

## **Oxfam Denmark's Local Leadership Strategy 2022-2025**

### **Introduction**

Oxfam Denmark aims to increase the strength, voice, and space for local actors. The partnership approach promotes ownership and leadership by local actors in both humanitarian, fragile, and more stable development contexts and values a diverse civil society and partner portfolio. Our guiding principles to partnerships are 1) shared vision and values; 2) complementarity of purpose and value-added; 3) autonomy and independence; 4) transparency and mutual accountability; 5) clarity of roles and responsibilities; and 6) long term commitment to joint learning. Furthermore, our humanitarian work is guided by our localisation commitments as signatories to e.g. the Grand Bargain, Charter for Change, Gender Based Violence Call to Action and Commitments to Refugee Meaningful Participation. We have integrated these commitments into our programme and policy approach and tools.

Context matters, which means that partnership and local leadership take different forms in different situations and contexts.

### **1. Partnerships on an equal footing**

Oxfam Denmark strives for mutual, complementary, and equitable relationships in partnerships based on respect, trust, and joint commitments to achieve social change. It implies sharing of power, responsibilities and reciprocal transparency and accountability being aware of Oxfam Denmark's role and advantages.

We recognise the diversity of partners and the fact that needs, and priorities are different depending on their mandate and whether partners are community-based organisations, national NGOs, loose structured movements, or strategic partners.

Oxfam Denmark is – in conjunction with a shifting role of Oxfam as a whole - increasingly redefining its role to be more of a convenor and supporter of activists, movements, and organisations locally, nationally, and globally, and not least as a connector between the different levels<sup>1</sup>.

### **To ensure equitable partnerships, we will:**

- Strengthen the mechanisms for continuous dialogue and mutual feedback between partners and Oxfam Denmark (for example joint partner capacity assessment and annual meeting with partners to discuss partnerships).

### **2. Quality and quantity financial support to local partners**

Oxfam Denmark has made a clear strategic and political commitment to transfer as high a proportion of its funding as possible to local partners in the global South, which is aligned with international commitments.

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<sup>1</sup> Fight Inequality. Together, We Can End Poverty and Injustice. Oxfam Global Strategic Framework 2020-2030 (Annex 3b)

In some of the fragile countries where Oxfam works, national legislation, policies and fragile independent civil society pose a challenge to the transfer of funds to local and national NGOs. This impacts especially financial transfers to local actors in humanitarian responses where speed and scale are critical factors. We will continue to pilot, learn and scale-up modalities which will increase our transfers to CBOs and other emergent organisations and groups.

Furthermore, transfers to partners are not only about the quantity of the funds transferred to partners, but also about quality. For Oxfam Denmark, quality funding is multi-annual and flexible to allow for adaptation in case of contextual and operational changes. Also, it includes adequate funding for organisational and capacity development and support costs.

**To strengthen quantity and quality financial support to local actors, we will:**

- Increase the proportion of financial transfers to local partners during the Strategic Partnership. Of the net amount of the SP funding transferred to the South, the target for programme intervention with development purposes is 60% in 2022 transferred to local partners, 65% in 2023, and 70% in 2024. For interventions with humanitarian purposes, 30% (of the net amount transferred to the South) in 2022 is transferred to local partners, 35% in 2023 and 40% in 2024.
- Choose a multi-year funding approach in partnerships in both development and humanitarian interventions when relevant and feasible.

**3. Strong local and national organisations**

Oxfam Denmark facilitates and provides tailor-made capacity development support, which is informed by context, strategic dialogue, and partnership (self)-assessments. Oxfam Denmark considers organisational and institutional capacity holistically, which implies a broad approach to capacity and capabilities including collaboration, motivation, contextual knowledge, influencing, resource mobilization, in addition to the capability to deliver on development objectives through technical and operational competences.

Capacity development support will be jointly agreed between Oxfam staff and the local partner and will build on and reinforce local competences, knowledge, and structures such as local learning institutions. Oxfam Denmark's capacity development approach will facilitate partner-to-partner technical support and strengthening of capacities through joint work. A plan for capacity development is part of the partnership agreements between Oxfam and partners. When possible and relevant, our approach will support a collective of diverse local actors including local leaders and authorities. Capacity development and sharing (between Oxfam-partner and among partners) is an integral part of the programme cycle and of annual planning and monitoring, partnership review meetings, and partnership learning events.

**To ensure strong local and national organisations, we will:**

- Strengthen the approach to organisational and institutional capacity development as part of all long-term partnerships.
- Monitor and support effective implementation of capacity development plans, building on best and innovative practises.

#### **4. Participation and leadership in projects and programmes**

Oxfam Denmark's partnership approach encourages partners to define and lead their own pathways, priorities and influencing agendas. It also aims for learning and knowledge creation to be built on shared information, analysis, and understanding – between Oxfam and partners, as well as among local actors.

Oxfam applies a partnering cycle of five phases alongside the programme cycle: 1) context and risk analysis; 2) programme design and 3) programme implementation; 4) monitoring and 5) evaluation and learning. Each phase includes concrete steps and actions to ensure meaningful partner engagement and participation.

Furthermore, participation of partners builds on inclusive representation and voice and meaningful engagement, communication, and feedback. This may take many forms but include regular dialogues, learning and reflective practices, and systematic feedback including complaint mechanisms. Ownership and sustainability of interventions are dependent on involvement in all programme phases.

#### **To strengthen participation and leadership we will:**

- Further enhance partners' involvement and decision-making in project and programme design and implementation.
- Strengthen information sharing and joint monitoring, evaluation and learning with partners.

#### **5. Voice and influence of local partners**

Oxfam Denmark has a brokering role in supporting the development of networks and alliances of partners and other civil society organisations – linking actions, voice and influence from local to national and international levels – and by facilitating constructive engagement with private sector, government authorities, and institutions.

By enabling and amplifying the voices and influence of women, youth, indigenous leaders and/or displaced people, and enhancing their connection to alliances and movements, we contribute to the sustainability of a civil society that has the capacity and legitimacy to propose and negotiate solutions with governments, private sector, and national and international coordination and policy fora such as embassies and EU representations, the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda, Global Partnership for Education, the Women, Peace and Security agenda, and Inter-Agency Standing Committee related to humanitarian assistance.

#### **To promote local partners' voice and influence, we will:**

- Strengthen inclusivity in coordination and local actor led advocacy work, in particular participation and work on women, youth, indigenous peoples, and displaced populations.
- Strengthen the engagement between local, national, and international coordination bodies and partners and other stakeholders among partners and other stakeholders, e.g. with Danish embassies and other representations, private sector, regional institutions, and UN organisations.