



Photo: Kemal Juri

# FOOD, LAND & WATER

## Pro-Poor Value Chains

In Africa and South- and South-East Asia, millions of rural households produce products such as grains, pulses, sugar, coffee, cocoa, and shrimps. Typically these are bought by traders and sold into the national and global markets. Many organisations are working to help rural households produce more and higher-quality crops, which can command better prices, as well as to manage their money more effectively through access to loans,

savings and insurance products. However, it's rare for these initiatives to explicitly tackle the social norms or customary and legal frameworks that hamper vulnerable people and in particular women to improve their livelihoods, and to engage with private sector companies and institutions to bring about changes at scale.

//We have to change power relations between value chain actors for gender equitable pro-poor development by building the strength of civil society organisations. At the same time we need to engage with companies who can influence the industry and set standards, for example by convening multistakeholder initiatives.//

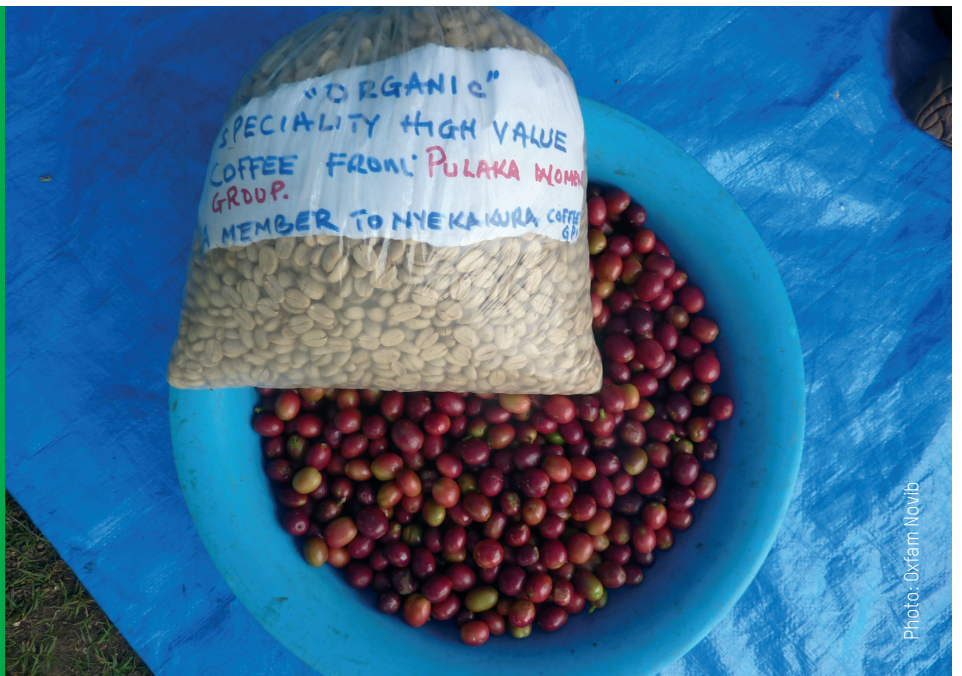
– Mirjam Andriessen, Oxfam Novib Programme Lead, Land, Water & Pro Poor Value Chains.



**OXFAM**

//My husband used to drink all the money he earned but now, we always discuss how to spend the money we are earning, to make sure that we maximize its use. Most of the income is spread between reinvesting in farming, building our new house, sustaining ourselves and paying school fees for the children.//

– Margret Etomaru, participant of a training in business skills in the Weman programme, Uganda.



## PURPOSE

Oxfam Novib's purpose is to contribute to the empowerment of rural communities in negotiating better prices for their products, better work conditions, and more relevant services by taking a holistic approach to value chains. The pro-poor value chains programme aims to develop sustainable agricultural production systems and to influence policies and practices of institutions and companies towards sustainable, gender sensitive and inclusive value chains.

## PROMISE

We work with local organisations, private sector companies, UN agencies, and other donors to support the inclusion of gender frameworks in their programmes and businesses. We help women and men in marginalised rural communities to articulate their ambitions and understand how greater gender equality can improve their livelihoods and lives.

## PERFORMANCE

Our value chain programme focuses on aquaculture/fisheries, palm oil, cocoa, coffee and rice. We develop standards and engage with private sector companies that strive to do business in a sustainable and inclusive manner. Our approach is research, agenda setting, policy change, practice change, and monitoring, evaluation and learning. We use local cases to influence at the global level. We also develop models for sustainable,

gender sensitive and inclusive value chains, such as company-community palm oil partnerships for 'green growth', rolling out the FAIR model (FAIR: Freedom of choice; Accountability; Improvement; Respect for rights), and the development of projects with companies.

## PROOF

Through its programme on palm oil, Oxfam Novib has been able to help the Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil (RSPO), a multistakeholder initiative ranging from communities to multinationals, and from governments to investors, to develop alternative models involving voluntary self-regulation. **The Scaling Up Sustainable Palm Oil Project (SUSPO)** has created space for communities outside the plantations, palm oil workers and small holders to voice their concerns. The results have been positive, with new standards set by RSPO, allowing for:

- More civil society engagement in decision-making about changes in land use.
- Communities to have the right to agree or disagree with a proposed development.
- Victims of land conflicts to have access to complaint mechanisms or mediation support.
- Palm oil smallholders to have access to (international) certified markets and to information that determines their investments and risks.

As a result of the **WEMAN** programme (Women's Empowerment, Mainstreaming And Networking in economic development interventions), in Uganda, Rwanda and Nigeria 68% of the 38,000 women directly involved reported more equal sharing of labour, decision making and control of assets. Almost half have more secure access to land. Men benefitted from reducing their expenditures on alcohol and affairs, to increase savings and invest in family welfare and business. These changes, combined with economic interventions, led to a significant increase in income for 70% of the women and 68% of the men.

## PLACES

Oxfam Novib works on Pro-Poor Value Chains in the following countries:

**Africa:** Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Egypt, Mozambique, Niger, Nigeria, Rwanda, Somalia, Sudan and Uganda

**Asia:** Bangladesh, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Pakistan and Vietnam

**Europe:** the Netherlands

For more information, please visit [www.oxfamnovib.nl](http://www.oxfamnovib.nl) or [www.oxfamnovib.nl/en](http://www.oxfamnovib.nl/en).

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