WHAT TO TAKE ACTION ON

THE MULTIDIMENSIONAL INEQUALITY FRAMEWORK: THE OXFAM TOOLKIT

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This section will assist you in putting your learning into action. The 'pathways to change' inevitably involve different strategies. It is about embedding the broad analysis of inequalities and their drivers in your country or programme strategy and project activities. It is also about proposing the right solutions to tackle these in your context, thinking about what is feasible given the opportunities, risk and Oxfam's country capacity; it is also about changing policies and narratives to tackle the main expressions of inequaities identified.

TAKING ACTION: WHAT TO TAKE ACTION ON?

Criteria to decide what to take action on

First you need to decide **what to take action on**. Your broad analysis will have provided you with a whole array of findings on where inequalities are most concerning, where trends are worsening and where certain groups in society are being particularly disadvantaged or left behind. You will have identified the multiple drivers of inequalities in your context, some no doubt driving inequalities across many domains of life and affecting citizens' wellbeing in myriad ways. No country programme can tackle all of the drivers of inequalities across all of these areas. You now need to make decisions on what to focus in your inequality programming. The visual below presents a simple **tool to guide your decision-making**.

The first criterion you need to consider is **relevance**. The good news is this step is already completed. It directly relates to the results of **concluding your diagnostic** (section 3 full toolkit). You will have already assessed inequalities by domain and identified the priority domains based on where the most concerning inequalities are to be found. You will also have assessed the drivers of these in your country and will know the most important drivers that need to be addressed to reduce inequalities in these areas. As such your relevance analysis is already completed and you have a **summary of issues/drivers** on which you could focus to address inequalities in your country.

However, this list may not be short. Even with prioritisation of issues, you could be faced with complex choices. It is also likely your results will identify areas in which Oxfam has no experience working, or drivers which, although important, are simply not feasible for the country team to work on. As such you need to take into account the other criteria in the decision-making tool to assess all of the priority areas against these. This will help you assess your ability to work on the priority areas and key drivers identified in practical terms in your context. Once this assessment is completed you can make a clear decision within your team on the **thematic priorities** for your inequality strategy and programming activities.

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Other assessment criteria

Added value: it is important to reflect on whether Oxfam can bring some added value to work in this area. This might be in the form of the rigorous analysis Oxfam has done already or can commission.

> **Box 1: Guiding questions to assess added value**
>
> - Has Oxfam already conducted rigorous analysis in this area or is Oxfam in a position to contribute new and powerful analysis that could stimulate debate and action?
>
> - Who else is actively working on this issue? Can Oxfam add value to others' work in this sphere?
>
> - Can Oxfam act as a catalyst drawing attention to a new issue, bringing different groups together and/or taking action in a new way?

It may also be that Oxfam can bring some additional impetus to support active movements, organisations and citizens demanding change. This could add value by helping citizens increase their influence at critical moments. However, the reverse might be true: an issue may be relatively ignored, if few, or no, organisations are working on it. This is often the case when it comes to tax reform. The added value of Oxfam may be in finding ways to tackle a new, very critical, issue with existing or new partners and networks.

Risk: some Oxfam teams may be working in contexts where there are repressive governments and/or a weak rule of law, where speaking out – even on basic rights issues – is dangerous for Oxfam staff or partners. Even in countries with more robust democracies speaking out about political and elite capture, drawing attention to wealth and income inequalities and confronting abusive corporate practices can incur legal, reputational and organisational risks. You need to assess this carefully in your context before taking action.

> **Box 2: Guiding questions to assess risk**
>
> - What are the most serious risks in your context if you work on the priority issues identified? Are there physical risks to staff and partners and/or reputational, financial or legal risks for Oxfam?
>
> - Will highlighting those who are particularly advantaged and disadvantaged exacerbate tensions amongst class, ethnic or political groups?
>
> - What measures can be taken to reduce risk? With whom can Oxfam work, or what strategies can Oxfam use, to reduce risk?
>
> - What is an acceptable level of risk for the management team? What support would be available from other Oxfam teams to address the consequences?
>
> For more information in relation to assessing risk see Oxfam's National Influencing Guidelines: https://oxfam.app.box.com/s/h9nan3ff5d0wmc22ooopaecf7ah8t9vw

Opportunity: another factor for teams to consider is whether the time is right to address this particular issue. Is it politically feasible or are there particular processes and openings to raise an issue? However, opportunity does not just refer to the political, but also to Oxfam's capacity to act. What is Oxfam's track record on the issue? Are strong partners organised and keen to mobilise and work with Oxfam? Does Oxfam have the (financial and human) resources necessary for the task

ahead? If necessary are there fundraising opportunities that could be accessed? With the right combination of factors, opportunities can be optimised.

> **Box 3: Guiding questions to assess opportunity**
>
> - What openings are coming up in the next 1-2 years to raise the issues Oxfam is interested in prioritising? Are there any local, national, regional or international processes or events around which Oxfam can build work?
>
> - Is there political space to raise these issues? Are there potential political backers that Oxfam can enlist as allies?
>
> - Is Oxfam already working with partners on this issue? Are partners strong, well prepared and keen to mobilise?
>
> - Does Oxfam have the required human and financial resources to work on the priority issue/s? If not are there fundraising opportunities of which Oxfam can take advantage?

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Oxfam is an international confederation of 20 organizations networked together in more than 90 countries, as part of a global movement for change, to build a future free from the injustice of poverty. Please write to any of the agencies for further information, or visit www.oxfam.org

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