



## IMPROVING SAFEGUARDING AND CULTURE AT OXFAM

This report covers Oxfam's work from **April 2020 to September 2020** towards its Improving Safeguarding and Culture Plan. The Plan continues to strengthen our safeguarding policies and procedures, our transformation of working cultures, and in aligning this across Oxfam's international confederation. The headlines are as follows:

### Safeguarding

- In June 2020, Oxfam rolled out its new Global Case Management System for safeguarding, fraud and corruption. The system allows for strengthened data analysis and oversight across the confederation and will improve the quality and consistency of the management of cases. Over the last reporting period, **all required Safeguarding staff have been trained to use the Global Case Management System.**
- **The new Safeguarding Core Standards were rolled out as a key tool to bring together key policies and minimum standards into an easy-to-understand document to guide practice.** Furthermore, Oxfam has updated its Misconduct Reporting Standard Operating Procedures to ensure more efficient reporting of allegations to donors, authorities, and amongst Oxfam affiliates.
- **Oxfam continues to play a key role in inter-agency coordination mechanisms including the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) at both the technical and Principle's level.** Further, Oxfam is involved in numerous other interagency initiatives at global, regional, and country level. This includes Digna, Interaction, Bond, ACFID, etc. In order to promote coordinated safeguarding response at country level, Oxfam is participating in country based PSEA Networks.
- **Oxfam continues to adapt and improve its approach to safeguarding in the context of Coronavirus, including to increased virtual working.** Guidance and support are regularly provided to all teams across the confederation. Global Safeguarding leads participated in a real-time evaluation of Oxfam's Coronavirus response in order to identify good practices and areas where Safeguarding can be better integrated into Coronavirus programme interventions.
- **Over the reporting period, a range of online training courses have been developed and are currently being tested, prior to rollout.** These include a standard induction package for all Oxfam employees, training for Country Directors and other senior managers, and an in-depth course for Country Safeguarding Focal Points.

### Global Program

- **We have further strengthened our safeguarding capacity in countries with full time Safeguarding staff in countries that have large scale humanitarian programming, including in DRC, Yemen, Myanmar and Mozambique.** Dedicated safeguarding capacity will ensure that we embed a safer programming approach.
- Oxfam's country and regional teams are going through major change processes. Oxfam's presence will be phased out in a number of countries. Other countries will be clustered, will focus more on influencing programs or will focus more on responding to fragility. Oxfam is aware, that during change processes, the risks of power abuse and safeguarding can increase. To manage these risks, **we have developed additional Safeguarding guidance and training for countries that are undergoing these organizational changes.**
- **Online Safeguarding, Induction and Learning resources, including mandatory ones, have been updated and will now be made available to all countries.**
- **Oxfam Great Britain (GB) has established a risk assessment process which is now built into all new Oxfam programs.** This is part of Oxfam GB's response to the UK



Charity Commission and improves our safe programming work. All new or changed Oxfam GB contracts will go through a risk assessment which focuses on safeguarding. The safeguarding team reviews these assessments on a monthly basis to assure quality.

## Culture

- **Recent external events, including the call for racial justice by #BlackLivesMatter, have increased the need to examine the impact of racial inequality around the world.** The Oxfam Executive Board committed to ongoing global data collection on diversity and racial equity across the confederation and to significantly increase racial equity across our governance and at senior leadership levels as a priority. Oxfam will form an equality commission chaired by the Oxfam International Executive Director to spearhead our drive toward more diversity and inclusion. Oxfam's culture team has organized discussions attended by several hundreds of staff aimed at addressing institutional racism.
- **Staff wellness and wellbeing has been prioritised through webinars that have been attended by hundreds of staff.** An internal platform was created to encourage colleagues to express themselves on wellbeing. Oxfam works with a pool of internal coaches to provide training and support to leaders on various topics. These coaches are being trained to explicitly integrate Oxfam's organizational values in their coaching sessions.
- **Oxfam actively works with the sector on improving the working culture, especially during Covid-19.** Oxfam's Global Culture Lead participates in the Gender and Development Network's PSEAH Group, sharing lessons on Safeguarding and Organisational Culture during Covid-19, including how to keep focus on Safeguarding and organisational change during the pandemic.
- **Culture, values, ethics and ways of working are essential parts of the current Oxfam International Secretariat restructure.** The Culture Team supported the Oxfam International Management Team in developing improved ways of working. An ethical decision-making framework was developed to guide the final decisions.
- **Specific support has been provided to countries where over time Oxfam's presence will be phased out.** In partnership with the Horn, East and Central Africa region leadership, the Culture Team organized conversations in Rwanda, Sudan and Tanzania to support fellow colleagues. The sessions were safe spaces for colleagues to share frustrations while also co-creating possible solutions for their country program and the transition.

## HR

- **Oxfam has further improved its global process for performance management.** New guidance is provided on how to have quality and meaningful conversations between management and staff, with a specific focus on the staff wellbeing, linked to Oxfam Values and Feminist Leadership Principles.
- **Additional wellbeing resources have been developed and shared with staff,** taking into account the impact to staff wellbeing of Covid-19.
- As part of safer recruitment, **Oxfam has continued the implementation of the Inter-agency Misconduct Scheme.** Oxfam also engages with the Steering Committee for Humanitarian Response, encouraging other organisations to participate in the scheme.



## Gender Justice

- **During the reporting period, work has continued in Oxfam affiliates, regions and countries, to embed feminist principles into actions, ways of working, and behaviours.** In West Africa, leadership teams convened and planned to reflect feminist principles into their workplans and behaviours. Oxfam Belgium organized an organisation-wide workshop on feminist principles, focused on translating these into practice. Oxfam America has implemented a parental leave policy that gives equal leave entitlement to birthing and non-birthing parents, which is an example of feminist principles and has significant impact on reducing gendered power imbalances.
- **Gender Justice continues to be an integral part of Oxfam's global response to the coronavirus.** We focus on the short and long-term impacts on women, girls, gender diverse and marginalized people. Oxfam has called on governments, the private sector and relevant agencies to integrate issues such as data desegregation and intersectionality, women's role in the care economy, their disproportionate care workloads, limited access to sexual and reproductive health, dignified work for women, impacts on single headed households and the need for social protection. Oxfam also works on a global survey with hundreds of women's rights organizations and networks to gather data on the impact of Covid-19 on the women's rights sector.
- Violence against women and girls has increased. **We have been highlighting the urgent need for addressing patriarchal violence and changing norms with our campaign #LockdownPatriarchy.**

## Governance

- **A final proposal for Oxfam's global governance reform has been prepared.** Oxfam's Board of Supervisors will decide on the governance reform in October. The review includes constitutional amendments, further clarity on the roles, responsibilities and accountabilities of different governing bodies and new governance structure. A transition period has been planned until April 2021.



## **SAFEGUARDING DATA FOR PERIOD APRIL - SEPTEMBER 2020**

Oxfam continues to encourage its approximate 10,000 staff, 50,000 volunteers, 3,000 partner organizations and millions of people it works with in communities in 66 countries, to speak out and report concerns and incidents affecting them, even when the incident itself took place in the past. Oxfam has adopted commonly used definitions, including safeguarding terminology used by the United Nations.

In June 2020, Oxfam transitioned to a new case management system to support greater accountability and capacity to analyze our case data. We are in the process of manually verifying the data in the new system to ensure its accuracy and consistency as we continue to report publicly every six months.

### **Cases reported for the period April – September 2020**

The last case data report was for the period ending March 2020. For the period April to September 2020, a total of 88 cases were managed on the OI Safeguarding Register. This included 44 new cases that were registered during the reporting period. At the end of September 2020, 44 cases were closed, and 44 have been carried forward as open cases.

### **Closed Cases**

Closed cases are those where an allegation has been reviewed, investigated where necessary, an outcome reached and acted upon. There are some closed cases which include instances where the case was not upheld or did not proceed because a survivor did not want to continue.

Between 1st April and 30th September 2020, Oxfam closed 44 global safeguarding cases (this included cases which had been registered and carried forward from the previous period, ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2020).

Of the 44 closed cases, appropriate action was taken in 33 cases, (e.g. an investigation), while 10 were closed after a preliminary review. In 1 instance the complainant did not wish to go forward with actioning the complaint.

The outcomes of actions taken for the 33 actioned cases were:

- 21 cases upheld (64%) resulting in:
  - 9 dismissal
  - 6 disciplinary action
  - 6 non-disciplinary action e.g. training on safeguarding and code of conduct
- 7 cases were not upheld (21%)
  - 3 not upheld
  - 4 insufficient evidence
- 5 cases referred to other internal departments (e.g. HR or fraud); (15%)

The 44 closed cases included:

- 7 allegations of sexual abuse; (16%)
- 13 allegations of exploitation (including actions such as paying for sex); (30%)
- 11 allegations of sexual harassment; (25%)
- 4 allegations that involved children; (9%)
- 9 allegations of other internal reportable issues (such as bullying or other inappropriate conduct; sexual or romantic relationship against the code of conduct and conflict of interest policy); (20%)

A breakdown of the 44 closed cases show that the survivors (alleged)<sup>1</sup> were made up of:

- 3 Programme participants; (7%)



- 5 community members (not directly receiving Oxfam assistance); (11%)
- 8 Volunteers; (18%)
- 4 Children; (9%),
- 16 Non managerial staff; (36%)
- 4 Managerial staff; (9%)
- 3 Partner personnel; (7%)
- 1 Others / unknown (e.g. watching pornography); (2%)

Of the 44 closed cases, the Subject of Complaint (Alleged Perpetrator)<sup>1</sup> is made up of:

- 5 community members; (11%)
- 7 volunteers; (16%)
- 5 partner staff; (11%)
- 12 non-managerial staff; (27%)
- 15 managerial staff; (34%)

Oxfam offers and provides support to survivors through all steps of the investigation, including from when an incident is reported, during and after the investigation of the case and even when an investigation does not take place. This support can include counselling, health care and legal support as required and wherever available.

### **Open cases**

At the end of September 2020, Oxfam continues to investigate 44 open cases.

Given that Oxfam is taking a survivor centered approach, some investigations take additional time to ensure that they are conducted safely and at a pace that survivors are comfortable with. Oxfam is committed to supporting survivors and remains committed to creating a culture of zero tolerance, to do all we can to prevent abuse and exploitation, and to encourage people to come forward to report their concerns.

**ENDS**

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<sup>1</sup> Closed cases include those where the allegation was not upheld, therefore we cannot consider all of them as victims or perpetrators... just alleged