transforming gender inequalities

Practical guidance for achieving gender transformation in resilient development

OXFAM

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introduction and the aim of this guide

Welcome to this Oxfam guide to achieving gender[1] transformation in resilience programming.

Oxfam believes that resilient development is only possible when gender-based inequalities are transformed and women, men and gender non-conforming people can fully enjoy their rights. Despite this understanding, our evaluations have shown that resilience programmes tend to focus on strengthening absorptive and adaptive capacities without adequately addressing broader structural inequalities and power imbalances. This guide is designed to build on current efforts to achieve more robust and sustainable gender transformation within resilience programmes.

Our aim is to share learning[2] on how we can build our own and our partners' capacity to **achieve gender transformation, promote women's rights and address the structural inequalities** – i.e. discriminatory social norms, laws, policies and budgets – that prevent us from achieving gender-transformative outcomes.

The guide begins with an overview of what it means to take a feminist approach, and why this is essential to resilience building. It then describes the Transformative Leadership for Women's Rights (TLWR) framework. This is followed by sections on how you can use the TLWR framework to develop your gender power analysis as part of the context analysis and Theory of Change; broaden your strategic alliances; use the six 'social change processes' to achieve gender-transformative outcomes; and make sure your MEAL is gender-transformative. Each section includes practical suggestions, examples and further resources.

The guide builds on and should be used alongside other Oxfam resources and frameworks for resilience building and gender justice – particularly the Oxfam Framework for Resilient Development and the TLWR framework – and these are referred to throughout.

what do we mean by taking a feminist approach?

As Oxfam, we have committed to using feminist principles to guide our work and support us in living our values every day and creating a truly accountable organization.[3]

Embracing feminism is not always easy or comfortable. By its very nature, a feminist approach challenges us to consider our own power, privilege and understanding of the world. Many of us appreciate the great strides in social justice that have been made as a result of the feminist movement, but we don't always engage with feminism as a philosophy for basic rights. Yet feminism can and must be the foundation of how we carry out our work towards justice and rights for all.

This is because an intersectional feminist approach takes us into the deeply personal aspects and root causes of inequalities, poverty, violence and conflict. Without understanding the way these issues are caused, compounded or experienced in people's daily lives, we will not be able to work to build effective or sustainable solutions and actions. A feminist approach is not only critical to Oxfam's politics, but also to our effectiveness and impact.
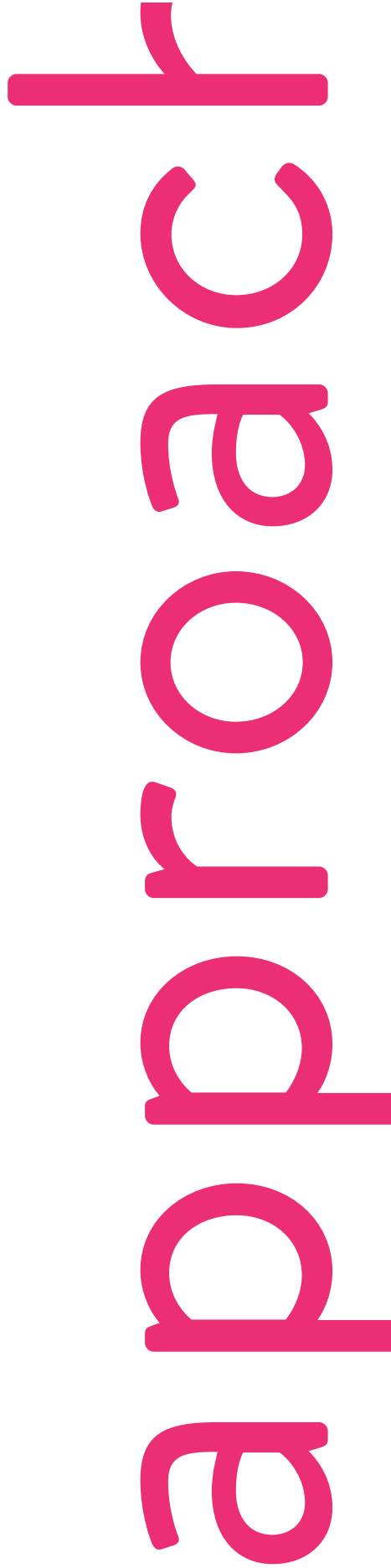
A feminist approach to resilience programming calls for radical change in gender power relations.

This means committing to feminist principles both as:

An OUTCOME

– the advancement of the rights of women and girls and gender justice.

A PROCESS

– embedded in our ways of working, our programme design and implementation, our policy and campaigning, budgets, human resources plans, and the values which underpin our decisions as staff and directors leading this work.

approach

In taking a feminist approach, it is essential to focus on rights of women and girls – taking into account additional marginalization due to race, ethnicity, cast, ability, sexual orientation, etc. – and to support women's rights and feminist organizations and movements. It is also important to work with a wide range of organizations. We also know that working with men, boys, the queer community, racialized people, youth and elderly people, and **considering the dimensions intersecting gender that define identities and power, are critical** to changing the social norms that underpin gender discrimination. A feminist approach considers gender as a spectrum, going beyond the binary categories of male and female.

Within this approach, **feminist and women's rights organizations are key change agents** and need opportunities and support to grow their capacity. They are the experts on their contexts, and are therefore best placed to support programmes and advocacy that address the root causes of gender inequality. A feminist approach means involving these organizations (and other key stakeholders) as active players in design, implementation and analysis, rather than as passive recipients.

A feminist approach also means **working to change the systems and structures that contribute to marginalization and oppression.** It assumes that to end poverty and achieve equality for the world's most disadvantaged groups, we need to focus our attention on women and girls and gender non-conforming people, and to consider power and intersectionality in everything that we do.[4]

FURTHER READING
Feminist Principles: What they are and how theyserve as a guidepost for our work. Oxfam Canada, 2018.

A Feminist Approach to Localization. Oxfam Canada, 2018.

Oxfam's Guide to Feminist Influencing. Oxfam, 2019.

moving from gender-aware to gender-transformative programming

'Projects are never neutral in the way they are designed or in their social impact, as they reflect, among other things, the implementing organization's values and priorities. Projects assumed to follow 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.'[5]

By adopting feminist principles, **Oxfam's work seeks to support transformative change**[6] **to advance the rights of women, girls and gender non-conforming people, by redressing historical power imbalances and discriminatory social norms,** and challenging patriarchy as a system that maintains this unequal division of power and privilege.

This kind of change doesn't happen overnight. Gender-transformative change is not a specific set of activities implemented at a certain time; it is the cumulative result of actions and processes. These actions can be stand-alone activities in your project, or can be embedded in the way you deliver activities (mostly not gender activities). It calls for approaches that are long-term and sustainable, and often requires collective actions that work towards changes at multiple levels – within ourselves, within households, within society and within institutions. As such, **gender transformation is a complex, slow, nuanced process** that may meet with backlash and resistance along the way. It needs to be nurtured carefully and over time.

However, we also know that with care and attention, the foundations of and stepping stones leading to deeply transformative changes can be laid in a relatively short space of time; that trialling new approaches or new ways of partnering can have powerful immediate ripple effects. For example, in Nepal, the Raising Her Voice project,[7] which was designed in 2008, saw the first-ever Oxfam partnership

with local women's rights organizations. Just 1.5 years into the project, 42% of the 2,000 women participating in the project reported feeling able to influence village and district development councils to allocate financial support for the promotion of women's interests; this was the case for just 2% of respondents from non-project villages.

While programmes and projects can use a number of different tools to identify and address gender norms and inequities in their design, implementation and evaluation, taking a feminist approach and moving towards gender-transformative programming always means:

Aiming to challenge and change discriminatory gender roles, norms and dynamics and promoting gender equality. Gender transformation requires strategic, concerted and intentional change to the systems that create risk, vulnerability and inequality.

Ensuring that programmes are never harmful. It is critical that projects do no harm and that project design, implementation and evaluation identify and mitigate any potential unintended negative consequences of an activity. While some interventions may be or may contain elements that are (intentionally or unintentionally) gender unaware, the aim should always be to move them toward gender-transformative approaches.

Every resilience-oriented programme needs to research the possible backlash and resistance to power redistribution, and design approaches to mitigate this. A feminist approach needs to ensure, as far as possible, the safety and security of the women activists and leaders we work alongside in these efforts. In a world where, for many women, even the act of stepping into the public sphere is in itself an act of disruption, this means being explicit about supporting the safety of those 'disruptors' with whom Oxfam works.[8]

Some approaches to gender in programmes may do harm, for example by exacerbating some existing vulnerabilities and risks and adding new ones.[9] Programmes that use women's involvement to measure programme success (i.e. an instrumental approach) are probably not asking what programmes can do to improve women's status – and therefore don't aim to transform gender relations and power dynamics in pursuit of gender equality.

In addition, such programmes may reinforce women's assigned gender roles (for example, as mothers or carers) to 'improve' humanitarian and development effectiveness. Instead of perpetuating harmful norms or taking a headcount approach, women must be seen as strategic partners whose active participation facilitates effective and efficient programmes.

The Gender Integration Continuum (Figure 1) describes the extent to which a project or programme considers gender.

Figure 1.
The Gender Integration Continuum: From gender-unaware to gender-transformative

GENDER UNAWARE

There is limited consideration that people of different genders may have different roles, needs, vulnerabilities or capacities, or acknowledgement of pre-existing power imbalances between people of different genders. Programmes or projects are likely to be shaped by stereotyped and cisnormative assumptions[10] that may exclude or disadvantage certain gender groups. Gender-unaware approaches are likely to perpetuate and exacerbate gender inequalities.

GENDER AWARE

There is acknowledgement that different genders (including gender minorities) are impacted differently or may have different roles, needs, vulnerabilities or capacities. There is analysis and assessment of differential vulnerabilities, risks and capacities, and of the existence of gendered power imbalances, but without proactive systemic adaptation to change and improve.

GENDER SENSITIVE

Programmes or projects reflect awareness of differential impacts on and vulnerabilities of different genders (including gender minorities), and the existence of gendered power imbalances. Strategies, priorities and activities are adapted to better meet the needs of marginalized gender groups.

GENDER TRANSFORMATIVE

Programmes or projects reflect awareness of differential impacts on and vulnerabilities of different genders (including gender minorities), and the existence of gendered power imbalances. Objectives, strategies, priorities and approaches are (re)designed to meet the needs of all people. There is consideration of harmful gender roles, norms and relations, acknowledgement of how gendered assumptions marginalize different genders, and proactive effort to reduce gender-based inequalities.

Source: Adapted from Dwyer and Woolf. (2018).

Shifting the focus from 'actions/outputs' to 'objectives/outcomes'

A shift from a gender-aware or a gender-sensitive to a gender-transformative approach should correspond with a shift from a focus on actions/outputs to a focus on objectives/outcomes. For example, if women are struggling to sell their produce, a gender-sensitive approach might focus on the ways actions (the outputs) are carried out. For example, it might seek to increase the number of women attending technical trainings, perhaps through a quota system or incentives. This may increase the number of women trained, and as such may indeed begin to achieve a shift in women's access to training opportunities and possibly in their skill levels. However, it ignores the wider context, and as such may not tackle the underlying gendered barriers which are preventing the women from accessing the market. It may also have unintended consequences; for example, women's participation in the training may shift their care responsibilities to the younger (or older) generation. This proposed intervention fails to seek to change the women's decision-making power, shift the norms that prevented them from accessing such training opportunities or markets for their goods, or transform the policies and laws that hold women and girls back.

A gender-transformative approach to the same problem might ask: 'How can capacity-building enable women, gender non-conforming people and marginalized groups to gain more power or to gain access to and control of resources, opportunities and decision-making spaces?'; or 'How can women organize collectively to drive change at different levels?'. It might also ask: 'How would we approach capacity building if it was designed with marginalized gender groups in mind, and if it was designed jointly with these groups?' If marginalized groups are involved in designing the intervention, it may emerge that they prefer different ways of building capacity, for example through family-friendly training sessions or home-based training.

A gender-transformative approach focuses on outcomes over outputs, emphasizes the effectiveness of the programme for marginalized gender groups, and improves gender equality within and across the programme. This often requires greater understanding (and acknowledgement) of gendered norms and power structures, and a willingness to explore alternative ways of reaching the desired outcomes.[12]

'Gender aware' and 'gender sensitive' strategies are a long way from achieving the aims of the feminist vision that originally informed them, and tend to reaffirm existing gender inequalities and gender norms. To achieve resilience using feminist principles, we must look at the entire gender dynamics landscape and act with gender-transformative intentions.

FURTHER READING
Interagency Gender Working Group (IGWG) resources on the Gender Integration Continuum: Understanding and applying the gender Equality Continuum checklist, Facilitator Guide, Gender Integration Continuum Scenarios Bank, Gender Integration Continuum PPT slides.

Gender Mainstreaming for Transformative Programmes.
Oxfam, 2017.

gender transformation in resilience building

'At the heart of Oxfam's resilient development approach lies an understanding that reducing vulnerability requires more than technical solutions; it calls for a redistribution of power and a commitment to tackling the many forms of inequality that are on the rise.'[13]

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[14] 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 manage this change proactively and positively, in ways that contribute to a just world without poverty.

Oxfam believes that resilient development is only possible when gender-based inequalities are transformed and women, men and gender non-conforming people can fully enjoy their rights. Despite this understanding, Oxfam's evaluations have shown that our resilience programmes tend to focus on strengthening absorptive and adaptive capacities without adequately addressing broader structural inequalities and power imbalances.[15]

Building skills and capacity therefore has to go hand in hand with tackling the system of inequality and injustice that makes people in poverty more vulnerable in the first place. This means 'challenging the social, economic, and political institutions that lock in security for some but vulnerability for many, by redistributing power and wealth (and with them, risk) to build models of shared societal risk.'[16]

Leaders of women's organizations have told Oxfam that 'investing in women's economic empowerment does not make women more resilient if other barriers caused by gender inequality (such as time poverty, sexist stereotypes about women's work, discriminatory inheritance and property rights, gendered division of labour, and unequal distribution of care responsibilities) are not addressed. These are more than mere externalities: they significantly negate the potential resilience-building effects of community development initiatives and can cause women to lose ground.'[17] In fact, ignoring the root causes of gender inequality and just focusing on the symptoms may be dangerous, as it leads to maladaptive strategies (e.g. women obliged to be present in meetings simply so that institutions can meet a gender quota, and preventing women from deciding where and how they do want to participate).

Activities enabling communities to absorb and adapt to shocks therefore need to take place alongside efforts to change attitudes and beliefs about gender, to challenge damaging stereotypes that reinforce women's and gender non-conforming people's inferior social status and increase their vulnerability to shocks and stresses, and to include women and marginalized groups as key players in the design and implementation of solutions.

We need to recognize gender inequality as a structural barrier to resilience and address the systemic gender inequalities that exacerbate vulnerability for all.

FURTHER READING
Resilience in Times of Food Insecurity: Reflecting the Experiences of Women's Organizations.
Oxfam Canada, 2014.

Gender Equality and Resilient Development: Evidence from Oxfam's resilient development portfolio.
Oxfam, 2019.

Gender Justice in Resilience: Enabling the full performance of the system.
Oxfam, 2017.

the transformative leadership for women's rights (tlwr) framework

'The complex threats to women's rights today, particularly in societies dealing with conflict, poverty, and inequality, require leadership – that positions not just individuals but rather a critical mass of them – to lead the way in shifting oppressive power dynamics that keep such harmful systems in place.'[18]

Oxfam's TLWR Framework

Oxfam's Global Programme Framework on Transformative Leadership for Women's Rights[19] (TLWR) aims to ensure that more women obtain and exercise their political, economic and social rights, through the increased engagement of individuals, civil society, private sector organizations and governments. It is intended to guide practitioners in the design, review and evaluation of programmes, campaigns and humanitarian responses, and to strengthen Oxfam's own organizational and leadership practice. The TLWR framework can be used to do a **gender power analysis of the context in which your resilience programme or project is being developed, as well as to develop your Theory of Change** (as described in the following sections). This section provides an overview of the TLWR framework and its main concepts.

As shown in Figure 2, the framework identifies four quadrants/areas for change[20] related to power and gender justice: formal and informal, individual and systemic. This complex, system-wide approach takes a holistic view and shows how all the areas for change are connected and mutually reinforcing. The figure uses examples from an Oxfam project in Ethiopia[21] to show how change happens simultaneously at all four levels. The project aimed to strengthen women's participation and leadership in formal honey cooperatives, in order to promote women's engagement in markets.

Figure 2:
Oxfam's Transformative Leadership for Women's Rights Framework,
with examples from an
Oxfam project in Ethiopia[22]

INDIVIDUAL

INFORMAL

FORMAL

CONSCIOUSNESS AND CAPABILITIES

(Individual informal area)
People's knowledge, skills, belief, attitudes, political consciousness and commitment to change toward equality.

PROJECT EXAMPLE: Informal women's self-help groups were set up to facilitate 'consciousness-raising' and enable women to gain the confidence and skills to take on new roles in cooperatives and markets.

RESOURCES

(Individual formal area)
Personal access to tangible and intangible resources (e.g. possessing an identity card, the right to vote, land entitlements, access to finance or basic services) and organizing together to make change happen.

PROJECT EXAMPLE: The informal groups led to increased women's participation in cooperatives. Women gained access to new technologies that enabled them to produce better-quality honey. As a result, they became more visible as producers and had access to more lucrative markets.

NORMS AND EXCLUSIONARY PRACTICES

(Systemic informal area)
Ideas, beliefs, social norms, behaviours and exclusionary practices in society at large, as well as the relationships and informal groups that create and sustain them.

PROJECT EXAMPLE: Oxfam also involved men in the community and the cooperatives, with the aim of negotiating household barriers and gendered power dynamics, positively affecting women's participation and influence over decision making in groups.

RULES AND POLICIES

(Systemic formal area)
Institutional level: laws, policies, and practices of government, businesses and other institutions in society.

PROJECT EXAMPLE: The community undertook advocacy at local and national levels to challenge a policy that discriminates against women by saying that only one person in each household may be a member of a cooperative.

SYSTEMIC

Source: Oxfam. (2014). 'Transformative Leadership for Womens Rights: An Oxfam guide.

change

If action is taken within several change areas at the same time, gender-transformative change will come about more quickly and will be more sustainable. Transformation at the individual informal area – for example, regarding self-image and consciousness, beliefs and attitudes, behaviour in intimate relationships and control over our bodies – is closely connected to collective norms, values and practices (individual formal area), and thus any changes to the former will only be sustainable if there is also change in the latter. Similarly, cultural norms at the systemic informal area are the main factors preventing the full implementation of gender-transformative laws at the systemic formal level.

The TLWR framework highlights the interrelationship between gender equality, organizational change and the institutions or 'rules of the game' that are held in place by power dynamics within communities. It also provides us with a useful framework for analysing the interconnectedness of sex and gender with other, intersecting forms or exclusion, violence and oppression, such as ethnicity, age, religion, sexuality, geography, disability and tribal affiliation, in line with the realities of local contexts. **The TLWR framework identifies five levels of change – individual to global – that also need to be worked on simultaneously to achieve gender-transformative change** (e.g. Oxfam assumes that individual-level change is unsustainable without positive change in community/national-level organizations and national-level government policy).

Individual level:

Relates to personal skills, capacities and self-confidence, e.g. family support, fear/risk of violence, freedom to travel, caring responsibilities; and tangible areas such as assets and income, access to identity cards, nationality, etc.

Household level:

This is where deep-held views of gender roles dictate women's and men's roles and responsibilities and decision-making processes in the household, and where some women are unsafe due to domestic violence.

Community level:

The structures, systems, institutions and social norms that shape our communities can be oppressive for women, but are also where identities and norms are shaped, safety nets are woven, and grassroots women's initiatives are created and mature. This is also where customary laws are practised which influence (and can limit) the impact of other changes.

National level:

National laws, policies and budgets can either restrict or enable women's rights and can affect different groups of women – e.g. indigenous women, widows, women working in the informal economy – in different ways. Women's movements can play a vital role t this level of change, for example by generating status reports on the implementation (or not) of country policies.

Global level:

This is the arena for advocacy on women's rights via international bodies such as the UN, as well as the place where funds for gender justice are negotiated and laws/policies to address gender inequality are advanced. Currently, 99% of gender-related international aid fails to reach women's rights and feminist organizations directly.[23]

A holistic approach that works to achieve change at all of these areas and levels of change adds value to planning processes for resilient development programming. Applying this framework to your gender power analysis, Theory of Change and MEAL will ensure that programmes are more coherent, balanced and sequenced across a variety of different resilience pathways and social change processes. When doing so, it is essential to remain open-minded, flexible and adaptive to reflect the highly complex and context-specific ways that gender justice interacts, formally and informally, with resilient development processes.

The following sections provide guidance and good practices on ensuring gender transformation in resilient development projects and programmes by using Oxfam's TLWR framework, as follows.
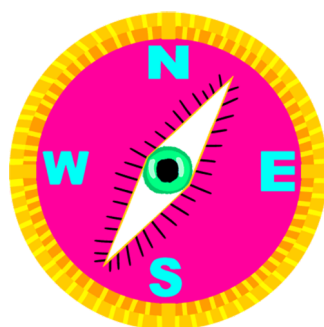
Figure 3:
Steps for achieving gender transformation in resilient development projects
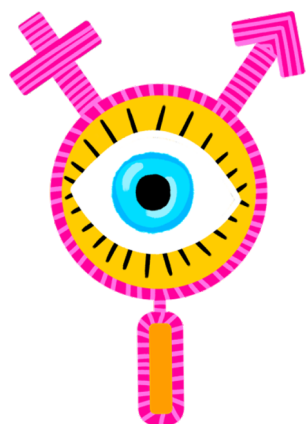
Understand the context by doing a gender power analysis.
See section 5.

a. Use the TLWR quadrants/change areas as your 'gender lens' for the analysis.

b. Identify stakeholders and actors.

Develop a 'compass' for your programme strategy and work by developing a **Theory of Change:**

a. Identify the changes or **outcomes** you are seeking to achieve (using the three resilience capacities and four quadrants/change areas of the TLWR).
See section 6.

b. Identify **who you are going to work with.**
See section 7.

c. Identify the **social change processes** that will make change happen (using the six social change processes).
See section 8.
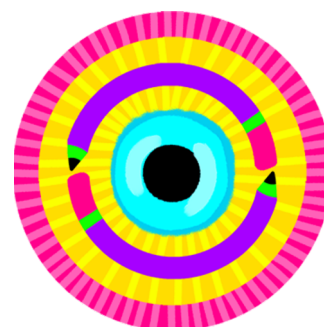
Review, adapt and learn. Develop a gender-transformative **MEAL framework.**
See section 9.

FURTHER READING
[Transformative Leadership for Women's Rights. Global Programme Framework](). Oxfam, 2017.
[Transformative Leadership for Women's Rights: An Oxfam guide](). Oxfam, 2014.
[Transformative Leadership for Women's Rights: Lessons and Recommendations from Oxfam's Experiences]().
Oxfam, 2015.
[Gender at Work Framework](). Gender at Work.

ensuring your context analysis is gender transformative – conducting a gender power analysis

'We need to recognize gender inequality as a structural barrier to resilience and a key driver of vulnerability, not simply a compounding factor of vulnerability, and to tackle it as such.'[24]

When we are developing a proposal for programme or policy work, we need to ensure that the strategies contribute to gender equality. A first step is to analyse the gender and power dynamics that shape women's, girls', gender non-conforming people's and marginalized populations' access to and control of resources and decision-making spaces. **This is a gender power analysis.** The information you collect from the gender power analysis will contribute to the development of the Theory of Change of your resilience programme (as outlined in the following sections).

Different axes of identity (e.g. gender, sexuality, class, caste, race, age, education, access rights) intersect and produce different experiences of risks and their impacts. A gender power analysis will help you to identify why and how this happens. However, the most important aspect of the gender power analysis is not to define the different vulnerabilities of women, men and gender non-conforming people but rather to **understand the causes of the inequalities and systemic marginalization underlying this difference.** Failing to understand the root causes of gender inequality, poverty and injustice can lead to strategies that don't bring lasting change or which actually reinforce inequality and the status quo.

Planning and conducting a gender power analysis – five golden rules

1. Challenge the status quo. The analysis process itself should be a first step towards changing gender and power relations, by providing all stakeholders with opportunities to contribute, reflect and learn – and enabling marginalized, vulnerable and less privileged people to speak out and be listened to. It is crucial to involve women and gender non-conforming people as well as men, and to include women's organizations, women's groups or women leaders in mixed organizations. The process can build women's capacity by giving them specific roles and responsibilities and enabling them to lead, influence and be part of decision making. This will ultimately build women's resilience (both as individuals and collectively) and, in turn, the resilience of households and communities.

2. Be participatory in your approach and co-design the project with the partners and participants who will implement it. Having a participatory process will increase understanding of the underlying power issues at play and the specific issues that women and gender non-conforming people face, in terms of households and community dynamics.

3. Crucially, '**We need to recognize women's organizations as legitimate actors** within the field of resilience because of their capacity to design solutions, not simply as a vulnerable group to be consulted.'[25] For example, a joint FEMNET and Oxfam programme to strengthen the women's rights movement in Africa deliberately started partnership assessments by holding a day of reflection and learning with wider members of local feminist movements in seven countries. This made for a much richer analysis of the issues and priorities that the project has subsequently focused on/adapted to address.

4. Use an **intersectional lens.** Inequality stems from the intersection of different social identities (e.g. gender, status, ethnicity, class, age), so it is vital to investigate how they interact. Work with local partners to agree where we have the expertise and legitimacy to work alongside groups and communities affected by these different forms of inequality and exclusion, and where we will need to bring in new staff or work better with others.

5. Follow Oxfam's ethical research standards.[26] Respect participants' confidentiality and safety, and do no harm by ensuring that stakeholders do not suffer any adverse consequences due to taking part. Create a non-threatening environment in which women and gender non-conforming people can freely express their views. Oxfam's own meta-analysis of its women's empowerment programming found a small increase in risks to women who step out of 'acceptable' family, community and public roles.[27] When working on gender transformation, Oxfam recognizes that we need to be much more explicit in how we plan for and minimize the risks wherever possible.[28]

6. Recognize that **gender and context analyses are political and not neutral.** Prioritize the perspectives of women and the most vulnerable or powerless groups in the context.

Which risks should a gender-transformative gender power analysis look at?

Risks that are rooted in gender discrimination and women's lack of decision-making power, including the shocks and stresses that originate at the household level and put women and girls at risk, are sometimes ignored in resilience and climate programming. Oxfam research on involving women's organizations in identifying food security and livelihoods risks found that they tend to prioritize risks that are largely absent from the literature and mainstream resilience frameworks.[29] For example, violence against women, women's unequal access to land and women's disproportionate responsibility for unpaid care work should be recognized as core resilience issues;[30] other harmful intra-household dynamics that should be taken into account include lack of contraceptives and the implications of polygamy. Gender-unaware analysis means that these issues are not factored into resilience-building projects; this limits their effectiveness from the outset, and is likely perpetuate and exacerbate gender inequalities.[31]

Example
In Cuba, women's groups called for a post-hurricane reconstruction programme by Oxfam to broaden its definition of 'safety' – by going beyond infrastructure to also consider social and protection risks, including domestic violence. As a result, the project shifted from a narrow goal of providing safer housing to the much more far-reaching aim of creating a 'safe community'. This became the entry point for women's continued work, alongside their male peers, to dismantle gender inequalities.[32]
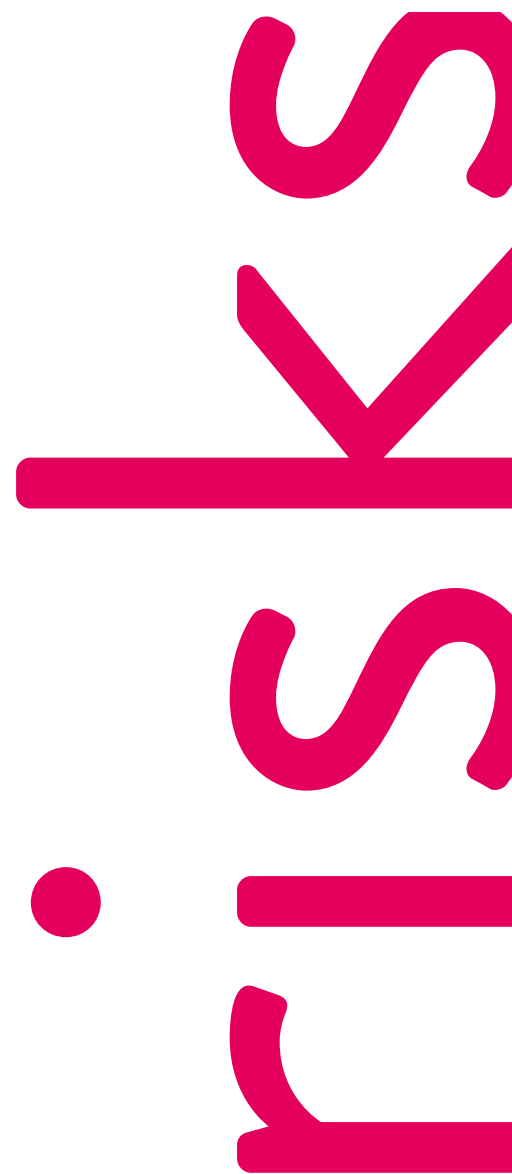
Methodologies for conducting a gender power analysis

The following methodologies can be used for a gender power analysis:

1. **Consult existing strategic country and programme documents,** such as the Oxfam country strategy and previous programme and project documents.

2. **Carry out a desk review of published and grey literature to identify existing data.** Look for research reports and national statistics that can answer any of the questions outlined above. Identify norms and practices, formal and informal laws and structures and their implementation, etc. Work closely with local partners and feminist technical advisors to identify women's rights groups, women's institutions and other groups that can support you in the implementation of the gender power analysis and the programme.

3. **Collect primary qualitative data** in-country. Keep a keen lookout for who is missing from the discussions; whose voice isn't being heard; whose perspective is not being shared. This can be done by speaking with women and men and gender non-conforming people from the communities you are hoping to work with, as well as feminist groups and local organizations. This data can be collected through:
   - Focus group discussions with women, girls, men and boys (see example in box below).
   - Key informant interviews (including leaders and members of women's rights organizations).
   - Gathering personal testimonies from people directly affected.

Always make sure you adhere to ethical and safety standards in collecting this data.[33]

4. **Determine the causes of the inequalities or disparities** you have found. Identify the forces that hinder or help the transformation of power imbalances.[34] Use the TLWR framework in Figure 2 above to analyse how leadership and the use of power, norms, and principles play a role in each quadrant/change area.

5. **Hold a validation and planning workshop to present the findings of your gender power analysis** to partners, women's rights organizations and other stakeholders. Together, reflect on the following:
   - WHAT are the gender dimensions and impacts of power relations?
   - WHO holds power? How does their gender reinforce it? Which women could we engage with who want to be leaders in transformative change?
   - WHERE are the decisions made? Do these spaces exclude women and gender non-conforming people?
   - HOW can we address the barriers to change (social norms, attitudes/beliefs, legislation)? What strategies will we use to transform power?

The validation and action workshop can validate your findings, but you can also use it for discussion and to jointly map out the strategies that will feed into the Theory of Change *(see next sections).*

what questions should we ask?

Figure 4 gives examples of the questions that can guide the gender power analysis in the process of resilience programme design. The questions relate to the four change areas of Oxfam's TLWR approach (see Figure 2 above) and include a fifth area with questions specifically related shocks and vulnerability. They should be modified by country teams depending on the context and broad areas of intervention already identified.

Figure 4:
Questions for gender power context analysis

1. CONSCIOUSNESS AND CAPABILITIES
(Individual informal area)

What is the **division of roles and responsibilities** between women and men in the community or communities where the programme will be implemented or where we seek to have policy impact? **What are the main beliefs and attitudes** that determine the confidence and capacities of individual women, men and gender non-conforming people (of different social, age, ethnic, religious and other groups) to actively participate and lead decisions and actions through which they mitigate and adapt to the impact of shocks and crises, and create systemic changes (transformation) for their survival, wellbeing and security?

EXAMPLE FINDINGS: Unequal gender norms have reduced women's self-confidence and prevented them from accessing different forms of formal knowledge and skills.

2. RESOURCES
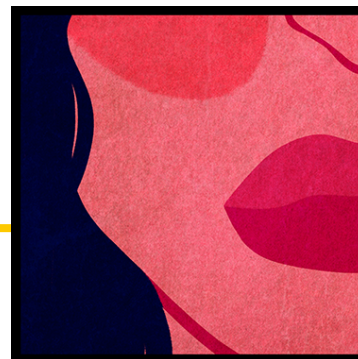**(Individual formal area)**
Do women, men and gender non-conforming people (of different social, age, ethnic, religious and other groups) **have the same access to and control over resources** such as land, water, food, assets, education, information, health services, markets or money? What are the differences? What are the barriers they experience in accessing and controlling the resources that are essential to absorb and adapt to the impact of shocks and stresses, and to bring about systemic changes (transformation) for their survival, wellbeing and security?

EXAMPLE FINDINGS: Women do not have access to formal knowledge. Changes to traditional role division are required by women becoming more visible as producers and participating in other markets.
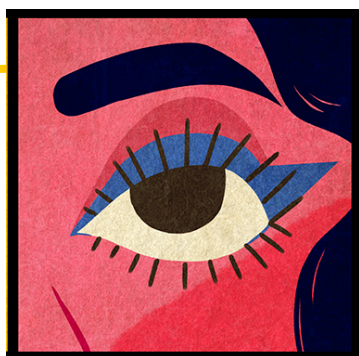
## 3. NORMS AND EXCLUSIONARY PRACTICES
(Systemic informal area)

What are the **dominant social norms and power structures** that determine the vulnerabilities and capacities of women, men and gender non-conforming people (of different social, age, ethnic, religious and other groups, etc.) to absorb and adapt to shocks and crises, and to bring about systemic changes (transformation) for their survival, wellbeing, safety and security?

EXAMPLE FINDINGS: Dominant norms and values at household level mean that few women are involved in cooperatives or participate in collective decision

4. RULES AND POLICIES
(Systemic formal area)

What are the gender contents and consequences of **policies and laws** that affect people's ability to absorb and adapt to the impact of shocks and stresses, and to bring about systemic changes (transformation) for their survival, wellbeing, safety and security?
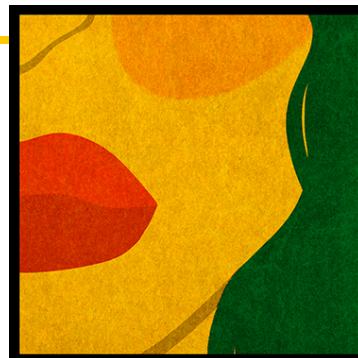
EXAMPLE FINDINGS: Policies and laws perpetuate the gendered division of labour, for example by making it harder for women to own land or join cooperatives.

5. SHOCKS, VULNERABILITIES AND CAPACITIES

What are the differences in the nature of **risks, shocks, vulnerabilities and uncertainties** faced by women, men and gender non-conforming people (of different social, age, ethnic, religious and other groups)? What are their **perceptions of their own/their household's/their community's risks, vulnerabilities and capacities?**
What are their **existing capacities**? What are the main global and local **drivers of vulnerability**?

EXAMPLE FINDINGS: Women experience increased harmful intra-household dynamics including violence against women, physical or mental abuse and/or sexual exploitation, increased domestic work (carrying water, collecting firewood, etc.), and increased pressure on girls to submit to early or forced marriage. Women have important roles in peacebuilding, disaster risk reduction and resilience building

Source: Adapted from Oxfam. (2017). Transformative Leadership for Women's Rights. Global Programme Framework.

Example

The following questionnaire was used for focus group discussions with female and male leaders of organizations working for climate action in coastal areas in Bangladesh. (To find out more about the results of this research, see the Gender-Transformative resilience programming research paper[36])

1. *What is the different impacts of climate change on women and men in your community? Are there particular gender and age groups that are most vulnerable?*

2. *How do women and men mitigate and adapt to the impact of climate change differently in your community?*

3. *Have you observed specific practices/ behaviours of women and men that enhance/ advance change in regard to women's capacity? If yes, can you give an example?*

4. *What is your ideal image of a leader/leadership for climate change? Give us three features that describe a leader.*

5. *How would you define leadership for women's rights in climate change?*

6. *Do you consider yourself a leader? Why?*

7. *Tell us one thing you do to change a woman's life/women's lives in your community? (This can be an entry to personal stories.)*

8. *What are the required knowledge/skills/ attitudes for practising leadership for women's rights in climate action? What are the places where you can gain those?*

9. *Is there any difference between how women and men practise leadership for women's rights in your community? If yes, can you describe it?*

10. *Who are the main actors that promote women's leadership in climate action?*

11. *What are the main factors that enable or hinder leadership for women's rights in climate action? (Try to probe for distinction between formal and informal, i.e. policies and norms).*

12. *Can you tell us an example of their effect on your life? (This can involve examples of success and ripple effects, as well as backlash.)*

13. *What would be your recommendation for Oxfam to further enhance Transformative Leadership for Women's Rights in climate action?*

FURTHER READING
Oxfam's Guide to Feminist Influencing.
Oxfam, 2019.

Transformative Leadership for Women's Rights. Global Programme Framework.
Oxfam, 2017.

Transformative Leadership for Women's Rights: An Oxfam Guide.
Oxfam, 2014.

Putting gender in International UK political economy analysis: Why it matters and how to do it. Practitioners' Guidance Note. Gender and Development Network, 2018.

ensuring your toc is gender transformative – defining your outcomes

'Theory of Change is simply an ongoing process of reflection to explore change and how it happens – and what that means for the part you play in a particular context and programme.'[37]

A Theory of Change (ToC) acts as a compass[38] and sets out your ideas for how change towards the programme or project objective will happen. The process to build the ToC should be participative and based on the information from the gender power analysis. You will need to identify the long-term changes the programme is seeking, and to define the outcomes and strategies you will use to achieve these changes. The ToC must be revisited regularly, and adjusted in response to ongoing monitoring and evaluation.

To help develop your Theory of Change, ask the following questions:

1. Which gender-transformative changes or outcomes are you seeking to achieve?
What does positive change for women, girls, gender non-conforming people and members of marginalized populations look like? What overall long-term impact do you want to see? What are the different elements of this? At what different levels/change areas (see the TLWR framework, Figure 2) will these occur?

2. With whom will you collaborate to make change happen?
Which **alliances, collaborations or relationships** will you establish to advance these social change processes? How can Oxfam use its role as broker to ensure that women's rights organizations and feminist movements lead and shape this work? How will you engage these key actors? (See section 7.)

### 3. How will you make change happen?
Which social and political change processes will contribute to achieving these gender-transformative changes and in what sequence will these occur? Build a causal pathway by working out the most strategic interventions and social change processes that will bring about the expected outcomes (see section 8).

4. Identify your assumptions
What are your **assumptions** about how and why the proposed actions will lead to these outcomes, and about the connections between outcomes?

5. Review, adapt and learn
How will you measure progress and learn from your interventions? Are your assumptions still valid? Do you need to change your strategy?
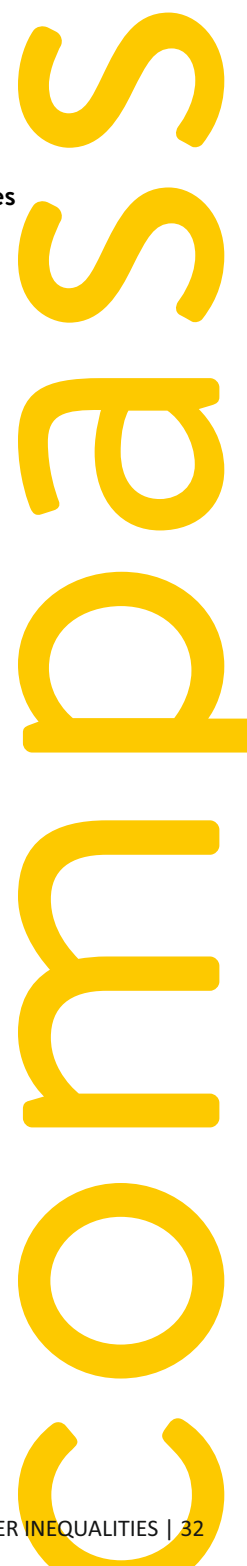
While project frameworks often include gender activities, in many cases these are not linked to clearly defined outcomes.[39] As described in section 2, a gender-transformative approach often goes hand in hand with a focus on outcomes over outputs.

In order to achieve gender transformation, we need to develop a Theory of Change with outcomes that aim to achieve change **across all four quadrants or change areas** of the TLWR framework: individual/informal, individual/formal, systemic/informal and systemic/formal. You also need to determine which **levels of change** (individual to systemic) are the most strategically important for your project and partnership in this particular context, and set out how your programme will influence the women, men, groups or structures that you have targeted.

Analysis of Oxfam resilience programmes[40] **using the TLWR framework shows that they** tend to focus on change and building capacities at the individual level, but much less on transforming systems, both formally (laws and policies) and informally (discriminatory norms).[41] This needs to change in order for us to be able to address the root causes of the factors limiting women's scope to absorb and adapt to shocks and stresses. In practical terms, this could mean trialling a new approach in one of the quadrants where your work is least well-developed, or moving from a focus on individual leadership, e.g. with women entrepreneurs, to a more collective approach – perhaps in partnership with local organizations.

To achieve gender transformation, resilience programmes need to challenge existing cultural norms about the roles of women, girls, men and boys in communities. Influencing beyond household and community levels is also critical for achieving impact: engagement at the policy level is needed to remove formal obstacles to the realization of women's rights.

For example, it is not enough to design actions to support women to cope with violence, or to challenge and change discriminatory norms; laws and policies on gender-violence must also be changed. For example, an Oxfam research report on social norms in Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean and the Pacific, recommended that, when addressing violence against women, 'a gender transformative approach should include a focus on challenging and changing the social norms that make violence acceptable; promote models of male sexuality that do not depend on controlling, dominating and entitlement over women's bodies; and promote healthy relationships'.[42]

While building individual capacities is very important, systemic change will only happen when women's voices are heard in the formal processes and agendas of authorities and institutions. And as much as we develop people's individual capacity to embrace change, the change will not be sustained if we do not also dismantle discriminatory norms.

We know that building individual and collective resilience takes time; however, with care and intention, small projects with shorter-term funding should be conceived of as stepping stones on a path towards a well-thought-through, longer-term process of change. As long as we are clear with our feminist partners about that longer-term vision, we can have more confidence in the smaller contributing steps required to realize this deeper change.

Examples of how to formulate gender-transformative resilient development outcomes

Resilience programme outcomes are often expressed in terms of building the three resilience capacities described in the Oxfam Resilient Development Framework:[43]

• **Absorptive capacity:** The capacity to 'bounce back' after a shock. It involves anticipating, planning for, coping with and recovering from specific shocks and stresses.

• **Adaptive capacity:** The ability to make adjustments in order to better manage or adapt to a changing situation. It is about flexibility, and being able to make incremental changes on an ongoing basis through a process of continuous adjusting, learning and innovation.

• **Transformative capacity:** The ability to address the structural or root causes that create risk and vulnerability. It represents a fundamental reassessment of development pathways in order to eradicate poverty and inequality.

To reinforce resilience capacities, we need to adopt a gender-transformative approach to the resilience outcomes. If we are to achieve our goals and vision in the context of increasing shocks, stresses and volatility, all three resilience outcomes/capacities need to be integrated in strategies and programmes.[44]

Example

In Senegal, Oxfam enabled rural women to form savings groups, which contributed to women's absorptive and adaptive capacities to cope with shocks and stresses. The programme also promoted women's agency to exercise their rights and to challenge the power dynamics that limit their access to resources and participation in decision making. Women are members of advocacy groups to call on local authorities to fulfil their rights, including the right to own land. By taking actions with long-term implications, the women are laying the foundations of a more resilient future for their entire communities.[45]

Using the four quadrants/change areas of the TLWR framework, and based on the information gathered in your gender power analysis, you can now formulate specific outcomes for your ToC. Answer the following questions (as relevant) – you should be able to turn the answers into outcomes, as shown in the examples on the next page.

Figure 5.
Turning the answers from your gender and power analysis into outcomes

TLWR CHANGE AREA	QUESTION	ANSWER	DRAFT OUTCOME(S)
1. CONSCIOUSNESS AND CAPABILITIES (Individual informal)	According to your analysis of the differential experiences of women, men and gender non-conforming people, what needs to change in terms of **consciousness and capabilities?**	*EXAMPLE: Women do not assume roles and leadership in cooperatives and markets. To change this, women can organize themselves in groups to increase awareness, solidarity, cooperation and confidence.*	*EXAMPLE: Women are aware, confident and have the skills to assume new leadership roles in the cooperatives and markets.*
2. RESOURCES (Individual formal)	What legitimizes and facilitates the differences between how women, men and gender non-conforming people experience **access to resources, power and control?**	*EXAMPLE: Women are told by community leaders that they don't have a legal right to inherit land from their fathers, despite the national law which states that they do. Women need to understand their legal rights so that they can inherit land and address community leaders to dispel misinformation.*	*EXAMPLE: Women understand their legal rights to property inheritance. Women successfully engage with community leaders to increase leaders' awareness of and support for women's property inheritance rights.*
3. NORMS AND EXCLUSIONARY PRACTICES (Systemic informal)	According to your gender and power analysis of the differential experiences of women, men and gender non-conforming people, what needs to change in terms of **cultural norms?**	*EXAMPLE: Discriminatory gendered power dynamics exist within the household and community. Men need to change their attitudes towards women's participation and decision making in groups.*	*EXAMPLE: Women participate and influence decision making in groups. Men have changed their attitudes towards women's participation and decision making in community groups.*
4. RULES AND POLICIES (Systemic formal)	According to your analysis of the differential experiences of women, men and gender non-conforming people, what needs to change in terms of **policy, laws or government actions?**	*EXAMPLE: Policy discriminates against women by saying that only one person in a household can be a member of a cooperative. Community members need to get organized to advocate for and influence change.*	*EXAMPLE: Community members are organized and advocate for changes at policy level to change the number of persons within each household that can participate in cooperatives.*

Source: Adapted from Oxfam. (2019). Oxfam's Guide to Feminist Influencing.

Figure 6 below gives some **examples of absorptive, adaptive and transformative outcomes** that were arrived at by applying the TLWR framework. Both the examples themselves and their classification under one capacity or another (in particular absorptive and adaptive) are **context-specific** (e.g. asset ownership may be considered a feature of both absorptive or adaptive capacity, depending on the context/type of shocks or whether it is used as a savings or recovery device).

Figure 6:
Examples of absorptive, adaptive and transformative resilience outcomes using the TLWR framework

1. CONSCIOUSNESS AND CAPABILITIES (Individual informal)	2. RESOURCES (Individual formal)
ABSORPTIVE CAPACITIES Vulnerable women's increased ability to cope with shocks, stresses and trauma. Community awareness of the risks of negative coping strategies, e.g. early marriage, substance abuse. Proactive support from men at household and community level to increase women's mobility and access to services. Community has confidence to cope with shocks.[46]	**ABSORPTIVE CAPACITIES** Free and safe access to public spaces. Possession of civic documentation (nationality, birth certificate, ID, health card). Free and safe access to services, cash savings, remittances, insurance, humanitarian assistance. Ability to pay for certain services, e.g. processing grain at a mill to free up time. Involvement in or membership of local groups, e.g. producer group, religious/social group, women's organization, etc.
ADAPTIVE CAPACITIES Aspirations/confidence/ability to adapt, e.g. to diversify livelihoods, invest and plan for the future. Control over income and purchasing decisions, e.g. to buy or sell livestock. Increased knowledge and positive behavioural changes and attitudes regarding gender equality.	**ADAPTIVE CAPACITIES** Women's access to and ownership of land and assets. Women's greater economic power and autonomy in decision making. Women have access to information, e.g. weather forecasts or climate change information, and can use this for decision making. Awareness of existing regulations and interaction with local institutions.
TRANSFORMATIVE CAPACITIES Changes to gender-based power structures at household, community and institutional levels, e.g. flexibility regarding the gendered division of roles and responsibilities within the household, community and institutions. Enhanced technical skills and confidence of local women activists and leaders for influencing communities and decision makers on sensitive issues such as land rights in risky environments.	**TRANSFORMATIVE CAPACITIES** Formal institutions, e.g. government departments, adopt TLWR learning and practices. Progressive laws on citizenship, marriage and family planning.

3. NORMS AND EXCLUSIONARY PRACTICES
(Systemic informal)

4. RULES AND POLICIES
(Systemic formal)

ABSORPTIVE CAPACITIES

Community protection mechanisms to prevent and address gender-based violence.

Informal safety nets and referral systems.

Social cohesion and support; solidarity among women.

ADAPTIVE CAPACITIES

Women, gender non-conforming people and their organizations are included in decision-making processes in all matters that affect them.

There is an enabling environment for women's empowerment and self-organization.

TRANSFORMATIVE CAPACITIES

Prevalence of positive cultural norms, practices and religious beliefs that mitigate conflict, negative coping strategies and violence against women and girls.

Eradication of all forms of gender-based violence.

Recognition of women as leaders and influencers.

Unpaid care work redistributed among family members and between the household and the state, enabling women to engage in activities of their choice.

ABSORPTIVE CAPACITIES

Institutions respond in a timely way to gender-based violence, and protect and assist survivors.

Continual availability of clear water, renewable fuel for domestic use, and access to healthcare services.

ADAPTIVE CAPACITIES

Equal representation and treatment in community committees, with procedures to ensure that the voices of women and marginalized groups are heard.

Local government is responsive and accountable to the initiatives and needs of women's groups.

Women have access to markets, communal natural resources, agricultural services and infrastructure, and to institutions and policy-making processes.

Active national platforms are in place for policy dialogue to influence ministries on the allocation of resources.

New livelihood opportunities are available and taken up by women.

TRANSFORMATIVE CAPACITIES

Institutions and policies criminalize gender-based violence and any sort of discrimination on the basis of gender or sexual identity/orientation; accountability mechanisms are in place to monitor women's rights.

Law ensures equal access to and control of land and other resources.

Women's groups and gender non-conforming people have access to political spaces, civil society and media, to influence all policies.

FURTHER READING
Systems Thinking: An introduction for Oxfam programme staff. Oxfam, 2015.

Developing a Theory of Change: A Facilitator's Guide. Oxfam, 2014.

Theory of Change Thinking in Practice. Hivos, 2015.

CAMSA resources on using Theory of Change. Oxfam, 2015.

Measuring Gender Dynamics in Resilience: Tools for Integrating Gender into Resilience-Focused Programs. Mercycorps, 2018.

ensuring your toc is gender transformative – working collaboratively

Working collaboratively with multiple stakeholders is one of the change pathways identified in Oxfam's Framework for Resilient Development. All Oxfam projects are implemented in partnership with local civil society – both NGOs and community-level organizations. This creates a bridge to communities and helps ensure that our approaches to building resilience are tailored to the local context.[47] Supporting women's organizations, networks and platforms is one of the main strategic areas and points of entry for Oxfam to work on Transformative Leadership for Women Rights.[48]

To pursue gender transformation in resilience-oriented programming and in line with the feminist principle 'nothing about us without us', **it is essential to broaden Oxfam's strategic alliances to include women's movements and women's rights organizations.** We can do this by learning from Oxfam's gender justice teams and forming non-traditional partnerships at global, regional, national and local levels. This includes stronger engagements with eco-feminists, women environmental activists, feminist journalists and academics. It also means prioritizing feminist themes in our work with other stakeholders who are implementing women's right agendas, and ensuring that our work is shaped and led wherever possible by women's movements and women's rights organizations. There is abundant evidence that women's organizations have an indispensable role in promoting gender equality. They are better able than mixed organizations to create spaces for women to discuss what is important for them.[49] Our evaluations show that when we work with women's organizations our work is better informed, better implemented, and has deeper impacts for the whole of the communities and constituencies we are working with.[50]

Working collaboratively with different stakeholders for gender transformation involves:

- Being guided by Oxfam's feminist principles in all relationships with stakeholders, partners and allies, and where necessary, negotiating principles, values and approaches to development.

- Giving long-term and flexible support to partners – particularly women's groups – rather than short-term and/or sporadic engagement,[51] and recognizing and supporting partners' capacity for gender transformation.

- Recognizing the importance of women's collective action;[52] working with women's rights organizations – especially those of ethnic and indigenous minorities[53] – and with gender non-conforming people's groups and organizations.

- Including women, gender non-conforming people and their organizations in decision-making processes, so that women's rights actors and the feminist analysis and expertise they bring are central to these processes, their organizations are strengthened, their voices are amplified and their projects supported.[54]

- Acknowledging, mapping and supporting existing local capacities, systems and structures – including grassroots organizations, women's rights

organizations, and formal and informal health, education, legal and governance systems – that promote women's wellbeing and empowerment and gender justice.[55]

- Emphasizing the physical and psychological wellbeing and solidarity of affected populations when building resilience capacities, rather than focusing only on structures and assets.

- Designing interventions that allocate financial and other resources directly to local communities and other stakeholders.

- Establishing and maintaining mutually respectful relationships with academic and research institutions that specialize in gender equality.

- Engaging with men and boys to benefit those who are negatively affected by discriminatory gender social norms and policies, and to prevent backlash.[56] Staying alert to and managing resistance and backlash at local level. Our project evaluations show that when we work with (specific groups of/influential) men as allies and partners rather than targets of an action, we see greater genuine engagement in and ownership of the shifts in power and resources envisaged by the project.[57]

Gender transformation and feminist principles are becoming accepted points of reference (and language) in international organizations. However, it is important to **remember that these concepts may be unfamiliar to Oxfam staff and local partners – and difficult for local communities to accept.** Feminist concepts and associated approaches and strategies must be explicitly and sensitively discussed with partners using context-specific language, framing and examples to avoid misunderstandings and to reach agreement on what is possible and effective in practice.

Oxfam's research[58] has highlighted certain tensions that can arise when adopting feminist principles, such as balancing respect for the autonomy of partners and other stakeholders with the need to address and overcome their reluctance to adopt gender-transformative approaches. This reluctance has various sources: lack of familiarity with the relevant ideas and their application (or simply lack of time to digest and internalize them), influence of the social environment, or staff members' lack of authority to make decisions. Failing to resolve this conflict often comes at the cost of real progress on gender transformation, which can become deprioritized in the interest of delivering agreed results in a hurry, or of maintaining good relations and leverage with national power structures and donors.

This points to the need for careful and early negotiations when promoting gender transformation and feminist principles, as well as a 'slow and steady' context-specific approach to gender-transformative action. Gender-awareness training and other activities to promote gender equality should draw on aspects of local culture, traditions and religion which uphold principles of respect and fairness to counteract negative gender norms and stereotypes, and promote true transformation. Gender transformation requires a shifting of power, and those who have power in the status quo may resist any such changes.

Case study: Partnering for gender transformation in Myanmar[59]

In Myanmar, Oxfam's Durable Peace Programme (DPP) works in a consortium of national organizations and international NGOs. Its main purpose is to support local civil society's contributions to durable peace, security, stability, sustainable development and gender equality in Kachin and Northern Shan states.

The DPP's approach could be considered gender transformative, since its stated aims concern women's social, economic and political empowerment, as well as their leadership and gender equality. Despite this, in the DPP's planning documents there is a marked absence of feminist language or ambition regarding gender transformation. This reflects the fact that DPP brings together members of very different orientations and personal and professional backgrounds, and that in Myanmar as a whole, the words 'feminism' and 'feminists' have extremely negative connotations. This is to the extent that 'Even female women's rights activists often deny being feminists, trying to avoid being labelled as such.'[60]

This highlights a tension that sometimes arises from the values of mutual respect and autonomy that are central to Oxfam's partnership practices, and its commitment to promoting gender-transformative approaches. DPP and partner staff are aware of this tension and are working to overcome it. For example, they are using Oxfam's Gender Leadership Programme, which is based on the TLWR model, to build understanding of gender justice and leadership, enabling participants to promote gender justice with confidence and authority.

FURTHER READING

The Power of Gender-Just Organizations. Oxfam Canada, 2012.

A Feminist Approach to Localization. Oxfam Canada, 2018.

Building Resilience Through Multi-Stakeholder Partnerships: Evidence from Oxfam's Resilient Development Portfolio. Oxfam, 2018.

Case study on the integration of TLWR approaches and strategies into the Burundi livelihoods project. Oxfam, 2017.

Raising Her Voice: The power to persuade. How women's voice and influence is strengthening governance and challenging inequalities. Oxfam, 2013.

The Dialogic Change Model to plan how to develop multi-stakeholder partnerships and collaborations. Collective Leadership Institute.

ensuring your toc is gender transformative – using the social change processes

Using your gender power analysis and Theory of Change, it's now time to **think about the processes that will build the capacities of communities.** Be sure to do this together with women's organizations you have partnered with.

According to Oxfam's Framework for Resilient Development, there are six closely connected social change processes that together develop absorptive, adaptive and transformative capacities (Figure 7). Each of the social change processes must adopt gender-transformative aims and approaches. As with the different levels and change areas in the TLWR framework, evidence shows that engaging in several interconnected social change processes simultaneously is more effective in promoting gender transformation.

Figure 7: The six social change processes

Accountable governing	01	
Informing	02	
Forward, flexible planning	03	

6 Social change processes

04	Learning and innovation
05	Securing & enhancing livelihood
06	Gender justice and empowerment

Source: Oxfam. (2016). The Future is a Choice: Oxfam's Framework and Guidance for Resilient Development.

The six social change processes are the strategies and entry points your programme will use to create change across the four quadrants/change areas of the TLWR framework.[61] The social change processes can, for example, be used to challenge discriminatory social norms and behaviours or to influence norms, processes, policies and their implementation. To complete your ToC, you can identify which social change processes would be most effective for achieving your chosen outcomes. The processes are outlined in greater detail, with examples, below.

1. Accountable governing

Accountable governing includes actions that build and sustain social justice and gender-transformative systems and institutions. It refers not only to formal but also informal governance, including customary community structures and institutions and their (political) cultures and ways of working. In order to secure transformational outcomes, programmes have to support women and other excluded groups to become part of these formal and informal processes and institutions, and in doing so, to transform the way in which these structures function and self-regulate. Oxfam's research[62] shows significant gaps in utilizing this social change process for gender transformation. Here are some ways to ensure that accountable governing processes contribute to gender-transformative outcomes:

- Promote transparency and accountability of government institutions. For example,

intensive engagement with local government structures can result in increased women's participation and leadership. It can also improve collaboration between different departments that have women leaders, and lead to increased access to services for women.

- Build government awareness of women's rights and capacities in the sustainable management and governance of natural resources, including land, water and biodiversity.

- Identify and remove the barriers that prevent women and gender non-conforming people from participating in and influencing public conversations about risk, vulnerability and fragility, their causes, and how risk is distributed within society. For example, the Oxfam training manual 'Gender Leadership in Humanitarian Action'[63] offers a practical guide to increasing women's participation and influence in national-level decisions about risk and vulnerability in emergency planning and response.

- Be conscious of power relationships and imbalances: promote people's rights to agency and voice, and call for more opportunities for participation. Changes in women's roles, empowerment, leadership and rights (including gender justice) are strong indicators of transformation.

Examples

In Bangladesh, with the help of local and national civil society, Oxfam successfully influenced national policy on the rights of domestic workers (who are almost exclusively women). 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 protection programmes and to services provided by non-governmental health and legal aid organizations. Government units have also been created specifically to protect domestic workers and their rights.[64]

In Pakistan, the very high level of involvement of women and people living with disabilities in disaster planning in Village and Union Disaster Management Committees (VDMCs) as a result of an Oxfam project was clearly seen as transformational by local stakeholders. Women took up positions of authority and responsibility in VDMCs, and often pushed the committees to accomplish broader developmental goals beyond disaster planning – including education for girls and better health facilities.[65]

2. Securing and enhancing livelihoods

This refers to processes for securing and building human, social, natural, physical and financial capital and household assets (based on the sustainable livelihoods framework).[66] To ensure that processes related to securing and enhancing livelihoods contribute to gender-transformative outcomes:

- In all interventions, include practical ways of recognizing, reducing and redistributing the unpaid care and household responsibilities assigned to women, as well as practical ways of ensuring that carers are represented in decision-making spaces at all levels, through a range of strategies. For example, Oxfam uses the Rapid Care Analysis (RCA)[67], a rapid assessment tool to gather evidence to promote the recognition of care work and identify practical interventions for reducing and sharing it.

- Identify the diversity of economic needs among women and girls, with tailored approaches for particularly economically vulnerable groups, including internally displaced people and refugees, indigenous peoples, women and girls living with disabilities, older women and gender non-conforming people, among others.[68]

- Do not encourage women and girls to engage in stereotypical occupations (such as caring, cooking and cleaning), and do not assume that they will take on these roles in the aftermath of disasters,

as this will reinforce rather than destroy the root causes of women's economic dependency and vulnerability.

- Transform the formal and informal structures and processes that underpin economic power by improving women's access to credit and savings opportunities, and linking these to financial services.[69]

- Prioritize the development, reform and implementation of formal policies that guarantee equal rights to natural assets and resources such as land, water, forests, etc. This is a route to fair and dignified livelihoods for all.

Example

In Northern Ghana, Oxfam's Climate Resilient Agriculture and Food Security (CRAFS) programme supported women and men 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 was a key component of the programme. It recognized 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.[70]

3. Informing

This relates to strategies and processes that develop information and knowledge to support decision making, particularly among women; and action to raise awareness of and support gender issues, particularly among men. Women's vulnerability is rooted in patriarchal structures that have consistently limited their access to education, information and resources. Access to information for decision making – especially concerning climate events, disaster risk reduction practices and peacebuilding initiatives – is necessary to build resilience capacities. Oxfam's role is not only to support the development of relationships, technologies and processes that generate appropriate information, but also to ensure that:

- These technologies and information are available to women, whether they live alone or in households.

- Information is communicated in ways that reflect women's level of literacy and the channels available to them (e.g. radio might be more appropriate than newspapers). Messages (content, wording, visuals, etc.) should be co-designed with different gender groups and be respectful of different sensitivities.

- Women's networks are valued for their ability to produce and exchange knowledge that is beneficial to resilience building. Women's local knowledge (of natural resources, climate events, social relations and norms, etc.) is recognized and put to good use.

- Barriers to women's meaningful participation in public conversations about risk, vulnerability and fragility are identified and addressed.

- Women can develop and use practical skills that augment women's ability to be – and be seen to be – capable leaders at different levels.[71]

Example
The Africa Climate Change Resilience Alliance (ACCRA), an Oxfam-led, multi-agency consortium operating in Uganda, Mozambique and Ethiopia from 2011 to 2016, resulted in the adoption of a government-led weather forecasting model that was specifically designed to reach rural women as well as men. Weather and climate information is essential to help farmers prepare for and adapt to changing weather patterns. Before Oxfam's advocacy, seasonal climate forecasts in Uganda used very technical language and were only available in English. Most rural populations, and women in particular, were unable to access or understand the forecasts. Today, thanks to the new system, rural women and men can now access this information via a variety of channels; it is presented using clear, non-technical terms and translated into the local language, enabling farmers to make informed decisions about when to plant, harvest or protect their crops.[72]

Example

A project implemented by the fisherwomen's network Samudran, and supported through Oxfam India by the United Artists Association, appears to have achieved remarkable results in terms of increasing household income and women's awareness of their rights and ability to demand them. It has done so by enabling fisherwomen to organize themselves into local self-help groups – which are linked to village institutions, then to district authorities – and to acquire relevant information and skills to improve their fishing methods and diversify their livelihood strategies.[73]

4. Flexible and forward-looking planning

This relates to processes that enable and enhance collective, forward-looking and flexible planning and decision making. It is needed, for example, to redistribute care responsibilities more equally between women and men and between households and the state, so that women are able to plan their own activities and manage change. To promote gender transformation, we need to recognize that:

- All institutions have gender norms and hierarchies which are likely to be reflected in their planning.

- The needs and priorities of different groups of women and men – especially concerning access to and control of resources in times of crisis – may differ fundamentally. The methodologies that are often used to 'consult' communities tend to privilege male choices and those of dominant (e.g. ethnic, religious, caste, tribal) groups and affiliations.

- In our role supporting the planning and management of processes and policy, we need to ensure that these processes are participatory, inclusive and gender balanced.

- Collective plans need to include and respond to specific gender-differentiated vulnerabilities and capacities.

- Planning and decision-making processes should ensure leadership from women's rights and feminist organizations, and should be built on stakeholder collaboration to explore ways of addressing the longer-term drivers of fragility and stress.

- At the household level, women and men should be supported to shift the burden of care so that it is equitably shared, creating space for women to plan their own activities and to innovate and manage change.

- Gender-transformative approaches and activities are not cost-free. They require investments of money, time and skills.

5. Learning and innovation

•   This social change process is about enabling people to learn together, support experimentation and increase the potential for innovation (social and technological). We need to adopt inclusive learning practices that value the knowledge of women and marginalized groups, and that make new insights, knowledge and technology accessible and relevant to all. Innovation is necessary to accelerate progress towards gender equality and thus to resilience. This also calls on us to:

• Establish and promote secure accountability and learning systems and practices for gender transformation among all staff, including managers, partners and allies. This includes acknowledging and understanding failure, so that lessons can be learnt from accumulated collective experience and accurate information.

• Recognize and support – financially and in other ways – grassroots women's development innovations that build community resilience.

• Embrace and learn from innovative forms of organizing – for example, the 'Me Too' movement, the School Strike for Climate – and from the technical capacities (e.g.

in ICT and social media) of young people and particularly of young women's organizations. Oxfam's RootsLab pilot[75] (see below) is a great young feminist-led example of how organizations like Oxfam can make a valuable contribution to innovations supporting social and political change.

• Systematically use feminist principles and methodologies in all research associated with resilience programming. Initiate dialogues with feminist researchers and more broadly, to include a diversity of voices and forms of knowledge.[76]

Example

*   Deep-rooted gender inequality prevents millions of young women and gender non-conforming people from taking control of their own lives. Not enough money or resources go to them directly to help them address, innovate around and combat these challenges. In Lebanon, FRIDA (The Young Feminist Fund), Global Fund for Women, Oxfam and The Young Foundation have joined together to adapt a 'social innovation lab' approach to advance young women and trans youths' rights, leadership and collective action. The 'RootsLab' model aims to empower a new generation of young women and trans activists, especially those who have not previously had access to traditional funding opportunities to become an active part of, and in turn to strengthen, their local women's rights and feminist movements.[77]*

6. Gender justice and empowerment

Gender justice and empowerment is a stand-alone process as well an aim that runs through the five other social change processes. Specific strategies on gender justice and empowerment can include:

• Building individual knowledge and transformative leadership for collective impact.

• Enabling women's rights organizations, networks and platforms to be autonomous, and helping women to exert greater influence in mainstream institutions.

• Supporting men to take action on women's rights.

• Promoting collaboration to influence social norms and informal decision-making processes and policies and their implementation.

• Promoting collaboration to influence formal decision-making institutions, processes, policies and their implementation.

• Assessing the risk of increased exposure to gender-based violence, especially violence against women and girls, and proposing mitigation and management measures.

Example

Oxfam's Raising Her Voice programme increased the voice and influence of over one million marginalized women. From 2008 to 2013, the programme supported 19 projects across four continents, working to ensure that women's voices influence decision making about services, public spending, policies and legal frameworks. The programme proactively sought to understand and address power relationships, operating at multiple levels by:
- *Developing broad-based, creative alliances, including with influential men.*
- *Strengthening personal knowledge and confidence among marginalized women, including by tackling gender-based violence.*
- *Developing women's leadership at community level.*
- *Increasing women's representation in political spaces.*
- *Facilitating structural change (e.g. through gender-sensitive legislation and investment).*

ensuring your MEAL is gender transformative

As discussed above, evidence shows that women, men, girls, boys and gender non-conforming people are exposed to the same risks in different ways, and are exposed to different risks, determining their differentiated vulnerability. Monitoring, Learning and Evaluation (MEAL) data therefore needs to provide relevant gender-disaggregated and differentiated information that captures women's and men's different experiences and perceptions of risks, shocks and stresses, and their different resilience capacities.

Ensuring that your MEAL system is gender transformative does not just mean including gender-sensitive indicators and monitoring and evaluating gender justice outcomes and outputs; it also means using gender-transformative methodologies, and considering how and by whom MEAL is done. This might entail breaking down the units of analysis (e.g. household, community) in a gender-differentiated and disaggregated way, and gaining as much detail as possible by using an intersectional lens (e.g. capturing data on young girls with disabilities, illiterate women in urban areas, Muslim women and men in the community, etc). It means rethinking who should be on the teams that conduct MEAL activities, and tracking progress towards gender justice goals, including relevant intermediate outcomes.[78]

To capture change, MEAL processes 'must be consciously attuned to existing gender and power-based dynamics'[79] which you have mapped and analysed through a gender and power analysis. That includes tracking how the programme affects those dynamics and intentionally provokes structural change. **The main features of gender-transformative MEAL are:**
1) it is built on recognition of gender-based differences in the context;
2) it uses gender-sensitive methodologies and methods;
3) it focuses on the transformation of gendered power relations;
4) it monitors and evaluates gender-related outcomes; and
5) it generates knowledge that is relevant for advancing gender transformation in the particular context.

To help make sure that MEAL takes the complexity of gender-transformative change into account:[80]

- Support partners to take the lead in MEAL practices, while building their capacity to do so. Encourage broad participation by using participatory tools and methods (quantitative and qualitative) and, in particular, by removing barriers to participation.

- Understand knowledge generation as a process by which knowledge can be produced, disseminated and used in ways that either transform gender and power relations or perpetuate existing unequal power relations, and use it as the former.

- Recognize non-linearity and complexity. This includes tracking and capturing negative impacts and reactions, resistance and unexpected outcomes, and adopting measures to mitigate these.

- Collect and use gender-disaggregated data: this means thinking about who in the household you are asking for information that captures women's and men's different experiences and perceptions of risks, shocks and stresses, and their different resilience capacities, accounting for other intersecting factors such as sexual orientation, ethnicity, age or class, according to the context (i.e. going beyond simple definitions such as 'woman head of household' versus 'man head of household').

- Use gender-transformative indicators that measure changes over time. These could include redistribution of care work in the household, women's participation in local planning processes, or the outcome of advocacy initiatives by women's groups.[81]

- Consider differences between the vulnerabilities, exposure to and perceptions of risk of women, men and gender non-conforming people, as well as their differentiated resilience capacities, to identify appropriate gender-sensitive MEAL indicators. Always bear in mind that gender interacts with other power dynamics, such as ethnicity or class, in

ways that affect people's resilience capacities. Indicators should be sensitive to such power dynamics.[82]

- Monitor power relations, including any negative effects of changes (e.g. a rise in domestic violence as a reaction to women's empowerment). To track changes, we need to ensure we have the right baseline data.

- Use culturally appropriate feedback mechanisms that are accessible and acceptable to women and girls. Feedback processes need to be interactive so they can assess a programme's effectiveness, not just its efficiency.

Example

In Northern Ghana, Oxfam's Climate Resilient Agriculture and Food Security (CRAFS) programme MEAL system defined indicators that reflect power dynamics and therefore allowed for tracking gender-transformative change. Indicators include: women becoming leaders and engaging with power holders; instances of gender stereotypes around women and men's roles in agricultural production being challenged; measures to ensure that women's voices are heard in media channels; and women's participation in local development planning processes.

Example

In 2012, gender staff from Oxfam MEECIS (Middle East, Eastern Europe and Commonwealth of Independent States) jointly developed a Gender Justice Operational Plan, which seeks to address some of the major internal barriers to Oxfam's vision of 'putting women's rights at the heart of all we do'. The plan includes targets and indicators for increasing programme quality (including an assessment of the quality of new Programme Implementation Plans (PIPs), and a gender justice objective for all staff. A first review of the plan's implementation in 2014 found that these targets had already contributed to driving organizational and cultural change and improvements in programme quality: 'An increase in the number of PIPs with at least one outcome and indicator for transformative change in women's lives, from 33% in 2012 to 45% in 2014, and a fall in the number of proposals receiving the lowest score against newly introduced Gender Equality Markers, from 57% in 2012 to 0% in 2014.' The review also found a 142% increase in the funds transferred to women's rights organizations.

Case study:
Using MEAL to track (and contribute to) gender transformation

In Cuba, flexible and inclusive MEAL enabled programme staff to track gender-transformative change, while the monitoring process itself became a mechanism for empowering women and shifting social norms.

Following Hurricane Matthew in October 2016, Oxfam supported the recovery efforts in isolated regions of the country. Community Brigades were created, whereby self-selected women's groups monitored and reported progress towards resilience in their community, and made recommendations to community leaders and Oxfam project staff about the assistance needed. Their feedback determined how project funds were allocated, ensuring that activities were responsive to the specific needs of different population groups, based on their age, gender and locality.

The Community Brigades also advised households on safety measures and reconstruction, and oversaw the distribution of life-saving equipment such as water tanks, filters, mosquito nets, etc. Some women became local leaders, breaking away from the social norms that previously prevented them from taking on leadership roles.

The Community Brigades reported potential safety problems in house reconstruction to the municipal authorities, who corrected these faults to ensure that homes are better able to withstand future hurricanes – thus making an important contribution to resilience. This innovative way of democratizing the monitoring process engaged the affected population, enhanced women's self-esteem and status in the community, and improved communication between citizens and community authorities.

FURTHER READING

Applying Feminist Principles to Program Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning. Oxfam, 2017.

Oxfam podcast: How to Measure Resilience Capacities – Experience from Oxfam's Impact Evaluations. Oxfam, 2019.

A 'How To' Guide to Measuring Women's Empowerment: Sharing experience from Oxfam's impact evaluations. Oxfam, 2017.

Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning for Resilience: A companion guide. Oxfam, 2018.

FURTHER RESOURCES FROM THE RESILIENCE KNOWLEDGE HUB

This guide is one of several pieces of work on gender justice and resilience published by the Oxfam Resilience Knowledge Hub.

Gender and resilient development: a timeline of Oxfam's learning outcomes

2017

[Gender Justice: Enabling the Full Performance of the System](#)[86] aimed to complement Oxfam's Framework for Resilient Development, by helping Oxfam staff understand the importance and implications of gender-mainstreaming initiatives that work to achieve resilient development.

2018

The 'Gender Justice in Resilience Challenge' brought together evidence of good practice from 19 countries, resulting in the publication of [Gender Justice in Resilient Development: Sharing programme learning from Africa, South Asia and Central America.](#)[88]
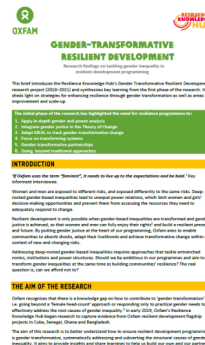
[Gender Equality and Resilient Development: Evidence from Oxfam's Resilient Development Portfolio](#) identifies where, how and why Oxfam's approach to resilient development has created impact.

2019

The **First Phase Synthesis Report** on the RKH's feminist and participatory action research was finalized. This focuses on gender transformation and includes a literature review and analysis of resilience flagship programmes in Cuba, Senegal, Bangladesh and Ghana.

2020-21

Transforming Gender Inequalities: Practical guidance for achieving gender transformation in resilient development (this guide) describes how to use the Transformative Leadership for Women's Rights framework for gender-transformative resilience programming.

The research report **Gender-Transformative Resilience Programming: Experiences from Bangladesh and Myanmar**[89] describes two in-country learning journeys to share learning on how resilience programmes can achieve gender transformation.

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NOTES

[1] The term gender is used to refer to a hierarchical social structure, an internal sense of identity and as a synonym for sex. For the purposes of this guide, the term is defined as 'the social attributes and opportunities associated with being male and female' and the relationship between them, which determine 'what is expected, allowed and valued in a woman or a man in a given context' and are socially constructed and learned through socialization. (From: Oxfam's Gender Mainstreaming for Transformative Development guidance note.)

[2] This guide shares lessons from research carried out by the Oxfam's Resilience Knowledge Hub in 2019. In the first phase of research, we compiled the lessons learned in Oxfam's resilient development flagship projects in Cuba, Senegal, Ghana and Bangladesh. In the second phase, Oxfam teams in Myanmar and Bangladesh went on a 'learning journey' to explore how they can achieve gender transformation in their programming.

[3] The Oxfam International (OI) Executive Board committed to the feminist principles in 2018. The intention was to make Oxfam's commitment to gender-transformative change more explicit and bring about such change both internally within the Oxfam Confederation, and externally in Oxfam's programmes and advocacy.

[4] Oxfam Canada. (2018). Feminist Principles: What they are and how they serve as a guidepost for our work.

[5] B. Leduc. (2009). Guidelines for Gender Sensitive Research. ICIMOD.

[6] The concepts and processes of transformational programming are described in detail in several Oxfam documents, including Oxfam. (2014). Transformative Leadership for Women's Rights: An Oxfam Guide. J. Kloosterman with C. Safier and Oxfam. (2012). Ending Violence Against Women: An Oxfam Guide.

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[10] Assumptions that everyone is cisgender (i.e. that everyone's biological sex at birth corresponds with their gender identity and expression).

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[16] Oxfam. (2013). No Accident: Resilience and the inequality of risk. D. Hillier and G.E. Castillo.

[17] Oxfam Canada. (2014). Resilience in Times of Food Insecurity. Op. cit.

[18] Oxfam America. (2017). Transformative and Feminist Leadership for Women's Rights. S. Wakefield. p. 7.

[19] Oxfam. (2017). Transformative Leadership for Women's Rights. Global Programme Framework.

[20] The TLWR framework is based on five interconnected 'pillars', but for the purposes of this tool we have focused on the four 'quadrants' most relevant to our resilience programming. The fifth pillar – accountability – focused on how we understand this change to happen (i.e. internally in our organizations and movements, as well as externally in our work/activisms, etc.) and has been further elaborated in the last sections of this guide.

[21] Oxfam. (2013). Women's Collective Action in the Honey Sector in Ethiopia: Involving Marginalized Women in Collective Action.

[22] Ibid.

[23] K. Miller and R. Jones. (2019). Towards a Feminist Funding Ecosystem. The Association for Women's Rights in Development (AWID).

[24] Oxfam Canada. (2014). Resilience in Times of Food Insecurity. Op. cit.

[25] Ibid.

[26] Oxfam. (2020). Research Ethics: a practical guide.

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[29] Oxfam Canada. (2014). Resilience in Times of Food Insecurity. Op. cit.

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[39] Resilience Knowledge Hub gender and resilience research, phase 1.

[40] Ibid.

[41] For example, an evaluation of an Oxfam project in Indonesia revealed that while the project helped to boost women's earning capacity, it did not address power dynamics or gender attitudes in the communities. See Oxfam Australia. (2018). Building Resilience through Multi-Stakeholder Partnerships: Evidence from Oxfam's Resilient Development Portfolio. E. Boydell, J. Webb and C. Sterrett, p. 5.

[42] Oxfam Research Reports. (2018). Let's Stop Thinking It's Normal: Identifying patterns in social norms contributing to violence against women and girls across Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean and the Pacific, p. 38.

[43] Oxfam. (2016). The Future is a Choice. Op. cit.

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[45] From: Oxfam. (2019). Gender Justice in Resilient Development: Sharing programme learning from Africa, South Asia and Central America. Op. cit., p. 12.

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