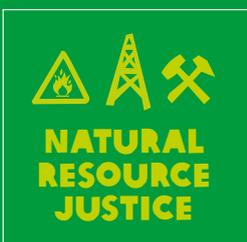




OXFAM NATURAL RESOURCE JUSTICE STRATEGIC PLAN 2021–2025



CONTENTS

Foreword	3
Introduction	4
Background and context	5
Vision and theory of change	7
Strategic focus	8
Human rights and communities	9
Economic justice and accountable governance	11
Gender justice	13
Environmental and climate justice	15
Civic space and human rights defenders	17
Ways of working	19
Working locally to globally	19
Evidence-based	19
Partnerships	19
Feminist gender and intersectional approach	20
Engagement, collaboration, and convening	21
Innovative strategies and tactics	21
Internal ways of working	21
Knowledge and learning	22
Annex 1: Alignment with Oxfam Global Strategic Framework	23
Notes	24



The guide format is a user-friendly and accessible interactive PDF. Clicking on the link symbol at the top right will take you to the contents page. From there it is possible to navigate to any page in this strategic plan. All **bold and underlined text** is linked to another page in this document.

Front cover: Phalombe District, Malawi: Dorothy Bonongwe facilitates an extractives advocacy group. Photo: Aurelie Marrier d'Unienville/Oxfam



FOREWORD

Few sectors have contributed more to the twin crises of global inequality and climate change than the extractive industries. Yet, despite a looming climate emergency and fresh concerns about the post-COVID economy, the pressure to extract oil and minerals remains higher than ever. Never has Oxfam's campaign for natural resource justice proven more critical.

For over 20 years, we have worked alongside communities impacted by mega extractives projects and held powerful actors accountable for their human rights abuses and environmental destruction. Now, with oil prices recovering from their pandemic slump and countries looking to exploit “green” minerals as part of the energy transition, the sector is poised to expand – amid existential questions about its cost and future. For these reasons, the need for transparency, accountability, and the promotion and protection of human rights are as important and urgent now as they were 20 years ago when Oxfam first launched its extractive industries program.

With this context and with great excitement, I am pleased to present Oxfam's Natural Resource Justice Strategic Plan. This strategic plan will guide our natural resource research, advocacy, influencing, partnerships, and programming work through 2025 across all levels of the Oxfam confederation.

The strategic plan will guide us as we seek positive and lasting change in the way the extractive industries sector is governed and regulated, in how companies operate at the project level, and in how people are able to use their voices and agency to influence the sector and individual projects. Most importantly, it lays out how Oxfam's natural resource campaign will respond to global inequality and climate change, the twin crises of our time.

Our work will be centered around **five strategic priority areas:**

- 1 Human rights and communities**
- 2 Economic justice and accountable governance**
- 3 Gender justice**
- 4 Environmental and climate justice**
- 5 Civic space and human rights defenders**

In addition to outlining our strategic priority areas, this plan also describes how we will work: locally to globally; based on evidence; rooted in partnership and collaboration; grounded in Oxfam's feminist and intersectional approach; and in ways that put impacted communities and Indigenous peoples at the center of decision-making over their lands, resources, and development priorities.

The challenges in front of us are unprecedented, and we must continue to speak truth to powerful interests. We are energized, focused, and determined that we, together with our partners and allies, can achieve natural resource justice and a more equitable, sustainable world.

Gabriela Bucher,
Oxfam International Executive Director



INTRODUCTION

Oxfam has been working in partnership with communities adversely impacted by the mining, oil, and gas sector for over two decades. Our work takes us to these communities; to regulators and treasury officials in national capitals; to the boardrooms of multinational companies and those financing extractive industry project development, including the international financial institutions; and to those forums where many of the standards and rules governing the sector are made.

Wherever we are, we work alongside and for the benefit of those communities that are impacted by the sector and for those people who, despite the tremendous oil and mineral wealth with which their country is endowed, continue to live in poverty.

This strategic plan will guide Oxfam's natural resource research, advocacy and influencing, partnerships, and programming work over the next five years. It will guide our work at the country level, and regionally and globally. We will implement our new strategic plan in over 30 countries in Asia and the Pacific, Africa, Europe, and the Americas.

This strategic plan aligns with Oxfam's Global Strategic Framework 2020–2030.¹ That framework commits Oxfam to working towards a just and sustainable world, and to fighting inequalities to end poverty and injustice. Our natural resource justice program will contribute towards this goal. [Annex 1](#) shows how the two plans align.



A girl walks along a space cleared for infrastructure development in Tanzania, where a regional investment boom in pipelines, gas facilities, roads, and related projects is also proving disruptive to local families. Photo: Andrew Bogrand/Oxfam.



BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

The extractive industries sector has the potential to provide benefits: economic growth and development, jobs, income for governments to spend on public services and infrastructure or to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, and the minerals on which modern economies depend.

However, the sector has also been linked to serious human rights abuse, gender-based violence, environmental destruction, and conflict. The huge revenues extractive industries projects generate for companies and host governments (and sometimes political and economic elites) mean the sector can be prone to corruption and political capture – which can undermine efforts to improve governance of the sector. When extractive industries companies do not pay their fair share of taxes in the countries in which they operate, the result is fewer resources for governments to spend on public services and social security. It is more likely to be women who fill this spending gap with their bodies and time.

Too often efforts to improve extractive industries governance, and the sector's human rights, gender, economic, and environmental performance, come up against corporate power and vested interests that resist change and that benefit from the status quo. Weak capacity in the institutions meant to regulate and monitor the sector undermines the prospects for widespread enjoyment of potential benefits from extractive industries projects. Further, extractive economic models are driving a global climate crisis and forcing an ever-growing number of people from their homes. For millions, it means loss of livelihoods, ecosystems, and food security. The political economy of fossil fuels stands in the way of reliable, accessible, and clean energy.

The negative impacts of extractive industries are not felt equally – too often women and girls, young people, and Indigenous peoples experience harm disproportionately.² Adverse impacts include the disruption of family and social life; the increased risks to health and safety, especially in terms of domestic and sexual violence; and environment degradation. Women's access to and control over their land, water, and livelihoods is also adversely impacted. The impacts of climate change, which is in large part driven by the extraction and burning of fossil fuels (and in some cases by deforestation to open up extractive industries reserves) are also felt unequally.

High unemployment, particularly among young people who are unable to gain employment in the sector, can be a source of tension and conflict in some resource-dependent countries.³ Contested land, water, and minerals access rights – including between large-scale miners and artisanal and small-scale miners, and between subsistence farmers and artisanal and small-scale miners – are also a source of conflict and inequality in some geographies.



BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

Artisanal and small-scale mining (ASM) has its own potential gains and potential negative impacts. ASM provides the livelihoods for millions of people globally,⁴ especially in parts of Africa, and can be an important strategy for women's economic empowerment. ASM will be increasingly important in the future as those people whose livelihoods are based on subsistence agriculture need to find alternatives as climate change undermines the income earned solely from agriculture. For many people, particularly young people, ASM is the only way they can derive an income and benefit from the extractives sector. There is also growing interest from many stakeholders for reform (and formalization) of the ASM sector to add value for people participating in ASM value chains; to collect revenues; to avoid serious conflict; and to hold the sector accountable for environmental degradation, health and safety concerns (including with regards to mercury use in gold mining), and human rights abuse.

This strategic plan is published at a time of unprecedented global change. The COVID-19 pandemic is causing significant health, social, and economic upheaval, which will be felt for the coming decade. The pandemic has reduced demand for fossil fuels and may have further accelerated the global shift towards clean energy.⁵ Those governments that rely on revenues from fossil fuels will experience economic shocks from falling royalties and tax revenues. Not surprisingly, some fossil fuel companies are arguing for a fossil fuel-led recovery and have successfully accessed increased government financial assistance.⁶

The urgently needed shift away from fossil fuels towards cleaner, renewable sources of energy has implications for our work. Minerals needed to manufacture batteries, wind turbines, and other technologies for the energy transition carry the risk of human rights abuse, gender-based violence, environmental destruction, and conflict. The energy transition may also see new geographies of risk and conflict, including in relation to the world's deep oceans. National governments lured by the promise of a transition minerals bonanza may borrow heavily against unrealistic expectations of future revenues, triggering future debt crises.

Under the cover of the COVID-19 pandemic, a number of governments have lowered environmental standards, suspended environmental monitoring requirements, reduced environmental enforcement, restricted public participation, and increased surveillance of citizens.⁷ The narrowing of civic space, and increased attacks on human rights and environmental defenders, transparency campaigners, and anti-corruption activists, began well before the COVID-19 pandemic hit. The COVID crisis has exacerbated these trends.⁸ The killing of human rights defenders can be linked to the extractive industries more often than to other sectors.⁹ In addition to the general risk of threats, attacks, and violence faced by all human rights defenders, women human rights defenders are exposed to specific risks. In particular, women human rights defenders can be the targets of misogynistic attacks and gender-based violence. These trends need to be reversed if there is to be any improvement in the human rights, gender, economic, and environmental performance of the sector.



VISION AND THEORY OF CHANGE

Over the next decade, Oxfam will continue its work towards a just and sustainable world. Oxfam's Global Strategic Framework aims to transform the systems that have the most significant impact on the lives of people living in poverty or who are marginalized and excluded. We will advocate for just economies that put people and the planet at the center; fight for gender justice and against gender-based discrimination and violence; take action to tackle the climate crisis; and call for inclusive and accountable governance.

Oxfam's vision for its natural resource justice program is that local communities and Indigenous peoples are at the center of decision-making processes in relation to their lands and resources, and development priorities.

Our **theory of change** requires that we work towards:

1. Change in the behavior of duty bearers (that is, governments and companies that have obligations to protect, respect, and fulfil human rights);
2. Change in the enabling and regulatory environment that promotes respect for human rights, gender justice, and a just economy; and
3. Expansion of people's voices and agency, especially women's, over the decisions that impact them, including to assert and defend their rights with regards to extractive industries.

Without these changes, the extractive industries will continue to be a cause of poverty and injustice. We will challenge power and seek systemic and structural change, including with regards to fossil fuel extraction, working to ensure that natural resource extraction is no longer a driver of the climate crisis.

We will continue to focus our efforts on both governments and extractive industries companies. The latter includes companies headquartered in both Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and non-OECD countries and those that may have a regional or global footprint.

Oxfam is in principle neither for nor against extractive industries development, with the exception of coal. We accept it as a reality in many countries, and we wholly adopt a rights-based approach. We often direct our efforts at trying to promote better development outcomes for countries and communities from investment in this sector, using our belief that communities should decide if and how their natural resources will be used, and using transparency, accountability, and respect for human rights as our guiding principles. We also support those opposing extractive industries development and an extractivist economic model.¹⁰

Oxfam is committed to a just transition away from fossil fuel extraction and burning. We believe that those that bear the greatest responsibility for historic emissions – mainly those high-income countries responsible for the majority of greenhouse gas emissions, and coal, oil, and gas companies – have an obligation to phase out fossil fuel extraction first and fastest, consistent with the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities. This means Oxfam will oppose new fossil fuel extraction that would have significant impacts on the global climate, particularly in countries that bear the greatest responsibility for the climate crisis.



STRATEGIC FOCUS

The following pages outline our strategic priorities for the coming five years. Our priority areas are human rights and communities, economic justice and accountable governance, gender justice, environmental and climate justice, and civic space and human rights defenders.¹¹ Country and regional programs, and Oxfam affiliates, will focus on those goals and strategic actions most relevant to the context in which they are working, and those consistent with relevant country and regional strategies and plans.



A farmer in Uganda who will lose farmland to a pending pipeline project. Photo: Andrew Bogrand/Oxfam



STRATEGIC FOCUS: HUMAN RIGHTS AND COMMUNITIES

HUMAN RIGHTS AND COMMUNITIES

The UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights have established a normative framework that articulates the obligations of governments and businesses with respect to human rights. Many governments and extractive industries companies have adopted this framework into their own policies and plans. Yet too many communities suffer terrible harms because of extractive industries projects, and people from these communities continue to experience human rights abuses. Too often corporate power and vested interests prevent affected people from receiving remedy for these harms, and from accessing project information or influencing decisions that will affect them. The right of Indigenous peoples to free, prior, and informed consent (FPIC) is rarely recognized in practice in any meaningful way.



Our Goal

People from extractive industry-affected communities – especially those potentially vulnerable to the negative impacts of the extractives sector and who are marginalized from decision-making processes – are able to fully realize and defend their human rights.



A Kichwa Indigenous leader explains why Indigenous people must be consulted about oil development in the Peruvian Amazon. Photo: Kathia Carrillo/PUINAMUDT



STRATEGIC FOCUS: HUMAN RIGHTS AND COMMUNITIES

Our strategic actions



We will:

1. Drive policy and practice change so that **governments meet their obligations to protect and respect human rights** (including women's rights), and extractive industries companies meet their responsibility to respect human rights, consistent with the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights.
2. Support initiatives to **document the impact of extractive industries projects** on the human rights of communities – including in relation to land, water, territories, and natural resources – and hold duty bearers accountable for the remedy of these impacts.
3. Advocate for **increased recognition and respect for the right of Indigenous peoples** and customary land rights holders to self-determination and to FPIC, and for communities to decide whether or not extractive industries projects should be developed on their land and territory.
4. Support **communities** – especially those community members potentially vulnerable to the negative impacts of the extractives sector and who cannot access information and decision-making processes (such as women) – to **understand and defend their rights**, including through strengthened collective voice and action.
5. Support efforts for more **inclusive and meaningful community consultation processes**, and for better access for affected communities to extractive industries decision-making forums at the local, national, regional, and global levels.



We know we are making progress when:

1. Governments develop and implement **policies and legislation to require respect for human rights** by the extractive industries sector and their financiers, including requirements for mandatory human rights due diligence, and signal their intention to do so through the development of National Action Plans on Business and Human Rights.
2. Extractive industries **companies commit to respecting human rights** and effectively implement these commitments.
3. Communities receive **remedy for harms** they have experienced.
4. **The right to FPIC is recognized** in government policy and legislation, and in extractive industries company policy commitments, and this right is respected in practice, including when communities decide that extractive industries projects should not be developed on their land and territory.
5. The local communities and organizations we work with are better resourced and connected, and are able to **engage with and influence duty bearers**.
6. Governments develop and implement policies and legislation that guarantee, and extractive industries companies commit to, **inclusive and meaningful community participation** in extractive industries decision-making forums.



STRATEGIC FOCUS: ECONOMIC JUSTICE AND ACCOUNTABLE GOVERNANCE

ECONOMIC JUSTICE AND ACCOUNTABLE GOVERNANCE

In recent years, there has been increased commitment from some governments and extractive industries companies to disclose extractive industries data, and some increased disclosure – particularly in relation to revenues. However, there has also been strong resistance to this by some stakeholders. The data that has been disclosed is now used by citizens and civil society organizations in many resource- rich countries. However, increased transparency and disclosure – which Oxfam is proud to have contributed towards – is just one part of the picture. Economic justice also demands that local communities are able to gain from the extractive industries through participation in extractive industries value chains, and from the fair and proper collection and management of revenues.



Our Goal

Governments receive their fair share of extractive industries revenues, which are used for the provision of essential services and social protections that are gender transformative and that reduce inequality, and extractive industries projects provide opportunities for local economic participation and economic benefit.



A chromite miner in Zimbabwe. Photo: Andrew Bogrand/Oxfam



STRATEGIC FOCUS: ECONOMIC JUSTICE AND ACCOUNTABLE GOVERNANCE

Our strategic actions



We will:

1. Advocate for **increased disclosure and accessibility of extractive industries project contracts, revenues, tax and profit data, audit and cost data, beneficial ownership information**, and other data.
2. Support efforts (including by affected communities, academia, and the media) to use extractive industries information to **improve governance and accountability** of the sector and of individual projects, including to reduce corruption along extractive industries value chains.
3. Contribute to policy change so that **extractive industries fiscal regimes in law and in contracts are transparent and progressive**, and companies pay their fair share of taxes and other payments in the countries where they operate.
4. Support efforts to **improve extractive industries revenue collection and allocation by governments** (including through strengthened fiscal administrative practices and better monitoring and verification of prices, production, and costs), **and grow the amount of revenue governments receive**.
5. Advocate that **extractive industries revenues effectively contribute towards gender-transformative spending¹²** by national and subnational governments.
6. Support efforts aimed at **ensuring greater benefit for local communities from extractive industries projects**, including through open contracting, local procurement (including from women-owned businesses), local employment, local development, and government budget allocation and social spending.
7. **With regards to artisanal and small-scale mining**, we will support efforts aimed at legal reform and formalization of the sector to **maximize the sector's contribution to local and national development priorities** (including through taxation of the sector), and to ensure better governance and human rights, gender, economic and environmental performance, and health and safety outcomes for mine workers.



We know we are making progress when:

1. Government policy and legislation, and industry standards and norms, **mandate the disclosure of extractive industries revenues, contracts, tax and profit data, audit and cost data, and beneficial ownership information**.
2. Extractive industries information and data are increasingly being used by affected communities and others to **inform demands for better governance and accountability** of the sector and of individual projects.
3. Governments develop, implement, and strengthen policies, legislation, capacities, and practice aimed at **maximizing the collection of extractive industries revenues**.
4. More governments in resource-rich countries (and regions within countries) **adopt gender-responsive budgeting**.
5. Governments develop and implement policies and legislation that **promote open contracting, the procurement of local content, and increased local employment** by extractive industries companies.
6. Extractive industries companies **commit to open contracting, the procurement of local content, and increased local employment** that is secure and pays living wages.
7. The local communities and organizations we work with are able to **influence decisions on the allocation and expenditure of extractive industries revenues**.
8. Governments **strengthen the legal, policy, and institutional frameworks** for the artisanal and small-scale mining sector.



STRATEGIC FOCUS: GENDER JUSTICE

GENDER JUSTICE

The highly gendered impacts of extractive industries are well known, in part because of Oxfam's research and advocacy on this issue. There is strong evidence that extractive industries projects disproportionately undermine women's rights and interests.¹³ Yet few extractive industries companies have developed policy and practice on gender equality and women's rights related to host communities. Widespread corporate commitments to principles of anti-discrimination, anti-harassment, and workforce diversity have not translated into similar policy commitments in community consultation and engagement processes.



Our Goal

Women, gender-diverse people, and others who are potentially vulnerable to the negative impacts of the extractive industries sector are able to fully realize their human rights, gain from the extractive industries, access industry information free from discrimination, and influence extractive industries decision-making forums.



A community activist in Cambodia's rural Ratanakiri province is pushing back against environmental degradation linked to a local gold mine.
Photo: Andrew Bogrand/Oxfam



STRATEGIC FOCUS: GENDER JUSTICE

Our strategic actions



We will:

1. Drive policy and practice change in governments and extractive industries companies so that the **rights and interests of women and girls** – and other people whose gender, age, race, Indigenous identity, ability/disability, and other identities may make them more vulnerable to the negative impacts of extractive industries projects – **are respected**.
2. Document the **impact of extractive industries projects on women and others potentially vulnerable to the negative impacts of the sector** (including through our support for community-led gender impact assessment processes) and work to hold duty bearers accountable for the remedy of these impacts.
3. Support efforts to **ensure equitable access to, and participation and leadership in, extractive industries decision-making forums** at the local, national, regional, and global levels, regardless of gender.
4. Support efforts to **ensure equitable access to information on the extractives sector** and specific projects, regardless of gender.
5. Highlight the unique and heightened risks, including of **gender-based violence, women human rights defenders face** and put this issue onto the global extractive industries agenda for action.
6. With regards to artisanal and small-scale mining, we will support efforts aimed at ensuring that **women and young people engaged in artisanal and small-scale mining earn a decent living**, that their livelihoods are sustainable, and that their rights are respected.



We know we are making progress when:

1. Governments develop and implement policies and legislation that **promote the realization of women's rights**, and the rights of others potentially vulnerable to the negative impacts of extractive industries projects, including requirements for gender impact assessment.
2. Extractive industries companies commit to **respecting the rights of women and girls, and the rights of others potentially vulnerable** to the negative impacts of extractive industries projects, and effectively implement these commitments.
3. Women and gender-diverse people **receive remedy for the harms** they have experienced.
4. **Women and gender-diverse people** are increasingly participating in and **playing leadership roles in extractive industries decision-making** and policy-setting forums at the local, national, regional, and global levels.
5. Women and gender-diverse people are increasingly using extractive industries information to advocate locally and nationally for **improvement in the human rights, gender, economic, and environmental performance of the sector**, and to ensure that extractive industries revenues contribute to gender-transformative spending by national and subnational governments.
6. Governments, companies, and other extractive industries stakeholders publicly acknowledge that women **human rights defenders** should be able to **operate in a safe and enabling environment** free from threats, harassment, intimidation, and violence.
7. Governments **strengthen the legal, policy, and institutional frameworks for the artisanal and small-scale mining sector** in a gender-transformative manner and safeguard the rights and interests of young people.



STRATEGIC FOCUS: ENVIRONMENTAL AND CLIMATE JUSTICE

ENVIRONMENTAL AND CLIMATE JUSTICE

To avoid catastrophic climate change, more than 90 percent of known fossil fuel reserves need to stay in the ground, and the transition of energy systems towards renewable technologies must be accelerated. There are growing calls from across civil society for the transition to be just – for fossil fuel industry workers and their communities, and for the countries whose budgets rely on revenues from fossil fuel. The impact of a changing climate will hurt the poor the most, of which the majority are women and girls, and Oxfam’s extractive industries and climate work will complement the work of others in Oxfam focused on climate adaptation and resilience. Our climate and extractives work will occur alongside our work to promote coordinated national and regional land use planning (including advocating for “no go” zones where appropriate), and seek remedy for environmental damage.



Our Goal

The shift away from fossil fuels needs to be undertaken rapidly in order to avoid 1.5°C of warming, with countries bearing the greatest responsibility for historic greenhouse emissions phasing out fossil fuel extraction first and fastest, consistent with the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities. Further, extractive industries projects do not pollute air, water, and land, or degrade the environment.



Members of the Natural Resource Group in Southern Zambia recently lobbied to save a bridge critical during the wet season. Photo: Georgina Goodwin/Oxfam



STRATEGIC FOCUS: ENVIRONMENTAL AND CLIMATE JUSTICE

Our strategic actions



We will:

1. Support efforts, particularly those of directly affected communities, to **prevent the development of new extractive industries projects** (or expansion and continued development of existing projects), including fossil fuel projects, that would have significant negative local environmental impacts and significant impacts on the global climate.¹⁴
2. Advocate for **stronger environmental protections** and regulation of extractive industries projects, including of fossil fuel projects and in relation to ecosystems that act as globally significant carbon sinks.
3. Advocate that **extractive industries companies disclose their scope 1, 2, and 3 greenhouse gas emissions and their roadmap to achieving an emissions profile**, in absolute terms, that is compatible with limiting global warming to no more than 1.5°C (such a roadmap might require closing projects before oil and gas reserves are exhausted), and that government policy and legislation mandate such disclosures.
4. Advocate for **fossil fuel contract transparency** as a step towards better understanding the true fiscal value and economic benefit of continued fossil fuel extraction in a global context of rapidly shifting energy markets.
5. Support efforts to **diversify the economies of countries that depend on fossil fuel revenues**, and the economies of communities that depend on fossil fuel projects for employment and other economic benefits, including efforts to identify diversification pathways that do not harm or exclude affected workers and communities so that economies are inclusive and sustainable.
6. Drive **policy and practice change in governments**, and strengthen **capacity among civil society, in new minerals frontiers** consistent with all the goals in this strategic plan.
7. Advocate for an **end to public fossil fuel subsidies** (including in response to the COVID-19 pandemic), and work to restrain the power and undue influence of extractive industries companies on regulatory efforts to take action on climate change and to strengthen environmental protections.



We know we are making progress when:

1. The biggest, most polluting fossil fuel projects in development **fail to receive regulatory approval and financing**.
2. Governments develop and implement policies and legislation to **better protect air, water, and land resources** and to ensure that funds provided by extractive industries companies are available for clean-up and rehabilitation efforts once mining, oil, and gas extraction is complete.
3. Government policy and legislation, and industry standards and norms, mandate the **disclosure of extractive industries scope 1, 2, and 3 emissions**.
4. Governments mandate the **disclosure of extractive industries contracts**.
5. There is commitment and leadership from within the governments of fossil fuel-dependent countries (or regions within countries) to engaging with other stakeholders on the issue of **economic diversification**, and credible pathways to greater economic diversification are proposed by all stakeholders.
6. Civil society organizations in new minerals frontiers are resourced, connected, and able to engage with and **influence their governments on transition minerals policy**.
7. Governments increasingly commit to **ending financial assistance for coal, oil, and gas companies**, including an end to tax breaks and corporate bailouts.



STRATEGIC FOCUS: CIVIC SPACE AND HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS

CIVIC SPACE AND HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS

Human rights defenders, climate and environmental defenders, transparency campaigners, and others advocating for improvement in the human rights, gender, economic, and environmental performance of the extractive industries sector continue to be threatened, harassed, and intimidated. There is widespread impunity for acts of violence against human rights defenders, and instead the work of human rights defenders is often criminalized. Civic space continues to shrink in many parts of the world.



Our Goal

Human rights, climate, environmental and land defenders, transparency campaigners, and others are able to operate in a safe and enabling environment free from threats, harassment, intimidation, and violence by governments, extractive industries companies, or their agents.



An indigenous community leader in the Peruvian Amazon. Photo: Venancio Sandiof/OPIKAFPE.



STRATEGIC FOCUS: CIVIC SPACE AND HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS

Our strategic actions



We will:

1. Support and strengthen grassroots movements, and **human rights defenders** and others, to **raise their voices** at local, national, regional, and global forums.
2. Support human rights defenders, including women human rights defenders, and **build alliances** (including with non-traditional allies, when it makes sense to do so) and local support networks, including for the development of community-based protection and care mechanisms.
3. Advocate for policy and legislation to **create a safe and enabling environment** within which human rights defenders can work.
4. Highlight the **risks human rights defenders and others face** – as well as the shrinking civic space grassroots movements have to operate in – and **put these issues onto the global extractive industries agenda** for action.
5. Draw attention to how corruption, gender-based violence, and the political economy of the extractives sector **creates risks for human rights defenders**, particularly women human rights defenders.



We know we are making progress when:

1. The **local communities and human rights defenders** we work with are better resourced and connected, and are able to **engage with and influence duty bearers**.
2. **Women human rights defenders and their support networks are better resourced**, including to build protection and care networks, and to document violations against women human rights defenders.
3. Governments and extractive industries companies publicly acknowledge the important role played by human rights defenders and others and acknowledge that they should be able to **operate in a safe and enabling environment free from threats**, harassment, intimidation, and violence.
4. Governments create, including through the development and implementation of policies and legislation, **a safe and enabling environment in which human rights defenders and others can safely operate**.
5. Extractive industries companies commit to **respecting the rights of human rights defenders**, including the rights of women human rights defenders.



WAYS OF WORKING

The strategies and tactics we use to achieve our vision and our goals will be adapted to the different contexts within which we are working; the needs, interests, and capabilities of the communities and organizations we work with; and our understanding of the political economy of the extractives sector. Core to our work will be a focus on challenging power, seeking systemic and structural change, and tangible results for people from the local through to global levels.

We will be flexible, innovative, and prioritize the creation and sharing of knowledge. We are also in for the long haul—this means we make internal resourcing decisions for long rather than short time horizons.

The approaches that form the foundation of how we work are described below.

Working locally to globally

Oxfam's worldwide influencing network is central to how we work. Oxfam's natural resource justice program is focused on bringing about change for the communities who are adversely impacted by the sector and for those people who, despite the tremendous oil and mineral wealth their country is endowed with, continue to live in poverty. We will work locally, regionally, nationally, and globally—through country and regional offices and affiliates—because decisions made by governments at the national or subnational level, by intergovernmental organizations regionally, by multi-stakeholder initiatives nationally and globally, and by multinational extractive industries companies and their investors affect the rights and livelihood of people everywhere. Communities can create positive change by using global norms and standards to hold governments and companies accountable at the local level. We will also use local evidence, experience, and learning to advocate for structural change.

Our knowledge and learning agenda connects our work, and that of our partners, from the local through to global levels. This ensures that our work is relevant, effective, and sustainable. We believe that cross-country and regional learning adds value to our work.

Evidence-based

Oxfam's natural resource justice program will be founded on a strong evidence base. Further, we believe that research and knowledge generation and sharing is necessary to challenge power and seek systemic and structural change. We will support the generation of such knowledge, and the skills and expertise needed to produce it.

Partnerships

Oxfam is part of a large ecosystem of organizations working towards reform of the extractive industries; we each have a role to play for collective success. Working in partnership with others is central to Oxfam's approach. Working with other organizations expands our knowledge and influence. Further, by partnering with local organizations and local institutional structures we are supporting community self-determined priorities, and prioritizing local values, knowledge, and experience over our own.



WAYS OF WORKING

Our research, advocacy, and influencing and programming work will be done in partnership with local communities, and civil society organizations, networks, and platforms. Together we will co-create and implement joint research, advocacy, and influencing plans. Where strategic, we will work with research institutions and think tanks where they have relationships with government decision makers, allowing us to advocate on contentious issues. We will work with women's rights and feminist organizations, human rights and environmental organizations, organizations of persons with disabilities (OPDs), youth-led organizations, and transparency, accountability, and anti-corruption organizations, among others.

We will provide and advocate for better access for our partners to information and data, and to extractive industries decision-making forums at the local, national, regional, and global levels. We will promote partner voice and agency. We will also ensure that we are working in ways that respect Oxfam's partnerships principles. These principles are shared vision and values; complementarity of purpose and value added; autonomy and independence; transparency and mutual accountability; clarity on roles and responsibilities; and commitment to joint learning.

Feminist gender and intersectional approach

Oxfam, in all its work, will work in ways that are consistent with our feminist principles.¹⁵ Our extractive industries work will apply a feminist lens to our analysis, partner with and support women's rights organizations, and support transformative leadership for women's rights.

Analysis

Context-specific gender power analysis will inform the design and implementation of our work. This analysis will ensure that our work reflects the needs, interests, and capabilities of women and girls, and other people whose gender (including sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, and sex characteristics), age, race, Indigenous identity, ability/disability, and other identities may make them more vulnerable to the negative impacts of extractive industries projects, or who may be excluded from extractive industries decision-making forums. Our analysis will be feminist and intersectional—this means we seek to understand how power relations, systems, and identities intersect and interact to drive vulnerability and marginalization.

Partnerships

We will continue to partner with and support women's rights organizations, and their networks and allies, in advancing their agendas in relation to women's rights and extractive industries. We will also work with our other partners to ensure their work is based on context-specific gender power analysis, and that they support women's leadership in their organization and in the communities they are working with.

Transformative leadership for women's rights

We will support transformative leadership for women's rights in our extractive industries work.¹⁶ We will promote and support women's political and public leadership, including in their communities, networks, and organizations. We will also support the leadership of other people whose identities may result in their exclusion from political and public leadership.



WAYS OF WORKING

Engagement, collaboration, and convening

We will engage constructively and critically with extractive industries companies, project financiers (including the international financial institutions), governments, industry standard setters, and other stakeholders. We will support our partners and affected community representatives when they engage these stakeholders. In contexts where civic space is constrained, working through multi-stakeholder forums or dialogues is often the only space available to advocate for change. However, in all circumstances we will maintain our independence. We will not accept funding from extractive industries companies.

Innovative strategies and tactics

We will use a diversity of strategies and tactics, including for example public mobilization, global campaigning, non-violent direct action, media, legal advocacy and strategic litigation, and legislative and other accountability forums and processes.

Internal ways of working

Oxfam's country and regional programs and affiliates will work collaboratively to support implementation of this plan. Among other actions, we will coordinate our efforts to fundraise and mobilize resources, and direct these resources to where they can best have an impact. We will also work collaboratively to implement our knowledge and learning agenda. We will provide effective leadership and strategic oversight of our program and ensure there is joint accountability for delivery of this strategic plan.



These women in Zambia are struggling to earn a living after a mining company purchased land that they once used for surface mining.
Photo: Georgina Goodwin/Oxfam



KNOWLEDGE AND LEARNING

Oxfam's global Knowledge and Learning Framework, and Oxfam's Global Strategic Framework 2020–2030 recognize the complexity of the challenges we face, and that responding to this complexity requires a diversity of knowledge forms, sources, and contributions. Investing in knowledge and learning helps us increase our impact.

We believe we increase our impact when:

- We provide high-quality information that is timely, relevant, accessible, and usable.
- We support ongoing learning and innovation with staff, partners, and allies.
- We enable effective collaboration within and outside Oxfam.

Oxfam's knowledge and learning framework proposes that our knowledge and learning efforts are directed towards accountability, improvement, learning, and social change. Across these four domains, a number of learning questions will guide our knowledge and learning agenda, while still providing space for individual Oxfam country and regional programs to prioritize their own learning needs. These include the following:

Accountability

- How do our partnerships, collaborations, and engagements benefit communities who are adversely impacted by the extractive industries sector, and people in resource-rich countries who continue to live in poverty, especially those who are potentially vulnerable to the negative impacts of the extractive industries sector (such as women)? Which partnerships, collaborations, and engagements have been most beneficial and why?

Improvement

- How can our natural resource justice program work in inclusive ways, learn from mistakes, and adapt to complex and changing contexts in inclusive ways?

Learning

- How can we support transformative leadership for women's rights in our extractive industries work?
- How can Oxfam's natural resource justice program best support and work with OPDs and youth-led organizations?

Social change

- How can we prioritize knowledge and learning to fight inequality and contribute to social change where grassroots movements are fragile and legally constrained?
- How has the knowledge generated by our program contributed to change in extractive industries practice? What type of knowledge has been most impactful and why?

Oxfam's Extractive Industries Knowledge Hub will lead the learning agenda for our global program. This hub takes an approach to learning and innovation that makes visible and leverages the diverse knowledge of our people and collaborators across the countries and regions where we work.



ANNEX 1: ALIGNMENT WITH OXFAM GLOBAL STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

The following table shows how the strategic priorities in this Strategic Plan align with the strategic priorities in Oxfam’s Global Strategic Framework.

Natural Resource Justice SP as covering 2021- 2025	Oxfam Global Strategic Framework 2020–2030
Human rights and communities	<p>Just economies: People and the planet are at the center of just and sustainable economic systems</p> <p>Accountable governance: Inclusive and accountable governance systems protect human rights and our planet</p> <p>Gender justice: Women and girls live free from gender-based discrimination and violence</p>
Economic justice and accountable governance	<p>Just economies: People and the planet are at the center of just and sustainable economic systems</p> <p>Gender justice: Women and girls live free from gender-based discrimination and violence</p> <p>Accountable governance: Inclusive and accountable governance systems protect human rights and our planet</p>
Gender justice	Gender justice: Women and girls live free from gender-based discrimination and violence
Environmental and climate justice	Climate justice: The climate crisis is contained through responses led by those who are least responsible and hardest hit
Civic space and human rights defenders	<p>Gender justice: Women and girls live free from gender-based discrimination and violence</p> <p>Accountable governance: Inclusive and accountable governance systems protect human rights and our planet</p>



NOTES

- 1 Oxfam, “Fight Inequality: Together, We Can End Poverty and Injustice: Global Strategic Framework 2020–2030” (Oxfam, 2020).
- 2 See for example Oxfam International, “Position Paper on Gender Justice and the Extractive Industries” (Oxfam, 2017).
- 3 See for example Ben Naanen, “When Extractive Governance Fails: Oil Theft as Resistance in Nigeria,” *Extractive Industries and Society Journal* 6, no. 3 (July 2019).
- 4 Gavin Hilson, “Artisanal and Small-Scale Mining and Agriculture: Exploring Their Links in Rural Sub-Saharan Africa” (IIED, London, 2016).
- 5 Douglas Broom, “5 Things to Know About How Coronavirus Has Hit Global Energy” (World Economic Forum, May 18, 2020), and Jillian Ambrose, “Coronavirus Crisis Could Cause \$25tn Fossil Fuel Industry Collapse,” *Guardian*, June 3, 2020, .
- 6 Michael Mazengarb, “Fossil Fuels Get Four-Times More Covid Stimulus Than Renewables, Report Says” (Renew Economy, July 16, 2020), .
- 7 David Boyd, UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights and the Environment, “COVID-19: ‘Not an Excuse’ to Roll Back Environmental Protection and Enforcement, UN Rights Expert Says” (UNHCR, April 15, 2020)
- 8 See for example Jewel Joseph and Ed O’Donovan, “Defending Rights During a Pandemic: Impact of Covid-19 on the Safety and Work of Human Rights Defenders” (Frontline Defenders, April 17, 2020)
- 9 Global Witness, “Defending Tomorrow: The Climate Crisis and Threats against Land and Environmental Defenders” (Global Witness, July 19, 2020).
- 10 An extractivist economic model involves the extraction, processing, sale, and consumption of minerals, oil, and gas in ways that disproportionately benefit nations, multinational corporations, and consumers in the global North at the expense of the majority people at the sites or countries of extraction, exacerbating inequality between and within nations.
- 11 These five priorities represent an evolution of the goals contained in our previous strategic plan, “Achieving Natural Resource Justice.” That strategic plan included goals on financial transparency, pro-poor revenue collection and spending, free prior and informed consent, human rights, civic space, and gender justice.
- 12 Including on public services, social welfare, and infrastructure so that the needs of women, men, girls, boys, and gender-diverse people are met, and gender equality commitments are realized.
- 13 See for example Caroline Sweetman and Maria Ezpeleta, “Natural Resource Justice,” *Gender and Development* 25, no. 3 (2017).
- 14 In addition to greenhouse gas emissions from the extraction and burning of fossil fuels, this may also include consideration of greenhouse gas emissions associated with forest clearance and energy usage from the extraction, transport, and smelting of ores.
- 15 Oxfam Global Strategic Framework 2020–2030.
- 16 Transformative leadership for women’s rights is a process of people working together to transform systemic and intersecting oppressions against women and gender-diverse people—with the ultimate goal being the realization of gender justice and women’s rights.

Oxfam America
US Headquarters
226 Causeway Street, 5th Floor Boston, MA 02114-2206
(800) 77-Oxfam

US Policy & Advocacy
1101 17th Street NW, Suite 1300 Washington, DC 20036-4710
(202) 496-1180

info@oxfamamerica.org oxfamamerica.org

Oxfam is a global movement of people working together to end the injustice of poverty. With 70 years of experience in more than 90 countries, Oxfam takes on the big issues that keep people poor: inequality, discrimination, and unequal access to resources including food, water, and land. We help people save lives in disasters, build stronger futures for themselves, and hold the powerful accountable.

Join us.



OXFAM