



IN PRACTICE: GENDER JUSTICE IN RESILIENT DEVELOPMENT

Sharing programme learning from Africa,
South Asia and Central America

In December 2017, Oxfam ran its first-ever 'Gender Justice in Resilience Challenge' – an initiative to promote learning about how gender justice is successfully integrated into resilience programming. The Challenge drew responses from Oxfam teams in 19 countries. This document presents a selection of the submitted case studies that best illustrate Oxfam's approach.



CONTENTS



THE CHALLENGE

4

OXFAM'S VISION OF RESILIENT DEVELOPMENT

5

FOUR KEY STEPS FOR EMBEDDING GENDER JUSTICE IN RESILIENT DEVELOPMENT

6

Step 1: Analyse and Differentiate

Taking a gender perspective in Vulnerability and Risk Assessment, Chad 8

Understanding the unequal distribution of unpaid care work to inform resilient programming, Nigeria 9

Promoting women's leadership in disaster response, Sri Lanka 10

Step 2: Challenge Systems and Norms

Building community resilience through access to microfinance for rural women, Senegal 12

Building safer and more equal communities, Democratic Republic of Congo 13

Step 3: Work with the right people

Increasing women farmers' resilience by improving access to weather forecast information, Uganda 15

Enhancing incomes, empowerment and opportunities for domestic workers, Bangladesh 16

Step 4: Monitor and Demonstrate Change

Women create safer communities after disaster, Cuba 18

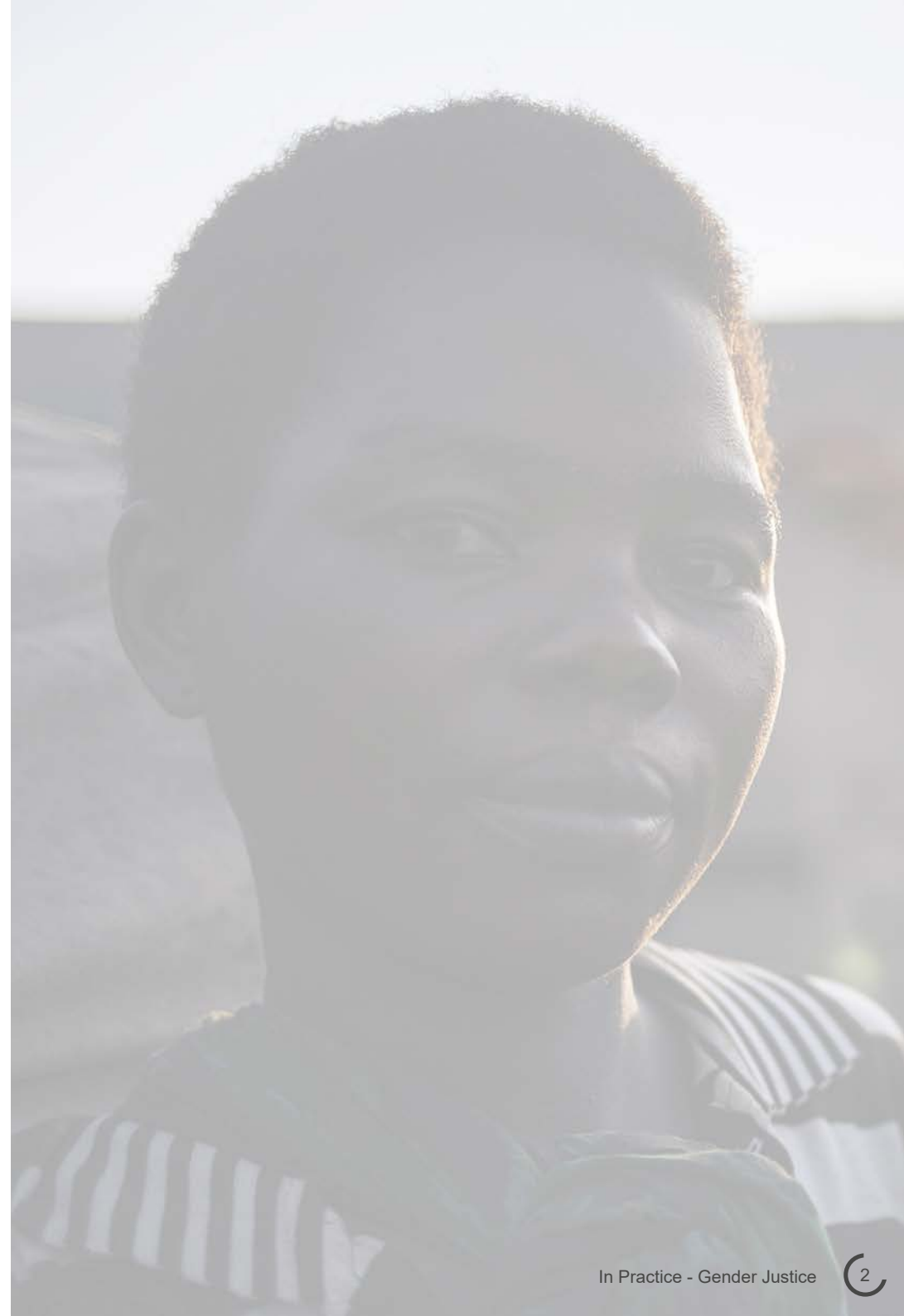
Women lead the way in climate change adaptation, Ghana 19

TIPS FOR PRACTITIONERS

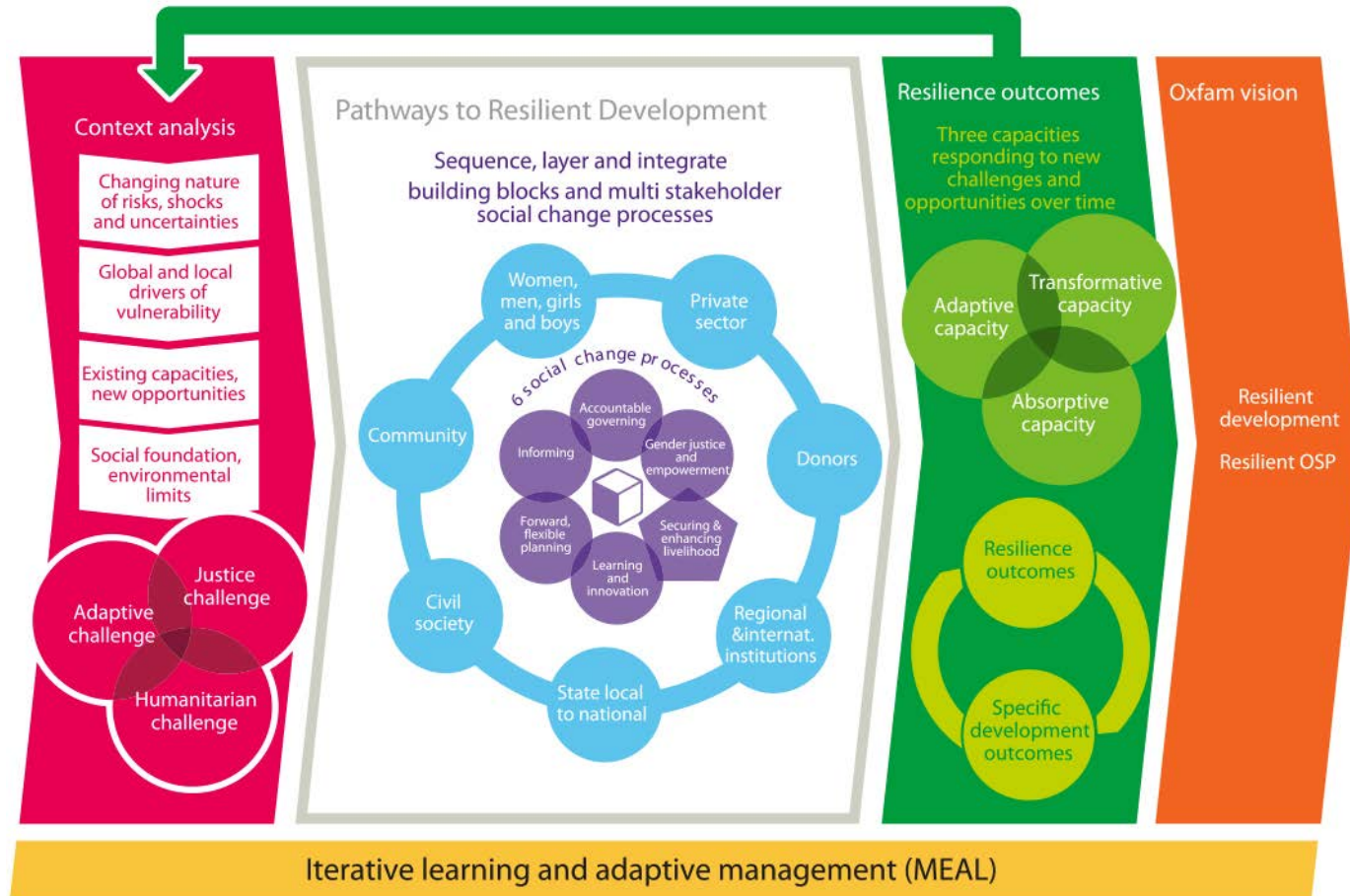
20

CONCLUSION AND NOTES

21



Oxfam's Framework for Resilient Development

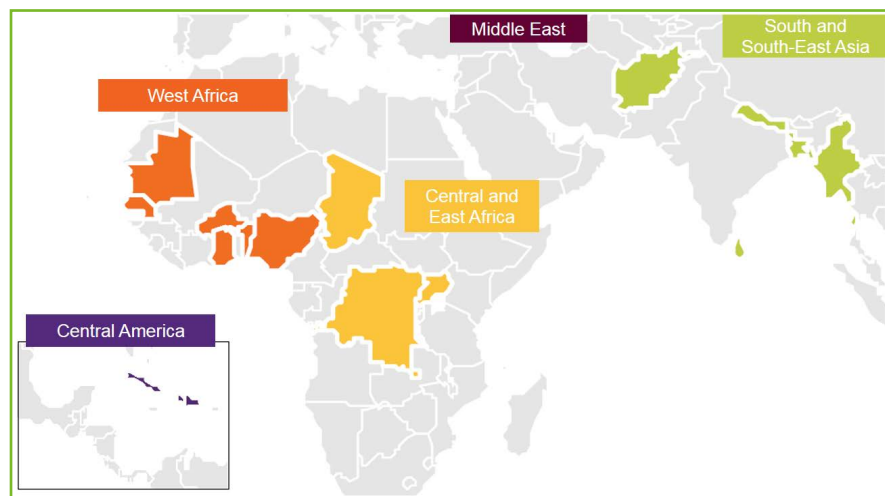


OSP = Oxfam's Strategic Plan

THE CHALLENGE

The case studies presented in this paper are drawn from the responses to Oxfam's 'Gender Justice in Resilience Challenge', which was launched by Oxfam's Resilience Knowledge Hub in 2017. This internal knowledge-sharing initiative aimed to identify practices that support the meaningful participation of women in resilience initiatives while also addressing structural inequalities.

The Challenge enabled Oxfam country, regional and global staff to share information about the tools and strategies they use to tackle drivers of inequality and unequal gender relations in their work to strengthen communities' resilience. In total, 25 case studies were submitted by 19 countries² (see map, below). Nine of these were selected and are presented in this paper to help illustrate Oxfam's approach to gender justice as a core component of resilient development. By sharing practices and experiences from these very different contexts, we aim to inspire programme teams and support them in their efforts to build resilient pathways that foster gender justice.



Countries that submitted case studies in response to the Challenge



OXFAM'S VISION OF RESILIENT DEVELOPMENT

Oxfam defines resilience as **‘the ability of women and men to realize their rights and improve their wellbeing despite shocks, stresses and uncertainty’**. The Oxfam [Framework for Resilient Development](#)³ recognizes that the contexts we work in are increasingly characterized by natural and human-made risks, widening inequalities, rapid demographic change, and more frequent environmental and weather-related shocks and stresses linked to climate change. Oxfam seeks to build communities’ capacities to proactively and positively manage this change, in ways that contribute to ‘a just world without poverty’.

Building absorptive, adaptive and transformative capacities

According to Oxfam’s Framework for Resilient Development, three capacities need to be enhanced to achieve resilient development outcomes:

- **Absorptive capacity:** This is the capacity to ‘bounce back’ after a shock. It involves anticipating, planning for, coping with and recovering from specific, known shocks and short-term stresses.⁴
- **Adaptive capacity:** Adaptation means making adjustments in order to better manage or adjust to a changing situation. Adaptive capacity is about flexibility, and the ability to make incremental changes on an ongoing basis through a process of continuous adjusting, learning and innovation.⁵
- **Transformative capacity:** Risk and vulnerability are not equally distributed in societies and the global community. They are maintained and perpetuated by powerful vested interests which marginalize and exclude certain groups based on categories like gender, age, ethnicity and religion. Transformative capacity is about addressing the structural or root causes that create risk and vulnerability, and represents a fundamental rethink of development pathways in order to eradicate poverty and inequality.⁶



Why gender justice is critical for resilient development

Resilient development is only possible when gender-based inequalities are transformed and women and men can fully enjoy their rights. Oxfam has therefore explicitly included gender justice and empowerment in its Framework for Resilient Development. As an organization, we aim to integrate gender justice and women’s rights into all that we do.

Ignoring gender dynamics and inequalities in our programmes can lead to unintended consequences, and risks harming the people we work with.

Gender-based considerations – like any other power-based considerations – need to be systematically integrated into the design of development, humanitarian and campaign initiatives. This can in turn open up new opportunities for countries and regions to engage in gender justice initiatives while working towards resilient development outcomes. For further information, please refer to Oxfam’s [Gender Justice in Resilience](#) guide.⁷

In practice, however, there is a knowledge gap in how to design quality programmes that invest in gender justice as a core component of resilient development. This document maps out emerging good practices in this area, providing examples of interventions and tools that enable us: a) to better understand the contexts that shape women’s, men’s, girls’ and boys’ ability to build resilience; and b) to develop approaches that tackle the root causes of gender-based barriers that keep people vulnerable.

Below, we outline four key steps that are necessary to integrate a gender justice approach into resilient development programmes. The country case studies are then presented in relation to these key steps and our learning on them.

FOUR KEY STEPS FOR EMBEDDING GENDER JUSTICE IN RESILIENT DEVELOPMENT



STEP 1: Analyse and differentiate

Adopting a gender justice approach to resilience means recognizing that **women, men, girls and boys have different vulnerabilities – and that we need to understand the causes of this through comprehensive context analysis.**

The case studies illustrate how gendered analysis builds a nuanced **understanding of the root causes** that create and maintain inequalities. Examples include bringing a gendered perspective into the Vulnerability and Risk Assessment in Chad, the emergency response in Sri Lanka and the Rapid Care Analysis in Nigeria.



STEP 2: Challenge systems and norms

While immediate needs must be met, Oxfam's approach to resilient development has a clear intention to challenge the systemic causes of vulnerability, inequality and unequal power relations.

The case studies from DRC and Senegal demonstrate how Oxfam is working to **shift discriminatory and harmful social norms, build women's leadership and transform unequal systems** as part of building absorptive, adaptive and transformative capacities.



STEP 3: Work with the right people

Engaging and partnering with diverse stakeholders – including unusual allies and often-excluded groups – helps to ensure that social change processes are defined by and led from within communities. Who we engage with determines whether we challenge or simply reproduce existing power structures.

This is illustrated by the examples from Uganda, where a unique approach to partnership helped advocate for inclusive and gender-responsive weather forecasting, and Bangladesh, where the project engaged with local to national stakeholders on the rights of domestic workers, helping to bring about change from household to policy level.



STEP 4: Monitor and demonstrate change

Defining specific gender justice outcomes when designing MEAL (monitoring, evaluation, accountability and learning) systems **helps capture how gender-sensitive and gender-transformative your intervention has been.** MEAL systems need to build on theories of change that explicitly show how gender and power-based differences will be addressed.

The case studies from Ghana and Cuba show how MEAL systems can be used as an entry point for embedding gender justice in programmes. In Ghana, the project's MEAL framework included specific gender outcomes and indicators, and the impact evaluation considered intra-household dynamics; while in Cuba, women are leading on monitoring recovery efforts and community assessments.



STEP 1: Analyse and differentiate

Adopting a gender justice approach to resilience means recognizing that women, men, girls and boys have different vulnerabilities, and building a picture of these from the outset.

Vulnerability is anchored in structural inequalities, one of the most pervasive of which is gender inequality. In order to build a **gendered perspective of the context**⁹ it is vital to ensure that the tools and methodologies we use adhere to gender justice and safeguarding principles. They should also embrace inclusion, participation, confidentiality and agency. Through a gender analysis, Oxfam and its partners can identify discriminatory social norms, practices, beliefs and laws which are inhibiting resilient development pathways (e.g. adaptive livelihood strategies that can only be taken up by men). The process of engaging women can in itself help to build women's confidence and encourage their participation in decision making. This is likely to support broader shifts in gender power relations in their households and communities.

Interventions that ignore the gender dimension risk exacerbating women and girls' existing vulnerabilities.

It is important to note that when assessing the power dynamics in a system, gender is not the only consideration. The intersection and interaction of different social identities, e.g. gender, status, ethnicity, class, age, religion and disability, contribute to the **underlying causes of people's vulnerability** as well as their resilience capacities.¹⁰ Context analysis must therefore highlight how specific groups are exposed to different risks and uncertainties, and are affected differently by them. It should also identify the distinct capacities of individuals that are often shaped, and limited, by systems of power and privilege.

The examples below demonstrate the importance of understanding the intersectionality of risk in order to tailor our activities and ensure we are working towards truly transformative change.

What have we learnt?

'A first indicator of NGO engagement with gender issues in resilience projects is whether or not they carry out a comparative gender analysis.'
BRACED working paper (2015)⁸



CHAD

TAKING A GENDER PERSPECTIVE IN VULNERABILITY AND RISK ASSESSMENT

The 2016 Climate Change Vulnerability Index ranked Chad as the country worst affected by climate change. It also revealed a concerning situation for women and girls, with high rates of maternal mortality, illiteracy and early marriage. Working together through the Trust Fund, Oxfam, CARE and Action against Hunger are contributing to more secure livelihoods in severely climate-affected areas. This includes anticipating and responding to new risks to help build communities' resilience.

To help support Oxfam and partners' context analysis, and to inform Local Development Plans, a Vulnerability and Risk Assessment (VRA)¹¹ was conducted in 2017. This methodology was chosen because it takes an inclusive approach which can improve communities' knowledge exchange, cooperation and social cohesion. The VRA process brings together actors from various governance levels and deliberately involves those whose voices usually go unheard – female heads of households, young people, and marginalized women and men. As such, the findings are relevant to and jointly owned by all participants.

The VRA analysed the effects of shocks or stresses according to gender, age and other aspects of social differentiation, e.g. livelihood type. The analysis was able to reveal the distinct and differentiated vulnerabilities and capacities of women, men, youth and children, thus highlighting the interplay between natural hazards, social norms and gendered/age-related behaviours. Understanding that these groups face different risks and are differently exposed to/affected by them is critical in shaping programme activities. The VRA process also reveals the important contributions women can make in reducing their own and others' vulnerability.

Four out of the 11 key risks identified were caused by gender-based discrimination. These were: low levels of schooling for girls; early marriage; reluctance to include women in decision making; and gender-based violence. The VRA findings were used to promote gender-transformative interventions, such as changing the composition of community governance groups to make them more representative, inclusive and gender-balanced. As a result, previously overlooked people can now have a say in decisions that affect them – a prerequisite of resilient development.



NIGERIA

UNDERSTANDING THE UNEQUAL DISTRIBUTION OF UNPAID CARE WORK TO INFORM RESILIENT PROGRAMMING

Nigeria is ranked 118 out of 164 on the Global Gender Gap Index, showing that economic participation, education, political empowerment and control of resources are still skewed in favour of men. Women do most of the unpaid care and domestic work, which often means that their contribution goes unmeasured and their participation in governance and decision-making processes is severely limited.

Women's disproportionate care workload also prevents them from developing the resilient capacities they need to cope with shocks and stresses. Oxfam is working with partners in Adamawa and Kebbi states to alleviate poverty, improve food security and build the resilience of the most vulnerable communities. The team has used Oxfam's Rapid Care Analysis (RCA)¹² and built alliances with key 'gatekeepers' (e.g. religious leaders, teachers) to shed light on care relationships, identify women's and men's work activities, and uncover gendered care patterns.

The RCA revealed deep-rooted religious and cultural norms and practices that undermine women's value in society and prevent them from participating in economic activities and decision making in their communities. The analysis showed that in some locations, women are not even allowed to talk in the presence of men or sit in a meeting with them.

By identifying the social norms that underpin perceptions of care and the different expectations of women and men, Oxfam was able to start a process of awareness raising and exploring potential solutions to address these issues. When both women and men see the reality of women's care workload and consider the benefits to the family and community of sharing unpaid care, it becomes easier to challenge the social norms that ascribe care roles to women. The process helped to build ownership among community members, including leaders, and increased their commitment to addressing the unfair distribution of care. Men were involved as advocates of change, and Muslim leaders acted as role models and spread messages on sharing care through sermons during Friday Prayers.



SRI LANKA

PROMOTING WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP IN DISASTER RESPONSE

Sri Lanka's vulnerability to climate-related disasters has been clear since the devastating effects of the 2004 tsunami, and in recent years the country has experienced numerous crises due to droughts, flooding and landslides. While these events have been more localized and low level, the disruption they cause to development cannot be underestimated. In 2017, floods triggered by the monsoon rains affected over 700,000 people in 15 districts. In Ratnapura, one of the three worst-affected districts, Oxfam was among the first agencies to carry out a gender assessment after the disaster.

In emergencies, when normal community structures and routines are severely disrupted, women and girls often face higher levels of vulnerability than others. These risks are deeply rooted in pre-existing gender-based inequalities within families and communities, which leave women with lower capacities, less autonomy and greater dependency. It is vital to incorporate a gender assessment as part of emergency response planning to ensure that activities are based on women's specific needs and are co-delivered by women themselves.

In the case of the Ratnapura flood response, the gender assessment uncovered serious protection and security issues that were specifically affecting women and girls' wellbeing in camps. For example, lighting was inadequate, no gender-segregated latrines or bathing facilities were available, and tents had zips that could be opened from the outside and windows that allowed passers-by to look in. Camp security was provided by male-only police surveillance, and there was no referral system to report cases of violence or abuse. Furthermore, Oxfam found that discriminatory social norms restricted women's roles to unpaid care and domestic work, limiting their opportunities to take part in decision making. This undermined women's ability to access humanitarian services, and created a clear gap between government service providers and women in affected communities.



Using this evidence, Oxfam started engaging with government partners – from the camp up to the national level – to propose an alternative emergency management model. Under this new model, women in Ratnapura would play a key leadership role in addressing camp and gender-related security issues.

Oxfam and its partners successfully pushed for the deployment of Women Development Officers in response operations and for the integration of gender minimum standards in national humanitarian policy and response plans.



STEP 2: Challenge systems and norms

Oxfam makes the case for an approach which challenges the systemic causes of vulnerability and inequality. This goes beyond a focus on women's basic needs, vulnerabilities and exclusion, and moves towards **'collective action capable of challenging fundamental inequalities'**.¹⁴

According to Oxfam's Framework for Resilient Development,¹⁵ projects' theories of change should combine short-term needs with mid-term and long-term strategic changes to address the key drivers of vulnerability and inequality. While we need to ensure that humanitarian principles continue to be met and people are supported to cope with today's problems, it is clear that recognizing and addressing the immediate needs of a community is not enough. Discriminatory social norms and unequal distributions of rights, power and resources are among the key drivers of vulnerability and inequality. In order to build truly resilient societies, it is therefore critical that NGOs adopt approaches that seek radical change in existing power relations.¹⁶

The examples below illustrate some of the ways that Oxfam and our partners are working towards this transformational shift by actively challenging and changing social norms and behaviours. They demonstrate how enabling women to participate in household and community decision making can bring benefits for the wider community. These include better nutrition, greater investment in community disaster risk management strategies, and increased income at household level.

What have we learnt?

'To improve people's quality of life, gender mainstreaming and resilience-building both need to be transformative. This means fundamentally changing power relations and recognising the societal structures that both undermine and constrain resilience.'
BRACED working paper (2015)¹³



SENEGAL

BUILDING COMMUNITY RESILIENCE THROUGH ACCESS TO MICROFINANCE FOR RURAL WOMEN

In Senegal, rural populations, and women in particular, lack access to modern agricultural equipment and to financial services, which are critical for livelihood investment and provide a safety net in times of crisis. As a result, men and women are struggling to sustain their economic activities and to cope with shocks and stresses. Oxfam is taking an innovative approach to increasing women's empowerment and enhancing their resilient capacities.

Senegal is one of the most stable countries in West Africa, yet more than half of its 12.5 million inhabitants live below the poverty line, and it is ranked 166th out of 199 countries in the UNDP's Human Development Index 2009. The Oxfam Savings for Change (SfC) programme, which has almost 700,000 group members across five countries, has a simple model: project teams train groups of women to save regularly, borrow from their group's fund, and repay loans with interest. In Senegal the SfC programme, which is implemented by the local NGO La Lumière, has enabled women to become key actors in the economic, social and political life of their community. The loans enable women to acquire productive assets, such as farming tools or livestock, that are traditionally owned only by men. This makes it easier for them to engage in income-generating activities, including rice and peanut farming. Thanks to the savings, women are able to improve the health of their families, as they can afford a greater variety of food.

The project uses financial inclusion as an entry point to disrupt the long-established belief that only men can be responsible for income generation and decision making in the household.

By enabling rural women to form savings groups, the project has developed women's absorptive and adaptive capacities to cope with shocks and stresses; for example, women are now able to invest in adaptive practices, such as the rehabilitation of boreholes. Women's greater economic power gives them more autonomy in making decisions on how household income should be spent. The programme promotes women's agency to exercise their rights and challenge the power dynamics that limit their access to resources and decision-making spaces. Women have created advocacy groups to call on local authorities to fulfil their rights, including the right to own land. By making these choices with long-term implications, women are laying the foundations of a more resilient future for their whole communities.



The project also aims to identify and challenge the discriminatory attitudes, perceptions and practices that have been holding women back, thereby preventing the community from reaching its full potential. It does so by engaging men in the fight for gender justice – sensitizing husbands and religious and traditional leaders to SfC's approach through awareness-raising sessions, so that they support the women in their communities. With the buy-in of their male counterparts, women's voices now have greater impact. As one SfC group member put it: 'Men can no longer make decisions in households without consulting women, because [now] the burdens of the family are shared.'

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO

BUILDING SAFER AND MORE EQUAL COMMUNITIES

After two decades of conflict, 71% of people in the DRC live below the poverty threshold. Women work in subsistence agriculture but receive a minimal share of the benefits. Due to structural gender and power inequalities they have limited access to land and markets, and little opportunity to make decisions at household or community level. These inequalities are compounded by the protection threats that women and their communities face, such as extortion, abduction, illegal detention, violence and forced labour. Oxfam has been operating in South Kivu since 2015, taking a gender justice approach to reduce women's exposure and vulnerability to these risks.

In countries where violence against women and girls is normalized and part of everyday life, it is very risky for women to speak up and challenge discriminatory cultural beliefs and traditions. The Oxfam project in South Kivu therefore takes an intentional transformative approach on gender/power dynamics and protection of human rights in its work on resilient livelihoods.

Through the project, farmers are increasing their incomes and building their resilience to the effects of climate change and conflict. The project enables farmers to improve their access to land, grow better quality and more marketable crops, create food stores and adopt soil conservation measures. It has also introduced a safety net mechanism which insures farmers against losses from crop failure, and has supported farmers to engage with authorities so they can influence change at local level. In an evaluation conducted in 2017, almost 70% of respondents reported having access to seed banks as a result of the project. The majority of those who have benefitted are women.

Oxfam has also conducted good governance trainings and activities to raise awareness on protection and justice issues, and set up Protection Committees that give women and their husbands a safe space to reflect on the problems that affect their safety and wellbeing, and come up with solutions which feed into community protection plans.



Although much effort and investment is still needed to continue challenging and changing the social norms that lie at the heart of gender inequality in the DRC, the project in South Kivu has achieved a breakthrough in terms of the way women are perceived and valued in the community. Interviews with male community members have shown the beginnings of a shift in mindsets, while women supported by the project have reported having more control over their own lives and greater confidence to participate in community decision making. Such shifts are the intermediate outcomes in the long-term transformative path, which is laid out in the project's theory of change.

Continual awareness-raising activities on gender justice, with the involvement of local authorities, security services and community protection structures, has been instrumental in getting men to recognize their roles and responsibilities in perpetuating gender imbalances and therefore in exacerbating women's poverty. Male community members are now recognizing that their female counterparts have the power and capacity to improve their lives. This is shown by the case of a village chief who, after keeping his wife out of household management and budgeting for many years, started to let her run the household and make decisions – challenging long-held beliefs and setting a positive example to other families.



STEP 3: Work with the right people

Oxfam's Framework for Resilient Development¹⁸ promotes an inclusive approach to stakeholder engagement and identifies six social change processes which support resilient development: 1) Informing; 2) Accountable governing; 3) Flexible and forward-looking planning; 4) Learning and innovation; 5) Securing and enhancing livelihoods; and 6) Empowerment and gender justice. As well as being a stand-alone change process, gender and women's empowerment is mainstreamed into each of the other processes to ensure that a 'gender lens' is applied to all the work we do.

These social change processes are driven by changes in attitudes, behaviours and ultimately practices. As such they are defined, led and monitored by a set of stakeholders. It is therefore critical to be aware of whose opinions and needs are incorporated. This requires a conscious decision to engage with stakeholders that traditionally have not been involved in communal development decisions by the authorities or those in positions of power.

This often means intentionally planning to involve groups which are often excluded, and considering which unusual allies can be brought on board. Inclusive methodology needs to be used both to decide what activities will be done and how they will be delivered. This will ensure that we include the most vulnerable and marginalized people, and that we do not inadvertently increase their work burdens and cause harm. For example, targeting women for livelihood activities without also supporting better sharing of domestic and unpaid care tasks only increases their overall workload.

As the following case studies demonstrate, this approach helps to ensure that a representative sample of the different experiences, needs, interests, capacities and perspectives of a community are heard by decision makers and influence programme implementation.

What have we learnt?

'Projects are never gender-neutral in the way they are designed... Projects assumed to follow gender-neutral approaches usually fail to address the specific needs of gender groups and the constraints they face, leading to their concerns being overlooked and the potential to increase existing inequalities.'
Leduc (2009)¹⁷



UGANDA

INCREASING WOMEN FARMERS' RESILIENCE BY IMPROVING ACCESS TO WEATHER FORECAST INFORMATION

Weather and climate information is essential to help farmers prepare for and adapt to changing weather patterns. Until recently, seasonal climate forecasts in Uganda used technical jargon and were only available in English. Most rural populations, and women in particular, were unable to access or understand the forecasts, or use the information to decide when to plant, harvest or protect their crops. Advocacy by Oxfam and partners resulted in the adoption of a government-led weather forecasting model that was specifically designed to reach rural women as well as men.

The Africa Climate Change Resilience Alliance (ACCRA) was an Oxfam-led, multi-agency consortium which operated in Uganda, Mozambique and Ethiopia from 2011 to 2016. It developed partnerships with various government actors to advocate for inclusive and gender-responsive climate change plans and policies. ACCRA and the Uganda National Meteorology Authority (UNMA) worked with other local and national government agencies to ensure that farmers could receive adequate, easy-to-understand weather forecasts and advice adapted to their needs.

To make sure the weather forecasts would reach all population groups, staff from ACCRA and UNMA initially researched how communities and households received information – taking into account gender and power balances. During focus group discussions, women explained that local community groups, markets and churches were their preferred spaces for receiving information, whereas men tended to use radios.

The findings led UNMA to change the way it disseminated its seasonal forecasts, to accommodate the different needs and preferences of the community groups, including women.



ACCRA then advocated at the national level to ensure that the new model became institutionalized. A task force with representatives from various government ministries, such as the National Planning Authority, Ministry of Local Government, and the Ministry of Water and Environment, as well as international NGOs and UN agencies, simplify the scientific forecasts and analyse what it means for agriculture, water, disaster risk reduction, education, health and transport. The regular weather forecast is then translated into the 56 languages spoken in Uganda – a process that is now supported by GiZ and USAID, thanks to ACCRA's advocacy.

Taking a strategic partnership approach and investing in systems that are embedded in national authorities and government ministries achieved sustainable gains around gender justice and resilience building. As well as supporting rural women to meet their immediate livelihood needs, the programme had a clear intention to influence social change processes, build alliances and engage diverse stakeholders. In doing so, it ensured that women and men farmers across Uganda have equal access to, understanding of, and ability to benefit from vital weather information – enabling them to monitor and respond to climate variations, improve food security and build their resilience to climate-related shocks and stresses.

BANGLADESH

ENHANCING INCOMES, EMPOWERMENT AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR DOMESTIC WORKERS

Domestic workers – 90% of whom are women and children – are among the most vulnerable groups in Bangladeshi society. Whether in the workplace or at home, their lives are characterized by exploitation, physical/mental abuse and sexual harassment. They receive low wages and lack rights such as a secure contract, minimum wage and social protection. The absence of legal protection and recognition of these rights, both by the families they work for and the state, traps these workers in a cycle of poverty and marginalization. Working with a range of allies, an Oxfam project has succeeded in bringing about change from household to policy level that will help to protect domestic workers nationwide.

Oxfam's project aims to support the development of more resilient livelihoods for domestic workers. It created partnerships with the Domestic Worker Right Network, local NGOs, health, legal and human rights organizations, as well as the police and the private sector. Activities include creating safe spaces where domestic workers can discuss challenges and the change they want to see, as well as helping them to access to health, legal and protection services.

The project holds regular meetings and demonstrations at local level with the participation of trade union leaders, domestic worker placement agencies, employers and other stakeholders, to raise awareness of the injustices domestic workers face. Issues such as wages, working conditions, violence and health are discussed, and measures taken to solve the problems. This includes engaging employers as 'change agents'.

The programme has encouraged male actors at various levels to become advocates for domestic workers' rights. This includes engaging with the husbands of domestic workers to raise their awareness of women's disproportionate care workload and the impact of violence against women. This has marked the beginning of important changes at household level and in the wider community. Men have gradually become more supportive of their wives, and some have become important allies in the movement to end abuse and violence against domestic workers. Male trade union leaders and human rights activists have been vocal in supporting the demands of domestic workers and pushing the agenda with decision makers, and community leaders have supported efforts to protect domestic workers from family and workplace violence. The project also enables domestic workers themselves to challenge power holders and hold them accountable for delivering workers' rights.



With the help of local and national civil society, Oxfam has successfully influenced national policy. After forming alliances with key stakeholders such as the Institute of Labour Studies and trade unions, gathering evidence and holding several rounds of policy dialogues with government agencies and domestic workers' groups, the Domestic Workers Protection and Welfare policy was adopted in 2016. As a result, domestic workers now have unlimited access to government social safety nets and social protection programmes, and to the services provided by non-governmental health and legal aid organizations. Government units have also been created specifically to protect domestic workers and their rights.



STEP 4: Monitor and demonstrate change

MEAL systems are essential for embedding gender justice in our programmes. They enable us to learn and demonstrate what has worked and what hasn't, and help build an evidence base. As we cannot talk about changes in resilience and progress towards resilient development without considering gender justice, it follows that we **need to build theories of change that explicitly show how gender justice will be intentionally promoted, and define specific gender justice outcomes**. This means going beyond a 'minimum requirement' gender-sensitivity approach based on disaggregated information. It calls for the use of monitoring tools²⁰ that help to capture changes towards gender equality – or inequality – during programme implementation, to allow for ongoing adaptation of our activities to better support gender justice processes and outcomes.

To capture change, MEAL processes must be consciously attuned to existing gender and power-based dynamics, both in terms of how they are impacting these dynamics and also how project activities can intentionally provoke structural change. This might entail rethinking and adapting existing tools by unpacking the unit of analysis (e.g. 'household' or 'community') in a gender-differentiated and gender-disaggregated way; using a gender perspective to determine who should be on the teams that conduct MEAL activities; or using participatory methods in MEAL through which we can facilitate women's voice and empower women.²¹

Using MEAL to embed gender justice in resilience programmes therefore relates both to what data is collected (indicators) and how it is collected (methodologies that support women's participation, learning and leadership). This approach is illustrated by the case studies below.

What have we learnt?

'To build resilience, we therefore need to ensure that we understand the gender differentiation of a) vulnerabilities, b) capacities and, in consequence, c) the impacts of our intervention strategies.'
Sotelo Reyes (2017)¹⁹



WOMEN CREATE SAFER COMMUNITIES AFTER DISASTER

In October 2016, Hurricane Matthew ravaged the eastern tip of Cuba, destroying 42,338 homes in the municipality of Baracoa. In the immediate aftermath of the disaster, landslides prevented government aid from reaching isolated communities like Mata Guandao for days. As proposed by the government, Oxfam launched a response in Mata Guandao and supported authorities and more than 500 families to rehabilitate vital infrastructure, prevent waterborne diseases, and promote safe sanitation and hygiene practices. This emergency response programme became an opportunity for women to lead the relief, reconstruction and rehabilitation efforts together with men – and to create safer, more resilient communities.

Community Brigades were created, whereby groups of men rehabilitated roofs using safer technology, while volunteer women's groups monitored and reported progress on the rehabilitation and safety of homes and made recommendations to community leaders and Oxfam project staff about the assistance needed. The women's group members were identified by local leaders and other women in the community. Their feedback ensured that the project took into account the specific needs of different groups in the community based on age, gender, location and other often-neglected factors, including disability.

These groups not only enabled women to make decisions regarding preparedness; they also served as a safe space for reflection where women could discuss and find ways to end domestic violence.

The women's groups called for the broadening of definitions of 'safety', beyond infrastructure, to also consider social and protection risks like domestic violence. As a result, the project aim changed – from providing safe roofs to creating a 'safe community'. Women then worked directly on inequalities alongside their male counterparts, with a special focus on gender. The project provided a flexible fund that enabled women to set up small businesses, which increased their resilience to extreme weather events by providing alternative income sources. Together these activities enabled women to become critical actors – and leaders – in the community reconstruction.



Community members could see women playing non-traditional roles and, in doing so, making a vital contribution to local development. Women grew in confidence as they found that they were capable of responding to the different needs in their community while integrating new ways of working.

As a result of their role in the emergency response, some of the women are now recognized as local leaders, breaking free of the social norms that previously made women's capacities invisible and prevented their political, economic and social leadership.

The project team had a clear intention from the outset to avoid the potential harm caused by gender- and power-blind interventions, and to promote greater equity through the local recovery activities. This is indicated by the fact that it integrated power-mapping in the activities developed; set up the flexible fund specifically for gender justice activities; and identified programme quality indicators on gender justice, including the prevention of gender-based violence. With the backing of formal and informal community leaders as well as local and national authorities, Oxfam in Cuba achieved a different way of integrating humanitarian response and development, whereby women strengthened their leadership while supporting their communities to become more resilient.

GHANA

WOMEN LEAD THE WAY IN CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION

Northern Ghana is increasingly vulnerable to the effects of climate change. Communities that had never previously experienced floods and droughts are now faced with these realities. This is affecting people's everyday lives – reducing their food security, threatening the natural resources they depend on and limiting livelihood options. These risks are also changing household dynamics, reinforcing gender-based inequalities and undermining community cohesion. In the face of these multiple challenges, an Oxfam project is enabling women to take the lead in building their communities' resilience.

Oxfam designed the Climate Resilient Agriculture and Food Security (CRAFS) project, which works with 4,500 smallholder farmers (70% women) in four districts (East Mamprusi, Garu-Tempane, Nandom and Daffiama-Busie-Issa districts). CRAFS supports farmers to build climate-resilient agricultural and food systems, adopt alternative livelihood and income sources during the dry season, better understand the effects of climate change, and protect their natural resources.

Addressing the root causes of gender inequality is a key component of the project strategy, which recognizes that marginalized social groups, including female-headed households, are often more exposed and sensitive to the risks caused by climate change and the depletion of natural resources. These groups also have fewer means of coping with the risks, such as access to other income-generating activities or to information that could help them adapt their farming practices to the changing weather patterns. The project team therefore defined gender-specific outcomes in its MEAL system, such as: 'Women are becoming leaders and engaging with power holders'; 'Challenging gender stereotypes around women and men's roles in agricultural production'; 'Women voice challenges in relation to food security and climate change adaptation in media channels'; and 'Women participate in local development planning processes'.



The project's impact evaluation²² focused on the Northern and Upper East Regions between 2015 and 2018, and took a quasi-experimental approach. It went beyond simply looking at whether 'female-headed households' and 'male-headed households' gained equally from the intervention, but also considered intra-household dynamics, such as access to information and control over resources for the main decision maker (men and women) within the household. **This enabled the project not only to look at differential impacts on women and men, but also to look at the dynamics between partners in terms of building resilience capacities.**

TIPS FOR PRACTITIONERS

Here are some key points to keep in mind when implementing or designing gender justice components as part of resilient development programmes:

- **Avoid exacerbating risk and vulnerability**
Development is resilient only when it reduces and transforms gender-based inequalities. If a project or programme doesn't address the different risks and capacities of women, men, girls and boys then it supports a path of development that is not resilient: it creates risk and vulnerability, and could increase inequality.
- **Build on incremental changes**
Embedding gender justice in resilience programmes is challenging and takes time, because it is a matter of shifting power imbalances and deeply-rooted rules that are difficult to change. Go step by step, and build on small wins.
- **Budget for gender justice**
Gender-differentiated activities will only happen if there is a budget for them.
- **Collaborate with partners to push for change**
Engage with women's rights organizations and invite unusual allies to help change the tone of the conversation.
- **Get men to support the project outcomes**
Make the effort to think about empowering women at all times of a project or campaign, and remember to work with both women and men to avoid creating barriers and risk causing harm.
- **Choose an approach that suits the context**
There is no one way that is better than another, but always agree clear outcomes and indicators, and aim to use methodologies that are participatory and create dialogue.



CONCLUSION

Oxfam's Framework for Resilient Development²³ shows that resilience is only possible when gender-based inequalities are transformed and women and men can fully enjoy their rights. The theory is clear, but reflecting this in practice is an ongoing process of learning and commitment. The case studies and learning outlined in this paper provide examples of Oxfam delivering on this commitment, as well as suggestions to further enhance this work.

It is important to constantly remind ourselves that gender-based inequality is one of the main causes of vulnerability: it is a pre-existing barrier to achieving resilient development outcomes for all. Our programming needs to address this, as gender injustice limits the way women and girls, men and boys in a community and society can respond to and manage change. Incorporating gender justice and addressing structural causes of unequal power relations in resilience-building programmes reduces vulnerabilities and risks, but also increases capacities to deal with shocks and stresses.

To truly achieve transformational change, our programmes need to go beyond just meeting gender-specific needs to address social norms, including power imbalances and unequal decision making. Mechanisms for this include: building women's leadership and involvement in decision making; increasing access to resources and information; and engaging with men and boys on masculinity and women's rights. Collaborative and participatory social change processes need to pay special attention to which stakeholders are involved, and ensure all participants can fully participate. In this way, existing power structures are challenged and excluded groups are empowered.

Changing the way we undertake vulnerability analysis and building in structural gender and power analysis is a vital first step in agreeing theories of change with specific gender justice outcomes and indicators. MEAL systems of resilience-building programmes must be gender-sensitive. Only when we define and monitor gender outcomes, establish related indicators and include a gender budget, are we able to intentionally work towards change and track the changes that are happening.

If we fail to take gender justice into account in our analysis, design, implementation and MEAL systems, we risk doing harm and undermining resilience, increasing existing inequalities, exacerbating vulnerabilities and even creating new ones. For Oxfam, addressing the specific needs of women, men, girls and boys and integrating gender justice is a prerequisite of resilient development.

NOTES

1. H. Jeans, S. Thomas and G. Castillo (2017) *The Future is a Choice: Absorb, Adapt, Transform. Resilience Capacities*, Oxfam. Available at: <https://policy-practice.oxfam.org.uk/publications/absorb-adapt-transform-resilience-capacities-620178>
2. In response to the Gender Justice in Resilience Challenge, case studies were submitted from Ghana, Bangladesh, Cuba, Uganda, Nigeria, Sri Lanka, Myanmar, DRC, Chad, Gaza, Haiti, Benin, Mauritania, Afghanistan, Dominican Republic, Burkina Faso, El Salvador, Nepal and Senegal.
3. H. Jeans, S. Thomas and G. Castillo (2017) op. cit.
4. A.V. Bahadur, E. Lovell and F. Pichon (2016) *Effectiveness in building resilience: Synthesis report for Oxfam's Resilience Outcome Area*, Oxfam.
5. H. Jeans, S. Thomas and G. Castillo (2017) op. cit.
6. M. Pelling, K. O'Brien and D. Matyas (2014) 'Adaptation and Transformation'. *Climate Change*, Volume 133, Issue 1, pp.113–127, Springer.
7. S. Sotelo Reyes (2017) *Gender Justice in Resilience: Enabling the full performance of the system*, Oxfam Resilience Knowledge Hub: <https://policy-practice.oxfam.org.uk/publications/gender-justice-in-resilience-enabling-the-full-performance-of-the-system-620376>
8. E. Wilkinson, V. Le Masson and A. Norton (2015) *Gender and Resilience. BRACED working paper*. London: Overseas Development Institute.
9. Ibid.
10. J.C. Gaillard, K. Sanz, B.C. Balgos, S.N.M. Dalisay, A. Gorman-Murray, F. Smith and V. Toelupe (2015) 'Beyond Men and Women: A Critical Perspective on Gender and Disaster'. *Disasters*, 2017 Jul;41(3):429–447; D. Morchain, G. Prati, F. Kelsey and L. Ravon (2015) 'What If Gender Became an Essential, Standard Element of Vulnerability Assessments?' *Gender & Development* 23(3).
11. Vulnerability and Risk Assessment: <https://policy-practice.oxfam.org.uk/our-approach/toolkits-and-guidelines/vulnerability-risk-assessment>
12. Participatory Methodology: Rapid Care Analysis: <https://policy-practice.oxfam.org.uk/publications/participatory-methodology-rapid-care-analysis-620147>

13. A.V. Bahadur, K. Peters, E. Wilkinson, F. Pichon, K. Gray and T. Tanner (2015) *The 3As: Tracking resilience across BRACED*. BRACED Working Paper. London: Overseas Development Institute.
14. C. Moser (2016) 'Can the New Urban Agenda fundamentally transform gender relations?' April, *Citiscope*.
15. H. Jeans, S. Thomas and G. Castillo (2017) op. cit.
16. Alston, M. (2013) 'Gender mainstreaming and climate change', *Women's Studies International Forum* 47(B): 287–294.
17. B. Leduc (2009) *Guidelines for gender sensitive research*. November, ICIMOD
18. H. Jeans et al. (2016) op. cit.
19. S. Sotelo Reyes (2017) op. cit.
20. See some examples of suggested tools and methodologies for monitoring social change processes: E. Febles (2018) op. cit. See also *MEAL for Resilience, A companion guide: Keeping on track on resilience pathways*:
<https://policy-practice.oxfam.org.uk/publications/monitoring-evaluation-and-learning-for-resilience-a-companion-guide-620498>
21. Ibid.
22. Oxfam Effectiveness Review series:
<https://policy-practice.oxfam.org.uk/our-approach/monitoring-evaluation/effectiveness-reviews>.
23. H. Jeans, S. Thomas and G. Castillo (2017) op. cit.



© Oxfam International November 2018

This paper was written by Valerie Minne, Sandra Sotelo Reyes and Lea Doumenjou, with contributions from Lourdes Benavides, Gina Castillo, Elsa Febles, Jessica Fullwood-Thomas, Charlotte Sterrett, Sebastian Thomas, Helen Jeans and Oxfam's colleagues in Bangladesh, Chad, Cuba, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ghana, Nigeria, Senegal, Sri Lanka and Uganda working in interventions aiming to build resilience. The paper was commissioned by Oxfam's Resilience Knowledge Hub and is part of a series of reports written to inform public debate on development and humanitarian programme issues.

Published by Oxfam GB for Oxfam International, Oxfam House, John Smith Drive, Cowley, Oxford, OX4 2JY, UK.

Resilience Knowledge Hub

Contact: resiliencekh@oxfam.org

