prepare the PRSP. Oxfam provided training to the Technical Committee on gender concepts, analysis and planning and supported the Women's National Committee to recruit gender experts to critique the technical and sectoral papers prepared. Support was also given to ensure gender was considered in the Voices of the Poor study carried out by the Ministry of Planning and Development.

Despite these efforts, the final PRSP document was disappointing, with the analysis of gender in the poverty assessment being patchy and gender not addressed in the strategy section. Oxfam provided critical feedback about this first to the Government. Subsequently, a letter, endorsed by civil society, was sent to the Executive Board members of the World Bank and IMF, criticising the Government of the Yemen for hindering NGO participation and for the weaknesses regarding gender in the plan. Despite the Ministry of Planning and Development's shock and discontent that the issues had been taken to the Executive Board, the Government has seen that Oxfam is serious about fighting poverty and now recognises that we will both support and challenge it on issues affecting poor women and men.

We are now seeing significant shifts in Government practices concerning gender issues. As a result of Oxfam GB's lobbying and pressure from the donor community, the government has acknowledged the importance of integrating a gender perspective in the implementation and monitoring of the PRSP. Oxfam was also asked to help recruit a gender specialist for the new PRS Monitoring Unit and to provide training on gender budgeting to staff from the Ministry of Finance.

Finally, in relation to work with specific marginalised groups, Oxfam GB's long involvement with pastoralist communities in East Africa has helped ensure that their concerns are raised in policy-making processes. In Kenya, the specific needs of pastoralist communities have been recognised in the PRSP.

Government and institutional accountability beyond the PRSPs

Several examples are provided below to illustrate the range of work being carried out to increase the accountability of governments and other institutions beyond the PRSP processes, and to support civil society to develop the skills and capacities to bring influence to bear.

- In Malawi, training for local communities in their Human Rights under the new constitution has begun to pay off, with poor women and men becoming much more vocal in demanding accountable and applicable services. At the same time, work with service providers has enabled them to better meet rising expectations. A good example is where, in partnership with the Ministry of Labour, we worked with communities on tea estates to form a trade union to strengthen their demands for fair pay and conditions. Community radio was used to broadcast these debates to a national audience.
- In North Sudan, support to pastoral institutions has resulted in policy and practice changes at the state level, with one of the pastoral union members being appointed as adviser on pastoral affairs to the Governor.
- In Tanzania, Oxfam GB's broadcasting of the views of pastoralists led to the Government changing its decision on how to divide the Arusha region.
- In Viet Nam, through the provincial capacity-building project in Ha Tinh province, practices and attitudes of both government staff and the community have changed to take on a participatory approach to project management, which has resulted in increased rice productivity and a fall of 10 per cent in the poverty rate in that province. The Oxfam-designed approach to community infrastructure projects – built on a model of transparency and community management – has been deemed so successful by

independent observers that, for example, the UN agency IFAD has adopted the approach in its multi-million pound infrastructure programme in Viet Nam.

But engaging people living in poverty can be a challenge, particularly where there is a lack of trust in government structures and feelings of powerlessness. The experience in the MEEECIS Region is that engagement resonates better when focused on issues that have tangible benefits on poor people's lives. Case study 19 illustrates how promoting women's and girls' participation in decision-making processes about water at village level has led them to have wider aspirations to engage in policy-making processes.

Case study 19: Women's empowerment through a water supply project in Kosovo

The project has provided drinking water to around 60,000 people in 31 villages, and has promoted equity and good governance. Access to piped water has improved the health status of poor women and girls and has reduced women's workloads.

Oxfam GB took deliberate steps to ensure the involvement of all stakeholders at both village and municipal levels, and emphasised the full participation of women and young people. The actions taken ensured women's participation in village water committees. This, alongside actions to raise awareness around gender issues, resulted in greater acceptance of women's participation in local governance. A number of villages now have at least one woman representative on the village council, traditionally the preserve of elderly and wealthy men.

Water has been a good entry point for promoting women's participation. Women engage with men on an issue that they can talk about with authority, and have taken advantage of their participation in village water committees to access decision-making forums as equal partners to men. This has contributed to women's increased confidence and assertiveness, and some women now aspire to play a more substantial role in society. A few women have stood for election to municipal assemblies.

Working on the accountability of private sector institutions is a smaller but important part of the programme. Some examples have already been given under the Right to a Sustainable Livelihood. Two others are given here:

- In 1999, the Manhattan Mining Company began exploration in the urban area of Tambo Grande in Peru, having detected gold beneath the homes of a population of 25,000 people. Oxfam GB sought to help this population to develop their capacities for negotiating with the mining company and ensuring that their rights and culture were respected. The Tambo Grande people have now received the National Human Rights Award in recognition of their struggle to defend their agriculture-based livelihoods. The active participation of the community was also a point of reference for changes in laws regulating environmental impact assessment procedures, drafted by the Ombudsman.
- In Georgia, a new programme is focusing on empowering poor people, affected by the Baku-Tbilissi-Ceyhan oil pipeline, to access fair land compensation and determine the social investment projects initiated by British Petroleum.

Influencing global institutions and linking local to global

In our advocacy on issues of debt relief and the need for Poverty and Social Impact Analysis (PSIA) at the planning stage of reform programmes and lending, research findings and country level experiences have supported lobbying at a global level. This has been done in collaboration with Save the Children, Christian Aid and Action Aid. We are now seeing views changing in the World Bank, with the principles of transparency and ownership now agreed. However, there is still an issue about PSIA's exploring genuine options. DFID is supportive of seeking to ensure PSIA's are done systematically and with government ownership.

International advocacy has also been used to influence national governments. Below, we give examples from Honduras and Yemen about international lobbying on national PRSP processes and then provide an update in case study 16 about our work with Global Witness concerning forest management and logging in Cambodia.

- In Honduras, Oxfam GB collaborated with FOSDEH, a leading NGO linked to social and labour movements, to produce research analysing the PRSP. The research asked the key question whether the PRSP was pro-poor, and found it to be clearly lacking. The recent coffee crisis for example is not mentioned in the document despite being the biggest single blow to poor people in recent years. In addition, positive sections of the document are yet to be funded due to ongoing disputes with the IMF who believe that teachers' salaries are too high. Oxfam organised meetings between FOSDEH and key people in the IMF and World Bank to advocate on the basis of the findings.
- In Yemen, we advocated at the Washington level about the PRSP process, saying the Government was hindering NGO participation and raising the weaknesses in addressing gender (see case study 20). This led to a new level of participation and partnership between Government and civil society in developing participatory monitoring mechanisms for the implementation of the PRSP.

Case study 20 Forest management in Cambodia

As reported last year, Global Witness successfully advocated for changes in the Cambodian policy on forest management, leading to a reduction of destructive logging practices and drafting of a new forest law that is more pro-poor, provides greater sustainability of natural resources, and protection of local sources of income for people living surrounding the forest area. However, issues within the concession system still needed addressing, not least because the World Bank-funded "sustainable forestry management" project was rife with problems related to non-payment of fees and taxes to the government, while, at the same time, the possibility of poor people using forest resources in a sustainable way themselves was constrained.

The Cambodian Government then rejected Global Witness as an independent monitor of forestry. In early 2003, Oxfam - together with partners - lobbied the World Bank to force the Government of Cambodia to abide by the conditions set for further lending to Cambodia. Oxfam GB's lobbying included the Director taking the issue up with Jim Wolfensohn, World Bank President. As a result, the World Bank key loans to the Cambodian Government were postponed. Distressingly, however, this fourteen month lobbying effort must be deemed a failure because in December 2003 the World Bank approved the continuation of the loans despite insufficient evidence of progress, and concerted lobbying by Oxfam and other NGOs. Though some DFID staff were sympathetic to concerns of the community and civil society organisations, Oxfam and others were unable to persuade DFID institutionally, or the UK Director of the World Bank, to take a stand against continuing loan disbursement.

D Lessons, issues and risks

- ***Continuation of the war on terror and the erosion of multilateralism.*** The global context continued this year to be largely negative in its impact on the realisation of human rights. There is much concern about the future of the UN and the WTO following the conflict in Iraq and the collapse of the trade talks in Cancun. In sum, the past year has been the worst in a long time for multi-lateral governance and upholding universal principles of human rights, particularly at times of conflict.

Nevertheless, on a more optimistic note, January saw unprecedented numbers of civil society activists and social movements from across the globe convene in Brazil for the World Social Forum, and the continued global co-ordination of both activists and poor country Governments to defend their interests in the debates on trade is unprecedented.

Despite this, poor peoples' voices are struggling to be heard. The level of policy space available remains enormously varied across the countries where we work, and global

opportunities are arguably declining. This underlines the crucial importance of continuing to tackle issues of participation and the realisation of human rights if the war on poverty is ever to be won, and Oxfam will continue to work with others to make this a reality.

- ***The colonisation of the poverty discourse.*** The World Bank, and even the IMF to some extent, is now talking the language of poverty reduction and human rights, and it is often hard to tell the difference between publications from these institutions and those of civil society. To an extent this represents a victory for those who have sought to get these organisations to recognise the importance of rights and poverty reduction. However, the changes still remain largely at the level of rhetoric and obscure the fact that, in reality, it is business as usual, for instance in continuing to promote neo-liberal economic theory, viz, the privatisation of social services, deregulation, fiscal stringency at the expense of pro-poor spending, and further trade liberalisation. As such, defining the differences in policy and practice between civil society and the International Financial Institutions is becoming increasingly challenging and important, and gathering detailed, country-based evidence is more crucial than ever before. Oxfam is working with partners to ensure such evidence is available, often providing information to the World Bank/IMF UK Executive Director, his team, and other Executive Directors to help them influence the institutions' policies. Unfortunately, our on-the-ground experience does not always convince (as in the recent Cambodia forestry case).
- ***Monitoring donors and the International Financial Institutions.*** There is clear donor pressure for civil society to concentrate on monitoring southern governments' performance. There is much less encouragement to examine the role of donors, the UN agencies, and the International Financial Institutions on financing gaps and continuing structural adjustment policies. Both areas of monitoring need attention, and we need to support partners to develop compelling arguments for policy propositions that can, if the evidence supports this, challenge donor policy reforms.
- ***Bringing the politics back in.*** Much of the emphasis on participation in PRSPs eschews genuine engagement with political realities and political actors such as members of parliament. The PRSP process has put technocratic and apolitical consensus-building ahead of a more political, economy-oriented debate of government priorities (although important discussions may take place with DFID Governance Advisers, drawing on the work of agencies like Oxfam as well as UK-based academics). Related to this, formulation of the PRSP has often failed to coincide with government planning cycles and has left the PRSP as a donor-led wish-list rather than a set of poverty reduction policies embedded in domestic political and planning processes. However, at the same time, vital and unprecedented new spaces have been opened up by this new commitment to participation. Oxfam and partners are keen to ensure the opportunity for participation is maximised, while continuing to question the apolitical discourse being promoted. We need constantly to keep in mind that rights and genuine policy making can only be the product of intense political debate.
- ***Gender equality.*** There is continuing evidence that all Oxfam GB Regions, and most programmes, are investing in integrating a consideration of gender issues into their programmes. However, a lot more could be done. Many programmes reported that they felt gender mainstreaming was difficult to implement, and this was discussed at length at the global Right to be Heard meeting in January 2003. One outcome of this has been establishing a community of practice to jointly develop programmes and learning on gender budgeting in Yemen, Uganda and the UK, to move on from training and awareness raising to actual gendered budget analysis and advocacy. It is felt that by keeping this focused we will be able to develop best practice to be shared across the programme. A global strategy also exists on gender and PRSPs as part of the Oxfam

International PRSP initiative, which should also help to address the challenges in bringing gender completely into our Right to be Heard programming and advocacy.

- **Implementing a rights-based approach.** We shall continue to clarify our thinking on a rights-based approach and how this could strengthen our analysis and actions in relation to 'duty bearers' and their accountability to poor and marginalized people. A community of practice has been established linking innovative work in this area in the UK and Malawi programmes, with the intention to share lessons across the programme.
- **A long term, strategic approach needed.** Engagement of civil society in Poverty Reduction Strategy processes has had to move quickly to keep pace with international agendas, so responses have often had to be reactive. A more strategic approach by civil society agencies needs to be developed in the future and, through Oxfam International's joint work on PRSPs, we are seeking to make some progress on this area ourselves. Making institutions accountable to poor people requires years of systematic work before tangible improvements in people's lives are achieved. We need to continue to pay attention to issues of quality in civil society participation, gender and diversity, open discussion over macro-economic fundamentals and monitoring policy implementation and budgets.
- **Co-ordination and linking with work on other SCOs.** We judge that better co-ordination and linking with work on other Strategic Change Objectives, especially concerning the changes we want to see on education and trade, could strengthen our overall programme impact.
- **Accountability of civil society organisations to those they seek to represent.** As civil society organisations, including International NGOs, engage in more advocacy and campaigning to influence policies and practices, they face new challenges in ensuring their accountability to those they seek to represent. Initiatives that we are now taking, including developing minimum standards for our relationships with partners and their participatory practices within programmes, as described earlier, aim to help ensure that we, and those we work with, consistently demonstrate good practice in our accountability to people living in poverty.

5 DFID and Oxfam GB partnership

Partnership in the UK

There has been significant dialogue and engagement on major areas of policy:

- **On trade issues**, Oxfam meets regularly with the Department of Trade and Industry and DFID, often together with other NGOs, to discuss a wide range of issues, in particular the TRIPS Agreement, the WTO Singapore issues (i.e. investment, competition policy, transparency in government procurement and trade facilitation) and agriculture. Oxfam attends the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) consultation meetings on EU Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) reform and has discussed proposals on CAP reform with other DEFRA and Government officials in London and Brussels. On the Singapore issues, Oxfam has campaigned as part of the Trade Justice Movement too, in order to influence the UK Government's position.
- **On EU policy**, Oxfam's representative was spokesperson until January 2003 for BOND's European Policy Group in regular NGO-DFID EU Department meetings, discussing aid issues, development policy and the EU draft constitution. Oxfam continues to be an active member of the group. With BOND, or as Oxfam, we have kept the UK Government up-to-date on our concerns on the latest draft of the EU Constitution, by sending letters to the Prime Minister, the Foreign Secretary and senior UK civil servants in London and Brussels. Oxfam represents NGOs on DFID's EU research budget steering committee. We have also been presenting ideas for international development priorities for the UK government for its EU presidency in 2005.
- **On poverty reduction strategies, empowerment of people living in poverty and World Bank and IMF policy**, collaboration has been strengthened since the establishment of DFID's new Policy Division. Strong alliances have been formed with the Poverty Analysis and Monitoring Team and the Macroeconomics Team. In particular there was close collaboration in relation to the conference on Poverty and Social Impact Analysis that DFID organised with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the Netherlands in October 2003. A meeting between DFID and NGOs after the World Bank/IMF annual meetings was also very constructive and Oxfam is now working with the Bretton Woods Project and DFID to make these meetings (involving DFID Policy Division and International Financial Institutions Department, the Treasury and NGOs) a regular fixture in the coming year. At a joint meeting earlier in the year, NGOs and DFID agreed to set-up a learning workshop about civil society engagement regarding government budgets and budget monitoring but this has not yet happened. Oxfam produced a paper on the role of the IMF in low-income countries and the need for consideration of the poverty impact of macroeconomic reforms. This helped influence IMF thinking along the lines the UK Government has also been pursuing. With other NGOs, Oxfam has sought to persuade the World Bank and IMF to recognise the role that debt relief plays in financing the Millennium Development Goals and ensure that debt sustainability analysis takes account of this.
- **On humanitarian and conflict issues**, there has been some discussion during the year about possible stronger collaboration in the area of disaster preparedness. Progress on this has been slow, partly as a result of CHAD's own review of its policy and work this year. Areas of interest that might be explored further include: (i) influencing others to bring about policy and practice change, (ii) linking preparedness with mitigation through development work, (iii) development and dissemination of tools that mainstream disaster reduction work, (iv) how best to replicate good projects (v) advocacy on disaster preparedness within our own organisations.

There has been some discussion too about collaboration regarding conflict reduction work and DFID has recently commissioned Oxfam to research the effects of arms

exports on poverty and development. A CHAD adviser presented a paper and participated at Oxfam GB's workshop to discuss our draft Strategic Framework for Conflict Reduction and the head of CHAD participated in Oxfam's Humanitarian Seminar later in the year. Oxfam was part of the consultation group and contributed to a conference on "*Integrating small arms and light weapons controls into development programmes*", organised by DFID in partnership with Wilton Park, the University of Bradford, and Saferworld.

Oxfam has highlighted forgotten emergencies and humanitarian needs through its report, "*Beyond the Headlines*", and has campaigned for a pro-poor focus for aid. We decided not to accept DFID funding for any humanitarian work during the Iraq war, in order to maintain independence. More recently, Oxfam has campaigned to prevent aid resources being diverted from poverty reduction programmes in developing and middle-income countries to Iraq. We are concerned by DFID's scaling-back or withdrawal from countries we consider to be strategic for the achievement of pro-poor trade reform and other key development challenges. Many of these same countries also continue to have issues of accountability and human rights that could usefully be addressed through support by the international donor community.

- ***Beyond the PPA objectives***, there are a number of significant areas of engagement with DFID. On education, Oxfam works closely with Action Aid and Save the Children in the UK, for example in the management of the Commonwealth Education Fund set up by the UK government and in lobbying on education issues. Oxfam has consistently given feedback on the education Fast Track Initiative (FTI), producing policy papers, progress reports and lobbying ahead of each World Bank and IMF meeting and FTI donor meeting. Together with the University of London Institute of Education, Oxfam was awarded a DFID research grant on "*Beyond Access: Gender, Education and Development*"; involvement of DFID staff in the UK and the regions has developed well around the seminar series in this first year. On health, discussion continues on access to medicines, including TRIPs reform and the Global Fund. There is discussion about DFID's HIV/AIDS strategy and DFID funded the publication of a book on HIV/AIDS mainstreaming, jointly produced by Action Aid, Save the Children and Oxfam. On Development Education, DFID has co-funded "*Get Global*" and "*Developing Citizenship*" alongside Oxfam and other NGOs, working to embed education for global citizenship in formal education. Oxfam also continues to work alongside DFID to influence key stakeholders (eg the Department for Education and Skills and the General Teaching Council) about the necessity of education that builds understanding of, and support for, development.

More generally, Oxfam has welcomed the two meetings DFID organised to introduce its new Policy Division and discuss areas of collaboration with NGOs. As already mentioned in relation to the Poverty Analysis and Monitoring Team and the Macroeconomics Team, collaboration has been strengthened already in some areas as a result of engagement with the new Policy Division and we welcome this.

Partnership in the Regions

The level of collaboration and dialogue between DFID and Oxfam GB at a regional and country level varies enormously. A number of different factors contribute to this: commonality of policy and programme interests, funding relationships and a variety of organisational features. Generally, we see a constructive relationship with examples of good discussion at a policy level, space for constructive criticism of one another and collaboration in influencing others.

□ **Consultation and policy dialogue**

In a number of countries, Oxfam has taken part in consultations about Country Assistance Plans (CAPs) or has been involved in other planning processes. This has included engagement with CAP processes in Viet Nam, Ethiopia and Rwanda, discussion of DFID's Regional Strategy Paper for the Caribbean and discussion about plans for Burma and Cambodia. DFID has been eager to involve Oxfam in their Country Strategic Review for the Palestinian Territories and for Burma, to name just two examples.

Oxfam welcomes the opportunities these processes have provided to discuss areas of common interest as well as to raise issues of concern, e.g. in the Caribbean about the geographical focus proposed and weaknesses in addressing gender. With the CAP process, however, there is a feeling that timetables and decision-making points have not always been clear, with consultations sometimes appearing superficial and aimed at validation of already decided direction.

□ **Influencing others and learning**

Oxfam has appreciated DFID's support in influencing others, e.g. in Sierra Leone, DFID has been helpful in advocacy with senior government representatives to influence the government's NGO policy.

There are also examples of good collaboration with DFID in innovative programming and a commitment to learning from this. This has been the case in Kenya over a long period, particularly in relationship to work with pastoralist communities. Oxfam has appreciated the ten-year funding DFID committed to the Wajir Pastoralist Development Programme (1993-2003). The final review of this programme took place during 2003, with DFID's involvement, as has been the case throughout the programme. DFID also supported innovative 'cash for work' programming in Wajir and Turkana as part of a drought recovery programme in 2001/02. DFID supported learning from this through an evaluation, a workshop for donors, NGOs and others, and the production of three DFID 'Key sheets' on "*Drought Recovery in Support of Sustainable Livelihoods*".

□ **Commonality of programme interests**

In some countries there is a good relationship based on common programming interests, with this often leading to a funding relationship too. For instance, this is the case in Yemen, where there is good collaboration on the PRSP process and DFID is funding work on PRSP monitoring. DFID has been supporting the Civil Society Capacity Building programme in the English Speaking Caribbean and results from the Output to Purpose Review (OPR), carried out with all participating partners and DFID country programme officers, were very positive. In Indonesia, Oxfam's role as a convenor of some national civil society organisations led DFID to encourage submission of two additional Right to be Heard proposals, one related to national PRSP processes.

Collaboration on humanitarian programming is widespread, usually with a good degree of shared analysis and approach. However, on occasions DFID has challenged Oxfam's analysis, e.g. disputing Oxfam's baseline data and analysis about the amount of food in-country in Ethiopia, and not accepting that there was a food crisis in Eritrea. DFID has also rejected humanitarian proposals where it judged activities did not focus on real emergency needs. We understand DFID is currently undertaking further research on humanitarian programme issues and we would welcome the opportunity to discuss this work further.

We support DFID's desire to collaborate more with us on conflict reduction work, as agreed at last year's PPA review meeting. Oxfam staff in West Africa are concerned that DFID has been slow to generate programme and funding strategies for the various

sectors within its Conflict Reduction Pool. Despite considerable discussion on a proposal for a Regional conflict reduction programme in West Africa, ultimately DFID felt unable to support it. Oxfam is currently reviewing its conflict work in the region in light of DFID's comments on the programme there, and will be working with local DFID staff to develop the programme further.

□ ***Organisational and policy issues affecting collaboration***

In some places, decentralisation of DFID's operations has facilitated closer collaboration. For instance, in Oxfam's CAMEXCA Region, the relationship with DFID has been strengthened through the decentralised offices of the British Development Division in the Caribbean. Lack of proximity, on the other hand, can discourage the building of a relationship, as mentioned last year. Oxfam's South Asia Regional Management Centre has not been pro-active in developing its relationship with DFID, but we hope that by moving the Management Centre from Dhaka to Delhi in 2004, Oxfam staff can develop stronger co-ordination with regional donors, including DFID.

As mentioned last year, the commitment of individuals within DFID and Oxfam is often a crucial factor in building strong relationships; staff changes can therefore affect collaboration between our two organisations. More generally, staff changes are likely to affect collaboration in the short term, and this has been the case in Uganda where it has proved difficult to arrange meetings to discuss the country PPA.

Oxfam regional staff have sometimes found it difficult to identify whom it is appropriate to talk to in DFID and in other Government Departments. It would be good to discuss this further with DFID PPA staff and to seek their advice on the best contacts.

DFID's policy of budget support to country governments, together with general low staffing levels, may act as a further constraint to developing long-term, deep engagement with INGOs, especially at a country level, and we are concerned by the limitations there may be on civil society engagement more broadly. Oxfam recognises DFID is very open to debate and discussion on policy and programme issues with British INGOs. We would like to share experiences with DFID and discuss the best ways of developing networks, tools and staff to engage with local NGOs and CSOs.

We would welcome discussion about how DFID sees INGOs, such as ourselves, working within the DFID model of sector reform and budget support. Oxfam recognises that an important factor in our future funding relationship with DFID beyond the PPA will be our ability to win tenders and effectively manage large, sub-contracted programmes. As we continue to strengthen our management performance in relation to large programmes, we would like to consider with DFID where large sub-contracted programmes might be an appropriate funding mechanism in relation to our shared objectives and Oxfam's strategies for bringing about change and widespread impact.

Management of the PAA

The BOAG Evaluation Group has continued to be a useful forum for discussion of monitoring and evaluation against strategic objectives. Staff from DFID's Information and Civil Society Department participated in the workshop the BOAG group held in December 2002 to discuss our progress in this area. Oxfam has appreciated the flexibility DFID has given us to experiment with ways of reviewing and reporting against the PPA.

Appendix A Oxfam GB's Programme Impact Reporting process

Oxfam GB's impact reporting process seeks to support both learning and accountability. We want it to help us learn with partners and beneficiaries, and across Oxfam, how to improve what we do and to be able to share this learning with others. It is also important in terms of accountability to those whom we seek to support, to those who support us and within Oxfam.

A global Programme Impact Report is prepared once a year. It seeks to look at achievements and weaknesses in the programme at that time, brought about by actions, not just in the previous year, but perhaps started some years before. The report draws from similar reports prepared for each of Oxfam's eight Regions, the UK Poverty Programme, Campaigns and Policy Division and the Humanitarian Department. These in turn draw from Programme/Project Impact Reports, written by programme staff for a selection of programmes/projects. Findings from recent reviews and evaluations, often involving external consultants, and other evaluative material, also inform the impact reporting process.

The process of Programme Impact Reporting by programme staff was introduced four years ago and we have kept the basic assessment questions⁴ the same over this period, to allow staff to become familiar and confident with them. In general, greater confidence is developing and, alongside this, a much greater clarity about what we need to do to strengthen our assessments. For instance, while the involvement of beneficiaries and partners in our impact assessments is certainly increasing, many staff see this as an area for improvement. The process is also becoming increasingly valued for the learning it can generate, but here too we know we can improve and front line staff and managers are identifying ways to do this. Overall, there is a better quality of analysis in both Programme/Project Impact Reports and in the Regional and Departmental reports this year.

A major challenge in impact reporting is to understand and explain different actors' *contribution* to change. Oxfam works in partnership and alliance with others and many other forces also influence whether the changes we want to see are achieved. When reporting "successes" in relation to advocacy and campaigning objectives, it is often particularly difficult to tease out the specific influence of individual actors. It is difficult too to retain much description of actions or programme-level analysis when we synthesise achievements across our global programme. While we want to celebrate positive change, we do not want to claim undue influence from our work with others! The growing debate among donors and development actors about *development effectiveness*, and the need to understand the contributions of different actors, is welcome in this regard.

While we are getting better at drawing out some of the weaknesses in programmes and also where change is fragile or has not been sustained, we are not yet capturing sufficiently the unintended impacts – both positive and negative - associated with programmes.

Each year, we set criteria to guide the selection of project and programme work for assessment and then documentation in Programme/Project Impact Reports (PIRs). In general, well-established work is assessed. Work will often still be in progress but some projects will have recently closed. We are not yet looking back at work completed several years ago to try and understand long-term impact. We currently have a minimum requirement that 25 per cent of the value of the programme is covered in the Programme/Project Impact Reports. Because of this, we also decide which Strategic Change Objectives (SCOs) we will focus particular attention on in the project/programme-level assessments in a given year, in order to ensure reasonable coverage of some areas of our work. Regional and Departmental Impact Reports cover all the SCOs that a

⁴ We assess: 1. Impact on the lives of poor women, men, girls and boys; 2. Changes in policies, practices, ideas and beliefs; 3. Progress towards enhanced gender equity; 4. Beneficiary involvement; 5. The likely sustainability of the changes achieved. 6. "Cost effectiveness" (not mandatory). Finally, from the assessment: 7. Learning, conclusions and actions to be taken.

Region/Department is working on, but to different degrees, depending on the evaluative material available from the PIRs and other sources.

When assessing programmes and projects, staff are asked to score the level of change/progress in relation to the first five assessment questions (see footnote 4). A four-point scale is used. This is useful in forcing judgements to be made and for encouraging debate in groups and teams. The scores can also be helpful for making preliminary selections of projects for further analysis of specific issues. However, although there was the desire in previous years to compare scores between regions, between SCOs and over time, there are too many variables for this to be done reliably. We have discontinued attempts at global statistical analysis.

In general, our intention is to look at change brought about by actions over a number of years. But we recognise that the title of the process – Annual Impact Reporting - is confusing, and that some staff still understand it to mean that we report each year on the impact of just the previous year. Having said this, moving forward, we need to debate the balance of what we do want to report on. For instance, for new areas of work requiring concentrated effort (e.g. the war in Iraq, the food crisis in Southern Africa and the new Make Trade Fair Campaign last year), it seems appropriate to report on achievements to date, even if work is continuing and impact will need to be assessed several years hence.

Impact reporting at the end of 2002/03

For the assessment at the end of 2002/03, we chose a Right to a Sustainable Livelihood, Saving and Protecting Lives and a Right to be Heard for particular focus in Programme/Project Impact Reporting. Regions and Departments could choose whether or not to assess other areas through PIRs, and indeed we find that there was some coverage of all Strategic Change Objectives at the end of last year. There were 271 Programme/Project Impact Reports written, covering 436 projects and representing 38 per cent of the value of the total programme. Twenty per cent of the reports cover work that began more than five years ago. Another 31 per cent cover work which began between two and five years ago⁵. Almost three-quarters (197) of the PIRs submitted had a major focus on a Right to a Sustainable Livelihood, Saving and Protecting Lives and a Right to be Heard.

In bringing together Oxfam GB's global Programme Impact Report, we drew from the analysis contained in the Regional and Departmental Impact Reports and referred back to some individual PIRs. In seeking to draw out achievements, difficulties and learning at this level, we are conscious that it is easy to lose sight of the complexity and diversity of our work across the world. One event that helped a group of us explore some of this complexity was an 'Impact Day', which brought together programme officers and partners, advisers, senior managers, the Chair of Oxfam GB's Council and a donor representative. Most of the day was spent discussing five case studies, enabling participants to explore the meaning of impact in the context of each project presented, explore ways of working and difficulties and discuss how we make assessments of our work. Input from this event helped finalise the Report.

⁵ This is probably an underestimate of the longer-term work being assessed, because project numbers are sometimes changed and this makes it difficult to track how long programmes and projects have been active.

Appendix B Oxfam's Aims and Strategic Change Objectives, with a breakdown of Oxfam GB programme expenditure for 2002/03

Oxfam's Aims and Strategic Change Objectives (SCOs)

Aim 1: Right to a Sustainable Livelihood

SCO 1.1: People living in poverty will achieve food and income security.

SCO 1.2: People living in poverty will have access to secure paid employment, labour rights and improved working conditions.

Aim 2: Right to Basic Social Services

SCO 2.1: People living in poverty will achieve tangible improvements in their health, through increased access to basic health services, clean water and sanitation.

SCO 2.2: All children living in poverty will achieve their right to a good quality basic education, and poor adults will have access to sufficient educational opportunities to help overcome their poverty.

Aim 3: Right to Life and Security

SCO 3.1: Fewer people die, fall sick and suffer deprivation as a result of armed conflict or natural disasters.

SCO 3.2: Fewer people will suffer personal or communal violence, forced displacement or armed conflict.

Aim 4: Right to be Heard

SCO 4.1: All poor and marginalised people will have an effective voice in influencing decisions affecting their lives, will achieve their civil and political rights and will enjoy equal status with others.

Aim 5: Right to Equity: Gender and Diversity

SCO 5.1: Women and men will enjoy equal rights.

SCO 5.2: Ethnic, cultural and other groups oppressed or marginalized by reasons of their identity will enjoy equal rights and status with other people.

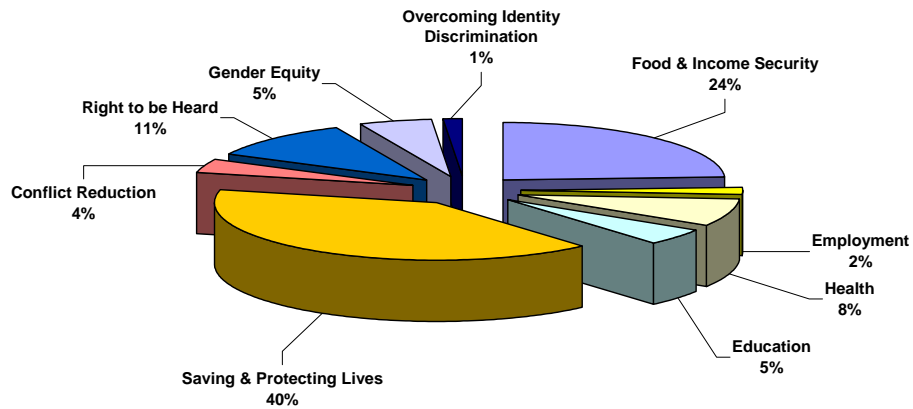
Breakdown of Oxfam GB's programme expenditure by SCO in 2002/03

Oxfam GB's total programme expenditure across the organisation in 2002/03 was £112m, up from £109m in 2001/02. The balance of expenditure between Strategic Change Objectives is shown in the chart below. There are big variations between regions in proportional spend on SCOs, in line with our strategic plan, and also reflecting the different needs for large humanitarian responses.

As a result of the transition to new accounting procedures in 2001/02, it is difficult to make comparisons of the breakdown in grant expenditure between 2001/02 and 2002/03. However, the big variations between years in regional spend, largely associated with responding to humanitarian crises, are worthy of note. For example, the overall grant

expenditure⁶ in Southern Africa rose last year to £15.8m, more than twice the expenditure in 2001/02, mainly as a result of the food crisis across the region. By contrast, overall grant expenditure fell by about a third in both South Asia (to £10.2m in 2002/03) and the Horn, East and Central Africa (to £14.7m), mainly again because of changes in expenditure associated with humanitarian crises.

Distribution of Expenditure across SCOs - 2002/03



⁶ Note that grant expenditure only is being used, because this is where we can relate shifts in spend between years to SCOs. Expenditure on programmes managed by partners and programmes managed by Oxfam is included in these figures.

Appendix C Acronyms and Abbreviations

ALNAP	Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance in Humanitarian Action
DEC	Disasters Emergency Committee
DFID	Department for International Development (UK)
EC	European Commission
ECHO	European Commission – Humanitarian Aid Office
EU	European Union
HIV/AIDS	Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
IMF	International Monetary Fund
INTRAC	The International NGO Training and Research Centre
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
OCHA	United Nations Office for the Co-ordination of Humanitarian Affairs
PIR	Programme/Project Impact Report
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
PSIA	Poverty and Social Impact Analysis
SCO	Strategic Change Objective
TRIPS	Trade Related aspects of Intellectual Property Rights
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNHCR	United Nations High Commission for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children’s Fund
WTO	World Trade Organisation

