

The Gendered Enterprise and Markets Programme

What is GEM

Oxfam's Gendered Enterprise and Markets (GEM) programme is a cutting edge approach to sustainable livelihoods development, driving change in markets and social systems to empower women and men smallholders, and integrating the organization's expertise in three areas;

1. Improving smallholder access to agricultural markets
2. Women's economic leadership
3. Adaptation to and reduction of risks, including climate change

Systemic change

Systems, be they market, environmental, governance or social systems, strongly determine the lives and livelihoods of women and men smallholders. GEM projects recognise the multiple parts and actors that influence one other (such as formal and informal institutions, natural processes, people, behaviours), and especially those in market systems such as companies, government agencies, rules and regulations, physical assets as well as environmental, social and political factors that will influence how the market operates and who is in it. Analysis and interventions are designed to drive change in these systems and increase smallholder agency by shifting more power to benefit poor women and men.

Access to markets (A2M)

Building equitable and sustainable access to markets for smallholders is a key driver to reducing poverty and changing power dynamics, and is the backbone to any GEM-designed projects. Oxfam has over twenty years' experience in supporting smallholder organisational development of community groups, business enterprises and co-operatives – and ensuring they're embedded within the wider network of businesses, financial institutions, government and NGOs.

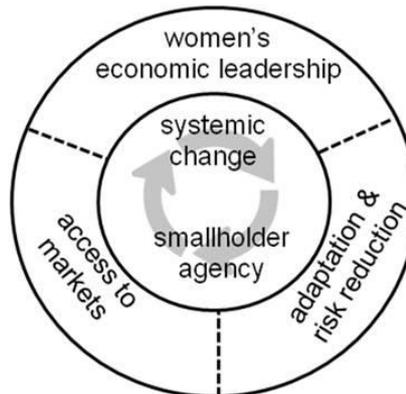
Women's Economic Leadership (WEL)

Power imbalances between men and women in agricultural markets are an inhibitive factor to women contributing to household welfare and increasing their agency. Market sub-sectors, or roles, that have the most potential to increase women's power in household, community and markets are therefore selected to promote women's economic leadership. WEL promotes gender equality in economic decision-making and roles for smallholder women that go beyond production, into more profitable and less risky market activities.

Adaptation & risk reduction (ARR)

Since smallholders' limited assets are vulnerable to environmental changes, participating in agricultural markets can be a risky business

if existing, or emerging, hazards are not adequately addressed - such as appropriate crop selection based on information about climate changes, or vulnerability to disasters. GEM projects work with smallholder communities and other key stakeholders to help them set up systems to identify, assess, monitor, mitigate and respond or adapt to environmental risks such as natural disasters (e.g. floods or drought) and, more recently, longer-term gradual changes caused by climate change (e.g. temperature increase or decrease in rainfall).



GEM builds on experience and success

14 countries currently apply a GEM approach around the world (and two have rounded off projects – see box for full list) reaching over a million smallholders and their family members. Since 2011, a wide range of donors, from governments and foundations, to corporations and individuals, have provided a total £29.5 million to fund these projects. As such, Oxfam has on-the-ground and global staff with many years of experience implementing market-based livelihoods projects together with local partners. Those adopting a GEM approach to existing or new projects build on the experience and trust they have with rural communities to expand the impact of their work through the establishment of a broader network of stakeholders – such as input service providers in the public and private sector, to buyers and processors, banks and microfinance institutes, local and

GEM countries

Ethiopia, Tanzania, Zambia, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Ghana, Azerbaijan, Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPT), Tajikistan, Armenia, Guatemala, Georgia, Tajikistan, Myanmar, Colombia (closed), Honduras (closed)

national ministry representatives, and leading academic and research institutes. The methodology and tools are flexible in design to be applied in widely ranging country contexts, while Oxfam's advisory services provide additional support to countries to developing interventions that are not only focused on impact within local communities, but that are also designed to capture best practice examples that can be scaled up through the established network of stakeholders. This facilitating approach increases the likelihood of sustainable project interventions, embedding them in the local and/or national context, and leveraging greater change through buy-in of these actors.

The GEM+ toolkit www.gemtoolkit.org

The GEM+ toolkit provides Oxfam country staff and partners with a suite of tools, guidance and reference materials to design and manage GEM projects in-country. The toolkit is accessible at www.gemtoolkit.org and is designed to allow immediate access to tools or to learn more about the GEM framework before diving into the specifics. Re-launched in May 2016, this updated version of the toolkit includes a wider range of tools; on the one hand, these support country staff working in post-crisis contexts and help tailor interventions to manage the vulnerabilities different groups face that are living in poverty. On the other hand, they support power analysis, influencing and working in multi-stakeholder contexts. It also include guidance to good practice on project cycle management. The toolkit is in publicly available and in testing phase – feedback on the tools and other materials are very welcome through the feedback tab.

The GEM programme within Oxfam

Market-based livelihoods programmes that use, or are interested in, the GEM approach can join the community of practice and learn more at www.growsellthrive.org and, for Oxfam staff, through the Women's Economic Empowerment in Agriculture Knowledge Hub (search through Sumus or Compass platforms). Under Oxfam GB's contribution to the confederation, GEM programmes help deliver on Women, Work and Inequality.