

# OXFAM'S GROW CAMPAIGN MID POINT EXTERNAL EVALUATION

## Executive Summary

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This report summarizes the mid-point evaluation of Oxfam's international GROW campaign. The aim of this evaluation was to provide, at the strategic level, an overview of progress to date with conclusions about achievements and challenges as well as actionable recommendations. The evaluation covered the 21-month period from the campaign launch in June 2011 to February 2013.

Unable to review all components and levels of the campaign given its broad reach and coverage of multiple issues, the evaluation sought to mix research and analysis on international strategies with "deep dives" into specific national and team campaigns and projects, to describe how the campaign was unfolding in practice. Two consultants (Glenn O'Neil and Patricia Goldschmid) worked for a total of 4 months to conduct research, including a review of Oxfam documents and monitoring information. Interviews were conducted with 41 Oxfam staff internal and 90 external stakeholders in addition to an internal survey of 55 Oxfam campaign staff. Bangladesh, Burkina Faso, Guatemala and the Netherlands were four case studies of the evaluation in addition to a review of the international Land Freeze initiative targeting the World Bank.

On 1 June 2011, Oxfam launched the GROW campaign to tackle food injustice and build a better food system. The GROW campaign is broad and diverse, operating at national, regional and international levels, across 4 thematic areas – land, investment in small-scale agriculture, climate change and food price volatility. As of March 2013, teams in 34 Southern countries and 16 Northern 'affiliate' countries were involved in the campaign.

## Findings

In this first phase, a number of outcomes were achieved across 50 countries and globally. The most significant achievement was securing policy changes or commitments on food and land from governments, corporations, and global bodies in addition to involving rural women in these processes. The biggest challenge has been to "deeply engage" with a significant global audience of 50 million on one or more of the GROW themes. More

"I THINK GROW HAS MADE AN IMPACT – IT CERTAINLY HAS MOVED LAND UP THE AGENDA AND AFFECTED POLICIES"

External stakeholder  
(government)

success has been seen in building national networks or cross-country initiatives, that while effective, haven't constituted a global movement on food.

**The most significant outcomes to date were identified as:**

- The commitments to change policies from companies targeted by the Behind the Brand (BtB) initiative;
- The media exposure and access to decisions makers for the Female Food Heroes (FFH) as “voices” on food in over 15 countries;
- Changes to World Bank policies as a result of the Land Freeze initiative;
- Changes to national agricultural and food security processes/policies, local “wins” on securing land for women and vulnerable groups in some 20 countries;
- Progress made in South-South collaboration within Oxfam.

“GROW HAS HELPED US IN GAINING THE KNOWLEDGE AND CONFIDENCE TO STAND UP FOR OUR RIGHTS”

Woman farmer

**In helping GROW movements build a better future (objective 1),**

Oxfam was successful in constructing strong networks on local levels mainly in the South, but still only reached an estimated 10% of its targets for global mobilisation, which were more aspirational than realistic according to Oxfam. Key achievements on mobilisation included the “Stop the African Hunger Games” petition on the Sahel crisis (533,000 signatures), the Polochic (Guatemala)

land grab petition (107,000), the actions on the BtB websites (110,000), the World Bank Land Freeze petition (50,000) and online interactions around food - the GROW Method (30,000). GROW was able to influence decision makers in government with positive initial results seen in at least five countries, as was the set target. Influencing consumers' choice was also achieved but more on a local level, rather than global.

**In stopping land and water grabs (objective 2),** Oxfam was able to influence global policy through its Land Freeze initiative with the World Bank. However, it was less successful on a local level in influencing national policies. While direct action on land and water grabbing did bring results in some countries, it was less effective in others due to the sensitivity of the topic.

**Reaching a global deal on climate change (objective 3)** was not a major focus for GROW in the first 21 months given the lack of progress on climate change negotiations. However,

some progress was seen on mitigation and finance issues, in addition to the support provided to national priorities and projects in many Southern countries.

**Concerning investing in small-scale food producers, particularly women (objective 4),**

Oxfam was successful in ensuring that producers and women participated in decision-making processes and consequent policies in some 15 countries. Examples were seen where GROW was effective in initiatives concerning gender and women's rights, particularly with the FFH approach and by supporting rural women in their access to policy-makers and markets.

**In responding to global food price crises (objective 5),**

some outcomes were seen with bio-fuels and speculative trading on agricultural commodities. In providing a fast and fair response, GROW together with the Rights in Crisis (RiC) campaign focused on both the Horn of Africa and Sahel crises during this period. Whereas the role of GROW in the Horn drought was limited, a combined GROW/RiC effort for Sahel mobilised supporters and brought media and political attention to the crisis, positively influencing financial commitments.

Interviews and survey responses revealed a number of limiting factors both internally and externally. Internal factors included the changing focus of the campaign in terms of rapid shifts from one theme to another and a lack of sufficient time to allow for an appropriate adoption by audiences. The lack of resources, both human and financial, to support the ambitious targets of GROW was also identified. Further challenges were seen with the coordination of different GROW priorities within, and between affiliates. And finally, the shift to the Single Management System (SMS) overstretched capacity available to support GROW and, in some cases, resulted in a general lack of ownership.

“IT’S ESSENTIALLY A FOOD CAMPAIGN BUT WE KEEP PRIORITISING THINGS THAT HAVE NOTHING TO DO WITH FOOD - ARE WE MISSING OPPORTUNITIES?”

Oxfam staff

External factors identified included the existence of coalitions and NGOs already working actively in the thematic areas; the overlap with other campaigns with similar focuses; the changing of governments which resulted in more or less support for the cause; the onset of crises that justifiably re-focused campaign resources and priorities but resulted in other GROW priorities becoming secondary; and limited public interest in some countries on some issues.

The flexibility of the GROW campaign model was effective on a national-global level as it

allowed national campaigns to model and shape GROW to fit their contexts. The model also provided initiatives that could be transferred successfully from one context to another. Limited experiences were seen in bringing national issues to the global level. Less effective aspects of the model included unmet expectations about significant traction at the global level; Southern offices struggled to find relevance in global initiatives such as the Land Freeze and BtB; the breadth of issues addressed meant that Oxfam staff had difficulty to follow progress on all issues and understand *who* was leading *what* and *with* which authority.

In general, GROW was seen as linking well to other Oxfam programmes particularly in the Southern regions and for aspects linked to agriculture (objective 4). Many Southern affiliates felt that the campaign supported them more than other past initiatives. GROW's work on the food crises was generally seen as positive from a programme perspective, although some felt that their local priorities were not always considered in the campaigning, particularly in the Horn of Africa crisis.

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### **Facilitated success:**

- Created through a broad consultation within Oxfam;
- Consistent GROW brand adopted widely;
- Engaging Southern partners in the concept phase ensured ownership;
- Flexibility of GROW allowed for local adaptation;
- The critical mass<sup>1</sup> factor for initiatives such as FFH and BtB;
- The proximity and relevance to other programmes;
- The selection of precise policy areas;
- The combination of media, public mobilisation and policy in campaigning.

### **Hindered success:**

- Difficult start and focus;
- Inability to create a critical mass around most initiatives;
- Inability to build a global movement;
- Coordination, focus and resource issues;
- The lack of coalition building in the North;
- The lack of mechanisms to identify and profile Southern issues;
- Divergence in focus by some affiliates linked to inconsistencies in supporting campaign priorities;
- Inconsistency between the North and South about the sensitivity of the land issue;
- “Battle of interests” to win policy support.

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<sup>1</sup> “Critical mass” in that enough affiliates joined to make it feel like they were part of something large or significant.

## Conclusions and recommendations

<i>Conclusion</i>	<i>Recommendation</i>
<p><i>Focus:</i> the findings of this evaluation present a type of paradox; GROW is a campaign that has been broad enough for all to be able to adapt to their own contexts. Yet at the same time, many identify this broadness as too complex and diverging from the original aim, which was on food justice and an improved food system. In that sense, priorities that emerged from the South (such as agricultural reform) are not conducive to those from the North (such as company policies). Therefore, GROW may be unable to find a global focus to address in the final phase of the campaign but more so recognise/reinforce national and regional priorities. Of note, the activity that mobilised the most in terms of numbers was a regional focus (Sahel petition).</p>	<p>Review the issues that have emerged and seen success at a regional or national level during the first phase of GROW; consider how these could be reinforced in the second phase, i.e. essentially seek out more of the “local to global” opportunities.</p>
<p><i>Movement:</i> helping grow movements to build a better future (objective 1) on a global level was an ambitious objective that has yet to be met. While GROW has established a following on different issues across countries and regions which may be considered the starting point for a global movement on food, the fact that the objectives are so broad may have diluted the potential for a momentum and impact. Further whereas GROW has been successful in supporting this movement through coalition building in the South, limited success has been seen in the North. Coalition building has been limited with organisations of equal or similar status to Oxfam. The evaluation saw where coalition building had added real value to GROW in terms of reach and impact was at the expense of a reduced visibility for Oxfam, which this evaluation believes is worth sacrificing in this case.</p>	<p>Review where GROW has successfully built supporter bases and coalitions; consider how these can be linked up and brought into an overall approach to supporting movements, focused exclusively on food to avoid confusion and dilution. Available resources would need to be reviewed to see what is feasible in this area.</p>
<p><i>Coordination:</i> an analysis of the factors that hindered the success of the campaign demonstrates that the majority were internal and mostly linked to how Oxfam sets campaign priorities and whether affiliates and country offices support them or not. While this may be a structural issue inherent to any confederation, the inconsistency in following priorities in international campaigning caused frustrations and tensions both in affiliates and country offices.</p>	<p>Create a more transparent process where affiliates and offices state clearly their support and involvement in global campaigning priorities; review how the campaign structure (Campaigns Group and EJCMT) enforce and monitor their decisions and set priorities.</p>

<p><i>Sustainability:</i> GROW has implicated itself in many policy processes that have demonstrated initial positive results. However, both internal and external stakeholders expressed some concern about long term monitoring and follow-up of these processes, some of which would span beyond the GROW time frame. An in-depth follow-up of some issues, such as policy implementation for the companies of BtB or Southern government implementation of policies would only be possible through the partnerships that Oxfam has established or needs to establish in those regions.</p>	<p>Ensure that resources (both human and financial) are available and allocated to monitoring and following-up on GROW’s policy achievements both regionally and globally, in coordination with relevant partners and coalitions.</p>
<p><i>Global-national model:</i> the model has faced challenges in bringing global issues to a local level and in securing global attention to local issues. Overall, there was greater success for the former in that Southern offices were focused on global issues, adapting them to the local context and working towards similar goals, mostly centred around agricultural reform but linked to land and food policy. Some inconsistency in relevance of some global initiatives is to be expected given the different contexts and priorities. Where GROW has been less successful is in bringing local issues to a global level, with the notable exception of the Polochic land grabbing case in Guatemala. While there was potential for other success stories in the South to be used for global campaigning, the sensitivities of the local context were not considered thoroughly enough. The Sahel crisis was another example that showed how global attention can be brought successfully to a regional issue.</p>	<p>Consider introducing a mechanism to identify local issues that need global support and/or have the potential to be communicated effectively. Consider more carefully, the political context of the topics at hand and the long-term consequences for both the local and global levels.</p>