



GLOBAL

INCLUSIVE WATER GOVERNANCE

SAVE WATER, SECURE THE FUTURE



OXFAM

Hundreds of millions of people do not have secure access to water due to environmental degradation and growing competition over natural resources. These causes stem from a wide range of factors: from infrastructure development, agricultural expansion and industrialisation to urbanisation and the effects of climate change. The people living in affected areas rarely have access to the information or means needed to challenge these developments. But however complex the causes of water insecurity may be, there are ways for people to improve their own access to water.

Oxfam's global programme **SAVE WATER, SECURE THE FUTURE** supports, strengthens and links such water governance solutions and initiatives in three large river basins. You can now work with Oxfam and support this programme!

THE BASINS

1. MEKONG

The large rivers of the Mekong region are a lifeline for 340 million people. The rivers and floodplains support farming and fishing – important to the economic well-being of Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos, Thailand, Southwest China and Myanmar. More than 60 million people rely on the inland fisheries for their livelihoods. A major challenge for local communities is the impact of rapid development of infrastructure, particularly large-scale hydropower dams.

2. INDUS (PAKISTANI PART)

The Pakistani part of the Indus river basin (two thirds of Pakistan) has more than 138 million inhabitants. These communities mostly depend on irrigated agriculture for their livelihoods. Major challenges for poor and small-scale farmers include the loss of water because of insufficient water management knowledge, poor governance and inequitable distribution among water users.

3. LIMPOPO

The Limpopo basin covers parts of South Africa, Botswana, Zimbabwe and Mozambique. It is home to 15 million people, at least 5 million of whom live in poverty. The majority of the poorest communities rely on water resources for their food security: they depend on subsistence farming and river-based livelihoods like fishing and tourism. Water scarcity and insecurity gravely affect them.

- We have separate brochures about our regional programmes. Feel free to order or download this material via our website: www.oxfamnovib.nl/waterprogramme.

THE CHALLENGES

Fresh water is indispensable for life, and the demand for it is increasing all around the world; to grow crops and pastures with it, to supply drinking water, to generate energy, to process minerals, et cetera. At the same time, fair and secure access to water for local communities is becoming an increasing challenge, which leads to hunger, disease and more and more competition over this indispensable resource – including water theft (‘water grabbing’).

Water governance is still all but inclusive

These problems are experienced in many basin contexts around the globe, but are particularly urgent in the places Oxfam’s global water governance programme operates. Here, local communities have no or only a very limited say in water governance decision-making. Also, they often lack the necessary knowledge and means to cope with growing water insecurity. In short: water governance is still all but inclusive. Oxfam regards this as a threat to marginalised people’s basic rights as laid down in international guidelines and regulations on water and land.



TOP 5 CHALLENGES WE WANT TO TACKLE

- Unequal access to and control over water resources, an inequality that especially burdens the poorest, marginalized communities.
- Women’s lack of control over water management, even though **they** are responsible for water fetching, food production and family subsistence.
- Exclusion of local communities in decision making and information sharing regarding the access to and use of water resources.
- Insufficient means to involve those communities in decision-making or to put into practice other guidelines and regulations as well.
- Not enough mutual support and coordination between civil society organisations that work with local communities to achieve long lasting change.

THE OBJECTIVES

We focus on marginalised communities; the ones who are most dependent on the resources and ecosystem services provided by a healthy river system. This group consists of mainly farmers and fisherfolk. For them to obtain a fair share of water resources, enough to sustain their livelihoods, we strengthen and extend networks of civil society organisations that work with them to defend their interests.

We aim to establish a network of organisations that have the same basic ideals, speak a common language and share resources and experiences. Via this network, communities will be increasingly capable of influencing decisions regarding water resources. We will help to include local issues into national, regional and global policies and guidelines. Also, we will work closely together with decision makers from the public and private sector, encouraging a greater respect for communities' water rights.

3 MAIN OBJECTIVES

More concretely, our support will deliver:

1. **practical evidence** of local challenges and sustainable, community-based alternatives to assure water for food security and climate-resilient livelihoods;
2. **strengthened civil society networks** in major river basins that amplify the voices of local communities and enable their participation in water governance;
3. **a more inclusive water policy environment** – with a committed public and private sector – that promotes and protects fair and sustainable access, control and use of water at a local, national, regional and global level.



INCLUSIVE WATER GOVERNANCE

Our approach is focused on inclusive water governance, which is based on the following principles:

- **TRANS-BOUNDARY SCALE:** Sustainable solutions for water governance and management require an approach that goes beyond provincial and national borders.
- **INCLUSIVE DECISION-MAKING:** The voices of all users, representing all uses of water resources, need to be heard to ensure fair decision-making.
- **EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN:** Women play a key role in water use, and their empowerment is critical for successful water governance.
- **RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES:** Not only the rights of rural people are important, they also have their own responsibilities in water governance.
- **POWER OF THE PEOPLE:** Oxfam and its partners do not speak on behalf of local communities, but strengthen their organisations and build networks so that their voices are heard.

THE APPROACH

Within Oxfam's Worldwide Water Influencing Network, we:

- increase linking and learning;
- develop and execute lobby activities together;
- work on capacity building;
- share resources.

How we achieve positive change:

OBJECTIVES

1

PRACTICAL EVIDENCE

APPROACH

- **WE SUPPORT LOCAL MANAGEMENT PRACTICES AND COMMUNITY ORGANISATIONS** which foster strong community based management of water and natural resources.
- **WE DOCUMENT THE RESULTS OF THIS WORK (THE 'EVIDENCE')**, spread them throughout our global network and use the successful ones as a basis for our influencing work.
- **WE SCALE UP PROVEN METHODS**, replicating them wherever useful and using them as a basis for the inclusive water governance standards we develop with the public and private sector.

2

STRENGTHENED CIVIL SOCIETY NETWORKS

APPROACH

- **WE BRING TOGETHER OUR PARTNER ORGANISATIONS**, build their capacity to make water management inclusive and choose 'champions': organisations that can serve as pioneers and examples to others.
- **WE STRENGTHEN AND EXPAND EXISTING NETWORKS**, offering a platform to promote links, learning, joint strategy building and other types of collaboration within and among these networks.
- **WE MOBILISE AND INFLUENCE KEY ACTORS IN WATER GOVERNANCE**. For this, we work with our networks, foster champions of good practice and promote platforms for participation.

3

A MORE INCLUSIVE WATER POLICY ENVIRONMENT

APPROACH

- **WE GET OUR PARTNERS INVOLVED IN POLICY-MAKING**. We facilitate engagement with the relevant public and private sector actors and make sure consultations are inclusive and meaningful.
- **WE PROMOTE SAFEGUARD POLICIES AND STANDARDS** to support and guide decision-making.
- **WE FOCUS OUR OWN ADVOCACY WORK** on improving the policy and practice of key global actors, changing the debate and aim to stop water grabbing.

WHY WORK WITH US?

Our added value, which enables us to scale up the impact and sustainability of this global programme, lies in:

- our rights-based approach upfront and long-term experience in successful evidence-based influencing;
- our experience in promoting women leadership in water management;
- our long-term presence and ability to work in different river basins and in multiple countries, with a large network of partners and country offices;
- our capacity to link local water issues to national, regional and global levels through our global network;
- our ability to build upon the experiences and lessons learnt within our global land programme;
- our large network of partners with long-term experience in working and building trust with local communities;
- our ability to mobilise resources through the Oxfam confederation and to access external expertise from other sectors (such as the Dutch water sector);
- our capacity to measure impact of our programmes through people-based methods like the World Citizen Panel.



HOW TO WORK WITH US?

Numerous initiatives to improve water security already exist across the globe. We would like to build on them, use our own experience and seek collaboration with national and regional authorities, companies, academics, media, civil society organisations and donors that share our ambition. All of this to contribute to a better livelihood for the rural people living in major river basins!

Are you seeking ways to ensure that marginalised people have a say in the decision-making that impacts them?

DO YOU WANT TO IMPROVE THEIR ACCESS TO WATER RESOURCES, SO THAT THEY CAN SUSTAIN THEIR LIVELIHOODS? Do you want to know how to make this happen; how you could work with us to defend communities' right to water, by sharing your knowledge, networks or financial means?

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Visit www.oxfamnovib.nl/waterprogramme for more information about our work in the basins.