

# HECA Regional Platform Legacy Documentation Report

Prepared by

**Innovia Research Consulting**

October 2022



## Table of Contents

Acknowledgement .....	3
Abbreviations .....	4
Summary: HECA RP Legacy Documentation Report .....	5
1.0. Background to HECA (RP) Legacy Documentation .....	7
1.1 About Oxfam in Horn East, Central Africa (HECA).....	7
1.2 Purpose, Objectives and Research Questions .....	7
2.0. Study Methodology .....	8
3.0. Legacy Documentation Results .....	10
3.1. The HECA RP Journey: Memorable and Key Defining Moments .....	10
3.2 Selected HECA RP Legacies .....	12
3.3 HECA RP Model Approaches .....	23
3.4 Case Studies.....	23
4.0 Missed Opportunities and Recommendations.....	25
5.0 References .....	27
6.0 Annexes .....	27
Annex 6.1: Terms of Reference.....	27
Annex 6.2: Study Tools.....	32

## Acknowledgement

Innovia Research Consulting sincerely wishes to thank the leadership of Oxfam HECA Regional Platform for their support and guidance during the legacy documentation process. We received immense cooperation from staff at the Regional Platform, the country offices in Uganda and Somaliland, and from members of the Regional Governance Group.

The legacy documentation process was undertaken at time when the Regional Platform was undergoing rapid institutional changes, and most senior staff were pressed for time. Many of the people we talked were extremely busy; but they spared time, fully immersed themselves in our conversations with them, and gave rich reflections and insights on the Regional Platform's memorable moments, legacies and missed opportunities. We are truly indebted to these individuals for their candidness, and for giving us a close and first-hand experience of what it felt like to weave through the crises and uncertainties, to innovate through complexities, and to collaborate with others in and outside Oxfam in catalysing change.

In the course of undertaking this assignment, we had a chance to interview a member of staff at the Regional Platform, who sadly passed away before we could complete the assignment. This was an unfortunate outcome. We continue to express our deep and sincere condolences to his family, friends and colleagues for this tragic loss. Even though he did not live to see the outcome of the legacy documentation, his insightful reflections with us are woven into the richness and depth of the memorable moments and legacies described in this report.

Finally, we would have loved to acknowledge each respondent by name. However, to keep the anonymity and confidentiality of the information given, we have chosen to keep everyone anonymous.

We confirm that the support we got from Oxfam was unwavering and enormous. Any omissions, misrepresentations of fact or mistakes that might occur in the document are purely our own. The other usual disclaimers apply.

## Abbreviations

AfDB	African Development Bank
AMWA	Akina Mama wa Afrika
ATMs	Automated Teller Machines
AU	Africa Union
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
DTTs	Double Taxation Treaties
EAC	East African Community
EACSO	East Africa Civil Society Forum
FPIC	Free Prior Informed Consent
HECA RP	Horn East and Central Africa Regional Platform
ICT	Information, Communication and Technology
ICT4D	Information, Communication and Technology for Development
OGB	Oxfam Great Britain
PAC	Parliamentary Accounts Committee
RiCs	Rights in Crisis
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

## Executive Summary: HECA RP Legacy Documentation Report

The legacy documentation provides an opportunity to document insights and reflections on Oxfam HECA's role as strategic leader, facilitator, convener and influencer for justice and equality, and first responder in humanitarian crises in the region. The main aim of the documentation is to re-trace and document HECA RP's journey and achievements and its legacies in providing strategic oversight for the 10 countries, and regional influencing work between 2016 to 2022. The 10 countries include: Burundi, DR Congo, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, South Sudan, Somalia, Sudan, Tanzania, and Uganda.

The legacy documentation process covers the period since Oxfam HECA started operations in the region, 2016 to date. Specifically, the objectives of the documentation are three-fold: (1). Document RP journey and key legacy achievements/successes or best practices and challenges regarding its mandate-strategic oversight to countries and regional influencing work; (2). Identify and profile model approaches applied to realize the registered successes; and (3). Draw lessons and recommendations that will inform future Oxfam operations including the Africa Platform

The study adopted a qualitative approach to generate data for addressing the objectives and research questions for the legacy documentation. The documentation largely draws from work and testimonies from the ten countries, but the focus is on regional influencing work executed and/or technical guidance/leadership provided by the RP. This enabled a rich descriptive narration of the experiences and perspectives of those who were involved in the setting up and driving operations of the Regional Platform. Recourse to qualitative approaches was deliberate to allow for depth of insight, and richness and uniqueness of the experiences captured in the report.

The report provides insights into achievements and key legacies built concerning influencing work undertaken by Rights in Crisis (RiCs), Extractive Industries, Gender Justice and Civic Space engagements.

The main legacies include the following: **Unity of Purpose**, which delves into how the RP operated in a very complex, dynamic and demanding environment (internal Oxfam systems and processes and the external operational contexts in the humanitarian response) but yet maintained a unique sense of unity of purpose and remained steadfast; and **Agility in the face of Odds** innovated by the Regional Platform leadership and management teams to enable the adoption a leadership and management culture that was nimble, agile, and adaptable. Other legacies included adoption of **an evidence-based approach** to its regional influencing work and **empowering women and refugee-led organisations** to build their individual leaders' and collective voice and agency to sustain the participation of marginalised groups and to ensure that their voices are amplified to join and participate in hitherto closed policy and decision making spaces.

The approaches responsible for the registered success included, inter alia, RP's ability to embrace innovation in its processes and systems, leveraging on its partnerships, and constantly anticipating and quickly dealing with crises. Others included leveraging on Oxfam's own track record that enabled the RP to get into policy spaces (that would have been difficult for other organisations lacking a similar profile to enter); evidence-based influencing (using credible research evidence for policy engagement), and recruitment of staff locally, that helped strengthen agency building among grassroots women and youth organisations and with local partners within refugee led organisations. The Regional Platform and the country programmes similarly practiced accompaniment for their local partners, which was complemented with local agency building and institutional strengthening in fundraising and resource mobilisation of resources (critical for local partners to operate even after

Oxfam's transitioning out of some of the countries in the region). Finally, convenings were catalytic engagements to mobilise other organisations in responding to humanitarian crises and disasters, and in amplifying pertinent issues like income and gender inequality.

Nonetheless, the report presents missed opportunities and recommendations that the RP and its partners/collaborators ought to be cognisant of for sustainable enjoyment of the legacies registered. These include, among others, the following: **Institutional set up and operations:** there were delays in setting up the regional program structures that delayed commencement of HECA RP operations; **Regional programming and advocacy:** The exit from some countries in the region was not smooth. Better use could have been made of country review mapping. It left a bitter taste in some countries. Adopting an orderly process of transitioning out of countries could have mitigated the challenges that followed the exit.

The report recommends that exit from countries should forecast and expect that staff (who are the most important cog in operations and programming) might leave in panic, throwing the transition process into chaos. Reducing the operational and programming footprints should be matched and aligned with the potential for staff attrition, and the process needs to be staggered, and terms and conditions for core staff reviewed to provide incentives for them to stay through the transition, where this is possible and applicable. Further, the report recommends that Oxfam International should carefully consider the cost of the architecture of the proposed Africa Platform based on a comparative analysis of existing similar or comparator organisational forms in Africa to prevent the new structure from experiencing operational challenges that HECA RP experienced during its set up and eventual operations. Developing a clear understanding of the operational and programming value add of the Africa Platform very early in the process would be useful. It would be useful to forecast how the roles and functions of the new structure might evolve, based on programming and operational needs, and the appropriate configurations necessary to enable it to function optimally so that projections of resources and capacity are made and availed accordingly.

Finally the report posits that adopting a systems thinking and focusing on the interdependencies across different organisational functions and programmes, presents ground for stronger processes and systems to fairly compensate for the weaker links in the system as demonstrated by the use of technology to mitigate for the inadequacy in staffing; and immense achievements are realised when a risk-preparedness mentality informs plans, programmes and processes. Moreover, future advocacy efforts could achieve more sustained outcomes if Oxfam is deliberate in strengthening the technical and institutional capacity of regional organisations and accompanying them within appropriate policy spaces and key decision making platforms until they have capacity; and research conceptualised and executed jointly with governments, regional intergovernmental bodies and regional CSO networks could have greater traction in policy than conducting research and presenting it to users of research. Further, another lesson learnt International NGOs adoption of strategies and policies that increase autonomy and confidence building in their local partners would yield more sustainability, hence, increased legacies emanating from their support.

## **1.0. Background to HECA (RP) Legacy Documentation**

The legacy documentation provides an opportunity to document insights and reflections on Oxfam's role as strategic leader, facilitator, convener and influencer for justice and equality, and first responder in humanitarian crises in the region. The main aim of the documentation is to re-trace and document HECA RP journey and achievements and its legacies in providing strategic oversight for the 10 countries and regional influencing work between 2016 to 2022. The 10 countries include: Burundi, DR Congo, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, South Sudan, Somalia, Sudan, Tanzania, and Uganda.

### **1.1 About Oxfam in Horn East, Central Africa (HECA)**

HECA Regional Platform was constituted in 2016. It marked the reorganisation of the different Oxfam affiliates (OGB, Oxfam Novib, Belgium, etc.) into more consolidated country programmes, under Oxfam International. Prior to this, each country was managed by an Oxfam affiliate, and it was possible for several affiliates to have offices in one country. The rationalisation process led to a restructuring which consolidated Oxfam country presence in the Horn, East, and Central Africa into 10 country programmes under one Oxfam International.

The resulting structure consisted of 10 country programmes, executing affiliates, a Regional Platform, and partner affiliates. The Regional Platform was created to offer technical programme support, oversight, and institutional support to the 10 countries. In this sense, the RP became the interfacing structure for Oxfam International with the countries and affiliates. In 2016-2017 HECA RP developed the statement of strategic intent which was succeeded by the Strategic Vision Framework 2018-2028. The Regional Platform also undertook two rounds of country mapping reviews and in the process phased out in 4 countries namely; Sudan, Tanzania, Burundi and Rwanda.

### **1.2 Purpose, Objectives and Research Questions**

The legacy documentation process covers the period since Oxfam HECA started operations in the region. Specifically, the objectives of the documentation are three-fold:

1. Document RP journey and key legacy achievements/successes or best practices and challenges regarding its mandate-strategic oversight to countries and regional influencing work.
2. Identify and profile model approaches applied to realize the registered successes.
3. Draw lessons and recommendations that will inform future Oxfam operations including the Africa Platform

The documentation draws from work and testimonies from the ten countries, but the focus is on regional influencing work executed and/or technical guidance/leadership provided by the RP. It gives insights into legacies built concerning influencing work undertaken by Rights in Crisis (RiCs), Extractive Industries, Gender Justice and Civic Space engagements.

To help interrogate the legacy, key questions were posed as follows:

1. How has the RP delivered its mandate amidst the changing context in the region?
2. How effective has the regional platform delivered its mandate given the rapidly changing internal and external context?
3. How have changes in an internal and external context shaped the work of the RP over years?
4. In what ways has the RP been effective in its regional influencing work and strategic oversight roles?
5. For the RP and its partners, what worked well? What did not work well?
6. What are some emerging/promising practices for continuity of the regional influencing work (both for Oxfam RP and/or its partners)?
7. What are the responsible exit strategies in respect to global networks?
8. What lessons and recommendations can we draw to inform future collaboration with partners and eventual transition into the Africa Platform model with regard to regional programming, strategic oversight and support structure for countries?

## **2.0. Study Methodology**

A largely qualitative approach was used to generate data for addressing the objectives and research questions for the legacy documentation. The recourse to qualitative approaches was made to enable obtaining a rich descriptive depth of the experiences of those who have been associated with the Regional Platform and its work over the six years (2016-2022). Qualitative methods enable in-depth study of social phenomena by delving into the experiences and the meanings people make of those experience as part of their everyday lived realities. They allow us to immerse ourselves in the social phenomena we are dealing with, and to examine why and how things unfolded over time, our experiences in these circumstances, and what we make of these experiences. They thus enable a rich and in-depth examination of reality as lived by people, over a span of time, and the meanings they make of those circumstances.

Quantitative data would have been inappropriate for this level of in-depth analysis and examination because it relies on aggregation of numeric data to generate trends and patterns across human behaviour and social processes. By focusing on aggregation of numeric patterns and trends, quantitative approaches lack the context-specific uniqueness and peculiarities of lived human experiences. Thus, qualitative approaches became the method of choice to understand the experiences, perspectives and reflections of Oxfam staff and board members on the legacies of HECA.

The documentation process commenced with preliminary discussions with the Oxfam HECA Regional Platform. Subsequently, the processes described below were undertaken in generating data for the legacy documentation.

- i. Document reviews: The Oxfam HECA RP team provided a number of documents to Innovia Research Consulting for review (see annex II). The documents provided included annual progress reports, HECA vision framework and several other reports. The Innovia Research Consulting team reviewed these documents to develop a first tentative perspectives of areas where legacies for the Regional Platform might lie. Internal documents were complemented with reviews of



external documents, including other information obtained from Oxfam website. All literature obtained through these sources was analysed textually, categorised and then used to generate the first set of themes to be explored through interviews and conversations with Oxfam staff.

- ii. Inception Report: A brief inception report was prepared, based on preliminary document review. The report highlighted a conceptual framework, a methodological framework to be used in undertaking the legacy documentation, and proposed schedule of interviews, and interview questions. This was submitted and approved by Oxfam.
- iii. Exploratory Key Informant Interviews: Innovia Research Consulting conducted preliminary exploratory interviews with 7 Oxfam RP staff members, 3 members of the regional governance group, one member of staff in the Uganda Country office, and three from Somaliland. Exploratory interviews focused on obtaining respondent perspectives on memorable moments, key innovations, legacies, lessons, and missed opportunities. All exploratory interviews, except those held in Uganda and Somaliland, were done virtually. Informed consent was obtained to interview and to audio record the conversations. Manual note taking complemented audio recording. Respondents were informed about the intended use of the information. After each interview, the Innovia Research Consulting team enquired whether the respondent was comfortable with a follow up interview where video recording would be done. All but one respondent consented to being video recorded in the next round of interviews.
- iv. Video recording: Innovia Research Consulting organised and conducted follow up video recorded interviews with some of the original respondents who participated in the exploratory interviews. Even though the ideal would have been to video record all respondents who consented to this next round of interviews, this was not possible as some staff had either transitioned out of Oxfam, or others were unavailable for various reasons. In total, 5 interviews were held in this second round of interviews. The questions asked in the second round of interviews were tailored for each respondent, based on feedback received from the exploratory conversations. Interview questions were emailed ahead of each interview, to enable the respondent to prepare for the video recording.
- v. Semi-structured survey guide for countries: Innovia Research Consulting prepared a semi-structured interview guide that sought to obtain experiences and perspectives of the country programmes on the support they received from the Regional Platform. The tool was reviewed and approved by the RP, then subsequently emailed to the countries. The consultants made follow up emails. In spite of the efforts devoted to following up, only 1 response was received.
- vi. Data analysis and preliminary findings: The consultants prepared interview notes from those taken during interviews and complemented these with additional notes taken after listening to the recordings after each interview. To ensure the quality of data collected, the notes were compiled, coded and categorised. From the categories built from the interview notes, themes and sub-themes were

generated from recurrent trends and patterns. As a further quality control measure, each theme and sub-theme was scrutinised jointly by the consultants, and data generated through desk review was used either build up or review the themes and sub-themes identified. This process of data triangulation continued until clear patterns and messages emerged on the themes and sub-themes identified. Subsequently, these were written out as preliminary findings.

- vii. Presentation of preliminary findings to Oxfam HECA Regional Team: the Innovia Research Consulting team presented the preliminary findings of the Legacy Documentation at a sense making meeting convened by the HECA Regional Platform senior management. The themes and sub-themes proposed by the consultants were approved, with slight adjustments, and the consultants allowed to proceed with video documentation.

### **3.0. Legacy Documentation Results**

#### **3.1. The HECA RP Journey: Memorable and Key Defining Moments**

One of the most memorable moments for the RP staff and members of the Regional Governance Group was the establishment of the Regional Platform. There was no prior experience with which to benchmark the establishment of such a structure. It was an untested organisational architecture that needed to be done from scratch, and this was fraught with challenges. The setting up of the Regional Platform coincided with the emergence of a category 1 humanitarian disaster in the region. This added a layer of complication and pressure for the nascent Regional Platform, which was then still very thinly staffed. Moreover, the Platform was established much later after costing for its setting up had been done. The costing model used for estimating what it would cost to fully establish, staff and operate the Regional Platform turned out to have been based on gross underestimations. The projections were unrealistic and underestimated the cost of establishing and operating a regional office in a city like Nairobi.

This was soon evident in various aspects once the task of establishing the Platform began. For instance, while the Regional Platform managed to attract and recruit incredibly talented staff for the Platform and the country programmes, it was not possible to retain them, yet the new structure needed to recruit and set up a regional leadership team if it needed to function effectively and meet its obligations to the country programmes. In fact, the country programmes' expectations were that the Regional Platform would be set up very quickly, and that it would start offering its support to the countries immediately. This was not to be, as a fully established Regional Platform took nearly two years to set up, given the slow internal processes at Oxfam. One of the most urgent tasks was the establishment of the regional leadership team, and it would take the relentless efforts of the new regional director and her team to have this completed within the first three months. The director also managed to support the regional leadership team to interpret, understand and execute the mandate of the Regional Platform.

Integral to the process was the need for recruitment of new staff, inducting them into their roles, and enabling them to perform. This required exploring effective, efficient, and feasible ways of working with the country programmes, affiliates, the Platform and the larger Oxfam International. Likewise, there was need for recruitment of new country programmes leadership, and a process of talent attraction and management was instituted. The Regional Platform managed to hire very qualified staff. However, just as with the Regional Platform, retaining staff proved to be a challenge.

A fully functional Regional Platform also required the development and implementation of a regional strategic vision. At first, the Regional Platform started off with the Horn, East and Central Africa (HECA) Region *Statement of Strategic Intent 2015-2017*. This document articulated an ambition for the region, which needed to be further redefined and clarified. It set the pace for the development of the HECA Vision Framework (2018-2028), which came into effect in September 2018. The development of the Vision Framework was done in a very participatory manner with the involvement of country teams, the confederation, affiliates, and other external stakeholders of the HECA RP.

The Vision Framework is predicated on a horizon thinking and philosophy, and it visualizes change over 10-year horizon. Inherent to its design is the more flexible and adaptable vision of change, in view of the complexities, uncertainties and recurrent volatility in the HECA region. The Vision Framework acted as a unifying strategic platform that brought together the country teams and affiliates to visualize change through a unified lens. It specified four key priority areas, namely: transforming conflicts and crises; tackling inequalities; transformative partnerships; and organisational effectiveness. These would be pursued through influencing work around Rights in Crisis (RiCs), extractives and fiscal justice, gender justice and civic space engagements. The ability of the Regional Platform to focus and to articulate a vision with clear priority areas where Oxfam could add value in the region was a major achievement. The RP managed this monumental task in the midst of competing programming priorities, and the complex and often intertwined development crises and challenges in the HECA region.

By providing a unified vision for the Regional Platform, the country programmes and Affiliates, the HECA Vision Framework enabled harmonised ways of working and provided a useful template on which everyone converged their efforts. For instance, each county developed its country strategy drawing from the Vision Framework. It also enabled joined up ways of working, with donors plugging into various components of the Vision Framework, based on their operational and programming interests, preferences and mandates. The framework similarly helped the Regional Platform, Affiliates and the Country Programmes in resource mobilisation and fundraising whether for specific thematic areas or for multi-country operational and programming needs.

The development and implementation of the HECA Vision 2018-2028 presented a model for the Oxfam confederation. Moreover, delivering on the Vision despite the internal and external constraints seemed to have built the requisite agility and resilience, which offered

an extremely useful foundation when COVID-19 struck. The agility and resilience built as part of the Platform set-up was converted for good use when COVID-19 broke out, and enabled issue framing/profiling, advocacy, fundraising, and responses to the pandemic. The HECA RP and the country programmes framed their advocacy on triple C: Covid-19, conflicts and climate change. The ability to link COVID-19, conflicts and climate was innovative, because it not only supported advocacy by sharpening the focus on these issues, but it also enabled resource mobilization.

### 3.2 Selected HECA RP Legacies

This section highlights the identified HECA (RP) legacies. It is derived from the collective memories and perspectives of staff and members of the Regional Governance Group on the outstanding achievements of the Regional Platform that qualify to be viewed as legacies. The legacies are to be found in achievements embedded in processes, reconfiguration of systems, unique and defining events or moments, and innovations in programming, operations and management of complexity and uncertainty. The underlying drivers of the legacies are connected and intertwined – one legacy springs from several underlying drivers, which are interconnected in a web of causal processes. The legacies can also be seen as lessons in their own right because they represent important landmarks in the Regional Platform’s journey over the period of its existence (2016 – 2022).

Based on the responses received, the legacies have been categorized as follows: (1) Unity of purpose, (2) Agility in the face of odds, (3) Innovations, (4) Gender, Agency building, and grassroots empowerment, (5) HECA Regional Convening, (6) Digitization, Communication and Information Management.

#### 3.2.1. Unity of Purpose

The RP operated in an overly complex, dynamic and demanding environment – yet maintained a unique sense of unity of purpose. Complexity and uncertainty were present in internal systems and processes that required balancing of the needs and expectations of the Regional Platform, the country programmes, the (partner and executing) affiliates, and the wider Oxfam confederation. Different country programmes had systems and processes that reflected the policies of the executing affiliates. This slowed down the process of establishing the Regional Platform into a fully functional unit. Moreover, South Sudan, Ethiopia and Democratic Republic of Congo took long to transition from the affiliate management into the Regional Platform model, with precious time being lost in the process.

The internal complexities extended right into the operational phase of the Platform; at the country office level, only the Country Director is the staff of Oxfam International and is directly managed by the Regional Platform. The rest of the staff are managed by the executing affiliate. This creates a level of complexity in operations.

Externally, the Oxfam HECA Regional Platform operated in a complex and dynamic environment, characterised by crises and emergencies. The inevitable result is that this stretched the capacity of staff and their ability to operate. Moreover, most government regimes in HECA are generally known for their intolerance to civic rights. This puts staff and Oxfam partners in constant danger and peril over their safety and civil liberties; and what is practical and feasible in one country context may not be so in another. The pursuit of rights in these fragile contexts is complex, threatens the status quo, and is therefore a dangerous undertaking. In essence, maintaining a balance and unified approach to programming and operations in these contexts is both challenging and difficult.

In spite of these complexities, the HECA Regional Platform maintained a good level of unity of purpose in its programming and operations. This is a major achievement, and thus a legacy of the Regional Platform. For instance, the HECA RP office had five distinct business units, yet staff maintained coherence in vision, and staff in these units operated as part of a larger family. Using the HECA Regional Vision Framework as the pivot around which everything converged, staff were able to maintain a unified vision of what Oxfam should achieve in the region. Similarly, the RP operated on four strategic pillars but each programme, despite being diverse and varied, all worked towards contributing to the four strategic pillars.

Typically, within the context of such a diverse and complex programming and operational context, the expectation would have been that staff would work in distinct silos, with occasional convergence. However, the Regional Platform instituted mechanisms that ensured that collaboration, synergising and a shared vision were operational values that were understood and pursued by all staff. Some of these mechanisms included the establishment of a regional leadership team that helped to cement this unified vision of change and purpose.

The regional leadership team maintained regular consultations, in physical rotational meetings in countries but also virtually. This enabled a proactive and collegial tackling of operational and programming opportunities and challenges as they emerged. With leadership showing the way, the rest of the staff fell in line and adopted this collegial and consultative approach to programming. Moreover, these formal mechanisms were buttressed with informal meetings, organised lunches for staff, Christmas parties, learning weeks and training to instil a sense of cohesion and unity of purpose among staff.

Furthermore, presence of the Regional Governance Group (a quasi-governance board which acted as a sounding board for the Platform), the affiliates and the country programmes also helped. The Regional Governance Group brought together the affiliates, the Regional Platform and the country programmes in joint meetings where the progress of the RP and that of the countries was reviewed. It was yet another platform where joint reflection, shared learning and visioning took place. The affiliates provided funding to keep the Platform operating, and they attended the annual regional team meetings where they shared in the deliberations and in the bonding processes. Besides, there are times when country programmes worked together to support the initiatives of the Regional Platform. For

instance, the work on the extractives industry received dedicated human and financial support from the Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania offices. It showed unity of purpose and cooperation where the country offices bridged a financing gap for the Regional Platform.

#### Exemplary Practices on forging unity of purpose

The Platform managed to remain coherent in spite of the diversity of its staff because the top leadership was committed to fostering diversity. The rotational annual meetings by the regional leadership team in the different countries signalled that all countries were significant and mattered. Moreover, simple mundane gestures like Christmas parties, informal lunches, and staff retreats served to cement bonds among staff. These served as important underlying drivers of unity and cohesion that worked with time.

The **lesson learnt** here is that the leadership and staff must be intentional in fostering staff unity and cohesion. Both might happen fortuitously, but that is the exception rather the norm.

Besides, the unity of purpose extends beyond Oxfam into operational contexts in the humanitarian response sphere. Oxfam mobilized other agencies to respond to various crises. This ability of the Regional Platform to provide leadership in the response to humanitarian crises in the region was seen as a legacy that Oxfam shared with other agencies in the region. A unique sense of unity of purpose was often demonstrated in these situations. As one staff of Oxfam put it:

*It was always heart-warming to see many organisations all working towards the same goal in various disaster situations we responded to. In nearly every case, the motivation was less about organisational logos and flags. No one was interested in that. We were acting in solidarity with those affected by the disaster. Our desire was to offer help to as many people as possible, in shortest time possible. In fact, if you did not know any of the people at a personal level, it would have been impossible to tell which organisation they worked for: whether for Oxfam, UNHCR, Red-Cross or for any of the many organisations responding to the disaster.*

The unity of purpose cultivated in the course of the Regional Platform's existence served to cushion staff against the massive social disruptions occasioned by COVID-19 pandemic. One respondent observed that instead of the pandemic driving a wedge among Oxfam's culturally diverse staff at the Regional Platform office, it cemented a bond where staff would call others to enquire if they were alright. The movement restrictions made it difficult to have physical interactions among staff, Oxfam still maintained virtual interactions on internet enabled platforms amongst staff. Moreover, the Platform presented a friendly caring face at the

height of the pandemic; it continued to pay for housing and other support, even for staff who were in the process of transitioning out of the organization when COVID-19 struck.

### 3.2.2. Agility in the face of Odds

Recurrent crises and the dynamic internal operating environment in which the Regional Platform operated required adoption of a leadership and management culture that was nimble, agile, and adaptable. Not only was the Regional Platform confronted with fragile, unpredictable and constantly changing operating contexts which is characteristic of the Horn, East and Central Africa region; it also had to confront internal pressures emanating from limited and unpredictable funding, periodic attrition of staff and thus loss of institutional memory, and lack of interoperability of systems. The HECA Regional Platform is not a funding unit – it does not fundraise for its own resources. Instead, fundraising is done by affiliates and the Regional Platform then has to negotiate for funding from the affiliates and complement this with funding from Oxfam International – also raised through the affiliates. The funding from affiliates is discretionary and short term and affiliates often have their own thematic interests, which may not necessarily tally with the needs of the Regional Platform or the countries. This curtailed the Platform in the execution of its operational mandate.

Secondly, staff attrition was a major issue for the Regional Platform. Oxfam would hire highly qualified staff, but then lose them to partners operating in the same region. In the words of one respondent, *“one of the most disheartening things was that we would recruit qualified staff, invest in them, and then because we could not afford to remunerate them accordingly, they would merely move offices to another organisation within the same area. It was like we did all the work for other organisations: talent searching, recruitment, and training: then the other organisation would hire the staff, taking us back to the drawing board.”*

The problem was compounded by the human resources policies and practices of the affiliates. It was common in Oxfam in the HECA Region to find staff performing functions at the same level to have different terms and conditions – not because one was a better performer, but because he/she was paid by a different affiliate. Moreover, staffing tended to follow the preferences of the respective affiliates, and not always the felt needs of the Regional Platform or the country offices. The attrition of staff particularly became more acute as Oxfam was phasing out of some countries in the Region.

Finally, different affiliates supporting different country programmes operated different systems, and these were not interoperable at the Regional level. In the words of one respondent:

*The confederation model does not lend itself easily to efficiency and effectiveness. While countries deal with one affiliate, at the Platform level, you may have to deal with as many as five executing affiliates before you get approval. This results in a layered and cumbersome bureaucracy. Getting simple approvals might take as long as two*

*weeks as you navigate through the various layers for signatures. In fact, it creates a situation in which people depend more on personalised relationships to get things moving, and less on the organisational structures and policies.*

The legacy built in this context is one of agility, nimbleness and adaptability. The Platform was able to set up a functional Regional Platform in spite of the funding limitations. It managed to hire extremely qualified staff at the Platform and country levels. Even though the Regional Platform was very thinly staffed compared to its mandate, it offered strategic oversight and technical support to the countries, supporting them to develop their country strategies, to develop annual plans, and to put in place financial management systems with proper controls.

The Regional Platform also supported and fostered innovation in countries. For instance, in the D. R. Congo, the Platform supported community engagement models for responding to Ebola outbreak, and this won the recognition of the WHO Director General. Besides, the Regional Platform supported innovations around WASH (water ATMs), and ICT for development (i.e. digitization, promoting the use of M-PESA for making payment for services, and the use of interactive voice recording services in Somalia for tackling gender-based violence during the pandemic).

The most enduring legacy of the Regional Platform's nimbleness and agility was its ability to mobilise quickly and respond to the many recurrent humanitarian crises in the HECA region. The Platform was very efficient and effective in mobilising the country programmes, the Oxfam confederation and other partners in responding to disasters. Whether responding to conflicts and displacements in the countries in the region, to desert locust invasions, or to the

### **Outstanding strategies and approaches in agility, nimbleness and adaptability**

The main underlying drivers that made agility, nimbleness and adaptability possible was the Platform's ability to embrace innovation in its processes and systems, to leverage its partnership with others, and to constantly anticipate and quickly deal with crises. The Platform innovated a system for forecasting and managing financial risks, developed systems to report gender violence, and in many contexts, took advantage of technological innovations like water ATMs, mobile payments and podcasts. In essence, reliance on innovations introduced a level of predictability and certainty in processes and systems, while also reducing over-reliance on a fully installed staffing capacity to reach the large numbers of people the Platform needed to reach.

Lessons learnt are twofold:

1. By adopting a systems thinking and focusing on the interdependencies across different organisational functions and programmes, it is possible for stronger processes and systems to somehow compensate for the weaker links in the system, as demonstrated by the use of technology to leverage the inadequate staffing.
2. A lot is achieved when a risk-preparedness mentality informs plans, programmes and processes. Because the Platform had adapted to operating in crises contexts, it managed to reduce the disruptions that could have been wrought by COVID-19.
3. Building adaptable organisational systems and processes requires investments of time and effort.



ravages of COVID-19, Oxfam remained highly agile and nimble. For instance, at the onset of COVID-19, HECA RP quickly adapted itself to the use of virtual meetings and remote working, thereby managing to keep its vital core functions operational. The Regional Platform developed a COVID-19 specific strategy to guide its internal and external operations. Granted, not everyone who needed to be reached was reached during emergencies or disaster situations, but within the constraints of available resources, most respondents highlighted the Platform's work in the humanitarian response space as perhaps its greatest achievement, and hence its most enduring legacy.

### **3.2.3. HECA Research, Regional Convening and Policy Influencing**

The Regional Platform adopted an evidence-based approach to its regional influencing work. This continued a long established tradition within Oxfam in which evidence is generated for influencing policy and practice at local, national, regional and international levels. What is remarkable about this legacy is that it enabled the Platform to have voice and visibility in key processes as outlined in the following descriptive accounts. Confronted with limited staffing and regular staff turnover, the innovation of novel ways of disseminating evidence, and building partnerships with other like-minded organisations stand out as part of this legacy. Moreover, by carefully selecting strategic policy platforms on which to share its evidence, and leveraging this with technology, the Regional Platform managed to overcome the shortcomings and constraints imposed by its own internal staffing challenges. This section is based on interviews with HECA Regional Platform staff and triangulated with literature obtained through document review.

In its attempts to influence policy debates in the extractives sector, the HECA Regional Platform organized the National Leadership Forum on Extractive Industry Revenue Management in East Africa. The Regional Platform partnered with Nation Media Group in this endeavour. The forum interrogated petroleum revenue prospects for Kenya and Uganda in view of the sale of Tullow Oil assets in Uganda and the impending sale of the same company in Kenya. The forum was also used for discussions on sustainable environmental management. Experts from Total E&P Uganda, Uganda Revenue Authority, Tax Justice Network Africa and Oxfam HECA Platform shared knowledge and lessons as well as calling for more transparency to ensure that petroleum revenues benefit citizens. The Forum was broadcast live on NTV Kenya and NTV Uganda and livestreamed through social media. It attracted a total of 75 million social media users, mainly Twitter and Facebook in addition to TV viewership.

Furthermore, the Regional Platform and the country offices collaborated very well on the advocacy work in the extractives sectors in Uganda, Kenya, and Tanzania. The aim was to ensure that governments, local citizens and host communities benefit optimally from mining activities. Oxfam's advocacy seeks to promote the application of Free Prior Informed Consent (FPIC) in communities where extraction is occurring. In this regard, HECA RP worked with the country offices in linking up communities in the affected areas with like-minded lawyers to

offer legal support and with the media for scrutiny to ensure respect for community and individual rights.

Effort was also devoted to ensuring that cross-border petroleum and mining infrastructure such as the East Africa Crude Oil Pipeline is developed in compliance with national and international laws and corporate best practice. So far, Oxfam has been able to influence fair revenue sharing, contract transparency, women's participation in extractive sector governance as well as analysis of publicly available data to determine if governments are getting a fair deal.

HECA RP similarly commissioned two studies to provide a better understanding of the network and impact of Double Taxation Treaties (DTTs) in East Africa. Additionally, the studies investigated the effectiveness of extractive industry auditing practices towards maximisation of revenues in different countries. One of these studies, *Weaving Webs for Tax Avoidance: Identifying and Mapping Treaties in the East African Community (EAC)*, was presented by Oxfam HECA RP at the 8<sup>th</sup> Pan African Conference on Illicit Financial Flows. This informed civil society discussions at the conference. The other study commissioned was *Auditing the Auditor: An Audit of supreme institutions*. The study covered supreme audit institutions in selected 10 countries in the Sub-Saharan Africa (Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Ghana, Sierra Leone, Nigeria, Mozambique, Zambia, Zimbabwe & Cameroon). Oxfam HECA RP also made presentations of both studies to the Parliamentary Accounts Committee (PAC) of Tanzania.

Oxfam's intention for pushing for the publication of extractive companies' audit reports was to entrench transparency as an integral and routine feature of natural resources governance and management systems. The reasoning was that disclosures would allow stakeholders and citizens to scrutinize companies' operations, thereby opening up a vital platform for public debate around the management of natural resources.

Oxfam HECA RP similarly supported the drafting of the East African Community (EAC) Mining Bill (2017). However, not much progress has been made towards this, given the slow processes of the EAC. With hindsight, one respondent observed that a better approach might have been working through the East Africa Civil Society Forum (EACSOF) since the EAC tends to be more responsive towards CSOs with their origins from the EAC region, rather than international NGOs like Oxfam. EACSOF's technical capacity on extractives is limited, and therefore supporting capacity strengthening of EACSOF could probably have achieved better policy traction.

HECA Regional Platform partnered with the East Africa Civil Society Forum (EACSOF) in convening the virtual 12<sup>th</sup> Annual EACSOF Conference. The conference brought together more than 80 civil society participants from Uganda, Tanzania, Kenya, Burundi, Kenya and beyond. The forum discussed the implications of COVID-19 pandemic in the East African region and the response and recovery options for the East African Community Partner States. It examined the COVID-19 impacts on socio-economic rights, democracy, Human Rights, elections, civic space and media freedoms. Discussions similarly covered the implications on

food security, public finance management and options for post-COVID economic recovery. The meeting reflected on what role extractive industry could play in catalysing recovery.

HECA Regional Platform convening work similarly extended to fostering discourse on feminist thought leadership in the region. For instance, the Platform co-convened a Feminist Thought Leadership Retreat with Akina Mama wa Afrika (AMwA) and Hivos East Africa at the Tamarind Hotel on 23<sup>rd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> January 2020 in Nairobi. The convening of the retreat was a deliberate attempt to increase engagement with Women Rights and Women-Led Organizations on advocacy on priority issues affecting women in Africa. The retreat drew participation from 25 feminist academics and activists from Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, South Africa, South Sudan, Tanzania, and Zimbabwe, with the objective of creating space to influence feminist thought and practice for a stronger, intersectional and progressive movement in Africa.

Likewise, as part of its regional advocacy work, the Regional Platform supported Oxfam Somalia and Somalia NGO Consortium in their engagements with African Development Bank (AfDB) and Africa Union (AU) on debt restructuring and Somalia debt cancellation. These engagements triggered many discussions, with the eventual cancellation of the debt for Somalia. In addition to this, the Platform collaborated with Pan African Programme and Global Inequality Team to profile the need for Africa debt cancellation as the Covid-19 pandemic spread to Africa. Similar regional convening efforts included Oxfam Uganda's hosting of a regional learning event themed bridging the nexus that explored practical pathways for the realisation of Oxfam's One Programme Approach and its linkages with the peace elements under triple nexus.

#### **Outstanding underlying drivers of success in research, regional convening and policy influencing**

The main driver of success seems to have been Oxfam's track record. It enabled the Platform to get into policy spaces that would have been difficult for other organisations lacking a similar profile to enter. More could have been achieved under this legacy, but Oxfam lacked adequate staffing capacity. While the achievements appear remarkable – rallying the EAC region around a discourse of extractives and revenue sharing; successfully campaigning for debt cancellation for Somalia – a closer examination reveals an ad hoc and opportunistic regional influencing approach which capitalised on emergent policy windows. To the Platform's credit, emerging policy windows were adequately seized and successfully used. The second driver of success was the reliance on credible research evidence for policy engagement. Evidence was presented at the appropriate regional platforms, often eliciting the desired response among key policy and decision makers. The drawback was that these engagements were not sustained over time and might fizzle out with the Platform transitioning into the Africa Platform.

Lessons learnt are first, that future advocacy efforts could achieve more sustained outcomes if Oxfam is deliberate in strengthening the technical and institutional capacity of regional organisations and accompanying them within appropriate policy spaces and in key decision making platforms until they have capacity. Secondly, research conceptualised and executed jointly with governments, regional intergovernmental bodies and regional CSO networks could have greater traction in policy than conducting research and presenting it to users of research.

### 3.2.4. Gender, Agency building, and grassroots empowerment

The Regional Platform contributed to a legacy of supporting women's empowerment by enabling them to build their individual and collective voice and agency. It also worked with refugee-led organisations and refugee-led networks in the countries in the HECA region towards their empowerment. In sum, these contributions are ensuring that voices and the participation of marginalised groups are amplified, and that such groups are facilitated to join and participate in hitherto closed policy and decision making spaces. As a result of HECA RP's efforts to accompany these organisations into previously closed spaces of engagement, insiders who occupy pivotal roles in these spaces have recognised the potential contribution of grassroots women, their organisations and networks; refugee led organisations and their networks; and youth-led organisations and their networks.

These marginalized groups now either carve spaces for themselves to discuss their issues, to which external players with decision making power and responsibilities are invited, or they get invited into hitherto enclosed policy spaces, often without accompaniment of Oxfam. This is indicative of the gradual opening up of policy and decision making spaces for marginalized or under-represented voices. As an illustration of these convening activities that define Oxfam's legacy in working with such groups, some examples are offered below.

HECA RP in collaboration with several actors (EACSO, YouLead, and media houses) co-convened several regional level meetings to deliberate on collective efforts on issues affecting the region such as the state of civic space. It also generated evidence to inform high level deliberations on gender and extractives sector. This has not only raised the visibility of Oxfam in critical policy making spaces but also drawn the attention of key stakeholders to the issues.

The Oxfam HECA Regional Platform supported a group of South Sudanese Women by convening a writing retreat held in June 2019 in which a publication entitled *No Time to Mourn* was produced. *No Time to Mourn* is a collection of short stories, poems, artwork, and photography penned, produced, and presented by 41 South Sudanese women. It reflects on the lives of the women writers and artists, and at the same time gives voice to the lived experiences and lives of every woman of South Sudanese heritage.

Furthermore, the Oxfam HECA Regional Platform in May 2020 supported women staff and partners in the region to participate in an on-line workshop on op-ed writing whose aim was to dramatically increase the public impact of underrepresented thinkers, and to ensure that their ideas help shape the important conversations. In August 2020, Oxfam's HECA regional office initiated a program to support local actors from across the region to write and publish opinion pieces. The objective was to counter Western narratives about a range of issues and help efforts to diversify the voices contributing to key humanitarian debates.

Likewise, HECA supported the Unyoke accompaniment program in helping to strengthen a network of 13 young South Sudanese refugee peacebuilders who are supporting one another to confront the immense personal and family challenges related to the conflict in South Sudan and their lives as refugees. The peace builders are also offering peer support to its members to reach their ambitions as peacebuilders, through sharing ideas, opportunities, and experiences.

The Regional Platform supported the participation of refugee-led organisations in the Global Refugee Forum on 16-18 December 2019 in Geneva, a critical opportunity to build momentum towards achieving the objectives of the Global Compact and to strengthen collective response to refugee situations. Moreover, a Uganda refugee-led organisation representative was invited and participated as a panellist at a regional meeting. The interventions described above contributed to amplifying the voices of refugees, to promoting

### **Key drivers of success and lessons learnt on Gender, Agency building, and grassroots empowerment**

The Oxfam HECA Regional Platform worked mostly with locally recruited staff to help strengthen agency building among grassroots women and youth organisations and with local partners within refugee led organisations. This was a major underlying driver of success because these people understood the dynamics of local culture, the politics and the embodied realities of working with and living in these communities. Working with local staff became particularly useful at the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic when movement of persons was restricted, and only locally recruited staff and partners could access local communities. By default, the pandemic facilitated the localisation agenda. The other major driver of success was the accompaniment that Oxfam HECA RP and the country programmes provided. Support to local agency building and institutional strengthening as well as help with strengthening the capacity of local partners to fundraise and mobilise their own resources have contributed to local partners having the capacity to operate even after Oxfam will have transitioned out of some of the countries in the region. The third driver of change has been the ability of women, youth and refugee-led organisations to carve their own space and autonomy. This acts as a critical springboard that furthers the process of local partners weaning themselves off their dependence on Oxfam.

The Lesson learnt here is that international NGOs should adopt strategies that increase autonomy and confidence building in their local partners. There are many ways of achieving this, among them through agency building, institutional capacity strengthening, and working towards developing linkages into spaces where local partners can raise their own funding, negotiate their space in key decision-making processes, and gradually set themselves as legitimate and formidable actors in the local, national and sub-regional development spaces.

the work of refugee led organisations (RLOs), and to increasing their place as legitimate and important actors within refugee response work. For instance, and as highlighted above, the community engagement model in the D. R. Congo got the recognition of the WHO Director General and the ASAL Humanitarian Network made a presentation at the UN General Assembly. In the view of one respondent, Oxfam in general lacks deep knowledge of working with the youth and youth-led organisations or movements. However, the Regional Platform did a commendable job in initiating early strides towards working with youth-led movements and youth networks. The legacy of working with youth organisations and their networks, though nascent, is one that Oxfam should build on and extend for the benefit of Africa's

youth. In her view, working with youth movements could re-energise Oxfam's campaigns for justice on the continent.

### **3.2.5. Digitalization, Communication and Information Management of systems and processes.**

The Regional Platform built its legacy through adoption of digital technology, innovative use of media for policy influencing, and information sharing within HECA and externally with different stakeholders and actors. The benefits of using digital technology were most evident during the COVID-19 pandemic. It was not possible to come to the office physically. Without embracing digital technology, Oxfam's work could have severely been disrupted. The Regional Platform managed to support staff to work remotely, and to be connected throughout the lockdowns that characterised the pandemic. In response to the disruptions created by the pandemic, Oxfam in Somaliland developed a learning App in partnership with a local Somaliland company that promoted facilitation of trainings of community health workers and collecting of information on Covid-19. This was possible through the use of smart phones that locals have on the ground in addition to the fact that internet is very fast in Somalia and Somaliland. This innovation is locally made and locally tailored.

Moreover, as already highlighted, the Regional Platform managed to frame the pandemic within a wider discourse that linked the effects of COVID-19 to the likely exacerbation of conflicts and climate change, thus promoting a policy narrative that cast the effects and implications of the pandemic beyond a narrow focus on its health effects.

The adoption of technology led to improved operational efficiency and effectiveness. For instance, the Platform pioneered a system for financial planning, management, forecasting and systematizing operational risk management. This was picked up at the confederation level. The Platform also pioneered the use of water ATMs in humanitarian contexts. HECA has similarly been at the forefront of pushing for digital rights movement aimed at promoting innovation and creativity by the youth. This led to the development of a regional early warning system, working with digital influencers and feminists.

In policy research evidence dissemination, the Platform adopted the use of podcasts to synthesise and disseminate research outputs. This enabled conveying of salient policy messages as well as creating awareness around issues such as women land rights, localization of humanitarian leadership, climate change, youth economic empowerment, transparency in the extractives industry sector, etc. These issues have subsequently been picked up by international media, other organisations and governments. Using podcasts has enabled wide

dissemination of content, in turn catalysing agenda setting on various platforms. This has generated a self-driving momentum of policy influencing processes at various levels.

There has equally been leveraging of good media relations globally, regionally and at country levels. The RP has used the media to showcase HECA's successes and to shape global, regional and country discourses on key issues as well as to create awareness on the region's pertinent policy issues.

### **3.3 HECA RP Model Approaches**

The model approaches have been highlighted in the sections above on legacies. This sub-section picks out a few that cut across the legacies. These include: an open and participatory leadership style at the Regional Platform; openness to innovation; Oxfam HECA RP as a facilitator and catalyst; and an adaptable and flexible approach to coping with and managing complexity.

The Platform embraced a style leadership that allowed broad-based participation of its staff, the affiliates and the country offices in the most critical processes. The development of the Vision Framework involved broad-based participation, and the rotational meetings in country offices broadened participation on key programming and operational decisions. Participation creates a sense of ownership, and broad-based consultations are critical in managing in complex and uncertain environments. Broad-based participation helps to disentangle the various dimensions and implications of intended actions and reduces the limitations of bounded rationality of a few individuals who may not fully visualise the entire panorama of the complexities and uncertainties the Platform routinely had to deal with. It is a useful approach to take into the new Africa Platform.

The Platform was also open to innovations. Whether it was in the use of podcasts for policy messages dissemination, ICT for risk forecasting and management, or working with the youth to develop ICT-based solutions like those for early warning or gender-based violence tracking and reporting, the Platform used this strategy effectively. As highlighted earlier, innovations more than compensated for the inadequacies of staffing establishment and enabled the Platform to navigate through its complex operating contexts. It is yet another strategy that could be scaled into the Africa Platform.

Finally, Oxfam at times employed its role as a catalyst and facilitator very well. This is seen in its work with grassroots organisations, in its ability to mobilise other organisations in responding to humanitarian crises and disasters, and in its regional convening work, especially on extractives. More could have been achieved in regional convening, but the complexity of the policy space compounded the Platform's approach of engaging intermittently to policy influencing windows, as and when these emerged.

### **3.4 Case Studies**

Each of the legacies highlighted above can be treated as lessons learnt in their own right, but also exemplary examples of achievements that qualify as case studies. This sub-section picks

out two case studies from the legacies. The approach adopted here is that of a case-within-a-case methodology. This allows the treatment of each case study as the larger case, and the specific events and achievements within as sub-cases that constitute the bigger whole. The cases are picked for their thematic depth, and their representativeness. For each case, a brief description is given, the main themes highlighted, and then the outcomes are described.

**5.1. Support for localisation:** in a number of cases, the Regional Platform supported capacity strengthening of local organisations. These span activities in the humanitarian response sector.

A good example of work with such grassroots organisation is the work Oxfam did with Somali Nexus Platform, a unique consortium led by eight pioneering Somali non-governmental organizations (NGOs). The Nexus aspires to lead a locally-driven agenda for change, working in partnership with the Somali government, private sector, and international partners. Founded in 2019, Nexus includes eight core members: Centre for Peace and Democracy (CPD), Gargaar Relief and Development Organization (GREDO), Horn of Africa Voluntary Youth Committee (HAVOYOCO), KAALO, Save Somali Women and Children (SSWC), Social-Life and Agriculture Development Organisation (SADO), Taakulo Somaliland Community (TASCO), and Wajir South Development Association (WASDA). The Nexus is tackling peacebuilding, conflict resolution, protection and GBV, health services, youth engagement, humanitarian response, WASH, livelihoods, cash transfers, education, and many more areas, thus facilitating integrated and coherent programming that links immediate relief with longer-term resilience and peacebuilding.

Support to local women, youth and refugee-led organisations or their networks took several forms: institutional capacity strengthening, fundraising support, accompaniment, or undertaking joint development initiatives. In D. R. Congo, for instance, work on institutionalising the community engagement model involved Oxfam and local organisations working together to domesticate an approach which had emerged in West Africa in response to Ebola outbreak. In other contexts, Oxfam worked with local communities and organisations at those levels to drill boreholes, set up water ATMs, and then transfer these to local communities to manage. In other instances, Oxfam linked communities affected by extractives sector to legal aid and to journalists with an interest in covering such issues. In nearly every case, Oxfam adopted a cross-sectoral approach, often working across sectors while ensuring issues around gender inclusion, women's rights and human rights in general were integrated into these interventions.

There are many direct and indirect outcomes of the support given to local organisations. In working with Oxfam, local organisations gained invaluable capacity. For instance, individuals and groups at the local level gained voice and agency. In most cases, Oxfam helped create safe spaces for local communities to tell their own stories, without the intrusion of external voices hijacking local narratives. This is a departure from the norm, where external others capture local narratives and tell them from their own values and biased perspectives.

Furthermore, in working with Oxfam, local organisations gained vital links to the policy and decision-making processes, to funding, and to wider networks either in the humanitarian sector, or to networks on feminism, refugee rights, or other local and international discourse on related issues. Moreover, work with Oxfam improved service provision at the local level



and enabled local organisations to gain authenticity and visibility in local spaces. This recognition in turn opened up space for fundraising opportunities, and for policy influencing. Indirectly, a rights discourse took root in local spaces, with women's voices finding space in hitherto male dominated arenas. The other indirect outcome was the emergence of collective action in often subtle but powerful ways, like the collective telling of stories such as *No Time to Mourn*.

### **3.3. Extractives Industries regional convening**

The Regional Platform steered dialogue on an emerging yet controversial issue in Africa and elsewhere in the developing South. Extractives industries are both a blessing and a curse, depending on how issues around them are handled. The sector is responsible for massive dislocation of populations, dispossession of land and other resources, and disruption of livelihoods on unprecedented scales. It is characterised by lack of transparency in the way land and resources are acquired, in the way compensation is done, and in the way resource rents are shared. Yet, when used transparently, the extractives sector can generate much needed revenues for local communities and national governments. To have steered dialogue and sustained the spotlight on the industry is therefore a case in its own right.

Oxfam used research, national and regional dialogue, and the media to bring key stakeholders around the table to discuss issues around the extractives sector. Bringing the private sector, government, civil society and the media together across Kenya and Uganda and creating online spaces for ordinary citizens to participate in the discourse served to open up closed policy spaces on the extractives sector. Engagements at the community level ensured that communities were sensitised on their rights and mobilised to demand for their rights from duty bearers.

The main outcomes from policy convening on the extractives sector included greater awareness and respect for the rights of communities to their land and resources, demystifying issues around extractives as technical and therefore beyond the comprehension of the ordinary citizen; and applying pressure on the industry for fairer terms on behalf of the governments in the region.

## **4.0 Missed Opportunities and Recommendations**

**4.1. Institutional set up and operations:** There were delays in establishing of the regional program structures. Precious time was lost in the setting up of the Regional Platform. It took two years to completely staff the institution and the delay impacted on the commencement of HECA region projects implementation.

- The recommendation in this regard is that Oxfam International should carefully consider the architecture of the proposed Africa Platform. The architecture should be assessed in terms of what it would cost to set it up. It should be informed by a comparative analysis of existing similar or comparator organisational forms in Africa to prevent the new structure from experiencing the operational challenges that HECA RP experienced during its set up and eventual operations. Besides, developing a clear understanding of the operational and programming value-add of the Africa Platform

early in the process would be useful. Forecasting how the roles and functions of the new structure might evolve, based on programming and operational needs, and the appropriate configurations necessary to enable it to function optimally might be useful, so that projections of resources and capacity are made and availed accordingly.

- A general review of the confederation model with affiliates and their role in regional platforms could be reconsidered so that a level of harmonisation of policies, operational systems and ways of working is achieved. The different parts of Oxfam are necessary for its optimal functioning. However, the operational interfaces at which different parts interact with one another need to be smoothed. Granted, there are interests which might not always converge, but a level of convergence and harmonisation is necessary to make the resulting operational processes and systems efficient and optimally functional.
- For the Africa Platform: Stress-testing operational models and systems would be ideal. Learning from what has worked in the HECA and the two other regional platforms could help in developing ideal operational systems. However, caution needs to be exercised in 'air-lifting' these proven models on to the Africa Platform. The contexts might invariably be different, and thus, the need for stress-testing how these models would work at the level of the Africa Platform.
- Secondly, the Africa Platform could reduce or drastically scale down the bureaucratic, multi-layered systems in operational structure to expedite decision-making processes. Simplified ways of obtaining approvals, while maintaining fidelity to sound financial management could be explored.

**4.2 Regional programming and advocacy:** The exit from some countries in the region was, as some respondents recalled, 'chaotic'. Better use could have been made of country review mapping. Furthermore, the process of transitioning out of countries needs to factor in creating an orderly process of exit. Besides, Oxfam did a commendable job working with local partners in its humanitarian response work. This was less so in the regional advocacy work, which many respondents viewed to have been ad hoc and at times, expedient. The recommendations here are as follows:

- Exit from countries should forecast and expect that staff – who are the most important cog in operations and programming – might leave in panic, throwing the transition process into chaos. Having staff contracts that are aligned with the transition could be one way out of this. Secondly, reducing the operational and programming footprints should be matched and aligned with the potential for staff attrition. The process needs to be staggered, and terms and conditions for core staff reviewed to provide incentives for them to stay through the transition, where this is possible and applicable.
- There is need to invest in strengthening the capacity of local organisations. This needs to focus on technical, programming and operational aspects. Identification of local partners with the potential to champion and handle issues critical to Oxfam should start early in the process, and Oxfam needs to work with such partners, gradually ceding ground to let the partners take leadership and convening roles in key regional

policy processes. This approach could have been used, for instance, in Oxfam’s regional work on the extractives sector.

## 5.0 References

### HECA RP Reports

1. Overview of HECA Countries Reports – FY2019-20
2. HECA RP Narrative Report (April 2019 - March 2020)
3. HECA RP Narrative Report (April 2020 - March 2021)
4. Learning for Impact in Horn East Central Africa Region: Reflection, adaptation, and collaboration
5. Re-Imagining Oxfam’s partnering in the face of Covid-19: Lessons from HECA Regional Learning Event
6. ONE PROGRAMME REPORT – RIGHTS IN CRISIS PROJECT (*January 2019 - December 2019*)
7. ONE PROGRAMME REPORT – NORAD Project in HECA (*April 2020 - March, 2021*)
8. Horn, East & Central Africa VISION 2018-2028

### External Documents reviewed

9. Barakat S, Milton S. Localisation Across the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus. *Journal of Peacebuilding & Development*. 2020;15(2):147-163. doi:10.1177/1542316620922805
10. Jeffrey S. Bednar (2013) Legacies in Organizations (University of Michigan, PhD Thesis)
11. Wertsch, James V. and Roediger III, Henry L. (2008) 'Collective memory: Conceptual foundations and theoretical approaches', *Memory*, 16:3, 318 - 326

## 6.0 Annexes

### Annex 6.1: Terms of Reference

#### **Terms of Reference for Oxfam’s Legacy Documentation in the Horn, East and Central Africa (HECA) Region.**

##### **1. Background about Oxfam in HECA**

Oxfam international in the Horn, East and Central Africa (HECA) region platform (RP), with its head office in Nairobi, was established in 2016 with a mandate to provide strategic oversight and coordinate delivery of Oxfam International influencing work in respect to its mission, brand and desired impact in the region. It covers ten countries-Kenya, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Burundi, Tanzania, Rwanda, Uganda, S. Sudan, Sudan, Somalia, and Ethiopia. The thematic areas of focus include, among others, transforming conflicts and crises, tackling inequality, and transforming partnerships and Organization effectiveness etc.

Over years, the RP has been engaging in influencing work through initiatives like Rights in Crisis (RiCs), extractives and fiscal justice, gender justice and civic space engagements. HECA

RP has strived to fight inequality, transform conflicts, crises and partnerships, as well as strengthen CSOs, and played a facilitative and convening role to amplify the voice of the voiceless. These initiatives have supported partner advocacy/influencing in countries like Uganda, S. Sudan, DRC, Ethiopia and Kenya. Influencing work targeted regional institutions such as the East African Community (EAC), East African Legislative Assembly (EALA), Intergovernmental Authority and Development (IGAD), and partner organisations (both refugee-led and national organisations), among others. Besides, it has also provided technical guidance, strategic planning, and leadership to the ten countries under its jurisdiction to realize its cherished vision, *'A transformed and stable Horn, East and Central Africa Region, where people exercise their right to challenge power and have dignity and security to drive transformative change in their lived experiences'*. The vision is anticipated to be realized through HECA RP's mission, *'We fight inequality to end poverty and injustice'*, and its overarching outcomes:

- **Tackling Inequality:** Exploring and building knowledge and thought leadership, sharpened analysis and robust evidence to influence power holders, and confronting challenges associated with urbanization, working with youth, extractives and technologies.
- **Transforming Conflicts & Multiple Crises:** Tackling root causes of conflicts in the region, supporting multi stakeholder engagement, working better with academic/research/knowledge institutions, better engagement with inter-state and regional institutions, demystifying intersectional and systemic issues that drive and sustain conflict, and address issues of climate change and ecosystems, patriarchy and inequality, as well as power and resource control
- **Transformative Partnerships:** Lead localisation of humanitarian response action, be deliberate in pursuit of new and diverse partnerships, mutual relationships to reflect our values, committing to Southern Agency and leadership for effective influencing, and infusing more coherence with women's rights movements, agencies and actors.
- **Pioneering alternative operating and financing models:** Exploring alternative approaches, strengthening social enterprises, incubators, platforms for sustainability, investing in knowledge models for Southern State funding of Civil Society work; investing in legislation for access to State funding; and

investing in knowledge for new programming e.g Trade and Urban programming.

Currently, Oxfam confederation is undergoing a radical change process to ensure that it is effective and fit for purpose for greater impact given increased global complexities and uncertainties. As part of this change process, Oxfam in HECA will be merged with West Africa Platform (WAF) and Southern Africa Platform (SAF) into One Oxfam Africa Platform. In the circumstance, HECA RP is seeking to document its legacy as part of the transition to the Africa Platform for institutional memory and celebration of the contribution made to changing lives of people in this region. This is a key learning moment to inform the modus operandi in the Africa Platform and adoption of best practices as Oxfam strives to redefine itself within the diverse/complex context. It is an opportunity to document insights and reflections on Oxfam's role as strategic leader, facilitator, convener and influencer for justice and equality, and first responder in humanitarian crises in the region.

## **2. Purpose and objectives**

### **a) Purpose of legacy documentation**

To re-trace and document HECA RP journey and achievements and its legacies in providing strategic oversight for the 10 countries and regional influencing work

### **b) Objectives of legacy documentation**

1. Document RP journey and key legacy achievements/successes or best practices and challenges regarding its mandate-strategic oversight to countries and regional influencing work.
2. Identify and profile model approaches applied to realize the registered successes.
3. Draw lessons and recommendations that will inform future Oxfam operations including the Africa Platform

## **3. Scope of Work**

The documentation of RP journey and legacies will cover the period since Oxfam HECA RP started operations (2016) to date (2022). While the documentation will draw from work and testimonies from the ten countries, emphasis will be placed on regional influencing work executed and/or technical guidance/leadership provided by the RP. Technically, documentation will broadly focus on influencing work undertaken by the RP across the four pillars of work: Tackling inequality, Transforming conflicts and crises, Transforming

Partnerships, and organizational effectiveness. Specifically, the documentation will delve into legacies built in respect to influencing work undertaken by Rights in Crisis (RiCs), Extractive Industries, Gender Justice and Civic Space engagements. Some of the questions that will guide the documentation include, but are not limited to the following:

- How has the RP delivered its mandate amidst the changing context in the region?
- How effective has the regional platform delivered its mandate given the rapidly changing an internal and external context?
- How have changes in internal and external context shaped the work of the RP over years?
- In what ways has the RP been effective in its regional influencing work and strategic oversight roles?
- For the RP and its partners, what has worked well? What has not worked well?
- What are some emerging/promising practices for continuity of the regional influencing work (both for Oxfam RP and/or its partners)?
- What are the responsible exit strategies in respect to global networks?
- What lessons and recommendations can we draw to inform future collaboration with partners and eventual transition into the Africa Platform model with regard to regional programming, strategic oversight and support structure for countries?

In addition, the consultant will document stories of change, videos showing the impact, and audio narrations/stakeholder voices are expected to complement this assignment.

#### **4. Study methodology**

The consultant will adopt a qualitative approach in the documentation process. The processes will be participatory to enable all the stakeholders engage in determining the legacies built along with Oxfam HECA RP. It is anticipated that the consultant will facilitate consultative meetings with selected stakeholders, hold key informant interviews with RP staff and partners, collaborators, donors, and country-based staff, among others. Other possible methodologies to employ may include outcome harvesting, review of existing reports, case studies, video and audio recordings, media publications etc. The consultant will work with RP staff to identify and select key respondents/actors knowledgeable on issues of interest. The documentation will be undertaken with full recognition of policy and ethical considerations, particularly, in respect to protection, safeguarding, and data, among others.

#### **5. Study deliverables**

The key deliverables expected from this assignment include the following:

- Report on HECA RP Legacies (2016-2022) accentuated with action photos, voices, etc
- Case studies/most significant change stories (across all pillars of work, where legacies are noticeable) that demonstrate the HECA RP legacies
- Short video highlighting key legacies in the HECA regional platform.
- Audio voices/testimonies on the selected legacies

## 6. Timeframe

The assignment will be undertaken within a total of 35 working days from the date of signing the contract.

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Number of days</b>
Signing contract for the assignment	0.5
Review of documents and development of the inception report and study instruments	3
Presentation of inception report	1
Harmonisation meeting with the documentation team study instruments	3
Collection of data (literature review, key informant interviews, video documentation, consultative meetings, recoding stories of change etc)	15
Data synthesis, report writing and editing videos and case studies/Most significant change stories (MSCs)	10
Incorporating comments on draft report	2
Presentation of the final report to Oxfam	0.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>35</b>

## 8. Qualification and experience of the consultant

- Academic degree in Journalism, Media and Communications, Social Sciences, Development studies, Governance and Policy Analysis or any related field.
- Professional and hands-on experience in conducting similar assignments, desk reviews, research, evaluations, and facilitating consultative meetings.

- Excellent writing skills, and video documentation and editing skills
- The consultant should have an analytical mindset with ability to digest, structure and summarize large amounts of unstructured data.
- Preferably also creative skills in presentation of the findings (use of infographics, visualisations, action photos etc.
- Excellent interpersonal communication skills, allowing you to constructively engage with a variety of stakeholders
- The team should be multidisciplinary (a mix of gender, development professionals, video experts, etc)

## **9. Supervision of the assignment**

The consultant will work under the direct supervision of the Programme Quality Lead at HECA regional platform who will also be the consultant’s focal point for all contractual and logistical matters. The consultant will receive methodological guidance and support from team members of HECA RP, especially the Media and Communications Advisor.

**10.** Payment will be done in two instalments, 30% upon signing the contract, and 70% upon Oxfam RP’s approval of the final legacy documentation report. Though the interested consultant is expected to provide a budget for the exercise, Oxfam will consider proposals that are within the approved rates as per its policy on professional fees. The consultant will be responsible for his/her Covid-19, income tax, and/or insurance costs during the assignment. The consultant will be required to recruit locally (where applicable) a team of qualified individuals to support accomplishment of the assignment.

## **11. Submission of technical and financial proposal**

Interested candidates are invited to submit a technical and financial proposal not later than **7th November 2021, midnight EAT** to [ssc.consultancy@oxfam.org](mailto:ssc.consultancy@oxfam.org). CVs of key staff (lead consultant and associate consultants, if applicable) should be included in the technical proposal too (through e-mail).

## **Annex 6.2: Study Tools**

### **Preamble**

Oxfam in HECA RP is documenting its legacy as part of the transition to the Africa Platform to preserve the institutional memory and in celebration of the contribution made to changing live of people in this region. As part of this change process, Oxfam in HECA will be merged with West Africa Platform (WAF) and Southern Africa Platform (SAF) into one Oxfam Africa



Platform. The documentation of HECA RP legacy is therefore a key learning moment to inform the modus operandi in the Africa Platform and adoption of best practices as Oxfam strives to redefine itself within the diverse/complex context. It is an opportunity to document insights and reflections on Oxfam’s role as strategic leader, facilitator, convener and influencer for justice and equality, and first responder in humanitarian crises in the region.

You have been selected as a key informant to support the documentation process. The views, perspectives and insights you give will be invaluable to the HECA HP legacy documentation. The nature of the exercise is such that we may not keep all sources of our information anonymous and confidential unless you expressly instruct us to do this. However, we are willing to treat all or part of the information you provide with confidentiality, should you feel this is necessary. We might video and/or audio record all or parts of this conversation if we feel this will emphasize certain aspects of HECA RP’s legacy.

Do we have your permission to go on with this conversation, and to video and audio record it as appropriate?

## Questions

### **1. HECA institutional and programming support to the 10 countries**

- a. Just an overview – could you please describe the nature of the institutional support provided by HECA RP to the 10 countries?
  - i. How was this support useful in enhancing operational effectiveness in the countries?
  - ii. In your opinion, would countries have managed, or coped in the absence of the HECA RP support? Please explain
- b. Innovations in systems and processes used in providing oversight and support – what was unique and innovative? In terms of systems, processes, and ways of working?
  - i. Were there any defining moments when creativity and innovation in operations, systems and ways of working became critical?
  - ii. What were these moments, and what stands out from them?
  - iii. Could you briefly talk about COVID-19 – how disruptive was it to organizational processes and ways of working?
  - iv. Were there any innovations that stand out for you in how Oxfam in HECA RP coped with Covid-19 disruptions?
  - v. What in your view stand out as lessons learnt in terms of innovations in organizational systems, processes and ways of working/work cultures from 2016 to date?
- c. **The nexus between the national and regional –**
  - i. how did it work in terms of coordination, intelligence gathering and sharing for policy influencing, and humanitarian response?
  - ii. This is a time of transition for Oxfam in HECA – are there any significant lessons learnt from managing the transition?
  - iii. In terms of knowledge management, are there any models of knowledge translation (evidence-to-policy action/practice) that have

been developed by HECA RP, and should be carried into the Oxfam Africa Platform?

- iv. Could you give examples of such knowledge translation models?
  - v. Could you briefly describe how country offices worked with the Regional Platform in developing the models you have described?
  - vi. How has such collaboration and coordination between the national and regional platform been used to further work in the area of Rights in Crisis, extractives, transformative feminist agenda and localization, and humanitarian response work? (probe each of these areas in turn)
- d. Leveraging on strengths and competencies at national and regional levels – any examples of outstanding achievements in this regard?

## **2. Defining Moments in regional advocacy and policy influencing**

- a. Any signature achievements in regional advocacy that stand out for you?
- b. Which influencing processes stand out for you, either in terms of the resources and levels of coordination involved, or the outcomes (positive or negative)?
- c. For each example: what were the issues?
  - i. What were the issues?
  - ii. Who was involved – the main actors?
  - iii. What influencing strategies were involved?
  - iv. What were the major outcomes?
  - v. What was the learning obtained from here, in general terms?

## **3. Institutional learning and leveraging on organization capital/track record or brand**

- a. Did the Oxfam brand aid in way in the major influencing processes undertaken?
- b. In what ways was the larger institutional capital – especially policy evidence – used to leverage advocacy or policy influencing in HECA activities?
- c. Specific examples of how evidence was generated and utilized for policy influencing/humanitarian response efforts?
- d. What aspects of institutional learning and evidence-to-action would need to be carried forward into the One Oxfam Africa Platform?

## **4. HECA Impact**

- a. Looking back – what impact has HECA Regional Platform had in the region?
- b. What do you see as the drivers of this impact?
- c. How likely are the countries transiting into the Oxfam Africa Platform likely to further the impact so far generated through HECA RP support?
- d. How prepared are the countries and partnerships that are being phased out likely to further and scale up the impact of the learning, institutional innovations and programming practices acquired through HECA RP support and collaboration?
- e. In terms of the advocacy and policy influencing networks where HECA RP was active, where would it make sense to continue engagement? Please explain.
- f. Which policy influencing and advocacy networks (regional and international) could the Oxfam Africa Platform scale down its engagements with? Please explain.

- g. What are the risks to the legacies created by HECA RP in continuing or discontinuing engagements in these policy influencing and advocacy networks?