



# TRANSFORMATIVE LEADERSHIP FOR WOMEN'S RIGHTS

## An Oxfam Guide

UNDERSTANDING HOW LEADERSHIP CAN CREATE  
SUSTAINABLE CHANGE THAT PROMOTES WOMEN'S  
RIGHTS AND GENDER EQUALITY

OXFAM 2014



OXFAM



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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

As part of its commitments to promoting gender justice, Oxfam invests in an approach called ‘Transformative Leadership for Women’s Rights’ (TLWR). Transformative leadership for women’s rights is an unfamiliar term for many of our staff and partners. This guide explores what transformative leadership for women’s rights means, and how it links to women’s rights and gender justice. We explore what distinguishes transformative leadership from other forms of leadership, and how *change* differs from *transformation*. The guide also explains why transformative leadership is important for Oxfam, and what we are trying to achieve by promoting it. By exploring what transformative leadership for women’s rights means in practice, this guide demonstrates how we can apply it in our programs and our organizations.

This guide is intended as a resource that will inform and inspire the work of Oxfam staff and of our partners. It can be read and consulted by individual staff members, or used as a basis for discussion with peers or partner organizations. The guide is available to interested external readers and organizations via the Oxfam website. Eventually, this guide will be accompanied by an online learning module, which will also be available on Oxfam’s website.

This guide will help you to understand how Oxfam defines transformative leadership for women’s rights as an approach and a strategy for social justice. TLWR challenges and transforms power relations and structures (in all their different manifestations) into an enabling environment for the leadership potential of individuals. It embodies the *principles and values* of human rights, gender equality, participation, consultation, and respect for the dignity of all people. TLWR directs others to bring about fundamental change, and facilitates collective efforts to transform inequitable institutions: in the home, in the community, within wider institutions, and in our own organizations.

Adopting a TLWR approach within our programs and policies requires us to integrate findings from gender and power analysis into all stages of program or policy strategy design and monitoring and evaluation. In order to do this, we need to develop the following elements:

- Context-specific gender power analysis in the initial stages of program design. This examines various dimensions of identity, marginalization and gender relations with respect to leadership.
- A *theory of change* that provides a clear shared understanding of what we want to change and how. The theory of change must address power, leadership, values, and principles.
- Strategies and activities that reflect an understanding of the existing gender power dynamics and how these influence the practice of leadership; and which provide compelling proposals for transforming them.
- Programs or policies that encourage people to reflect on the self (and their own ways of exerting power or reflecting their principles), their leadership styles, and the organizational culture in which they work.
- A monitoring, evaluation, accountability, and learning (MEAL) strategy that monitors shifts in various forms of power and leadership; measures how lasting change happens; and is based on principles that value and protect the work of our partners.





Noorkishili Naingâisa  
Geoff Sayer/Oxfam

TLWR also requires organizational reflection. The purpose, values, and principles that are at the root of transformative leadership are foundational to Oxfam's mission. It would be both a missed opportunity and a risk to our credibility as a rights-based organization were we not to practice what we preach, and examine how power impacts our lives, relationships, and our shared work.

In this guide, we explore all the components of a strong TLWR program or policy so that you can apply it directly to your work. We present useful tools, strategies, best practice case studies, and links.

# INTRODUCTION

More poor and marginalized women will occupy key positions of power and influence in communities and organizations, providing transformative leadership in support of women's rights.<sup>1</sup>

OXFAM STRATEGIC PLAN 2013-2019

Transformative leadership which is leadership for sustainable change addresses the root causes of inequality. Promoting transformative leadership is a central objective in Oxfam's Strategic Plan 2013-2019. Specifically, Oxfam focuses on **transformative leadership for women's rights (TLWR)**. This is a form of leadership which promotes **gender justice** by advancing women's participation and leadership.

Transformative leadership for women's rights is both an important *goal* of Oxfam's work and a *strategy* that informs our work. On the one hand, TLWR is about the improvement of the *content* of leadership, or *how* people exercise their leadership. At the same time, leadership capacity is being built in order to *achieve* or *change* something. For example, we might seek to build leadership capacity to mobilize citizens or policy-makers to reform gender inequitable laws and policies; to transform power relations between men and women at the household, market, or government levels; or to foster spaces where gender justice goals can be realized.

Advancing gender justice is a core 'Change Goal' in Oxfam's Strategic Plan 2013-2019. Oxfam is promoting a series of strategies linked to this Change Goal, including: alliance-building with civil society organizations; training poor 'at-risk' women to understand their rights and building their capacity to lead and influence decision-makers; promoting leadership and participation of women producers in Oxfam's Fair Trade networks; and promoting women's agency and leadership across all of Oxfam's work. Transformative leadership for women's rights will play a key role in implementing these strategies and advancing gender justice.

Transformative leadership challenges structures and ideologies that justify and perpetuate gender inequality and power imbalances. It seeks to ensure that leadership actions contribute to equity, human rights, justice, and peace. Oxfam is investing in building the skills, experience, and confidence of our staff and partners in using the transformative leadership approach. We believe that this will strengthen all areas of Oxfam's work, including our long-term development programmes, advocacy and campaigning, and humanitarian response.<sup>2</sup>

This guide offers a comprehensive introduction to the TLWR approach. It is aimed at Oxfam's staff, partners, allies, and networks, as well as other interested readers. It aims to offer answers to the following questions:

- What is TLWR? What definitions, concepts, and principles can we use to describe it?
- Why is TLWR important? What are the rationale and the theory of change that lie behind it? How does it relate to gender justice and women's rights?
- How can we apply TLWR? How can we apply it in our external-facing programme, policy, humanitarian, and campaigning work? How can we apply it internally, in our management approaches, organizational structure, practices, and policies? Who needs to be involved in applying and implementing TLWR?
- How can we measure the impact of adopting this TLWR approach? What kind of monitoring, evaluation, accountability and learning (MEAL) approach do we need to adopt for this work?





Women conduct hygiene awareness training in Yemen  
Wolfgang Gressmann/Oxfam

This guide is divided into six sections. The first section begins by clarifying what gender justice and women's rights means, in terms of definition and practice. We explore the term 'transformative change', and how it relates to different forms of power. We then bring all the key terms together to provide a definition and explanation for what we mean when we say 'Transformative Leadership for Women's Rights'.

In Section 2, we look at the 'theory of change' that underlines TLWR, to begin our exploration of how TLWR can be integrated into programs. In Section 3 we delve a bit deeper into one aspect of program design, and look closely at how we can apply a gender and power analysis within our TLWR programs.

In Section 4, we examine TLWR from the perspective of our own organizations and ourselves, focusing on specific tools and exercises to support the application of a TLWR approach

within an organization like Oxfam, or to support capacity development for TLWR with partners.

In Section 5, we focus on the monitoring, evaluation, accountability and learning of TLWR. Section 6 offers conclusions and a summary of key points.

Additional resources – including a glossary, bibliography, notes on the text, and a list of further reading materials – are available at the end of the guide.

Alongside this guide, Oxfam is developing an e-learning course on TLWR which will be available to staff and via our website. The e-learning course covers some of the key topics introduced in this guide in greater depth, and includes case studies, exercises, and examples taken from the experiences of Oxfam's affiliates in working with TLWR.

# WHAT IS TRANSFORMATIVE LEADERSHIP FOR WOMEN'S RIGHTS?

## 1.1 DEFINING GENDER JUSTICE AND WOMEN'S RIGHTS

Working towards **gender justice** means:

1. Challenging and changing existing structures, institutions, practices, customs, norms, values, attitudes, and beliefs where these are barriers to the achievement of women's rights and the rights of all people, regardless of gender or sexual identity. This requires the promotion of **agency**: possessing the power and knowledge to be able to claim one's rights.<sup>3</sup>
2. Ensuring the **accountability** of the institutions which are responsible (legally or morally) for dispensing and ensuring justice, protecting civilians, and guaranteeing and protecting the rights of citizens. These include the State, the judiciary, religious institutions, the community, and the family.
3. Working towards **freedom from all forms of violence and discrimination** based on gender identities and sexual identities (woman, man, lesbian, gay, bisexual, queer, intersex, transgender, and others). Oxfam's human rights perspective takes into consideration the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (1979) and the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women (1993).<sup>4</sup>

## WOMEN'S RIGHTS

Gender inequality derives from social and cultural socialization processes. In patriarchal societies, girls and women are classified (not always consciously) as less valuable, less strong, economically less attractive, not suitable for public leadership roles, needing protection and control, etc.. Other aspects of identity, such as (dis)ability, HIV status, sexual orientation, race, class, caste, and religion interrelate with people's biological sex and this can result in multiple forms of discrimination.<sup>5</sup> For Oxfam this patriarchal, exclusive ideology is the main cause of the violation of the women's right to equality. We recognize that for the reasons listed above women often belong to the most marginalized groups and are denied access to resources, justice, and power. We believe that when women and girls face discrimination and injustice, it is both a cause and a result of the inequality that drives poverty. Therefore, we focus on **transformative leadership that advances women's participation, leadership, and rights**.

## 1.2 TRANSFORMATIVE CHANGE AND POWER

The achievement of women's full rights is a complex socio-economic and political process. It demands diverse, positive, and sustained changes in policy, practices, resource allocation, attitudes, beliefs, and power relationships. Together these changes have the potential to lead to transformed societies where women and other marginalized groups can fully achieve their rights.

**Transformative change** means change that is fundamental, lasting, and which challenges existing structural inequality. It is part of Oxfam's approach to development and humanitarian response, and it is continuously being refined and developed within the Oxfam confederation.



Transformative change requires fundamental shifts in power relationships. Power can be expressed in many different forms. The most commonly recognised expression of power is ‘**power over**’. This is a way of exercising influence over people, often negatively associated with force, repression, coercion, discrimination, abuse, or corruption. Those who have control over resources and decision-making have *power over* those without. When people are denied access to important resources like land, healthcare, education, or jobs, *power over* perpetuates inequality, injustice, and poverty. This expression of power is often associated with the way people interpret leadership: as a hierarchical process where someone (the visible leader) uses his or her authority to make people act and think the way they want.

**EXERCISE:** The exercise of *power over* doesn’t always have to be negative. Think of an example when you or somebody else exercising *power over* had a negative impact on your work. Now think of an example when *power over* had a positive impact.

If Oxfam aims for transformational change and leadership, power must be used and exercised in more collaborative ways. ‘**Power with**’ builds collective strength and finds common ground among different interest groups. *Power with* is based on mutual support, solidarity, and collaboration. It brings together the talents and knowledge of individuals to build bridges across different interests in a way that transforms or reduces conflict and promotes equitable relations. Figure 2 gives a graphic illustration of *power with*, while Figure 3 shows how changing leadership styles are increasingly embracing elements of power with in place of *power over*.

‘**Power to**’ refers to a person’s capacity to decide and carry out desired actions. It refers to the unique potential of every person to shape her or his life and world. It opens up the possibility of joint action, or *power with*.



Figure 1: An example of power over. Source: [www.powercube.net](http://www.powercube.net)

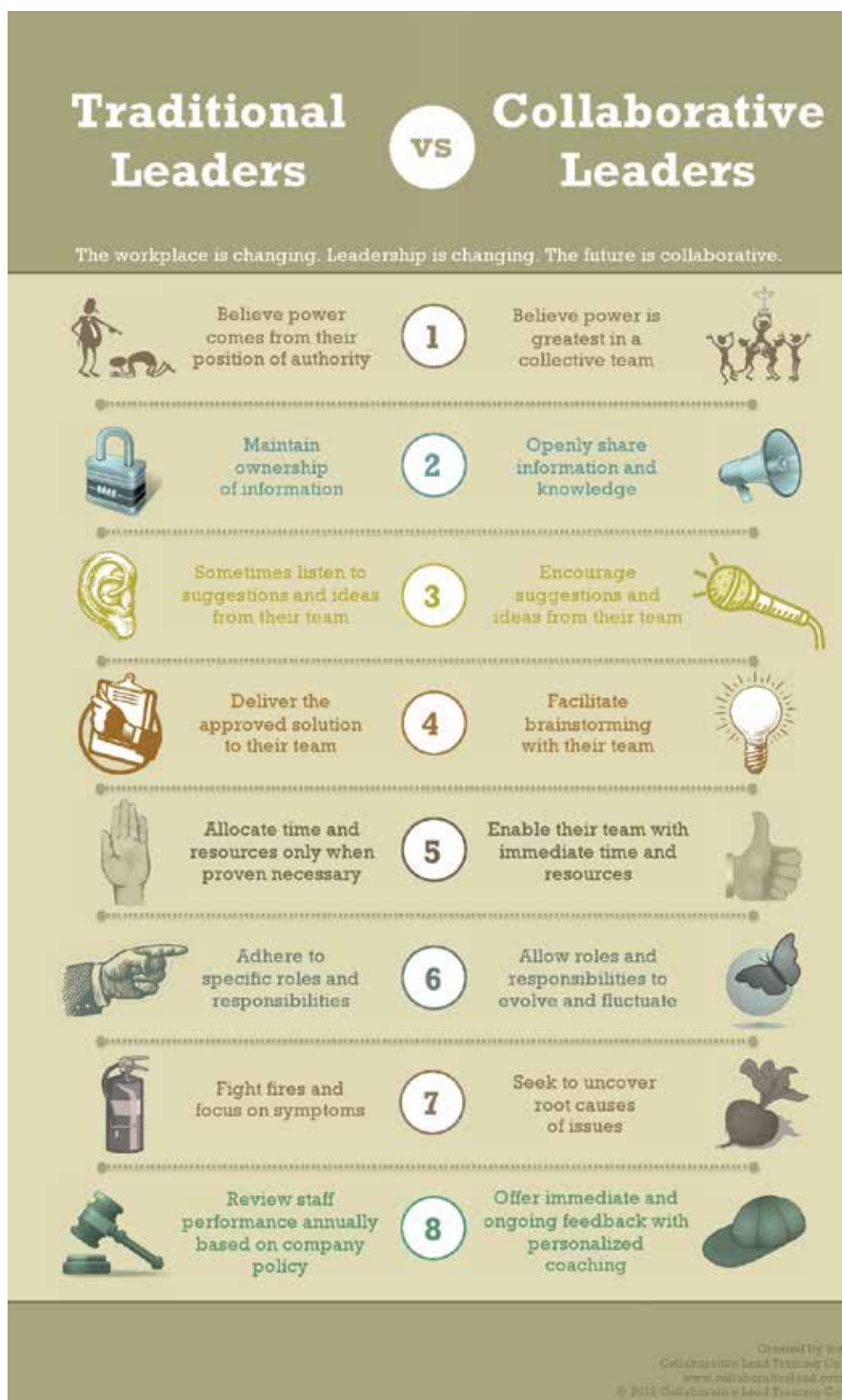


Figure 3: How leadership styles are shifting from *power over* to *power with*  
Source: Collaborative Lead Training Co. ([www.collaborativelead.com](http://www.collaborativelead.com))





**EXERCISE:** Think of the last time that a group you are part of made a collective decision. How did the group arrive at the decision? What types of power did you observe during the decision-making process (*power over, power with*)? Who held power, including less obvious, hidden forms of power? Who did not have power? Was the relative power of the individuals in the group linked to aspects of their identities (such as their rank, position, experience, gender, etc.)?

‘**Power within**’ refers to a person’s sense of self-worth, self-knowledge, self-confidence, and their conviction of what is legitimate. It includes an ability to recognise individual differences while respecting others, and refers to the capacity to imagine and have hope.<sup>6</sup>

It is important to remember that leadership is not always linked with an appointed position or role. Leadership can occur in a moment, act, or behaviour. Anyone can be a leader, or take on leadership, in any given situation. Leadership can also be imagined as a process, where cooperation is emphasized over competition, power and influence is shared within the group, and participative decision-making takes place.

*“As for the best leaders, the people do not notice their existence. The next best, the people honor and praise. The next, the people fear; the next, the people hate.”<sup>7</sup>*

Lao Tse

## 1.3 TRANSFORMATIVE LEADERSHIP FOR WOMEN’S RIGHTS

### 1.3.1 WOMEN’S POLITICAL PARTICIPATION AND LEADERSHIP

The advancement of women’s leadership has traditionally been focused on increasing women’s political participation. This is an important strategy because there is evidence to suggest that increasing the participation of women in politics and public life makes a significant difference for women and society. The visibility of women in public office encourages greater political engagement and mobilization of a broad spectrum of women. It helps to shift people’s perceptions of what a leader is, and challenges the idea that only men can be/are leaders. It can also give women the confidence to apply for positions of public leadership.<sup>8</sup>

However, working to promote women’s political and public leadership may be ineffective if we ignore the broader political and structural context in which this is taking place, and the relevant informal sources of power and decision-making that are active in that context. This is because conventional leadership is often situated in existing power structures. Usually these are founded in hierarchical and exclusionary patterns of power over. Globally, decision-making spaces are still male-dominated. Leaders who become part of these structures are encouraged to model prevailing power behaviors which may compromise on their principles, and are rewarded for doing so. Merely ensuring that women hold formal positions of power is therefore not enough.<sup>9</sup>



For example, a recent study found that quotas for women – which are often used to secure space for women in governments or other leadership spaces – are not sufficient; the type of decision-making that occurs within the space (unanimous or hierarchical) has an impact on the way women are able to access and influence power (Mendelberg 2013). The case study in Box 1 illustrates that women need to be empowered and informed about relevant policy issues to enable them to participate more effectively in political activities.

### 1: CASE STUDY – DEVELOPING WOMEN LEADERS IN GUATEMALA

The evaluation of Oxfam’s Raising Her Voice program in Guatemala found that for women’s participation and leadership to be meaningful, investment is required to move beyond increasing the number of women in decision-making spaces. Raising Her Voice focused on ‘growing’ the political confidence and influencing capacities of women activists, including through power mapping, social audits, and mentoring.

**“We need political education. Otherwise, once we manage to have dialogue and they start talking to us about things like municipal budgets, it’s like jumping out of a plane with no parachute. If they are talking about infrastructure, I have to know about infrastructure. If they are talking about territorial rights, I have to know about territorial rights.”**

Bertha Zapeta, Raising Her Voice, Guatemala

### 1.3.2 TRANSFORMATIVE LEADERSHIP FOR WOMEN’S RIGHTS

Srilatha Batliwala (2010, p.15)<sup>10</sup> presents the following diamond (Figure 4). This incorporates four elements that form the core of transformative leadership for women’s rights.

The ‘four Ps’ of the diamond make up ‘the Self’, because it is at the individual level where positive change in leadership styles to promote gender justice starts. This means that the implementation of a TLWR approach and strategy begins with *ourselves*. We have to work to change ourselves as individuals, to become better leaders who practice *and* fight for gender justice.<sup>11</sup>

Power is one of the elements in this diamond. Values and principles underlie the politics and purpose of leadership, and translate into practice.

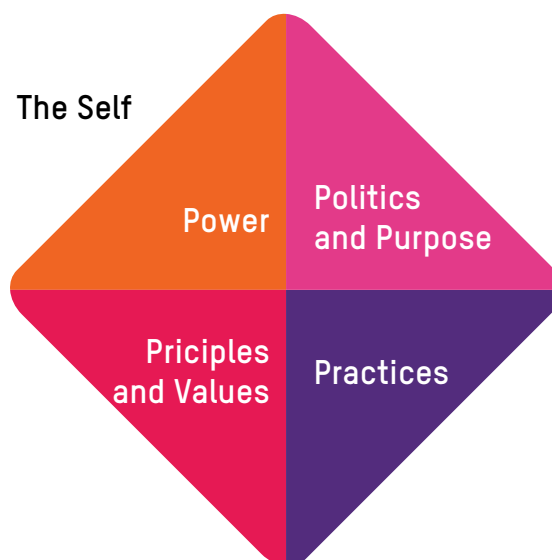


Figure 4: The feminist leadership diamond

Source: Batliwala 2010, p.15

**Transformative Leadership** requires an analysis of the inequitable power structures (formal and informal) that undermine people’s dignity, development, and leadership. Unless we seek to transform the cultural and political contexts in which we promote gender equality, activists and leaders risk violence, backlash, and ridicule based on their gender or sexual identity. We must support processes of transforming *power over* into *power to*, amongst individuals and communities, in both formal institutions and informal spheres.

Transformational leadership for women’s rights strives for social, cultural, economic, and political transformation for equality and the realization of human rights for all, regardless of gender, sexuality, or other forms of identity. Transformative leadership mobilizes and respects all people, and facilitates the space for the led to become leaders.

Based on this, we use the four Ps of the diamond to develop the following definition of transformative leadership for women’s rights:

Transformative leadership for women’s rights is an approach and strategy for social justice which challenges and transforms *power* relations and structures (in all their different manifestations) into an enabling environment for the leadership potential of individuals (*purpose*). It embodies the *principles and values* of human rights, gender equality, participation, consultation and respect for the dignity of all people. TLWR directs others to bring about fundamental change, and facilitates collective efforts to transform inequitable institutions whether it is in the home, the community or more broadly (*practice*).

# THE GENDER AT WORK FRAMEWORK:

## Making our theory of change for TLWR explicit

The **Gender at Work** framework is one of the most useful tools for mapping the change Oxfam wishes to create through the TLWR approach.<sup>12</sup> This framework distinguishes four important areas for change related to power and gender justice: formal and informal, individual and collective. Although this framework doesn't show *how* change happens, it is helpful for planning interventions and can be used to do a gender power/leadership analysis of the context in which the program or project is being developed. It can also be used to carry out an internal analysis of organizations.

The arrows in the framework represent the relationships between the four quadrants, which influence each other. Evidence shows that if action is taken within multiple quadrants at the same time, change will come about more quickly and will be more sustainable.<sup>13</sup>

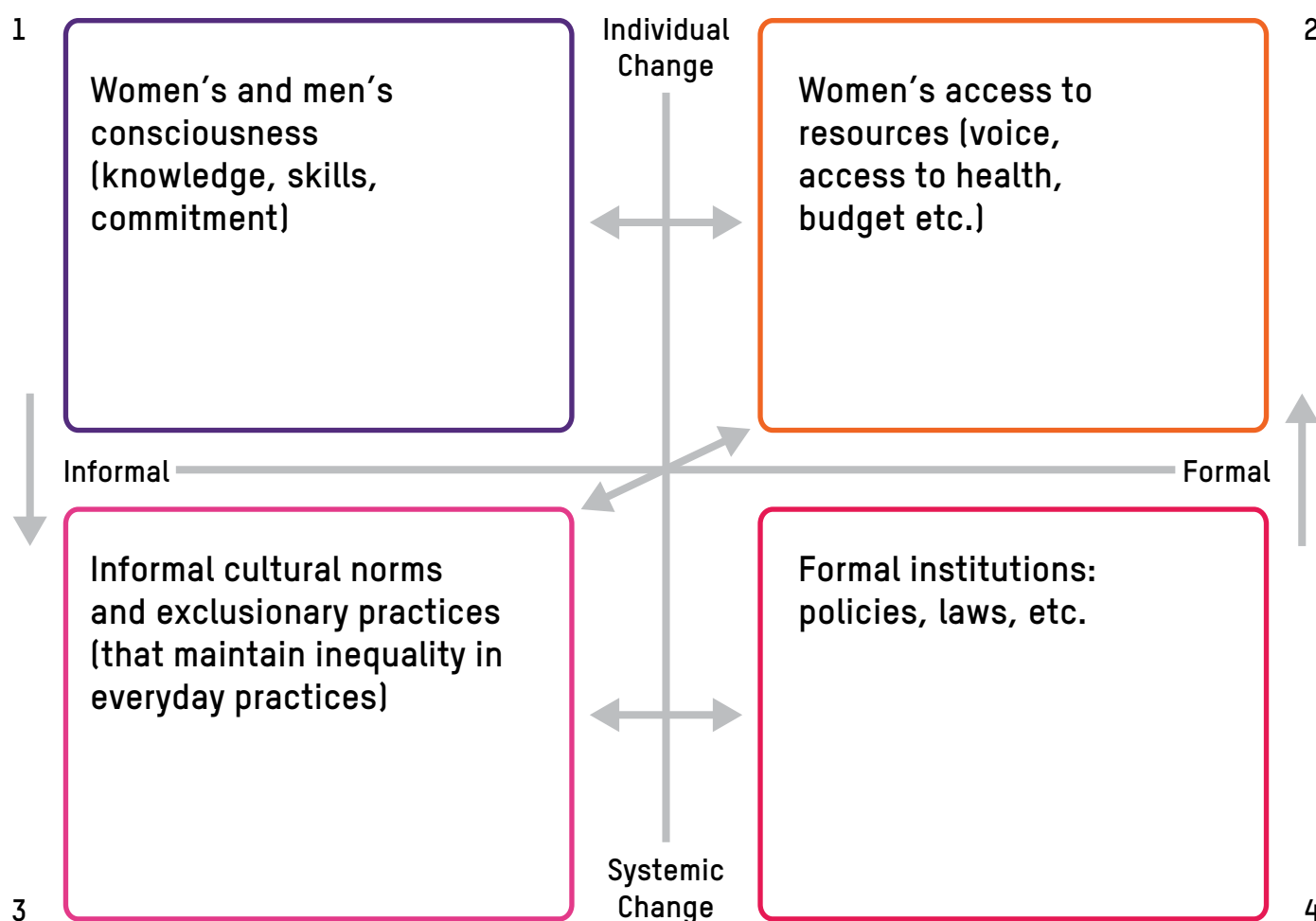


Figure 5: The Gender at Work framework. The arrows represent potential relationships between areas of change. Source: [www.genderatwork.org](http://www.genderatwork.org)

The following are examples of types of changes fitting within each quadrant of the framework:

1. Informal individual change: For the first time, men speak out about violence against women as an illegal practice.
2. Formal individual change: Women gain access to land and learn how to farm, increasing their ability to support themselves and their families.
3. Informal systemic change: A community begins to support women's participation and leadership in community councils.
4. Formal systemic change: New legislation changes the laws so that women have the right to inherit land or prosecute their abusers.

The third quadrant of the Gender at Work Framework relates to deep structure and culture. It is in this informal, collective sphere where we find the assumed values and ways of thinking and working that often underlie decision-making and action. Deep culture is not always visible. Figure 6 shows how deep culture can be both invisible and substantial, like the section of an iceberg that lies below the surface.

Change in the third quadrant requires a long-term, collective process, which means that more than one individual must adapt and reflect the change over time. It is important to take into consideration that culture and ideology differ from place to place, and from time to time. Change, therefore, can look different from one place to another and might be considered significant in a certain community, while in another, it does not.<sup>14</sup>

The case study in Box 2 gives an example of how this framework can be used to understand the promotion of women's rights to support economic justice.

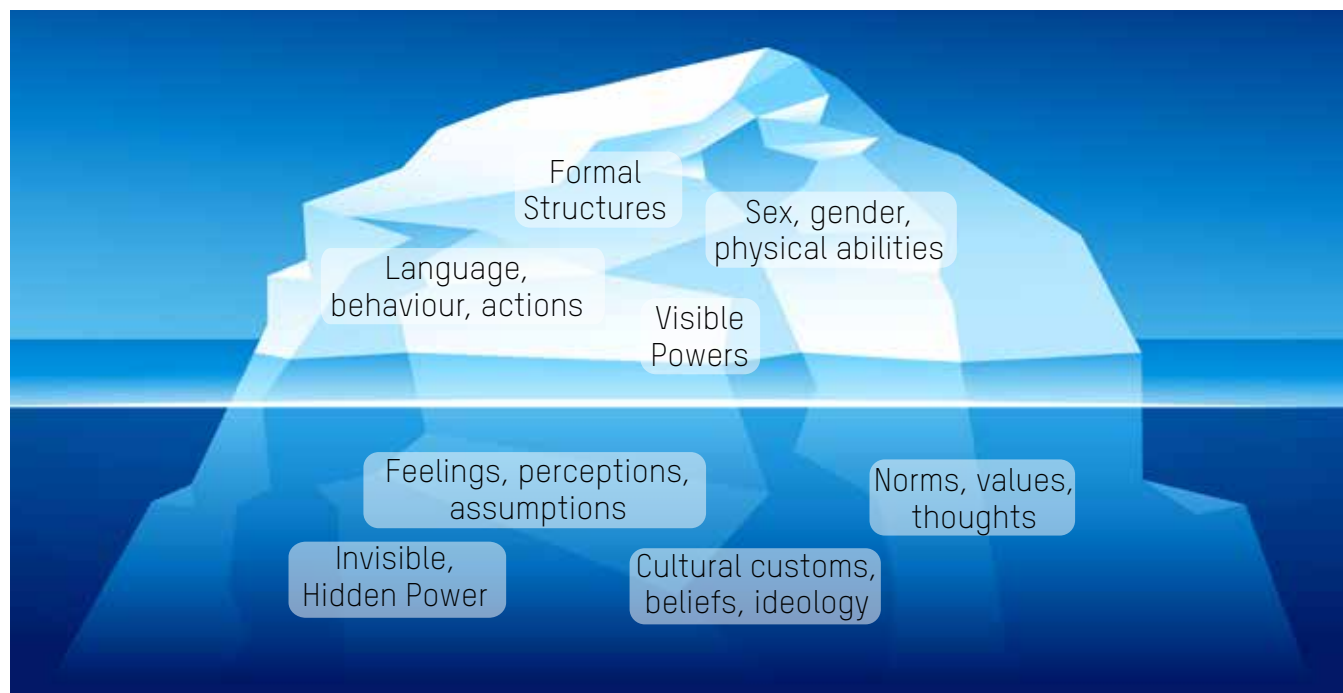


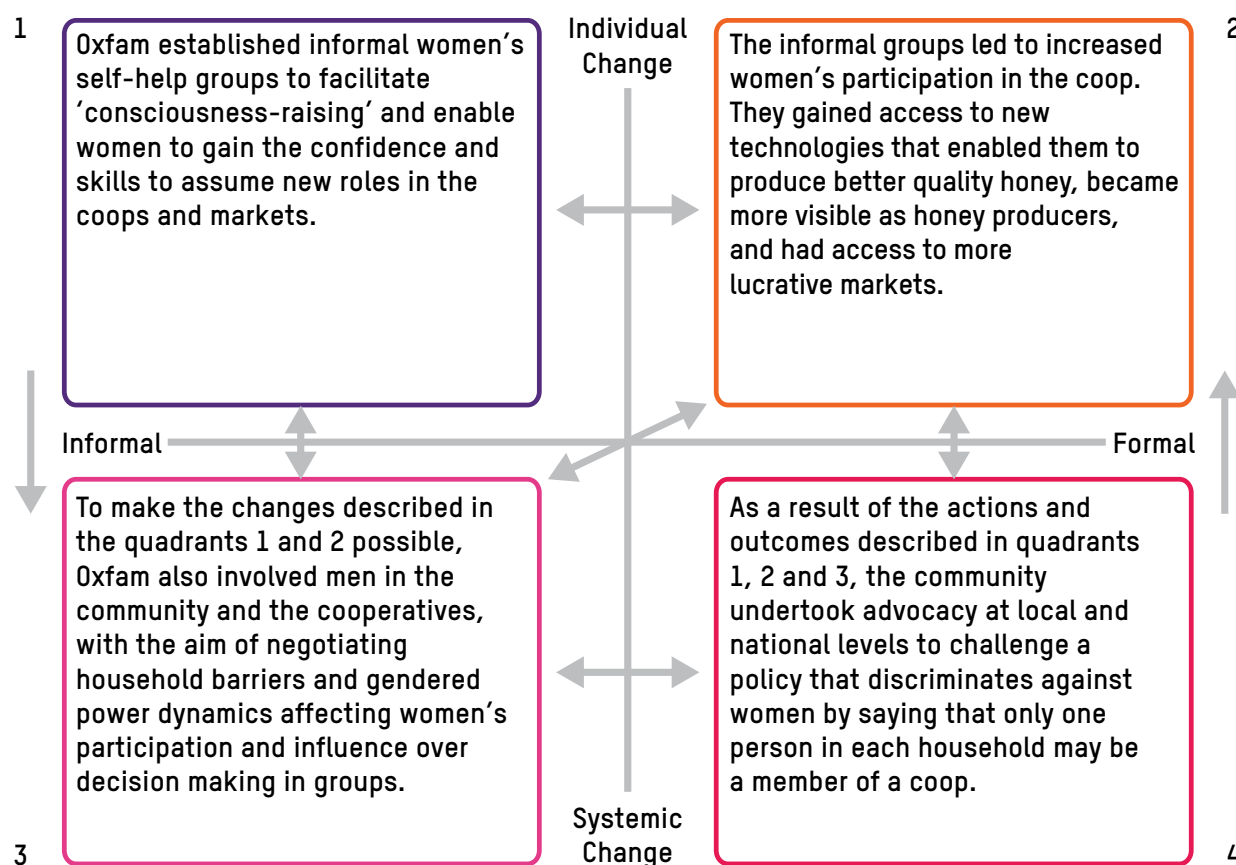
Figure 6: Deep culture: collective norms, values, and behaviours 'below the surface'



## 2: CASE STUDY - USING THE GENDER AT WORK FRAMEWORK TO ANALYSE PROJECT OUTCOMES IN ETHIOPIA

In Ethiopia, Oxfam has been supporting a project 'Women's Collective Action in the Honey Section in Ethiopia' intended to strengthen women's participation and leadership in formal cooperatives in order to promote women's engagement in markets. In the problem analysis phase of the project, it became clear that women needed their own spaces to develop the confidence and skills to allow them to assume leadership and reap more benefits from their participation in the cooperatives.

Below, we use the Gender at Work framework to analyse the project activities, and to consider how they contributed to the different types of change described in each quadrant:



Source: [http://womenscollectiveaction.com/file/view/Eng\\_Ethiopia\\_lorez.pdf/408801284/Eng\\_Ethiopia\\_lorez.pdf](http://womenscollectiveaction.com/file/view/Eng_Ethiopia_lorez.pdf/408801284/Eng_Ethiopia_lorez.pdf)

In order to understand the power dynamics that will affect their program or project, program managers can use the four quadrants of the Gender at Work framework to analyse the prevailing and emerging leadership and power relationships in the program context. This means asking questions such as:

- Who holds power in this context? How is it transferred?
- What form of power is it: 'power with', 'power over', 'power within' or 'power to'?

This analysis is the first step in developing a 'theory of change'. A theory of change is a kind of map that sets out our ideas for how change towards the program or project objective will happen. In the next section we will focus more on how to apply TLWR in our program and policy work.

# INTEGRATING TRANSFORMATIVE LEADERSHIP FOR WOMEN'S RIGHTS INTO PROGRAMS

## 3.1 HOW DO WE APPLY GENDER POWER ANALYSIS TO OUR PROGRAMS IN SUPPORT OF TLWR?

When we are developing a proposal for programmatic or policy work we need to analyse the existing gender and power dynamics that may have an impact on the outcomes of our work. This is a **gender power analysis**. A gender power analysis should involve the partners and participants who will implement the program or project. It is a *participatory* process where all the people involved – including partners and allies – try to understand the underlying power issues at play. In Box 3 we give some examples of the kinds of questions that a gender power analysis would ask in the process of program design.

### 3: Considering gender power analysis in program design

Gender power analysis is a useful tool for considering how to ensure that women can participate and develop as leaders within your project or program.

1. How can we increase women's participation in our project/program?  
Increasing women's participation means more than simply enabling women to be present in meetings. Women must also have equal status in discussions. For example, even if women form a majority within a meeting, they may not feel able to stand up to a prominent local landowner or community leader who holds a great deal of power. Do the women have the confidence and skills they need to contribute and influence discussions and agreements? Does the environment ensure that their contributions are heard and respected?
2. What risks do women activists and leaders face in this context? How can we manage them in our project/program?

Violence – and the threat of violence – is a significant barrier to women's full participation in decision-making spaces. Women leaders and activists are at risk of various forms of violence (economic, physical, psycho-social, structural) from those who do not want the status quo to be challenged. This needs to be addressed explicitly in all programming and policy work.



Ghida Anani, Programme Coordinator for KAFA. KAFA, which means “Enough” in Arabic, offers counseling to women at its office in Beirut.  
David Snyder/Oxfam

When doing gender and power analysis, the first step is to expose any underlying assumptions about the way gender relations work in a certain context, and to understand power dynamics, particularly in relation to the practice of leadership. Next, we analyse the environment in which the program or advocacy strategy is going to be implemented. The following **six basic questions about leadership and gender equality** can guide this analysis :

1. What is the division of roles and responsibilities between men and women in the community or communities where the program will be implemented, or where we seek to have policy impact? What are the differences between men’s and women’s roles?
2. Do men and women have the same access to and control over resources such as land, water, food, assets, education, information, (health) services, markets, or money (see Box 4)? What are the differences?
3. What are the practical needs and strategic interests of men and women? How do these differ?
4. Do men and women have the same decision-making powers within the family, within the community, and within public institutions? What are the differences? Which women or men want to be engaged in transformative change?

5. What different expressions of power are visible in this situation or community? What expressions of power might be invisible? Who exercises power?
6. Which expressions of power do we want to engage with and seek to change in the interventions we are planning? What strategies will be used to address barriers and support transformative leadership for women’s rights?

#### 4: Defining access to resources and control over resources

To have **access to resources** means to have the opportunity to make use of certain resources in order to satisfy personal or collective needs and interests.

To have **control over resources** means having the permanent possibility to use resources when required, and to make decisions about them (Tobón Coral *et al.* 1995, pp.35-6).



The most important part of the gender and power analysis comes next. Determine the causes of the inequalities or disparities you have found, and check whether your underlying assumptions are correct or if they need to be adjusted. Then, identify the forces that *hinder* or *enable* the transformation of exclusionary practices of leadership and gender inequality. This analysis can employ the Gender at Work framework (see Figure 5) to analyse how leadership and the use of power, norms, and principles play a role in each quadrant. We give some examples of this in Box 5.

### 5: Using the Gender at Work framework to explore enabling and hindering forces

An example of an enabling, **positive force** for the achievement of women's rights is the presence of gender sensitive women leaders in public office (formal and informal, individual, quadrants 1 and 4).

An example of a hindering, **negative force** for the achievement of women's rights is a law that inhibits women inheriting land (formal, systemic, quadrant 4).

After doing the gender power analysis, you will be able to define the objectives required to achieve the desired long-term change. Asking the following questions can help you to define the objectives:

1. How does this program or advocacy strategy define leadership and empowerment?
2. Does the program or advocacy strategy seek to address issues of *power over*, *power to*, *power with*, or *power within*?
3. Which quadrant(s) of the Gender at Work framework will the program or policy work address?

Next, decide what activities your program or advocacy strategy will include, and who should be included in or targeted by the actions. To undertake an action plan, you need to determine which levels or quadrants are the most strategically important to try to influence or change, and how your program will influence the women, men, groups, or structures that you have targeted. Remember that this is a participatory process and it is important to involve your partners, allies, and key stakeholders in thinking and decision-making at every stage. A few questions to consider are:

- What kind of tools will be needed to influence the people or structures that we want to change?
- What resources (finances, time, skills, and knowledge) will we need in order to challenge negative forces, reduce resistance, and promote positive forces that can effectively influence the target groups? How can we access or develop these resources within our work?



Leaders of grassroots organizations of Pampamarca, in Canas gathered to talk with the journalists visiting their community.  
*Celia Aldana/Oxfam*

## 3.2 TRANSFORMATIVE LEADERSHIP FOR WOMEN'S RIGHTS AS A CROSS-CUTTING APPROACH

Transformative leadership for women's rights is a strategy and an aim that is relevant within all areas of Oxfam's program and advocacy work. Gender power analysis and the Gender at Work framework can and should be used by teams implementing programs or advocacy work in support of *any* of Oxfam's six Change Goals (see Box 6), because understanding gender and power relations is critical for our work on any of the Change Goals to be effective.

### 6: Oxfam's six Change Goals

Oxfam's Change Goals are set out in the Oxfam Strategic Plan 2013-2016. They are:

1. The right to be heard;
2. Advancing gender justice;
3. Saving lives, now and in the future;
4. Sustainable food;
5. Fair sharing of natural resources; and
6. Financing for development and universal essential services.

In Box 2 we presented a case study from Ethiopia about women's cooperatives. To illustrate how gender power analysis can be applied to any area of our work (from economic justice to humanitarian response), in the following exercise we apply a gender power analysis to this case.

TLWR also intersects with other gender justice issues, such as violence against women (VAW), gender-based violence (GBV), care work, and sexual health and reproductive health rights. Each of these issues can be analysed using the lens of gender and power inequality. This is because Oxfam believes that unequal gendered power relations are the root cause of these diverse gender justice challenges. Power transformation is therefore central to our work on GBV and VAW. Overcoming GBV and VAW requires transformations in the individual and collective beliefs that condone its social acceptability; and within the institutions that have a duty to protect citizens from violence, but which may in fact perpetuate violence through their structures and policies. A **transformative change** will challenge assumptions of patriarchal power at individual and institutional levels.

The different steps mentioned here form the building blocks of the theory of change for your program or advocacy strategy. A central part of the theory of change process is the setting of measurable indicators and definition of methods for collecting data and targets for each objective. We will elaborate more on this in section 5. In the next section, we consider how TLWR can be a strategy for organizational development and change within Oxfam's internal leadership structures, policies, and practices.

**EXERCISE:** Based on the case study in Ethiopia in Box 2, imagine how the different types of power (*power over*, *power within*, *power with*, and *power to*) are being exercised within each quadrant of the Gender at Work framework. What are the key power issues that women face in each quadrant?

A few possible responses:

- *Quadrant 1:* Women lacked organization (*power with*), self-confidence (*power within*) and knowledge/skills (*power to*).
- *Quadrant 2:* Women lacked knowledge (*power to*) and had to change traditional role division by becoming more visible as producers and participating in other markets (*power within*).
- *Quadrant 3:* Men had to be involved to change norms and values at the household level and in the coops (*power to* and *power within*). Women started to participate in spaces they did not participate in before (*power to*, *power within*) and were involved in collective decision-making (*power with*), which was not the case before.
- *Quadrant 4:* The action to change a limiting policy indicates that women (and possibly also men) possessed *power to* organize and were able to have a collective impact by changing the law.

# TRANSFORMATIVE LEADERSHIP FOR WOMEN'S RIGHTS AT THE ORGANIZATIONAL LEVEL

## 4.1 IMPLEMENTING A TLWR APPROACH WITHIN OXFAM AND ITS PARTNERS

In our Strategic Plan (2013–2019), Oxfam states that it is part of our work to ensure that organizations themselves – and the contexts in which they work – are open and safe spaces where leaders can make choices that are inclusive of women's rights and needs. Of course, this applies to Oxfam itself as well. Oxfam will promote the transformative approach to leadership internally, and review our effectiveness in advancing this approach. The purpose, values and principles that are at the root of transformative leadership are foundational to Oxfam's mission as a rights-based organization. Oxfam's internal work on transformative leadership facilitates – and is complementary to – our stand-alone work on women's rights and our work on gender mainstreaming, because it strengthens Oxfam and the organizations we work with. In particular, it works to overcome blockages and resistance to the adoption of a gender perspective in all aspects of our work. Oxfam's Code of Conduct for staff illustrates principles that relate to transformational leadership, as shown in box 7.

An organization which has transformative leadership strongly embedded in its internal practice will be better equipped to do programming that delivers gender justice for the following reasons:

- **Personal biases and deeply held beliefs about gender identity can limit the analysis and design of a program or policy.** For example, if a policy specialist believes that women are solely the victims and never perpetrators of violence in conflict situations, policies that promote reconciliation may fail to include women combatants, and sustainable peace may not be achieved.

### 7: Oxfam's Code of Conduct for staff

It is mandatory for all Oxfam staff to sign Oxfam's Code of Conduct. The Code states: '[I will] treat all people with respect and dignity and challenge any form of harassment, discrimination, intimidation or exploitation. I will contribute to a working environment characterised by mutual respect, integrity, dignity and non-discrimination. I will ensure that my relationships and behaviour are not exploitative, abusive or corrupt in any way. I will respect all peoples' rights, including children's rights, and will not engage in any form of abuse or sexual exploitation of children (as defined in the country Child Protection Policy), or of any persons of any age.' (Oxfam 2012, p.1)

- **When leadership is not transformative and inclusive, important voices may be excluded from decision-making.** Oxfam's staff is very diverse in its experience and background; our work will be stronger when all voices and opinions are incorporated whenever possible.
- **When Oxfam doesn't 'walk the talk' on gender justice within the organization, we put our reputation as a rights-based organization at risk.** As an organization that puts 'women's rights at the heart of all we do' we are committed to creating a safe, supportive, and inclusive environment for all our staff and to tackling gender discrimination, inequality and harassment in the workplace.



Many organizations perpetuate gender inequality in aspects of their internal policies and practices, and in their relationships with external actors. This may be done consciously or unconsciously. Examples include the under-representation of women in decision-making positions; resistance in organizational structures and systems (at all levels) to becoming more inclusive and accountable to women and other identity groups; gender pay inequalities; and uneven opportunities for promotion and professional development. The TLWR approach provides a tool that staff and leaders can use to analyse and address gender power relations within their organization.

This list can be used as a checklist but is not exhaustive. Some indicators may be more relevant in some organizations than in others.

This internal organizational gender power analysis can in turn underpin the definition of an action plan for TWLR. The action plan should take into account the positive and negative factors that may influence change. It should detail the resources and tools that may be needed for implementation, and should incorporate measurable indicators to assess effectiveness. This in turn forms a basis for the organization’s theory of change towards a more inclusive, gender-equal work environment where leadership is exercised for the benefit of all.

### 4.2 APPLYING TLWR WITHIN AN ORGANIZATION: TOOLS AND EXAMPLES

An organization wishing to conduct a self-reflection on TLWR can use the same analytical process as we describe for the program level in section 3 of this guide. Figure 7 uses the Gender at Work framework and concepts from the feminist leadership diamond to generate a series of questions that organizations can use to explore TLWR internally.

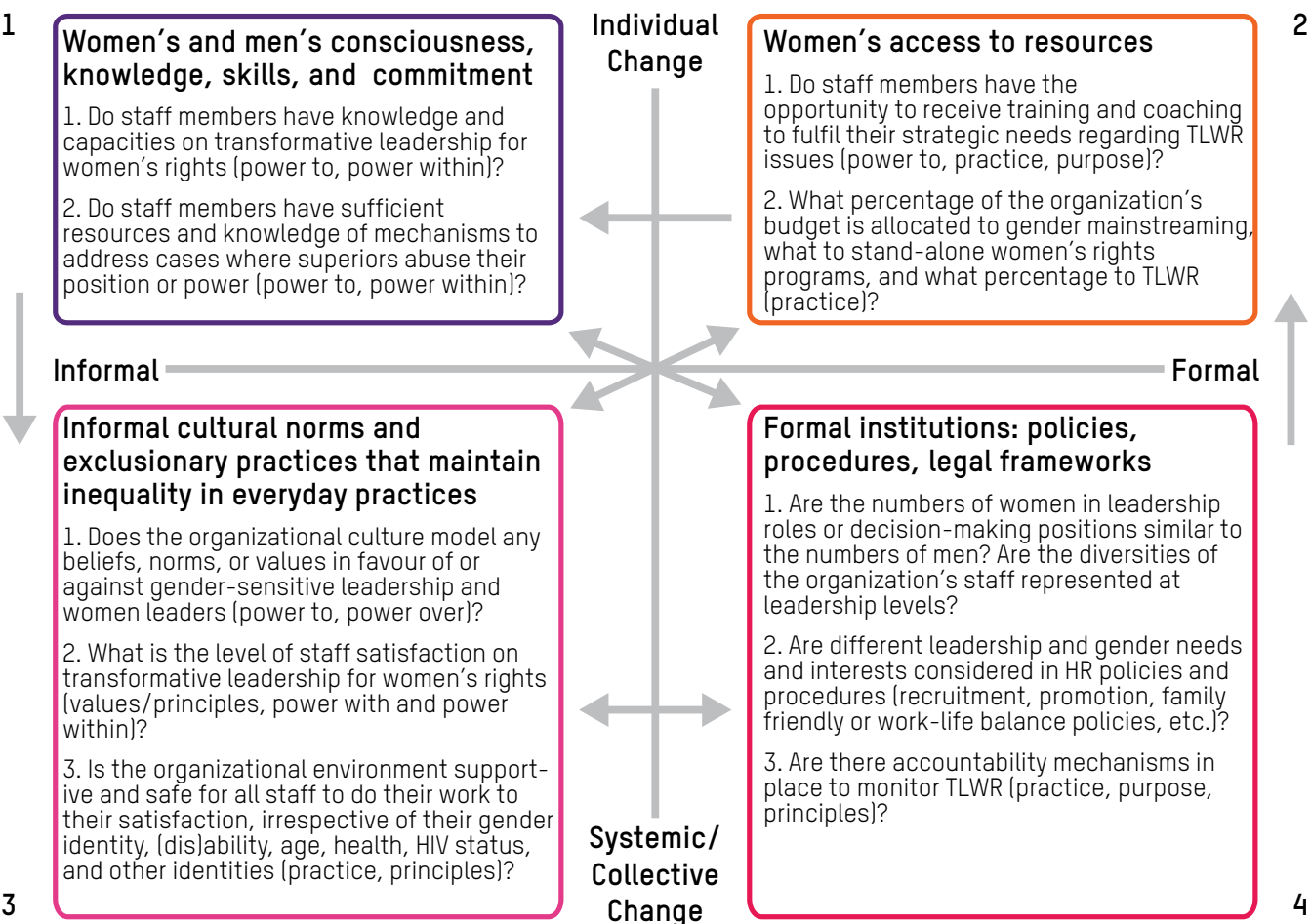


Figure 7: Using the Gender at Work framework to do an internal organizational analysis of TLWR <sup>17</sup>

In January 2014, Oxfam Intermón organized a workshop on TLWR. Staff from different departments came together to reflect on the model and practice of transformative leadership within the organization. The group identified three fundamental values of transformative leadership that need to be further developed internally: **empathy, empowerment, and horizontal relationships**. Table 1 shows the resulting action plan for each of the three value areas.<sup>18</sup>

VALUE	EMPOWERMENT	EMPATHY	HORIZONTAL RELATIONSHIPS
What do we need to do to make change happen?	Generate power analysis in the whole organization, promote self-esteem in the workplace, have the time necessary to work together and construct programs collectively.	What do we need to do to make change happen?	What do we need to do to make change happen?
Who will be responsible for facilitating the change?	Individual level	Everybody (internal power)	Director of Communication Department (design), with the approval of key decision makers.
	Persons with responsibility who have 'power over'.	Managers of teams (power over)	
Who else should take responsibility to implement the changes?	The board	Current project on performance management	The whole team. We have to work on the change with the support of leadership.
What factors could have a negative influence?	Leaders resistant to change, lack of culture of accountability, lack of reinforcement of decision making.	Stress, workload, labour conditions, institutional challenge of staff being fatigued by organizational changes and adjustments.	Resistance to change because of lack of flexibility, changes in roles, change is a long term process with no quick results, lack of technical capacity in new roles.
How can we minimize the negative factors?	Promote the linkages and collaboration between people who work for Oxfam. Develop capacity building for leaders/managers and integrate elements of accountability in the monitoring system.	Better management of time (empowerment at work and more clarity about roles and responsibilities), take care of the organizational climate (more coffees, informal activities).	Increase the accessibility of directors, increase support to the teams, capacity building for teams including horizontal, long-term vision.

Table 1: Implementing TLWR internally: an example of an organizational action plan

## 4.3 CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT FOR TLWR IN PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS

Sometimes, partner organizations request Oxfam to provide tools and trainings to strengthen their internal organizational capacity to work on leadership for women's rights. One way that Oxfam can support this growing demand for support is to facilitate organizational change processes with partners to improve TLWR.

Several excellent resources exist to support analysis and training on leadership and power issues. We have included some of the most useful in the Resources section at the end of this document. The following resources are particularly helpful for organizations seeking to develop their capacity to work on TLWR:

- CREA, a global women's rights organization<sup>19</sup>, has developed a toolkit to support organizations and movements to work on transformative feminist leadership.<sup>20</sup> The toolkit contains

a set of practical exercises for training and discussion about the four elements of the diamond presented in section 1 above. The toolkit is accompanied by a conceptual paper about transformative feminist leadership.<sup>21</sup>

- Another useful resource is a manual produced by Women's Learning Partnership in collaboration with several Women's Rights organizations. The manual, *Leading to Choices: A Leadership Training Handbook for Women*, has been published in 19 different languages and is oriented mainly towards grassroots organizations.
- Another useful resource is a manual produced by Women's Learning Partnership in collaboration with several Women's Rights organizations. The manual, *Leading to Choices. A Leadership Training Handbook for Women*, has been published in 19 different languages and is oriented mainly towards grassroots organizations.<sup>22</sup>

# MONITORING, EVALUATION, ACCOUNTABILITY AND LEARNING (MEAL) FOR TLWR

## 5.1 MONITORING, EVALUATION, ACCOUNTABILITY AND LEARNING

Although presented as the last section of this guide, MEAL should not be the last activity of a program or project. The development of a monitoring, evaluation, accountability and learning approach for TLWR activities begins with the development of the theory of change for the initiative. This should be undertaken at the outset of the initiative, as we have described above. The process includes exploring underlying assumptions; conducting a context analysis with a gender and power lens; figuring out the possible causes of inequality and power differences; defining the enabling and hindering factors; and defining the objectives of the program and the activities.

In order to form a strong basis for MEAL activities, the planning phase and the development of the theory of change must ensure sufficient time and engagement with partners. The theory of change should avoid oversimplification, identify critical junctures, and properly identify Oxfam's role in the process. This forms the basis for the development of the MEAL strategy.

Measuring the power dimensions of gender inequality is complex. Program and advocacy initiatives may need to be (re)designed to measure and value the steps in the process towards transformation, and not focus solely on end results.<sup>23</sup> Most of Oxfam's programs or advocacy initiatives have a short timeframe for implementation. It may be more appropriate to speak of building narratives about how Oxfam's work is *contributing* to changing norms and behaviour (rather than seeking evidence of norm or behaviour change itself). This approach strengthens and sharpens our analysis and theory of change.<sup>24</sup>

'A transformative approach recognizes all contributions, no matter how small they seem, as steps in a transformative process, and the necessity of women setting their own agendas in all decision making processes.'<sup>25</sup>

In June 2013, Oxfam staff, partners, and other experts participated in a learning event on feminist monitoring, evaluation, learning, and accountability. The participants proposed a useful set of principles for feminist MEAL, generating the following recommendations:

1. *MEAL should be co-designed with project participants, partners, Oxfam staff. The MEAL design process should:*
  - Use participatory tools and methods that explore gender and power relationships;
  - Remove barriers to participation, such as women's care burdens;
  - Ensure on-going risk analysis;
  - Review evidence generated by MEAL collectively, and agree conclusions;
  - Recognize that time is needed to build trust and understanding;
  - Ensure different levels of accountability are emphasized and seen as valuable, for example by using meaningful feedback mechanisms;
  - Be flexible, adaptable, and responsive, because desired results and related indicators will change as people and organizations respond to change.

2. MEAL should recognise the power dimensions of the production of knowledge, and should emphasise learning:

- The production of knowledge is both political and intertwined with power relations;
- Learning is both what happens during the process, as well as what is done with the information collected;
- MEAL should favour collective and responsive learning;
- Change, and understanding change, takes time and investment;
- MEAL should strive to produce knowledge in a way that acknowledges gender and power relations, how they change, and why;
- Knowledge and values are cultural, socially and temporally contingent;
- MEAL should ensure that learning is widely shared, and that it feeds back into all processes and future work;
- Knowledge should be used by the people who create, own, and share it.

3. MEAL needs to take complexity into account, for example through:

- Recognizing non-linearity and complexity, including tracking and capturing negative impacts, resistance, reaction, holding ground and unexpected outcomes;
- Acknowledging that transformative change processes often include periods of backlash or 'holding ground'.

4. MEAL should use mixed methodologies. Specifically, it should:

- Use both quantitative and qualitative methodologies (such as the Most Significant Change technique, or outcome harvesting);
- Use methods that assess contribution, rather than attribution.

5. MEAL should support the development of internal organizational capacity. Specifically, it needs to:

- Acknowledge that those facilitating evaluative processes need a skill-set which includes facilitation, listening, and self-awareness.<sup>26</sup>

## 5.2 SOME EXAMPLES OF OXFAM AFFILIATES DOING FEMINIST MEAL

To monitor and evaluate TLWR initiatives, depending on the program or policy focus, information needs to be generated about all four elements of the diamond (Figure 4), and the four quadrants of the Gender at Work framework. This applies to external program and policy work and also to work that focuses on changing the internal organizational culture. A MEAL framework might ask the following questions:



- Did you identify any changes in established power relations? Can you identify any examples where *power over* became *power with* *power to*?
- What kind of values and principles of transformative leadership did the program activities address?
- Has any kind of change become visible at the deep structure level?
- What would be a good example of transformative leadership for gender justice in the community you are working in?
- Can you identify any unintended (positive and negative) consequences of the interventions? What kind of consequences? What can we learn from this?

Oxfam has used the Most Significant Change (MSC) technique to do MEAL in the context of women's rights and gender mainstreaming programs (Box 8). MSC can be used to reflect on change within an organization, community, or at the level of individual programme participants.

In piloting this technique, we learned that it is important for the participants or the evaluator to establish the linkages between the changes which have been identified as most significant, and the theory of change. If the changes identified as most significant are not reflected anywhere in our theory of change, this might suggest that our theory of change is missing some important aspects, or that our intervention has had different results to what was intended. We have also learned that the implementation of story-telling techniques requires sufficient human and financial resources, especially time, and interview and writing capacities.

Oxfam's AMAL Program,<sup>28</sup> is piloting a new MEAL tool.<sup>29</sup> The program aim is that 'women in the MENA region, including poor and marginalized women, have increased ability to participate and exercise leadership at all levels of decision-making, gaining power over their lives and ensuring their practical needs and rights are central for existing and emerging governance structures.'



The tool uses the four elements of the transformative leadership diamond. It has developed a set of indicators that will be measured at the organizational level (by Oxfam and our partners). The following indicators are a sample taken from this tool:

*Power*

- Level of knowledge of the different dimensions and faces of power in your organization.

*Principles and values*

- Existence of mechanisms/processes/skills that enable women to achieve balance in different aspects of their lives (personal, professional).

*Practice*

- Presence of an analysis of gains and setbacks within the organization.
- Existence of democratic, transparent, and accountable policies and mechanisms for allocating financial resources.

*Self*

- Existence of structured support to deal with issues of personality, emotional balance, and self esteem.

Another useful resource includes *The Power of Gender Justice Organizations: Toolkit for Transformative Organizational Capacity Building*, which includes specific tools and templates for measuring transformative change.<sup>32</sup>

At Oxfam, MEAL for TLWR is still in its initial phase. In the future, we will develop the accountability and learning components of this work. As Oxfam continues to invest in monitoring, evaluation, accountability, and learning, we will focus on ensuring that our work is relevant and effective. Useful experiences and lessons learned will continue to be documented and shared within Oxfam and beyond, in order to contribute to the growing knowledge base about what works to advance TLWR.

## 8: Using the Most Significant Change technique for monitoring TLWR

This tool borrows from the process of ‘storytelling’ in the Most Significant Change (MSC) technique. Participants are encouraged to identify significant change stories that best represent their organization’s transformation or journey towards becoming a more effective, gender-just organization.

The facilitator’s role is to encourage partners to undertake analysis and reflection of their change stories to build evaluative thinking skills that they can apply in different contexts.

For each exercise, it is possible to define parameters: for example, one year a suggested focus could be stories that relate to transformative women’s leadership; in another year the focus could be transformative gender justice programming and advocacy.

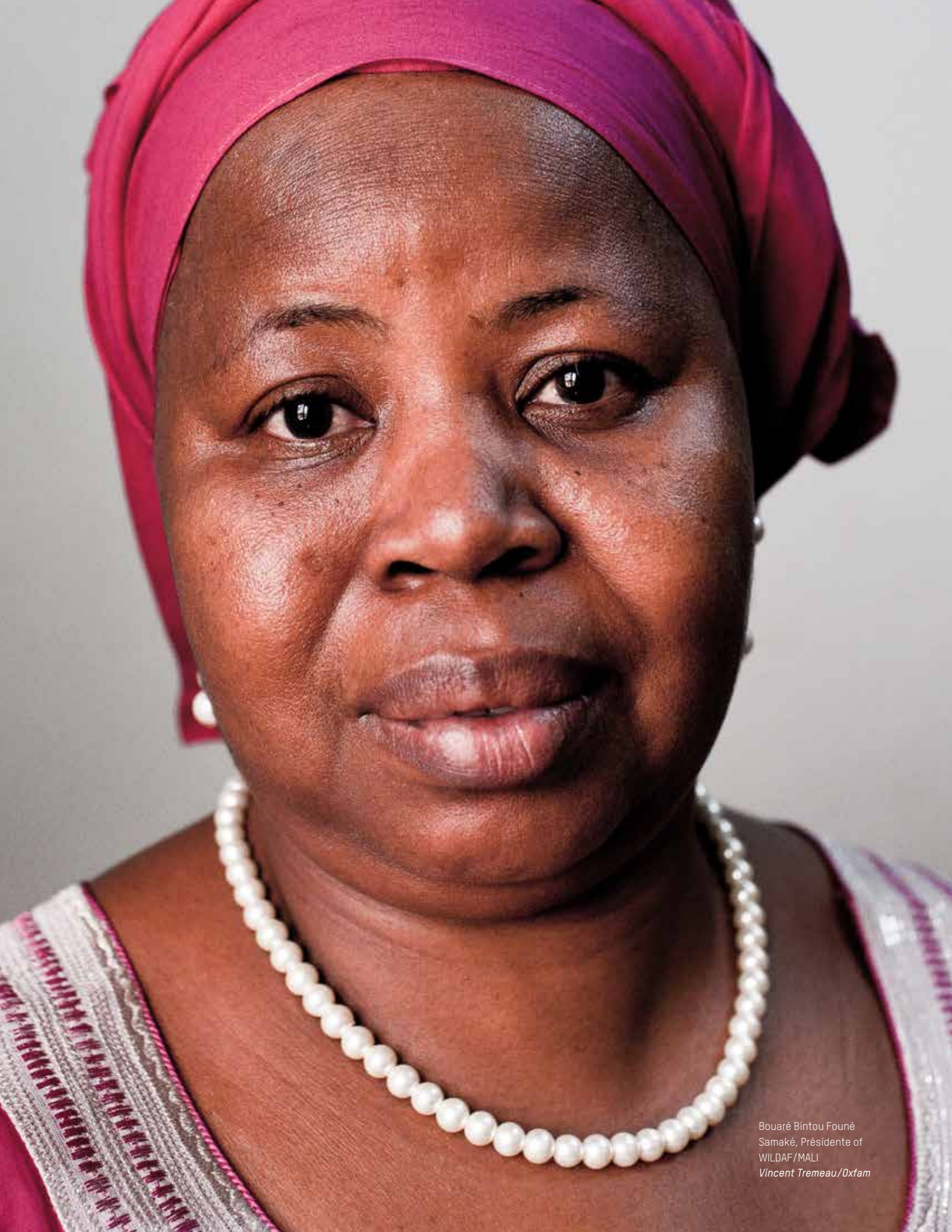
### EMPOWERMENT

**Monitoring tool**

**Change Story:** Please share a story about a ‘significant change’ your organization has experienced over the past year, which you believe is related to a capacity building intervention.

**Analysis of Factors and Actors**

- What issue did the capacity building intervention seek to address?
- Why was this issue perceived as important in your context?
- What happened?
- Who was involved?
- Where did it happen?
- When did it happen?
- Why did it happen?
- What enabled the change to occur?
- What did your organization do with, or as a result of, this change?
- Why do you consider this change to be significant?



Bouaré Bintou Founé  
Samaké, Présidente of  
WILDAF/MALI  
*Vincent Tremeau/Oxfam*

# FINAL REMARKS

Transformative leadership for women's rights is important for Oxfam to be able to put 'women's rights at the heart of all we do'. This guide has introduced and explored the reasons for, and ideas behind, this approach, and has suggested practical ways to integrate TLWR into all areas of Oxfam's work. We have explored how TLWR initiatives can develop their theory of change, and how they can apply feminist MEAL principles in developing their MEAL strategy.

Documentary resources and specialist staff within Oxfam are available to support work on the issue of transformative leadership for women's rights, which can be sensitive and sometimes difficult. The resources section of this guide also suggests a range of practical tools and other resources.

In developing TLWR, we must move beyond a simple headcount of the number of women and women's rights organizations we support. The outcomes and impacts of our work relate to the substantial improvement and reinforcement of the rights of all people in the private, social, economic, and political domains. Through an improved MEAL system, we can be more accountable to the people we work with, ourselves, governments, and our supporters.

We use the word 'transformative' in this guide because it implies changing power relations in their varying manifestations. We state that transformative leadership is both a goal in itself and a strategy. By emphasising these aspects of transformative leadership, we seek to improve the quality of leadership and the way that power is exercised, both within Oxfam itself, and within our programs and partner organizations. We believe that this work will enable the advancement of gender equality and women's rights in Oxfam and in the communities where we work. Our vision is the development of skilful, non-oppressive, inclusive, participative leadership that mobilizes others around a shared agenda of social, cultural, economic, and political transformation. TLWR then becomes a strategy for supporting leaders to *increase the impact* of their activism and leadership, through a better understanding of where power lies and how to influence it.

# GLOSSARY

Definitions adapted from *“Ending Violence Against Women: An Oxfam Guide”* and other sources

## **Change Goal**

A change goal is a priority working area for Oxfam. There are six change goals in the Oxfam Strategic Plan 2013-2019

1. The right to be heard;
2. Advancing gender justice;
3. Saving lives, now and in the future;
4. Sustainable food;
5. Fair sharing of natural resources and
6. Financing for development and universal essential services.

## **Domestic violence**

Domestic violence is violence that happens in households and intimate relationships. This includes harm to children from witnessing domestic violence. Some definitions also encompass any kind of violence that happens within the family, e.g. violent ‘punishment’ of children and abuse of older family members.

## **Empowerment**

Empowerment is the process of gaining control of the self, over ideology, and over the resources which determine power.

## **Gender**

Gender refers to the characteristics and roles that societies attribute to women and men respectively. Gender is not ‘natural’ – it is constructed by societies.

## **Gender discrimination**

Gender discrimination is discrimination based on gender differences. Examples: Women tend to get paid less than men; some armies exclude homosexual men from service.

## **Gender equality**

Gender equality is the situation in which women and men enjoy the same status; have equal conditions, responsibilities and opportunities for realising their full human rights and potential; and can benefit equally from the results.

## **Gender equity**

Gender equity is fairness of treatment for women and men according to their respective needs

## **Gender justice**

Gender justice is full equality and equity between women and men in all spheres of life.

## **Gender mainstreaming**

Gender mainstreaming is a strategy which aims to bring about gender equality in programmes and organizations whose main purpose is not necessarily gender justice.

## **Gender norms**

Gender norms refer to the behaviours, roles, and capacities that societies expect from women and men based on their respective gendered identities.

## **Gender relations**

Gender relations are the ways in which a culture or society prescribes rights, roles, responsibilities and identities of women in men in relation to one another.

## **Gender roles**

Gender roles are the roles a society expects from women and men respectively. These roles vary depending on many factors (‘intersectionality’), even within a society.

## **Gender-based violence (GBV)**

Gender-based violence is the use of power to enforce gender norms.

## **Harmful traditional practice**

A harmful traditional practice is a practice that is rooted in a way of thinking or acting that is inherited from the past, and that is likely to damage the health and well-being of persons. For example, FGM/C and forced marriage of teenage girls are harmful traditions.

## **Intersectionality**

Intersectionality is a methodology for studying the relationships among multiple dimensions of social relationships and people’s identity. Intersectionality holds that different types of oppression – such as racism, sexism and homophobia – do not act independently of one another, but interrelate, to create the ‘intersection’ of multiple forms of discrimination.

## **MEAL**

Monitoring, evaluation, accountability, and learning

## **Patriarchy**

Patriarchy refers to societal structures and practices that institutionalise male power over women and children.





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Director of the  
PNLE – National  
programme for  
fighting excision  
*Vincent Tremeau/  
Oxfam*

### **Power**

Power can be defined as the ability or capacity to perform an act effectively; a specific capacity (as in 'her powers of persuasion'); strength; authority; might; forcefulness.

### **Power analysis**

In advocacy, 'power analysis' examines the different types and levels of power that play a role in a situation. (Power analysis is also used as a technical term in statistics, with a different meaning.)

### **Rights-based approach**

A rights-based approach is a way of working that is based on the idea that all human beings are of equal value and have rights that must be upheld at all times. It aims to ensure that people can claim their rights with the duty-bearers. Duty-bearers are actors that are responsible for protecting the rights of others, for example, governments.

### **Sex**

Sex refers to the biological differences between men, women and intersex persons, i.e. the biological, physical and genetic composition with which we are born.

### **Sexual orientation**

Sexual orientation refers to someone's attraction to a specific gender or genders. For example, someone who is attracted exclusively to people of the opposite gender is heterosexual. Women who are attracted exclusively to women are lesbians. Bisexual persons can be attracted to someone of the same gender or someone of a different gender; asexual persons are not sexually attracted to other people at all.

### **Theory of change**

A theory of change is a visual or written explanation of how change is expected to occur within any particular context (i.e. community or state) and in relation to a particular intervention (project or program). A theory of change articulates the assumptions that underlie our ideas about how change will occur.

### **Transformation**

Transformation is fundamental, lasting change. Transformation in Oxfam's gender justice work refers to fundamental change in the structures and cultures of societies.

### **Transformative feminist leadership**

Transformative feminist leadership refers to people with a feminist perspective and vision of social justice who are individually and collectively transforming themselves to use their power, resources and skills in non-oppressive, inclusive structures and processes. Transformative feminist leaders seek to mobilize others – especially other women – around a shared agenda of social, cultural, economic, and political transformation for equality and the realization of human rights for all (Batliwala 2010, p.14).

### **Violence**

Violence is the intentional use of force or power – threatened or actual – against oneself, another person, or against a group or community. Violence either results in, or has a high likelihood of resulting in, injury, death, psychological harm, maldevelopment, or deprivation.

### **Violence against women (VAW)**

Violence against women is gender-based violence that targets women.



Top Left: Doucoure Marietou Diaby, Associate Director Oxfam GB. Top Right: Diawa Bintou Coulibaly Secretary at Education and research at the APDF – Association for the progress and défense of Women’s rights. Bottom Left: Diallo Mariam Kalifa Traoré, Coordinator of CAF0 – Coordination of Women’s associations and NGOs in Mali. Bottom Right: Sekore Tounkara, Trainer at RECOTRADE – Network of traditionnal communicators for the development in Africa. *Vincent Tremeau/Oxfam*

# RESOURCES

In this section we list a series of resources that may be useful if you are considering integrating transformative leadership for women's rights into your program or policy work, or into your organization.

## 1. INTERNAL RESOURCES FOR OXFAM STAFF

Resources listed in this section are only available for Oxfam staff to consult, on SUMUS.

Oxfam International has developed a **Gender Justice Policy Compendium** which contains a section on transformative women's leadership and political participation, based on Oxfam's approach.

The **Oxfam International Statement on Transformative Approaches to Women's Leadership** was developed at an Oxfam International workshop focusing on transformative women's leadership (TWL) in 2011. It sets out Oxfam's basic principles and approach to TWL.

The **Oxfam International Statement on Oxfam's Support to a Transformative Approach to Women's Leadership 2010** sets out Oxfam's commitment to TWL.

Participants at the Oxfam Gender and Feminist Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning Event in Boston in June 2013 articulated a series of principles and practices that should characterise feminist **MEAL: Gender and Feminist Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning Event: Articulation of Feminist Principles**.

Oxfam field staff in West Africa have developed a toolkit for working with the gender and development approach. **The West Africa Gender Toolkit** offers easy-to-use tools for all aspects of program development, in simple language.

### **Making Women's Leadership Explicit: An Oxfam Review**

consolidates the knowledge and practices of women's leadership programming, both standalone and crosscutting, across Oxfam International. This report by Alexandra Pittman tries to establish a coherent picture of Oxfam's work on women's leadership, and to make explicit the different theories of change that underlie this work.

Gender Leadership Program Middle East and former Soviet Union, Oxfam 2013-2014. Forthcoming, available at: <https://sumus.oxfam.org/oxfam-gb-mecis-gender-leadership-programme>

## 2. PUBLICLY AVAILABLE OXFAM PUBLICATIONS

The Oxfam International Strategic Plan 2013-2019 sets out Oxfam's commitment to working on issues of gender justice. Oxfam International (2013) **'The Power of People against Poverty: Oxfam Strategic Plan 2013-2019'**, Oxford: Oxfam International.

**'Women Leading Change, Experiences Promoting Women's Empowerment, Leadership, and Gender Justice'** offers case studies from five Asian countries. This report was co-published by Oxfam Novib, Oxfam America, and Oxfam Australia and features the experiences of five Oxfam partner organizations in promoting women's political and economic empowerment and leadership. Although the report does not focus specifically on TLWR, many of the examples used are relevant for considerations of transformative leadership.

**'The Power of Gender-Just Organizations: A Conceptual Framework for Transformative Organizational Capacity Building'** is published by Oxfam Canada.

V. Groverman and J. Kloosterman (2010) **‘Mainstreaming a Gender Justice Approach. A Manual to Support NGOs in Self-Assessing their Gender Mainstreaming Competence’**, The Hague: Oxfam Novib. This manual was developed to assist NGOs in self-assessing and improving their competence to mainstream gender justice within their organization and programmes. This free publication can be ordered by emailing [info@oxfamnovib.nl](mailto:info@oxfamnovib.nl). <https://sumus.oxfam.org/gender-justice-change-goal-group/documents/mainstreaming-gender-justice-approach-manual-support-ngos>

**Voices from Ethiopia.** Gender Mainstreaming and Transformative Female Leadership Development Oxfam Novib June 2008, available at: <https://sumus.oxfam.org/node/142543>.

The case study of women’s collective action in the honey sector in Ethiopia (Box 2) is described fully in this paper, published by Oxfam in February 2013: **‘Women’s Collective Action in the Honey Sector in Ethiopia. Involving Marginalized Women in Collective Action: Making a Difference through NGO Interventions’**, available at: [http://womenscollectiveaction.com/file/view/Eng\\_Ethiopia\\_lorez.pdf/408801284/Eng\\_Ethiopia\\_lorez.pdf](http://womenscollectiveaction.com/file/view/Eng_Ethiopia_lorez.pdf/408801284/Eng_Ethiopia_lorez.pdf)

Oxfam Canada (2013) **‘The Power of Gender-Just Organizations: Toolkit for Transformative Organizational Capacity Building**, Ontario: Oxfam Canada, available at: [http://www.oxfam.ca/sites/default/files/Ox-Gender-Toolkit\\_web-final\\_0.pdf](http://www.oxfam.ca/sites/default/files/Ox-Gender-Toolkit_web-final_0.pdf)

Oxfam International (2012) **‘Ending Violence Against Women: An Oxfam Guide’** written by Michaela Raab: This practical guide invites development practitioners to consider: What is VAW? Why does it happen? What does it have to do with development? What does Oxfam do to end VAW? And what does it mean to do that work with a transformative approach? It is available in Spanish, French, Arabic and English.

### 3. TOOLS FOR CAPACITY BUILDING ON TRANSFORMATIVE LEADERSHIP FOR WOMEN’S RIGHTS

**Powercube.net** is a resource for understanding power relations in efforts to bring about social change. It has been developed by the Participation, Power and Social Change team at the Institute of Development Studies in the UK. ‘Power Pack: Understanding Power for Social Change’ is a downloadable collection of Powercube resources for undertaking power analysis: <http://www.powercube.net/wp-content/uploads/2011/04/powerpack-web-version-2011.pdf>

**The CARE Gender Toolkit** is a website offering a toolbox of methods with discussion on tried successes, struggles, and lessons on gender analysis: <http://gendertoolkit.care.org/default.aspx>

**Women’s Learning Partnership (WLP)** builds networks dedicated to women’s leadership and empowerment. WLP has published a range of learning tools including *Leading to Choices: A Leadership Training Handbook for Women*. This manual offers resources and guidance for facilitating and running women’s leadership training workshops, and is available in 18 different languages. <http://www.learningpartnership.org/ltc>



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# NOTES

- 1 This is one of the objectives of Oxfam's Strategic Plan 2013-2019, which is ambitious, and places women's rights at the heart of all we do. The Gender Justice change Goal focuses on two priority areas: gender-based violence and transformative leadership for gender justice and women's rights. <http://www.oxfam.org/en/about/accountability/oxfam-strategic-plan-2013-2019>, p.16.
- 2 This guide builds on the extensive work that Oxfam and its partners have already done on gender justice, women's empowerment, and transformative leadership. Oxfam staff can refer to the Oxfam International Statement on Transformative Approaches to Women's Leadership (2010) and the Gender Justice Policy Compendium (2011) (see the resources section of this guide for full details).
- 3 Agency is the ability of each individual to act independently and to make free choices. All humans possess the innate capacity to think for themselves. Our choices and actions do not need to be determined or limited by structures like social class, religion, or the environment (Barker 2005, p.448).
- 4 See Anne-Marie Goetz 2007, pp.15-58.
- 5 This is what is meant by the term 'intersectionality'. For an enhanced definition of intersectionality and an example of how it can be used in gender justice work, see: AWID Primer on Intersectionality: A Tool for Gender and Economic Justice.
- 6 The definitions of the different expressions of power come from personal communication with Penny Plowman, September 2013. For more information about power, see the Power Cube developed by members of the Power, Participation and Social Change (PPSC) team at IDS, and Just Associates' Power Concepts.
- 7 Lao Tse, in *Tao Te Ching*, quoted in Batliwala 2010, p.40.
- 8 UNICEF 2006, p.52 and P. Norris et al. 2007.
- 9 C. Blondet 2005, p.277; T. Mendelberg et al. 2013.
- 10 Srilatha Batliwala is a well-known scholar working on gender equality and feminism. Currently she is a scholar associate to the Association for Women's Rights in Development (AWID).
- 11 We recognize that many of the principles mentioned here come from feminist theorization and thought. See Batliwala 2010; L. VeneKlasen and V. Miller 2002; and J. Rowlands 1997.
- 12 Rao and Kelleher 2005, pp.60, 65.
- 13 See for example A. Guedes 2007.
- 14 J. Kloosterman *et al.* 2012, p.536.
- 15 In this analysis it is always necessary to make explicit which women and men we are talking about: their age, class, caste, ethnic group, etc..
- 16 Practical needs are considered to be needs that are basic and tangible, such as housing, food, water. Strategic interests are interests that are considered to be ideological and intangible. Examples are the possibility to come together and discuss issues of importance in daily life, access to information, for example market prices or training, have the freedom to travel.
- 17 Oxfam staff can consult the 'twelve boxes tool' in V. Groverman and J. Kloosterman 2010 <https://sumus.oxfam.org/gender-justice-change-goal-group/documents/mainstreaming-gender-justice-approach-manual-support-ngos> and Oxfam Canada 2013, p.40. [http://www.oxfam.ca/sites/default/files/Ox-Gender-Toolkit\\_web-final\\_0.pdf](http://www.oxfam.ca/sites/default/files/Ox-Gender-Toolkit_web-final_0.pdf)
- 18 The workshop took place in Barcelona on 21-22 January 2014. Oxfam staff can access the resulting workshop communiqué:
- 19 <https://sumus.oxfam.org/oxfam-intermonadtm-knowledge-corner-gender-justice/documents/communique-wtl-workshopoxfamintermon>
- 20 Related resources on gender justice from Oxfam Intermón are available to Oxfam staff in the Oxfam Intermón Knowledge Corner in Gender Justice: <https://sumus.oxfam.org/oxfam-intermonadtm-knowledge-corner-gender-justice>
- 21 Sexuality and Rights Institute, <http://web.creaworld.org/home.asp>
- 22 S. Batliwala 2012.
- 23 CREA 2010, *Feminist Leadership for Social Transformation: Clearing the Conceptual Cloud*
- 24 WLP 2001, <http://www.learningpartnership.org/ltc>
- 25 Oxfam International 2010, 'Statement on Oxfam's Support to a Transformative Approach to Women's Leadership', Oxford: Oxfam International.
- 26 As stated by Carol Miller (OC) in 'Some notes on the evaluation question/method(s) for the OSP VAW Outcome', OC January 2014.
- 27 Source: Oxfam International 2013, 'Gender and feminist monitoring, evaluation, accountability and learning event. Articulation of feminist principles', Boston: Oxfam International 2013
- 28 Oxfam staff can access the principles here: <https://sumus.oxfam.org/gjmeal-event-4-6-june-2013-boston/core-information/feminist-meal-principles>
- 29 For more reflection and lessons learned see Evallab (2013). *Engendering Change Case Studies: Ethiopia*. <http://oxfam.ca/about/accountability-transparency>; Peer Associates (2013). *Engender Change: Zimbabwe Case Study* <http://oxfam.ca/about/accountability-transparency>; Kloosterman *et al.* 2012; Benning *et al.* 2012.
- 30 AMAL means 'hope'. It is a three-year multi-country programme funded by SIDA and implemented by Oxfam and partners. It began in 2012.
- 31 See 'Intermón Oxfam Strategy for Social and Gender Justice: Women's Transformative Leadership in Latin America' 2012, <https://sumus.oxfam.org/oxfam-intermonadtm-knowledge-corner-gender-justice/documents/womens-transformative-leadership-latin>
- 32 See [http://www.oxfam.ca/sites/default/files/Ox-Gender-Toolkit\\_web-final\\_0.pdf](http://www.oxfam.ca/sites/default/files/Ox-Gender-Toolkit_web-final_0.pdf)



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COVER PHOTO

The photo was taken in Andhra Pradesh

*The late Mr. Rajendra Shaw/Oxfam*



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