

Grand Bargain in 2021:
Annual Self Report – Narrative Summary

Name of Institution:

Oxfam International

Point of Contact (please provide a name, title and email to enable the consultants to contact you for an interview):

Asta von Stackelberg/ EA Global Humanitarian Team asta.vonstackelberg@oxfam.org

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(1) Reflecting on the information provided in the Excel spreadsheet, please highlight the 2 or 3 key outcomes or results relating to the Grand Bargain that your institution achieved in 2021?

2021 was still severely impacted by restrictions and Covid-19 pandemic consequences. However, Oxfam built on the adaptations and opportunities identified in 2020 developing them further. The integration of commitments and approaches in the strategic horizon plans¹ developed for humanitarian crisis and fragility are key advances in relation to the GB. Work streams 2,3+6 progressed especially in 2021.

Oxfam's investments in [local actor capacity& leadership](#) enabled local actors and Oxfam teams to integrate locally led action in regular humanitarian programs, and informed shifts to partner led programming across Oxfam's country programs and responses. Multi-year investments allowed strong local actor led DRR, resilience, response and recovery in Asia, Pacific& Latin American programs, innovative locally led networked response approaches in East Africa& Asia and strengthened roles& leadership of local and national NGOs in MENA.

Increased use of [Cash and Vouchers Assistance](#) across responses (spending reaching 24% in 2021) created space for an influential and ambitious CVA agenda strengthening dignity, resilience, and inclusion for marginalized populations. A growing number of Oxfam programs included objectives on financial, digital, and mobile inclusion (Philippines, Pacific, Kenya, Somalia), others explored group cash transfers and women's group/community focused modalities (Lebanon, South Sudan, and Burkina Faso), and a few looked at CVA as an early and anticipatory action tool (Philippines, Bangladesh, Kenya). This increase allowed us to explore areas of work across the Nexus as well as the social protection agenda ([Social Protection case studies](#)). A key enabler of this has been the sectorial CVA guidance (Protection, and upcoming WASH (PHP)& Gender). Oxfam maintained [high levels of engagement with other actors](#) focusing on cash coordination (supporting the CCD advocacy) and contributing to the cash caucus discussion, advocating for the integration of social protection and for partnership approaches to support LHL.

[Participation Revolution](#) initiatives mentioned in the 2020 GB report have further evolved and showed positive results and interest by other actors. Oxfam's social accountability work keeps developing. The Your Word Counts digital feedback system remains active in 12 countries and UNICEF has been rolling out a version with 12 implementing partners in OPT. While contributing to the sector with research and technical proposals, an internal new policy on CFM to strengthen practice is in the final stages of approval. Building on the successes of 2020 with the [Community Perception Tracker](#) for Covid-19, Oxfam has expanded the use of this tool to 13 countries across 4 regions (Asia, MENA, WAF and LAC). It enabled increased access and effective promotion of vaccines for refugees in contexts like Lebanon. Oxfam led operational research on the usefulness of CPT in responses in partnership with LSHTM and ACF (findings will be available in the course of 2022.) Oxfam's [Sanitweaks](#) initiative received further support and carried out sector trainings for WASH practitioners in countries like Iraq. By ensuring equal voice for all community members in consultations WASH programs are showing better levels of adaptation, inclusion, and definite results. 2022 will see the expansion of this initiative to different contexts and to all WASH work.

Finally, Oxfam's effort to [reduce management costs](#) by improving the efficiency of business support functions across the confederation remained a high priority and is expected to yield improvements in the coming financial years.

(2) Explain how outcomes contribute to achieving the Grand Bargain 2.0 enabling priority 1.

Through relevant NGO coordination platforms, national initiatives and working groups, as well as through the participation in the IASC Results Group 5 Oxfam ensured continuous [advocacy towards donors to enhance the quality and efficiency](#) of humanitarian funding. Oxfam is co-chairing (with UNICEF) a sub-group of IASC RG5 on humanitarian financing looking at current practices related to cascading overhead and indirect costs to partners. In 2021 the sub-group began work to identify best

¹ Horizon plans in Oxfam are 2-3 years strategic planning pieces integrated under the frame of [Oxfam's Global Strategic Framework \(2020-2030\)](#)

practices on sharing overheads from UN agencies and INGOs to national and local partners. In 2022 best practices will be identified through extensive consultation and guidance developed.

Oxfam has been advocating at the global/ national level for donors to contribute to [pooled funds](#) (country-based + other) and for direct access by local/ national NGOs. Our recommendations were informed by the Oxfam-led '[Desk review on Enhancing the Potential of Pooled Funds for Localisation](#)' (Final Report from 2020). In collaboration with Charter 4 Change (C4C), Oxfam developed a [briefing note](#) on how to increase accessibility for local actors to pooled funds. As a member of the UNOCHA Pooled Fund Gender Contact Group we worked on ways to better fund and integrate WROs.

Oxfam increased [multi-year investments](#) in the institutional capacities of local responders by developing multi-year projects that included capacity strengthening of local and national NGOs (incl. women-led/WROs). 2021 saw the end of multi-year programs focused on strengthening institutional capacity in Uganda, Bangladesh, and Iraq funded by the IKEA Foundation & SIDA. Strengthening the capacity of local responders remained a core focus of 8 other projects across 13 countries, and 8 more multi-year projects across 12 countries. Dedicated funding for actions aimed primarily at strengthening local capacity & leadership has proved difficult to mobilise. Oxfam tries to include [adequate 'direct' costs of overheads in project budgets](#) in line with our C4C commitments. We have begun to make flexible institutional, or 'core', support available to partners through sharing ICR received from donors, when this is allowed by donors and feasible for the Oxfam affiliate. In trying to institutionalise this, Oxfam has been challenged by requirements of different back donors, for instance on auditing partners for their use of ICR, or the methodologies to calculate ICR for partners. In 2021, Oxfam maintained good results on [transparency](#) across affiliates, increasing the number of activities published as well as the use of humanitarian elements in Covid-19 projects. Oxfam included LHL and WRO data points in IATI and internal mechanisms.

Quality funding is a key enabler for changes and evolutions in the system and we are looking forward to the advances of the quality funding Caucuses.

(3) Explain how the outcomes contribute to achieving the Grand Bargain 2.0 enabling priority 2.

Outcomes of [multi-year investments in local actors' capacities and leadership](#) proved essential in both, the leadership, capacity, and response delivery of communities affected by crises, and the CBOs and CSOs that represent them. These investments allowed Oxfam and partners to develop new modalities of engagement, deepening our INGO brokering role and providing technical and administrative backstopping for local actor led preparedness & response work. It also allowed to influence the humanitarian system, through local actor led networking & advocacy and by bringing together key stakeholders in the humanitarian ecosystems. Another important result of the investments in LHL were improved governance mechanisms and the engagement with and accountability to affected people and communities. An example is Oxfam's joint work in 2021 with ECOWEB and UN OCHA in the Philippines: The Alliance for Empowered Partnership (A4EP), supported by the UN Resident Coordinator, mapped the state of localization by organising a multi-stakeholder dialogue and put the affected population at the centre of the process. The aim was to promote and institutionalise the implementation of GB commitments on localisation and the participation revolution as well as to devise a localisation roadmap for the Philippines HCT. It generated space to explore synergies and linkages with existing coordination mechanism, donors and Philippine INGO networks, private sector, local and national CSOs and national authorities. Lastly, it sought to define a tracking mechanism crucial to the success of localisation in-country. The report of the Multi-Stakeholder Dialogue process, including the recommendations, can be found [here](#).

The [work in some specific areas further advanced the localization agenda](#) in Oxfam and for the sector. This is the case of the local partnerships sub-group of the GB Cash work stream created to ensure that the work on cash and localization aligns to the shift to GB 2.0. Oxfam's team developed technical guidance on CVA and localization to support this effort. Moving forward Oxfam remains an active member of the group hosted by CALP driving forward a participatory and inclusive agenda on CVA and localization alongside local and international actors. Oxfam also took part in the technical review

group that developed the guidance and tool on Group Cash Transfer, helping the agencies and GCT-supported groups with implementing the approach based on localization and transfer of decision-making power and agency to crisis-affected populations. Oxfam has successfully piloted this approach in Burkina Faso, Lebanon, and South Sudan with promising results in empowering women's groups and feelings of increased legitimacy in their communities.

Grand Bargain and cross-cutting issues

(4) How has your institution contributed to the advancement of gender equality and women's empowerment² in humanitarian settings through its implementation of the Grand Bargain? Which results/outcomes have been achieved in this regard?

Gender is the attribute that most persistently predicts poverty and powerlessness in our world today. Therefore, Oxfam in all its humanitarian work considers gender equality and women's empowerment as integral part of its vision to see a safe and just world, critical to its mission of addressing the root causes of poverty and inequality, and a key strategic area to further women's rights and gender justice. While working on [mainstreaming gender and GB commitments in its humanitarian responses](#) Oxfam has particularly focused on improving the [quality of its partnerships with WROs](#), supporting them as allies by creating partnerships that go beyond funding and influencing donor support, flexible funding and increasing their participation in decision making processes in the sector. To achieve this, Oxfam continues to [participate and influence in multiple gender, protection and GBV global/ national forums](#). In addition to its membership in the GB's Friends of Gender Group and the sub-work stream on Cash and Gender, Oxfam became co-chair of the IASC Gender and Nexus Global Task Force (with UN Women), a core member of the GBV Area of Responsibility, member of the INGO Working Group for the GBV Call to Action, member of the Global Protection Cluster, and member of the NGO Working Group on Women, Peace & Security, to lobby for stronger language on GBV in UNSC briefings and space and recognition of the role of WROs. In 2021 Oxfam was an active member of regional Gender in Humanitarian Action Working Groups (GIHA in MENA, WAF and Asia) and a member of the UNOCHA Pooled Fund Gender Contact Group dedicated to finding ways to better fund and integrate WROs into the funding processes at country level. For most of 2021, Oxfam's humanitarian response continued to be shaped by COVID-19, whether in analysing the gender differences, the potential and real impact of gender inequality (e.g. care work, livelihoods, access to education, discrimination), or by seeking new and better ways of working with partners, including WROs and WLOs. During the past year, Oxfam [increased by 17% the number of active women leadership and empowerment projects](#) (from 170 to 199) including in areas of DRR, humanitarian preparedness, the Women Peace and Security agenda, as well as GBV/VAWG, partnership with WRO increased by 20%.

(5) How has the humanitarian-development Nexus been strategically mainstreamed in your institutional implementation of the Grand Bargain commitments?

Oxfam developed strategic [horizon plans³ for vulnerable and fragile countries](#). This commitment to fragility provides a good foundation to advance the work across the humanitarian-development-peace Nexus (HDP). GB commitments (especially localization, participation & quality funding) are fundamental pieces of the strategic plans and deeply linked with the Nexus approach Oxfam is working at integrating. For its operationalization and to adapt ways of working, a reduced number of country offices will have access to an increased amount of flexible funding in 2022.

As a [result of different analysis and learning processes](#) aimed to capture experiences of working across the Nexus, Oxfam shared in 2021 the [briefing paper](#) "Transforming the Systems that Contribute to Fragility and Humanitarian Crises: Programming across the triple Nexus" outlining policy to address

² Refer to the IASC definitions of gender equality and women empowerment, available [here](#).

³ Horizon plans in Oxfam are 2-3 years strategic planning pieces integrated under the frame of [Oxfam's Global Strategic Framework \(2020-2030\)](#)

tensions and dilemmas when operationalizing the Nexus⁴. The briefing paper is a building block for the implementation of the horizon plan that together with the support capacities and all country efforts will contribute to the ending needs agenda. In some countries, like Somalia the Nexus approach is moving in clear alignment with the LHL agenda. In WAF, at regional level, a Nexus roadmap is being implemented to advance the thinking and action. [Oxfam is focusing on aligning vision and operations to improve results in volatile countries which requires adaptive capacities.](#)

Oxfam co-chaired the IASC Result Group 4 on triple Nexus focussing that in 2021 focused in bridging the gap between policy and practice. In 2021 the RG4 produced a [mapping of good practices](#) with examples from 16 countries; maintained a community of practices for practitioners; mapped guidance and tools for humanitarians to integrate peace; delivered [The Nexus collection podcast series](#) to capture learning, and the various points of views on specific aspects of the Nexus; and, participated and influence key meetings with donors and other stakeholders. As co-chair with UNDP, Oxfam promoted the integration of local actors' perspectives and practices in the key outcomes through by focussing on their role and their participation as members in the group. Through this [global engagement](#) Oxfam influences the Nexus agendas integrating key topics like localization& participation. Oxfam also co-chairs the Nexus& Gender group looking at pragmatic ways to unpack and tackle gender aspects across the HDPs work.

(6) Has your institution taken any steps towards improving risk sharing with its partners? If so, how?

In 2021 Oxfam strengthened some [ongoing initiatives and put in place new ones to improve integration of risk management principles, approaches, and tools](#) to better share risk (as opposed to risk transfers). In terms of global initiatives and coordination, Oxfam participated in the platform on Risk Sharing([Statement on risk sharing.](#))⁵, led by the Netherlands and ICRC, contributing to joint actions. This coordination helped to improve Oxfam's own risk sharing with partner organisations further.

Oxfam continued its investments in Safe Programming to increase awareness and capacity of both, Oxfam, and partners to understand and manage risks inherent in humanitarian action. To do so Oxfam developed high quality training resources, rolled out training and Training of Trainers events, and facilitated access to e-learning modules on Oxfam's learning platform. The joint understanding has increased our joint capacity to engage in risk management conversations.

Technical developments in [CVA](#) have integrated risk sharing elements. From the partnership and CVA tool kit, where we find specific examples as Oxfam's CVA Organizational Capacity Assessment Tool for Partners that incorporates information and analysis on risk enabling, analysis and mitigation strategy right from the on-set of partnership; to the CVA SOPs (to be released in 2022) in which safe programming has been incorporated throughout the project cycle.

[Open and transparent conversations](#) about risk are also increasingly part of partnership dialogue, aided by Oxfam's investments in awareness raising on the localisation agenda commitments, the Humanitarian Principles, and equitable partnering practices. In 2021 regional webinar series took place in Asia, West Africa, and MENA, bringing together staff from Oxfam, partner organisations and local actor allies. To further understand risk management and sharing, Oxfam Novib, together with the Dutch Relief Alliance (DRA) and C4C allies, invested in a research exploring the role of partnerships in principled humanitarian action in conflict contexts (report [here](#)). [Overall](#), in 2021 we improved approaches and tools, ensuring a better understanding and shared analysis of risks as core elements of the partnership and LHL agenda. Next year will see a more dedicated focus on Risk Sharing and its implications for Oxfam's programs, partnerships, and funding.

⁴ The briefing builds upon Oxfam's 2019 [discussion paper](#) on the triple nexus for Mutimandated organizations.

⁵ During the 2021 Annual meeting and in consultation, Signatories expressed a strong interest in advancing the risk-sharing agenda. The Netherlands, ICRC and InterAction are in the process of setting up a Risk Sharing Platform.