

A GLOBAL WATER AND SANITATION SYSTEM THAT WORKS FOR ALL

Oxfam GB's Sustainable Water
and Sanitation Strategy

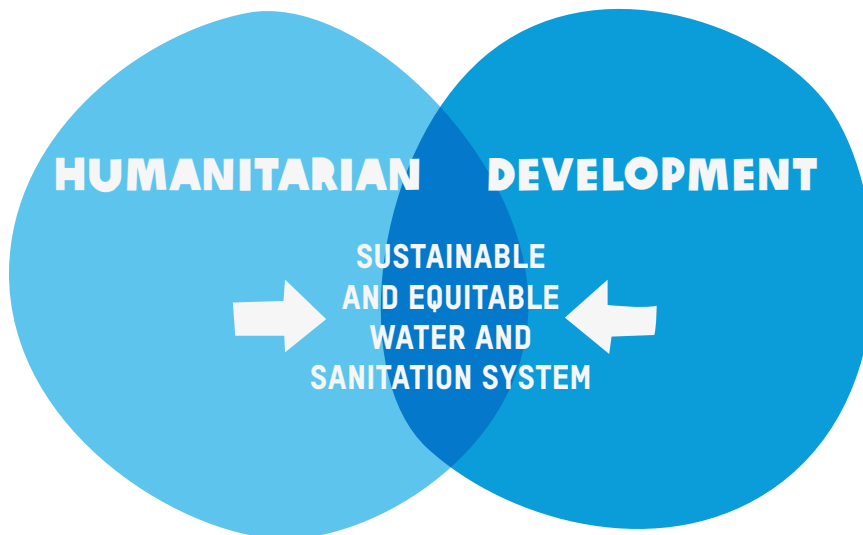


OXFAM

OUR STRATEGIC AIMS

Oxfam aims to work with essential partners in a **unified approach** to connect poor and vulnerable communities to water and sanitation services, ensuring they are working equitably. By working to support and **connect humanitarian and development actors and approaches**, we will build real resilience for marginalised populations to keep water and sanitation systems operational, accessible and affordable.

CONNECTING SYSTEMS



The space between humanitarian response and development is made up of fragility, neglect, inequality and political imbalance. Oxfam is working with institutions, private sector, government, and communities to ensure water and sanitation is accessible to marginalised populations and is affordable and appropriate in FCAC and Middle Income Countries.

COLLABORATING FOR INNOVATIONS TO TRANSFORM LONG-TERM WATER AND SANITATION SOLUTIONS

We are driving change by working with enterprising partners to integrate these approaches into our two focus areas of resilience and governance.

1. ALTERNATIVE BUSINESS MODELS TO MAKE SYSTEMS SUSTAINABLE AND AFFORDABLE

Innovative business models and finance mechanisms which create financially viable, affordable and sustainable water value chains.

We are already working on new models in DRC, Philippines and S.Sudan.

2. INNOVATIVE, EFFECTIVE AND ADAPTIVE TECHNOLOGY

Making technology operational for marginalised groups for current needs AND to future proof against challenging new conditions.

Find out more about this from our work in Kenya, Nepal and Sierra Leone.

3. SOCIAL INNOVATION TO UNDERSTAND AND INFLUENCE THE DYNAMICS SURROUNDING INEQUALITY AND CHANGE

Influencing social norms and structural barriers to ensure marginalised groups have access to and influence over water and sanitation services.

See our work in Pakistan, Tajikistan and Zimbabwe.

THE SUSTAINABILITY CHALLENGE FOR WATER AND SANITATION

Where water and sanitation solutions are in place, structures are failing to guarantee sustainability or equitable access. In areas of vulnerability, disasters, climatic shocks and conflicts exacerbate inequalities, accelerating the trend still further. Development and humanitarian programmes address these issues separately, but fail to create an integrated, sustainable solution.

844 MILLION PEOPLE

still lack a basic drinking water service and

2.3 BILLION PEOPLE

are without a basic sanitation service. The majority still practise open defecation or use unimproved facilities.¹

The challenge we face is not only to increase the coverage of water points and latrines, but to identify the reasons why people cannot safely access, afford or maintain them. The opportunities and entry points we must seek are through:

- Political change in the form of new or improved water laws policies and regulatory systems for institutional accountability.
- Pro-poor finance products.
- Technical solutions for ease of maintenance.
- Affordable service agreements with both formal and informal providers.
- Local governance and understanding social accountability mechanisms within society.

Oxfam will take a systems based approach, identifying the socio-cultural mechanisms, technical, institutional and economic barriers to creating sustainable access to water and sanitation services.

Inequality in Service Delivery

We're already witnessing inequalities of investment and distribution of water resources between rich and poor, urban and rural, and ethnic groups in society, due to poor management, planning, prioritisation and investment of resources. Inequalities are exacerbated by poor investments that provide temporary, unsustainable access, while reinvestment to rectify or reinstall these services can cost twice as much. For countries that have limited budgets, this can perpetuate the inequalities for the poorest and invisible communities, particularly women, as they strive to balance social and economic constraints and to adapt to economic and climatic changes.

We can focus on tackling existing inequality, but will also tackle the root causes for more efficient and equitable water and sanitation systems.

Inclusivity and Governance

Marginalised groups are frequently excluded from decision-making roles and thus deprioritised when it comes to service delivery. The water and sanitation issues faced by women in particular are largely due to their low capacity to influence decision-making.

Equally, understanding women's priorities is difficult, because of the lack of comprehensive gender-sensitive data. This can be a major barrier to planning women's economic empowerment globally³. There is a gap between official recognition of women as important actors and representation on official decision-making platforms on water and sanitation policy.

This leaves women excluded from primary decision-making roles, both within traditional community structures and governmental institutions, especially at the local level. Social accountability provides a route to empower women and those marginalised by poor governance systems, to enable them to engage in decision-making and service delivery.

Oxfam GB works together with essential partners to raise women's voices and increase citizen engagement with duty bearers to provide equitable, affordable and safe water and sanitation services.

Economic Sustainability

Water and sanitation systems in developing contexts struggle to be self-sustaining. Traditional community-based management structures often battle to overcome financial, technical and supply-chain related issues to cover even the most basic running costs, let alone capital costs. Systems with cost recovery mechanisms in place are often unaffordable for the poorest and most marginalised, an issue which is exacerbated in growing urban areas.

Meeting global coverage of capital investment alone is enormous, amounting to \$28 billion per year. When factoring in SDG targets for 'safely managed services', this expands to \$114 billion annually². We urgently need to set up approaches that maximise the longevity of these investments.

Oxfam GB will collaborate with innovative partners to create economically viable, affordable and sustainable water and sanitation enterprise models.

VISION

Our vision is to address the global challenge of water insecurity.
Working with development and humanitarian communities to achieve systemic change.
For sustainable and equitable access to water and sanitation for all.

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS?

- Increased resilience to water scarcity in a wide range of contexts and needs; from chronically vulnerable contexts to growing economies and countries.
- Sustainable and equitable access to water and sanitation for the poorest and most marginalised women and girls, men and boys.
- Ultimately, the reduction of aid dependency.

SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT OF WATER AND SANITATION FOR ALL

Oxfam GB will support the right to universal and equal access to safe and affordable drinking water for all; access to adequate and equitable sanitation and hygiene for all and an end to open defecation; the key aims of SDG6. Fulfilling these goals will promote direct health benefits but also ensure that potable water is safe by preventing contamination through unsafe practices and disposal of untreated wastewater.

Sustainable management of water requires greater cooperation across all sectors to reduce the number of people suffering from water scarcity. Through our focus on reducing inequality and improving governance, we will contribute to expanding international cooperation and capacity-building support to developing countries in water- and sanitation-related activities and programmes.



A NEW, SUSTAINABLE APPROACH FOR THE WATER AND SANITATION SECTOR

Oxfam GB will work with essential partners to focus on quality and coverage of water and sanitation services and better governance of water resources.

FOCUS 1

Improving resilience of vulnerable populations in fragile contexts by increasing access to water and sanitation services

We will understand better which parts of our water and sanitation activities work, which ones don't and why, especially in vulnerable contexts.

We will strengthen our work with women and girls to make sure our activities support transformative social change and do not perpetuate negative consequences for them.

We will look beyond infrastructure to facilitate more systemic, longer lasting change in service provision.

INTERVENTIONS

- Provide dedicated support to ongoing WASH programmes in priority countries.
- Improve our understanding of what constitutes sustainability in the contexts where we work and how we can develop appropriate monitoring frameworks for it.
- Create better understanding of how to integrate risk based analysis findings into programmes (e.g. power dynamics, protection, vulnerability, political economy analysis).
- Develop more sustainable approaches for service management in chronically vulnerable and early-recovery contexts, looking to the wider system (e.g. financial, technical, governance).
- Synthesise, communicate and enhance our evidence base of good practice to:
 - Develop a sustainable water framework for guidance on approaches, mechanisms and monitoring systems to guide better programme development.
 - Identify approaches for reducing risk and increasing resilience of water programmes in disaster prone contexts.
 - Improve quality and coverage of service provision.
- Understanding how to combine a programme based monitoring system while maintaining an evolving understanding of risks and vulnerabilities in fragile contexts.

FOCUS 2

Better governance of water resources overall

Improving **the sustainability of services using pro-poor approaches and better governance** to achieve sustainable water and sanitation management systems.

We will develop economically viable, affordable and sustainable WASH value chains in chronically vulnerable rural and urban contexts.

We will create blended financing models, utilizing grant funding to leverage private investment, to develop more sustainable and scalable financing mechanisms for water and sanitation.

We will underpin our programming with social accountability structures to ensure that service providers and duty bearers are held accountable for inclusive and accessible service delivery.

INTERVENTIONS

Targeted investment and resource allocation

- Evidence based advocacy for better and more inclusive water and sanitation policy and investments.
- Participatory policy setting and evidence of effective models of investment.
- Develop economically viable, affordable and sustainable water and sanitation enterprise models in vulnerable contexts where services are commercialised.

Institution building and strengthening

- Convene state and non-state actors, brokering water and sanitation actions.
- Ensure good institutional governance principles.
- Advocate for greater social accountability.
- Develop water resource management techniques for communities and providers.
- Strengthen unsustainable and failed community-managed systems by creating partnerships to overcome financial, technical, and supply chain related obstacles to sustainability.

Accountability

- Establish effective and transparent accountability and regulatory mechanisms.
- Develop social accountability mechanisms for water and sanitation service providers and government structures.
- Improve our ability to robustly monitor the sustainability of our activities beyond programme lifetimes.

OXFAM WORKING WITH DIFFERENT PARTNERS AND PERSPECTIVES

The solutions to the water and sanitation system challenges that face us will not be solved by one organisation working in isolation. It will require **creative thinking, risk taking and new, innovative models**, co-created between partners. Solutions are already being trialled and progressed. We are seeing developments in finance, technology, governance and accountability which are building resilience and access to services. **Oxfam is looking for progressive partners** who want to continue this journey. Together we can collaborate and find the solutions to build a sustainable water and sanitation system.

OXFAM CONNECTS: joining up the thinking, investments and essential partners. We seek to collaborate and invest in a wide range of transformative partnerships which include specialists in social accountability, finance, marketing and private entrepreneurship.

EVIDENCE

We are challenging conventional approaches and methods to identify solutions to sustainability.

By building an evidence base of our work to date in policy, practice and research, we can improve our own programming and influence others in the sector.

INNOVATION

We are establishing learning and developing thinking for equitable and sustainable water and sanitation solutions.

We are sourcing funding and modelling innovative solutions in governance and investments, market-based approaches as well as efficient and adaptive tools and technologies.

INFLUENCE

Our aim is to convene partners, decision makers, thought leaders and donors to influence the approach of the wider water and sanitation sector.

We will create spaces for forward thinking and promoting good practice and learning.

Our strong campaigning arm continues to work hard to raise the issues surrounding global water insecurity.



Photo: Maya Hautefeuille / Oxfam



TRUSTED IN WATER AND SANITATION FOR OVER 50 YEARS

- Oxfam GB has 50 years of experience in WASH and we are evolving our expertise to meet growing trends and global challenges in the sector.
- We are consistently keen to innovate and adapt established approaches to address emerging challenges.
- We have a cadre of dedicated in-house staff, in the UK, at a regional and in-country office level, with relevant technical, management and process skills and experience.
- We are known for our extensive and proven track record of successfully implementing high-calibre water and sanitation programmes at scale in a range of contexts from Fragile and Conflict Affected Countries to emerging states and middle income countries.
- Oxfam has extensive water and sanitation related networks and relationships throughout national and regional political, institutional and operational contexts, and with regional and national Governments.
- A successful and trusted facilitator of local engagements, delivering specialist water and sanitation technical training and capacity building at all levels (incl. government, industry, and community and 500 partner WASH staff).

PARTNER WITH US

Oxfam is investing in a new team of experts with specialist knowledge and skills in water sustainability. Our strategic and technical focus is on water governance and water resilience to support on sustainable water recovery management and women's empowerment in water and sanitation. In addition to fragile contexts, our geographic focus is expanding to deprived urban areas. By establishing this strategic framework, we will support countries and regions to adopt this vision.

Find out more

Oxfam is looking for progressive partners who want to continue this journey. Contact us to find out more.

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1. WHO (2017), Progress on Drinking Water, Sanitation and Hygiene: <http://www.who.int/mediacentre/news/releases/2017/launch-version-report-jmp-water-sanitation-hygiene.pdf?ua=1>

2. World Bank.org: <http://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/water/publication/the-costs-of-meeting-the-2030-sustainable-development-goal-targets-on-drinking-water-sanitation-and-hygiene>

3. UN (2005) Women and Elections. URL: www.un.org/womenwatch/osagi/wps/publication/WomenAndElections.pdf



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