

## **Oxfam input to the UN Working Group's report on a Gender Lens and the UNGPs**

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### **I. The women's economic empowerment narrative, suggested framing**

For a narrative on WEE and the broken economic model, you could use the exec summary of this report - 'An Economy that works for women' - [https://d1tn3vj7xz9fdh.cloudfront.net/s3fs-public/file\\_attachments/bp-an-economy-that-works-for-women-020317-en.pdf](https://d1tn3vj7xz9fdh.cloudfront.net/s3fs-public/file_attachments/bp-an-economy-that-works-for-women-020317-en.pdf)

However, evidence shows that although gender equality supports economic growth, not all economic growth supports gender equality. Our current economic model is concentrating wealth at the top of the economy, causing extreme economic inequality and leaving the poorest women and girls behind. The model constrains women's economic empowerment because it does not create decent work opportunities with fair wages, or recognize and invest in addressing unpaid care work, particularly for the poorest. Women's voice and influence is also constrained and marginalized. Clearly, a structural change is needed.

There is a section focusing on global supply chains on pg. 16 with a case study.

A case study on pg. 17 is of how companies worked together to support the minimum wage in Myanmar.

Oxfam Canada has published a paper on a feminist approach to foreign economic policy, including corporate accountability. Starting on pg. 11:

[https://www.oxfam.ca/sites/default/files/file\\_attachments/tackling\\_inequalities\\_in\\_the\\_global\\_economy\\_report.pdf](https://www.oxfam.ca/sites/default/files/file_attachments/tackling_inequalities_in_the_global_economy_report.pdf)

The report called for all Canadian companies to undertake mandatory gender-sensitive human rights due diligence.

### **II. Good Practice**

#### **1. Examples of good practice in the cocoa supply chain**

In 2016, Oxfam's Behind the Brands initiative released a report on women's rights in the cocoa sector and examples of good practice: <https://www.oxfam.org/en/research/womens-rights-cocoa-sector>

In the report are several areas of interventions for the private sector to improve and address gender equality. These are the 10 areas with examples of good practice for each one, outlined in the report:

1. Sex-disaggregated data
2. Increasing women's leadership and voice in design and implementation
3. Gender sensitization training for both men and women at the community level
4. Women's empowerment and leadership training
5. Gender commitments made by private sector
6. Technical training that are tailored to female farmers
7. Women's access to credit

8. Women's access to tools and technology
9. Market access for female farmers and entrepreneurs
10. Private sector engaging government on gender-positive policies

In a related evaluation, Oxfam assessed the quality of several company-led gender impact assessments. Among those evaluated, the Fair Labor Association's gender/labor impact assessment of the Nestle cocoa supply chain in Cote d'Ivoire was one of the strongest. The full Oxfam report is here: [https://www.oxfam.org/sites/www.oxfam.org/files/file\\_attachments/women-and-cocoa-analysis-oct-2014.pdf](https://www.oxfam.org/sites/www.oxfam.org/files/file_attachments/women-and-cocoa-analysis-oct-2014.pdf)

The FLA impact assessment is here:

[http://www.fairlabor.org/sites/default/files/documents/reports/nestle\\_gender\\_report\\_7-9-14\\_0.pdf](http://www.fairlabor.org/sites/default/files/documents/reports/nestle_gender_report_7-9-14_0.pdf)

## 2. Other examples of good practice

- <https://policy-practice.oxfam.org.uk/blog/2015/01/understanding-unpaid-care-work-in-ethiopia-through-first-hand-testimonies>
- <https://businessfightspoverty.org/articles/care-work-matters-advocating-for-greater-recognition-of-unpaid-care-and-domestic-work/>
- <https://www.oxfamamerica.org/explore/research-publications/women-in-small-enterprise-semiannual-report-july-december-2016/> (in the report, look at financial lender and Oxfam partner, COOPSAMA, and their change in policy to be more gender aware in practice)

### III. On the role of the private sector and social norms

1. Oxfam has a long-term strategic partnership with Unilever - The [UN High Level Panel on Women's Economic Empowerment](#) (HLP) recently identified [seven key drivers](#) to increase women's economic empowerment (WEE) and overcome entrenched barriers. The panel has called on governments, private sector companies and civil society organisations to step up their work on WEE by increasing investment, finding new types of partnerships and expanding their actions to more of the 'drivers.'

Driver 1 (Tackling adverse norms and promoting positive role models) and Driver 3 (Recognising, reducing and redistributing unpaid work and care) focus on issues that may be new, even for companies who are committed to promoting WEE.

2. This year the SEEP Network and Oxfam convened a [Practitioner Learning Group](#) on social norms in the economy which has brought together 12 people from six organisations (Mars Chocolate, CARE, International Youth Foundation, Promundo, Swiss Contact and Oxfam) from civil society and the private sector to learn together and share insights on how to address the challenge of shifting social norms in the economy at scale. This involves building our collective understanding of how to tackle gender norms and roles, such as those linked to early marriage or violence against women, as well as 'economic norms,' such as what is considered work, versus leisure, and the perceived skill and value placed on different economic activities.



These norms shape and distort markets and economic policy by influencing cost-benefit analyses and investment decisions. As part of this initiative, Oxfam has developed a [diagnostic tool](#) to identify key norms that limit WEE in specific contexts and strategies for change. The tool has been tested in Bangladesh by Oxfam's [Empower Youth for Work programme](#), funded by the IKEA Foundation. Others also plan to test the diagnostic tool, such as Swiss Contact in Kosovo. A practitioner guide for norms change will be published later this year., visit our Women's [Economic Empowerment in Agriculture knowledge hub](#) to find out more.

### 3. Oxfam current research on private sector and impacts on social norms

Gender issues have in recent years been rising on the agenda of the global business community. To date, many companies have focused their efforts to tackle gender inequality on the work place by committing to non-discrimination around hiring, treatment and compensation. More proactive actions by companies to promote gender equality include aspirational goals for women in leadership positions and targeted trainings for women. What is often overlooked when it comes to the private sector's influence on gender equality is the important role companies play in relation to social norms. As a significant cultural actor in many societies, companies are not only the recipient of social norms, they also shape them. Companies can reproduce and grant legitimacy to certain social norms but also be a powerful force challenging them.

The private sector's norm-shaping role applies to the promotion of gender roles in their own organizational culture but also their external communication, political activities and sustainability practices. Examples of business' reproducing gender roles are myriad and include:

- *Gender stereotyping of job roles* – how does the association and content of job roles bias these jobs towards men or women?
- *Masculine leadership styles* – what do desired leadership styles and attributes communicate about women's and men's ability to lead a company?
- *Gender stereotyping in marketing/communication* – how are gender roles portrayed in a company's branding and advertising?
- *Gender norm implications of political activities* - how do companies' policy positions, financial contributions, and memberships challenge or reproduce social norms around gender?
- *Gender norms and corporate sustainability* – how does a company's philanthropic and strategic sustainability work challenge and reproduce gender norms?

### IV. Issue of unpaid care work

Here are a few examples from projects that Oxfam is involved in.

Surf, which is owned by Unilever, recently launched a unique three-year partnership with Oxfam that aims to expand choices for women and girls, by recognising, reducing and redistributing the amount of time spent by women and girls on unpaid care work. This includes laundry, cooking, cleaning and collecting water, as well as caring for people. In some parts of the world this takes up as much as six hours a day.

The initiative involves:

- Providing better access to water and laundry infrastructure, with new or improved communal laundries, household laundry facilities and water systems/centres.
- Challenging and seeking to change harmful social norms that currently mean women bear the brunt of household chores through a communications programme involving local agents and household visits, and local radio, TV and social media campaigns.
- Advocating for public policies that change the distribution of unpaid care work, by building a body of research evidence to inform policymakers and building the capacity of women leaders and women's organisations for more effective stakeholder engagement.

The programme, which is the first of its kind, is running in the Philippines and Zimbabwe, directly changing the lives of hundreds of thousands of people. Through public communications, it will also reach millions globally, promoting activities focused on recognising the impact unpaid care work has on women and girls' lives, and changing norms to achieve more equal responsibility of unpaid care work.

*“Collaboration is the key to making a real difference on development issues and this programme is a great example of partnership, combining Oxfam’s proven methodologies in addressing unpaid care work and our expertise in marketing, technology and consumer insights.”* Analia Mendez, Global Director, Social Mission Expertise, Home Care.

#### V. **Labor and supply chain issues**

1. Oxfam also worked with Unilever in Vietnam and produced this report on good practice - <https://policy-practice.oxfam.org.uk/publications/labour-rights-in-unilevers-supply-chain-from-compliance-to-good-practice-an-oxf-267532>
2. Oxfam’s research on women workers in the US poultry industry and specific impacts they face with a set of recommendations to poultry companies: <https://www.oxfamamerica.org/explore/research-publications/women-on-the-line/>

#### VI. **Multi-stakeholder initiatives addressing women’s economic empowerment**

Oxfam is currently in the inception phase for an initiative called “System Innovation for Women’s Economic Empowerment in Agriculture” (SIWEE), one of Oxfam’s HLP commitments. The World Cocoa Foundation, Diageo, Marks & Spencer, Mondelez, The Body Shop and others are involved in setting up the initiative. Through this initiative we aim to address some of the complex barriers to WEE through a “social lab” approach. We will set up multi-stakeholder groups consisting of women’s rights organisations, multinational companies, local businesses and governmental representatives in selected countries. In the process of conducting joint action research participants, we will develop an in-depth understanding of barriers to WEE and develop and implement innovative pilot projects to address these barriers. There will be a focus on ensuring social norms are considered, given that this is the underlying cause of so many issues from sexual violence in the work place through to what is considered women’s paid or

unpaid work. More information found here: <https://policy-practice.oxfam.org.uk/our-work/gender-justice/womens-economic-empowerment/siwee>

The initiatives above are evidence of the unique expertise and important role that private sector companies have in partnering with others to deepen our understanding of how to create change, and co-developing solutions that lead to transformational change for women.

**VII. Examples of how women experience the impact of business-related human rights abuses differently and disproportionately.**

- <https://policy-practice.oxfam.org.uk/blog/2015/01/understanding-unpaid-care-work-in-ethiopia-through-first-hand-testimonies>
- <https://businessfightspoverty.org/articles/care-work-matters-advocating-for-greater-recognition-of-unpaid-care-and-domestic-work/>

**VIII. Good practices on how to deal with increased marginalization or vulnerabilities faced by women due to intersectionality, feminization of work, informal economy, and conflicts.**

WEE resource guide: <https://views-voices.oxfam.org.uk/wee-resources/index.html#UCW>

Examples of gender market maps that have been done, more guidance here:

<http://wee.oxfam.org/resources/learning-resources#MarketMaps>

Measuring WEE with the private sector/ Linda Scott from Said Business School:

<https://www.sbs.ox.ac.uk/school/news/measures-womens-economic-empowerment-professor-linda-scott>

[https://www.sbs.ox.ac.uk/sites/default/files/Research\\_Areas/Strategy\\_And\\_Innovation/Docs/advisory-note-on-measures-final2016.pdf](https://www.sbs.ox.ac.uk/sites/default/files/Research_Areas/Strategy_And_Innovation/Docs/advisory-note-on-measures-final2016.pdf)

Oxfam initiatives:

- Oxfam's [Conceptual Framework on Women's Economic Empowerment](#)
- The framework for Women's Economic Leadership in Asia [summarized in this doc.](#)