



**THE POWER OF**  
**SRI LANKANS**  
**FOR PEACE, JUSTICE AND EQUALITY**

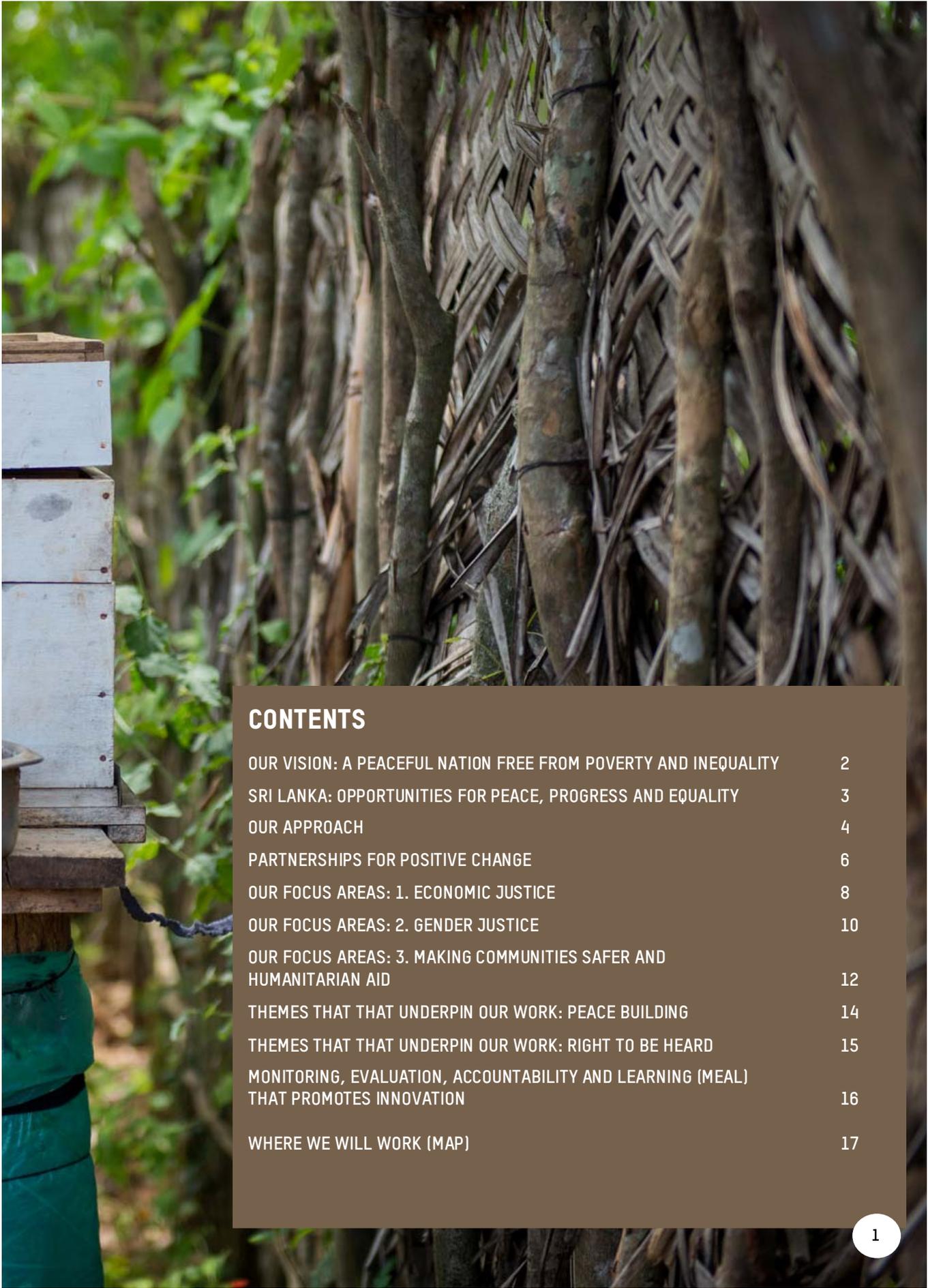
OXFAM IN SRI LANKA  
STRATEGIC PLAN 2014—2019



**OXFAM**



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## OUR VISION: A PEACEFUL NATION FREE FROM POVERTY AND INEQUALITY



At Oxfam, we picture a Sri Lanka where everyone, especially women, girls and vulnerable groups, is able to make their own choices and take charge of their lives. They will live in peace with respect for themselves and others, free from injustice and poverty.

To make this vision a reality, Oxfam will work on three focus areas, they are:

- **Economic Justice:** we will work to ensure that poor and vulnerable women and girls, and their families, have enough food to eat, and have more sustainable and resilient jobs or ways of making money.
- **Gender Justice:** Oxfam wants poor and vulnerable women and girls to be able to exercise their rights and live free from violence. There must be more women in positions of leadership influencing structures, processes and action for equitable social change.

- **Making Communities Safer and Humanitarian Aid:** we will support communities, particularly women, exposed to and affected by disasters, climate change and conflict to lessen, prepare for and survive these shocks.

In addition, two important themes inspire all our work, and they are:

- **Peace Building:** Oxfam will work to establish an understanding of what causes conflict. We will increase capacity for building peace and preventing or reducing conflict.
- **Right to be Heard:** We will promote active citizen participation, the inclusion of diverse social groups, and responsive governance.

To achieve our objectives, Oxfam will support strong civil society actions, networks and partnerships. We call for greater accountability by the government and other responsible development partners.

## SRI LANKA: OPPORTUNITIES FOR PEACE, PROGRESS AND EQUALITY



Today, Sri Lanka is faced with an opportunity to achieve lasting peace, sustainable development and social justice for all its citizens, especially to improve the living conditions of the poorest and most vulnerable. The ethnic conflict that plagued the nation for three decades ended in 2009. Following the presidential and parliamentary elections in 2015, the country has a new government, elected on the back of civic action of an unprecedented scale, that promises good governance, social wellbeing and sustainable and equitable economic development.

Sri Lanka is now a Middle-Income Country (MIC). According to the 2014 Human Development Report, the country's Human Development Index is in the high category, owing largely to its historically strong social welfare policies. In spite of the war and a tightly controlled political climate thereafter, the country has enjoyed significant economic growth. National poverty has declined mostly due to the fall in rural poverty, and 85% of the country's poor live in rural areas. Sri Lanka achieved the Millennium Development Goals ahead of its 2015 schedule, and the Government has

committed to achieving the Global Goals for Sustainable Development.

However, the country's recent economic development has relied on heavy investments in infrastructure and private sector growth, and inequality levels have remained high with poor, vulnerable and marginalized communities left behind. Sri Lankans remain divided along ethnic and religious lines, and little effort has been made towards reconciliation and lasting peace. Structural drivers of conflict and injustice remain unaddressed. Poverty has increased in the formerly war affected areas. Women, especially those in poor and vulnerable communities, enjoy less freedoms and opportunities than men and live in fear of discrimination and violence.

Oxfam, the civil society and development partners have a vital role to play in shifting the power dynamics and eradicating disparities and vulnerabilities by enabling action by Sri Lankan citizens. We must work together with the government to promote pro-poor development, equitable access to services and resources, and to remove the causes of division and conflict permanently.

## OUR APPROACH

For our vision to be realized, we need to address the causes of inequality, injustice, conflict and poverty. We will work to strengthen the movements for positive change and capitalise on opportunities available. Oxfam seeks to enable the people of Sri Lanka, especially the poor and vulnerable women and men, so that they can engage with their governments with dignity and ability to make choices and take action. Finding solutions to problems that bind people to poverty and place them at risk and disadvantage requires a holistic approach that pushes boundaries, enables and links the people. We believe that citizens should be the drivers and leaders of development.

There are disproportionately more women and girls in the ranks of poorest and most vulnerable. For them to lead and participate in the development process to improve their lives, fundamental changes to power dynamics need

to happen within homes, communities and society at large. Women, men and children are required to adopt new and positive attitudes that challenge the cultural norms in place, especially those that promote or tolerate inequality, division and violence. Presently, the negative beliefs and practices are reinforced through government policies, economic models, business practices, media reporting and leadership at all levels. The non-governmental organisations rooted amongst the poor, national organisations, movements and individuals promoting equality, human rights, peace and tolerance have a critical role in challenging the present norms.

Oxfam has invested significantly in mobilizing the rural poor into community based groups, and we now aim to link these groups with partners that work at higher levels. Moving forward, we will strategically broaden our influencing base to include a wider range of



governmental and non-governmental organisations and individuals. We will support youth to fulfil their roles as active citizens, drivers of social change and future leaders. Oxfam will work to increase the power of people and groups to challenge the forces that prolong inequality and vulnerability.

Oxfam's strategy in Sri Lanka is built upon a thorough understanding of the local context, our experience and areas of expertise, and opportunities identified through an up-to-date analysis of the environment. Following the end of the three decade long ethnic conflict in 2009, Sri Lanka has remained divided along ethnic and religious lines, with limited space for civil society to question the divisive norms. With a new government elected in early 2015, we are now presented with an opportunity to take action for positive social change that will benefit the poor and vulnerable, especially whose basic rights have been denied during and after the war.

Oxfam will:

- Link existing community groups with others to strengthen their ability to defend their rights;
- Link within and between communities to build dialogues that bridge divides;
- Strengthen women and girls at the community level;
- Broaden the space for challenging the norms and promote policy that protects women and girls and enables pro-poor development, at district, provincial and national levels; and
- Provide opportunities for the poor to speak up and influence the opinions and decisions affecting them.





## PARTNERSHIPS FOR POSITIVE CHANGE

We need to work together to achieve positive change and equality, and the governments, civil society, private corporations, development partners and individuals must collaborate. Oxfam will make use of its competencies and connections to strengthen existing partnerships and establish new ones. Through working together, we will be well placed to lead, seize opportunities and to respond to situational demands.

Oxfam will work with poor people's organisations and institutions mandated to support the poor and protect their rights. We recognize that to effect lasting change, people's organisations need to make their own decisions and take action. To strengthen the civil society, we will strategically partner with select local actors and build alliances with others.

Our partnerships will go beyond project delivery. Relationships with core partners, based on solidarity, shared goals and common values, aim to strengthen the partners' strategies and their networks so that they remain a sustainable force for the development of Sri Lanka. Oxfam will engage with academic institutions, media, agricultural businesses, social enterprises, youth organisations, and national organisations. New opportunities for dialogue with different levels of government, private sector, and other aid actors are being explored.

Oxfam will target regions lagging behind in their development, especially the war affected communities in the North and East and the estate worker populations in the hill country and areas adjacent. Our work is anticipated to continue in twelve districts across the Northern, Eastern, Central, North Central, Uva, Sabaragamuwa and Southern provinces. Oxfam

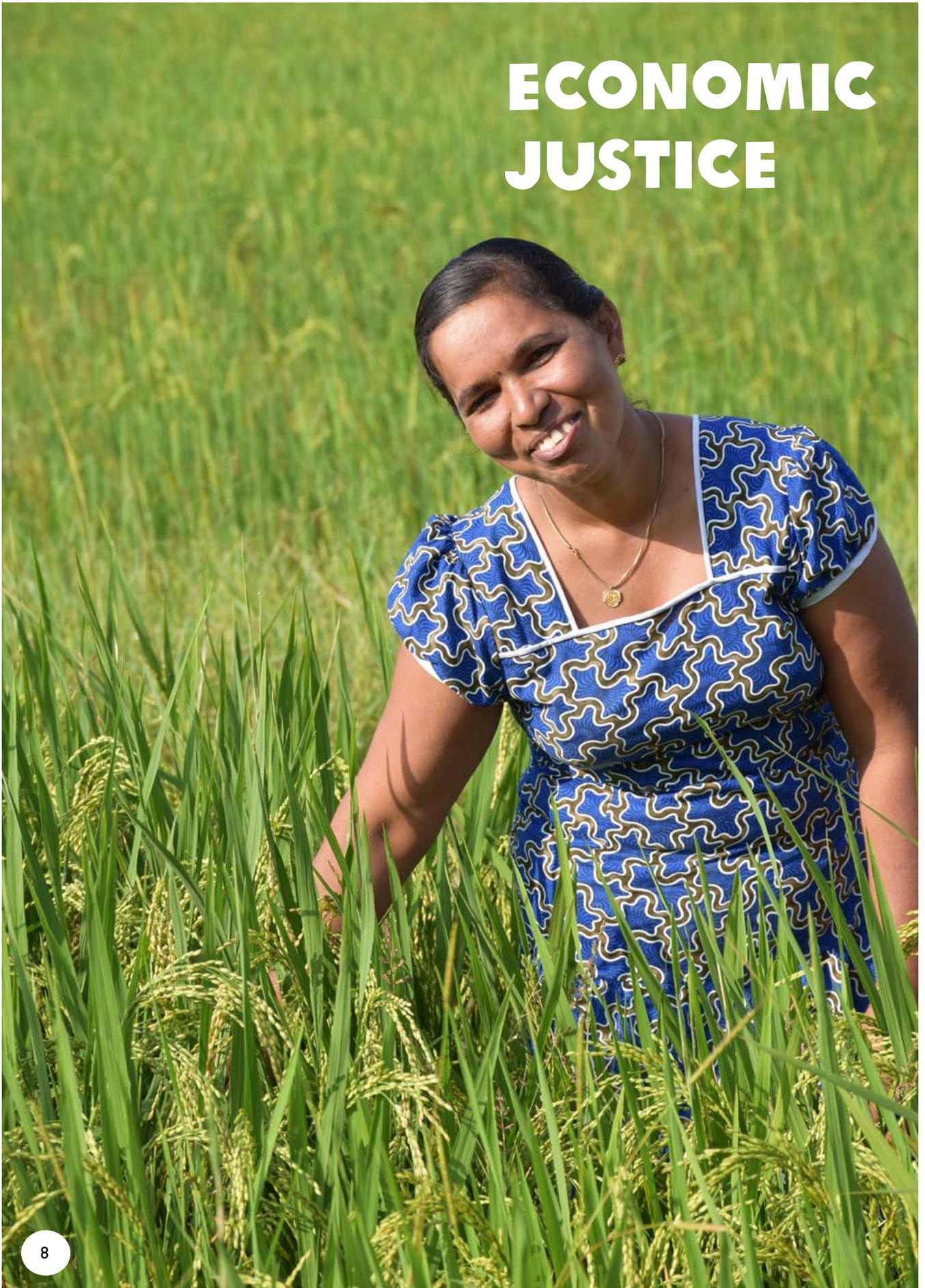


expects to reach 40,000 families and to work with 40 partner organisations.

We will continue to reassess the needs within the regions and explore opportunities to maximize cost efficiencies. Population increase, levels of poverty and vulnerability within the country's fast growing city centres, especially Colombo, will be monitored so that appropriate responses can be tailored targeting the poorest and most vulnerable.

Partners and communities will be encouraged and enabled to hold Oxfam accountable for its commitments, and their feedback will help us improve our programmes and partnerships.

# ECONOMIC JUSTICE



## OUR FOCUS AREAS: 1. ECONOMIC JUSTICE

We will work to ensure that poor and vulnerable women and girls, and their families, have enough food to eat, and have more sustainable and resilient jobs or ways of making money.

### Our goals:

1. Poor and vulnerable women and girls, and their families will have access to natural resources required to maintain resilient livelihoods.
2. Poor and vulnerable women producers and their families will have access to technology, knowledge and finances needed to effectively and sustainably benefit from proactively marketing their products.
3. Government and private sector will be influenced to provide a policy and market environment that enables poor and vulnerable producers to secure resilient and sustainable livelihoods.

### What we will do:

Oxfam will work to ensure that poor and vulnerable women, girls and their families can own and use land and water. These vital natural resources are necessary for resilient and sustainable income generation. When farmers own their land, they have a bigger incentive to invest in them.

We will target the cultural and legal barriers that prevent women and disadvantaged groups from using or owning the land required for income generation; for instance, those who were displaced from their land during the war will be assisted to reclaim their ownership.

Our work is guided by Oxfam's global goal of fairer sharing of natural resources and of advancing people's rights to sustainable livelihoods. We will work with our partners to advocate for more equitable land rights policies, campaigning at both national and local levels. Following a similar approach, later

in the course of the country strategy, Oxfam will widen the focus to include access to water.

We will support Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) as a means to help poor and marginalised women, girls and their families to overcome poverty. Oxfam, with its partners, will work to build the capacity of producers to become entrepreneurs, help them to access more equitable and higher value markets, and influence the relevant policies, practices and services,

Oxfam will enable civil society and community networks to stand up for improving the quality of life of marginalised women and small scale producers so that they can influence the governments and the private sector.

Oxfam will influence to develop climate resistant livelihood models for small producers, and promote the leadership of women in production and marketing of agricultural produce, where they control more aspects of the value chain.

### As a result:

- Communities and groups that represent them will claim and defend their rights to land including land that has been misappropriated and unfairly seized.
- Based on water needs for farming and climate change scenarios, the poorest communities will have enough water.
- Poor women producers will have access to knowledge, technology and finances.
- There will be improved prospects for poor producers to benefit from the marketing value chain.
- Policies and laws will protect the livelihoods of the poorest producers.
- Civil society organisations will respond to and represent the needs of poor women producers.

# GENDER JUSTICE



## OUR FOCUS AREAS: 2. GENDER JUSTICE

We want poor and vulnerable women and girls to be able to exercise their rights and live free from violence. There must be more women in positions of leadership influencing structures, processes and action for equitable social change.

### Our goals:

1. Recognition of women's rights will be increased and tolerance for gender based violence will be reduced by: changing discriminatory attitudes and practices; strengthening policies and laws, and by improving their implementation; Government and responsible actors will be held accountable for the delivery of services.
2. More freedom and opportunities for women to actively participate in decision making and more women in positions of leadership for change.

### What we will do:

Discrimination and violence against women and girls can be reduced by challenging beliefs, attitudes and practices that lead to gender inequality. We will seek to engage men and boys as change agents through strategically adapting approaches that have worked well internationally to suit the localities Oxfam works in. Media, religious institutions and leaders play a critical role in shaping people's opinions. Therefore, we will proactively engage with them to advance public opinions of the human rights to be treated equally and to live free from violence. We will work with young men and women, recognizing their potential to bring about positive change. Oxfam will aim to broaden the acceptance of gender equality as a human right, so that more women and girls are able to

take up leadership roles.

Women, while active in local social welfare organisations, are traditionally left out of community decision making organs such as farmer, fisheries, political and religious committees. We will assist women to develop their confidence, and their communities will be supported to encourage women's participation and leadership. As a result, more women will contribute to community action for peace building, local disaster management and networks linking local and national campaigns. Building upon our work, Oxfam will partner with national influencing efforts and local women leaders to increase women's representation in local governments and the Parliament.

Oxfam will work to prevent all forms of gender based violence by promoting women's and girls' rights. We will enable a dialogue to promote their rights at the community level, work to address the gaps in laws, policies and structures, and advocate for the implementation of existing laws.

### As a result:

- More women will be leading community groups and action.
- Men and boys are engaged to address gender based violence and gender inequality.
- More people are encouraged to question gender stereotypes and to stand up against gender based violence and discriminatory practices.
- Government will respond positively to demands by citizens and promotes women's and girls' rights by introducing and implementing policies. Discriminatory policies will be replaced.



## **MAKING COMMUNITIES SAFER AND HUMANITARIAN AID**



## OUR FOCUS AREAS: 3.

### MAKING COMMUNITIES SAFER AND HUMANITARIAN AID

We will support communities, particularly women and girls, exposed to and affected by disasters, climate change and conflict to lessen, prepare for and survive these shocks.

#### Our goals:

1. Members of vulnerable communities, particularly women and girls, will be more resilient to the adverse impacts of natural hazards, climate change and conflict.
2. Community members, especially women and girls, affected by disasters, will be provided assistance and protection by responsible authorities and civil society with support from the international community.
3. Government and private sector will be influenced to provide resources for reducing and mitigating risks and in responding to humanitarian crisis.

#### What we will do:

We will strengthen communities to be better prepared against disaster, to work together to reduce the impacts and to hold the government authorities to account for disaster preparedness and response. Non-governmental and community based organisations will be supported to respond to emergencies and fill gaps if the Government is overwhelmed. All areas of our work will contribute to building stronger communities, and Oxfam will promote inclusive community based Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) with government and partners for wider acceptance. By working with the academia to establish better research evidence, we plan to strategically influence the business sector to

invest in reducing risks and securing their supply chains.

In disaster response, Oxfam will focus on assessing the damage and supporting the responsible authorities to assist all affected communities. Through advocacy, we will underline that the service delivery must be without bias and include those at high risk and are difficult to reach. In the event of extreme disasters and in situations where affected members of communities, especially women and girls, face extreme risks, we will step in to save lives, both directly and with partners. In times of emergency, Oxfam will use its role as the Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) coordination cluster lead to facilitate the exchange of information with the government agencies.

In DRR and humanitarian response work, we will partner with Sri Lankan civil society, international organisations, Government and the private sector.

As a result:

- To mitigate the impacts of disasters, the DRR plans of most disadvantaged and at risk communities will be funded and supported by government authorities.
- The private sector will invest in strengthening vulnerable communities against disaster.
- Through early warning and coordinated responses to emergencies, lives will be saved and suffering will be minimised.
- Better disaster preparedness and responses will be built upon scientific evidence, assessment of responses and lessons learnt.

## THEMES THAT UNDERPIN OUR WORK: PEACE BUILDING



Oxfam will take a practical approach to peacebuilding that is both sensitive to the ground realities and takes advantage of opportunities available. All our work will be conflict sensitive, i.e. they will not in any way worsen divisions and tensions or cause conflict amongst communities.

Through learning and developing awareness, Oxfam and its partners will recognise opportunities to promote peace and adapt programming so that they help bring together communities divided by the conflict. By incorporating peacebuilding and conflict sensitive programming across all our work, women and men will have a greater understanding of causes of conflict and how to act together to reduce divisions.

### As a result:

- Oxfam staff, partners and civil society organisations will have an increased understanding of diversity (ethnic, religious and caste) and be able to identify opportunities for building peace.
- Communities will have an increased understanding of causes of conflict and be able to identify opportunities to address these through a dialogue within their community and with neighbouring communities to create greater awareness of diversity and to build trust.
- Increased awareness of other ethnic, religious and caste groups will lead to shared plans and solutions, which can be used as foundations for durable peace.
- Oxfam, partner and community capability to analyse conflict causes and implement conflict sensitive action will be enhanced.

## THEMES THAT UNDERPIN OUR WORK: RIGHT TO BE HEARD

The right to be heard is the foundation for achieving our vision, widespread impact and sustainable change in Sri Lanka. A strong, independent platform for addressing injustice emerges when citizens speak up for their rights, participate in democratic action and take advantage of opportunities to influence authorities on behalf of the poor and vulnerable to bring about positive change.

Oxfam will promote active citizenship in all our work so that civil society, especially poor and marginalised women and men, are enabled to lead their own development, act together to defend their rights, and engage effectively with government and other service providers on issues that affect them.

### As a result:

- Citizens, especially members of vulnerable and poor communities, will understand their rights better and have the capacity and space to engage effectively in decision making to protect their rights.
- Community based and civil society organisations will represent the interests of poor, especially women and girls, to resolve issues that affect their lives.
- Oxfam and civil society organisations representing the poorest will be able to amplify their voices through local, provincial, national and international networks.
- Poor and vulnerable communities will be empowered to demand good governance, accountability and transparency from the authorities.
- The public will more proactively engage with one another, the government and private sector to create opportunities for communities to influence decision making.
- Individuals and communities will challenge formal and informal power structures to highlight and address the interests of the poor and vulnerable.



## MONITORING, EVALUATION, ACCOUNTABILITY AND LEARNING (MEAL) THAT PROMOTES INNOVATION



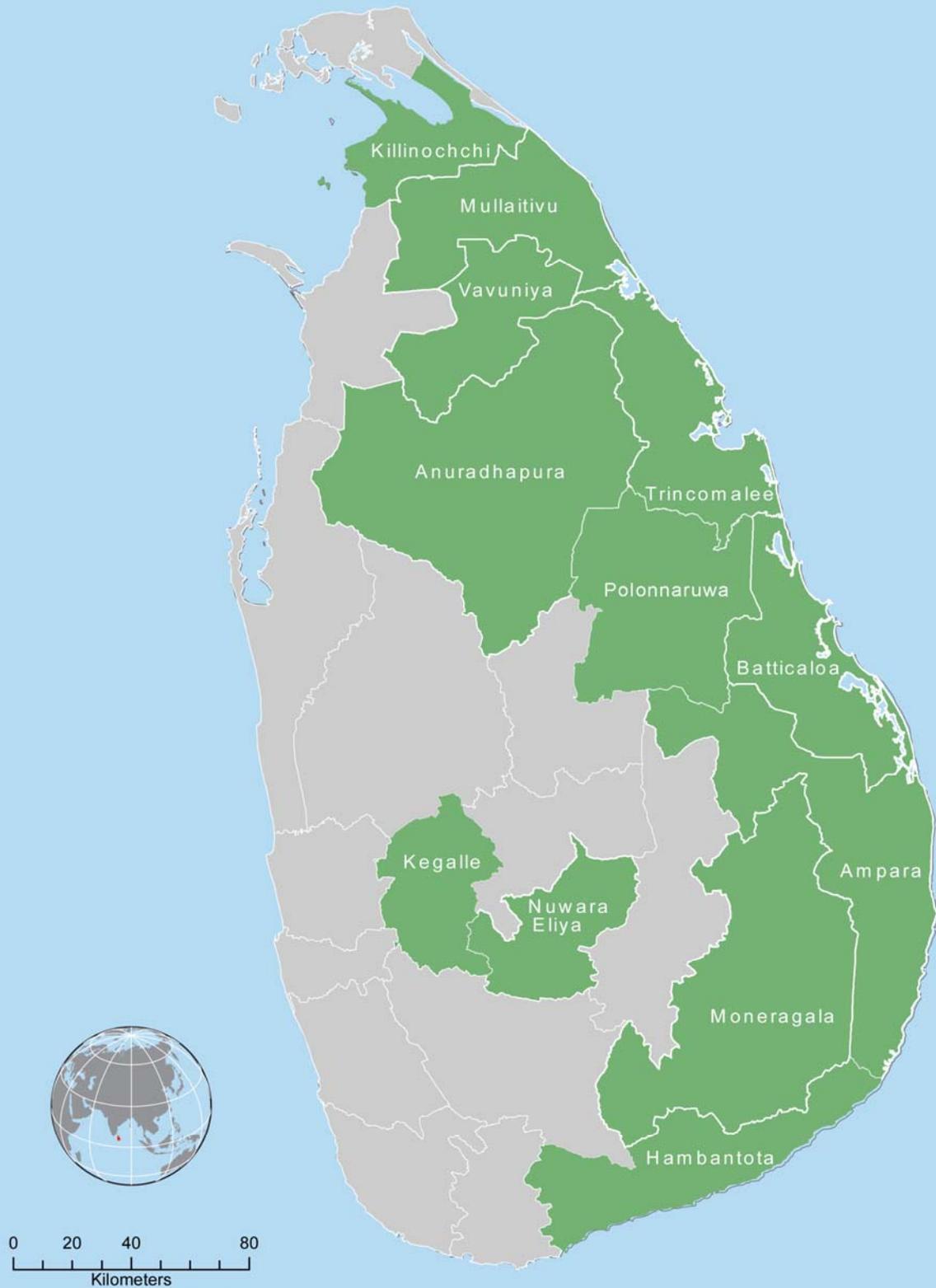
Oxfam will use a Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability, and Learning (MEAL) framework that leads to more innovative programming.

The framework will outline who we are accountable to, what commitments we are accountable for, and how we will facilitate others to hold us to account. It will clearly document how various programme elements contribute to the overall achievement of the Country Strategy.

The MEAL framework will be guided by the following principles:

- Accountability and transparency.
- Participative and enabling approaches to engage the poorest and most vulnerable groups.
- Use of monitoring and evaluation tools that fit the specific needs of a programme.
- Conflict and gender sensitivity.
- MEAL designed to generate innovation, improve efficiency, effectiveness, and relevance of programmes.
- Systematic monitoring of the external environment and changes therein, to ensure programmes respond accordingly.
- Learning agendas developed for each programmatic area in partnership with sector actors and communities.
- Learning loops with local and international networks to identify innovations, best practices and new methodologies.
- Monitoring of thematic programming for impact across sectors and alignment with the Country Strategy.
- An Oxfam International Programme Standards Self-Assessment will be conducted to guide and inform the development of benchmarks for programme quality across programming in Sri Lanka. We will align our work in Sri Lanka with Oxfam's international directives including Common Approach to MEL and Social Accountability (CAMSA), Worldwide Influencing Network (WIN) and international benchmarks such as the Core Humanitarian Standards.

## WHERE WE WILL WORK (MAP)





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