



# Oxfam's Food Security for Tanzania Farmers Programme: Guidelines for Achieving the Double Boon

Programmatic notes for Women's Economic  
Empowerment Policy and Programming

November 2017



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PROGRAMMATIC NOTES

The Oxfam Food Security for Tanzania Farmers programme (2012–15) aimed to increase food production and income, and improve the quality of life and food security for smallholder farmers, particularly women, in Tanzania. In Lushoto and Korogwe districts, it focused in particular on the domestic vegetable value chain (VVC), wherein rates of women's participation are lower as compared to other agricultural crop production. The programme engaged in three interventions: (1) ensuring women's participation across the whole VVC, (2) improving the quality of agricultural production, and (3) training farmers in leadership, entrepreneurship and governance. In 2015–17, the project 'Balancing unpaid care work and paid work: successes, challenges and lessons for women's economic empowerment programmes and policies' investigated how women's economic empowerment (WEE) policies and programmes take unpaid care work into account in order to enable women's economic empowerment to be optimised, shared across families and sustained across generations. This note discusses the main findings of the research in relation to the care-sensitivity of the Oxfam programme, and presents some recommendations for how unpaid care work can be mainstreamed into WEE programming.

## The Oxfam Food Security for Tanzania Farmers programme

The Oxfam Food Security for Tanzania Farmers programme, which ran from 2012 to 2015, aimed to increase food production and income, and improve the quality of life and food security for smallholder farmers, particularly women, in Tanzania. In the districts of Lushoto and Korogwe in northern Tanzania, the programme focused on the vegetable value chain (VVC). The desired outcome was to support smallholder farmers to 'become resilient, overcome the challenges of climate change through sustainable and innovative systems of food production, improved market access to and efficient use of water and land'. Women were identified as 'new role models for agricultural development'. The project's aims were pursued through three interventions:

1. **Ensuring women's participation across the whole VVC** and in particular in its most profitable nodes, such as in the sale of processed products. The focus here was on increasing women's access to, control of, and ownership of land, which in Tanzania continues to be constrained by customary practices (OECD 2014). The programme advocated for **women's land rights** and supported women in covering the cost of the taxes levied by the government on agricultural production, thereby **increasing women's opportunities to generate income**;
2. **Improving the quality of agricultural production** by training farmers on global good agricultural practices

and supporting them in obtaining quality certification; overall, contributing to growing their marketing potential through building their technical skills such as in tilling land, crop rotation, weeding, harvesting, storage, etc.;

3. **Training farmers in leadership, entrepreneurship and governance**, in order to strengthen farmers' collective action *vis-à-vis* the government and financial institutions. This component was especially important for **boosting women's voices and decision-making at all levels**, from the home, to the market, and to the community.

The programme's decision to target 60 per cent women and 40 per cent men stemmed from a conscious strategy to **anticipate and defuse tensions around the redistribution of economic resources towards women**. Women's economic empowerment was a central goal, with the aim of **supporting women's capacity to earn and control income**, which is often then used to improve their household member's health and educational outcomes.

However, the programme design did not take into account the **unequal gender and generational distribution of unpaid care work within the household**. It made no specific provision in the form of services, training or sensitisation that would help women to scale up their engagement in paid work by reducing and/or redistributing their everyday engagement in unpaid care work.



turning a ‘double burden’<sup>22</sup> into a ‘double boon’ – i.e. paid work that empowers women and provides more support for their unpaid care work responsibilities. The main research question was: ‘How can women’s economic empowerment policies and programmes take unpaid care work into account in order to enable women’s economic empowerment to be optimised, shared across families and sustained across generations?’

Based on the 4Rs framework (ActionAid, IDS and Oxfam GB 2015) – which demands the recognition, reduction and redistribution of unpaid care work, and the representation of women’s voices and demands – this note discusses the main findings of the research in relation to the care-sensitivity of the Oxfam programme. This is followed by a set of recommendations on how Oxfam could mainstream unpaid care work into its WEE programming.

## Key research findings

The analysis of Oxfam’s Food Security for Tanzania Farmers explored four key aspects related to the care-sensitivity of the programme; namely, whether it: (1) recognised care in its design; (2) reduced the drudgery of paid or unpaid care work; (3) contributed to redistributing care tasks between women and men, and across the household, state, market and community; and (4) offered an opportunity for women’s voices, needs and aspirations to be taken into account. The findings were as follows.

### Recognition of care

Women’s involvement in unpaid care work was not factored into the programme’s design. There were no measures taken to support women in balancing their dual engagement in paid and unpaid care work, for example providing childcare facilities or support with tasks for which women are typically responsible.

## The research

Between 2015 and 2017, a research partnership between the Institute of Development Studies (IDS) and partner organisations in four countries undertook a study entitled ‘Balancing unpaid care work and paid work: successes, challenges and lessons for women’s economic empowerment programmes and policies’. In Tanzania, research was implemented by BRAC Research and Evaluation Unit (BRAC-REU) and IDS in the districts of Korogwe and Lushoto, in two sites where Oxfam’s VVC programme was active.<sup>1</sup> The research hypothesis was that taking unpaid care work into account in women’s economic empowerment (WEE) policies and programmes has the potential to significantly strengthen the empowering outcomes of women’s participation in paid work, therefore



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Very poor [people] have no choice to carry the burden of paid and unpaid care work.

Community leader, Korogwe

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### Reduction of drudgery

The programme introduced efficient production methods and storage facilities for agricultural produce. However, it did not introduce any labour-saving technology or infrastructural investment that would reduce the time and physical stress of doing the unpaid care tasks for which women are generally responsible, such as water and firewood collection.

### Redistribution of care within the household, and to society, the state and the market

The redistribution of unpaid care work was neither set as a programme goal nor viewed as a means to pursue women's economic empowerment. Nonetheless, the research found evidence of shifts in awareness of women's sole responsibility for unpaid care work; notably, women, men and community leaders commented that women in paid work also had a heavy load of unpaid care work tasks. This suggests that the programme's gender training challenged the norms governing the gendered division of

care work, creating a space for negotiating its distribution within and beyond households, including raising questions about the role of the state and the market.

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I can see that she is doing a lot for the family and I would not want her to be exhausted.

Francis, husband of Janice, Korogwe

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### Representation of women's voices, needs and aspirations

The programme supported women's participation in parts of VVC production from which they have historically been excluded, as well as more broadly in programme decision-making processes revolving around work. It fostered links with other programmes operating in the area, for example by supporting women's participation in saving and lending groups. By explicitly recognising the value of women's collective organising and the importance of transforming decision-making processes by including their voices, the programme offered valuable opportunities for women to practice individual and collective leadership.



## Recommendations

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Based on these findings, recommendations for Oxfam's WEE programmes and for its new Tanzania country strategy include:

- Women's paid and unpaid work conditions can be improved through the support and cooperation of women and neighbours. **Helping to set up and maintain women's groups** would enable women to undertake collective action, and support each other individually where needed. This could increase their collective bargaining power to lobby for more decent work and provision of public services, as well as increase their ability to balance paid and unpaid care work. In addition to supporting these activities **directly** in its work, Oxfam could **share its knowledge and experience, and lobby and support other organisations** in this kind of work.
- Access to decent work plays a key role in enabling women to achieve a 'double boon' through their participation in economically empowering work. However, all of the women in the study pointed out that their earnings were very low, unpredictable, and often involved arduous labour and considerable amounts of travel. **Access to markets**, such as through the value chain programme, **should be maintained and further expanded** or lobbied for, but women participants also demanded that government or NGOs build markets closer to their communities, so they can avoid carrying heavy loads over long distances and save time to spend on home care tasks. Oxfam could play a crucial part in enabling women to lobby for more accessible markets.
- Limited access to public services such as water, fuel and electricity, and health services affects the time that women and/or their children spend on household chores such as cooking, washing and caring for infants. This is because they have to walk long distances for routine tasks such as fetching water or firewood, or to seek health care. Oxfam could play a significant part in enabling women to **lobby for better public services and infrastructure**.
- Oxfam could **play an active role in helping families plan and redistribute the division of care tasks** to take into account capacities of all household members. Households where care arrangements were well-managed – in a set and agreed routine of delegated responsibilities, made in advance rather than *ad hoc* and left to chance or inclination – were better able to balance women's paid work with the household's unpaid care needs. In line with this, Oxfam could explore the viability and usefulness of having **childcare centres in the community**, which could reduce the amount of unpaid care work for households.
- Oxfam has successfully helped **increase women's work capacities** and prospects for earning incomes through personal skills training. Oxfam should also **support activities that encourage women and families to send their children to school**, discouraging the transfer of onerous care tasks that disrupt schooling onto children, and should hold the government accountable for ensuring free primary and secondary education as well as enforcing school attendance.

## References

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- ActionAid, IDS and Oxfam GB (2015) *Redistributing Care Work for Gender Equality and Justice: A Training Curriculum*, [www.actionaid.org/sites/files/actionaid/redistributing\\_care\\_work\\_final\\_0.pdf](http://www.actionaid.org/sites/files/actionaid/redistributing_care_work_final_0.pdf) (accessed 17 October 2017)
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## Credits

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## Notes

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1. Research was also conducted in communities in the same two districts on the Women Development Fund state-funded programme. This note only focuses on recommendations for the Oxfam programme.
2. The notion of 'double burden' refers to the idea that women bear a dual load of labour, being chiefly responsible for the reproductive work of caring for families and the household as well as generating income and resources for the family through paid work or unpaid productive labour (see Kabeer 1996).

# Oxfam's Food Security for Tanzania Farmers Programme: Guidelines for Achieving the Double Boon

## Programmatic notes for Women's Economic Empowerment Policy and Programming

Balancing unpaid care work and paid work carried out qualitative and quantitative research in India, Nepal, Rwanda, Tanzania across 16 sites. This research explores how women's economic empowerment policies and programmes can take unpaid care work into account, in order to enable economic empowerment to be optimised, shared across families and sustained across generations. It focusses on the social

organisation of care in low income households, and at the role of families, state, private sector and not-for profit sector.

Ultimately it aims to identify measures that can lead towards a 'double boon', creating paid work that empowers women and provides core support for their unpaid care work responsibilities.

The Balancing unpaid care work and paid work project explores the successes, challenges and lessons for Women's Economic Empowerment programmes and policies.

Creating and sharing new knowledge on the balance between paid work and unpaid care work

Advocating for decent paid work, providing support for unpaid care work responsibilities and removal of barriers to entry and retention in paid work

Resulting in women's economic empowerment that is optimised, shared across families and sustained across generations

LOW PAID WORK

TANZANIA



Research was undertaken in 2016 in four sites located in two districts of the Tanga region of Tanzania

Lushoto

Korogwe

### PROJECT LEAD:



Institute of Development Studies

### RESEARCH PARTNERS:



BRAC Research and Evaluation Unit

### UPTAKE PARTNER:



Oxfam Tanzania

For more project background information, publications and access to datasets and case studies, visit [interactions.ids.ac.uk/wee](https://interactions.ids.ac.uk/wee)

Balancing unpaid care work and paid work is part of the global Growth and Equal Opportunities for Women programme (GrOW) [bit.ly/1PbKwAd](https://bit.ly/1PbKwAd)



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