Organisational Levels and Organisational Characteristics: Oxfam GB and the Disability Movement in Uganda

Vol. 2

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Chapter Four: The Head Office

"Modern management and the smack of firm leadership"[1]

4.1 INTRODUCTION

Applying the OLOC model to Oxfam's corporate centre

This investigation is concerned with how Oxfam's organisational characteristics (managerial structure, working culture, aims and objectives, marketing, mainstreaming minority issues, and learning as an organisation) affected the relationship between Oxfam GB in Uganda and the National Union of Disabled Persons of Uganda (NUDIPU). Of specific interest will be the culmination of influences which led to the end of the funding relationship in 2005.

Head Office This chapter begins the application of the Organisational Levels and Organisational Characteristics (OLOC) model outlined in the previous two chapters. It is the first of three case study chapters and it takes as its focus the top level of the Oxfam GB hierarchy.

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In 1974 Brian Walker was appointed director of Oxfam. Unlike his predecessors, Walker came from the business sector and the trustees made it clear to him that

[1] Black, Maggie (1992) *A Cause for Our Times: Oxfam the first 50 years* (Oxford: Oxfam and Oxford University Press) p. 203.

what was needed from him was "modern management and the smack of firm leadership."[2] This can be seen as the start of Oxfam's drive to professionalise; it was a long process as Oxfam had to adjust to its growing size and expanding role beyond that of a simple humanitarian agency. During the 1980s, Oxfam grew at an unprecedented rate due to the changes in its approach to fundraising and the Western public's desire to respond to the crises in Ethiopia and Cambodia.[3] By 1996/7, Oxfam was the most popular charity in the UK based on the amount of voluntary income;[4] however up until this point, its policies were developed in an ad hoc manner[5] and it was not until the 1990s and the Strategic Review of Intent that Oxfam started to move towards a strategic vision, coherent policies, and corporate way of working.[6]

Significant changes in Oxfam GB's management and strategic focus in the later years of the Oxfam-NUDIPU relationship were directly linked to this internal Strategic Review. This review was initiated by the upper echelons of the management structure; that level made decisions which ushered in changes which were to have drastic effects on the manifestation of the structural and ideational elements within Oxfam. These changes affected the decision-making environments and the reception of disability issues.

Using the Strategic Review as the starting point, this chapter investigates the Oxford-based head office as a layer in the OLOC model and this corporate centre's[7] projection of its concept of Oxfam's organisational image. This projection involved their vision of the ideal managerial shape the organisation would take (structural elements), the chosen blue-print for what elements of organisational policy would be backed up by definite implementation strategies (ideational elements), and finally what opportunities for learning as an

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[2] Black, Maggie (1992) *A Cause for Our Times: Oxfam the first 50 years* p. 203.
[3] Black, Maggie (1992) *A Cause for Our Times: Oxfam the first 50 years* p. 266.
[4] Charities Aid Foundation (2007) 'Which individual charities are the most popular?'.
[5] Hastie, Rachel (1997) Disabled Children in a Society at War (Oxford: Oxfam UK and Ireland) p. 27 and p. 66.
[6] Oxfam GB (1998) *Setting the Course for the Twenty-First Century: Oxfam Strategic Review* (Unpublished Report).
[7] Oxfam GB (1998) *Setting the Course for the Twenty-First Century* p. 151.

organisation were present (organisational learning). Before we move on to this analysis, Oxfam GB and its relationship with Oxfam International need to be introduced to show that, in this analysis, the Oxford-based head office can be treated as the top level of the OLOC model.

OXFAM INTERNATIONAL AND OXFAM GB

Oxfam International is an affiliation of twelve International Non-Governmental Organisations (INGOs) that maintain their independence, but have agreed to work together for a clearer international image, a globally recognisable brand, more efficient programmes, and greater impact of their activities.[8] To achieve these ends, nine strategic change objectives (SCOs) were introduced in 1998, which were divided into five broad 'aims'.[9] Scheper claims the creation and adoption of the SCOs represented the first attempt by an international consortium of autonomous INGOs to "formulate an output-orientated, global civil society development strategy".[10]

This is the first of many instances uncovered in this analysis, where theories from the international corporate world were exerting an influence over Oxfam's organisational characteristics. Throughout the next three chapters the focusing of priorities provided by the SCOs will be examined against what influences lay behind their formation, how they were introduced to Oxfam and what the consequences of their implementation were.

Although the twelve Oxfams collaborated under the umbrella of Oxfam International to develop the SCOs, thereby creating a unity in image, ideology and activity,[11] this did not equate to central management from the international

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[8] Offenheiser, Raymond; Holcombe, Susan; and Hopkins, Nancy (1999) 'Grappling with Globalisation, Partnership and Learning: A look inside Oxfam America' *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly* Vol. 28, suppl. 1, p. 127.
[9] Oxfam GB Head Office Employee (2006) Interview.
[10] Scheper, Elisabeth E. (2001) *On the Right to Development, Human Security, and a Life in Dignity* p. 5.
[11] Lee, Julian (2004) *NGO Accountability: Rights and Responsibilities* p. 5.

umbrella. As discussed in chapter two, section 2.2.1, out of the four major global "super INGOs" (CARE, World Vision, Oxfam and Save the Children Federation), only World Vision is actually centrally managed.[12] Oxfam represents the more common model of 'super INGO', with the autonomous national INGO branches agreeing on certain core principles in order to foster a more powerful brand image,[13] whilst at the same time retaining individual dominion over their own managerial styles[14] and individually run projects. Oxfam International has been a forum for collaboration since 1995, but Oxfam GB has continued to run its programmes from its Oxford head office independent from its international umbrella; for this reason, the case study analysis will take the Oxford-based head office as the first level for analysis.

In 2002, Oxfam GB had 3909 employees, 1842 of which were based in the UK,[15] 57 in the Ugandan Office.[16] It worked in over 75 countries worldwide,[17] and had a total income of £189.4 million.[18] Shortly after the 1998 Review, an entirely new international tier was added to the levels within the Oxfam hierarchy when nine regional management centres worldwide were created.[19] This process of regionalisation,[20] or decentralisation,[21] occurred concurrently with the introduction of the SCOs and other changes in Oxfam's ideational elements. The

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[12] Ramia, Gaby (2003) 'Global Social Policy, INGOs and Strategic Management: An Emerging Research Agenda' *Global Social Policy* Vol. 3, No. 1, pp. 90-91.
[13] Offenheiser, Raymond; Holcombe, Susan; and Hopkins, Nancy (1999) 'Grappling with Globalisational, Partnership and Learning' p. 127.
[14] Dale, Stephen (1992) 'Guarding an Ideal' *New Internationalist* Issue 228.
[15] Oxfam GB (2002) *Oxfam Annual Report and Accounts 2001/2002* p. 41.
[16] Oxfam GB in Uganda (2002) *Proceeds of the Quarterly Programme Meeting for Oxfam GB in Uganda Munyonyo Resort Hotel on March 20th-22nd* (Unpublished Report) p. 6.
[17] Oxfam GB (2002) *Oxfam Annual Report and Accounts 2001/2002* p. 5.
[18] Oxfam GB (2002) *Oxfam Annual Report and Accounts 2001/2002* p. 14.
[19] HECA (Horn, East and Central Africa), West Africa, Southern Africa, CAMEXCA (Caribbean, Mexico and Central America), South America, MEEECIS (Middle East, Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States), East Asia and South Asia and UKPP.
[20] Whitbread, Jasmine (2006) Interview; Oxfam GB (2001) *Oxfam Annual Report and Accounts 2000/2001* p. 19; Oxfam GB (2003) *Oxfam Annual Report and Accounts 2002/2003* p. 5; and Oxfam GB (2005) *Oxfam Annual Report and Accounts 2004/2005* p. 6.
[21] Oxfam GB (2002) *Oxfam-DFID Partnership Programme Agreement 2002* p. 6; Oxfam GB (2001) *Oxfam Annual Report and Accounts 2000/2001* p. 18; Oxfam GB (2005) *Oxfam Annual Report and Accounts 2004/2005* p. 6; and Oxfam GB (2007) *Oxfam GB in Partnership: A Global Strategic Evaluation 2006/07* p. 95.

"transition to a new managerial architecture"[22] drastically shook up Oxfam's organisational characteristics, and affected the relationship with partners.[23]

The rest of this chapter will look at these changes and evaluate the new decision-making terrain that was emerging within Oxfam. The objective of this analysis is to establish the wider organisational context in which decisions were made about NUDIPU. Each of the six areas of organisational characteristics identified in chapter two will be investigated: managerial structure, working practices, aims and objectives, marketing, mainstreaming and learning as an organisation. Chapters five and six will also follow this pattern to show the different manifestation of different behavioural chains at different levels within Oxfam and NUDIPU.

[22] Oxfam GB (2002) *Oxfam-DFID Partnership Programme Agreement 2002* p. 6.
[23] Oxfam GB (2007) *Oxfam GB in Partnership* p. 95; and Oxfam GB in Uganda (2002) *Proceeds of the Quarterly programme Meeting for Oxfam GB in Uganda* p. 13.

4.2

STRUCTURAL ELEMENTS

The Designers of the Oxfam GB Machine

❶ **Managerial Structure**

This section analyses Oxfam GB's evolution into its current decentralised form. The process of changing the managerial structure, as envisioned, projected and implemented by head office, will be placed in the theoretical grounding provided by OLOC model. This precedes the analysis of the Oxfam GB Ugandan country office and NUDIPU experiences of the changes, which will come in later chapters.

Before 1998, Oxfam's overseas programmes were managed by development professionals located in Oxford.[24] Stocking describes the pre-decentralised era as "the days of country, or regional "desks" in the UK making decisions for the staff who had to deliver the programme on the ground".[25] This form of organisational "architecture",[26] which Oxfam's 1998 review described as a "traditional hierarchy",[27] was common in the development world, yet in the corporate world, it was being abandoned because of its inefficiency and lack of flexibility.[28] Oxfam, and other INGOs, were coming under increased pressure to decentralise in order to follow the business world. Development theories were

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[24] Dawson, Elizabeth; Dodd, Rosie; Roberts, Jill; and Wakeling, Catherine (2004) 'Issues and challenges for record management in the charity and voluntary sector' *Records Management Journal* Vol. 14, Issue 3, p. 114.

[25] Stocking, Barbara in Oxfam GB (2001) *Oxfam Annual Report and Accounts 2000/2001* p. 18.

[26] Oxfam GB (1998) *Setting the Course for the Twenty-First Century* p. 151.

[27] Oxfam GB (1998) *Setting the Course for the Twenty-First Century* p. 15.

[28] Lewis, David (2001) *Management of Non-Governmental Organizations: An Introduction* (London: Routledge); and Stubbs, Paul (2003) 'International Non-State Actors and Social Development Policy' *Global Social Policy* Vol. 3, No. 3.

also arguing that decentralisation would move decision-making closer to the grassroots and give more power to the beneficiaries.[29]

The Strategic Review, which formed the catalyst for Oxfam's managerial metamorphosis, highlighted the problems with Oxfam's 1990s structure vis-à-vis popular espousals of the ideal managerial framework:

> "At a time when many organisations are promoting flattened hierarchy and multi-disciplinary teams to achieve the same ends, Oxfam's extensive hierarchy and cumbersome vertical reporting lines consume valuable management time and discourage cross-departmental/divisional collaboration, and individual and team initiative."[30]

This shows how Oxfam's decisions were influenced by external as well as internal influences: criticisms were coming from inside[31] and examples were being set outside. For example, as discussed in chapter two, 'participation' and 'partnership' were becoming increasingly popular concepts in the 1990s[32] and practical measures had to be taken to incorporate these concepts. Regionalisation was a useful symbol of the incorporation of participatory rhetoric.[33] Oxfam's response involved a significant relocation of personnel and the site of decision-making, but when coupled with the blue-print of the ideational elements which controlled policy and implementation procedures, the release of decision-making power was deceptively controlling in its actualisation, as shall be discussed in section 4.3.2.

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[29] Smillie, Ian (2002) 'Conclusion' in Gibbs, Sarah with Smillie, Ian; Pratt, Brian; and Fowler, Alan (2000) *Decentralised NGO Management* INTRAC Occasional Papers Series 18 p. 44; and Stubbs, Paul (2003) 'International Non-State Actors and Social Development Policy' p. 329.
[30] Oxfam GB (1998) *Setting the Course for the Twenty-First Century* p. 150.
[31] Hastie, Rachel (1997) *Disabled Children in a Society at War: a Casebook from Bosnia* p. 67.
[32] Stubbs, Paul (2003) 'International Non-State Actors and Social Development Policy' p. 336; and Mosse, David (2005) *Cultivating Development: An Ethnography of Aid Policy and Practice* (London: Pluto Press) p. 4.
[33] Townsend, Janet G.; Porter, Gina; and Mawdsley, Emma (2002) 'The Role of the Transnational Community of Non-Governmental Organizations: Governance or Poverty Reduction?' *Journal of International Development* Vol. 14, Issue 6, p. 834.

On the basis of a series of reviews in the mid to late 1990s,[34] a process of decentralisation was drawn up and initiated by the corporate centre. The aim was to bring a selection of decision-making powers closer to the site of programme implementation. These new powers enabled the lower levels to play a more active role in defining what programmes and projects they ran as long as it was within the policy framework defined by Oxfam's main policy concept-blocks: the SCOs.[35] This shift in decision-making powers required a significant internal redistribution of administrative and managerial positions within Oxfam. The restructuring saw Oxfam GB divided into eight regions of operation, later extended to nine with the introduction of the UK poverty programme. It also required a greater percentage of Oxfam employees to be stationed outside of the UK, the total of which rose from only 11% in 1990[36] to 47% in 2002.[37] There was also a deliberate attempt to cut back the number of jobs based in Oxford.[38]

The new managerial structure was laid out as follows: the country offices came under the bureaucratic control of the newly established regional offices, and they in turn answered to corporate centre. The rationale behind this move was presented in two ways reflecting both concerns about grassroots participation and corporate managerialism. For example, Oxfam's Chair, Joel Joffe portrayed the change in Oxfam's *Annual Reports and Accounts 2000/2001* as: "[b]y managing the programme this way, our input will be more accountable at the local level, and more able to respond to national and regional demands."[39] The 2003 Oxfam's Partnership Programme Agreement with DfID emphasised the role of the new managerial architecture as creating regional coordination,

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[34] Fowler, Alan (1992) 'Decentralisation for international NGOs' *Development in Practice* Vol. 2, No. 2, and Oxfam GB (1998) *Setting the Course for the Twenty-First Century.*
[35] Oxfam GB in Uganda Employee (2005) Interview.
[36] Black, Maggie (1992) *A Cause for Our Times* p. 300.
[37] Oxfam GB (2002) *Oxfam Annual Report and Accounts 2001/2002* p. 41.
[38] Oxfam GB (2002) *Oxfam-DFID Participatory Programme Agreement 2002* p. 6.
[39] Joel Joffe in Oxfam GB (2001) *Oxfam Annual Report and Accounts 2000/01* pp. 4-5.

identity and consistency in programme delivery, elements which require a degree of top down control to achieve.[40]

These two elements contain contradictions. On the one hand the changes were attempting to recast Oxfam's managerial system from one described as a 'hierarchy' to one befitting the title 'network', or 'networked organisation'.[41] This is evident of a behavioural chain anchored in participatory rhetoric, running through Oxfam. The influence of these pressures was an attempt to move away from perceptions of Oxfam as a top heavy organisation. On the other hand, there was a more influential chain present which was centred on maintaining a strategic, coherent vision throughout all of Oxfam's operations, discussed further in section 4.3.2, which required more centralised managerial control. Despite the influence of participatory rhetoric, the managerial restructuring organised by head office at the turn of the century was not about handing power down to the country levels: in fact, it was acknowledged that country offices would actually witness a reduction in their authority to make decisions.[42] In an interview, Oxfam's former International Director described the regionalisation process as follows:

> "[I]t was not about giving power out everywhere, it was about actually taking power in and being more strategic... whereas before in a way it was ultimate decentralisation, because we just send the money over and everyone decides what they were going to do with it, there wasn't really a central strategy. It was about... more decision-making centrally, or certainly with the input of the eight regions.[43]

Despite being referred to as the process of decentralisation in Oxfam documentation,[44] in this interview it was stressed that it was never meant to be decentralisation, it was *regionalisation*. Such an interpretation creates no obligation to initiate meaningful devolution of decision-making power to elements

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[40] Oxfam GB (2003) *DfID - Oxfam GB Partnership Programme Agreement Second Review Report 2002/2003* p. 3.
[41] Oxfam GB (1998) *Setting the Course for the Twenty-First Century* p. 15 and 151.
[42] Oxfam GB (2003) *DfID - Oxfam GB Partnership Programme Agreement Second Review Report 2002/2003* p. 3.
[43] Whitbread, Jasmine (2006) Interview.
[44] Stocking, Barbara in Oxfam GB (2001) *Oxfam Annual Report and Accounts 2000/2001* p. 18.

outside of head office. This distinction was not made by other staff interviewed from head office,[45] and the *Oxfam Annual Reports and Accounts 2004/2005* defines regionalisation as "the de-centralisation of programme management to eight regions."[46]

How this process is interpreted has significant ramifications for the different centres of power throughout the levels of Oxfam. In light of the definitions of decentralisation discussed in chapter two, section 2.2.2, the regionalisation process which did occur can be seen more as a process of deconcentration, which lacks genuine relocation of power, and limits the efficiency and flexibility of local decision-making,[47] yet retains the image of participation and downward accountability. However, the lack of clarity regarding the intentions of the managerial restructuring process meant that some staff expressed confusion about who was being allocated what power.[48]

This will be made clearer with an examination of the role allocation for the regional centres; the country office role will be dealt with in more detail in the next chapter. The Strategic Review clearly defined the roles of the new regional management centres, stating that they "will have the responsibility for delivering quality on all fronts... while fulfilling a contract with the corporate centre".[49] Two things can be drawn out of this telling statement. Firstly, the adoption of the term 'corporate centre' illustrates the influence of the business world on these decisions: head office was clearly trying to emulate its organisational cousins in the business world. Secondly the presence of the 'contract' reduced the independence of the regional offices as it became their responsibility to communicate to the country offices the corporate image and messages defined at head office, meeting agreed targets in issues demarcated as key areas by

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[45] Oxfam GB Head Office Employee (2005) Interview.
[46] Oxfam GB (2005) *Oxfam Annual Report and Accounts 2004/2005* p. 6.
[47] Bergh, Sylvia (2004) 'Democratic decentralisation and local participation: a review of recent research' *Development in Practice* Vol. 14, No. 6, p. 781.
[48] Oxfam GB Head Office Employee (2005) Interview.
[49] Oxfam GB (1998) *Setting the Course for the Twenty-First Century* p. 151.

head office, and to "[o]perate cost-effectively against central bench marks",[50] also defined by head office.

This shows the frameworks within which 'decision-making powers' had been devolved and there were clear restrictions and limitations. These responsibilities contrast with the review's outline for the role of head office which involved, among other things, setting the strategic direction of the organisation, allocating resources, and ensuring quality through "professional support and supervision".[51] This again relates to the corporate world by emphasising professional qualities; it also still implies a hierarchy, and the network which was created through Oxfam's decentralisation or regionalisation process, still had the power to define the concept-blocks and blue-prints for the ideational elements concentrated at head office.

The regionalisation process was initiated with the aim of moving decision-making powers closer to the regions of implementation;[52] to create a more simple, less cumbersome organisational hierarchy;[53] to facilitate regional coherence and identity;[54] and to create a new managerial level with the role of communicating head office's strategic vision through to the country offices.[55] Despite head office's desire for a less complicated hierarchy and clearer objectives, the implementation of regionalisation caused a great deal of upheaval. Larkin, in his independent review of Oxfam's work in Uganda described how restructuring was seen in Uganda as having "caused uncertainty among staff, while partners [were] not aware of any added value from the new structure."[56] This was echoed in the 2003 Oxfam-DFID Partnership Programme

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[50] Oxfam GB (1998) *Setting the Course for the Twenty-First Century* p. 151.
[51] Oxfam GB (1998) *Setting the Course for the Twenty-First Century* p. 151.
[52] Oxfam GB (1998) *Setting the Course for the Twenty-First Century.*
[53] Oxfam GB (1998) *Setting the Course for the Twenty-First Century p.* 150.
[54] Oxfam GB (2002) *Oxfam-DFID Participatory Programme Agreement 2002* p. 6.
[55] Oxfam GB (1998) *Setting the Course for the Twenty-First Century* p. 151.
[56] Larkin, Matthew in Oxfam GB (2002) *Oxfam Stakeholder Survey 2001/02* p. 17; Oxfam GB in Uganda (2002) *Proceeds of the Programme Meeting Held on 12th to 14th June 2002 at Munyonyo Resort Beach Hotel, Kampala* p. 13.

Agreement which highlighted that the uncertainty was causing higher levels of staff turnover.[57]

In a lot of cases the regionalisation process led to confused messages and lack of clarity over who was in charge.[58] One Oxfam employee placed a lot of responsibility for this confusion at the door of the campaigns division. Regionalisation was planned to relocate power into seven centralised hubs, but in geographically dispersed locations. Since 1998, the UK based campaigns division grew more than was anticipated.[59] The expectations raised by the 'decentralisation' process led to a desire on behalf of the country and the regional programmes to drive Oxfam's work; this clashed with the increasingly influential Western based campaigns division, which wanted to set the agenda and lead Oxfam's work.[60] Adding to the already unclear physical map of the regionalised power structure designed by head office, the new campaigning element led to further unclear messages and organisational elements vying for power over policy, drawing attention back to the UK. The result of these trends was to introduce incompatible and competing organisational characteristics into Oxfam, creating inconsistencies in employee perception and decision-making.

The lack of clarity about where the power was moving to was also illustrated by the common usage of the term 'decentralisation' to describe the 'regionalisation' process. Influences from 'participation' literature were mixing with organisation and management theory resulting in an attempt at strategic reorganisation to enable cost-efficiency, organisational consistency and accountability whilst interfacing with participatory rhetoric. This led to a long adjustment period, as the different levels within Oxfam found their role within the organisation, and the organisational characteristics settled into a stable pattern. Whitbread described

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[57] Oxfam GB (2003) *DfID - Oxfam GB Partnership Programme Agreement Second Review Report 2002/2003* p. 3.
[58] Oxfam GB Head Office Employee (2006) Interview; Larkin, Matthew in Oxfam GB (2002) *Oxfam Stakeholder Survey 2001/02* p. 17; and Oxfam GB in Uganda (2002) *Proceeds of the Quarterly Programme Meeting for Oxfam GB in* p. 13.
[59] Oxfam GB Head Office Employee (2006) Interview.
[60] Oxfam GB Head Office Employee (2006) Interview.

this process as "too long and drawn out and there was mixed messaging and confusion and what should have taken about a year, took four years of confusion".[61]

Major organisational change is difficult as Oxfam's Director, Rosemary Thorp recognised,[62] but the benefits of decentralisation were seen as worthwhile by both her, Whitbread and other decision makers in Oxford.[63] An entire new level had been put in place, a new layer of interpretation, negotiation, knowledge ingestion and creation, whilst at the same time, a more definitive guideline for programme focus, implementation and impact was being introduced; this will be discussed in more detail in section 4.3.2. The uncertainty staff at the regional and country level were reporting in Oxfam's Stakeholder Reviews[64] revealed the extent to which a fundamental shift in power distribution was occurring. This was driven from above with the purpose of moving centres of power both closer to the grass roots, in terms of the location at which the decision would be made, *and* away from them, in terms of the origins of the ideational concept-blocks and blue-prints which defined the decisions which were possible.

This caused confusion, setting organisational characteristics in direct conflict with each other, where one set of objectives (such as the handing out of decision-making power) was working against another set of objectives (such as the creation of greater organisational coherence), causing both intended and unintended organisational behavioural patterns. This introduced a terrain where Barnett and Finnemore's institutional *pathologies* became rife.[65] Behaviour did not always be a mirror of the corporate centre's concept-blocks because of the inherent lack of consistency between those concept-blocks and the blue-print enacted. This brought negotiation, a reliance on individual personalities, and

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[61] Whitbread, Jasmine (2006) Interview
[62] Thorp, Rosemary in Oxfam GB (2002) *Oxfam Annual Report and Accounts 2001/2* p. 6.
[63] Rosemary Thorp in Oxfam GB (2002) *Oxfam Annual Report and Accounts 2001/2* p. 6; and Whitbread, Jasmine (2006) Interview.
[64] Larkin, Matthew in Oxfam GB (2002) *Oxfam Stakeholder Survey 2001/02* p. 17.
[65] Barnett, Michael N. and Finnemore, Martha (1999) 'The Politics, and Pathologies of International Organizations' p. 702.

interpretation to the forefront: where organisational characteristics were incongruous with each other, the reception of these influences at the country level depended on a myriad of different institutional imperatives and behavioural influences. These will be examined in chapter five.

From a management and marketing perspective, the need for a coherent image and predictable standard in all of Oxfam's project work was an invaluable aim, and one regionalisation was set up to address.[66] However, from a development perspective, flexibility, innovation and bottom up initiatives held a lot of weight.[67] The increased pressure on Oxfam to become more business-like placed the emphasis squarely on the creation and maintenance of a professional workforce,[68] corporate standards and an Oxfam brand.[69] Elements which could move decision-making to the eight regions and create local, culturally sensitive, innovative approaches to development unique to the cultural characteristics of each area[70] were present within the system, but faced with obstacles created by other characteristics woven into the same system. In practice the issue of convergence of image and divergence of global regional identity led to ambivalent messages and, as a consequence, different locales reacted differently to the regionalisation process.[71] In the case study at the heart of this investigation, centrally defined policy overrode local interpretations and previous areas of involvement and expertise. However, closer inspection revealed that this local acquiescence to head office's definitions was partly the result of a number of local factors, including employees leaving the country office and

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[66] Oxfam GB (1998) *Setting the Course for the Twenty-First Century* p. 70; Oxfam GB (2002) *Oxfam-DFID Participatory Programme Agreement 2002* p. 6.
[67] Mosse, David (2005) *Cultivating Development*; and Stubbs, Paul (2003) 'International Non-State Actors and Social Development Policy' p. 342.
[68] Offenheiser, Raymond; Holcombe, Susan (2003) 'Challenges and Opportunities in Implementing a Rights-Based Approach to Development: An Oxfam America Perspective' *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly* Vol. 32, No. 2, p. 276; Oxfam GB (2002) *Oxfam Annual Report and Accounts 2001/2002* p. 13; and Williams, Ian (1999) 'The development of purpose and strategy within British Charitable organisations: Historical impressions' *International Journal of Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Marketing* Vol. 4, No. 2, p.143.
[69] Ritchie, Robin J.B.; Swami, Sanjeev; and Weinberg, Charles B. (1999) 'A Brand New World for Nonprofits' *International Journal of Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Marketing* Vol. 4, No. 1.
[70] Oxfam GB (1998) *Setting the Course for the Twenty-First Century.*
[71] Oxfam GB Head Office Employee (2006) Interview.

growing disillusionment with the partner's operational focus. This will be explored in detail in chapters five and six.

The fear of 'accidentally' enforcing convergence was raised in the initial stages of the restructuring when the Oxfam Review warned that the guidelines could become stifling to grass roots innovation and replace locally led initiatives with pre-planned formulas and priorities. The following extract from the 1998 Review illustrates these concerns:

> "Given the changing world and diverse contexts of Oxfam's work... there is a danger that such a framework may become too rigid and restricting. Allowance, therefore, should be made to adjust the framework and encourage innovation within and outside it."[72]

Rhetorically stating allowance in the plan for regionalisation, however, was not enough to give the actuality of flexibility. Similar to the debates regarding mainstreaming discussed in the previous chapter, if blue-prints are not explicitly incorporated to back up rhetoric to help local innovations sidestep obstacles caused by other organisational characteristics, it is highly likely that the preferences of higher levels will dominate the local level agenda.[73] The need for institutional coherence was competing against the need for local responsiveness, the latter being less fundamental to marketing and harder to monitor. In Oxfam this was manifested as an increasing move towards "highly constraining thematic Aim silos"[74] which saw Oxfam's programmes categorised and compartmentalised into predetermined areas.

In order to re-orientate Oxfam's vast body of programme work into coherent categories throughout the globe, many existing programmes were culled.[75]

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[72] Oxfam GB (1998) *Setting the Course for the Twenty-First Century* p. 70.
[73] Lewis, David (2001) *Management of Non-Governmental Organizations* p. 162.
[74] Palmer, Robin (2007) 'Working on Land Rights for Oxfam, 1997-2007: Or Last Rites for Land Rites' p. 3.
[75] Palmer, Robin (2005) *Critical Reflections on the Role of an International NGO Seeking to Work Globally on Land Rights – With Specific Focus on Oxfam's Experiences in Southern Africa* Institute of Social Studies (ISS) Conference: Social Movements Perspectives: Land,

Country offices were often told to phase-out work with partners which did not fall into the SCO categories.[76] This shows how one behavioural chain, the need to be able to place all programmes within an overall strategic policy framework, undermined both the aim of local agenda-setting and flexibility, and the value placed on partnership. However, this does not mean that the drive for coherence always overrode the other imperatives.

The battle between the drive for coherence and the need for local and regional input was not geographically uniform; there was evidence of some regional and country offices managing to exercise more freedom than others.[77] This was attributed, by some head office interviewees, to personal experience and the competence of individual managers[78] and highlights the importance of looking at the local-level as well as the corporate level when assessing the internal workings of the INGO. Evaluation of regional variances is beyond the scope of this investigation, which is looking at one country office's experience of the regionalisation process. However, it is important to note that the country office's role in this dynamic is not predetermined, and the actions of the country level managers are important in, to coin Mosse's phrase, the brokering networks[79] which may lead to certain issues being defined in terms of Oxfam's strategic interests, or outside of Oxfam's thematic area.

The local and national NGOs Oxfam chose to work with as 'partners', although occupying a space outside of Oxfam's organisational structure, were not immune from the sweeping changes the Strategic Review was instigating. Working with partners had been a long-term strategy of Oxfam;[80] however the nature of this behavioural chain within Oxfam was to change significantly: firstly, because of changes in Oxfam's policy regarding how would relate to partners;

Poverty, Social Justice and Development, The Hague 9-10 January 2006 p. 14; and Whitbread, Jasmine (2006) Interview.

[76] Burden, Allison (2002) Internal Memo; and Whitbread, Jasmine (2006) Interview.

[77] Palmer, Robin (2006) Personal Communication.

[78] Oxfam GB Head Office Employee (2006) Interview.

[79] Mosse, David (2005) *Cultivating Development* p. 192.

[80] Oxfam GB (2007) *Oxfam GB in Partnership* p. 14.

and secondly because of how other organisational characteristics would affect the influences partnership rhetoric could hold over decision-making.

The review made the specific choice to reduce the number of partner's Oxfam worked with,[81] and it was acknowledged that, with the narrowing of focus and the concentration on fewer partners, many NGOs which had previously secured prolonged support from Oxfam, would be shed from Oxfam's operational network.[82] Those partners that were left saw a shift from what Oxfam itself tellingly referred to in the Strategic Review as a donor/beneficiary relationship,[83] to one more akin to a partnership, which the review stated "should involve better ways of listening to and involving stakeholders in its systems of planning and impact assessment."[84]

Chapters five and six will explore a partner's experience of falling between the two extremes. Although NUDIPU was initially kept on by the Uganda country office, despite the phase-out of many other Disabled Persons' Organisations (DPOs) in the country, in 2002 it was advised by the regional office that disability issues did not come under that country offices strategic focus, so should be phased-out.

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The regionalisation process shook up Oxfam's global management structure and every organisational body related to its work. The managerial network was changed, a whole new level was created and new centres of power were introduced in an attempt to simplify and professionalise the previous ad hoc line management system. The new layout helped create a more orderly structure; it moved some decision-making closer to the ground, as far as the regional

[81] Oxfam GB (1998) *Setting the Course for the Twenty-First Century.*
[82] Oxfam GB (1998) *Setting the Course for the Twenty-First Century* p. 71.
[83] Oxfam GB (1998) *Setting the Course for the Twenty-First Century* p. 11.
[84] Oxfam GB (1998) *Setting the Course for the Twenty-First Century* p. 11.

centres, but it did not 'decentralise' so much as regionalise. [85] Organisational management theory had presided over participatory rhetoric.

In many cases, the process disrupted working patterns and led to staff feeling overworked[86] and stressed.[87] But, from an organisational management perspective, the coherence created by the changes was worth the teething problems witnessed in the bedding in period.[88] Some staff, accustomed to the old system, described the new system as highly complex and confusing,[89] but this view was countered by others who regarded it as a much more professional and modern way of working, essential in the contemporary world of INGO development.[90]

The structural elements themselves tell us something about Oxfam's operational practices, but the ideological driving forces behind the operations reveal even more. The next section will deal with ideational elements and what blue-prints head office drew up to ensure its perception of Oxfam's work was carried through into implementation.

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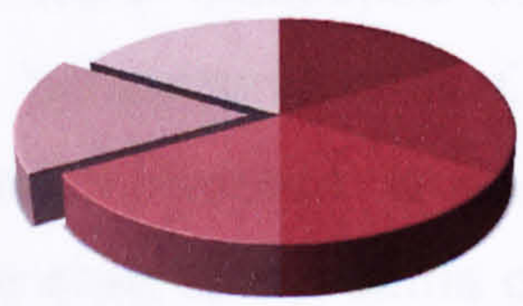
[85] Oxfam GB Head Office Employee (2006) Interview; Palmer, Robin (2005) *Critical Reflections on the Role of an International NGO Seeking to Work Globally on Land Rights* p. 18(fn).
[86] Oxfam GB in Uganda (1996) *Strategic Plan 1996-2000* (Unpublished Report).p. 20.
[87] Oxfam GB in Uganda (March 2002) *Proceeds of the Quarterly Programme Meeting for Oxfam GB in Uganda, Held at Munyonyo Resort Hotel on March 20th-22nd, 2002* p. 13.
[88] Oxfam GB (2005) *Oxfam Annual Report and Accounts 2004/2005* p. 12.
[89] Oxfam GB Head Office Employee (2006) Interview.
[90] Whitbread, Jasmine (2006) Interview.

4.3 IDEATIONAL ELEMENTS
"[H]ow to focus on what we aim to change... so as to lend greater coherence to our international work"[91]

Chapter two discussed how the ideational elements of an INGO's work can be divided into working practices, aims and objectives, mainstreaming, and marketing. This section will be looking at these four bundles of organisational characteristics through a close examination of Oxfam GB's head office and its role in four areas: defining working practices; the creation and implementation of the SCOs; the mainstreaming of gender and disability issues; and the marketing of the Oxfam brand.

4.3.1 WORKING PRACTICES



2 Working Practices

The encroachment of New Public Management theories on the INGO world were discussed in chapter two. Oxfam was not immune from theories of conduct, management and professionalisation. This is clearly visible in Oxfam's working culture which it defined in the Strategic Review[92] and applied prominently throughout publicity work,[93] project proposals and reviews at all levels,[94] stakeholder evaluations,[95] annual reports,[96] and was even evident in

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[91] Oxfam GB (1998) *Setting the Course for the Twenty-First Century* p. 6.
[92] Oxfam GB (1998) *Setting the Course for the Twenty-First Century* p. 134.
[93] Davison, Jane (2007) 'Photographs and Accountability: cracking the codes of an NGO' *Accounting, Auditing and Accountability Journal* Vol. 20, No. 1, p. 145; Oxfam GB (2000) *Stakeholder Survey 2000* p. 19; and Oxfam GB (2003) *Stakeholder Survey 2002/2003* p. 6; Oxfam GB (2004) *Oxfam Annual Report and Accounts 2003/2004* p. 5; Oxfam GB (2004) 'Oxfam's Mission Statement'.
[94] Oxfam GB (2002) *Oxfam-DFID Participatory Programme Agreement* 2002; and Oxfam GB in Uganda (2005) *The Rwenzori Livelihoods Improvement and Good Governance Project* (Unpublished Report) p. 24.

the messages conveyed by the photographs placed in the public domain.[97] This working culture is divided into five simple blocks:

1. Making a Difference
2. Innovative
3. Collaborative
4. Accountable
5. Cost Effective [98]

The 1998 Strategic Review was clear in its belief in the need for strong and defined working practices, which it called Oxfam's 'culture': "The issue of culture... underpins everything else in this report. It is at the heart of what Oxfam does best in its international work".[99] The importance of the five points is illustrated by how often notions of cost-efficiency, making a difference, accountability, and so forth, were mentioned in reviews, assessments and proposals. These all act as behavioural chains, putting their issues on the decision-making table to be considered when choices are being made. Throughout the analysis of the case study, some of these concepts come to the surface more than others: for example, Oxfam's preference to work with partners rather than go it alone and be 'operational' can be seen as being influenced by its desire to be collaborative;[100] and lack of impact was one reason cited for the ending of the NUDIPU relationship.[101] In this section, we will provide the background to one aspect of culture which proved most influential in the Oxfam-NUDIPU relationship, and that is the notion of "making a difference".

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[95] Oxfam GB (2000) *Stakeholder Survey 2000* p. 3; Oxfam GB (2002) *Stakeholder Survey 2001/2002* p. 3.
[96] Oxfam GB (2004) *Oxfam Annual Report and Accounts 2003/2004* p. 4.
[97] Davison, Jane (2007) 'Photographs and Accountability: cracking the codes of an NGO' p. 145.
[98] Davison, Jane (2007) 'Photographs and Accountability: cracking the codes of an NGO' p. 145; Oxfam GB (1998) *Setting the Course for the Twenty-First Century* p. 134; Oxfam GB (2000) *Stakeholder Survey 2000* p. 19; Oxfam GB (2003) *Stakeholder Survey 2002/2003* p. 6; Oxfam GB (2004) *Oxfam Annual Report and Accounts 2003/2004* p. 5; Oxfam GB (2004) 'Oxfam's Mission Statement'.
[99] Oxfam GB (1998) *Setting the Course for the Twenty-First Century* p. 134.
[100] Oxfam GB (2007) *Oxfam GB in Partnership* p. 14.
[101] Oxfam GB in Uganda Employee (2005) Interview.

The 1998 review made the following comment about the 'Making a Difference' aspect of Oxfam's culture: "If [Oxfam] is to continue in existence, it will need to make a difference and be seen to make a difference to poverty and suffering".[102] This led to an explicit focus in all projects on the necessity to have and *show* they have had an impact, and this imperative applied to regional offices, country offices and partners alike. Reviews on projects, country case studies, annual stakeholder reports, and other documentation were regularly produced for head office, and more importantly, donor consumption.[103] Through the need to produce reports, pressure was applied to regional management centres, country offices and partners to prove their work had had an impact, and head office was able to then present evidence to the public, donors and critics to prove that a difference had been made.[104]

Take for example the depiction of the support to NUDIPU presented in the 2000/2001 Oxfam Annual Review. In this article, Oxfam highlights the support it provided to the workshop which created NUDIPU (not making clear that this was thirteen years before the article was written, or that the termination of support to NUDIPU was already on the cards). The support to NUDIPU was shown to have led to a direct and tangible impact: "As a result, five disabled MPs have been elected, and more than 46,000 disabled representatives hold seats on local councils throughout the country."[105] This programme had produced evidence of 'impact'.

The need to be seen to be making a difference was promoted by head office and efforts were taken to ensure this characteristic became a permanent ideational element throughout all Oxfam. This was to have significant influence on decision-making. For example, because of the need to produce reports

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[102] Oxfam GB (1998) *Setting the Course for the Twenty-First Century* p. 135.
[103] NUDIPU (2004) *Financial Report to Oxfam* (Unpublished Report); Oxfam GB (2002) *Stakeholder Survey 2001/2002*; Oxfam GB (2006) *Oxfam GB-DFID Partnership Programme Agreement Annual progress report 2005-06*; and Oxfam GB in Uganda (2004) *Oxfam: Support to the Right to be Heard Programme in Uganda May 2003-April 2008* (Unpublished Report).
[104] Oxfam GB (2001) *Oxfam Annual Report and Accounts 2000/2001* p. 9.
[105] Oxfam GB (2001) *Oxfam Annual Review 2000/2001* p. 13.

showing impact, the activities conducted at all levels had to be the sort of activities which could be caught on paper with evidence of impact. This has been attributed to Oxfam's aversion to "long term processes which defy quick fixes or easy final solutions",[106] and can also be seen to have affected the inclusion of marginalised groups, and attempts at trickier, less tangible development work, for as was discussed in the previous two chapters, these do not generate easy to document outputs.[107] The increased emphasis on this element continued throughout the period under investigation, and in 2006 Oxfam's *Global Programme Learning Report* highlighted how the corporate centre was still pushing for a more "systematic data collection" to aid their ability to show "Oxfam's contribution to change".[108]

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The notion of making a difference and the other four points of culture affected all aspects of Oxfam's work, as will be seen by their recurrence in the analysis for the rest of this chapter, and chapters five and six. The analysis will now move on to the aims and objectives designed by the corporate centre.

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[106] Palmer, Robin (2005) *Critical Reflections on the Role of an International NGO Seeking to Work Globally on Land Rights* p. 6.
[107] Mawdsley, Emma; Townsend, Janet G.; and Porter, Gina (2005) 'Trust, accountability, and face-to-face interaction in North-South NGO relations' *Development in Practice* Vol. 15, No. 1, p. 80.
[108] Oxfam GB (2006) *Global Programme Learning Report 2006* p. 5.

4.3.2 AIMS AND STRATEGIC CHANGE OBJECTIVES

3 Aims and Objectives

The Strategic Review which concluded in 1998 was, to quote Whitbread, about Oxfam asking:

> "after sixty years of being in business, what was it doing right? What was it doing wrong? And concluding, not surprisingly, it needed to focus down on a few key areas, and work in ways that Oxfam is best and not work in other ways and get rid of the patchy quality."[109]

It was decided Oxfam had to make "Strategic Choices";[110] it needed to focus on what it wanted to do, how it was going to do it, and how that upheld its 'culture'. We have seen the effect of strategic decisions on Oxfam's structural elements; a similar transformation also took hold of Oxfam's ideational elements. Hard choices were made with the aim of making Oxfam more effective, more business-minded, to get rid of the areas where it was not making an impact and to work more efficiently in areas where it excelled.[111] There was an emphasis on a coherent global image,[112] a simple set of concept-blocks which, throughout the world, regional and country offices could relate to. The SCOs which came out of this process affected more than just the programmes: they fed into the structure itself, staff and departments were divided along SCO lines,[113] and reports were divided into the five SCO categories.[114] So where did the SCOs originate?

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[109] Oxfam GB (1998) *Setting the Course for the Twenty-First Century*; and Whitbread, Jasmine (2006) Interview.
[110] Whitbread, Jasmine (2006) Interview.
[111] Oxfam GB Head Office Employee (2006) Interview.
[112] Oxfam GB (1998) *Setting the Course for the Twenty-First Century* p. 70; Oxfam GB (2002) *Oxfam-DFID Participatory Programme Agreement 2002* p. 6.
[113] Palmer, Robin (2005) *Critical Reflections on the Role of an International NGO Seeking to Work Globally on Land Rights* p. 6.
[114] Oxfam GB (2003) *Oxfam GB Strategic Plan 2003-2006.*

The SCOs were defined in collaboration with Oxfam International to focus all of the Oxfam affiliates' activities and provide a more predictable Oxfam product and image.[115] They were devised in the early 1990s in discussions between the top levels of the twelve Oxfams with the aim of providing a commonality in all programmes, activities and campaigns of 'Oxfam'.[116] For Oxfam GB, the SCOs helped to focus its activities and to provide direction and organisational consistency: they became the concept-blocks on which activities were to become based, the categories each programme was to be slotted into, and the framework around which possibilities were conceived. However, their uptake depended on the blue-prints head office were to lay down; the enforcement mechanisms to ensure *their* concept-blocks became *the* concept-blocks for the lower levels.

Before they could be enforced, the SCOs needed to be communicated to the lower levels, and publicised to all members of staff. Head office issued directives to instigate the dramatic ideational shift, changed managers, sent out individuals from the corporate centre with the mission to align previously diverse activities with the new thematic focus areas, and phase-out programmes and partners who did not fit with Oxfam's new coherent image.[117] Country offices, programmes and staff in different parts of the world were given common reference points around which to shape their decisions and activities. The whole notion of categories falling in 'SCO4' or 'SCO5' became entrenched throughout Oxfam GB from the country offices to the Oxfam shop managers,[118] with the shorthand phrase conveying a whole wealth of in depth discourse and associations. So what were these SCOs?

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[115] Oxfam GB (1998) *Setting the Course for the Twenty-First Century* p. 70; Oxfam GB (2002) *Oxfam-DFID Participatory Programme Agreement 2002* p. 6; Oxfam International (2001) *Towards Global Equity: Strategic Plan 2001-2004.*

[116] Scheper, Elisabeth E. (2001) *On the Right to Development, Human Security, and a Life in Dignity* p. 20.

[117] Oxfam GB Head Office Employee (2006) Interview.

[118] Oxfam GB Shop Manager (2004) Informal Conversation.

INTRODUCING THE SCOs

> The period 1987-95 when I worked on the Southern Africa Desk was a time when people in country teams were left fairly free to determine their own priorities.[119]

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> The model of charity in the 70s and 80s, of... letting a thousand flowers bloom, was naturally going to come to an end, and strategic decision-making about how to spend resources was inevitable and much needed.[120]

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Oxfam's programme work evolved as a series of ad hoc innovations in the face of a variety of crises and long-term problems throughout the world. The resultant outlook was thematically disparate, covering a wide range of issues, minority groups and styles of working.[121] This was no longer acceptable in the modern age of business-minded INGOs offering value for the money and predictable goods for money donated.[122] The organisation needed focus, and that was what the SCOs intended to do. The driving force behind the SCOs was, as made clear in the 1998 review, "how to play our strengths more consistently across the world; how to focus on what we aim to change in the lives of people living in poverty, so as to lend greater coherence to our international work"[123]

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[119] Palmer, Robin (2007) *Working on Land Rights for Oxfam* p. 2.
[120] Whitbread, Jasmine (2006) Interview.
[121] Black, Maggie (1992) *A Cause for Our Times* p.163.
[122] Ritchie, Robin J.B.; Swami, Sanjeev; and Weinberg, Charles B. (1999) 'A Brand New World for Nonprofits'.
[123] Oxfam GB (1998) *Setting the Course for the Twenty-First Century* p. 1.

In total, there were nine SCOs, which were categorised under five aims:

Oxfam's Strategic Change Objectives:

- **SCO1: Right to a Sustainable Livelihood**
  - SCO 1.1: People living in poverty will achieve food and income security
  - SCO 1.2: People living in poverty will have access to secure paid employment, labour rights, and improved working conditions
- **SCO2: Right to Basic Social Services**
  - SCO 2.1: People living in poverty will achieve tangible improvements in their health through increased access to basic health services, clean water and sanitation
  - SCO 2.2: All children living in poverty will achieve their right to a good-quality basic education, and adults will have access to sufficient educational opportunities to help overcome their poverty
- **SCO3:Right to Life and Security**
  - SCO 3.1: Fewer people will die, fall sick, and suffer deprivation as a result of armed conflict or natural disasters
  - SCO 3.2: Fewer people will suffer personal or communal violence, forced displacement, or armed conflict
- **SCO4: Right to be Heard**
  - SCO 4: Poor and marginalised people will have an effective voice in influencing decisions affecting their lives, will achieve their civil and political rights, and will enjoy equal status with others
- **SCO5: Right to equity**
  - SCO 5.1: Women and men will enjoy equal rights
  - SCO 5.2: Ethnic, cultural, and other groups oppressed or marginalised by reasons of their identity will enjoy equal rights and status with other people

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The main heading of each SCO relates to Oxfam's five aims, the further sub clauses to the objectives. Over certain periods, the head office would choose a selection of these SCOs to form a global focus; these chosen SCOs became Oxfam's 'corporate priorities'. These were outlined in the Strategic Plan, and for the period 2003-2006 they were, SCO1.2, SCO2.2, SCO 3.1 and SCO5.1.[125]

Country offices, especially those with limited budgets, did not focus on all of these points; the idea was for depth, not breadth, so two or three SCOs formed the thematic base of the country office's operations depending on the history

[124] Oxfam GB (2003) *Oxfam GB Strategic Plan 2003-2006.*
[125] Oxfam GB (2003) *Oxfam GB Strategic Plan 2003-2006* p. 6.

and needs of the country.[126] It was decided that it would be better to focus on fewer better quality programmes, rather than try to do a bit of everything,[127] as the 1998 Review describes: "Given the likelihood of only modest increase in resources there has also to be recognition of the trade-off between quality (depth) and quantity (spread) in its programmes."[128] This resulted in the closure and phasing out of projects which did not correlate with the SCOs covered in a given region or country;[129] the effects of this reverberated not only throughout Oxfam, but throughout its partners and other INGOs it collaborated with. As the focus narrowed, so did the diversity of Oxfam's partners.[130] Many of Oxfam's previous partners found themselves falling outside the SCO focus of, either Oxfam as a whole, or the individual country offices with their more restricted focus. For this reason, many partnerships and projects were phased-out.[131]

To ensure the uptake of SCO concept-blocks by the whole of Oxfam, a series of blue-prints were needed, as well as plans for enforcement, and practical action taken to make sure the SCOs did not end up mere pie in the sky. For example, country and regional level employees had to justify to head office how current or proposed programmes fitted into the SCO framework;[132] head office employees, well versed in the SCOs, visited or were restationed at regional levels to help with the change of thematic focus;[133] and the new regional offices which were set up at the same time as the SCOs, therefore completely integrated into the

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[126] Oxfam GB (2003) *Oxfam GB Strategic Plan 2003-2006* p. 4; Oxfam GB in Uganda (2004) *Oxfam – Mission Statement: Oxfam works with others to overcome poverty and suffering* (Leaflet).
[127] Oxfam GB (1998) *Setting the Course for the Twenty-First Century* p. 71; Oxfam GB (2002) *Oxfam-DFID Participatory Programme Agreement 2002* p. 2.
[128] Oxfam GB (1998) *Setting the Course for the Twenty-First Century* p. 10.
[129] Oxfam GB Head Office Employee (2006) Interview; Palmer, Robin (2007) *Working on Land Rights for Oxfam* p. 4.
[130] Oxfam GB (1998) *Setting the Course for the Twenty-First Century* p. 71.
[131] Oxfam GB (2000) *Stakeholder Survey 2000* p. 12.
[132] Muhereza, Frank Emmanuel (2004) *Oxfam GB – A Long Term Program Strategy for the Rwenzori Region August 2004 – December 2010* (Unpublished Report) p. 40; and Oxfam GB in Uganda Employee (2005) Interview.
[133] Oxfam GB Head Office Employee (2006) Interview.

concept-blocks from their first day of operation, were tasked with realigning and regulating the country offices' uptake of the SCOs.[134]

The SCOs created drastically new centralised behavioural chains. Compared with the notion of handing power out which was initiated with the regionalisation process, the SCOs were about controlling activity and aligning policy along a centrally determined agenda. Oxfam's internal operating system was contending with, not only drastically new behavioural influences and institutional imperatives, but inherently contradictory forces. This was hinted at in the structural elements section, and shall now be explored from two sides: regionalisation and SCOs, as agents of control and/or liberation.

When analysis of the SCOs and regionalisation were combined, there were two distinct descriptions of the process present in the organisational documents[135] and accounts given by head office employees.[136] The most common reflection was that regionalisation was designed to hand power out to the regions, and SCOs to keep the regional and country offices in line with Oxfam's broader image, objectives and strategic plans.[137] Such a portrayal was given by Oxfam's Director, Barbara Stocking in 2002:

> "Gone are the days of country, or regional "desks" in the UK making decisions for the staff who had to deliver the programme on the ground. With improvements in electronic communication, we can keep in touch with our colleagues overseas and they are better placed to decide how to spend their budgets in response to local needs and initiatives – while keeping within the framework of Oxfam's programme aims."[138]

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[134] Oxfam GB (2002) *Oxfam-DFID Participatory Programme Agreement 2002* p. 6.
[135] Barbara Stocking in Oxfam GB (2001) *Oxfam Annual Report and Accounts 2000/2001* p. 19; Oxfam GB (2002) *Oxfam-DFID Participatory Programme Agreement 2002* p. 6; Oxfam GB (2003) *DfID - Oxfam GB Partnership Programme Agreement Second Review Report 2002/2003* p. 3; Oxfam GB (2005) *Oxfam Annual Report and Accounts 2004/2005* p. 6.
[136] Oxfam GB Head Office Employee (2006) Interview ; Palmer, Robin (2005) *Critical Reflections on the Role of an International NGO Seeking to Work Globally on Land Rights* p. 18(fn).
[137] Oxfam GB (2002) *Oxfam-DFID Participatory Programme Agreement 2002* p. 6.
[138] Barbara Stocking in Oxfam GB (2001) *Oxfam Annual Report and Accounts 2000/01* pp. 18-19.

This interpretation sees the introduction of the SCOs and regionalisation as a paradoxical process of simultaneous alignment of aims (restriction) and decentralisation of managerial responsibilities (increased freedom). This gives the impression of greater regional and country level autonomy, but the content is built using concept-blocks provided by the central management, thereby seriously restricting the decisions which are considered appropriate for 'Oxfam'.

However an alternative analysis was provided by a senior manager, who was involved in the team which made these strategic decisions. She described the process of regionalisation as follows: "pulling in that power, corporately, but then empowering people back and saying that within that framework, you can decide what you want to do."[139] This turned the first and most common view of the process on its head, describing the process of regionalisation as the element which provided the control over the regional and country offices, and the SCOs as not binding, but providing a framework to inspire confidence to act.[140] The controlling element in the first portrayal is the SCOs and the enabling element the decentralisation process. This contrasts with the second depiction where the SCOs provided an enabling environment and the regionalisation process was the managerial checking apparatus.

Head office instigated the implementation of the SCOs at the same time as the regionalisation process. These two major structural shifts created a whole new host of organisational characteristics, and a whole new host of organisational pathologies.[141] Both of the above interpretations view the SCOs and regionalisation as either restrictive to the lower levels, or as providing a basis for liberating them. What can be deduced from these contradictory depictions of these strategic changes is that both the SCOs and the regionalisation framework contained elements of centralised control and decentralising delegation. How

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[139] Whitbread, Jasmine (2006) Interview.

[140] Fowler, Alan (2000) 'Degrees of Separation: perspectives on the Decentralisation of International NGOs' in Gibbs, Sarah with Smillie, Ian; Pratt, Brian; and Fowler, Alan 'Decentralised NGO Management' *INTRAC Occasional Papers Series* 18 p. 14.

[141] Barnett, Michael N. and Finnemore, Martha (1999) 'The Politics, and Pathologies of International Organizations'.

the lower levels were to experience these depended on the implementation of the blue-prints, the interaction of individuals, the ability to negotiate, and the presence of other influencing forces at work in the decision-making process. The experience of the Ugandan country office provides an illustration of these forces and will be discussed in the next chapter. This section now turns to look at the benefits and draw backs to such ambiguous structures within Oxfam's core framework.

Mosse argued that, in development planning and theory, ambiguity is useful.[142] The SCOs were ambiguous. They meant a lot of things to different people and they were applied to many different development programmes. However, allowing a large degree of interpretation is not good for an organisation aiming for a coherent image; it can also prove tricky when transmitted into another level of the organisation, where English is not the primary language, and cultural differences may lead to different interpretations. For these reasons the ambiguous phrasing of the SCOs was criticised by Whitbread for being:

> "Problematic because they were worded by committee... I think there was too much word messing going on, with implied meaning in every single word, which most ordinary people, leave alone if English is your third language, or something, won't get all the implied meaning, so it just got lost, it's confusion. I'd have made it clearer.[143]

Lack of clarity can lead to innovative local interpretations, or lack of confidence[144] and a dependence on higher levels for interpretation.

Take for example, SCO4, The Right to be Heard. The focus here is: "Poor and marginalised people will have an effective voice in influencing decisions affecting their lives, will achieve their civil and political rights, and will enjoy equal status with others". Who are the poor and marginalised people? Where should the focus be to enable them to influence decisions affecting their lives? In parliament? In their local community? The interpretations of the SCO will be

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[142] Mosse, David (2005) *Cultivating Development* p. 36.
[143] Whitbread, Jasmine (2006) Interview.
[144] Fowler, Alan (2000) 'Degrees of Separation' p. 14.

discussed in detail in the next chapter when it shows how the Ugandan country office interpretation included disabled people under the SCO4 programme for seven years after the introduction of the SCOs,[145] before it was informed by the Horn, East and Central Africa (HECA) regional office that work with disabled people did not come under the SCO4 category. Instead, it came under SCO5 The Right to Equity,[146] precisely objective SCO5.2 "Ethnic, cultural, and other groups oppressed or marginalised by reasons of their identity will enjoy equal rights and status with other people".

This issue was addressed by Whitbread, when she provided the following interpretation of the use of SCOs

> "[T]hey're tools, and you can use them badly, or you can use them well and if you use them to – as a straight jacket, or to obstruct, then they will be rubbish. If you use them to say, hang on a second this is a strategic steer to where the organisation can have the most impact, balance that against all the other issues to make the right decision, then it will [restrict programme work] – so yes, they can – the drawback is, like any tool, they can be misused, and I think the key issue is we weren't clear enough quick enough about how they should be used".[147]

During the research, one head office employee spoke of how different geographical areas and Oxfam organisational units handled the SCOs differently, some approaching them in a highly interpretive manner, others sticking to the letter and refocusing their work accordingly.[148] Flexibility was worked into the SCOs and regional structures; negotiation was part of the framework being implemented. Oxfam highlights many occasions where local staff have shown innovation in their programmes:[149] after all, it is an element of Oxfam's 'culture. However, this case study is focused on the termination of a long-term partnership, which showed evidence of a dominant and restrictive

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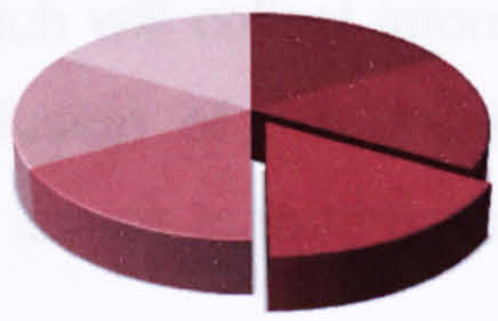
[145] Oxfam GB in Uganda Employee (2005) Interview.
[146] Burden, Allison (2002) Oxfam HECA/Uganda Internal Memo.
[147] Oxfam GB in Uganda Employee (2005) Interview.
[148] Palmer, Robin (2005) Personal Communication.
[149] Oxfam GB (2003) *Oxfam Annual Report and Accounts 2002/2003* p. 7; Oxfam GB (2003) *Programme Impact Report 2003* p. 24; Oxfam GB (2004) *Annual Review 2003/4* p. 13; and Oxfam GB (2004) *Programme Impact Report 2004* p. 7 and 29.

interpretation of the SCOs leading to the phasing out of partners and of higher levels guiding the interpretation of the lower levels. This will be discussed in detail in the next two chapters.

4.3.3 TARGET GROUPS



4 Mainstreaming

In designing the concept-blocks on which to build programmes and development activity, head office incorporated a focus on specific target groups whose concerns were to be mainstreamed into all of Oxfam's work. The reasoning behind this can be seen in Oxfam's Diversity Strategy which declares that: "People's vulnerability to poverty and suffering is increased by unequal power relations based on, for example, gender, race, caste and disability, women, who make up the majority of the world's poor, are especially disadvantaged."[150] However, the awareness of this diversity was not incorporated in a wholesale manner into the blue-prints and strategies which would ensure actual inclusion in all of Oxfam's work throughout the globe. In fact Oxfam's Diversity Strategy only applies to Oxfam's employees and programme work within the UK.[151]

This does not mean that there are no target groups highlighted in the concept-blocks which are accompanied by specific blue-print strategies to move them beyond the rhetorical stage to become mainstreamed throughout Oxfam. This section will focus on the mainstreaming efforts put in place for the issue of gender, in order to draw a comparison with the absence of such measures for disability issues.

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[150] Oxfam GB (2000) *The Difference Starts with You: Oxfam's Diversity Strategy* p. 1.
[151] Oxfam GB (2000) *The Difference Starts with You: Oxfam's Diversity Strategy* p. 3.

GENDER

As was discussed in chapter three, mainstreaming is a cycle of seven stages: raising an issue; including the issue in concrete blue-prints; facilitating inclusions with relevant resources; emphasising, repeating and promoting the issue; conducting activities in line with the blue-prints drawn up on paper; putting in place a monitoring system which will collect information which will highlight the success or failure of the inclusion of the issue; and finally, learn from the process, reflect, and raise new issues to feed back into the start of the cycle.

The issue of gender is clearly raised by the inclusion of the concept-block, SCO5. SCO5 has always been considered to be the aim dealing with "gender and diversity", highlighting the special attention gender was to be given compared to other minority groups.[152] Oxfam GB's Strategic Plan for 2003-2006, made the emphasis on gender within this SCO even more prominent: "Within this Aim the corporate priority is integration of gender issues into all aspects of our work".[153] The three year plan (2003-2006) for this SCO was influenced by the 2002 gender review conducted within Oxfam which provided the basis for the strategic integration of gender equality goals, incorporating learning, knowledge-management and learning.[154]

As has been discussed, the SCOs state a number of objectives, but not every aim and objective is singled out to become a "corporate priority".[155] This is where the gap between rhetoric and implementation first becomes institutionalised, through a presentation of aims and objectives, and then an internal definition of what will constitute policy.[156] Gender was an element of policy which was backed up with a series of blue-prints. SCO5.1 was one of the

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[152] Oxfam International (2001) *Towards Global Equity* p. 14.
[153] Oxfam GB (2003) *Oxfam GB Strategic Plan 2003-2006* p. 10.
[154] Oxfam GB (2003) *Oxfam GB Strategic Plan 2003-2006* pp.10-11.
[155] Oxfam GB (2003) *Oxfam GB Strategic Plan 2003-2006* p. 6.
[156] Albert, Bill; Dube, A.K.; and Riis-Hansen, Trine Cecilie (2005) *Has Disability Been Mainstreamed into Development Cooperation?* p. 17; and Thomas, Philippa (2005) *Disability, Poverty and the Millennium Development Goals: Relevance, Challenges and Opportunities for DFID* pp. 11-12.

concept-blocks singled out to be made a corporate priority; extra attention was paid to the specific aim of "integration of gender issues into all aspects of our work".[157] This was a long-term enterprise, even before the Strategic Review. Oxfam's Gender and Development Unit, established in 1986,[158] was promoting gender issues in Oxfam's "internal systems".[159] Oxfam publishing published its first book on gender and development in 1991,[160] and has been producing the academic journal Gender and Development since 1993. The emphasis on the continuation of this emphasis on gender is reaffirmed in the Oxfam GB Strategic Plan for 2007-2010.[161] This shows that Oxfam is both aware of, and willing to make, the kind of long-term commitment to gender mainstreaming that will allow the cycle of issue raising, implementation and monitoring to become fruitful.[162]

There was a distinct organisational commitment; rhetoric was backed up with blue-prints and, by 2003, mainstreaming was considered by Oxfam to be "beginning to translate into impact."[163] This inclusion of gender and subsequent translation into impact did not happen by the osmosis of good intentions from Head Office: ideas were shared, rhetoric was delivered but, left at that, most programmes would have failed to take practical measures to include gender issues. So what did the corporate centre do to help promote gender mainstreaming at the decision-making tables in the regional and country offices?

a) Raise Issues

The need to include women and gender issues in development work was raised by external discourses and presented to the corporate centre for contemplation. The creation of internal organisational bodies such as the Gender and

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[157] Oxfam GB (2003) *Oxfam GB Strategic Plan 2003-2006* p. 6.
[158] Black, Maggie (1992) *A Cause for Our Times* p. 300.
[159] Hastie, Rachel (1997) *Disabled Children in a Society at War* p. 27.
[160] Wallace, Tina, and March, Candida (Eds.) (1991) *Changing Perceptions: Writings on Gender and Development* (Oxford: Oxfam).
[161] Oxfam GB (2007) *Oxfam Strategic Plan 2007-2010* p. 7.
[162] Osman, Abdal Monium Khidir (2002) 'Challenges for integrating gender into poverty alleviation programmes: lessons from Sudan' *Gender and Development* Vol. 10, Issue 3, p. 29.
[163] Oxfam GB (2003) *Oxfam GB Programme Impact Report 2003* p. 32.

Development Unit and a series of internal reviews, including the organisation-wide gender review in 2001/2, were also important in shaping Oxfam's approach to gender mainstreaming.[164] Through the use of these reviews, combined with knowledge from the external discourses of gender mainstreaming, the tools which would be needed for mainstreaming were identified and a series of concrete plans and blue-prints were drawn up.[165]

This awareness was subsequently fostered at lower levels through learning events designed to pass on messages of gender equality, ideas on how to incorporate women and gender issues, and to clarify new corporate standards to staff located throughout Oxfam.[166] At the regional level, experts were hired to formulate extensive plans for thorough gender mainstreaming,[167] and awareness-raising efforts were conducted at all levels of Oxfam's work, right down to the partners Oxfam worked with.[168]

b) Inclusion of issues in plans and proposals

By 2005, Oxfam had introduced the rule that all policy papers had to include a section explaining the proposed plans for including gender issues. This, it was claimed, was responsible for strengthening Oxfam's work with gender,[169] but as will be shown, the link between proposal and implementation was not guaranteed. The emphasis did lead to proposals containing varying levels of inclusion, from naming women as target groups but lacking in-depth

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[164] Dawson, Elsa (2005) 'Strategic gender mainstreaming in Oxfam GB' *Gender and Development* Vol. 13, No. 2, p. 80.
[165] Dawson, Elsa (1998) 'The Relevance of Social Audit for Oxfam GB' *Journal of Business Ethics* Vol. 17, No. 13, p. 1461; and Dawson, Elsa (2005) 'Strategic gender mainstreaming in Oxfam GB' pp. 85-86.
[166] Oxfam GB (2003) *DfID - Oxfam GB Partnership Programme Agreement Second Review Report 2002/2003* p. 33.
[167] Dawson, Elsa (2005) 'Strategic gender mainstreaming in Oxfam GB' p. 80.
[168] Osman, Abdal Monium Khidir (2002) 'Challenges for integrating gender into poverty alleviation programmes' p. 26; Oxfam GB (2003) *DfID - Oxfam GB Partnership Programme Agreement Second Review Report 2002/2003* p. 43; and Oxfam GB in Uganda (2005) *Capacity Building for Empowerment Report of a Workshop held in Jinja, Uganda 6-8 March 2005* p. 10.
[169] Oxfam GB (2005) *Programme Impact Report* p. 12.

consideration,[170] to more detailed plans where the inclusion was more thought out, gender and the target population were discussed, and potential tactics for addressing gender issues in the target programme were explored.[171]

There have been efforts made by some of Oxfam's regional offices, attributed to the leadership of specific managers,[172] to draw up extensive plans, including strategies which were tailored to fit around the heavy work load of the programme level workers, and learning campaigns.[173] However, Dawson documents how, despite the investment in producing these plans, the gender mainstreaming proposals designed for the South America region were not implemented because they were considered too ambitious, and the facilitative regional manager was relocated elsewhere; therefore support was lost.[174]

c) Facilitate inclusion with the necessary provisions

Within Oxfam, training and budget provisions were put in place for the mainstreaming enterprise. At all levels, employees received training to highlight barriers to inclusion and suggest ways of negotiating these barriers,[175] and new staff were actively inducted into the mechanisms in place for mainstreaming.[176] At the country level, local gender trainers were usually employed to ensure the appropriate negotiation between local cultural interpretations of gender, and the core principles all Oxfam activities needed to display.[177]

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[170] Muhereza, Frank Emmanuel (June 2004) *Oxfam GB – A Long Term Program Strategy for the Rwenzori Region* p. 40.
[171] Oxfam GB in Uganda (2004) *Capacity Building for the Empowerment Review* pp. 16-20.
[172] Dawson, Elsa (2005) 'Strategic gender mainstreaming in Oxfam GB' p. 88.
[173] Dawson, Elsa (2005) 'Strategic gender mainstreaming in Oxfam GB' p. 85-86.
[174] Dawson, Elsa (2005) 'Strategic gender mainstreaming in Oxfam GB' p. 85-88.
[175] Oxfam GB (undated) *Gender Policy* p. 2; Oxfam GB (2006) *Global Programme Learning Report 2006* p. 26; and Oxfam GB in Uganda Employee (2005) Interview.
[176] Oxfam GB (2003) *Programme Impact Report 2003* p. 33; and Dawson, Elsa (2005) 'Strategic gender mainstreaming in Oxfam GB' p. 84.
[177] Porter, Fenella and Smyth, Ines (1998) 'Gender training for development practitioners: only a partial solution' *Gender and Development* Vol. 6, No. 2, p 61.

d) Repetition of need to include gender

The following extract from Oxfam's 2005 Programme Impact Report shows how repetitive messages were being insisted upon for gender inclusion to become reality in project work.

> "In northern Uganda, women are still typically excluded from participation in organised politics and community leadership, remaining confined to an overburdened domestic role. Oxfam has deliberately sought ways to increase their involvement and participation in the programme by continually challenging staff, partners, and volunteers to think, *'With this activity, how can we create greater equality between men and women?'* This systematic questioning has led Oxfam to innovate and challenge accepted norms and assumptions."[178]

Throughout all of Oxfam's work, issues of gender proliferate; the message is repeated, and employees perceive it to be a focus area.[179] SCO5.1: Women and men will enjoy equal rights, is seen to be a corporate priority and so therefore is meant to be included in all proposals and activities. However, despite the training which the employees receive, and despite rules for its inclusion in written documents, the issue was found to be absent in fundamental planning documents by Oxfam's 2006 *Global Programme Learning Report.*[180] Where gender was included in planning documents, and the plans were not regarded as too ambitious to implement, there still remained a significant level of policy evaporation before programmes were implemented.[181]

This is not to say successful examples of gender mainstreaming have not been documented,[182] but Dawson describes how the elevation of gender to corporate priority was actually detrimental to its actual inclusion:

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[178] Oxfam GB (2005) *Programme Impact Report* p. 2 (Emphasis in the original).
[179] Oxfam GB in Uganda Employee (2005) Interview.
[180] Oxfam GB (2006) *Global Programme Learning Report 2006* p. 27.
[181] Oxfam GB (2003) *Programme Impact Report 2003* p. 19.
[182] Oxfam GB (2005) *Programme Impact Report 2005* p. 22.

"On the one hand this states the need to mainstream gender throughout the organisation's five strategic objectives; and on the other hand makes gender equality an objective on its own, and the last one at that. This dual approach allows staff to see gender as an add-on, leading them to say it is not their priority, rather than seeing gender sensitivity as an integral part of the management of a high-quality programme."[183]

e) Gender issues included in Oxfam's activities

Mainstreaming of any minority issue is a long-term process.[184] Although Oxfam has reported that its gender mainstreaming policies have started to have an impact,[185] it was also aware that a lot of work still needs to be done. A lot of strategies were drawn up, but "capacity constraints",[186] the lack of individuals in influential positions to support the policy,[187] competing priorities,[188] and the speed at which programmes had to be devised and implemented,[189] all provide explanations as to why the implementation of plans has not always been successful. As the following quote from a Review of development work conducted in Kotido, Uganda reveals:

"In general there was a very positive response to gender questions by district officials, most of whom displayed a good understanding of the need to involve women in activities including holding leadership positions. Despite the emphasis on women's participation, there were actually no women visible either within the District Administration or within the different partners that were interviewed and it is possible some of the reactions on women and gender equity are just at the level of rhetoric. The mainstream was still very male-dominated and the only time women were visible was in the discussions with and about women's groups."[190]

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[183] Dawson, Elsa (2005) 'Strategic gender mainstreaming in Oxfam GB' p. 87.
[184] Albert, Bill; Dube, A.K.; and Riis-Hansen, Trine Cecilie (2005) *Has Disability Been Mainstreamed into Development Cooperation?* p. 24; and Osman, Abdal Monium Khidir (2002) 'Challenges for integrating gender into poverty alleviation programmes' p. 29.
[185] Oxfam GB (2003) *Oxfam GB Programme Impact Report* p. 32.
[186] Seel, Amanda; Ocampo, Dina; and Diaz, Leonor (2005) *Philippines Case Study for the Strategic Evaluation of Oxfam GB's Education Programme* p. 28.
[187] Dawson, Elsa (2005) 'Strategic gender mainstreaming in Oxfam GB' p. 88.
[188] Oxfam GB (2005) *Programme Impact Report 2005* p. 12.
[189] Dawson, Elsa (2005) 'Strategic gender mainstreaming in Oxfam GB' p. 86.
[190] Oxfam GB in Uganda (2004) *Capacity Building for the Empowerment Review* pp. 16-17.

Such evaporation was noticed in many other regions, and the issue of 'evaporation' highlighted as a concern at the corporate level, especially when working in coalitions with partners.[191]

f) Inclusion monitored in evaluation

Oxfam monitors the inclusion of gender issues in its programmes; training has been provided in gender analysis and gender budgeting to staff at different levels,[192] advice and guidance given on how to compile gender aware reports;[193] and an intranet system has been compiled for, amongst other uses, the monitoring of gender impact indicators.[194] However, a review of Oxfam's organisational learning highlighted deficiencies in the collection of information by local level evaluations which "seldom considered changes in power relations, including gender relations",[195] nor were the evaluation procedures uniform throughout the organisation.[196]

g) Evaluations monitored and learning occurred

The deficiencies in the monitoring system have been highlighted by Oxfam, and the evaporation of gender policies acknowledged.[197] This acknowledgement is a positive step in the mainstreaming cycle. In a long-term strategy, which is what gender-mainstreaming is, success will not be immediate. The fact that Oxfam was raising these issues and publically admitting the shortcomings alongside the

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[191] Oxfam GB (2003) *DfID - Oxfam GB Partnership Programme Agreement Second Review Report 2002/2003* p. 34; Oxfam GB (2003) *Programme Impact Report 2003* p. 19.
[192] DFID (2004) *Oxfam Partnership Programme Agreement (PPA) Annual Review* p. 8; Oxfam GB (2003) *DfID - Oxfam GB Partnership Programme Agreement Second Review Report 2002/2003* p. 33; and Oxfam GB (2004) programme Impact Report 2004 p. 59.
[193] Dawson, Elsa (2005) 'Strategic gender mainstreaming in Oxfam GB' p. 85; Oxfam GB (2003) *Programme Impact Report 2003* p. 34; and Oxfam GB (2005) *Programme Impact Report 2005* p. 21.
[194] Dawson, Elsa (2005) 'Strategic gender mainstreaming in Oxfam GB' p. 83.
[195] Oxfam GB (2006) *Global Programme Learning Report 2006* p. 5.
[196] Oxfam GB (2006) *Global Programme Learning Report 2006* p. 26.
[197] Oxfam GB (2003) *DfID - Oxfam GB Partnership Programme Agreement Second Review Report 2002/2003* p. 34; Oxfam GB (2003) *Programme Impact Report 2003* p. 19; and Oxfam GB in Uganda (2004) *Capacity Building for the Empowerment Review* pp. 16-17.

success stories, means that it was able to move on to the next stage of the cycle. Mainstreaming is not an immediate process, nor is a progression from A to B with a definite start and a definite end: that is why it is represented in this research as a cycle. Once the evaluations have been made, it is up to the organisation to learn and raise new issues for the cycle to start again. The learning element of this cycle will be dealt with in section 4.4.

Because of the activities Oxfam has been conducting since the establishment of the Gender and Development Unit, a change has occurred and impact documented.[198] For example, in the aftermath of the 2004 Tsunami, Oxfam's work in Aceh, Indonesia, addressed its previous gender imbalance in involvement, as well as including previously unconsidered basic needs of women in the programme design.[199] Oxfam holds itself accountable to the goal of mainstreaming, warning against complacency,[200] continuing to publish research on the issue, monitor the success of its programmes,[201] and consider new ways of pursuing gender mainstreaming into the future.[202] But disability mainstreaming is a different story.

DISABILITY

Does Oxfam apply what it has learnt about how to mainstream an issue to the issue of disability? Having discussed how concept-blocks and genuine blue-prints for mainstreaming had a real impact on the inclusion of women and gender related issues in Oxfam's activity, we now turn to the opposite: how poor blue-prints for the mainstreaming of disability issues led to exclusion, marginalisation and no action to ensure any form of meaningful organisation-wide involvement of disabled people in Oxfam's work. This did not mean that

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[198] Oxfam GB (2003) *DfID - Oxfam GB Partnership Programme Agreement Second Review Report 2002/2003* p. 17 and pp. 24-25; Oxfam GB (2003) *Programme Impact Report 2003* p. 7 and p. 32;and Oxfam GB (2005) *Programme Impact Report 2005* p. 22.
[199] Oxfam GB (2005) *Programme Impact Report 2005* p. 22.
[200] Oxfam GB (2005) *Programme Impact Report 2005* p. 32.
[201] Oxfam GB (2006) *Global Programme Learning Report 2006.*
[202] Oxfam GB (2007) *Oxfam Strategic Plan 2007-2010* p. 1.

disabled people were barred from Oxfam's work, but as will be discussed, targeted programmes were phased-out to be replaced by a vague 'commitment' masking an actual departure from any integration policy.

Employees interviewed at the country level described disability as having been mainstreamed;[203] Oxfam's Diversity Strategy stated "we will seek to positively include... disabled as well as able bodied";[204] and on the front cover of its latest Strategic Plan Summary, produced for public consumption, it highlights that "[p]eople's vulnerability to poverty and suffering is increased by unequal power relations, based on, for example, gender, race, class, caste and disability."[205] Prominent disability activists have used Oxfam as an example of an INGO which has taken serious measures to include disability issues in their work,[206] and it has even produced a training book on how to include disabled people in the work of development organisations, which was present in the documents room of the Kampala office.[207]

On the surface, disability could be interpreted as an issue Oxfam was incorporating in its operations. However, during the 1998 Strategic Review, it was decided at the corporate level, but never publically, that disability was not a strategic area where "Oxfam was going to add value on".[208] This led to Oxfam "completely abandon[ing its] work with the disability movement, which had been an important part of many of [Oxfam's] programmes in Southern and Eastern Africa at [the pre SCO] time."[209]

Returning back to SCO5, the starting point for Oxfam's approach to gender, we can see how mainstreaming one issue can adversely affect the attempt to

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[203] Oxfam GB in Uganda Employee (2005) Interview.
[204] Oxfam GB (2000) *The Difference Starts with You* p. 2.
[205] Oxfam GB (2007) *Oxfam Strategic Plan 2007-2010.*
[206] Yeo, Rebecca (2002) *Chronic Poverty and Disability* p. 21; and Yeo, Rebecca and Moore, Karen (2003) 'Including Disabled People in Poverty Reduction Work' p. 580.
[207] Harris, Alison with Enfield, Sue (2003) *Disability, Equality and Human Rights: A Training Manual for Development and Humanitarian Organisations* (Oxford: Oxfam).
[208] Whitbread, Jasmine (2006) Interview.
[209] Palmer, Robin (2007) *Working on Land Rights for Oxfam* p. 3.

mainstream other issues. The SCOs were the main concept-blocks which gave the Oxfams a unique and coherent image. Looking at Oxfam International's description of SCO5, the aim for diversity is defined as follows:

> "The Aim addresses the rights of people who are excluded or oppressed because of their gender, ethnic, cultural or other identity. These are homogenous groups, including those who are marginalized by physical or mental disability, or because of traditions or lifestyle choices."[210]

Within Oxfam GB, the emphasis of SCO5 (gender and diversity) became gender:[211] gender was categorically mainstreamed throughout all Oxfam work,[212] therefore SCO5 itself became sidelined. Ideas of gender have firmly found their place within Oxfam's discourse, and from that position, multiplied, reinforced, recreated and entrenched themselves. This has enabled the conception, design and implementation of gender positive, gender centred and gender aware projects throughout all of Oxfam's programmes. Organisations trying to mainstream an issue had a lot to learn from this mainstreaming process, the main lesson being that: "a clear and binding strategy"[213] was needed to include gender in Oxfam work. An intangible policy statement without blue-prints, set targets, repetition, monitoring and learning wouldn't do; there needed to be stipulations and regulations or an issue would evaporate when the project was implemented. Whilst gender was receiving this attention, other groups which were included in the general concept-blocks, failed to be written into the blue-print of the organisation.

Oxfam has historically been heavily involved with the disability movement and engaged with the disability rights movement rhetoric;[214] this can be seen from

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[210] Oxfam International (2001) *Towards Global Equity.*
[211] Oxfam GB (2003) *Oxfam GB Strategic Plan 2003-2006* p. 6.
[212] Dawson, Elsa (2005) 'Strategic gender mainstreaming in Oxfam GB'; Oxfam GB (2003) Programme Impact Report 2003 p. iii; and Oxfam GB in Uganda Employee (2005) Interview.
[213] Payne, Lina and Smyth, Ines (1999) 'The need for reliable systems: gendered work in Oxfam's Uganda programme' *Development in Practice* Vol. 9, No. 1p. 178.
[214] Abu-Habib. Lina (1997) *Gender and Disability* (Oxford: Oxfam UK and I); Coleridge, Peter (1993) *Disability, Liberation and Development* (Oxfam UK and I); Harris, Alison with Enfield, Sue (2003) *Disability, Equality and Human Rights;* Hastie, Rachel (1997) *Disabled Children in*

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Oxfam's public adoption of the social model,[215] and its engagement in programmes related to disabled people in diverse contexts and diverse locations, from working with amputees in Afghanistan and Cambodia, to involvement with the Disability Rights Movements in Kosovo, Lebanon and Uganda.[216] It has an especially long involvement with the medical aspects of disability:[217] for example it started work with the Mulago orthopaedic workshop in Uganda in the mid 60s.[218] However, when the disability movement started to criticise the medicalisation of disability issues, Oxfam was responsive to these external critiques and moved towards the social model and development as emancipation as opposed to exclusion and separate medical intervention.[219]

However, characteristic of the wider policy formation environment within Oxfam in the pre-SCO era, its involvement with disability can only be described as ad hoc and sporadic.[220] As Hastie describes:

> "Oxfam has a theoretical commitment to disability in its programmes all over the world, but actual work on disability issues has not been done in a strategic or considered way: the promotion of disability issues depends very much on the initiative of field staff and regional managers."[221]

Disability was not an issue with the same status as gender within Oxfam;[222] this was normal for development organisations, for the reasons discussed in the previous chapter. Oxfam did, however, commit a significant amount of resources to the issue of disability, both in terms of disability focussed programmes and

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a Society at War; Palmer, Robin (2007) *Working on Land Rights for Oxfam* p. 3; and Traboulsi, Omar (2000) *Oxfam GB in Uganda: Report on Review of Disability Programme.*

[215] Abu-Habib, Lina (1997) *Gender and Disability* p. 11.

[216] Eade, Deborah and Williams, Suzanne (1995) *The Oxfam Handbook of Development and Relief Volume One* (Oxford: Oxfam UK and Ireland) p. 313; Harris, Alison with Enfield, Sue (2003) *Disability, Equality and Human Rights.*

[217] Eade, Deborah and Williams, Suzanne (1995) *The Oxfam Handbook of Development and Relief Volume One* p. 311.

[218] Traboulsi, Omar (2000) *Oxfam GB in Uganda: Report on Review of Disability Programme* p. 17.

[219] Traboulsi, Omar (2000) *Oxfam GB in Uganda: Report on Review of Disability Programme* p. 17.

[220] Hastie, Rachel (1997) *Disabled Children in a Society at War* p 66 and p. 27.

[221] Hastie, Rachel (1997) *Disabled Children in a Society at War* p. 27.

[222] Hastie, Rachel (1997) *Disabled Children in a Society at War* p. 27.

research into how disability needs to be considered in development work. It published a highly influential book in 1993, *Disability, Liberation and Development*,[223] which has become one of the major texts in debates surrounding disability and development. In 2003 Oxfam also published a training manual for the inclusion of disabled people specifically for the use of development and humanitarian organisations.[224] Funding the research and publication of a total of four books on disability and development spanning 1993-2003 revealed a high level of commitment by Oxfam to this issue.[225] However, although the last publication, *Disability, Equality, and Human Rights: A Training Manual for Development and Humanitarian Organisations* declared that it was the "starting point"[226] for the gathering of knowledge and strategies to pursue the mainstreaming of disability within Oxfam, as well as other INGOs, it coincided with a decision not to include disability issues in any definite way within Oxfam.[227]

As the analysis in the following two chapters will show, Oxfam's metamorphosis into the SCO guided-branded-coherent model resulted in it becoming more focused on the compartmentalised activities laid out in the blue-prints of the organisation: the targets which needed to be met and the requirements of monitoring and documentation.[228] This left elements not in the blue-print highly unlikely to squeeze onto the agenda of strained budgets, time-pressed and results-orientated development programmes. The situation before regionalisation and SCOs was criticised by Hastie as follows: "Oxfam's *ad hoc* approach to disability and the system of line management means that one

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[223] Coleridge, Peter (1993) *Disability, Liberation and Development.*
[224] Harris, Alison with Enfield, Sue (2003) *Disability, Equality and Human Rights.*
[225] Abu-Habib. Lina (1997) *Gender and Disability*; Coleridge, Peter (1993) *Disability, Liberation and Development*; Harris, Alison with Enfield, Sue (2003) *Disability, Equality and Human Rights*; Hastie, Rachel (1997) *Disabled Children in a Society at War.*
[226] Harris, Alison with Enfield, Sue (2003) *Disability, Equality and Human Rights* p. 2.
[227] Whitbread, Jasmine (2006) Interview.
[228] Palmer, Robin (2007) *Working on Land Rights for Oxfam* p. 3.

individual in a key position can present a block to effective work on disability issues."[229]

However, this ad hoc system also meant the disability could find its way on to the agenda, should there be individuals with an interest in the area and the environment be favourable. In the new era of corporate concept-blocks and blue-prints, disability focused programmes were phased-out in return for the mainstreaming of disability issues throughout, as implied by the concept-blocks,[230] and described by interviewees at the country level.[231] Yet, as has been made clear, mainstreaming could not occur until the same investment as provided for gender mainstreaming was put on the table. This led to Oxfam turning its back on many existing programmes with disabled people and former partners left to come "to terms with the fact that after so many years of involvement in disability, Oxfam GB was "no longer interested" in PWDs."[232] Some work with disabled persons' organisations continues in a couple of countries, for example in Armenia[233] and Azerbaijan,[234] but many others have been phased-out.[235]

There was no explicit blue-print designed for the exclusion of disabled people from Oxfam's work; however, the decision was made at the highest echelon of decision-making not to mainstream disability.[236] This was an explicit strategic decision, but to the majority of Oxfam staff, even within head office, the phase-

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[229] Hastie, Rachel (1997) *Disabled Children in a Society at War* pp. 66-7.
[230] Oxfam GB (2000) *The Difference Starts with You* p. 2; and Stocking, Barbara (2003) 'Preface' Harris, Alison with Enfield, Sue (2003) *Disability, Equality and Human Rights* p. vii.
[231] Oxfam GB in Uganda Employee (2005) Interview.
[232] Traboulsi, Omar (2000) *Oxfam GB in Uganda: Report on Review of Disability Programme* p. 9.
[233] Oxfam GB (2007) 'Oxfam's Work in Armenia in Depth'.
[234] Oxfam GB (2003) *Stakeholder Survey 2002/2003* p. 17.
[235] Albanian Disability Rights Foundation (2006) Capacity Building: Organization Capacity ISPO/USAID/WHO consensus conference on wheelchairs for developing countries; and Palmer, Robin (2007) *Working on Land Rights for Oxfam* p. 3; Oxfam GB in Uganda Employee (2005) Interview ; and Oxfam GB in Uganda Employee (2005) Personal Communication.
[236] Whitbread, Jasmine (2006) Interview.

out of Oxfam's previous involvement with many disability projects passed unnoticed.[237]

The decision not to focus on disability inclusion was based on the notion that Oxfam needed to remain a world leader, and should concentrate its efforts on areas where it had accumulated a "critical mass of expertise... had the potential to remain the leader... and had the opportunities to bring about the greatest amount of change."[238] Clearly issues of marketing were affecting the choices of what issues would be transformed from rhetorical concept-blocks into mainstreaming blue-prints to embed them into Oxfam's organisational characteristics globally. Gender was an area popular in the external world,[239] and an area where Oxfam could be seen to be leading the field. By pushing an issue popular with donors and one where Oxfam could claim to lead, the Oxfam brand would benefit. Gender was an area in which Oxfam could be, and would be seen to be (through the provision of tangible evidence) a world leader. As Whitbread made clear:

> "[D]isability did not fit this bill, so although NUDIPU's work and Uganda's work in disability was fabulous, as is the stuff in the Caucasus as well, that wasn't a critical mass and it wasn't an area we felt that Oxfam globally could be a leading player".[240]

The phase-out of these programmes was deemed to be justifiable because Oxfam was not a leading player in the field of disability and development.[241] Organisations such as Action for Disability and Development (ADD) and World Vision were considered to be providing that expertise, and so therefore Oxfam's attentions were concentrated on its strengths. As was discussed in the previous chapter, those campaigning for the mainstreaming of disability rights throughout development organisations distinctly warn against separating disabled people's

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[237] Palmer, Robin (2005) Interview.
[238] Whitbread, Jasmine (2006) Interview.
[239] Albert, Bill; Dube, A.K.; and Riis-Hansen, Trine Cecilie (2005) *Has Disability Been Mainstreamed into Development Cooperation?* p. 35; Yeo, Rebecca (2003) *To what extent are disabled people included in international development work?* p.10.
[240] Whitbread, Jasmine (2006) Interview.
[241] Whitbread, Jasmine (2006) Interview.

development and from that of their peers. The reliance on specialist development organisations, coupled with the exclusion from the development work being undertaken with wider society, reinforces their marginalisation.[242]

Oxfam's decision to phase-out its work specifically with disabled people was accompanied by declarations that disabled people should be mainstreamed throughout all development work;[243] however, as shall be discussed, the concept-blocks stating inclusion were not backed up with a comprehensive strategy for mainstreaming. For example, at the Ugandan country level, employees described the phase-out of the disability work as being replaced by general mainstreaming, although they could not identify any training for such inclusion or any other mechanisms to ensure this mainstreaming actually occurred.[244] A copy of the 2003 *Disability, Equality and Human Rights* training manual was present on the shelves of the Kampala office library, but that did not show any sign of affecting programmes. This was because no blue-prints had been drawn up to actually enable this to happen, and attentions were diverted to gender and HIV/AIDS inclusivity training.[245] In the 2007-2010 Oxfam GB Strategic Plan, it was actually acknowledged that although the long-term goal for SCO5 included other groups, "the priority for Oxfam at present is gender equality."[246] This left disabled people phased-out and not yet mainstreamed.

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Can questions of "[c]apacity and comparative advantage"[247] justify the consequences of this phase-out? Can asking, "[d]oes Oxfam have the capacity and advantage in this area to promote envisaged change, or would it be more

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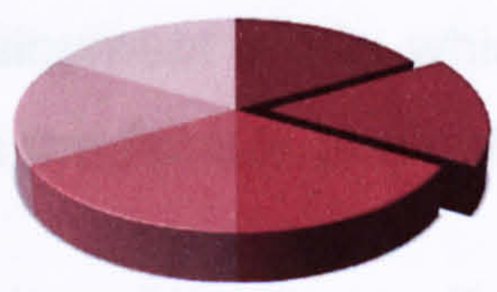
[242] Harris, Alison with Enfield, Sue (2003) *Disability, Equality and Human Rights* p. 31; and Yeo, Rebecca (2002) *Chronic Poverty and Disability* p. 6.
[243] Oxfam GB in Uganda Employee (2005) Interview; and Traboulsi, Omar (2000) *Oxfam GB in Uganda: Report on Review of Disability Programme* p. 18.
[244] Oxfam GB in Uganda Employee (2005) Interview.
[245] Oxfam GB in Uganda Employee (2005) Interview.
[246] Oxfam GB (2007) *Oxfam Strategic Plan 2007-2010* p. 7.
[247] Oxfam GB (1998) *Setting the Course for the Twenty-First Century* p. 67.

effectively done by other actors or a combination of actors?"[248] mean that disabled people in development should once again be in the hands of 'experts' 'specialists' and 'alternative organisations'? Considering that the history of disabled persons' exploitation has led the disability movement to campaign explicitly against exactly such paternal provisions which lead to exclusion, marginalisation and disabled people being hidden from society,[249] it is not a matter of simply where Oxfam's "critical mass"[250] lies. These issues will be further discussed in the next two chapters. Now the affects the growth of marketing the INGO sector has had on decisions taken at head office will be examined.

4.3.4 MARKETING



Marketing

The SCOs and Oxfam's working culture dominated another area of Oxfam's activities: marketing. The SCOs became an integral part of the Oxfam product, and closely associated with the marketing of its brand. This section will be looking at how Oxfam was marketed and the importance of the SCO concept blocks.

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[248] Oxfam GB (1998) *Setting the Course for the Twenty-First Century* p. 67.

[249] Finkelstein, Vic (2001) *A Personal Journey into Disability Politics* p. 5; Frost, Barbara (2000) *Disability and Development* p. 8; and Tregaskis, Claire (2002) 'Social Model Theory: the story so far ...' p. 460.

[250] Whitbread, Jasmine (2006) Interview.

Oxfam's logo is an internationally recognised symbol.[251]

This image and what it represents was cultivated through publicity campaigns, consistent high profile work corroborating the values the logo stands for and careful corporate brand-management undertaken by all members of Oxfam International together with the branding consultancy firm, the Interbrand Foundation.[252] The complexity of this endeavour is compounded by the brand's association with the different members of Oxfam International,[253] making concept-blocks such as the 'culture' and the SCOs even more essential for defining and guiding the development work, which is the 'product' Oxfam is selling, so as to present a more predictable and coherent package.[254]

The marketing imperative laid the obligation to "[p]rotect the Oxfam name and enhance its standing"[255] on all of the head offices of those belonging to the Oxfam International affiliation. As was discussed in chapter two, such brand marketing for INGOs requires a clear and consistent approach to the development activities and the publicity and communication sent out to the public.[256] The driving force to streamline Oxfam's activities on an international level to produce "a clear and consistent approach" with which to associate "[the] name "Oxfam"[257] was clearly stated by Oxfam International and the other Oxfam

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[251] Oxfam International (2006) *Promises to Keep Evaluation of the Implementation of Towards Global Equity, Oxfam International's strategic plan, 2001 – 2006, Volume I: Synthesis Report* p. 12.
[252] The Interbrand Foundation (undated) 'The Oxfam Brand'.
[253] Oxfam International (2006) *Promises to Keep Evaluation of the implementation of Towards Global Equity* pp. 11-12.
[254] Offenheiser, Raymond; Holcombe, Susan; and Hopkins, Nancy (1999) 'Grappling with Globalization, Partnership and Learning' p. 127.
[255] Oxfam international (2001) *Towards Global Equity Strategic Plan 2001-2004* p. 3.
[256] Jenkinson, Angus; Sain, Branko; and Bishop, Kevin (2005) 'Optimising Communications for Charity Brand Management' *International Journal of Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Market* Vol. 10, pp. 79-92.
[257] Oxfam international (2001) *Towards Global Equity Strategic Plan 2001-2004* p. 3.

head offices. Oxfam America, for example, believed the international collaboration in resources, ideas, brand marketing, common logo and policy would help build "name recognition" for the Oxfams.[258] The rights to this trademark logo belong to Oxfam International, and although the trademark name 'Oxfam' belongs to Oxfam GB, it has allocated Oxfam International the responsibilities for the allocation and protection of that name.[259] Therefore, to use the name Oxfam, the organisation has made a commitment to align along the SCO lines, and it is the corporate centre's responsibility to ensure the image it fosters and projects is consistent with the brand image being cultivated.

Through the use of the culture and SCOs, Oxfam GB was optimistic about the coherence being generated, both throughout its own organisation, and throughout the Oxfam International affiliation. This was clearly linked to the need for a clear brand and identity.[260] The energies Oxfam directed towards marketing were significant; in the year 2001/2 the total fundraising costs totalled some £19.9 million.[261] The Oxfam GB Strategic Plan for 2003-6 made clear the centrality of marketing when it stated that: "Getting our money, as much as spending it, requires equal amounts of brilliance, professionalism and sheer hard work."[262] This effort has resulted in Oxfam being able to claim that it is "Big enough for 99 per cent of the great British public to have heard of us."[263] How many in other parts of the world is not mentioned, but during the interviews conducted in Uganda, many of the interviewees responded that they had not heard of Oxfam, and most of those who had, did not know what Oxfam did.[264]

In its communications to the Western public, Oxfam deliberately emphasised its working culture, as well as the five aims represented by the SCOs. For example,

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[258] Offenheiser, Raymond; Holcombe, Susan; and Hopkins, Nancy (1999) 'Grappling with Globalization, Partnership and Learning' p. 127.
[259] International Non Governmental Organisations Accountability Charter (2007) *Report on Charter Compliance: Oxfam International* p. 6.
[260] Oxfam GB (2003) *Oxfam GB Strategic Plan 2003-2006* p. 42.
[261] Oxfam GB (2002) *Oxfam Annual Report and Accounts 2001/2002* p. 15.
[262] Oxfam GB (2003) *Oxfam GB Strategic Plan 2003-2006* p. 3.
[263] Oxfam GB (2007) Part of the bigger picture campaign 'Oxfam: What We Do'.
[264] Disabled People in Kamuli (2006) Interviews.

each year Oxfam produces a series of corporate documents including Annual Reports and Accounts, Annual Reviews, Stakeholder Surveys and Programme Impact Reports. These are available to the public should they wish to access in depth information about Oxfam's work, and they are usually structured around the SCO categories. However, most members of the public would not dig that deep to form their opinion of Oxfam's work. In which case Oxfam's five aims (the main heading each SCO) are easily accessible on the website, and even photographic images produced for publicity can be found to have aspects of Oxfam's culture and SCOs encoded into their composition.[265] This can be seen through the gendered composition of photographs, the collaborative endeavours being represented, tangible evidence of physical projects, depictions of children learning, and so forth.[266]

Davison, in her study of the photographs used in Oxfam GBs 2003/4 Annual Review provides a breakdown of how the visual representations have encoded Oxfam's culture and SCOs:

> "the cover suggests the goals of accountability (through provision of information), cost-effectiveness (through the use of electronic media) and innovation (through novel delivery)... the cover suggests the programme aims of promoting the "Right to social services [SCO2] – education"... and the "Right to be heard" [SCO4]"[267]

Davison also goes on to note how the nature of the distribution of these documents and images to those in the West, and the content of the images, in this case, Kenyan children learning the alphabet with counters made out of beer bottle tops, blurs traditional boundaries "as the corporate mingles with the charitable."[268] This brings the analysis back to the influences of the corporate managerial elements of the modern INGO world Oxfam is firmly and inextricably rooted in.

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[265] Davison, Jane (2007) 'Photographs and accountability' pp. 143-145.
[266] Davison, Jane (2007) 'Photographs and accountability' pp. 143-145.
[267] Davison, Jane (2007) 'Photographs and accountability' p. 149.
[268] Davison, Jane (2007) 'Photographs and accountability' p. 149.

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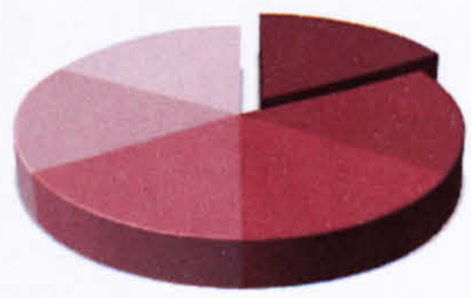
The interwoven nature of managerial structure, culture, aims and objectives, mainstreaming and marketing have been explored. This provides a comprehensive picture of the decision-making terrain at head office, where it made decisions regarding disability and what issues would receive training and prominence in proposal-review-writing routines. It also has shown how these decisions have contributed to the organisational characteristics travelling down through the organisations to the lower levels. However, one last bundle of characteristics is left to explore, which has had a profound effect on the evolution of organisational policy, and that is Oxfam and organisational learning.

4.4
ORGANISATIONAL LEARNING

"Although we call ourselves a learning organisation, we are crap at it."[269]



6 **Learning as an Organisation**

Chapter two discussed how INGOs have recently become eager to promote themselves as learning organisations;[270] Oxfam, as Porter and Smyth make clear, was like most international NGOs in its aspirations to "be a learning organisation".[271] However, as this research has been highlighting, the path from organisational aspirations to the implementation of a policy is not straightforward or guaranteed: it requires significant maintenance and signposting by the upper echelons of the management structure.[272] This section will be looking at how Oxfam has addressed the issue of knowledge-management and organisational learning, areas it highlighted in the 1998 Review as key issues to receive corporate backing.[273]

This chapter has introduced some of the behavioural chains present in the decision-making terrains of the upper echelons of the Oxfam management. Chapter two, section 2.4.1, discussed some of the organisational characteristics which inhibit organisational learning, including heavy workloads and time constraints,[274] which prevent staff engaging in learning activities; and 'cost-

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[269] Oxfam GB Head Office Employee (2006) Interview.
[270] Roper, Laura and Pettit, Jethro (2002) 'Development and the Learning Organisation: an introduction' *Development in Practice* Vol. 12, Nos. 3 and 4, p. 258.
[271] Porter, Fenella, and Smyth, Ines (1998) 'Gender Training for development practitioners' p. 60.
[272] Stephen, June (2001) 'Knowledge Management in Oxfam' *Information Development* Vol. 17, No. 2, p. 107.
[273] Stephen, June (2001) 'Knowledge Management in Oxfam' p. 107; and Oxfam GB (1998) *Setting the Course for the Twenty-First Century* p. 41.
[274] Dawson, Elsa (2005) 'Strategic gender mainstreaming in Oxfam GB' p. 86.

efficiency' and the emphasis on tangible results,[275] which place the onus on generating output not outcome.[276] On the other hand, learning can be bolstered by characteristics, such as internal pressures to increase the effectiveness of gender mainstreaming by collecting gender sensitive information on programme implementation.[277] All of these elements are present within Oxfam, from the emphasis on cost-efficiency in Oxfam's culture,[278] to the measures which have been taken to monitor gender mainstreaming.[279]

Organisational learning is believed to aid the mainstreaming of minority issues;[280] therefore, it is an important element to look at when assessing minority issues within the INGO. This section will be looking at what investments Oxfam made towards the goal of organisational learning and how learning occurred on the four fronts: the individual, the partners, the external and the organisational level. This will shed further light on the interplay of organisational characteristics within Oxfam, the nature and flows of knowledge production and dissemination, and the energies invested in research and learning about both disability and gender.

Within Oxfam, a commitment was made to knowledge-management and organisational learning. The Strategic Review of 1998 made this clear when it said:

> "Oxfam must place a new emphasis on 'knowing what it knows' and sharing this knowledge quickly and effectively. To develop the culture and ways of working which will promote the creation and sharing of knowledge will require a new approach to aligning management,

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[275] Wiedenhof, C and Molenaar, H. (2006) 'One never knows: research Policy and Knowledge Management in Dutch development cooperation' *Knowledge Management for Development Journal* Vol. 2, No. 3, p. 6-7.
[276] Albert, Bill; Dube, A.K.; and Riis-Hansen, Trine Cecilie (2005) *Has Disability Been Mainstreamed into Development Cooperation?* pp. 22-23.
[277] Oxfam GB (2006) *Global Programme Learning Report 2006.*
[278] Oxfam GB (1998) *Setting the Course for the Twenty-First Century* p. 134.
[279] DFID (2004) *Oxfam Partnership Programme Agreement (PPA) Annual Review* p. 8; Oxfam GB (2003) *DfID - Oxfam GB Partnership Programme Agreement Second Review Report 2002/2003* p. 33; and Oxfam GB (2004) programme Impact Report 2004 p. 59.
[280] Kelleher, David and the Gender at Work Collaborative (2002) 'Organisational learning: a borrowed toolbox?' *Development in Practice* Vol. 2, Nos. 3 and 4, p. 312.

> information and learning development systems. In particular Oxfam should... identify and prioritise those activities where knowledge is critical to its impact... [and] develop an integrated framework in support of these activities, sponsored by a corporate manager."[281]

A Knowledge Management Project Sponsor was allocated, who was both a senior manager and a member of the corporate management team.[282] A cross programme learning fund was created to encourage learning,[283] and a three year budget of £200,000 was provided in 2000 for pilot projects and knowledge-management techniques training.[284] There was support, declarations of the desire to be a learning organisation, and money allocated for the learning endeavour to entrench itself within Oxfam's operational blue-prints.

However, organisational learning and knowledge-management were to come up against obstacles arising from other organisational characteristics, such as cost-efficiency, the need to show tangible impact, and the clearly delineated thematic focus provided by the SCOs. Compared to the other organisational characteristics, knowledge-management and organisational learning were to be secondary supportive by-products of Oxfam's main commodity: 'development'. The Strategic Review of 1998 made this very clear when it stated: "Oxfam's primary purpose and passion remains to overcome poverty and suffering; the education and research are secondary aims, pursued to the extent that they help that purpose."[285]

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[281] Oxfam GB (1998) *Setting the Course for the Twenty-First Century* p. 14.
[282] Stephen, June (2001) 'Knowledge Management in Oxfam' p. 107.
[283] Madon, S. (1999) 'International NGOs: networking, information flows and learning' *Journal of Strategic Information Systems* Vol. 8 Issue 3, p. 257.
[284] Stephen, June (2001) 'Knowledge Management in Oxfam' p. 108.
[285] Oxfam GB (1998) *Setting the Course for the Twenty-First Century* p. 41.

4.4.1 INDIVIDUAL LEARNING

Individual learning as a vital element in Oxfam's organisational learning processes was highlighted in 1996 by the Learning and Development Team of the Human Resource Department in the International Division; this body specifically emphasised the importance of individual learning and individuals' responsibility to contribute to Oxfam's overall learning.[286] The analysis in this section will follow the same pattern as chapter two, using the four modes of knowledge creation as defined by Knight and Liesch:[287] socialisation, combination, externalisation, and internalisation.

a) Socialisation: tacit knowledge to tacit knowledge

Chapter two discussed the peril of staff turnover in INGOs and the retention of tacit knowledge (knowledge gained from personal experience and stored in a person's head). Oxfam has a history of high staff turnover, especially in field offices[288] and even more so in southern Africa.[289] Action was taken to counter these high levels through the implementation of a Global Rewards Project in 2002-2003,[290] which was closely followed by focusing on an organisational policy of "talent management" aimed at "developing staff and investing in people".[291] Such techniques to aid staff retention served several goals, most importantly, cost-efficiency, because if fewer staff left, fewer newcomers needed to be trained. This also helped protect the knowledge base of the organisation as the valuable tacit knowledge remained within Oxfam and could be built upon.

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[286] Porter, Fenella, and Smyth, Ines (1998) 'Gender Training for development practitioners' p 60.
[287] Knight, Gary A. and Liesch, Peter W. (2002) 'Information Internalisation in Internationalising the Firm' *Journal of Business Research* Vol. 55 No. 12, p. 989.
[288] Dawson, Elsa (1998) 'The Relevance of Social Audit for Oxfam p. 1466; Oxfam GB (2003) *Programme Impact Report 2003* p. 16–17; and Oxfam GB (2007) *Oxfam GB in Partnership* p. 32.
[289] Oxfam GB Head Office Employee (2006) Interview.
[290] Oxfam GB (2003) *DfID - Oxfam GB Partnership Programme Agreement Second Review Report 2002/2003* p. 3.
[291] Department for Education and Skills and the Department of Health (2006) *Industry Techniques and inspiration for Commissioners: Every Child Matters, Change for Children* p. 74.

However, in 2005-2006 staff turnover was still high, standing at 19.3% internationally, and 14.7% for employees based in the UK.[292]

Retaining experienced staff and their valuable knowledge is a fundamental element in organisational learning; however, within Oxfam that knowledge was increasingly shaped by thematic focus areas defined by the corporate centre. As has been previously been discussed in this chapter, since 1998 Oxfam had been introducing methods to coordinate its international work and create a unified organisational image. This created a more coherent body of work on an international scale, (although the restructuring and disruption did prompt an initial rise in staff turnover).[293] From a previously ad hoc[294] experience of policy formation and programme implementation, the concept-blocks of the SCOs were made more prominent, and the experiences available to staff became streamlined within Oxfam's thematic areas, or "highly constraining thematic Aim silos" as one head office employee described them.[295]

Regions, thematic divisions, and SCOs all provided useful institutional tools with which help keep Oxfam's activities organised, monitored and focused, but for the individuals, it led to a profound change in their experience of working for Oxfam. This was described by one Oxfam employee as follows: "Previously staff were encouraged to be all-rounders, assigned an area, engaged with partners in that area and were expected to know a little about each partner. They were geographical specialists, not SCO specialists."[296] Staff became specialists for a more productive, manageable and efficient organisation, but this inhibited cross-fertilisation,[297] innovation, and encouraged single loop learning: thinking how best to achieve the current set of aims without questioning the aims themselves.

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[292] Oxfam GB (2006) *Oxfam Annual Report and Accounts 2005/2006* p. 13.
[293] Oxfam GB (2003) *DfID - Oxfam GB Partnership Programme Agreement Second Review Report 2002/2003* p. 3.
[294] Hastie, Rachel (1997) *Disabled Children in a Society at War* p. 66 and 27.
[295] Palmer, Robin (2007) *Working on Land Rights for Oxfam* p. 3.
[296] Palmer, Robin (2005) Interview.
[297] Palmer, Robin (2007) *Working on Land Rights for Oxfam* p. 3.

b) Combination: Explicit knowledge to explicit knowledge

In 2002, Oxfam worked in over 75 countries[298] covering a diverse range of projects, programmes and relationships with partners. The activities Oxfam was involved with became more streamlined with the categorisation of programmes into SCO bands; therefore information of the activities became easier to manage. It also enabled the construction of comparable and useable studies of what Oxfam was doing and how it was doing it. However, as this section will discuss, the collection and processing of information within Oxfam had inherent contradictions and inefficiencies built into the system because of the presence of conflicting organisational characteristics, such as the cultural emphasis on innovation and compartmentalism introduced with the SCO "silos".[299]

Combination learning consists of taking explicit knowledge, such as information from reports, databases and other forms of second hand accounts, and reconstituting that information to re-present a new source of explicit knowledge. This is not done without a reason: knowledge is combined and reformatted for a purpose. The corporate centre's relationship with knowledge-management and learning was different from other levels within Oxfam: its main concerns were accountability, marketing, campaigning and organisational learning. The majority of work conducted at head office depended on combination knowledge, but the methods put in place for collecting and distributing that knowledge had a distinct impact on the content and quality of the information head office had at its disposal.

There were three main avenues for information of Oxfam's programme work to be passed up to head office: through documents (proposals, reviews, plans and appraisals); through electronic communication (data bases and e-mails); and through head office visits to country offices and programme sites. However, as discussed in the previous section, it must be noted that the SCOs had a serious

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[298] Oxfam GB (2002) *Oxfam Annual Report and Accounts 2001/2002* p. 5.
[299] Palmer, Robin (2007) *Working on Land Rights for Oxfam* p. 3.

impact on shaping the information which was codified into the explicit knowledge which would be passed up to head office. The 2002/2003 Annual Reports and Accounts described the SCOs as "the framework for linking from the local to the global and back".[300] They could also be seen as a way of filtering what information was regarded as relevant to be conveyed up the echelons of the organisation and then transmitted to the public and donors.

REPORTS

Since the 1998 Review of Strategic Intent, all activities have increasingly come to be seen through the SCO lens in order to play to Oxfam's strengths and improve programme consistency and coherence.[301] This not only changed the focus of programmes and the experiences open to employees, but also changed the focus of report writing. The focus on the 'procedures', the use of the SCO terminology, resulted with proposals explicitly emphasising their SCO compatibility,[302] the production of documents outlining a country office's plan for activities within a specific SCO,[303] and reviews on country programme work to be devised under SCO categories.[304] The information passed through to head office, was laced with SCO references.

Oxfam's *Global Programme Learning Report* of 2006 highlighted concerns of the head office regarding the lower levels performance in the production of knowledge for their use, including "a frequent lack of basic, systematic data collection, and adequate monitoring systems", "[p]oor documentation", continuity problems when staff left, and a tendency for descriptive as opposed to analytical reporting.[305] This shows how the corporate centre's relationship with the

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[300] Oxfam GB (2003) *Oxfam Annual Report and Accounts 2002/2003* p. 5.
[301] Oxfam GB (2006) *Global Programme Learning Report 2006* p. 1.
[302] Muhereza, Frank Emmanuel (June 2004) *Oxfam GB – A Long Term Program Strategy for the Rwenzori Region* p. 40.
[303] Oxfam GB in Uganda (2004) *Oxfam: Support to the Right to be Heard Programme in Uganda 2003-2006* (Unpublished Report).
[304] Oxfam GB in Uganda (2002) *Proceeds of the Programme Meeting.*
[305] Oxfam GB (2006) *Global Programme Learning Report 2006* p. 5.

knowledge-management process differed from the lower levels. The head office needed comparative data and details which could be included in combination reports, descriptive reports were seen of little value at this level.[306] Tacit knowledge of programmes requires an in depth engagement with people and events, and that was not what head office was looking to gather and produce at the corporate centre.

DATABASES

Like most organisations in today's globalised electronic world, Oxfam has made extensive use of electronic methods for communication, knowledge sharing and employee interaction.[307] One such use of this method of knowledge storage and transmission is Oxfam's Words and Picture Library: an intranet database storing information and stories specifically for the use of publication and external communication of Oxfam's work to donors and the public. This provides descriptions of varying length of specific programmes, quotes, photos and where these programmes fit into the SCOs.[308]

The use of electronic databases provided Oxfam with a cost effective, quick and easy way to make a large amount of data available to a geographically dispersed audience. For the purpose of marketing and creating overview documentation, such a database performs its function. However, for creating a deeper understanding on which to base learning, these databases failed to trap tacit knowledge of the country level staff, or even the detailed, day to day records of dealings with partners; most of the detailed information, the

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[306] Oxfam GB (2006) *Global Programme Learning Report 2006* p. 5.
[307] Dawson, Elizabeth; Dodd, Rosie; Roberts, Jill; and Wakeling, Catherine (2004) 'Issues and Challenges for record management in the charity and voluntary sector' p. 114.
[308] Sayer, Geoff (1999) '"NUDIPU's role should be to advocate..."' Internal Communications on Oxfam Words and Picture Library; Sayer, Geoff (1999) '"We respect people for what they are, not how they might appear"' Internal Communications on Oxfam Words and Picture Library; and Sayer, Geoff (2000) '"Ten years ago we couldn't talk in public. No one would listen to us..."' Internal Communications on Oxfam Words and Picture Library.

knowledge which creates understanding, remained at the local level either in reports or in individual employees.[309]

TRAVEL

The increasing dependency on reports and data bases, which were incomplete and framed around SCO categories, can be seen to be directly linked to the notion of cost-efficiency. This had an effect on the learning experience of the UK based employees because of the decision to curb the amount of travelling Oxfam employees were able to do.[310] One long-term Oxfam employee described this as being the reason staff in Oxford had less knowledge and understanding of the countries and regions where Oxfam worked.[311] After the regionalisation process, only the senior management were encouraged to travel;[312] the rest of the employees worked with information provided by reports, databases and e-communication, as opposed to high investment personal knowledge, experience and collective learning. Because most employees at the corporate centre were not learning about events first hand, more of their work was conducted on the basis of combination knowledge. Robin Palmer, Oxfam's Global Land Advisor, describes the affect of this on the corporate centre:

> "It's a little ironic that in an age where global communications are so much more sophisticated, we perhaps know far less about the people we strive to serve than we did when we spent more time sleeping in rural villages or urban compounds."[313]

What can be seen from this brief overview of Oxfam's use of reports, data bases and travel, is that the type of knowledge which is valued, accessible and considered useful at the corporate centre is not extensive detailed accounts of work at the lower levels, but information which is easy to access and can be

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[309] Dawson, Elizabeth; Dodd, Rosie; Roberts, Jill; and Wakeling, Catherine (2004) 'Issues and Challenges for record management in the charity and voluntary sector' p. 114.
[310] Palmer, Robin (2005) Interview.
[311] Palmer, Robin (2005) Interview.
[312] Palmer, Robin (2005) Interview.
[313] Palmer, Robin (2007) *Working on Land Rights for Oxfam* p. 3.

used for comparative purposes.[314] The next chapter will provide a contrasting account of individual learning, and more interestingly, a different perception of how the knowledge sent up the Oxfam hierarchy is actually received.

c) Externalisation: Tacit Knowledge to Explicit Knowledge

In Uganda, one Oxfam employee said the best way they had to communicate their ideas and what they are doing to head office was through the use of OPAL, the computer based system called "Oxfam Programme, Accountability and Learning".[315] This was relatively new at the time of the interviews, having rolled out in 2003 as an initiative which would "improve programme accountability and learning".[316] As knowledge-management structures go, this was a clear example of technology being utilised to collect information in a stacked manner: details were stored up, creating a fragmented and functional display, but not able to generate a tacit understanding at the other end of the internet cable.

The Strategic Review highlighted that the use of new technology depended on employees understanding the limitations:

> "Oxfam staff must understand the distinction between data, information and knowledge and recognise that effectiveness in application of knowledge can be facilitated by improved information technology, but essentially depends on the attitudes and abilities of its people. The value of improved technology lies in the utilisation of this technology, rather than in the technology itself."[317]

The intranet database focus for Oxfam's knowledge-management was more than likely influenced by the Knowledge Management Project Manager's position in the IT department.[318] Even the non-electronic forms of documentation have been described as standardised and tailored to be fed into a larger system

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[314] Oxfam GB (2006) *Global Programme Learning Report 2006* p. 5.
[315] Oxfam GB in Uganda Employee (2005) Interview.
[316] DFID-Oxfam GB (2003) *Partnership Programme Agreement – Second Review Report 2002/2003* p. 3.
[317] Oxfam GB (1998) *Setting the Course for the Twenty-First Century* p. 74.
[318] Stephen, June (2001) 'Knowledge Management in Oxfam' p. 107.

for the manufacturing of statistics and graphical representation of Oxfam's work.[319] And yet, in the 2006 Global Programme Learning Report, the knowledge produced at lower levels was criticised for being too descriptive and not analytical enough.[320] Tacit knowledge may be an organisation's best asset,[321] but head office was not trying to tap into the detailed side of their operations, as their role, marketing, coordinating, and communicating with donors, required different types of knowledge.

OPAL contained information about Oxfam's programme work throughout the world. This was open to Oxfam programme workers via an intranet so they had access to information on many projects, a wealth of overlapping illustrations of Oxfam's working and examples of the SCOs in practice. Whitbread described the use of OPAL as follows:

> "What it did was it provided a way of being able to amalgamate up and take views and get management information at a much higher level and it provided a view in on the programme which we had never had before... my deputy... was like, 'We had no idea what programmes we were running.' So I suppose it enabled head quarters or anybody not at the country level, to *leam* if you want, to see – Gosh these are all of our programmes at the very basic level – you know – being able to see things.[322]

Having the information does not equate to "learning" in the sense of a tacit, profound understanding of what events are like on the ground, but that is of limited use for the types of decisions which have to be made at the corporate level. The empathy and compassion which accompany tacit understanding can hamper business-minded and strategic decision-making. For Oxfam, the intranet system was a useful tool for providing a multiplicity of examples and evidence to increase the breadth of information on which policy can be formed, *and* help monitor their overseas programmes in one accessible and structured layout. As

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[319] Van Brabant, Koenraad (1997) *Organisational and Institutional learning in the Humanitarian Sector: Opening the Dialogue* p. 26.
[320] Oxfam GB (2006) *Global Programme Learning Report 2006* p. 5.
[321] Knight, Gary A. and Liesch, Peter W. (2002) 'Information Internalisation in Internationalising the Firm' p. 983.
[322] Whitbread, Jasmine (2006) Interview.

one Oxfam GB employee in Uganda described, OPAL "has really centralised our programme work".[323]

Individuals with tacit knowledge were inputting their experiences into a computer in an office setting, with time constraints, and within SCO categorisations. In the Oxfam Words and Picture Library database the SCO categorisation can be clearly seen at the start of each entry, where each programme is classified according to percentage compatibility with each SCO. For example, entries for this database in 1999 described NUDIPU as being classified as 50% SCO4 and 50% SCO5.2.[324] These articles were entered into the database the year after the review introduced the SCOs, and was the start of the filtering which was described in the previous section.

This categorisation reveals two things: how the SCOs were initially superimposed upon existing programmes and that information was being formulated and packaged for head office with SCO criteria clearly in the foreground. If an employee is writing for an audience in terms of the SCOs, the events will be portrayed in terms of the SCO, and extraneous information will be minimal, due to time constraints. Programmes were judged on their overall compatibility with the SCOs, and methods of data collection such as data bases increased the categorisation of programmes and partners; this highlighted more clearly partners and programmes which fell out of the accepted strategic focus. In the era before strategic plans and data base entries, a relationship with a partner, although fragile, would not be ended because it fell into the wrong classification. This shows how knowledge-management systems were both affected by other organisational changes, and contributed to other trends which were developing within Oxfam, such as altering the basis of partnerships by

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[323] Oxfam GB in Uganda Employee (2005) Interview.

[324] Sayer, Geoff (1999) "'The challenge now is for the government. We are the service providers...'" Internal Communications on Oxfam Words and Picture Library; and Sayer, Geoff (1999) "'We need schemes that will make us job creators not job seekers.'" Internal Communications on Oxfam Words and Picture Library and others.

changing the type of information available on partners paving the way to the termination of a partnership because of "internal reasons".[325]

The intranet system's role in the knowledge-management within Oxfam is more cost efficient, as staff do not need to travel to access it, but less profound on an individual level. Sat at a desk in Oxford reading a computer screen could not lead to the same understanding of a programme as actually being there, and the explicit knowledge it does store has been criticised for its incomplete and unsystematic approach to the monitoring of variables.[326] With staff at the country level claiming that OPAL was a very useful tool for them to input their opinions into Oxfam,[327] it is a flawed conduit, and the rating of the intranet system by interviewees in Oxford was a lot less complimentary than those in Uganda.[328]

The Intranet system's use depended on what was expected from the system. As Whitbread remarked:

> "[I]n terms of learn about what's going on at a programme level, I don't think it was ever designed to do – should never have been designed to do that, and wasn't, we should have just changed the expectations around that, I think you learn through people actually and not from computer systems."[329]

Some Oxfam employees were less convinced about its use even for overviews; one interviewee commented that what you got with OPAL was "garbage in, garbage out". People entered details out of obligation, with minimal details, leading to a patchy collection of raw data with little applicable use.[330] This was the perception from head office of a system which was described in Uganda of one of their main methods of communicating to head office. However, this does not mean that the system does not have other uses; for example, it fosters the belief in lower levels that their views are being received without the upper levels

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[325] Traboulsi, Omar (2000) *Oxfam GB in Uganda: Report on Review of Disability Programme* p. 49.
[326] Oxfam GB (2006) *Global Programme Learning Report 2006.*
[327] Kampala office Interview July 2005
[328] Oxfam GB in Uganda Employees (2005) Interviews.
[329] Whitbread, Jasmine (2006) Interview.
[330] Palmer, Robin (2005) Interview.

investing the money and time it would take to thoroughly engage with this knowledge.

d) Internalisation: explicit knowledge to tacit knowledge

To take the explicit knowledge gathered by Oxfam and turn it into tacit experience which employees develop in the course of their work, a process of exposure to concepts followed by the reification of practice needs to occur. The corporate centre chose which knowledge would be used and then disseminated that selected explicit knowledge; for example Oxfam's focus on gender mainstreaming meant explicit knowledge on areas such as gender analysis were distributed to the lower levels,[331] and access to the SCO themed data base allowed the 'SCOs' categories to be fleshed out ready for the programme workers to build their own experiences within the SCO boundaries.

It was acknowledged by head office employees that information was easier to communicate down through the managerial hierarchy as opposed to vice versa.[332] The control of information is an important element in the blue-prints of an organisation, as it helps orientate practice and justify certain procedures, such as approaches to gender mainstreaming and alignment along strategic lines, but internalisation requires more than just the distribution of documents and manuals.

The distribution of explicit knowledge is no good unless there are mechanisms in place to make sure documents are read, ideas are incorporated, and the knowledge internalised. For example, Oxfam's emphasis on gender training[333] and stipulations that each report produced needed to contain a section explicitly addressing gender issues,[334] were specific blue-prints which meant the gender documentation which was distributed was actually utilised. The training manual

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[331] Oxfam GB (2006) *Global Programme Learning Report* p. 26.
[332] Whitbread, Jasmine (2006) Interview.
[333] Oxfam GB (2006) *Global Programme Learning Report* p. 26.
[334] Oxfam GB (2005) *Programme Impact Report 2005* p. 12.

on how to include disabled people in development work which Oxfam published in 2003[335] was present in the Kampala office. However, without specific incentive, time pressed employees grappling with gender issues and an increasing obligation to produce documentation[336] were unlikely to read or profoundly alter their behaviour because of the presence of a book on a shelf. As will be discussed in the next chapter, section 5.3.3, ideas of disability mainstreaming did not have any noticeable affect on the programme work Oxfam conducted in Uganda.

Training was not a uniform process, and this affected employees' exposure to, or utilisation of, the explicit knowledge available to them in their office setting. One senior member of staff described the process of induction as "in the lap of the gods".[337] Another interviewee described how the different management styles or the sudden onset of disasters could affect the quality and duration of the induction period for new members of staff.[338] This led to variation of staff awareness of Oxfam's ideational structures and gender mainstreaming. When this was combined with inherent differing personal styles, competencies and experiences, it formed significantly different priorities in the decision-making terrain, which is another reason why looking at the local level is important when analysing INGO-partner relationships, and why different countries and regions tackle issues in markedly different ways.[339]

In the age of coherence[340] and strategic focus,[341] there was an emphasis on organisation-wide policies, consistent approaches and the targeting of certain issues on a global scale. Gender was one of Oxfam's organisation-wide target issues; concerted efforts were made to ensure gender came off the pages of proposals and affected employee's experiences. Gender training had increased

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[335] Harris, Alison with Enfield, Sue (2003) *Disability, Equality and Human Rights.*
[336] Oxfam GB in Uganda (1996) *Strategic Plan 1996-2000* pp. 20-21.
[337] Oxfam GB Head Office Employee (2006) Interview.
[338] Whitbread, Jasmine (2006) Interview.
[339] Palmer, Robin (2005) Personal Communication.
[340] Oxfam GB (2001) *Oxfam Annual Report and Accounts 2000/2001* p. 18.
[341] Oxfam GB (1998) *Setting the Course for the Twenty-First Century.*

since the days before the Strategic Review, when the only gender training an Oxfam employee was likely to see was a one hour training workshop in the Knowledge of Oxfam course attended by all UK based employees.[342] Employees were exposed to gender issues and encouraged to use those ideas, but as discussed in section 4.3.3, there remained no disability training.[343] The explicit knowledge Oxfam collected on the issue of disability, in the form of local reviews,[344] and Oxfam funded and published research,[345] never became tacit knowledge and the mainstreaming cycle for disability issues was broken. The concept-blocks stated disability inclusion, but employees were not given guidance in how to include disabled people in development work. The corporate centre did not have any plans or blue-prints for disability training or mainstreaming,[346] and the evaluations were not looking for the absent disabled people from the development programmes.[347]

4.4.2 PARTNER LEARNING

How Oxfam GB in Uganda learned from its partners will be discussed in the next chapter, and what experience NUDIPU had of 'learning' in its relationship with Oxfam will be discussed in chapter six. This section will briefly look at how knowledge originating from Oxfam's partners was communicated to and used by those at the corporate centre. Mechanisms were in place for the control of the information passing down to the grass roots, but as Whitbread remarked, "what we always really struggled with, less about communicating down, but how do we get that communication up, and that was left unresolved really when I left."[348]

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[342] Porter, Fenella, and Smyth, Ines (1998) 'Gender Training for development practitioners' p. 60.
[343] Oxfam GB in Uganda Employee (2005) Interview.
[344] Traboulsi, Omar (2000) *Oxfam GB in Uganda: Report on Review of Disability Programme.*
[345] Abu-Habib. Lina (1997) *Gender and Disability*; Coleridge, Peter (1993) *Disability, Liberation and Development*; Harris, Alison with Enfield, Sue (2003) *Disability, Equality and Human Rights;* and Hastie, Rachel (1997) *Disabled Children in a Society at War.*
[346] Oxfam GB in Uganda Employee (2005) Interview.
[347] Miller, Carol, and Albert, Bill (2005) *Mainstreaming Disability in Development: Lessons from gender mainstreaming.*
[348] Whitbread, Jasmine (2006) Interview.

This chapter has looked at how Oxfam managed information and learning within its own boundaries, but how did information management work when it came to the partners outside of the Oxfam system? Information from partners did flow into the organisation through reports and partner-country office interaction, but as Matthew Larkin, an independent consultant conducting a survey for Oxfam uncovered, "national partners are less clear as to how profound institutional learning is as a result of what the organisation hears."[349] This view has been echoed by other research into partner's perception of Oxfam's ability to listen to them.[350]

As discussed in chapter two, this is symptomatic of structural inequalities inherent in the system, leading to INGOs acting like "they are there only to give and that they have nothing to learn".[351] It also reflects on the increasingly strict definition of organisational culture and thematic aims, which place employees under pressure to adhere to internal guidelines and procedures.[352] Such a focus re-orientated employees' focus towards the core of Oxfam and deflected attention away from the less compartmentalised experience of the partners, who do not live life by the SCO.

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The details of the mechanisms in place to channel information into the heart of Oxfam reveal a number of things: the knowledge needs at head office, which were based around communicating with donors, global coordination and aggregate data, which led to the devaluation of descriptive information; the filtering influence of the SCO categorisation; and the problem of getting the tacit knowledge developed at the front line of Oxfam's campaign into the corporate

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[349] Larkin, Matthew in Oxfam GB (2002) *Oxfam Stakeholder Survey 2001/02* p. 17.
[350] Oxfam GB (2006) *Global Programme Learning Report 2006* p. 4 and 31.
[351] Wiedenhof, C and Molenaar, H. (2006) 'One never knows' p. 13.
[352] Leopold, Mark (2001) "Trying to Hold Things Together' International NGOs Caught up in an Emergency in North-Western Uganda, 1996-97' in Barrow, Ondine and Jennings, Michael (Eds.) *The Charitable Impulse: NGOs and Development in East and North-East Africa* (Oxford: James Curry) p. 106

centre. For these reasons, the work with partners was best understood at the country level and as Dawson et al. observe, the "records reflecting progress of projects and correspondence with partners and other involved agencies i.e. those records of use for later learning and that trace the development of Oxfam's work, remain at country level."[353]

4.4.3 EXTERNAL LEARNING

Oxfam has for a long time been very active on the international development research scene; it has regularly released campaign reports, and policy and briefing papers which are available to the public to download.[354] It produces two journals, *Development in Practice* (since 1991) and *Gender & Development* (since 1993). It has its own publishing company, Oxfam Publishing, which published its first book in 1982, *Bitter Pills, Medicine and the Third World Poor.*[355] It also engages in collaborative research with other INGOs such as Action Aid,[356] research organisations such as INTRAC,[357] and manages research projects, for other bodies such as the Commonwealth Education fund (CEF) gender project.[358]

Working with ADD, Oxfam has published four books specifically on development and disability,[359] including a training manual for INGOs to help mainstream disability policies throughout their operations.[360] During this time, a number of programmes with disability movements and DPOs were being ran by different country offices, and the ideas from the disability movement, such as the social

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[353] Dawson, Elizabeth; Dodd, Rosie; Roberts, Jill; and Wakeling, Catherine (2004) 'Issues and Challenges for record management in the charity and voluntary sector' p. 114.
[354] Oxfam Publishing (undated) 'About Us'.
[355] Melrose, Diana (1982) *Bitter Pills : Medicines and the Third World Poor* (Oxford: Oxfam).
[356] Hillier, Debbie and Wood, Brian (2003) Shattered lives: the case for tough international arms control (Eynsham: Actiona Aid and Oxfam).
[357] Oxfam GB (2003) *DfID - Oxfam GB Partnership Programme Agreement Second Review Report 2002/2003* p. 33.
[358] Oxfam GB (2007) *Oxfam Annual Report and Accounts 2006/2007* p. 11.
[359] Abu-Habib. Lina (1997) *Gender and Disability*; Coleridge, Peter (1993) *Disability, Liberation and Development*; Harris, Alison with Enfield, Sue (2003) *Disability, Equality and Human Rights*; Hastie, Rachel (1997) *Disabled Children in a Society at War.*
[360] Harris, Alison with Enfield, Sue (2003) *Disability, Equality and Human Rights.*

model, was being used by parts of Oxfam.[361] The publications stopped when disability issues were dropped from Oxfam's strategic focus. By the end of 2007, Oxfam Publishing had published 9 books which dealt with issues of disability, compared to 121 dealing with the issue of gender.[362]

Another structural change within Oxfam which had a profound effect on how Oxfam approached knowledge-management and learning was the growth of the campaigns division. The campaigns division was formed in 1991 and rapidly grew in size and prominence. This led to a conflict between, on the one hand, the desire to direct efforts towards creating an 'educated', engaged public and activities aimed at addressing the wider political causes of poverty, and on the other hand, the influence of participatory rhetoric which states the driving force should originate at the grassroots.[363] By 2003, campaigning was considered an essential tactic in the pursuit of the SCOs;[364] this was reflected in the increase in the size of the budget which rose from £7.8 million in 1999/2000[365] to £16.6 million in 2006/2007.[366] Despite the emphasis placed on this sphere of learning, education and activity, the lower levels felt there was little connection between their work and the campaigning work which was being conducted by the corporate centre.[367]

As with most other INGOs over the past two decades, within Oxfam there has been a move away from providing relief and project work to addressing the root causes of global inequalities and poverty. It was argued that to make sustained change, or to 'Make Poverty History', the things to tackle involved the "glaringly unjust global trade system, a debt burden so great that it suffocates any chance of recovery and insufficient and ineffective aid."[368] This meant campaigning and lobbying at a national and international level. In chapter six, a comparison will be

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[361] Abu-Habib. Lina (1997) *Gender and Disability* p. 11.
[362] Oxfam Publishing (undated) Online Catalogue.
[363] Palmer, Robin (2005) Interview.
[364] Oxfam GB (2003) *Oxfam GB Strategic Plan 2003-2006* p. 36.
[365] Oxfam GB (2001) *Oxfam Annual Report and Accounts 2000/2001* p. 39.
[366] Oxfam GB (2007) *Oxfam Annual Report and Accounts 2006/2007* p. 39.
[367] Oxfam GB (2006) *Oxfam Annual Report and Accounts 2005/2006* p. 14.
[368] Make Poverty History (2005) 'What we Want'.

drawn between the increased focus of Oxfam on global lobbying and its criticisms of NUDIPU focusing its energies on lobbying the Ugandan government to tackle the disablist attitudes of government and society, as opposed to making sure impact is felt at the grassroots.

4.4.4 ORGANISATIONAL LEARNING

Having discussed the three fronts of learning which contribute to the knowledge base of Oxfam, we now turn to the final and most important element for the organisation as a whole: how did Oxfam, as an organisation, learn? The introduction of the SCOs was based on a thorough review which sought to question both ways of working and Oxfam's aims and objectives. This shows that Oxfam has been able to change its way of working based on knowledge it has gathered in the past. However, this was an expensive one off review; the changes did not stem from learning mechanisms built into Oxfam's structure.

This review ushered in many changes, some of which have been discussed above. Part of these changes involved the way Oxfam managed its knowledge and the learning experiences of individual employees, but how did the new system relate to the idea of organisational learning? What needs to be established is what blue-prints were in place to achieve organisational learning, what kind of learning those blue-prints would have been predisposed to produce, and the other organisational characteristics which would provide obstacles to the successful fulfilment of the goal of organisational learning.

Oxfam had certain tools for knowledge-management: these include databases, an intranet system, fortnightly corporate newsletters, daily message sent out via e-mail to all staff, and every three months, there was a question and answer session with senior management in order to seek clarifications on Oxfam's work and raise issues.[369] There was a central library where Oxfam publications, reviews, reports and other documents were kept; regional centres also possess

[369] Stephen, June (2001) 'Knowledge Management in Oxfam' p. 108.

archives, and country level offices have mini libraries containing their proposals, reports and documentation of partners. This was how knowledge was stored, but how was it utilised?

As was made clear in chapter two, organisational learning requires knowledge collected to be applied to the workings of the organisation with the aim of improving the product it delivers.[370] For learning to possibly take place at the organisational level, Oxfam needed to have mechanisms built into the blue-print of the organisation to accommodate knowledge, reflect on it, and change organisational practices (for single loop learning), or the organisation's aims and objectives (for double loop learning). Within Oxfam, there were opportunities for the sharing of best practices developed by groups within the organisation. For example, following the 2001/2002 gender review, the knowledge and ideas gathered by the team were shared at a global workshop,[371] influencing key staff to replicate the inclusion of gender issues within their work, and helping the mainstreaming endeavour. Oxfam's 2003 Partnership Programme Agreement with DFID highlighted another example of its successful learning:

> "There were some good examples of learning being shared across Regions last year. For instance, Oxfam GB's experience in East Africa of developing a community-based targeting methodology for use in emergencies was shared with three Regions, as well as with other agencies.[372]

However, on the whole, Oxfam's definition of what the learning process should consist of involved the active replication of successful programmes:[373] how to achieve greater impact within the strategic focus the organisation had set itself. The SCOs provided very clear demarcations of Oxfam's areas of interest, and all programmes were expected to operate within the SCOs. As has been

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[370] Power, Grant; Maury, Matthew, and Maury, Susan (2002) 'Operationalising bottom-up learning in international NGOs: barriers and alternatives' *Development in Practice* Vol. 12, No. 3 and 4, p. 275.
[371] Oxfam GB (2003) *DfID - Oxfam GB Partnership Programme Agreement Second Review Report 2002/2003* p. 2.
[372] Oxfam GB (2003) *DfID - Oxfam GB Partnership Programme Agreement Second Review Report 2002/2003* p. 2.
[373] Oxfam GB (2003) *Oxfam GB Strategic Plan 2003-2006* p. 6.

discussed, this focus shaped the experiences the employees had whilst working for Oxfam; reports and information being collected and combined in the knowledge-management process further focused on these categories and selected the best information for the pursuit of these goals. Therefore the knowledge Oxfam was collecting was less likely to challenge the dominant aims and objectives, meaning if challenges were to be made to the aims and objectives, it would be more likely to be from external development discourses.

Questioning of the SCOs would be sign of double loop learning, and there was evidence of this. Oxfam International made the decision to use the five aims instead of the nine SCOs.[374] Oxfam's former International Director described the start of a similar process by Oxfam GB, where staff were increasingly using the five aims in their daily conversations and work.[375] This shift was emerging in the upper echelons of Oxfam's hierarchy, who were in a position to question Oxfam's core focus. However, as evidence of a profound questioning of how minority groups are mainstreamed, or which goals Oxfam was working towards, this was not a major shift. On the whole, the opportunities for organisational learning were largely focused on single loop learning, maximising impact and making sure Oxfam remained the world leader within its centrally defined strategic areas.

[374] Whitbread, Jasmine (2006) Interview.
[375] Palmer, Robin (2005) Interview.

4.5
CONCLUSION

This chapter has used the OLOC model outlined in chapter two to start the analysis of the Oxfam GB-NUDIPU relationship. By taking the top level of Oxfam, and exploring the framework it designed for the workings of the Oxfam global machine, the trends which were to influence decisions about Oxfam's partners have been contextualised. By understanding the wider organisational concept-blocks, blue-prints and mechanisms for handling information and knowledge, the pressures, constraints, guidance and freedom created by the crisscrossing of behavioural chains throughout all levels of Oxfam can start to be analysed at the country level.

Using the six categories of organisational characteristics highlighted for analysis by the OLOC model, (managerial structure, working practices, aims and objectives, marketing, mainstreaming and learning as an organisation), this chapter has dissected Oxfam GB's organisational characteristics and looked at the trends the 1998 Strategic Review of Intent ushered in.

The implementation of regionalisation or decentralisation strategies provided an interesting example of how managerial structures of a large INGO can be changed, but the more significant discovery for this analysis was the reasoning behind the changes and the portrayal of the shifting of power. Decentralisation theories are about becoming more flexible at the lower levels and handing down power over certain decisions. Oxfam made public statements about the motivation to be more flexible at the grassroots level;[376] however, it was clear from the plans for these regional management centres that part of their role was to curtail freedom and align Oxfam's activities along centrally defined aims.[377]

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[376] Joffe, Joel in Oxfam GB (2001) *Oxfam Annual Report and Accounts 2000/01* pp. 4-5.
[377] Oxfam GB (2003) *DfID - Oxfam GB Partnership Programme Agreement Second Review Report 2002/2003* p. 3.

To accompany the radical change in the managerial architecture initiated because of the recommendations in the Strategic Review, Oxfam also brought in new concept-blocks to align working practices and organisational aims and objectives. Working practices were defined by the five simple concept-blocks of Oxfam's 'culture. This culture stated that in all its work, Oxfam should be, making a difference, innovative, collaborative, accountable, and cost effective.[378] The influences of the need to make a difference and the need to be cost effective have been illustrated in other areas of Oxfam's working, from marketing to its approach to learning. However the nine centrally defined organisation-wide Strategic Change Objectives[379] proved to be a lot more dominant in the changes they ushered in, and caused a lot of programmes and work with partners to be terminated.

By taking the seven stages of the mainstreaming cycle described in chapter three, section 3.4.4, Oxfam's approach to gender was shown to be making progress and although the aspiration of gender equality in Oxfam's work was yet to be achieved,[380] Oxfam had been putting in place blue-prints and learning mechanisms to improve its performance in this area. The analysis of disability revealed the opposite to gender: from a positive interaction with disability issues in the 1990s, Oxfam had pulled out of engagement with the issue, believing this was not an area it could be a global leader in and therefore it was not going to focus on the issue.

This notion of strategic focus and areas where Oxfam could excel were also influenced by the marketing behavioural chain. By compartmentalising the development process, through the use of SCOs, isolation of target groups and areas where Oxfam could excel, head office could produce evidence of the difference it had made to present to the Western public and donors. The increased emphasis of coherent image and protection of the Oxfam brand

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[378] Oxfam GB (1998) *Setting the Course for the Twenty-First Century* p. 134.
[379] Oxfam GB (2003) *Oxfam GB Strategic Plan 2003-2006.*
[380] Oxfam GB (2003) *DfID - Oxfam GB Partnership Programme Agreement Second Review Report 2002/2003* p. 34; Oxfam GB (2003) *Programme Impact Report 2003* p. 19.

across, not just Oxfam GB's activities, but Oxfam International as a whole, increased the imperative to align along SCO lines and adherence to Oxfam's culture. Success in this area can be seen by Oxfam's consistent performance in the league table of popular British charities, dominating the top three of highest earners of voluntary income over many years.[381]

The final organisational characteristic which was evaluated was the notion of Oxfam as a learning organisation. This revealed how the corporate centre's knowledge needs were not centred on fostering in depth understanding or tacit knowledge of the grassroots development work amongst its head office employees. That sort of knowledge was not necessary for marketing, strategic overviews, and campaigning. The information needs of the head office were reflected in the knowledge-management mechanisms of Oxfam which had increasingly become based on explicit knowledge. Detailed information of programme work and partner relationships remained at the country level,[382] and what information was available was increasingly framed in the SCO framework.

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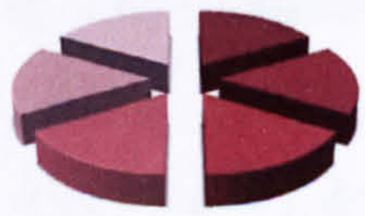
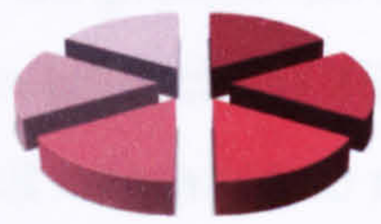
This chapter has explored organisational characteristics at the head office level, and the role Oxfam's corporate centre played in shaping the behavioural chains which would affect the decision-making terrains in the lower levels of the Oxfam GB hierarchy. This has paved the way for the next chapter which will take the analysis down to the Ugandan country office and show how these six bundles of organisational characteristics shaped the relationship with partners, and caused a major and sudden withdrawal from the disability movement in Uganda.



[381] Charities Aid Foundation (2007) 'Which individual charities are the most popular?'.
[382] Dawson, Elizabeth; Dodd, Rosie; Roberts, Jill; and Wakeling, Catherine (2004) 'Issues and Challenges for record management in the charity and voluntary sector' p. 114.

Chapter Five: The Country Office

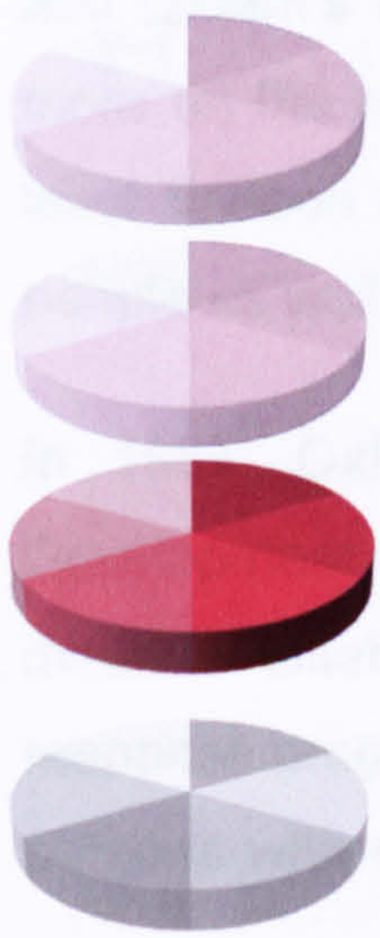
From a significant involvement with the Ugandan Disability Movement to a rhetorical mainstreaming



5.1

INTRODUCTION

"We recognise that Oxfam Uganda is a relatively small organisation with limited resources and influence"[1]



Country Office

The previous chapter looked at Oxfam GB's "corporate centre" and its role in shaping the organisational characteristics which affected decision-making throughout the different levels of Oxfam. This chapter will take the analysis down to the country level to show how the decisions at head office and the frameworks that were put in place affected decisions taken at the Ugandan level. The regional level has been omitted because the role it was assigned to play was discussed in the previous chapter, and the influence it exerted over the country level will be dealt with in this chapter.

Where chapter four was dominated by international and Western concerns of marketing, organisational coherence and culture, this chapter will be looking at how those issues mixed with the practicalities of conducting programme work at the country level. It begins by providing a brief contextualisation of Oxfam in Uganda before looking at how each of the

[1] Oxfam GB in Uganda (1996) *Strategic Plan 1996-2000* (Unpublished Report) p. 3.

organisational characteristics outlined in chapter two affected the decision-making terrain at this level.

OXFAM GB IN UGANDA

Many of the influential trends which proved central to this research originated in the 1960s. Oxfam began work in Uganda in 1963;[2] in 1965 Oxfam GB outlined its new objectives, making explicit reference to disability, but not gender;[3] Oxfam in Uganda started supporting "medical rehabilitation services" mainly to the Mulago Orthopaedic Workshop in Kampala;[4] and Hunt's *Stigma*, which has been pin pointed as the start of the disability movement,[5] was published in 1966, paving the way for the social model and the challenges that would bring to development work. As international opinion shifted in favour of the social model, and Oxfam's internal focus mirrored this shift, Oxfam GB in Uganda focused more on the social aspects of disability, providing funding and assistance to at least thirteen different organisations addressing society's attitudes to disabled people as well as their medical needs.[6]

In 1987, Oxfam GB was working closely with Action for Disability and Development (ADD) on an international scale;[7] it was engaging with the social model of disability[8] and by the mid nineties would have started both emergency response programmes and long term development projects specifically targeting persons with disabilities in the Balkans, the Caucasus and in Uganda.[9] When

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[2] Leggett, Ian (2001) *Uganda: An Oxfam Country Profile* (Oxford: Oxfam) p. 85.
[3] Black, Maggie (1992) *A Cause for Our Times: Oxfam the first 50 years* (Oxford: Oxfam and Oxford University Press) p. 91.
[4] Traboulsi, Omar (2000) *Oxfam GB in Uganda: Report on Review of Disability Programme* (Unpublished Report) p. 17.
[5] Davis, John M. (2000) 'Disability Studies as Ethnographic Research and Text: research strategies and roles for promoting social change?' *Disability and Society* Vol. 15, No. 2, p. 195.
[6] Traboulsi, Omar (2000) *Oxfam GB in Uganda: Report on Review of Disability Programme.*
[7] Mulindwa-Matovu, Christine, (2005) Personal Communication.
[8] Traboulsi, Omar (2000) Oxfam GB in Uganda: Report on Review of Disability Programme p. 17.
[9] Harris, Alison with Enfield, Sue (2003) *Disability, Equality and Human Rights: A Training Manual for Development and Humanitarian Organisations* (Oxford: Oxfam); and Eade,

seventeen disabled persons organisations wished to hold a seminar in 1987 to create a national umbrella organisation and sought funding from Oxfam in Uganda, disability rights were prominent within Oxfam on an international level. The Oxfam Uganda country programme provided funding for this seminar and the result was the formation of the National Union of Disabled People of Uganda (NUDIPU). In close collaboration with ADD,[10] Oxfam continued to fund NUDIPU until 2005.

Oxfam's Uganda office's strategic focus in 2006 involved three SCOs: SCO1, the Right to a Sustainable Livelihood; SCO3, the Right to Life and Security; and SCO4, the Right to be Heard.[11] Its operations fell into four main areas: conducting emergency work with internally displaced people in the North of Uganda, which it publicised regularly at the international level;[12] longer term development work with pastoralists in eastern Uganda as part of the region wide East Africa Regional Pastoralist Programme (EARPP);[13] relief work of a smaller nature in the Rwenzori region,[14] which the Ugandan country office hoped to expand into a more long term development programme;[15] and finally a series of advocacy campaigns such as managing the Uganda Participatory Poverty Assessment Process to make sure the voice of the poor was heard in the debt relief process.[16]

Deborah and Williams, Suzanne (1995) *The Oxfam Handbook of Development and Relief Volume One* (Oxford: Oxfam UK and Ireland) pp. 303-318.

[10] Mulindwa-Matovu, Christine, (2005) Personal Communication; and Traboulsi, Omar (2000) *Oxfam GB in Uganda: Report on Review of Disability Programme* p. 19.

[11] Oxfam GB in Uganda Employee (2005) Interview.

[12] Oxfam GB (2004) *Oxfam Annual Report and Accounts 2003/2004* p. 14; Oxfam GB (2004) *Oxfam Annual Review 2003/2004* p. 17; and Oxfam GB (2005) *Oxfam Annual Review 2004/2005* pp. 12-13.

[13] Morton, John (2006) *A Review of Oxfam GB's Horn/East Africa Regional Pastoral Programme*; and Oxfam GB (2002) *Oxfam Review of the East Africa Pastoralist Programme.*

[14] Oxfam GB in Uganda (2005) *The Rwenzori Livelihoods Improvement and Good Governance Project* (Unpublished Report) p. 24; and Muhereza, Frank Emmanuel (2004) *Oxfam GB – A Long Term Program Strategy for the Rwenzori Region August 2004 – December 2010* (Unpublished Report).

[15] Oxfam GB in Uganda Employee (2005) Interview.

[16] Oxfam GB (2003) *DfID - Oxfam GB Partnership Programme Agreement Second Review Report 2002/2003* p. 35.

The country office was a vital level in the interaction between Oxfam and NUDIPU, and in many ways, *was* the 'Oxfam' NUDIPU related to. Therefore, to understand the Oxfam-NUDIPU relationship, this level of Oxfam should form a significant part of the analysis. The starting point in this investigation involves locating the Ugandan country office in the 'map' or Oxfam, where it fitted into Oxfam's decentralisation strategy and the country office's approach to incorporating 'partners' in its work. From there, the ideational elements and the country office's role in organisational learning will be examined.

5.2
STRUCTURAL ELEMENTS

1 Managerial Structure

In 2002 Oxfam GB in Uganda employed 57 people;[17] it had a large office in Kampala which coordinated, monitored and implemented the projects and programmes throughout Uganda. There were also two local offices based in Kotido (east Uganda) and Kitgum (north Uganda), the two regions where Oxfam worked directly with beneficiaries as opposed to through partners. The Kampala Office was integrated into Oxfam's framework both administratively and ideologically. The staff were trained in gender and HIV/AIDS awareness,[18] accounts were sent to head office and the staff were divided into SCO teams.[19] The office was obliged to conduct regular reviews and participate in conferences to discuss progress towards Oxfam's aims,[20] and the role of the local offices was clearly defined in terms of the generation of information and reports to contribute to "Oxfam's skills and knowledge needs."[21]

This section will be looking at where in Oxfam's regionalised structure the Uganda programme was located, and will briefly introduce the Ugandan aspect of the regional EARPP, as an illustration of regional ties and the evolution of the Ugandan office's approach to disability issues in development. It will then look at how Oxfam GB's policy for working with partners was interpreted and voiced at

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[17] Oxfam GB in Uganda (2002) *Proceeds of the Quarterly Programme Meeting for Oxfam GB in Uganda Munyonyo Resort Hotel on March 20th-22nd* (Unpublished Report p. 6.

[18] Oxfam GB in Uganda Employee (2005) Interview.

[19] Kampala Office Observation (2005).

[20] Oxfam GB in Uganda (1996) *Strategic Plan 1996-2000*; Oxfam GB in Uganda (2002) *SCO 4 Programme for Uganda: Support to Policy and Advocacy Work in Uganda (2003-2006)* (Unpublished Report); Oxfam GB in Uganda (2002) *Proceeds of the Programme Meeting Held on 12th to 14th June 2002 at Munyonyo Resort Beach Hotel, Kampala* (Unpublished Report); and Oxfam GB in Uganda (2002) *Proceeds of the Quarterly programme Meeting for Oxfam GB in Uganda.*

[21] Oxfam GB in Uganda (2005) *The Rwenzori Livelihoods Improvement and Good Governance Project* p. 24.

the Ugandan level, and the effects the Strategic Review had on its relationship with its partners.

In 1996, Oxfam's Uganda office was already feeling the benefits of decentralisation: it had more control over grants for projects which were aligned with Oxfam's strategic plan, and was taking charge of the finances of its operations.[22] Within Uganda in the 1990s, it was not common for International Non-Governmental Organisations (INGOs) and donors to decentralise power in such a way, and the country office saw that this made them "unique... [because] much power [was] located in the field, allowing for prompt and immediate actions."[23] However, it was observed that coordination between the departments in Oxford could be improved,[24] as country offices were regularly contacted by head office staff working in different departments and on different issues, but asking similar questions.[25] To combat this and free up the time of the local staff to get on with Oxfam's operational work, the upper echelons of the corporate centre placed restrictions on those who could communicate with the lower levels, streamlining communications down into newsletters, weekly e-mail bulletins and contact only by selected managers.[26]

At the end of the 1990s, Oxfam's regionalised structure was introduced as the head office's answer to pressures for decentralisation.[27] The regional management centres were tasked with, among other things, bringing the country offices into line with the SCOs.[28] This shift in the managerial structure invested more power in the regional and local offices, and despite the increased freedom over issuing grants, concerns soon were being raised about the "highly directive" strategic focus provided by the SCOs and its constraining affect on advocacy

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[22] Oxfam GB in Uganda (1996) *Strategic Plan 1996-2000* p. 20.
[23] Oxfam GB in Uganda (1996) *Strategic Plan 1996-2000* p. 20.
[24] Oxfam GB in Uganda (1996) *Strategic Plan 1996-2000* p. 20.
[25] Oxfam GB Head Office Employee (2006) Interview.
[26] Whitbread, Jasmine (2006) Interview.
[27] Oxfam GB (2001) *Oxfam Annual Report and Accounts 2000/2001* pp. 4-5.
[28] Oxfam GB (2002) *Oxfam-DFID Participatory Programme Agreement 2002* p. 6.

work in East Africa.[29] This will be discussed in more detail in the section dealing with Aims and Objectives.

The introduction of the regional structure also created the opportunity to coordinate programmes from the regional management centres. When programmes were run dealing with cross border issues and aspects of development from which different country programmes could learn from each other, the regional management centres provided the structure through which country offices programmes were coordinated. The EARPP is one example of such collaboration. The regional collaboration between the Kenyan, Tanzanian and Uganda country offices through the Horn, East and Central Africa (HECA) regional office, was seen to help with employee learning, and strengthen the status of a marginal group (pastoralists) within the separate country offices.[30] This programme received extensive funding from DfID and Comic Relief,[31] bringing external donor scrutiny onto the programme, the affect of which will be discussed later in this chapter in the section looking at mainstreaming.

OXFAM GB IN UGANDA AND ITS PARTNERS

Oxfam GB in Uganda had long history of working with partners. It held a firm belief that working through partners helps develop "meaningful and sustainable development"[32] because local institutions are strengthened.[33] The use of the existing resources and skills was also seen to be a cost-effective strategy.[34] For this reason, where it could, the Uganda country office worked through or set up

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[29] Palmer, Robin (1998) *Oxfam GB's Land Advocacy Work in Tanzania and Uganda: The End of an Era?* p. 6.
[30] Oxfam GB (2002) *Oxfam Review of the East Africa Pastoralist Programme* p. 6.
[31] Morton, John (2006) *A Review of Oxfam GB's Horn/East Africa Regional Pastoral Programme* p. 2; and Oxfam GB (2002) *Oxfam Review of the East Africa Pastoralist Programme* p. 28.
[32] Oxfam GB in Uganda (2004) *Capacity Building for the Empowerment Review, Kotido, Uganda* p. 32.
[33] Oxfam GB in Uganda (2005) *The Rwenzori Livelihoods Improvement and Good Governance Project* p. 27.
[34] Oxfam GB in Uganda (2005) *The Rwenzori Livelihoods Improvement and Good Governance Project* p. 27

local organisations through which to work.[35] It was involved in the creation of the Dodoth Agro Pastoral Programme, (DADO),[36] The NGO Forum,[37] and NUDIPU.[38] Throughout its eighteen year history of involvement with Disabled Persons' Organisations (DPOs), Oxfam funded at least thirteen different organisations.[39]

However, because of the paucity of funds, the Uganda office often promoted relationships which are not finance based:[40] in fact, the Uganda office clearly stated that its partners have "to be cognisant of the fact that true partnership cannot be achieved unless all stakeholders have achieved meaningful independence".[41] However, the down side of its promotion of non-financial activities such as advice on planning, proposal writing, producing programme evaluations, and so forth, is that these all required Oxfam employee time,[42] adding to workloads which were already very high,[43] and costing Oxfam in salaries.

In 1996, the Uganda office acknowledged that because of shrinking budgets,[44] and the increased emphasis on strategic focus coming from head office,[45] the use of partners by the Oxfam's Uganda office was to be profoundly altered. For the partners in Uganda, the immediate result of Oxfam's managerial and thematic change was to create uncertainty,[46] and to make the country office slower and less responsive as it referred decisions back to head office, unsure

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[35] Oxfam GB in Uganda (2004) *Capacity Building for the Empowerment Review* p. 12.
[36] Oxfam GB in Uganda (2004) *Capacity Building for the Empowerment Review* p. 15.
[37] Oxfam GB in Uganda (2004) *Capacity Building for the Empowerment Review* p. 15.
[38] Ndeezi, Alex (2004) *The Disability Movement in Uganda* (NUDIPU: Kampala) p. 12.
[39] Traboulsi, Omar (2000) *Oxfam GB in Uganda: Report on Review of Disability Programme.*
[40] Oxfam GB in Uganda (1996) *Oxfam Uganda Strategic Plan 1996-2000* p. 3.
[41] Oxfam GB in Uganda (2004) *Capacity Building for Empowerment Review* p. 33.
[42] Oxfam GB in Uganda (1996) *Oxfam Uganda Strategic Plan 1996-2000* p. 20.
[43] Oxfam GB in Uganda (1996) *Strategic Plan 1996-2000* p. 20; and Payne, Lina and Smyth, Ines (1999) 'The need for reliable systems: gendered work in Oxfam's Uganda programme' *Development in Practice* Vol. 9, No. 1, p. 176.
[44] Oxfam GB in Uganda (1996) *Strategic Plan 1996-2000* p. 3.
[45] Oxfam GB in Uganda (1996) *Strategic Plan 1996-2000* p. 19.
[46] Sayer, Geoff (1999) "'The challenge now is for the government. We are the service providers...'" Internal Communications on Oxfam Words and Picture Library.

of its own role.[47] More importantly, the decline in non-earmarked funding combined with the increased pressure to strategise[48] saw partners in non-thematic areas phased-out.

The decision to cut back on the number of partners and focus on the quality and depth of the relationship described in the 1996-2000 Strategic Plan[49] closely resembled the wider policy outlined in the Oxfam-wide 1998 Review,[50] however, the extra motivating factor of reducing staff workload was also mentioned in the reasoning provided by the country office.[51] The remaining partners were facing the new environment of Oxfam's increasing strategic focus on specific key SCOs. This phase-out was not unique to Uganda: partner relationships in other regional areas also met with a similar end.[52] What is of specific concern is that as a result, Oxfam's involvement with disabled persons' organisations in many parts of the world were largely phased-out, without the need to explicitly exclude disabled people, just simply deploy the need to strategise.[53]

The changing environment being ushered in with the strategic review also brought with it an increased documentary culture. Strategising requires systematic plans, proposals, logframes and reviews. The Oxfam GB in Uganda Strategic Plan for 1996-2000 reveals the move towards the production of regular strategic plans for the country office to work with.[54] This focus on reporting obligations also fell on the partners. Wamai and Walera, in a study of Ugandan NGOs in the health sector, describe a common attitude among NGOs which

[47] Oxfam GB (2000) *Stakeholder Survey 2000* p. 10; and Palmer, Robin (2005) *Critical Reflections on the Role of an International NGO Seeking to Work Globally on Land Rights – With Specific Focus on Oxfam's Experiences in Southern Africa* p. 18(fn).
[48] Oxfam GB in Uganda (1996) *Oxfam Uganda Strategic Plan 1996-2000* p. 3.
[49] Oxfam GB in Uganda (1996) *Oxfam Uganda Strategic Plan 1996-2000* pp. 20-21.
[50] Oxfam GB (1998) *Setting the Course for the Twenty-First Century.*
[51] Oxfam GB in Uganda (1996) *Oxfam Uganda Strategic Plan 1996-2000* pp. 20-21
[52] Whitbread, Jasmine (2006) Interview.
[53] Palmer, Robin (2007) *Working on Land Rights for Oxfam, 1997-2007: Or Last Rites for Land Rites* p. 3.
[54] Oxfam GB in Uganda (1996) *Strategic Plan 1996-2000* p. 1.

does not emphasise "reporting or information sharing";[55] however, Oxfam GB in Uganda's relationship with its partners became based around regular proposals, reports and scrutiny of accounts.[56] Training was also provided to partners to help them in this respect,[57] thereby spreading Western NGO norms[58] and institutional trappings.[59]

The "rhythms of cooperation"[60] produced by such reporting obligations were specifically highlighted by partners as a negative aspect of their relationship with Oxfam, because they were unable to plan for the long term as the funding may not be there.[61] Being able to plan their own activities over the long term was an important factor in the local NGOs' independence and feelings of security. In terms of mission or individual projects with the partner, very few development projects exhibiting a well rounded approach can be fitted into a year: most projects require much longer before impact can be assessed, and if funding runs dry, in the words of an Emergencies Department manager: "There is a danger of building a road that ends in the middle of a field."[62] For NUDIPU, which had retained funding during the systematic phase-out of the disability component of Oxfam's work,[63] the year by year decision whether or not to extend funding was viewed by the partner as extremely stressful and detrimental to its work.[64]

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[55] Wamai, Nafuna; Walera, Ismail; and Wamai, Gimono (1997) *The Role of Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) in Social Development A study of Health Sector NGOs in Mbale and Mubende* p. viii.
[56] Oxfam GB in Uganda (1996) *Strategic Plan 1996-2000* p. 20.
[57] Oxfam GB in Uganda (2004) *Capacity Building for the Empowerment Review* p. 15
[58] Barnett, Michael N. and Finnemore, Martha (1999) 'The Politics, and Pathologies of International Organizations' International Organizations Vol. 53 No. 4.
[59] Igoe, Jim (2003) 'Scaling Up Civil Society: Donor Money, NGOs and the Pastoralist Land Rights Movement in Tanzania' *Development and Change* Vol. 34, Issue 5, p. 874.
[60] Marcuello, Carmen and Marcuello, Chaime (1999) 'Northern words, Southern readings' *Development and Practice* Vol. 9, No. 1, p. 153.
[61] NUDIPU (2005) *Annual Progress Report on Advocacy and Lobbying May 2004 – April 2005: Submitted to Oxfam GB in Uganda* (Unpublished Report).
[62] Payne, Lina (1998) *Rebuilding Communities in a Refugee Settlement: A Casebook from Uganda* (Oxfam Publications: Oxford) p. 174.
[63] Traboulsi, Omar (2000) *Oxfam GB in Uganda: Report on Review of Disability Programme.*
[64] NUDIPU (2005) *Annual Progress Report on Advocacy and Lobbying.*

The initial reception of Oxfam's decentralisation process in the Ugandan country office was positive. The increased financial powers were welcomed,[65] although accompanied with the acceptance that available funding was declining.[66] The new structure also created the possibility of region wide programmes; this prepared the ground for the formation of EARPP, a major programme which focused on the minority issue of pastoralism.

At the same time, the relationship with partners was undergoing a fundamental change. The number of partners was reduced, and Oxfam's long standing affiliation with the DPOs of Uganda came to an end.[67] However, this was just the tip of the iceberg: through an investigation of the other organisational characteristics which affected the decision-making terrain in Kampala, the influencing forces are shown to be more complex than they initially appear.

[65] Oxfam GB in Uganda (1996) *Strategic Plan 1996-2000* p. 19.
[66] Oxfam GB in Uganda (1996) *Strategic Plan 1996-2000* p. 20.
[67] Traboulsi, Omar (2000) *Oxfam GB in Uganda: Report on Review of Disability Programme.*

5.3
IDEATIONAL ELEMENTS
"Our development programme is changing with a growing emphasis on impact and transparency in partnership"[68]

There are four bundles of organisational characteristics which make up the ideational elements within the OLOC model: working practices, aims and objectives, mainstreaming, and marketing. As the analysis progresses through the following sections, the reasons why the Uganda office withdrew from its partnership with NUDIPU, and the ramifications of that decision, become much clearer.

5.3.1 WORKING PRACTICES

❷ Working Practices

Section 2.3.1 of chapter two outlined three ways an intermediate level in an INGO is exposed to notions of working practices: through scrutiny, imposed procedures and as a conduit. There were three ways the Ugandan country office was affected by Oxfam's five points of working culture (Making a Difference, Innovative, Collaborative, Accountable and Cost-Effective).[69] Firstly it was subject to **scrutiny** against the standards set by head office; secondly through the use of the **procedures** outlined by the five points; and thirdly, as a **conduit** for the concepts, passing on good behaviour to the partners; this is illustrated in figure seven.

[68] Oxfam GB in Uganda (1996) *Strategic Plan 1996-2000* p. 20.
[69] Oxfam GB (1998) *Setting the Course for the Twenty-First Century* p. 134.

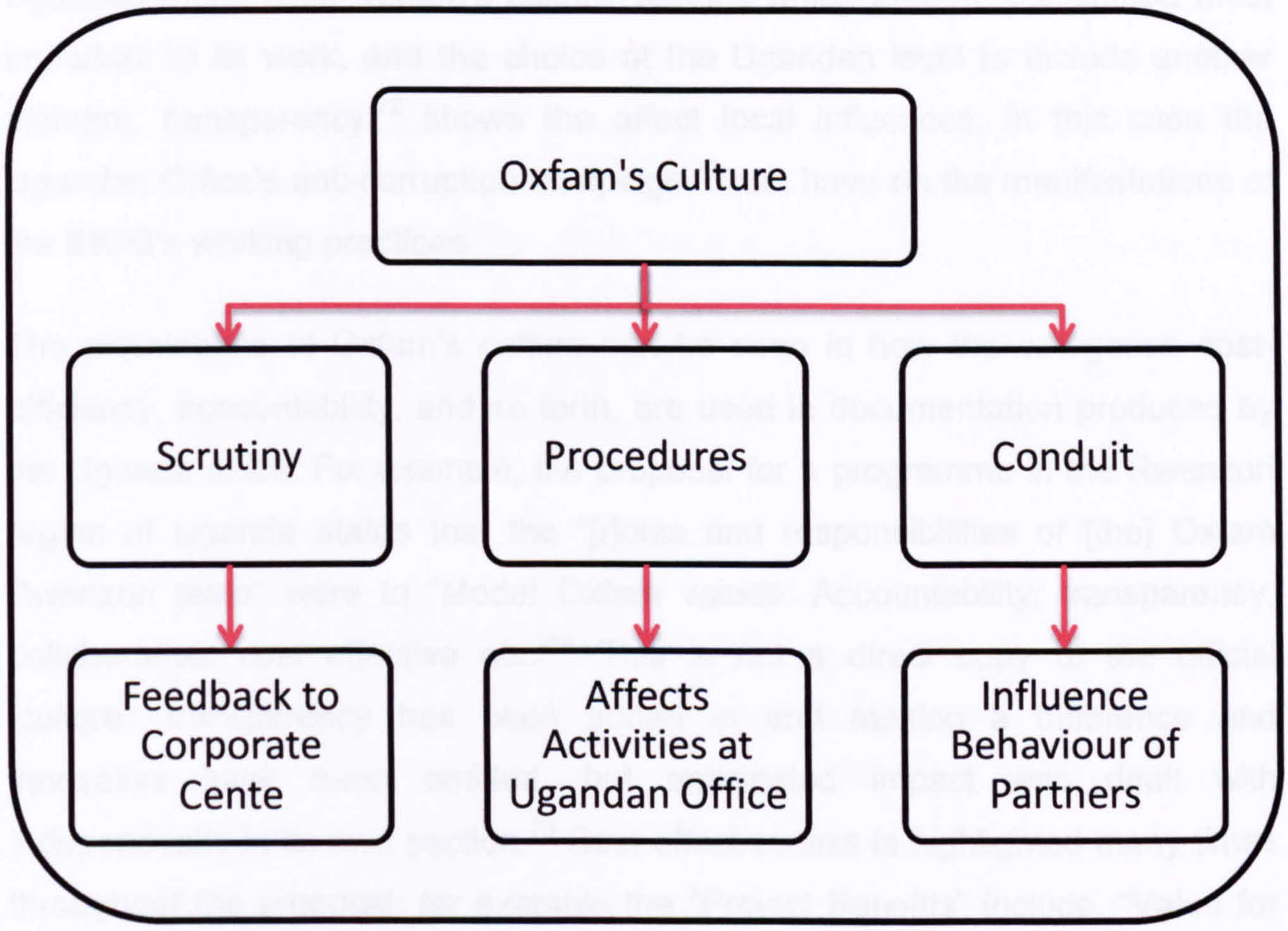

Fig. 7: Ugandan Country Office's relationship with Oxfam's Working Culture

As part of Oxfam GB and Oxfam International, the Uganda office had a specific obligation to adhere to Oxfam's way of working if it wished to use the name 'Oxfam', the Oxfam logo and Oxfam funds;[70] after all, ultimate legal responsibility for the quality of Oxfam's global activities rested with the trustees.[71] Since Oxfam GB placed a great emphasis on this working culture, the Ugandan office had an obligation to use it. The ways in which this obligation manifested itself was varied, from statements in reports through to justifications for the termination of funding relationships with partners. Looking at how the

[70] Offenheiser, Raymond; Holcombe, Susan (2003) 'Challenges and Opportunities in Implementing a Rights-Based Approach to Development: An Oxfam America Perspective' *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly* Vol. 32, No. 2.

[71] Fowler, Alan (2000) 'Degrees of Separation: perspectives on the Decentralisation of International NGOs' in Gibbs, Sarah with Smillie, Ian; Pratt, Brian; and Fowler, Alan 'Decentralised NGO Management' INTRAC *Occasional Papers Series* 18; and Oxfam GB (2004) 'Oxfam's Trustees'.

Ugandan office used 'Oxfam's culture' reveals which areas it considered most important to its work, and the choice at the Ugandan level to include another element, transparency,[72] shows the affect local influences, in this case the Ugandan Office's anti-corruption campaign,[73] can have on the manifestations of the INGO's working practices.

The prominence of Oxfam's culture can be seen in how the categories cost-efficiency, accountability, and so forth, are used in documentation produced by the Uganda office. For example, the proposal for a programme in the Rwenzori region of Uganda states that the "[r]oles and responsibilities of [the] Oxfam Rwenzori team" were to "Model Oxfam values: Accountability, transparency, collaborative, cost effective etc."[74] This is not a direct copy of the official 'culture': transparency has been added in and making a difference and innovative have been omitted, but anticipated impact was dealt with independently in its own section.[75] Cost-effectiveness is highlighted many times throughout the proposal: for example the "Project Benefits" include, "Value for money – Oxfam is committed to making cost-effective interventions against poverty."[76] This is drawing examples from one report, but other reports examined displayed similar uses of the terms.[77]

Obviously there is a difference between things appearing on paper and translated into action, as shown by the analysis of gender mainstreaming discussed in chapter three.[78] Evidence of practical efforts to pursue cost-

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[72] Oxfam GB in Uganda (2005) *The Rwenzori Livelihoods Improvement and Good Governance Project* p. 13.
[73] Oxfam GB in Uganda (2004) 'New Code of conduct for Oxfam GB Partners' in Oxfam GB in Uganda Oxfam Partner News Vol. 1, No. 1, p. 8.
[74] Oxfam GB in Uganda (2005) *The Rwenzori Livelihoods Improvement and Good Governance Project* p. 24.
[75] Oxfam GB in Uganda (2005) *The Rwenzori Livelihoods Improvement and Good Governance Project* p. 13.
[76] Oxfam GB in Uganda (2005) *The Rwenzori Livelihoods Improvement and Good Governance Project* p. 27.
[77] Oxfam GB in Uganda (2004) *Oxfam: Support to the Right to be Heard Movement in Uganda May 2003 – April 2008* (Unpublished Report) p.19.
[78] Longwe, Sara Hlupekile (1997) 'The evaporation of gender policies in the patriarchal cooking pot' *Development in Practice* Vol. 7, No. 2, p. 150; and Osman, Abdal Monium Khidir (2002)

effectiveness can be seen in the justification of working through partners so Oxfam would not have to spend money on setting up operations;[79] emphasis on partners gaining independence,[80] so they no longer would need Oxfam's funding to continue their operations; and the promotion of non-financial forms of assistance to partners.[81] The environment of diminishing funding also heightened the observance of cost-effectiveness. One more justification was also sometimes supplied: "Oxfam International's working principles require..." (in this case that country programmes should aim to work through *accountable* organisations).[82]

When it came to the partners, the Uganda office's relationship with Oxfam's culture involved the money they could save by using partners, or the fact that by using partners, they could tick the box for collaboration:[83] the partners themselves were expected to respect the standards of Oxfam's working culture,[84] and partners were provided with training in order to learn the working culture Oxfam had made a central part of the way it worked.[85] This manifested mainly in reporting requirements, with partners having to submit their accounts for scrutiny to the Kampala office, which were then kept on record.[86] In 2005, a new code of conduct for partners was drawn up, which was communicated to the partners at the 2005 Oxfam GB in Uganda Partners' Conference.[87] This set out the standards Oxfam expected from its partners, and it was clearly

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'Challenges for integrating gender into poverty alleviation programmes: lessons from Sudan' *Gender and Development* Vol. 10, Issue 3, p. 27.

[79] Muhereza, Frank Emmanuel (2004) *Oxfam GB – A Long Term Program Strategy for the Rwenzori Region* p. 34; and Oxfam GB in Uganda (2005) *The Rwenzori Livelihoods Improvement and Good Governance Project* p. 27.

[80] Oxfam GB in Uganda (2004) *Capacity Building for the Empowerment Review* p. 33.

[81] Oxfam GB in Uganda (1996) *Strategic Plan 1996-2000* p. 20-21.

[82] Muhereza, Frank Emmanuel (2004) *Oxfam GB – A Long Term Program Strategy for the Rwenzori Region* p. 34.

[83] Oxfam GB in Uganda (2005) *The Rwenzori Livelihoods Improvement and Good Governance Project* p. 18.

[84] Muhereza, Frank Emmanuel (2004) *Oxfam GB – A Long Term Program Strategy for the Rwenzori Region* p. 34.

[85] Oxfam GB in Uganda (2004) *Capacity Building for the Empowerment Review* p. 15.

[86] Oxfam's Kampala Office gave me copies of these reports.

[87] Oxfam GB in Uganda (2004) 'New Code of Conduct for Oxfam GB Partners' p. 8.

emphasised that breaching these standards could lead to the termination of the partnership agreement.[88]

Promoting behaviour which is making a difference, innovative, collaborative, accountable, cost-effective, and including the Ugandan office's addition to this list, transparent,[89] are not inherently bad aims: in fact these can be seen as positive attributes for an INGO, its country office or its partners. The problem arises when, combined with other organisational characteristics, internal standards effect the local responsiveness, thereby undermining the rationale for decentralisation. As Leopold notes in his study of Oxfam in the North of Uganda:

> "I believe there is a general tendency among international assistance agencies to ignore local circumstances and histories: NGO managers are valued more on their understanding of agency policies and practice than on their understanding of local issues."[90]

The argument that Oxfam's increasingly dominant internal standards orientate practice to centrally defined behaviour and choices at the expense of fostering innovation and wider experiences will be drawn out in more detail through discussions of the aims and objectives. Now the analysis will turn to looking at the need to 'make a difference' in more detail, and how this affected the Uganda office's decisions.

MAKING A DIFFERENCE

The 1996-2000 Strategic Plan for the Ugandan country office clearly illustrates how the emphasis on making a difference was changing the way the Kampala office was defining its work and its relationship with its partners: "Our

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[88] Oxfam GB in Uganda (2004) 'New Code of Conduct for Oxfam GB Partners' p. 8.

[89] Oxfam GB in Uganda (2004) *Support to the Right to be Heard Programme in Uganda* p. 19; and Oxfam GB in Uganda (2005) *The Rwenzori Livelihoods Improvement and Good Governance Project* p. 24.

[90] Leopold, Mark (2001) "Trying to Hold Things Together' International NGOs Caught up in an Emergency in North-Western Uganda, 1996-97' in Barrow, Ondine and Jennings, Michael (Eds.) *The Charitable Impulse: NGOs and Development in East and North-East Africa* (Oxford: James Curry) p. 106.

development programme is changing with a growing emphasis on impact and transparency in partnership. More needs to be done to focus the programme and demonstrate impact".[91] In areas covered by the SCO4 programme, The Right to be Heard, measuring impact is not straightforward as it includes the areas of empowerment, advocacy and changing values; it is hard to "demonstrate impact" of such activities as the results are not overly tangible.

Simon Nangiro who worked on the Kotido programme highlighted the problem of assessing such issues:

> "We see empowerment as building human capital in terms of organisation: people getting organised to do things in their direction. This requires an institutionalisation of practices and beliefs, but this is intangible so it is very hard to measure".[92]

The Review of the region-wide EARPP made similar conclusions: intangible focal points such as "voice and capacity" tend towards qualitative assessment, reliance of individual perceptions, and often, the opinions of the implementing staff.[93] However, despite the intangible nature of the SCO4 programme's activities, it did supply a list of objectives against which impact could be measured:

> "to strengthen partner organisations to represent the voices of women and men... to strengthen partners to plan, implement and monitor effective advocacy for gender sensitive, pro-poor policies (globally, regionally, nationally and at the district), budgets, (national and district) and practice... To campaign against the climate of impunity of corruption in Uganda...To campaign and advocate for pro-poor trade and agricultural policies."[94]

The main problem with less-than-concrete objectives and impact indicators when working in a partnership is the communication of the exact expectations from the work being conducted. This was raised by head office as a "specific

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[91] Oxfam GB in Uganda (1996) *Strategic Plan 1996-2000* p. 20.
[92] Oxfam GB in Uganda (2004) *Capacity Building for the Empowerment Review* p. 9.
[93] Morton, John (2006) *A Review of Oxfam GB's Horn/East Africa Regional Pastoral Programme* p. 7.
[94] Oxfam GB in Uganda (2004) *Support to the Right to be Heard Programme in Uganda* p. 14.

lesson" which could be learnt from its experience of working in partnerships,[95] and the details which will be revealed throughout the next two chapters about the Oxfam-NUDIPU relationship clearly show that differences in opinion regarding the objectives of the programme emerged in the later years of the relationship.

The interviews conducted with Oxfam employees in Uganda and NUDIPU workers revealed disparate views on where the emphasis of NUDIPU's Oxfam-funded advocacy campaign should lie: NUDIPU interpreted the objectives as affecting change at the level of government,[96] whereas Oxfam employees described their concerns that 'impact' was not visible at the grass roots.[97] NUDIPU's advocacy campaign with Oxfam had been long running and NUDIPU's emphasis had always been targeted mainly at the government.[98] In 1995 Oxfam's support and close ties with this political campaign was evident when an Oxfam employee got personally involved in campaigning with NUDIPU to get disability issues written into Uganda's new constitution.[99] Later, as Oxfam's emphasis changed, the nature of the work conducted and the preferred outcome of the programme was highlighted by Oxfam as one of the main problems with the relationship;[100] it was not an issue raised by NUDIPU when discussing the relationship with Oxfam, revealing a lack of successful communication.

The evolution of the working practices in Oxfam since 1998 introduced an ambiguity into the Oxfam-NUDIPU relationship and this disparity of interpretation over intentions revealed the problem of communication between the INGO and partner. With clear communications, a partner is more at risk of having to tow the donor line; with ambiguous or changing programmes which have either

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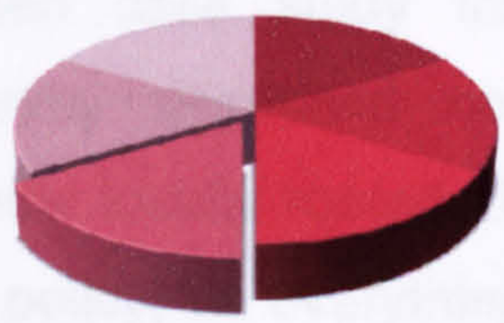
[95] Oxfam GB (2006) *Global Programme Learning Report* p. 31.
[96] Asamo, Hellen Grace (2006) Interview; and Kamya, Julius (2005) Interview.
[97] Oxfam GB in Uganda Employee (2005) Interview.
[98] Ndeezi, Alex (2004) *The Disability Movement in Uganda.*
[99] Sayer, Geoff (2000) "'Ten years ago we couldn't talk in public. No one would listen to us...'" Internal Communications on Oxfam Words and Picture Library.
[100] Oxfam GB in Uganda Employee (2005) Interview.

unclear impact goals, or mis-communicated goals, the partner has the opportunity to operate with more freedom, but the future consequences for the donor-partner relationship may be damaged. The merits of NUDIPU's advocacy work, and the freedom it had to pursue its own agenda, will be dealt with in more detail in the next chapter.

5.3.2 AIMS AND STRATEGIC CHANGE OBJECTIVES



❸ Aims and Objectives

Oxfam's Strategic Change Objectives were introduced in the previous chapter. They consist of nine objectives divided into five aims and are used to streamline Oxfam's activities and produce a more coherent global programme.[101] When the SCOs were introduced, Oxfam GB in Uganda chose to focus its activities around the following SCOs:

- SCO1: the Right to a Sustainable Livelihood
- SCO3: the Right to Life and Security
- SCO4: the Right to be Heard[102]

This strategic focus was viewed at the country level as a positive thing.[103] In an atmosphere of "progressively dropping" budgets,[104] the Uganda office reasoned that: "We recognise that Oxfam Uganda is a relatively small organisation with limited resources and influence. We therefore should endeavour to make best use of our funding and prioritise clearly."[105] However, as the following discussion will show, despite the country level office choosing the SCO focus, and the

[101] Oxfam GB (1998) *Setting the Course for the Twenty-First Century* p. 70; and Oxfam GB (2002) *Oxfam-DFID Participatory Programme Agreement 2002* p. 6.
[102] Oxfam GB in Uganda Employee (2005) Interview.
[103] Oxfam GB in Uganda (1996) *Strategic Plan 1996-2000* p. 19.
[104] Oxfam GB in Uganda (1996) *Strategic Plan 1996-2000* p. 20.
[105] Oxfam GB in Uganda (1996) *Strategic Plan 1996-2000* p. 3.

decentralisation of selected financial responsibilities, the independence of the Uganda office was limited.

Choosing three of five centrally-defined strategic focus points is not a significant act of country level agency. The SCOs were designed in the West and imposed by head office; this, combined with a history of Western dominance in development discourse created the perception at the Uganda level that the authority over the interpretation of the SCOs lay in the higher levels of Oxfam. In 2001/2 Uganda was a chosen case study for the Oxfam GB's annual Stakeholder Survey; this survey described concerns which were being expressed in Uganda about "how locally rooted Oxfam [was] and how slow it [could] be to react in areas of policy, as everything has to be referred back to Oxford."[106] This illustrates the argument which was made in the previous chapter, that the attempt to achieve locally responsive offices[107] was undermined by the inhibitive presence of centrally-defined concept-blocks which were heavily emphasised in all of Oxfam's activities.[108]

The SCOs introduced a new and highly dominant behavioural chain into the decision-making terrain of Oxfam's Kampala office. Notions of SCOs came to dominate decisions made by this country office; what is most interesting to this research is how these SCOs affected decisions regarding partners, specifically NUDIPU and the other organisations working with disabled people. In terms of the relationship between Oxfam's levels and the use of the SCOs, the interesting discovery of this research was that the Ugandan level's interpretation of the SCOs was explicitly questioned and realigned by higher levels.

As an advocacy focused programme aiming to help a marginalised group get themselves heard and respected in society, NUDIPU naturally fell under SCO4, (The Right to be Heard). It could also have been categorised under SCO 5.2,

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[106] Matthew Larkin in Oxfam GB (2002) *Oxfam Stakeholder Survey 2001/02* p. 17.
[107] Oxfam GB (2001) *Oxfam Annual Report and Accounts 2000/2001* pp. 19-20.
[108] Palmer, Robin (2007) *Working on Land Rights for Oxfam, 1997-2007: Or Last Rites for Land Rites* p. 3.

(Ethnic, cultural, and other groups oppressed or marginalised by reasons of their identity will enjoy equal rights and status with other people). In 1999 and 2000, stories relating to NUDIPU appeared on Oxfam's internal database categorised as 50% SCO4 and 50% SCO5.2.[109] But SCO5 was not one of the Uganda office's chosen SCOs, so the programme was run by the SCO4 team.[110]

As discussed in the previous chapter, section 4.3.3, SCO5.1 (Women and men will enjoy equal rights) was considered to be mainstreamed throughout all of Oxfam's work.[111] Because of SCO5.1's cross-cutting status, SCO5 was not a focus criterion within the country office. As there was no SCO5 team, NUDIPU was referred to as an SCO4 project and remained so until 2002. In June 2002 a HECA employee visited the Uganda office. During this visit, it was pointed out that disability fell under SCO5 and that Oxfam GB in Uganda did not carry SCO5 "as a standard rule".[112] To quote the internal memo sent between HECA and the Uganda office: "we will need to define how this [the NUDIPU programme] contributes to wider organisational and regional objectives."[113] This definition process decided that the NUDIPU programme did not fit with the country office's, or the region's, strategic plans.[114]

The following explanation of the situation by a Kampala office employee illustrates how the SCO categories were used as the sole justifying reason behind policy decisions (even if later revelations showed that the case was a little bit more complicated):

> "So when Oxfam went through a restructuring – the Right to be Heard programmes – they dropped their [NUDIPU's] proposal. It was realised disability no longer falls there, [SCO4] according to the alignment of this field, and so we had to phase-out – and that was with the support of somebody from the policy department – came down and so we set about

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[109] Sayer, Geoff (1999) "'NUDIPU's role should be to advocate...'" Internal Communications on Oxfam Words and Picture Library; and Sayer, Geoff (2000) "'Ten years ago we couldn't talk in public. No one would listen to us...'".
[110] Oxfam GB in Uganda Employee (2005) Interview.
[111] Oxfam GB (2003) *Oxfam GB Strategic Plan 2003-2006* p. 6.
[112] Oxfam GB in Uganda Employee (2005) Interview.
[113] Burden, Allison (2002) Internal Memo.
[114] Oxfam GB in Uganda Employee (2005) Interview.

engagement – communicating to them that disability issues within Oxfam were in another SCO5 classification, and we don't have that SCO in Uganda. It's a cross category, but we don't have it as a standard rule."[115]

Oxfam GB in Uganda prepared a proposal for Oxfam Head Office to consider funding NUDIPU on a special basis, but funding was not secured.[116] Although the representative from the SCO4 team was clear that this reasoning had been made clear to NUDIPU,[117] NUDIPU showed no awareness of this line of reasoning and was under the impression that the relationship had been terminated for other reasons which will be discussed in the next chapter.[118]

This reveals how a partner aligned with Oxfam's overall strategic aims could be phased-out for not fitting into the three SCOs chosen at the country level. It also reveals how the fact that NUDIPU had been 'wrongly' categorised into SCO4 by the country level (a fact that was 'highlighted' by a higher level) undermines the power invested in local interpretation, because local interpretation was considered secondary to the need for a coherent image.

However, despite the official reasoning for the withdrawal, there were other issues to be considered regarding the Oxfam-NUDIPU relationship. These include the growing criticisms of NUDIPU's advocacy campaign outside of Oxfam,[119] the strength of the disability movement in Uganda,[120] and personal and unofficial opinions which were being raised by some Kampala office employees about NUDIPU's increasing political leanings.[121] These contributed to the acquiescence to the decision by the upper levels of Oxfam that NUDIPU did not fit in Uganda's strategic focus; as one employee pointed out, had there been the will-power, the NUDIPU partnership may have continued.[122]

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[115] Oxfam GB in Uganda Employee (2005) Interview.
[116] Oxfam GB in Uganda Employee (2005) Interview.
[117] Oxfam GB in Uganda Employee (2005) Interview.
[118] Asamo, Hellen Grace (2006) Interview; and Kamya, Julius (2005) Interview.
[119] Lwanga-Ntale, Charles (2003) *Chronic Poverty and Disability in Uganda* p. 14.
[120] Oxfam GB in Uganda (1996) *Strategic Plan 1996-2000* p. 27.
[121] Oxfam GB in Uganda Employee (2005) Interview.
[122] Oxfam GB in Uganda Employee (2005) Interview.

The *Oxfam GB in Uganda Report on Review of Disability Programme* stated that "[c]ounterparts clearly appreciated the presence of a country office with a large degree of decision-making power and autonomy";[123] this contrasts with a survey of partners conducted in 2002, which highlighted that "the bureaucracy and central focus policy has bogged down possible campaigns or delayed some issues to be discussed."[124] The same survey highlighted that the Uganda office had to "refer back to Oxford" before it could proceed with decisions.[125] The evidence does point towards the SCOs providing a central policy guide at the expense of local responsiveness. One head office employee pointed out that this was particular to the location, drawing the comparison with neighbouring Kenya: "unlike Kenya, where a vastly experienced senior manager interpreted the coming of SCOs in a highly flexible way, in Uganda by contrast, they were interpreted very rigidly"[126]

The SCOs introduced a new behavioural chain into the decision-making terrain at the country level; however, the SCOs were not the only influential forces in the decision to terminate the Oxfam-NUDIPU relationship. One of the reasons given for the phasing out of the disability programme was that disability was now a mainstreamed issue within Oxfam.[127] Key head office employees had voiced the idea of mainstreaming disability during the strategic review process,[128] and at the Uganda level, with its history of involvement with disability issues, that sentiment registered as policy;[129] but as was discussed in chapter four, section 4.3.3, no blue-prints were ever designed or implemented by the head office to cater for disability mainstreaming. The next section looks at how three minority groups, disabled people, women and pastoralists, were treated in Oxfam's work in Uganda; this aims to show how disability was not mainstreamed in the

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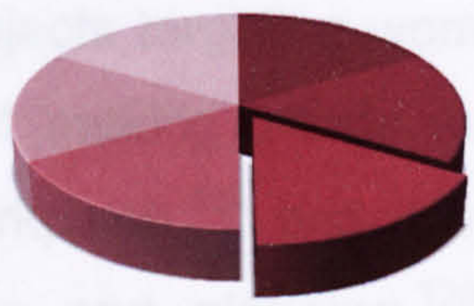
[123] Traboulsi, Omar (2000) *Oxfam GB in Uganda: Report on Review of Disability Programme* p. 21.
[124] Oxfam GB in Uganda (2002) *Proceeds of the Programme* p.10.
[125] Oxfam GB in Uganda (2002) *Proceeds of the Programme* p. 13.
[126] Palmer, Robin (2005) Personal Communication.
[127] Oxfam GB in Uganda Employee (2005) Interview.
[128] Traboulsi, Omar (2000) *Oxfam GB in Uganda: Report on Review of Disability Programme* p. 18.
[129] Oxfam GB in Uganda Employee (2005) Interview.

Uganda country programme, and the success of other programmes dealing with minority groups and issues.

5.3.3 TARGET GROUPS



4 Mainstreaming

Efforts to mobilise and inform staff occurred primarily through training: as one Kampala office employee describes, "The special sessions now are HIV/AIDS, gender, for example stuff like critical and cross cutting, but people are aware that Oxfam really promotes opportunities."[130] This section will look at efforts at mainstreaming in the Kampala office, drawing on examples from the long term development work with pastoralists in Kotido, to examine how this promotion of opportunities translated into impact.

GENDER MAINSTREAMING

The Oxfam-wide stipulation that a section is included in all proposals to show how gender issues will be addressed[131] clearly manifested in the documentation reviewed[132] and training was provided for both Oxfam employees and partner organisations.[133] As was discussed in the previous chapter, Oxfam's gender mainstreaming policies have been criticised for evaporating between the planning which occurs on paper and the implementation of the policy;[134] such

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[130] Oxfam GB in Uganda Employee (2005) Interview.
[131] Oxfam GB (2005) *Programme Impact Report* p. 12.
[132] Oxfam GB in Uganda (2004) *Kotido pastoral Development programme: Three Year (2004-2007) log frame* (Unpublished Report) pp. 2-3; and Oxfam GB in Uganda (2005) *The Rwenzori Livelihoods Improvement and Good Governance Project* p. 17.
[133] Oxfam GB in Uganda (2002) *SCO 4 Programme for Uganda* p. 29.
[134] Oxfam GB (2003) *DfID - Oxfam GB Partnership Programme Agreement Second Review Report 2002/2003* p. 34; and Oxfam GB (2003) *Programme Impact Report* p. 19.

evaporation has also been documented in Uganda.[135] This section will be exploring the factors which have helped gender mainstreaming within Uganda, and those which have hindered it.

The Uganda office's approach to gender before the strategic review was one of "ad hoc approaches",[136] of projects targeting women rather than including them in the mainstream work,[137] of making efforts to recruit women and address gender imbalances in the workplace,[138] and driven by individual personalities rather than systematic policy and planning.[139] Ugandan society is highly patriarchal,[140] and the Ugandan office was reluctant to challenge traditional roles for fear of alienating the target community and jeopardising projects.[141] In 1994 the decision was taken to remove the post of the Gender and Development Officer in order to eliminate the compartmentalisation of gender and encourage gender issues to be included throughout all work.[142] The reasoning behind this is described in Dawson's analysis of gender mainstreaming within Oxfam:

> "Various definitions have been drawn up, but the central idea with relevance to Oxfam is that, for an organisation committed to social action, gender equality should not just be the concern and responsibility of a few specialists, but rather an essential part of the work of all members of staff, as well as an integrated part of all organisational systems and procedures."[143]

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[135] Oxfam GB in Uganda (2004) *Capacity Building for the Empowerment Review* pp. 16-17; and Payne, Lina and Smyth, Ines (1999) 'The need for reliable systems: gendered work in Oxfam's Uganda programme' p. 176.
[136] Payne, Lina and Smyth, Ines (1999) 'The need for reliable systems: gendered work in Oxfam's Uganda programme' p. 177.
[137] Matthew Larkin in Oxfam GB (2002) *Oxfam Stakeholder Survey 2001/02* p. 17; and Oxfam GB (2005) *Kotido Pastoral Development Programme An overview of Oxfam GB's work in northeastern Uganda* p. 9.
[138] Matthew Larkin in Oxfam GB (2002) *Oxfam Stakeholder Survey 2001/02* p. 17.
[139] Payne, Lina and Smyth, Ines (1999) 'The need for reliable systems: gendered work in Oxfam's Uganda programme' p. 177.
[140] Tamale, Sylvia (1999) *When Hens Begin to Crow: Gender and Parliamentary Politics in Uganda* (Oxford: Westview) p. 35.
[141] Payne, Lina and Smyth, Ines (1999) 'The need for reliable systems: gendered work in Oxfam's Uganda programme' p. 176.
[142] Payne, Lina and Smyth, Ines (1999) 'The need for reliable systems: gendered work in Oxfam's Uganda programme' p. 176.
[143] Dawson, Elsa (2005) 'Strategic gender mainstreaming in Oxfam GB' p. 80.

The example set by these decisions can be seen to have influenced the Ugandan office's relationship with NUDIPU, when, because of the argument that gender should be mainstreamed and not the responsibility of an individual, Oxfam stopped funding the salary of NUDIPU's gender officer, saying gender needed to be worked into all of NUDIPU's work.[144] This will be discussed in more detail in the next chapter.

However, where efforts to promote gender inclusion achieved notable successes in Ugandan Projects, for example in the refugee camp in Arua where the management structure was changed to remove patriarchal barriers,[145] the positive changes have been directly linked to the work of individuals. Such lessons have been highlighted elsewhere by Oxfam reviews,[146] and recent changes have been made to recruit individuals to specifically push through gender mainstreaming and draw up plans for inclusion.[147] In 2003 the Ugandan Country Programme Manager was also responsible for leading SCO5.1 (women and men will enjoy equal rights) at the regional level,[148] providing a solid base for the leadership which is required to push gender mainstreaming through.[149]

Successful gender mainstreaming in the Kotido programme has been highlighted as follows:

> "Gender inequity is a major cause of concern and a key factor in pastoral poverty in Karamoja and Oxfam has attempted to mainstream gender issues into programme design. The majority of direct project beneficiaries are women, and the project has been very successful in transferring assets into the hands of women and in enabling them to demonstrate their capacity to determine their own development needs."[150]

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[144] Sayer, Geoff (1999) '"NUDIPU's role should be to advocate..."'.
[145] Payne, Lina and Smyth, Ines (1999) 'The need for reliable systems: gendered work in Oxfam's Uganda programme' p. 177.
[146] Dawson, Elsa (2005) 'Strategic gender mainstreaming in Oxfam GB' p. 88; and Oxfam GB (2006) *Global Programme Learning Report* p. 27.
[147] Oxfam GB in Uganda (2002) *SCO 4 Programme for Uganda* p. 29.
[148] Oxfam GB in Uganda (2002) *SCO 4 Programme for Uganda* p. 29.
[149] Osman, Abdal Monium Khidir (2002) 'Challenges for integrating gender into poverty alleviation programmes' p. 28.
[150] Oxfam GB (2005) *Kotido Pastoral Development Programme* p. 9.

This is approach centred on targeting women as opposed to 'mainstreaming' gender in all development work. The higher levels of Oxfam placed an emphasis on mainstreaming, but did not clarify the required balance between the two main aspects of mainstreaming, targeting women or tackling gender discrimination in all programme work.[151] This left the country offices a degree of choice in how they implemented Oxfam's mainstreaming policy,[152] with the risk that, to return to the example of 'successful' mainstreaming quoted above, although there were examples of successful mainstreaming in the programme work, these focused on including women, not addressing gender inequalities in society. The problems with such programmes were described by Oxfam's own review as: "there is a tendency for women to be involved only within their traditional roles with little being done to challenge these roles".[153]

Another problem was the evaporation between the policy documents which Oxfam demanded included a section showing how gender issues were to be included,[154] and the implementation of the programmes.[155] As a review of the programme in Kotido observed:

> "Despite the emphasis on women's participation, there were actually no women visible either within the District Administration or within the different partners that were interviewed and it is possible some of the reactions on women and gender equity are just at the level of rhetoric."[156]

The barriers to mainstreaming, which include poor understanding of the basic key concepts, unwillingness to tackle tradition roles, the lack of gender analysis and systematic planning, combined with insufficient monitoring,[157] meant that even the Ugandan office's major development programme delivered poor results

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[151] Dawson, Elsa (2005) 'Strategic gender mainstreaming in Oxfam GB' p. 81.
[152] Dawson, Elsa (2005) 'Strategic gender mainstreaming in Oxfam GB' p. 81.
[153] Oxfam GB in Uganda (2004) *Capacity Building for the Empowerment Review* p. 37.
[154] Oxfam GB (2005) *Programme Impact Report* p. 12.
[155] Oxfam GB in Uganda (2004) *Capacity Building for the Empowerment Review* pp. 16-17; and Payne, Lina and Smyth, Ines (1999) 'The need for reliable systems: gendered work in Oxfam's Uganda programme' p. 176.
[156] Oxfam GB in Uganda (2004) *Capacity Building for the Empowerment Review* p. 16.
[157] Payne, Lina and Smyth, Ines (1999) 'The need for reliable systems: gendered work in Oxfam's Uganda programme' p. 176.

when it came to inclusive and comprehensive gender mainstreaming. However, improvements had been made in the inclusion of women in its work.

Gender was an area for which head office had implemented blue-prints to encourage the uptake of the ideas stated in the concept-blocks. The next section will look at how disabled people and the issue of disabled people fared with the move to strategic planning, where despite employees of the Uganda office claiming disability had been mainstreamed into their work, no concrete implementation methods had been deployed.

DISABILITY MAINSTREAMING

> "I think they have a disability awareness in their programmes in the mainstream... that one is an achievement I feel we have with Oxfam, because when they talk about people, they always have to remember about the disabled and decide to put them in the programmes."[158]

Similar to how UK disability activists have claimed that Oxfam had adopted good mainstreaming policies at the organisation-wide level,[159] the main disability advocacy body in Uganda described Oxfam in Uganda as also having a good approach to including disabled people in their mainstream development work.[160] This reputation was earned even though no measures were put in place to include disabled people or disability issues in their work,[161] accompanied by the absence of any training or implementation mechanisms for Oxfam employees.[162] This is despite eighteen years of involvement with disability in Uganda,[163] which formed a major portion of what work Oxfam did conduct in the country,

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[158] Asamo, Hellen Grace (2005) Interview.
[159] Yeo, Rebecca (2002) *Chronic Poverty and Disability* p. 21.
[160] Asamo, Hellen Grace (2005) Interview.
[161] Morton, John (2006) *A Review of Oxfam GB's Horn/East Africa Regional Pastoral Programme* p. 12.
[162] Oxfam GB in Uganda Employee (2005) Interview.
[163] Traboulsi, Omar (2000) *Oxfam GB in Uganda: Report on Review of Disability Programme* p. 49.

consuming 24% of the non-earmarked budget in the years between 1992 and 1999.[164]

As with gender, the disability policy before the review was described as ad hoc and highly reliant on individuals to champion the cause.[165] An Oxfam employee was personally involved in a great deal of NUDIPU's campaign work,[166] and Oxfam's involvement with disabled people in Uganda right from the early days of the Uganda programme gave it both the contacts, experience and disposition to continue working in the area. As the 2000 review of the Uganda office's involvement in the disability movement describes:

> "Decisions were taken as a result of progress in implementation of certain disability projects as well as in the light of new emerging opportunities. Such decisions were all too often prompted by the personal interests of staff in the issue of disability. One former Oxfam GB staff described disability work as being "piece meal". It is clear that the preceding sizeable support to Mulago orthopaedic workshop was a main factor in the decision to pursue the programme's involvement in disability."[167]

On the eve of the introduction of the SCOs, the disability partners were raising concerns that "for the most, Oxfam GB's objectives were not crystal clear."[168] This issue was resolved when the SCOs were introduced, helping to clarify Oxfam's aims and objectives, but the backlash was that supporting DPOs was not one of these new aims:

> "The decision to cut down on the number of partners and then to phase out disability work caught most of the funded organisations by surprise and was seen as abrupt. The affected partner organisations were clearly ill prepared for the move. The precipitated and seemingly unilateral withdrawal appears to have had severe consequences on the work of a

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[164] Traboulsi, Omar (2000) *Oxfam GB in Uganda: Report on Review of Disability Programme* p. 19.
[165] Traboulsi, Omar (2000) *Oxfam GB in Uganda: Report on Review of Disability Programme* p. 19.
[166] Sayer, Geoff (2000) '"Ten years ago we couldn't talk in public'".
[167] Traboulsi, Omar (2000) *Oxfam GB in Uganda: Report on Review of Disability Programme* p. 19.
[168] Traboulsi, Omar (2000) *Oxfam GB in Uganda: Report on Review of Disability Programme* p. 20.

large number of organisations that have been too dependent on Oxfam's support."[169]

Initially, the funding relationship with NUDIPU remained, specifically focusing on the advocacy campaign and the establishment of a new policy unit. Although Oxfam's 2000 review of the disability programme in Uganda mentioned briefly that the long term sustainability needs of NUDIPU should be addressed,[170] the participation in the review process actually raised NUDIPU's hopes of a new interest by Oxfam in the relationship,[171] instead of preparing NUDIPU for withdrawal.

Oxfam's move to cut down on its partners was described earlier in this chapter as a move to prioritise in the face of shrinking budgets,[172] and as an attempt to focus on better quality relations with fewer partners.[173] The reduction in the number of partners had a significant impact on the disability movement in Uganda. Because Oxfam provided funding for many different DPOs and even the Ugandan office of the UK based INGO, Action for Disability in Development (ADD),[174] the decision fell overly hard on this one sector. The common feeling among Oxfam's former partners was "that Oxfam was now abandoning" Persons with Disabilities (PWDs).[175]

Oxfam's withdrawal has been directly linked to several DPOs or programmes within DPOs being closed down, or continuing with a severely reduced capacity.[176] Even before the NUDIPU funding was withdrawn, the reduced ability of the disability movement in Uganda to campaign and conduct advocacy work

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[169] Traboulsi, Omar (2000) *Oxfam GB in Uganda: Report on Review of Disability Programme* p. 20.
[170] Traboulsi, Omar (2000) *Oxfam GB in Uganda: Report on Review of Disability Programme* p. 50.
[171] Sayer, Geoff (1999) "'NUDIPU's role should be to advocate...'".
[172] Oxfam GB in Uganda (1996) *Strategic Plan 1996-2000* p. 3.
[173] Oxfam GB in Uganda (1996) *Strategic Plan 1996-2000* p. 20-21.
[174] Traboulsi, Omar (2000) *Oxfam GB in Uganda: Report on Review of Disability Programme* p. 19.
[175] Traboulsi, Omar (2000) *Oxfam GB in Uganda: Report on Review of Disability Programme* p. 21.
[176] ADD Uganda Employee (2006) Interview; and Traboulsi, Omar (2000) *Oxfam GB in Uganda: Report on Review of Disability Programme* p. 50.

at the local and national level was highlighted by the Oxfam GB in Uganda disability review.[177]

Part of the justification of this decision was the suggestion that the higher levels were planning to mainstream disability throughout all work in a similar manner to gender.[178] However, the same measures were not taken to mainstream disability or disabled people as was taken to ensure women were included in programme work. Reports contained no sections dealing explicitly with how disability issues or disabled people were to be integrated in the proposed activities and where disabled people did make an appearance in reports, which was rarely, it was usually acknowledging that there would be disabled people among the target population,[179] or in lists such as the following which appeared in a proposal for the Rwenzori Region:

> "Within communities and livelihood systems referred to below, Oxfam GB's intervention will specifically target the following vulnerable categories of people:
>
> - women
> - People living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHA) and people affected by HIV/AIDS, especially widows (and to a small extent orphans, since Oxfam GB is not planning a child – focused intervention)
> - Disabled people (due to war or health related reasons)
> - Landless cultivators
> - Victims of disasters such as drought, land slides and floods within the target project areas
> - People affected by armed conflicts especially Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) and refugees and widows and orphans
> - Poor men
> - Fisherfolk
> - Pastoral women and men"[180]

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[177] Traboulsi, Omar (2000) *Oxfam GB in Uganda: Report on Review of Disability Programme* p. 50.

[178] Traboulsi, Omar (2000) *Oxfam GB in Uganda: Report on Review of Disability Programme* p. 18.

[179] Mukasa, Aggrey (2004) *A Participatory Assessment for Bundibugyo and Kasese Districts – Report for the Rwenzori Region Development and Disaster Preparedness Programme – Oxfam GB in Uganda Oct 2003-Jan 2004* (Unpublished Report) p. 46.

[180] Muhereza, Frank Emmanuel (2004) *Oxfam GB – A Long Term Program Strategy for the Rwenzori Region* p. 40.

There were no special measures outlined for the inclusion of disabled people in any of the proposals examined, and if awareness meant inclusion on an exhaustive list (in which it would be hard to find a group of people *not* included), the strategic decision not to place any emphasis on the issue of disability, although not an explicit anti-SCO, succeeded in removing disability issues from the decision-making table in this case study. This was not unique to Uganda: one senior employee of head office observed that similar withdrawals from disability programmes were occurring in other Oxfam country offices as well.[181]

The review of the EARPP conducted by Morton provides an interesting angle to this discussion. The EARPP received a large amount of its funding from DfID and Comic Relief;[182] despite disability mainstreaming being an area Comic Relief was specifically interested in,[183] the review of the programme highlighted that "there is no current activity within the regional programme" to mainstream disability issues.[184] Despite highlighting this briefly in the report, the funding relationship continued,[185] indicating the acceptability of the omission of disability issues from development programmes, even by donors who are specifically interested in promoting the mainstreaming of disability.

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It is becoming clear that leaving certain elements of policy at the level of rhetoric is acceptable in INGO work. Increasingly, gender is an issue for which rhetorical inclusion is considered insufficient, meaning mainstreaming efforts for gender have started to see real changes in the way development programmes are

[181] Palmer, Robin (2005) Interview; Palmer, Robin (2007) *Working on Land Rights for Oxfam, 1997-2007* p. 3.
[182] Morton, John (2006) *A Review of Oxfam GB's Horn/East Africa Regional Pastoral Programme* p. 2; and Oxfam GB (2002) *Oxfam Review of the East Africa Pastoralist Programme* p. 28.
[183] Morton, John (2006) *A Review of Oxfam GB's Horn/East Africa Regional Pastoral Programme* p. 2.
[184] Morton, John (2006) *A Review of Oxfam GB's Horn/East Africa Regional Pastoral Programme* p. 12.
[185] Morton, John (2006) *A Review of Oxfam GB's Horn/East Africa Regional Pastoral Programme.*

approached, and the implementation of targeted initiatives aimed at empowering women. In Oxfam's Uganda programme, these efforts were sometimes less than successful, even reinforcing traditional roles,[186] but in the mainstreaming cycle, there will be setbacks. Important steps forward have been made because gender has found a foothold in the Uganda programme and has been incorporated in monitoring mechanisms; hence the shortcomings which were being openly acknowledged.

On the other hand, despite being involved with disabled people since the mid sixties, and being allied to the disability movement for eighteen years, since the phase-out of the disability programme, no measures to mainstream disabled people have been taken. Yet employees at the Uganda office claim to mainstream the issue[187] and the disability movement in Uganda believes Oxfam in Uganda has implemented the policy of mainstreaming.[188]

The ideational elements affecting the decision-making terrain at Oxfam's Uganda country office contain one last bundle of organisational characteristics which are interesting to this analysis: those related to the 'marketing' imperative. The next section will look at how Oxfam's Uganda office related to the marketing imperatives of the corporate centre as well what marketing imperatives it faced itself, both in terms of raising funds externally, and convincing head office to provide the funding for the programmes it wished to conduct.

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[186] Oxfam GB in Uganda (2004) *Capacity Building for the Empowerment Review* p. 19.
[187] Oxfam GB in Uganda Employee (2005) Interview.
[188] Asamo, Hellen Grace (2006) Interview.

5.3.4 MARKETING

In 2001, the front cover of Oxfam's 2000/2001 Annual Review featured a picture from the National Games for the Blind in Uganda, activities related to NUDIPU's advocacy campaign.

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In December 2004, a much publicised visit by Helen Mirren to Northern Uganda appeared as the leading story in The Independent Magazine and was used to illustrate Oxfam's work in the 2004-5 Annual Review.[190]

Oxfam needs its work at the country level to justify its existence. This is the product Oxfam is selling to the Western public and Oxfam's Uganda office has a role to play in the creation of this publicity material. On the other hand, their

[189] Oxfam GB (2001) *Oxfam Annual Review 2000/2001.*
[190] Oxfam GB (2005) *Oxfam Annual Review 2004/2005* p. 12-13.

experience of the Oxfam brand is entirely different. In the Kampala office, an Oxfam carrier bag was seen as a novelty,[191] and the Oxfam name was not as well known in Uganda amongst those who had not been directly involved in their work.[192] This issue was raised at the 2002 Quarterly Programme Meeting, during which Oxfam was accused of being poor at communicating its relevance and the full scope of what it did down to the grass roots.[193]

This does not mean the Oxfam office in Uganda did not have concerns with publicity and marketing. With the reduction in the non-earmarked budget for the local office to allocate under their decentralised powers,[194] the country office had the opportunity to market potential programmes to Oxfam for special grants,[195] or to other INGOs and donors.[196] This raises the issue of drawing those funds away from local and national NGOs,[197] and the concern of following the donor's agenda.[198]

During the research, two specific examples were found of how the Kampala office approached the corporate centre with proposals for programmes it wished to run but did not have the funds to pursue. Firstly, when NUDIPU's status was defined as not being an integral part of the Uganda country's strategic focus, a proposal was sent to head office asking for it to provide funds for the programme. This proposal was declined.[199] Secondly, the Uganda office wanted to scale up the existing small-scale relief work in the Rwenzori region in Western Uganda.[200] In order to sell this idea to the corporate centre, the country office

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[191] Oxfam GB in Uganda Employee (2005) Interview.
[192] Disabled People in Kamuli (2006) Interviews.
[193] Oxfam GB in Uganda (2002) *Proceeds of the Quarterly Programme Meeting for Oxfam GB in Uganda* p. 10.
[194] Oxfam GB in Uganda (1996) *Strategic Plan 1996-2000* p. 3 and p. 20.
[195] Oxfam GB in Uganda Employee (2005) Interview.
[196] Oxfam GB in Uganda (1996) *Strategic Plan 1996-2000* p. 22; Oxfam GB in Uganda (2004) *Oxfam: Support to the Right to be Heard Programme in Uganda* p. 20.
[197] Oxfam GB in Uganda (1996) *Strategic Plan 1996-2000* p. 22.
[198] Oxfam GB in Uganda (1996) *Strategic Plan 1996-2000* p. 3.
[199] Oxfam GB in Uganda Employee (2005) Interview.
[200] Oxfam GB in Uganda (2005) *The Rwenzori Livelihoods Improvement and Good Governance Project.*

commissioned assessment reviews,[201] and drew up proposals thoroughly ingrained with SCO terminology[202] and plans for gender mainstreaming.[203] However, again head office declined to provide the funds to allow this programme to go ahead,[204] showing again how local decision-making powers and mechanisms to let the country level set the agenda, even within the SCOs, was limited.

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This section has looked at four types of organisational characteristics present in the ideational elements of Oxfam. The analysis has shown how the trends initiated at head office affected the decision-making terrain at the country level, and the unanticipated affects these had, including the sidelining of the disability movement, and subsequently disabled people, from Oxfam's development interventions. The final selection of organisational characteristics left to look at in this chapter, are those related to organisational learning.

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[201] Mukasa, Aggrey (2004) *A Participatory Assessment for Bundibugyo and Kasese Districts.*
[202] Muhereza, Frank Emmanuel (2004) *Oxfam GB – A Long Term Program Strategy for the Rwenzori Region* p. 40.
[203] Oxfam GB in Uganda (2005) *The Rwenzori Livelihoods Improvement and Good Governance Project* p. 17.
[204] Oxfam GB in Uganda Employee (2005) Interview.

5.4 ORGANISATIONAL LEARNING

"Ready to share learning and best practices so that more organisations might learn"[205]

The previous chapter looked at the Oxfam corporate centre's role in shaping knowledge-management and organisational learning opportunities. The challenges Oxfam as a whole faced in this field were immense due to the size of the organisation; large quantity of diverse information; and sheer number of employees, totalling 3909 in 2002.[206] The country office had a different experience of Oxfam's learning processes as it was much smaller, had to manage less information, and only had 57 employees.[207] This section will look at the Ugandan office's experience of Oxfam's learning environment by exploring the four fronts of learning introduced in chapter two: individual, partner, external and organisational.

5.4.1 INDIVIDUAL LEARNING

There are two themes which are relevant to this section that have been explored in the analysis so far: an organisation learns through its employees;[208] and development is the product an INGO offers.[209] Employees in Oxfam's Uganda country office were at the front line of both of these elements. What the employees of the Kampala office learnt from their experience of running

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[205] Oxfam GB in Uganda (2004) *Support to the Right to be Heard Programme in Uganda* p. 19.
[206] Oxfam GB (2002) *Oxfam Annual Report and Accounts 2001/2002* p. 41.
[207] Oxfam GB in Uganda (2002) *Proceeds of the Quarterly Programme Meeting for Oxfam GB in Uganda* p. 6.
[208] Knight, Gary A. and Liesch, Peter W. (2002) 'Information Internalisation in Internationalising the Firm' *Journal of Business Research* Vol. 55, No. 12, p. 983.
[209] Ritchie, Robin J.B.; Swami, Sanjeev; and Weinberg, Charles B. (1999) 'A Brand New World for Nonprofits' *International Journal of Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Marketing* Vol. 4, No. 1.

development programmes and interacting with partners, and how they communicated that experience to the other parts of the organisation, were all part of Oxfam's organisational learning process. However, the Uganda office was only one country office with 1.5% of Oxfam GB's total number of employees.[210]

The following analysis will look at how these employees experienced learning at the country level, how they defined their responsibility for helping Oxfam 'learn', and what structures were in place to absorb that knowledge into the wider organisation. Using the same structures borrowed from Knight and Leisch's work and used in chapters two and four, this section will be divided into individual learning as Socialisation, Combination, Externalisation and Internalisation.[211]

a) Socialisation: tacit knowledge to tacit knowledge

Knight and Leisch describe the learning that occurs through socialisation as the "sharing of members' experiences, perspectives, and previously received knowledge, essentially a process of ongoing social interaction aimed ultimately at achieving some purpose".[212] The purpose of socialisation in the Uganda office was to be able to run the activities which constituted Oxfam's development work, and to make sure staff were familiar with Oxfam's working practices and SCOs.

This case study is concerned with a tumultuous and changeable time for Oxfam; the change in managerial structure and many of the ideational elements on which internal decisions and activity were based profoundly affected the experiences employees had whilst working for Oxfam. The process of change had a significant impact on the experience and socialisation of staff in the

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[210] Oxfam GB (2002) *Oxfam Annual Report and Accounts 2001/2002* p. 41; and Oxfam GB in Uganda (2002) *Proceeds of the Quarterly Programme Meeting for Oxfam GB in Uganda* p. 6.
[211] Knight, Gary A. and Liesch, Peter W. (2002) 'Information Internalisation in Internationalising the Firm' p. 989.
[212] Knight, Gary A. and Liesch, Peter W. (2002) 'Information Internalisation in Internationalising the Firm' p. 989.

Kampala office, as the following extract from the Uganda Strategic Plan for 1996-2000 describes:

> "staff are forced to rapidly adapt to new circumstances internally and externally... The rapid changes in working environment frequently move faster than staff capacity to handle the change, and sometimes their capacity and ability to handle the changed workload, often leaving staff overstretched and increasingly demoralised."[213]

A high employee turnover[214] also affected the dividends and dynamics of the socialisation process. It meant employees left, taking with them the lessons that were learnt through the experiences and history of working with partners, which thus became less influential in the decision-making terrain. The arrival of new employees undermined Oxfam's aim for a consistent culture in its working practices, as these individuals brought in different working styles; this element was highlighted by the Ugandan partners as bringing inconsistency to Oxfam's dealings with them.[215] However, high staff turnover also had positive repercussions for the implementation of Oxfam's strategic plan as fewer employees were accustomed to the old system, allowing the SCOs to be quickly entrenched as incoming staff were inducted directly into the new system. This was evident in the interviews conducted for this research at the country level, where the SCOs were used as nouns, contrasting sharply with interviews at head office, where they were described as tools[216] or unhelpful thematic silos.[217]

This more prominent use of the SCOs by country level employees also reflects the linguistic manifestation of traditional networks of power. As Quaggiotto describes:

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[213] Oxfam GB in Uganda (1996) *Strategic Plan 1996-2000* p. 20.
[214] Muhereza, Frank Emmanuel (2004) *Oxfam GB – A Long Term Program Strategy for the Rwenzori Region* p. 65; and Traboulsi, Omar (2000) *Oxfam GB in Uganda: Report on Review of Disability Programme* p. 21.
[215] Muhereza, Frank Emmanuel (2004) *Oxfam GB – A Long Term Program Strategy for the Rwenzori Region* p. 65.
[216] Whitbread, Jasmine (2006) Interview.
[217] Palmer, Robin (2007) *Working on Land Rights for Oxfam, 1997-2007* p. 3.

> "Traditionally, aid has flown from developed countries in the North to developing economies in the South. The flow of financial resources has often been accompanied by the presumption that knowledge about the best recipe for development resides in donor economies."[218]

The SCOs seemed to have found a more welcome reception in the Uganda office than the corporate centre, where, within a few years of their introduction they were being dropped from common parlance and documentation in favour of using the wider five aims.[219] However, despite a flexible interpretation of the SCOs at the corporate centre, one long term head office employee described the working environment at the country level as being locked into:

> "highly constraining thematic Aim silos, which have made it more difficult to work on cross-cutting issues such as women's land rights, and which have caused us e.g. to completely abandon work with the disability movement, which had been an important part of many of our programmes in Southern and Eastern Africa at this earlier time."[220]

The SCO categories provided by head office shaped the experiences of the country level and made certain decisions possible. Where the pre-SCO evolution of policy was described as being dominated by existing programmes, emerging opportunities and personal interest,[221] the new environment restricted activities to those areas where Oxfam globally was seen to have a comprehensive expertise,[222] regardless of local experience, expertise or country office history.

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[218] Quaggiotto, Giulo (2005) 'Elective affinities? Reflections on the enduring appeal of knowledge management for the development sector' *Knowledge Management for Development Journal* Vol. 1, No. 3, p. 43.
[219] Whitbread, Jasmine (2006) Interview.
[220] Palmer, Robin (2007) *Working on Land Rights for Oxfam, 1997-2007* p. 3.
[221] Traboulsi, Omar (Review Team Leader) (March 2000) *Oxfam GB in Uganda Report on Review of Disability Programme* p. 19
[222] Whitbread, Jasmine (2006) Interview.

b) Combination: Explicit knowledge to explicit knowledge

Chapter four, section 4.4.1, discussed how fostering tacit knowledge of the events occurring at the country level was not a priority at the corporate centre, but head office was dependent on explicit knowledge generated at lower levels in order to define policy, make decisions, monitor activities and communicate with donors. A lot of this information was in the form of combination knowledge, where explicit knowledge had been used to compose proposals, reports and overviews. The country level was involved in the combination process in two ways: firstly collecting explicit information from partners and the programmes it was running, and combining it to produce new forms of information to store or pass up through the levels; and secondly taking tacit knowledge and turning it into explicit knowledge to be combined with other information by higher levels. The second part is *externalisation* and will be dealt with in the next section.

As part of the funding arrangement with the country office, partners had to produce narrative and financial reports for Oxfam.[223] Programmes run by Oxfam also had to produce monthly and quarterly reports for the country office as a way of monitoring their progress.[224] These contributed to the country office's explicit knowledge base; however, questions have been raised about the potential reliability of such information obtained from partners, especially when there is any insecurity over the future of the funding relationship.[225] During the transition to Oxfam's strategic plan, several partnership relationships were ended;[226] this was at a time when many other major donors in Uganda were cutting down on the number of partners they worked with.[227]

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[223] NUDIPU (2005) *Annual Progress Report on Advocacy and Lobbying* p. 1 and p. 11.
[224] Oxfam GB in Uganda (2005) *The Rwenzori Livelihoods Improvement and Good Governance Project* p. 26
[225] de Conink, John (2005) Current procedures and policies dominating aid: building strong relationships and enabling NGOs meet their stated aims?: A summary report on research carried out in Uganda, 2000-2004 p. 14.
[226] Oxfam GB in Uganda (1996) *Oxfam Uganda Strategic Plan 1996-2000* pp. 20-21.
[227] de Conink, John (2005) *Current procedures and policies dominating aid* p. 9.

In an environment where funding opportunities were getting scarcer and the partner felt at risk of losing funding, Oxfam's partners were less open in their communications with the country office[228] and reports focused on positive portrayals of their work.[229] For example the only negative focus points in NUDIPU's 2002 and 2005 reports to Oxfam regarded the insecurity of funding with both Oxfam and other donors;[230] how Oxfam's pulling out lost NUDIPU "experienced and tested personnel";[231] and problems caused by Oxfam's reporting demands, lack of clarity, and the timing of funding.[232]

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The country office also drew on the tacit knowledge of its employees to draw up proposals, strategic plans, and other internal documents, which could be accessed by other parts of Oxfam as part of the knowledge-management and organisational learning process. This externalisation of knowledge is the focus of the next section.

c) Externalisation: Tacit Knowledge to Explicit Knowledge

The corporate centre was dependent on the lower levels producing explicit knowledge. How tacit knowledge was codified into explicit knowledge trapped in reports and entries affected what knowledge was collected and assimilated into Oxfam's knowledge base, thereby affecting what ideas and examples were present for organisational learning and marketing. Quaggiotto emphasises that knowledge-management is partly about "how to engage with time-stripped experts on the ground to persuade them to share their tacit knowledge with their

[228] Oxfam GB in Uganda (2002) *Proceeds of the Quarterly Programme Meeting for Oxfam GB in Uganda* p. 13.
[229] de Conink, John (2005) *Current procedures and policies dominating aid* p. 14.
[230] NUDIPU (2005) *Annual Progress Report on Advocacy and Lobbying* p. 13.
[231] NUDIPU (2005) *Annual Progress Report on Advocacy and Lobbying* p. 13.
[232] NUDIPU (2003) *Six Months Progress Report on Advocacy and Lobbying May to October 2002* (Unpublished Report) p. 10.

colleagues."[233] This section will show how the methods put in place to harvest the tacit knowledge of the Uganda office employees and communicate that information into the corporate centre, both tainted the knowledge, and affected the work environment in the Kampala office.

The Ugandan office and the SCO4 team's definition of their own role involved a clear emphasis on the production of reports.[234] This involved annual,[235] three year[236] and five year[237] strategic plans for the office and each division, and monthly, quarterly and annual reports on the programmes, supplemented with other reports where appropriate.[238] Partners were also obliged to produce six monthly[239] or annual reports,[240] as well as being appraised by the Ugandan Office.[241] In terms of "expertise and knowledge sharing, and contributing to Oxfam's skills and knowledge base",[242] the Uganda office, and the offices located in areas of Uganda where Oxfam was operational,[243] perceived that they played an important role.

In terms of collecting explicit knowledge which would remain with the organisation when, in an environment of high staff turnover,[244] individual employees left, the focus on reports and documents resulted in a great deal of paper work. However, the 'management' of this knowledge, in terms of making it available to the right people who may affect change at an organisational level, was hampered. Firstly, a significant amount of the reports were not

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[233] Quaggiotto, Giulio (2005) 'Elective affinities?' p. 42.
[234] Oxfam GB in Uganda (1996) *Strategic Plan 1996-2000* p. 1; and Oxfam GB in Uganda (2004) *Support to the Right to be Heard Programme in Uganda* p. 19.
[235] Oxfam GB in Uganda (1996) *Strategic Plan 1996-2000* p. 1.
[236] Oxfam GB in Uganda (2002) *SCO 4 Programme for Uganda.*
[237] Oxfam GB in Uganda (2004) *Support to the Right to be Heard Programme in Uganda.*
[238] Oxfam GB in Uganda (2004) *Support to the Right to be Heard Programme in Uganda* p. 19.
[239] NUDIPU (2003) *Six Months Progress Report on Advocacy and Lobbying.*
[240] Oxfam GB in Uganda (2002) *Proceeds of the Quarterly programme Meeting for Oxfam GB in Uganda* p. 13.
[241] Oxfam GB in Uganda (2004) *Support to the Right to be Heard Programme in Uganda* p. 29.
[242] Oxfam GB in Uganda (2004) *Support to the Right to be Heard Programme in Uganda* p. 19.
[243] Oxfam GB in Uganda (2005) *The Rwenzori Livelihoods Improvement and Good Governance Project* p. 24.
[244] Muhereza, Frank Emmanuel (2004) *Oxfam GB – A Long Term Program Strategy for the Rwenzori Region* p. 65.

communicated up the levels of the managerial hierarchy, remaining in the Kampala office.[245] Secondly, the filing and grant records have been highlighted by researchers as being in a poor state,[246] thereby hindering the composition of reviews, such as the disability review in 2000.[247]

The focus on the documentary and knowledge transfer aspect of the Kampala team's role monopolised more and more of their time and added to an already heavy workload.[248] Attempts to simplify the system involved the utilisation of intranet databases such as OPAL. The value of OPAL was described by one employee as: "it encourages learning, lessons, experiences, showing you what happens elsewhere."[249]

However, use of such a system in the African context has been criticised by van Doodewaard for the following reasons:

> "The very essence of the Internet is based on Western cultural and social notions. It is relatively egalitarian, open, informal and based on the written word. This is not necessarily similar to the way knowledge is shared in African communities which tend to have a more hierarchical, formal and oral knowledge sharing tradition."[250]

As was discussed in the previous chapter, there was also a disparity between the value ascribed to the knowledge being put into the intranet system at the country level and the corporate centre. Despite the production of documents and the existence of the intranet system, there was still a bottle neck, preventing

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[245] Dawson, Elizabeth; Dodd, Rosie; Roberts, Jill; and Wakeling, Catherine (2004) 'Issues and challenges for record management in the charity and voluntary sector' *Records Management Journal* Vol. 14, Issue 3, p. 114.
[246] Traboulsi, Omar (2000) *Oxfam GB in Uganda: Report on Review of Disability Programme* p. 53.
[247] Traboulsi, Omar (2000) *Oxfam GB in Uganda: Report on Review of Disability Programme* p. 53.
[248] Oxfam GB in Uganda (1996) *Strategic Plan 1996-2000* pp. 20-21.
[249] Oxfam GB in Uganda Employee (2005) Interview.
[250] van Doodeward, M. (2006) 'Online knowledge sharing tools: any use in Africa?' *Knowledge Management for Development Journal* Vol. 2, No. 3, p. 43.

knowledge, even in its explicit form, getting up through the echelons of the organisation.[251]

d) Internalisation: explicit knowledge to tacit knowledge

The internalisation process depends on not just what information is available, but what information the organisation places value on: which areas were considered core to Oxfam's coherent image;[252] areas of added value, where Oxfam could make most impact,[253] or cross-cutting issues of concern (gender). At the Uganda level, although the Kampala office had a history of involvement with the disability movement, and had cultivated a good understanding of the social model,[254] no emphasis or activities fostered the development of tacit knowledge in this area, and with the high staff turnover,[255] tacit knowledge faded to awareness,[256] which became omission and sidelining of disabled people and disability issues. On the other hand, through activities such as workshops,[257] training,[258] and the allocation of roles to individual members of staff to emphasise gender issues,[259] experiences were formed around gender issues, profoundly affecting the way development programmes were designed,[260] even if the outcomes were yet to address the patriarchal imbalance in the target communities.[261]

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[251] Whitbread, Jasmine (2006) Interview.
[252] Oxfam GB (2001) *Oxfam Annual Report and Accounts 2000/2001* p. 18.
[253] Oxfam International (2006) *Promises to Keep Evaluation of the implementation of Towards Global Equity, Oxfam International's strategic plan, 2001 – 2006, Volume I: Synthesis Report* p. 1.
[254] Traboulsi, Omar (2000) *Oxfam GB in Uganda: Report on Review of Disability Programme.*
[255] Muhereza, Frank Emmanuel (2004) *Oxfam GB – A Long Term Program Strategy for the Rwenzori Region* p. 65.
[256] Asamo, Hellen Grace (2006) Interview; and Oxfam GB in Uganda Employee (2005) Interview.
[257] Oxfam GB in Uganda (2005) *Capacity Building for Empowerment Report of a Workshop held in Jinja, Uganda 6-8 March 2005.*
[258] Oxfam GB in Uganda (2002) *SCO 4 Programme for Uganda* p. 29.
[259] Oxfam GB in Uganda (2002) *SCO 4 Programme for Uganda* p. 29.
[260] Oxfam GB in Uganda (2004) *Capacity Building for the Empowerment Review* p. 16.
[261] Oxfam GB in Uganda (2004) *Capacity Building for the Empowerment Review* p. 19.

5.4.2 PARTNER LEARNING

The proposal for the development programme in the Rwenzori region was based on information gathered through holding workshops with potential partners and allowing them to inform Oxfam of their priorities for the development for the region.[262] In theory this provides a solid basis for a learning relationship with the partners, but in this case, the corporate centre chose not to pursue this programme. The experience of this appraisal process by potential partners can be seen as an exploitative extraction, a point which itself was highlighted in the Rwenzori appraisal process when participants expressed their feelings about researchers who have historically come to the region and never provided feedback on the research process.[263]

Another negative experience of the partner's experience of Oxfam's research can be seen in the disability review of 2000.[264] At the time of the review, Oxfam was in the process of phasing out its disability programmes ostensibly because of the "major organisational changes in priority and subsequent revisions to Oxfam GB's global and regional strategic aims";[265] however, the consultation process with partners caused a false sense of hope regarding Oxfam's future intentions. This can be seen in statements made by NUDIPU's former executive secretary in an article intended for internal Oxfam use: "we can see some hope, a light at the end of the tunnel, that perhaps it may not be a complete phase out by Oxfam".[266]

These are ways that Oxfam's collection of knowledge for learning and decision-making has affected partners, but does not place them in Oxfam's learning structures. The rest of this section will look at the nature of the information

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[262] Muhereza, Frank Emmanuel (2004) *Oxfam GB – A Long Term Program Strategy for the Rwenzori Region* p. 26.
[263] Mukasa, Aggrey (2004) *A Participatory Assessment for Bundibugyo and Kasese Districts* p. 6.
[264] Traboulsi, Omar (2000) *Oxfam GB in Uganda: Report on Review of Disability Programme.*
[265] Traboulsi, Omar (2000) *Oxfam GB in Uganda: Report on Review of Disability Programme* p. 18.
[266] Sayer, Geoff (1999) "'NUDIPU's role should be to advocate...'".

exchange and learning processes shared between the partners and the country offices. This will look at how the Uganda office's actions shaped the learning of the partners, the problem of communication, and the role of monitoring in this relationship.

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Part of the Uganda office's role was to model Oxfam's culture and values, and promote the uptake of these by its partners. For example, partners were expected to adopt ideas, approaches and techniques to promote gender issues within their work.[267] Training was provided, and policies were communicated. Oxfam was able to convey its ideas about issues such as gender both through training and advice, but also through example, and more importantly, what it would provide funding for.

The evolution of the approach to gender provides a good illustration for this. In the mid-nineties, after the gender review of the Uganda office, it was decided to remove the post of Gender and Development programme Officer.[268] The justification was that gender should be mainstreamed throughout all of Oxfam's work and should be the responsibility of everyone. In 1999, Oxfam abruptly stopped funding the post of gender officer in NUDIPU on the same grounds.[269] The move shaped NUDIPU's approach to gender, and although both organisations noted how the loss of the individual post had a negative impact on gender work,[270] it shows an extreme example how a change in the Uganda office's policy initiated through the application of knowledge gained through a review (learning), was passed down to the partner. This move shaped how NUDIPU experienced gender mainstreaming, and emphasised the issue. It has

[267] Oxfam GB in Uganda (2004) *Support to the Right to be Heard Programme in Uganda* p. 14.
[268] Payne, Lina and Smyth, Ines (1999) 'The need for reliable systems: gendered work in Oxfam's Uganda programme' p. 176.
[269] Sayer, Geoff (1999) "'NUDIPU's role should be to advocate...'".
[270] Sayer, Geoff (1999) "'NUDIPU's role should be to advocate...'"; and Payne, Lina and Smyth, Ines (1999) 'The need for reliable systems: gendered work in Oxfam's Uganda programme' p. 176.

also been linked with the formation of the National Union of Women with Disabilities in Uganda (NUWODU).[271]

As was discussed in chapter two, when one organisation has funds, and the partner is dependent on those funds to conduct its activities, it fosters an environment where the donor organisation, in this case the Uganda office, feels it also has a role in the provision of knowledge.[272] In some cases, this can be seen as a good thing: for example NUDIPU welcomed Oxfam's help and guidance when it came to applying for proposals and learning how to mobilise resources;[273] however, as the example about the role of NUDIPU's gender officer revealed, sometimes the 'lessons' were not as welcome.

One aspect of potential learning, which will be discussed in more detail in the next chapter, is how clearly the country office and its partners communicated with each other. In the Aims and Objectives section of this chapter, the issue was raised that Oxfam saw the emphasis of NUDIPU's advocacy campaign as being too focused on the government, even though it had been actively involved with the campaign since the beginning. Another area where lack of communication was evident was the reason for withdrawal. Oxfam presented one range of reasons for withdrawal, but NUDIPU provided a completely different list of reasons.[274] Clearly communication was not as good as either party described it.[275]

Opportunities for Oxfam to learn from the partners, or to collect information about partner activities for other organisational uses, depended on the country office's interaction with the partners. The monitoring aspect of the relationship

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[271] Nalusiba, Cissy (2005) Information Officer for NUWODU, Interview.
[272] Wiedenhof, C and Molenaar, H. (2006) 'One never knows: research Policy and Knowledge Management in Dutch development cooperation' *Knowledge Management for Development Journal* Vol. 2, No. 3, p. 13.
[273] NUDIPU (2005) *Annual Progress Report on Advocacy and Lobbying* p. 11.
[274] Kamya, Julius (2005) Interview.
[275] Asamo, Hellen Grace (2005) Interview; Kamya, Julius (2005) Interview; and Oxfam GB in Uganda Employee (2005) Interview.

was prominent,[276] with an emphasis on financial and narrative reports.[277] However, where face to face interactions between policy makers in Oxford and the beneficiaries were diminishing with the decisions to cut back on travel,[278] face to face interactions between the partner and the country office were still common, and valued by the partner.[279]

However, with the increasing insecure environment for partners and their funding from Oxfam, the close proximity to the partners did not lead to an open environment where ideas were openly and honestly exchanged. It was raised in one stakeholder review that partners were unwilling to be open if thought it could lose them funding.[280] This was reflected in the communication difficulties between Oxfam and partner. A further issue which will be discussed in the next chapter is how PWDs at the grassroots felt that NUDIPU's donors did not monitor its activities down to the people it was supposed to be working for.

5.4.3 EXTERNAL LEARNING

Chapter four looked at how Oxfam was increasingly looking at campaigning on the global scene as a means to achieving the aims set out in the SCOs.[281] The Uganda office played a role in this by contributing to the knowledge base on which these campaigns were based. For Oxfam GB in Uganda, the priorities are different. There is not the same emphasis on communicating with the global media or academia. However, with the conflict in Northern Uganda and the Global Make Trade Fair Campaign, there were direct communications between the country level and the international media.

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[276] Oxfam GB in Uganda (2004) *Oxfam: Support to the Right to be Heard Programme in Uganda* p. 29.
[277] NUDIPU (2005) *Annual Progress Report on Advocacy and Lobbying* p. 11.
[278] Palmer, Robin (2007) *Working on Land Rights for Oxfam, 1997-2007* p. 3.
[279] Kamya, Julius (2005) Interview.
[280] Oxfam GB in Uganda (2002) *Proceeds of the Quarterly programme Meeting for Oxfam GB in Uganda* p. 13.
[281] Oxfam GB (2003) *Oxfam GB Strategic Plan 2003-2006* p. 36.

The Uganda office has a policy and communications officer,[282] who communicated with the global media, for example the BBC,[283] on matters relating to the war in the North. Oxfam has also made reports by one of its partners, Civil Society Organisations for Peace in Northern Uganda (CSOPNU) available on its internet site.[284] In the SCO4 strategic plan, there is an international element focusing on debt relief and fair trade.[285] However, the lessons learnt from the eighteen year engagement with DPOs in Uganda,[286] have remained at the local level.[287]

5.4.4 ORGANISATIONAL LEARNING

This section has addressed the country office's experience of Oxfam's learning environment on three fronts of learning: individual, partner, and external. The last thing to examine is how the issues discussed so far contributed to Oxfam's organisational learning. As learning at the corporate centre was discussed in chapter four, section 4.4, this section will be looking at how the country level 'learnt', and the implications arising from the nature of the knowledge cultivated at this level for Oxfam's wider organisational learning.

Organisational learning occurs when an organisation uses its knowledge base to reflect on its practices and policies and, as a result, changes either the way it works or what it is working towards. Did Oxfam GB in Uganda change its practices in light of information received? Yes. It received information about Oxfam's increasing strategic focus and theories and ideas on how to include

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[282] Oxfam GB in Uganda (2007) 'Peace Talks: Northern Ugandans don't feel they are being heard'.
[283] Grainger, Sarah (2007) 'Peace talks bring change to Uganda' *BBC News* 14th July.
[284] CSOPNU (2006) *Counting the cost: Twenty years of war in northern Uganda*; and CSOPNU (2007) *Between Hope and Fear in Northern Uganda: Challenges on the Ground and an Urgent Need for Peace.*
[285] Oxfam GB in Uganda (2002) *SCO 4 Programme for Uganda* pp. 7-8.
[286] Traboulsi, Omar (2000) *Oxfam GB in Uganda: Report on Review of Disability Programme* p. 50.
[287] Dawson, Elizabeth; Dodd, Rosie; Roberts, Jill; and Wakeling, Catherine (2004) 'Issues and Challenges for record management in the charity and voluntary sector' p. 114.

issues of gender in its work, and adjusted programmes accordingly.[288] However, this was based on knowledge coming down through the organisation and decisions made in the higher echelons of Oxfam GB rather than independent decisions to change practice on the basis of what the country office has learnt from its own experiences, so cannot be called organisational learning.

Organisational learning on a smaller scale was evident in the discussion of the three fronts of learning, such as the decision to change the approach to gender based on a gender review,[289] but as Oxfam as a whole began to pursue the deliberate policy of coherence in both strategic aims and working culture, room for local organisational learning became undermined.

This is not to say the country office did not play a role in contributing to the knowledge base on which the higher levels of Oxfam made decisions about policy and working practices. The Uganda office defined its responsibilities in plans and proposals as including "[e]xpertise and knowledge sharing, and contributing to Oxfam's skills and knowledge needs",[290] more explicitly, it claimed it was "[r]eady to share learning and best practices so that more organisations might learn" and to "[c]ontribute to Oxfam's learning process".[291]

The previous chapter discussed how the corporate centre struggled to get information from the country level up through the organisation. Here the nature of what information was conveyed will be addressed. The emphasis on producing documents as a method of both monitoring and storing information was prominent throughout the three fronts of learning. Such forms of explicit knowledge are useful as they could be transported far easier than tacit

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[288] Oxfam GB in Uganda (1996) *Strategic Plan 1996-2000*; and Payne, Lina and Smyth, Ines (1999) 'The need for reliable systems: gendered work in Oxfam's Uganda programme'.
[289] Payne, Lina and Smyth, Ines (1999) 'The need for reliable systems: gendered work in Oxfam's Uganda programme' p. 176.
[290] Oxfam GB in Uganda (2005) *The Rwenzori Livelihoods Improvement and Good Governance Project* p. 24.
[291] Oxfam GB in Uganda (2004) *Support to the Right to be Heard Programme in Uganda* p. 19.

knowledge; however, even in this form, much of the knowledge generated by the Uganda office remained at the country level.[292]

The discussion regarding the knowledge transfer between partner and Oxfam raises further questions about the knowledge-management system. Oxfam preferred to work through partners where it could.[293] However, in the increasingly insecure funding situation, where many partners felt they were unable to be entirely honest with Oxfam,[294] a significant amount of the information passed up to the higher levels, for example, as evidence of impact made, could not be regarded as balanced depictions of activities since partners were more willing to emphasise the positive elements of their work rather than be openly critical. Coupled with the presence of the SCOs which both framed the experiences employees had[295] and how information was presented in its explicit format,[296] the knowledge coming from the Ugandan office was less an accurate depiction of events and relationships, and more the product of Oxfam's own organisational characteristics and the power imbalance between Oxfam and partners. This resulted in a stylised representation of power relations and strategic categorisation. As a knowledge base from which to learn, there are a limited number of lessons, most of which were shaped by Oxfam's existing ideational framework.

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[292] Dawson, Elizabeth; Dodd, Rosie; Roberts, Jill; and Wakeling, Catherine (2004) 'Issues and Challenges for record management in the charity and voluntary sector' p. 114.
[293] Muhereza, Frank Emmanuel (2004) *Oxfam GB – A Long Term Program Strategy for the Rwenzori Region* p. 34.
[294] Oxfam GB in Uganda (2002) *Proceeds of the Quarterly programme Meeting for Oxfam GB in Uganda* p. 13.
[295] Palmer, Robin (2007) *Working on Land Rights for Oxfam, 1997-2007* p. 3.
[296] Sayer, Geoff (1999) '"NUDIPU's role should be to advocate..."'; and Sayer, Geoff (2000) '"Ten years ago we couldn't talk in public"'.

5.5
CONCLUSION

This chapter has built on the analysis of Oxfam's corporate centre provided by chapter four and shown how trends initiated at the head office manifested at the country level. By following the same structure as the previous chapter, it has proved possible to pull out several interesting insights into how organisational policies were affecting the decision-making terrains at the Uganda level and the country office's approach to working with partners. The next chapter will build on this and discuss the role NUDIPU played in the 'partnership', how the trends outlined here affected NUDIPU, and finally, the wider ramifications of the decisions which were taken as a result of Oxfam's strategising.

The managerial structure was the first organisational characteristic which was examined from the perspective of the country level. This placed the policies taken at head office in the context of a lower level and described how the Uganda office welcomed the increased power brought in by decentralisation.[297] The regional offices created new opportunities for cross-border collaboration as was illustrated with the discussion of the HECA based EARPP which involved country offices in Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda.[298] This section also introduced the relationship between the Ugandan country office and its partners, discussing the value placed on working through partners as both a cost-effective strategy[299] and as a means to achieving "meaningful and sustainable development".[300] However, because of a declining budget, the number of partners Oxfam worked with in Uganda was reduced.[301]

The emphasis on the cost-effective use of partners was indicative of the country office's uptake of Oxfam's 'culture'. The five characteristics to which Oxfam GB aspires (Making a Difference, Innovative, Collaborative, Accountable and Cost-

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[297] Oxfam GB in Uganda (1996) *Strategic Plan 1996-2000* pp. 19-20.
[298] Oxfam GB (2002) *Oxfam Review of the East Africa Pastoralist Programme.*
[299] Oxfam GB in Uganda (2005) *The Rwenzori Livelihoods Improvement and Good Governance Project* p. 27
[300] Oxfam GB in Uganda (2004) *Capacity Building for the Empowerment Review* p. 32.
[301] Oxfam GB in Uganda (1996) *Strategic Plan 1996-2000* pp. 20-21.

Effective),[302] proliferated throughout proposals and reports,[303] with an extra emphasis on transparency.[304] The notions of making a difference and cost-effectiveness were also used to justify a number of policy decisions, such as the use of partners to reach the grassroots,[305] and the phasing out of former partners.[306]

The manifestation of Oxfam's aims and objectives in the Uganda office revealed a case where policy decisions at head office had a dramatic impact on the decision-making terrain at the country level. The introduction of the SCOs was seen as a positive thing at the country office,[307] replacing an era of ad hoc policies[308] and unclear objectives, especially from the perspective of the partners.[309]

As aims and objectives were made clearer and more prominent in defining which activities could be part of the Uganda team's mission, the categorisation of programmes became both prominent and significant for the survival of Oxfam's relationship with its partners. The classification and reclassification of NUDIPU[310] reveals both the importance of interpretation and allocation of programmes to SCO categories, and how the Uganda office's decision of which SCO the disability programme belonged in could be overruled by the regional office.[311] Although presented as an issue of placing disability in the right SCO

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[302] Oxfam GB (1998) *Setting the Course for the Twenty-First Century* p. 134.
[303] Oxfam GB in Uganda (2005) *The Rwenzori Livelihoods Improvement and Good Governance Project* p. 24.
[304] Oxfam GB in Uganda (2005) *The Rwenzori Livelihoods Improvement and Good Governance Project* p. 24.
[305] Muhereza, Frank Emmanuel (2004) *Oxfam GB – A Long Term Program Strategy for the Rwenzori Region* p. 34; and Oxfam GB in Uganda (2005) *The Rwenzori Livelihoods Improvement and Good Governance Project* p. 27.
[306] Oxfam GB in Uganda Employee (2005) Interview.
[307] Oxfam GB in Uganda (1996) *Strategic Plan 1996-2000* p. 19.
[308] Payne, Lina and Smyth, Ines (1999) 'The need for reliable systems: gendered work in Oxfam's Uganda programme' p. 177; and Traboulsi, Omar (2000) *Oxfam GB in Uganda: Report on Review of Disability Programme* p. 19.
[309] Traboulsi, Omar (2000) *Oxfam GB in Uganda: Report on Review of Disability Programme* p. 20.
[310] Burden, Allison (2002) Internal Memo.
[311] Palmer, Robin (2005) Personal Communication.

band, this event was in fact part of Oxfam GB's wider withdrawal from disability issues.

The discussion of attempts to mainstream gender revealed positive steps had been taken to mainstream women in line with Oxfam's organisational blue-prints. The importance of including gender was recognised in reports and, increasingly, programmes were designed to include initiatives targeting women.[312] However, women were still found to be absent from many of the programmes being run,[313] and the Ugandan office clearly adopted a policy of aiming to include women, but not tackle the wider gender issues.[314]

The mainstreaming of disability suffered a different fate to gender mainstreaming. During the transition to strategic plans, the targeting and inclusion of women in development work was increasingly put on the agenda in the decision-making terrain. At the same time, the notion of working with disabled people, or aiming to tackle disability issues, was increasingly removed from the decision-making terrain. In Uganda, this occurred despite an involvement with disability which had lasted eighteen years,[315] and had included the personal involvement of one Oxfam employee in the political campaign during the writing of the 1995 constitution.[316] In 2005, during the field work, Oxfam and NUDIPU both described the Uganda office as having an awareness of disability issues in their work,[317] but there was no evidence of this affecting policy in any way to ensure disabled people were actually included in Oxfam's work.[318]

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[312] Oxfam GB in Uganda (2004) *Kotido Pastoral Development Programme: Three Year (2004-2007) log frame* pp. 2-3; and Oxfam GB in Uganda (2005) *The Rwenzori Livelihoods Improvement and Good Governance Project* p. 17.
[313] Oxfam GB in Uganda (2004) *Capacity Building for the Empowerment Review* p. 16.
[314] Oxfam GB (2005) *Kotido Pastoral Development Programme* p. 9.
[315] Traboulsi, Omar (2000) *Oxfam GB in Uganda: Report on Review of Disability Programme* p. 49.
[316] Sayer, Geoff (2000) "'Ten years ago we couldn't talk in public'".
[317] Asamo, Hellen Grace (2006) Interview; and Oxfam GB in Uganda Employee (2005) Interview.
[318] Morton, John (2006) *A Review of Oxfam GB's Horn/East Africa Regional Pastoral Programme* p. 12.

The Uganda office's 57 employees[319] had a markedly different experience of learning to the employees at the corporate centre. The explicit knowledge used at head office to manage, monitor and market the activities of the lower levels was dependent on the production of useable forms of knowledge at lower levels. The work of the employees at the Uganda office formed experiences which were codified into documents and database entries. These experiences were increasingly framed by the SCOs and Oxfam's working culture, and the way documents were compiled further framed the information in terms of internal frameworks, classifications and taxonomies. Combined with the reports from partners, which had a tendency to focus on the areas least risky to their funding relationship,[320] Oxfam's knowledge base was shown to be skewed by its dominant organisational image and the power relations of the INGO-partner relationship.

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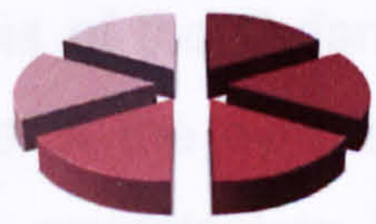
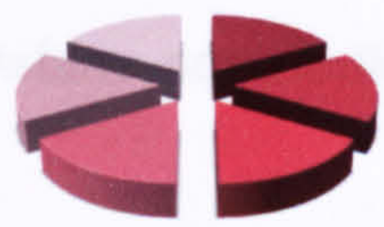
By looking at the manifestation of behavioural chains at the country level, the trends which affected the decisions about the Oxfam-NUDIPU relationship are becoming clearer. Chapters four and five have examined the factors internal to Oxfam which explain the decision to withdraw funding from NUDIPU; however, without actually looking at NUDIPU and its relationship with the disability movement and PWDs of Uganda, the story is incomplete. The next chapter will provide the final detailed investigation of a specific level within the Oxfam-NUDIPU collaboration and in doing so conclude the analysis of the relationship.



[319] Oxfam GB in Uganda (2002) *Proceeds of the Quarterly programme Meeting for Oxfam GB in Uganda* p. 6.
[320] Oxfam GB in Uganda (2002) *Proceeds of the Quarterly programme Meeting for Oxfam GB in Uganda* p. 13.

Chapter Six: The Under-Level

Strategic Plans and Partners: How Oxfam's prioritising and becoming more business-like affected NUDIPU



6.1

INTRODUCTION

"Our life revolves around the decisions they make" [1]

Macline Twimukye, Former Executive Secretary of NUDIPU, speaking about donors

In 2005, Oxfam ended its partnership with the National Union of Disabled Persons of Uganda (NUDIPU); the relationship had lasted eighteen years. However, NUDIPU was not the only partner focusing on disability issues Oxfam GB in Uganda had been involved with: Oxfam had been involved in projects involving disabled people since it first started work in the country in the mid 1960s, during which time it provided support to more than thirteen separate Disabled Persons Organisation (DPOs).[2]

Partner/Under-Level

The previous two chapters explored the reasons internal to Oxfam which led to the decision to phase-out the disability programme; this chapter will complete the analysis of the Oxfam-partner relationship by closely examining NUDIPU's experience of the events discussed so far. As NUDIPU was the national representative organisation for the DPOs of Uganda, how

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[1] Twinukye, Macline, quoted in Sayer, Geoff (1999) '"NUDIPU's role should be to advocate..."' Internal Communications on Oxfam Words and Picture Library.

[2] Traboulsi, Omar (2000) *Oxfam GB in Uganda: Report on Review of Disability Programme* (Unpublished Report).

Oxfam's actions affected the other DPOs will also play a major part in this analysis. In the structural elements section, there will be an assessment of whether the Oxfam-NUDIPU relationship could be considered a partnership, or is better described as an under-level; the next section will assess the correlation between the ideational elements of Oxfam and NUDIPU, paying specific attention to working practices, and aims and objectives; and finally, the discussion will look at how Oxfam contributed to NUDIPU's organisational learning.

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To begin the analysis, the wider context of the International Non-Governmental Organisation (INGO)-partner scene in Uganda will be examined, before introducing NUDIPU and the National Union of Women with Disabilities of Uganda (NUWODU), the main case studies for this chapter. The rest of the chapter will discuss the organisational characteristics which proved most important at this level of analysis: this will include looking at the structures between Oxfam, NUDIPU, and other DPOs, working practices, aims and objectives, and NUDIPU's knowledge-management and opportunities for Oxfam's learning.

6.1.1 INGOS AND THE UNDER-LEVEL IN UGANDA

To begin this analysis of the under-level, some background is required to situate the case study NGOs in the Ugandan setting. This section will introduce the NGO environment which evolved since the coming to power of the National Resistance Movement (NRM) in 1986, and the relationship between national NGOs and INGOs in terms of funding, accountability and strategic planning.

The NRM brought a period of stability to Uganda after years of violence and unrest[3] which undermined the formation, activities and proliferation of NGOs.[4] The NRM era brought about a "rapid proliferation"[5] of both Ugandan national and local NGOs, as well as INGOs.[6] This sudden upturn in quantity, dispersion and type of NGO present in Uganda was so remarkable that it was referred to as an "invasion" by the Ugandan media.[7]

The NRM sought to specifically encourage activities by women NGOs[8] and the disability movement.[9] As Alex Ndeezi, former Chairperson of NUDIPU describes: "The NRM bush war of 1981-1986 had among other ideologies depended on the philosophy of empowering hitherto marginalised and neglected groups in society as a tool to win popularity of its struggle."[10] However, although the NRM opened up a degree of 'political space' for new NGOs and the growth of existing NGOs,[11] the survival of those organisations depended on their relationship with the government,[12] and what direction the evolution of these NGOs could take was controlled by the NRM through use of both carrot and stick methods.[13] NGOs fostering the acquiescence of the NRM regime,[14] which helped the NRM gain support, and which did not confront NRM policies or practices, could continue and were encouraged by the government. Those

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[3] Ofcansky, Thomas P. (1996) *Uganda: Tarnished Pearl of Africa* (Oxford: Westview Press) p. 58.
[4] Tripp, Aili Mari (1998) 'Local Women's associations and politics in contemporary Uganda' in Hansen, Bernt Holger and Twaddle, Michael (Eds.) *Developing Uganda* (Kampala: Fountain Publishers) p. 130.
[5] Wamai, Nafuna; Walera, Ismail; and Wamai, Gimono (1997) *The Role of Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) in Social Development: A study of Health Sector NGOs in Mbale and Mubende* p. 1.
[6] Wamai, Nafuna; Walera, Ismail; and Wamai, Gimono (1997) The Role of Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) in Social Development' p. 1.
[7] Dicklitch, Susan (1998) 'Indigenous NGOs and Political Participation' Hansen, Bernt Holger and Twaddle, Michael (Eds.) *Developing Uganda* (Kampala: Fountain Publishers) p. 145.
[8] Dicklitch, Susan (1998) 'Indigenous NGOs and Political Participation' p. 122.
[9] Ndeezi, Alex (2004) *The Disability Movement in Uganda* (NUDIPU: Kampala) pp. 17-18.
[10] Ndeezi, Alex (2004) *The Disability Movement in Uganda* p. 17.
[11] Tripp, Aili Mari (1998) 'Local Women's associations and politics in contemporary Uganda' p. 122.
[12] Dicklitch, Susan (1998) 'Indigenous NGOs and Political Participation' p. 148.
[13] Dicklitch, Susan (1998) 'Indigenous NGOs and Political Participation' p. 150.
[14] Dicklitch, Susan (1998) *The Elusive promise of NGOs in Africa: Lessons from Uganda* (Basingstoke: Palgrave) p. 168.

which questioned the government in any way found leaders harassed and arrested,[15] or the organisation closed down through obstructing the registration process,[16] and being declared illegal.

In this environment, the Ugandan NGO sector was shaped; however, the role of Western donors such as Oxfam cannot be ignored. What activities NGOs engaged in depended on what resources could be accessed.[17] The late eighties and nineties saw a high level of Western donor support to Ugandan NGOs: these levels could not be matched by the national or local economies should the donors withdraw funding;[18] therefore a significant dependency on Western donors was created.[19] The NGO environment became one of competition among NGOs for limited donor funding;[20] shrinking available donor funds;[21] and, as Dicklitch highlights, questionable legitimacy.[22] This was because the Ugandan NGOs were limited to what activities they could secure funds for,[23] meaning their agenda was being set by non-indigenous bodies, and as donor withdrawal could lead to the collapse of the 'partner' NGO,[24] there was a significant pressure to accept the donor's aims and objectives.

The move by INGOs towards a more business-minded approach to development,[25] strategising,[26] and changes in partner relations,[27] all discussed

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[15] Dicklitch, Susan (1998) 'Indigenous NGOs and Political Participation' p. 150.
[16] Dicklitch, Susan (1998) 'Indigenous NGOs and Political Participation' p.149.
[17] Barr, Abigail and Fafchamps, Marcel (2006) 'A client-community assessment of the NGO sector in Uganda' *Journal of Development Studies* Vol. 42 No. 4, p.612.
[18] Fowler, Alan (1995) 'NGOs and the Globalisation of Social Welfare: Perspectives from East Africa' in Semboja, Joseph and Therkildsen, Ole (Eds.) *Service Provision Under Stress in East Africa* (London: James Curry) p. 65.
[19] Dicklitch, Susan (1998) *The Elusive promise of NGOs in Africa: Lessons from Uganda* p. 28.
[20] Dicklitch, Susan (1998) *The Elusive promise of NGOs in Africa: Lessons from Uganda* p. 28.
[21] Oxfam GB in Uganda (1996) *Strategic Plan 1996-2000* (Unpublished Report) p. 3.
[22] Dicklitch, Susan (1998) *The Elusive promise of NGOs in Africa: Lessons from Uganda* p. 28.
[23] Barr, Abigail and Fafchamps, Marcel (2006) 'A client-community assessment of the NGO sector in Uganda' p.612.
[24] Dicklitch, Susan (1998) *The Elusive promise of NGOs in Africa: Lessons from Uganda* p. 28; and Traboulsi, Omar (2000) *Oxfam GB in Uganda: Report on Review of Disability Programme.*
[25] Stubbs, Paul (2003) 'International Non-State Actors and Social Development Policy' *Global Social Policy* Vol. 3, No. 3, p. 338.
[26] Oxfam GB (1998) *Setting the Course for the Twenty-First Century: Oxfam Strategic Review* (Unpublished Report).
[27] Oxfam GB (1998) *Setting the Course for the Twenty-First Century.*

in the previous chapters, meant that donor policies towards the use of Ugandan NGOs as 'partners' changed.[28] This had a profound impact on the NGO sector in Uganda. The shift to the prioritisation and strategic plans[29] which Oxfam GB implemented in the 1990s was also introduced by other INGOs working in Uganda.[30] Research conducted in Uganda in 2000-2004 found that the INGO's increased use of 'strategic plans' meant that many former partners fell out of the prioritised funding area and lost their funding.[31] In an environment where Ugandan NGOs were dependent on donor funding in order to conduct activities[32] and the termination of funding could lead to activities being curtailed or even the partner NGOs ceasing to be operational,[33] these changes in INGO policy severely affected the work of the Ugandan community, and the choices they could make.[34]

Chapter two discussed the precarious nature of the under-level,[35] and how 'partnership' was usually characterised by INGO agenda-setting and upwards accountability to the donors at the expense of genuine participation and downward accountability.[36] The general move by INGOs towards coherent global policies and strategic plans had an unanticipated affect on the donor environment for Ugandan NGOs. This was described by de Conink as follows:

> "one agency had reduced the number of their partners from over 50 to about 10, focusing on large network and advocacy organisations and moving away from support to small, localised NGOs, another had to develop exit strategies from communities where they had worked

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[28] de Conink, John (2005) *Current procedures and policies dominating aid: building strong relationships and enabling NGOs meet their stated aims?: A summary report on research carried out in Uganda, 2000-2004* p. 9.
[29] Oxfam GB in Uganda (1996) *Strategic Plan 1996-2000* p. 3.
[30] de Conink, John (2005) *Current procedures and policies dominating aid* p. 9.
[31] de Conink, John (2005) *Current procedures and policies dominating aid* p. 9.
[32] Barr, Abigail and Fafchamps, Marcel (2006) 'A client-community assessment of the NGO sector in Uganda' p.612.
[33] Dicklitch, Susan (1998) *The Elusive promise of NGOs in Africa* p. 28; and Traboulsi, Omar (2000) *Oxfam GB in Uganda: Report on Review of Disability Programme.*
[34] de Conink, John (2005) *Current procedures and policies dominating aid* p. 9.
[35] Michael, Sarah (2004) *Undermining Development: The Absence of Power Among Local NGOs in Africa* (Oxford: James Curry and Indiana University Press p. 87.
[36] Wallace, Tina and Chapman, Jennifer (2003) *Some realities Behind the Rhetoric of Downward Accountability* p. 1.

> intensively over many years... Some [partners lost] their funding almost overnight, others [were] required to change their focus to retain a funding relationship, sometimes staff [had] to be shed in large numbers."[37]

NUDIPU and the wider disability movement in Uganda were caught up in the environment of Ugandan NGO insecurity, loss of funding, difficulties finding INGOs who would fund disability related programmes, pressures to change focus and loss of staff.[38] This formed the background to events surrounding Oxfam's withdrawal. The above introduction to the Ugandan NGO scene, combined with the details of changes within Oxfam provided by chapters four and five, has paved the way for the analysis of our primary case study, NUDIPU; our comparative NGO, NUWODU; the wider disability movement; and the opinions of the Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) in Kamuli. NUDIPU and NUWODU will now be introduced before the research is analysed using the framework of the Organisational Levels and Organisational Characteristics (OLOC) model.

6.1.2 NUDIPU

In the 1980s, NUDIPU was a trailblazer in the international disability movement. As Alex Ndeezi described:

> "In terms of international and continental developments in the disability movement, the launching of NUDIPU as an all-embracing umbrella organisation of all PWDs in the country was an event of the first of its kind on the African continent."[39]

What NUDIPU aimed to achieve was to become a unified voice for all PWDs in Uganda. Separate impairment-specific organisations had been around for over a decade; for example the Ugandan National Association of the Blind (UNAB) was founded in 1970 and the Ugandan National Association of the Deaf (UNAD) in

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[37] de Conink, John (2005) *Current procedures and policies dominating aid* p. 9.
[38] Traboulsi, Omar (2000) *Oxfam GB in Uganda: Report on Review of Disability Programme*; and Sayer, Geoff (1999) "'NUDIPU's role should be to advocate...'".
[39] Ndeezi, Alex (2004) *The Disability Movement in Uganda* pp. 11-12.

1973. However, NUDIPU aimed to provide a stronger voice in the realm of advocacy by uniting the disparate voices which were all demanding their rights and their share of the development pie for their own needs. The aim of uniting these different groups was to make their demands more efficient by campaigning with one coordinated voice asking for changes which would benefit all.[40]

The influences on 'unity' can be found in the ideas of the international disability movement[41] which were discussed in chapter three; however, Ugandan influences can also be found.[42] For example, a Luganda proverb which proved influential to the women's movement,[43] also found a home in the rhetoric of unity in the disability movement. The proverb states that "a gali awamu ge galuma enyama" (it is the teeth that are together that can bite the meat),[44] and to the disability movement, that meant the unity between individuals with different impairments and their representative groups.

Having established the importance of unity, NUDIPU's primary mission was to campaign for change. Oxfam provided a great deal of support for this advocacy campaign, and when it started to cut back on its funding relationship with NUDIPU, the campaigning element remained for nearly a decade. The advocacy campaign was defined by NUDIPU as follows:

> "NUDIPU's mission is to advocate for the equalisation of the rights and opportunities of PWDs with other citizens of Uganda, to endeavour to improve on their quality of life in the fields of health, education and socio-

[40] McCloskey, Tony (1999) *The Norwegian Association of the Disabled – Report: NUDIPU – An Overview* p. 3.
[41] Barton, Len (2004) 'The Disability Movement: Some Observations' in Swain, John; French, Sally; Barnes, Colin; and Thomas, Carol (Eds.) *Disabling Barriers – Enabling Environments* (Sage Publications: London) p. 285.
[42] Ndeezi, Alex (2000) 'A presentation by Alex Ndeezi (MP) Chairperson –NUDIPU' presented at The Conference on Disability: In Nordic Development Co-operation p. 9.
[43] Tripp, Aili Mari (2000) *Women and Politics in Uganda* (Oxford: James Curry Ltd.) p. 108.
[44] Kangere, Maria (2003) *Development and Disability: The Ugandan Experience* A paper presented at an expert meeting for Inclusion of Disability in Dutch Development Co-operation Policy and Practice p. 3.

economic welfare and to ensure that services developed or to be developed are relevant to the needs of PWDs."[45]

Chapter three discussed how a disability movement could have three functions: to provide a support base for its members; to be used as a platform for campaigning;[46] and to provide aspects of service provision to its members.[47] NUDIPU became both an advocacy body and a moderate service provision organisation. The debate regarding where its focus should lie remained an issue for NUDIPU: keeping its main focus on campaigning, but unable to leave the service provision because of the dire need for such assistance.[48]

The fertile environment provided by the NRM regime enabled NUDIPU, as well as other NGOs campaigning for minority rights, to flourish.[49] NUDIPU was regularly consulted by MPs and parliamentary committees,[50] and clearly defined its role as working closely with the government, focusing on the political lobbying campaign for pro-disability decisions and to maintain the political gains made so far.[51] However, this approach to advocacy drew NUDIPU too far into the political field for the liking of some of its donors,[52] which will be discussed in more detail in the aims and objectives section.

As a Kampala-based NGO, there was originally an urban bias: power was very much located in the capital city and targeting the government was one of NUDIPU's main activities; PWDs in more rural areas were not being adequately integrated into the disability movement. To address this unbalance, NUDIPU received funding from a Danish INGO to decentralise its structure; this process began in 1995 and involved the establishment of a local branch of NUDIPU in

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[45] Ndeezi, Alex (2004) *The Disability Movement in Uganda* p. 20.
[46] Barton, Len 'The Disability Movement: Some Observations' p. 285.
[47] Thomas, Philippa (2005) *Disability, Poverty and the Millennium Development Goals: Relevance, Challenges and Opportunities for DFID* p. 14.
[48] McCloskey, Tony (1999) *The Norwegian Association of the Disabled – Report* p. 4.
[49] Dicklitch, Susan (1998) 'Indigenous NGOs and Political Participation' p. 122; and Ndeezi, Alex (2004) *The Disability Movement in Uganda* p. 17.
[50] Asamo, Hellen Grace (2005) Interview.
[51] Nizeyimana, Pamela (undated) *NUDIPU.*
[52] Oxfam GB in Uganda Employees (2005) Interview.

each district of Uganda to ensure a more comprehensive geographical coverage.[53] The inspiration for this was predominantly Ugandan, drawing upon the unique structure of the Movement government and from another DPO which operated in Uganda, the Foundation of People with Disabilities (FPD). FPD had also received Oxfam funding, and had adopted a decentralised district arrangement.[54]

In the same year as the decentralisation process was initiated, NUDIPU saw a major advocacy campaign come into fruition. In 1995, the Ugandan government adopted a new constitution; a significant campaign led by NUDIPU, and in which an employee from Oxfam's Uganda office was personally involved, succeeded in making sure several pro-disability clauses were included in the new constitution.[55] PWDs got representation on local councils, with two seats being reserved for disabled people on each local council, and five seats reserved for disabled MPs in parliament.[56]

By 1997 there was a backlash to the strides made in securing the best political representation for people with disabilities throughout the world.[57] As McCloskey describes:

> "In 1997, all that was so carefully built over the previous decade was put in danger of collapse. Effectively, the head of NUDIPU had been guillotined when the most senior staff left, 'en bloc', to take up their political careers, and those who replaced them (chosen without due consideration or preparation) could not cope in a time of such rapid change."[58]

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[53] Nilsson, Annika; Balayo, Seezi; Mwesigye, James; Petersen, Poul Erik; and Kokhauge, Bengt (2002) *Mid Term Review Report DSI/NUDIPU Programme District-Based Disability Organisations* (Unpublished Report) p. 5.
[54] Traboulsi, Omar (2000) *Oxfam GB in Uganda: Report on Review of Disability Programme* p. 32.
[55] Ndeezi, Alex (2004) *The Disability Movement in Uganda* p. 39.
[56] Ndeezi, Alex (2004) *The Disability Movement in Uganda* p. 22.
[57] Frost, Barbara (1999) 'Action for Disability and Development: Working with disabled people's organisations in developing countries' Stone, Emma (Ed.) (1999) *Disability and Development: Learning from Action and Research on Disability in the Majority World* (Leeds: The Disability Press) p. 52.
[58] McCloskey, Tony (1999) *The Norwegian Association of the Disabled – Report* p. 5.

Several donors withdrew because the new managers' inexperience and unsuitability resulted in many problems including the mismanagement of funds.[59] The influx of NUDIPU's former leaders into the official political establishment also divided the focus of the disability movement between the government and NUDIPU. The unity NUDIPU had always claimed to be central to its advocacy campaign became compromised due to the poorly-defined roles between the political element of the disability movement and NUDIPU.[60]

Oxfam's involvement with many DPOs in the early years of disability movement of Uganda has been described as "critical" to the successes which have been achieved.[61] However, in 1996, Oxfam began to reduce the number of partners in this sector,[62] as part of the changes preparing the way for the 1998 strategic review; this signalled the start of the end of Oxfam's involvement with the disability movement of Uganda. FPD's collapse soon after was attributed by some senior NGO workers in Uganda to the withdrawal of Oxfam funds.[63] A similar fate awaited several other DPOs Oxfam had previously supported.[64] NUDIPU's relationship with Oxfam continued till 2005, when its funding was also terminated.

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NUWODU's experiences at this time provide an interesting parallel to NUDIPU's. As it will be used to illustrate many points throughout this chapter, the origins and ethos of NUWODU will now examined.

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[59] McCloskey, Tony (1999) *The Norwegian Association of the Disabled – Report* p. 5.
[60] DSI (2007) *DSI Mini-programme Country Strategy Paper Uganda 2007 – 2011* p. 39.
[61] Traboulsi, Omar (2000) *Oxfam GB in Uganda: Report on Review of Disability Programme* p. 46.
[62] Traboulsi, Omar (2000) *Oxfam GB in Uganda: Report on Review of Disability Programme* p. 18.
[63] ADD Uganda Employee (2006) Interview.
[64] Traboulsi, Omar (2000) *Oxfam GB in Uganda: Report on Review of Disability Programme.*

6.1.3 NUWODU

In the 1990s Oxfam was working with NUDIPU on the creation of a gender desk. Later it withdrew funds claiming that gender should be mainstreamed throughout all of NUDIPU's work and not the focus of a specific desk.[65] Although this meant in the short-term that attention to gender issues waned,[66] it also prompted the creation of NUWODU as a separate organisation. The information officer for NUWODU described the reason for the creation of a women's DPO as: "women with disabilities found they were being left out in the mainstream women's organisations and also in the disability movement organisations."[67] This echoed the findings of Western disability activists such as Jenny Morris, who highlighted how women with disabilities were sidelined in both the disability movement and the feminist movement.[68] Women were considered a secondary issue to the disability movement, even more so in a country where women were treated as "second class citizens".[69]

The idea for a separate women's organisation came from within NUDIPU: women on the board voiced the idea, and the women's wing of NUDIPU evolved into NUWODU, still in the same office, sharing the same computers and able to use NUDIPU structures to raise funds.[70] NUWODU eventually relocated into separate offices in a different part of Kampala, but was still a member of NUDIPU, and individuals occupied positions within both organisations. NUWODU's relationship with NUDIPU provided it with both funds and advice, but NUWODU also acted as a monitoring body, to make sure NUDIPU was observing gender issues in its work; and as a source of advice to be called upon when NUDIPU required gender-sensitive information.[71] The Executive Secretary of NUDIPU and Chairperson of NUWODU, Hellen Grace Asamo, described

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[65] Sayer, Geoff (1999) "'NUDIPU's role should be to advocate...'".
[66] Sayer, Geoff (1999) "'NUDIPU's role should be to advocate...'".
[67] Nalusiba, Cissy (2005) Information Officer for NUWODU, Interview.
[68] Morris, Jenny (1991) *Pride against prejudice: a personal politics of disability* (London: Women's Press).
[69] Nalusiba, Cissy (2005) Information Officer for NUWODU, Interview.
[70] Nalusiba, Cissy (2005) Information Officer for NUWODU, Interview.
[71] Nalusiba, Cissy (2005) Information Officer for NUWODU, Interview.

NUWODU as follows: "To me, I think NUWODU is a chain of NUDIPU, but being in another home."[72]

NUWODU had experiences of coming under NUDIPU's 'umbrella'; it had parallel experiences to NUDIPU, such as its own decentralisation efforts to establish regional branches of its own to complement the work of NUDIPU at the district level; and it had interactions with Oxfam as a potential donor. As the following analysis moves through the categories of the OLOC model, NUWODU's experiences and observations of the INGO-partner-beneficiary dynamic complements the research centred on Oxfam and NUDIPU.

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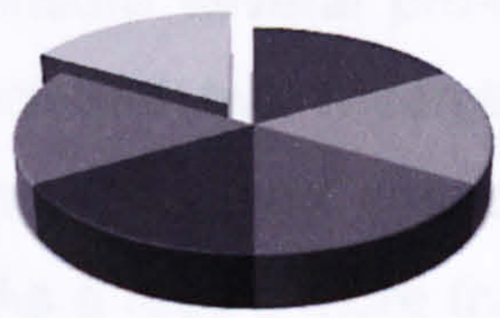
The details of NGOs in Uganda and the introduction to NUDIPU and NUWODU have provided the background against which the lowest level of the OLOC model can be analysed. At this level, organisational trends within Oxfam manifest themselves in decisions which directly affect partners. The first thing which will be examined is the structural elements NUDIPU and associated DPOs, followed by an assessment of whether the Oxfam-NUDIPU relationship can be described within the OLOC model as an under-level or as a partnership.

[72] Asamo, Hellen Grace (2005) Interview.

6.2
STRUCTURAL ELEMENTS
Linking INGO, Umbrella NGO, DPOs and PWDs



❶ **Managerial Structure**

One role of the global or a national disability movement is to create unity for disabled people, both for solidarity and as a platform for campaigning. NUDIPU, as the figurehead of the disability movement in Uganda, clearly saw the fostering of such unity as part of its mission.[73] This section explores the decentralised structures which were put in place to reach and unify NUDIPU's constituents: it will then move on to explore where NUDIPU fitted in the levels of Oxfam's operations.

Using the four factors outlined in chapter two, section 2.2.3, to assess whether the INGO-partner relationship can be represented as a partner or as an under-level in the OLOC model, the second half of this section will gauge the nature of the Oxfam-NUDIPU relationship. In order to evaluate the qualities inherent in the structural ties between Oxfam and this partner, the following areas will be looked at: NUDIPU's donor environment, NUDIPU's clout, the Oxfam-NUDIPU partnership interaction and finally issues of commitments and responsibilities arising from the history and nature of the partnership. As NUDIPU is the national representative for the DPOs of Uganda, this analysis will include details of Oxfam's interaction with the whole disability sector as well as NUDIPU as an individual partner.

[73] Fletcher, Agnes (1994) *DAA Resource Kit No.4: Organisation Building*.

6.2.1 DECENTRALISATION AND DISTRICT UNIONS

In 1995 The Ugandan government adopted a new constitution; NUDIPU campaigned successfully to ensure several pro-disability clauses were written into this constitution. This included two reserved seats for disabled people, elected by disabled people, on each district council, and five seats in parliament reserved for disabled MPs.[74] As a result, more than 50,000 disabled councillors were elected and given posts at the local council level.[75] This achievement had two challenges for NUDIPU: incorporating these new individuals into the NUDIPU system; and defining the boundaries between NUDIPU and the political realm.[76]

To facilitate the first of these challenges, NUDIPU with support from the Danish Council of organisations of Disabled People (DSI)[77] set up fifty-six regional branches, which were called the 'district unions'.[78] These represented the organisation at the district level, provided the structures whereby the new representatives could be informed of organisational policy,[79] and were the means by which the PWDs outside of Kampala were reached. This decentralised structure was also adopted by UNAD, UNAB[80] and NUWODU to ensure the interests of their constituents were also addressed and their members had a local organisation to relate to.

These structures were used to reach the local levels, but also as mobilisation structures and electoral colleges through which the local councillors were elected;[81] leaders of the district unions were often also elected as local

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[74] Ndeezi, Alex (2004) *The Disability Movement in Uganda* p. 22.
[75] Ndeezi, Alex (2004) *The Disability Movement in Uganda* p. 23.
[76] DSI (2007) *DSI Mini-programme Country Strategy Paper* p. 39.
[77] McCloskey, Tony (1999) *The Norwegian Association of the Disabled – Report* p. 5; and Ndeezi, Alex (2004) *The Disability Movement in Uganda* p. 27.
[78] Ndeezi, Alex (2004) *The Disability Movement in Uganda* p. 23.
[79] DSI (2007) *DSI Mini-programme Country Strategy Paper* p. 21.
[80] DSI (2007) *DSI Mini-programme Country Strategy Paper* p. 21.
[81] Ahikire, Josephine (2002) *Decentralisation in Uganda Today: Institutions and Possible Outcomes in the context of Human Rights* International Council on Human Rights Policy

councillors.[82] This blurring between the boundaries of NUDIPU and the district councils is illustrated by Alex Ndeezi, a former prominent member of NUDIPU who became an MP under the provisions secured in the 1995 constitution. In his history of the disability movement in Uganda, he describes the ties between NUDIPU and the disabled persons' representatives on the district councils as follows: "Since the councillors were elected under [the] NUDIPU structure, they were seen as part and parcel of it."[83] Combined with the correlation between those who held prominent positions within NUDIPU at the national level, and those who were elected to parliament,[84] the political leanings of NUDIPU were from its early days contentious,[85] and an issue which will be returned to later in the section dealing with aims and objectives.

Despite the problems caused by the blurring of the lines between NGO and politics, what the decentralised structure did was provide PWDs with opportunities to campaign and lobby at all levels of society, show society what they were capable of doing, and engage those in power over issues such as resource allocation.[86] NUDIPU's district unions were much acclaimed, and often held up as an excellent model which could be learnt from in other countries.[87] However, the structure did not always operate ideally.

Other Ugandan DPOs which focused on national representation for women, the youth or different impairments, such as UNAD, UNAB and NUWODU also had district unions; however, they did not have the resources to cover all regions, meaning geographical coverage was not uniform.[88] It has been observed that, in

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Decentralisation p. 8; and McCloskey, Tony (1999) *The Norwegian Association of the Disabled – Report* p. 5.

[82] Disabled People in Kamuli (2005) Interviews.

[83] Ndeezi, Alex (2004) *The Disability Movement in Uganda* p. 28.

[84] Danida (2004) *Supporting the establishment of district based disability organisations in Uganda* p. 2; and McCloskey, Tony (1999) *The Norwegian Association of the Disabled – Report* p. 5.

[85] McCloskey, Tony (1999) *The Norwegian Association of the Disabled – Report* p. 10.

[86] DSI (2007) *DSI Mini-programme Country Strategy Paper* p. 19.

[87] McCloskey, Tony (1999) *The Norwegian Association of the Disabled – Report* p. 1.

[88] DSI (2007) *DSI Mini-programme Country Strategy Paper* p. 25; and NUWODU (2006) Group Interview.

the run up to elections, the activities of these various district branches increased, with the representative bodies scaling down their activities and disappearing from the public realm after the politics was over, leaving local PWDs unaware of the local branches still meant to be 'supporting their interests'.[89]

A study by one of NUDIPU's main donors, DSI, highlighted how the local district unions were not developing leadership qualities which would have enabled them to take on views or plans which differed from the national umbrella; this meant their agenda was set for them by their urban leaders and did not reflect local situations and problems.[90] There was also a widespread perception that NUDIPU's national profile was not mirrored by its presence at the grassroots.[91] This is not unique to NUDIPU; Lister and Nyamugasira's study of civil society organisations in Uganda concluded that many NGOs in Uganda claimed to have extensive structures reaching to the local level, but these claims have been attacked for being misleading and not a reflection of the real structures in place.[92]

A comparison can be drawn here between Oxfam's presentation of its decentralisation process and the country office's ability to set an independent agenda from the corporate centre. However, there was one major difference: whereas improved communication technology had aided Oxfam's decentralisation process, in the Kamuli region, where the field work for this research took place, there were no phones or internet for the regional branches to keep in touch with the national umbrella, and the postal system was slow and unreliable.[93] During interviews with prominent members of the Kamuli District Unions, examples were given of letters arriving, inviting members to

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[89] DSI (2007) *DSI Mini-programme Country Strategy Paper* p. 25.
[90] DSI (2007) *DSI Mini-programme Country Strategy Paper* p. 25.
[91] Lwanga-Ntale, Charles (2003) *Chronic Poverty and Disability in Uganda* p. 14.
[92] Lister, Sarah and Nyamugasira, Warren (2003) 'Design Contradictions in the 'New Architecture of Aid'? Reflections from Uganda on the Roles of Civil Society Organisations' *Development Policy Review* Vol. 21, No. 1 p. 103.
[93] KAWIDA (2005) Group Interview.

conferences after the conference had occurred.[94] Visits from staff from the Headquarters were seen only a couple of times a year, so a great deal of autonomy was required for the functioning of the district branches. For the district branches reaching out to the grass roots, problems of communication were also present. Despite the smaller coverage area, poor transport infrastructure, cost of travelling (especially for the physically impaired), and the dispersion of local groups of PWDs and individual PWDs meant restricted communication, monitoring and networking.[95]

The funding relationship between national and district caused problems. The perception from the district was that the funds got "stuck in the middle", never to reach the district level.[96] The funding provided for advocacy and lobbying, transport and essential staff costs left little to go round the fifty-six district unions. This led to resentment at the district level, and the opinion in the rural areas that urban areas were favoured and those in the villages lost out.[97] It was raised several times by different interviewees in the rural areas that the funding should come straight to the district level, because when it goes to the national level, they did not see any of it.[98] District unions could approach potential donors independently from the national umbrella, and donors could approach them,[99] but alternative sources of funding was scarce and one donor review highlighted that the head office felt that if donors funded the districts independently, it undermined its status as the umbrella organisation for all PWDs.[100]

The presence of the district unions had an important impact on the 'structure' of the PWDs at the grassroots level. The district unions encouraged the local

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[94] KAWIDA (2005) Group Interview.
[95] KAWIDA (2005) Group Interview.
[96] Baligema Women with Disabilities Kumumwa (2006) Group Interview.
[97] Baligema Women with Disabilities Kumumwa (2006) Group Interview.
[98] Baligema Women with Disabilities Kumumwa (2006) Group Interview; and Chair Person of the Busuyi Kirbedda Women with Disabilities Group (2006) Interview.
[99] Chair Person of KAMUDIPU (2006) Interview; and Nalusiba, Cissy (2006) Information Officer for NUWODU, Interview.
[100] Nilsson, Annika; Balayo, Seezi; Mwesigye, James; Petersen, Poul Erik; and Kokhauge, Bengt (2002) *Mid Term Review Report DSI/NUDIPU Programme* p. 28.

PWDs to form groups as a basis for self help and development.[101] The idea behind this was, as expressed by one local group member, that by working in groups, they were no longer isolated individuals and they could help each other.[102] The formation of groups was even encouraged over the radio where PWDs were urged to form groups as lone individuals would not receive support from organisations.[103] Some groups found the solidarity of groups a good thing because, once in a group, the able-bodied in the community started to listen to them;[104] however, the drawback was some groups were formed solely to get funding from the district unions, thereby causing resentment when no funding was forthcoming.[105] As the information officer for NUWODU explained, women with disabilities had high expectations from the district unions: expectations for which there just weren't the funds to fulfil. As a result, there was disillusionment, people left the groups and stopped trying to help each other.[106]

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The above discussion has introduced the structures of NUDIPU, associated DPOs and beneficiaries, but how did NUDIPU relate to Oxfam's overall structure, and what relationship did it have with its other donors? The next section sets out to establish if NUDIPU was in fact a partner to Oxfam, according to the OLOC model, or if it was, in fact, Oxfam's under-level.

[101] Disabled People in Kamuli (2006) Interviews.
[102] Mpaatasobola Women with Disabilities Group Leader (2006) Interview (Trans from Lusoga).
[103] Chair Person of the Busuyi Kirbedda Women with Disabilities Group (2006) Interview (Trans from Lusoga).
[104] Baligema Women with Disabilities Kumumwa (2006) Group Interview (Trans from Lusoga).
[105] Baligema Women with Disabilities Kumumwa (2006) Group Interview (Trans from Lusoga).
[106] Nalusiba, Cissy (2006) Information Officer for NUWODU, Interview.

6.2.2 NUDIPU: PARTNER OR UNDER-LEVEL?

Chapter two outlined four criteria which can be used to assess whether or not this lowest tier in the OLOC model can be considered a partner or an under-level: donor environment, partner clout, partnership interaction and commitment and responsibilities. This section will apply these four criteria to the Oxfam-NUDIPU relationship.

a) NUDIPU's donor environment

As discussed in chapter three, it is often assumed by development organisations that disability is a specialist issue, best addressed by INGOs with a medical or specific disability focus.[107] For DPOs in Uganda, existing and potential donors were most likely to have a specific disability focus. This point was picked out in NUDIPU's Annual Progress Report to Oxfam in 2005:

> "Disability as a sector, is still silently suffering marginalisation. Surprisingly, this is more evident among would-be development partners, as is exemplified in the unending difficulties encountered in accessing funds from development partners who are not specifically disability-based. General development partners have continually viewed disability as a complex domain, easily handled by international NGOs specifically working in this area. NUDIPU's experience in this light is not different from that of other national and district-based DPOs."[108]

The programme coordinator of NUWODU highlighted the exact same problem in finding donors.[109] The base of donors willing to finance DPO activities was limited and the consequence was that NUDIPU and other DPOs in Uganda were dependent on a small number of donors to sustain core activities. This sector-wide dependence on only a few donors was causing concern for its donors, who claimed it limited the flexibility for both supported DPO and donor INGO to

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[107] Frost, Barbara (2000) *Disability and Development: an overview and ideas on best practice* p. 14; and Yeo, Rebecca (2002) *Chronic Poverty and Disability* p. 8.
[108] NUDIPU (2005) *Annual Progress Report on Advocacy and Lobbying May 2004 – April 2005: Submitted to Oxfam GB in Uganda* (Unpublished Report) p. 13.
[109] Katumba, George (2006) Programme Coordinator for NUWODU, Interview.

act;[110] but it also meant that the disability movement, which was composed of these DPOs, was susceptible to the changes in policies of only a few INGOs.

NUDIPU's budget was funded to the tune of 99% by external donors for a large portion of its history;[111] such dependency raised serious questions about the ability of the DPO to act as a strong, confident partner who had control over the ideational elements of its programmes. The affect this dependency had on the working practices, and aims and objectives of NUDIPU, will be discussed in the next section. By 2001, the level of dependency had reached more of a steady balance with 12% of NUDIPU's income coming from national and local government, 0.4% from its own businesses, but still 87.6% from international donors.[112] Donors were providing training in resource mobilisation,[113] NUDIPU was encouraged to be more proactive in answering requests for funding proposals appearing in the national and local newspapers,[114] and at NUDIPU's 2002 annual donor conference the idea of changing the funding regime to a basket funding system was raised.[115] Basket funding was eventually introduced to cover NUDIPU's core operational costs,[116] but this had not been secured before Oxfam's withdrawal.

In a situation of financial dependency and few potential donors, NUDIPU's donor environment before Oxfam's withdrawal undermined the potential for it to act as a confident partner when negotiating with its INGO donors. For example, when Oxfam abruptly withdrew the funding of NUDIPU's gender development officer

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[110] Nilsson, Annika; Balayo, Seezi; Mwesigye, James; Petersen, Poul Erik; and Kokhauge, Bengt (2002) *Mid Term Review Report DSI/NUDIPU Programme* p. 23.
[111] Ndeezi, Alex (2002) 'Disability and Development: A Success Story from Uganda' in VENRO *Entwicklung ohne Ausgrenzung: Menschen mit Behinderung als entwicklungspolitisches Querschnittsthema im Kontext der Menschenrechte* p. 35.
[112] Kruse, Stein-Erik; Kayonga, Santa V.I.; Mathisen, Trine Rønning; and Roslyng-Jensen, Kristine (2003) *Norwegian Support to Civil Society in Uganda Section 2: Profiles of Ugandan Organisations* pp. 51-52.
[113] NUDIPU (2005) *Annual Progress Report on Advocacy and Lobbying* p. 11.
[114] NUDIPU (2005) *Annual Progress Report on Advocacy and Lobbying* p. 11.
[115] Nilsson, Annika; Balayo, Seezi; Mwesigye, James; Petersen, Poul Erik; and Kokhauge, Bengt (2002) *Mid Term Review Report DSI/NUDIPU Programme* p. 23.
[116] Kruse, Stein-Erik; Kayonga, Santa V.I.; Mathisen, Trine Rønning; and Roslyng-Jensen, Kristine (2003) *Norwegian Support to Civil Society in Uganda* pp. 51-52.

because it believed gender should not be the responsibility of one person,[117] and NUDIPU lost that employee and had to scale back its gender work, it felt unable to confront Oxfam over this decision. The description by Macline Twimukye, NUDIPU's former Executive Director, of NUDIPU's response was indicative of the partner's lack of power vis-à-vis their donor: "But somehow NUDIPU didn't take action".[118]

DSI, one of NUDIPU's main donors described the nature of the relationship between the Ugandan DPOs and their Danish donors as follows:

> "In a number of ways, Ugandan DPOs perceive their Danish partners more as donors and not partners. And indeed, some of the Danish partner DPOs also may behave as donors because they have to prescribe the donor conditional ties without leaving room for their partner DPOs in Uganda to evolve their own systems that reflect their own institutional culture and development. The challenge here is how to develop a genuine partnership".[119]

This description of the donor environment the DPOs in Uganda found themselves in needs to be brought down to the level of interaction; especially the experiences and importance of personal networking. De Conink describes how opportunities for NGOs in Uganda were often shaped around a "web of on-going relationships."[120] During the research process it was highlighted that funding often was secured for a DPO because of existing personal connections between employees of the DPO and the donor.[121] The previous chapter discussed how Oxfam's involvement with the disability movement of Uganda was encouraged by a single member of staff who was personally involved in a lot of NUDIPU's advocacy work.[122] This trend of organisational relationships being swayed by personal relationships had both funding opportunities and

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[117] Kamya, Julius (2005) Interview.
[118] Sayer, Geoff (1999) "'NUDIPU's role should be to advocate...'".
[119] DSI (2007) *DSI Mini-programme Country Strategy Paper* p. 41.
[120] de Conink, John (2005) *Current procedures and policies dominating aid* p. 6.
[121] Katumba, George (2006) Programme Coordinator for NUWODU, Interview; and Nalusiba, Cissy (2006) Information Officer for NUWODU, Interview.
[122] Sayer, Geoff (2000) "'Ten years ago we couldn't talk in public. No one would listen to us...'" Internal Communications on Oxfam Words and Picture Library.

insecurities in store for NUDIPU, NUWODU, and other DPOs in this network. Where a good relationship secured funding and support, the relationship was tied up with that individual, and examples were provided of DPOs losing funding because their contact within the INGO left the employment of the donor.[123] As Cissy Nalusiba of NUWODU described: "when that person goes the funds stops.[124]

With the increasing professionalisation of development organisations, relationships based on individual relations were becoming less influential in forming partner-INGO relationships. The move towards thematic guidelines and organisational imperatives led to partners losing funding, and previous involvement with individuals or organisations no longer held the weight they once carried, as the following description of an interaction between the Norwegian Association of the Disabled (NAD) and NUWODU shows:

> "the Norwegian Association of the Disabled, they used to have an executive secretary which passed away. The funder, they contacted the person in NUWODU direct and said no you cannot fund a person, we cannot say we are funding NUWODU because of that person, because of that relationship we enjoyed".[125]

In the analysis of why the funding relationship between Oxfam and NUDIPU ended, although never stated as a reason, the departure of the member of staff who had previously worked so closely with NUDIPU is likely to have contributed to the country level office's acquiescence to the re-categorisation of NUDIPU into a non-strategic focus area and the decision that the programme should be phased out. One telling statement by one interview from the Kampala office hinted that had the willpower been there to keep it, the relationship may have continued.[126]

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[123] Katumba, George (2006) Programme Coordinator for NUWODU, Interview.
[124] Nalusiba, Cissy (2006) Information Officer for NUWODU, Interview.
[125] Katumba, George (2006) Programme Coordinator for NUWODU, Interview.
[126] Oxfam GB in Uganda Employee (2005) Interview.

Before the analysis moves on to assess the exact nature of Oxfam's involvement with NUDIPU, it is necessary to look at the other side of the donor-NUDIPU relationship: NUDIPU's inherent strengths. This involves looking at NUDIPU's investment in capacity building during the relationship with Oxfam; the resistance to donor agenda-setting; and the 'status' NUDIPU had with donors, in terms of trust, competence, and ability to 'make a difference'.

b) NUDIPU's clout

Ndeezi clearly recognised the problems NUDIPU's dependency on donors was storing up, calling it a "time bomb";[127] however, during the time Oxfam and NUDIPU were partners, very little attention was paid to the issue of NUDIPU's long-term sustainability despite its high donor dependency.[128] The measures that were taken included the donation of an office block to NUDIPU by NAD in 1998,[129] and as part of Oxfam's phase-out strategy it provided NUDIPU with training in "partnership building and resource mobilisation".[130] Before Oxfam signalled the final withdrawal of funds, NUDIPU was working on a programme aimed at local fundraising; however, this was the first programme to be cut when Oxfam started to implement its withdrawal.[131]

These measures were not enough to diffuse the donor-dependency time bomb.[132] NUDIPU's funding relationship with Oxfam did attract funding from other donors,[133] and Oxfam was not NUDIPU's main financier; DSI covered half of its budget.[134] However, NUDIPU's advocacy campaign was heavily

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[127] Ndeezi, Alex (2002) 'Disability and Development: A Success Story from Uganda' p. 35.
[128] Traboulsi, Omar (2000) *Oxfam GB in Uganda: Report on Review of Disability Programme* p. 47.
[129] DSI (2007) *DSI Mini-programme Country Strategy Paper* p. 35.
[130] NUDIPU (2005) *Annual Progress Report on Advocacy and Lobbying* p. 11.
[131] NUDIPU (2005) *Annual Progress Report on Advocacy and Lobbying* p. 9.
[132] Ndeezi, Alex (2002) 'Disability and Development: A Success Story from Uganda' p. 35.
[133] Traboulsi, Omar (2000) *Oxfam GB in Uganda: Report on Review of Disability Programme* p. 21.
[134] Nilsson, Annika; Balayo, Seezi; Mwesigye, James; Petersen, Poul Erik; and Kokhauge, Bengt (2002) *Mid Term Review Report DSI/NUDIPU Programme* p. 23.

dependent on Oxfam's funding,[135] as were many of the DPO's which NUDIPU represented as the umbrella organisation for DPOs in Uganda.[136]

There were no major alternatives to Western donor funding: the Ugandan government had only a limited capacity to fund the work of the disability movement,[137] and the Ugandan economy was considered to be unable to offer an alternative to the long-term funding being provided by the Western INGOs.[138] NUDIPU's funding base was not sufficient to allow it to conduct all of the activities it wished to,[139] and whilst foreign donors were "plugging large funding gaps",[140] in an environment where the termination of donor funding was leading to DPO collapse,[141] NUDIPU's 'clout', in terms of not being overly dependent on any one donor, was minimal.

Based on the donor environment and internal capacity, NUDIPU's ability to fulfil the role of partner for Oxfam and other donors was weak and its susceptibility to being recruited as a subcontractor to carry out activities chosen by the donor increased.[142] As Ndeezi described:

> "the disability movement cannot claim to have the capacity to withstand donor interference in its programmes – including setting priorities. The danger of running irrelevant and unsuitable donor driven programmes and projects cannot be ruled out.[143]

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[135] Asamo, Hellen Grace (2006) Interview.
[136] Traboulsi, Omar (2000) *Oxfam GB in Uganda: Report on Review of Disability Programme* p. 47.
[137] Walugembe, Joseph with Peckett, Julia (2005) 'Power struggle: Uganda has an impressive array of people with disabilities involved in politics'.
[138] Neeteson, Annemarie (1998) *Support to the National Union of Disabled Persons of Uganda: Final Evaluation* (Unpublished Report) p. 10.
[139] Traboulsi, Omar (2000) *Oxfam GB in Uganda: Report on Review of Disability Programme* p. 30.
[140] Walugembe, Joseph with Peckett, Julia (2005) 'Power struggle: Uganda has an impressive array of people with disabilities involved in politics'.
[141] Regional Representative for NUWODU (2006) Interview; and Traboulsi, Omar (2000) *Oxfam GB in Uganda: Report on Review of Disability Programme* p. 47.
[142] Nilsson, Annika; Balayo, Seezi; Mwesigye, James; Petersen, Poul Erik; and Kokhauge, Bengt (2002) *Mid Term Review Report DSI/NUDIPU Programme* p. 10.
[143] Ndeezi, Alex (2004) *The Disability Movement in Uganda* p. 38.

The clout of a partner depends on more than the donor base, internal capacity, and resilience to donor agenda-setting: it also depends on the reputation of the partner NGO.[144] NUDIPU had an internationally-acclaimed reputation for bringing political representation to the disabled people of Uganda[145] and being a highly representative and innovative organisation because of its decentralised structure.[146] In its early days, it was also fronted by a charismatic leader and had many excellent and competent people working for its cause.[147] However, in 1997 its reputation was undermined when it lost both its respected leaders to parliament,[148] and within a year the figurehead of the disability movement, Eliphaz Mazima, died.[149]

The loss of the leadership was compounded by some funds being misappropriated, causing donors to withdraw.[150] Trust was rebuilt, but in 2005 another issue was becoming important; whether NUDIPU was 'making a difference' and the right kind of difference. The successes achieved in the 1995 constitution were a decade old, and although Oxfam's corporate centre did chose to use those very achievements in the 2000/2001 *Oxfam Annual Review* as evidence of the impact they had made,[151] questions were being raised about whether NUDIPU was translating the political successes it had scored into differences in the lives of PWDs at the grassroots.[152] In 2005, DSI withdrew a significant amount of its funding from NUDIPU on the grounds that there had not been the desired impact at the grassroots, nor had NUDIPU's coverage been

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[144] Goddard, Andrew and Assad, Mussa Juma (2006) 'Accounting and navigating legitimacy in Tanzanian NGOs' *Accounting, Auditing and Accountability Journal* Vol. 19, No. 3.
[145] Harris, Alison with Enfield, Sue (2003) *Disability, Equality and Human Rights: A Training Manual for Development and Humanitarian Organisations* (Oxford: Oxfam GB) p. 25.
[146] Lwanga-Ntale, Charles (2003) *Chronic Poverty and Disability in Uganda* p. 14.
[147] Ndeezi, Alex (2004) *The Disability Movement in Uganda* p. 16.
[148] McCloskey, Tony (1999) *The Norwegian Association of the Disabled – Report* p. 5.
[149] Ncubedis, Jabulani M. (1997) 'Eliphaz Mazima Remembered' *Disability International.*
[150] McCloskey, Tony (1999) *The Norwegian Association of the Disabled – Report* p. 16.
[151] Oxfam GB (2001) *Oxfam Annual Review 2000/2001* p. 13.
[152] Etengu, Nathan (2005) 'Disabled Lose Funds' *New Vision* 24th January; and Lwanga-Ntale, Charles (2003) *Chronic Poverty and Disability in Uganda* p. 14.

balanced between the regions.[153] This coincided with Oxfam's complete withdrawal from funding NUDIPU's advocacy campaign.[154]

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The next section will explore how Oxfam and NUDIPU interacted with each other: the specifics of the relationship; the decisions and attitudes which defined the status of the partnership. This will involve looking at elements beyond the financial transferring of funds: elements such as welcome advice; communication of plans, intentions and the future of relationships; and the way Oxfam phased out its disability programme.

c) Oxfam-NUDIPU partnership interaction

The use of the family analogy to describe the relationship between Oxfam and NUDIPU by employees of both organisations revealed diverging interpretations of the nature of the partnership. One former Oxfam employee described NUDIPU's perception of the relationship as "Oxfam was seen almost like a parent";[155] this contrasted sharply with NUDIPU's emphasis that the Oxfam-NUDIPU relationship had not been one of a mother to a child.[156] NUDIPU's desire for the relationship not to be depicted as maternal revealed that the traditional top-down approach to INGO-beneficiary relationships was less welcome for the partner, whereas for the workers within Oxfam, such ideas still persisted.

The positive aspects of Oxfam's approach to its partners in the Ugandan disability sector, and NUDIPU in particular, were described by the partners as the advice which was given on how to improve plans and proposals;[157] the way

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[153] Etengu, Nathan (2005) 'Disabled Lose Funds'.
[154] Oxfam GB in Uganda Employee (2005) Personal Communication.
[155] Oxfam GB Former Head Office Employee (2006) Interview.
[156] Kamya, Julius (2005) Interview.
[157] Kamya, Julius (2005) Interview; and Traboulsi, Omar (2000) *Oxfam GB in Uganda: Report on Review of Disability Programme* p. 21.

Oxfam fostered "lateral links" between the different organisations it worked with, thereby strengthening the NGO sector and the partner's own networking;[158] and the face-to-face personal interaction with INGO employee made possible by the presence of the country office.[159]

However, many elements were identified which undermined the spirit of partnership, or which proved detrimental to the longitudinal evolution of the relationship. For example, Oxfam's abrupt changes in policy and lack of clarity over its long-term intentions, the DPOs' impression that Oxfam was sometimes distant and formal, insufficient monitoring by Oxfam of the partners' work, and Oxfam's unreliability regarding the timing of approving grants and dispersing funds.[160]

To develop the last point: the renewal or approval of grants and partnership agreements were often delayed, as was the transferral of money to the partner.[161] This caused much insecurity for the supported organisations and illustrated Oxfam's position in the power relationship, because by delaying the approval or renewal of the funding relationship, it drew attention to the partner's need for the funds, and the donor's control over those funds.

The affect of this was described by NUDIPU as follows:

> "As the contract between NUDIPU and Oxfam demands a new proposal every financial year, this puts the former in a lot of uncertainty at the beginning of the year (particularly between May and September/October every year). This is a period within which both parties are agreeing on a number of things and it is not very clear how much money will be committed to the programme. It is in effect difficult to get started on these activities, which have big financial implications, not until the annual contract(s) are completed/signed. This causes some back log on

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[158] Traboulsi, Omar (2000) *Oxfam GB in Uganda: Report on Review of Disability Programme* p. 21.
[159] Kamya, Julius (2005) Interview.
[160] NUDIPU employees (2005) Interviews; Sayer, Geoff (1999) "'NUDIPU's role should be to advocate...'"; and Traboulsi, Omar (2000) *Oxfam GB in Uganda: Report on Review of Disability Programme* p. 21.
[161] Traboulsi, Omar (2000) *Oxfam GB in Uganda: Report on Review of Disability Programme* p. 21.

NUDIPU's part so much so that activities of 12 months are expected to be done within about seven or six months when funding is secured."[162]

The lack of clarity over the dispersal of funds indicated a poor level of communication between Oxfam and its partners; this was also evident in the problems the Oxfam Uganda office had in conveying its plans for the long-term evolution of Oxfam's involvement with its Ugandan DPO partners. Oxfam's failure to define "any time-bound frame for continued involvement in disability",[163] led many partners to believe their support from Oxfam was not "time-bound"[164] and therefore both INGO and partner paid insufficient attention to long-term sustainability issues.

Oxfam's ability to communicate its overall objectives to the DPOs it supported was also poor and this lack of clarity regarding its wider mandate beyond the disability programme caused further problems. In the era before the strategic review, partners were unclear of Oxfam's objectives; however, as Oxfam's previous work had been heavily involved with the disability sector, the DPOs believed that they were central to Oxfam's work.[165] Although disability was one of Oxfam's major programmes for the period 1987 to 1998, the relationship was affected by key Oxfam employees leaving the country office,[166] and the introduction of the SCOs, which shifted the Uganda office's focus onto fewer areas, in which disability was not included.

Oxfam's Uganda office conveyed its decision to withdraw a year before the phase-out commenced.[167] This signalled the end of Oxfam's involvement with

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[162] NUDIPU (2003) *Six Months Progress Report on Advocacy and Lobbying* (Unpublished Report) p. 10.
[163] Traboulsi, Omar (2000) *Oxfam GB in Uganda: Report on Review of Disability Programme* p. 20.
[164] Traboulsi, Omar (2000) *Oxfam GB in Uganda: Report on Review of Disability Programme* p. 20.
[165] Traboulsi, Omar (2000) *Oxfam GB in Uganda: Report on Review of Disability Programme* p. 20.
[166] Traboulsi, Omar (2000) Oxfam GB in Uganda: Report on Review of Disability Programme p. 21
[167] Traboulsi, Omar (2000) *Oxfam GB in Uganda: Report on Review of Disability Programme* p. 49.

the wider disability movement; however, NUDIPU was kept on as a partner and, by funding the umbrella organisation, the other DPOs were seen to still be supported.[168] Oxfam's clarity over its long-term intentions for NUDIPU remained unclear; the end of the sector-wide support was on the cards, but the large-scale disability review of 2000 gave the leaders of NUDIPU the impression that there was "some hope, a light at the end of the tunnel, that perhaps it may not be a complete phase-out by Oxfam", that NUDIPU itself would retain funding.[169]

The lack of clarity by the country office was the consequence of the way the SCOs were communicated between the levels of Oxfam. Chapter five, section 5.3.2, discussed how the NUDIPU programme was defined as coming under SCO4, and therefore part of its strategic focus. It was not until 2002 that the Uganda office unequivocally decided the disability programme would be entirely phased out, and only after higher levels of Oxfam re-categorised the NUDIPU programme into SCO5 and told the Uganda office it was not in their country strategic focus.[170] This shows how the relationship between the levels of Oxfam had unexpected influences on the NUDIPU-Oxfam relationship.

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This section has looked at the interactions which formed the basis of the Oxfam-NUDIPU relationship, the factors which contributed to the lack of clarity over the longitudinal commitment of Oxfam to the disability sector, and how issues of long-term sustainability were not addressed in the course of this partnership. The next section completes the critique of the Oxfam-NUDIPU relationship, by looking at the commitments and responsibilities each side took on, and how their actions defined the DPOs in the lowest level of Oxfam's development work as an under-level as opposed to a genuine partnership.

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[168] Oxfam GB in Uganda Employee (2005) Interview.
[169] Sayer, Geoff (1999) "'NUDIPU's role should be to advocate...'".
[170] Burden, Allison (2002) Internal Memo.

d) Commitments and responsibilities: Implications for the Oxfam-NUDIPU relationship

As discussed in chapter two, section 2.2.3, the OLOC model will not consider the lowest level of the INGO's operational hierarchy a 'partnership' if it is easily shed from the structure, if certain responsibilities which are created through historical involvement in a sector are neglected, or if either side lacks a longitudinal commitment to the other. This section will show that Oxfam was involved in a lengthy relationship with both the Ugandan disability movement and specifically the disability movement's umbrella organisation, NUDIPU. Many organisations developed a relationship on Oxfam which was characterised by dependency, meaning that when Oxfam withdrew from the sector, their work was adversely affected. The way the Oxfam Uganda office conducted its phase-out from this sector revealed that these relationships could not be considered a partnership, since Oxfam treated these DPOs as its under-level.

In reaching this conclusion, this section will draw on the evidence discussed so far, look at Oxfam's history of involvement with NUDIPU and the disability movement, the implementation of the phase-out strategy and the impact this withdrawal had on the disability movement in Uganda.

Oxfam had been involved with NUDIPU since it funded the seminar at which NUDIPU was created to act as an umbrella for all Ugandan DPOs. However, its involvement with the disability movement went back further and spread wider than the assistance to NUDIPU. Its support to DPOs including UNAD, UNAB, FPD, the Kyaka association of the Disabled, and the Community Based Rehabilitation Alliance,[171] covered national representative organisations, local DPOs, service providers, and even the Uganda branch of Action for Disability and Development (ADD). Oxfam's funding and encouragement of many nascent DPOs was considered critical to the overall development of the disability

[171] Traboulsi, Omar (2000) *Oxfam GB in Uganda: Report on Review of Disability Programme* pp. 32-44.

movement in the country.[172] However, its withdrawal of support from this sector, beginning in 1996, left many of these DPOs running at a reduced capacity, or having to close down altogether.[173]

Reasons why Oxfam made the decision to phase-out the disability programme have been discussed throughout the last three chapters; here all of them will be assembled to evaluate what those reasons, both official and unofficial, reveal about the nature of Oxfam's approach to its partnership with NUDIPU and the DPOs of Uganda.

The primary reason given for the termination of the disability programme was the fact that, with the introduction of Oxfam's SCO's, disability belonged to SCO5 and the Uganda country office did not carry SCO5 "as a rule".[174] These "internal reasons"[175] were justified on the grounds that disability was now mainstreamed throughout all of Oxfam's work.[176] Chapter five, section 5.3.2, discussed how the Uganda office agreed with Oxfam's wider principle of cutting back the numbers of partners with which they were working with in order to foster better relationships with those which were kept on, especially since Oxfam GB in Uganda was facing a decline in funding:[177] this cut-back hit the disability sector especially hard.

In the short-term, the support to NUDIPU as the umbrella organisation was maintained.[178] However, although the country office defined this programme as coming under SCO4 and Uganda's strategic focus, an employee visiting from the HECA office communicated to the Uganda office that it did not fit in with the

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[172] Traboulsi, Omar (2000) *Oxfam GB in Uganda: Report on Review of Disability Programme* p. 46.
[173] ADD Uganda Employee (2006) Interview; Asamo, Hellen Grace (2006) Interview; and Traboulsi, Omar (2000) *Oxfam GB in Uganda: Report on Review of Disability Programme* p. 33 and 43.
[174] Oxfam GB in Uganda Employee (2005) Interview.
[175] Traboulsi, Omar (2000) *Oxfam GB in Uganda: Report on Review of Disability Programme* pp. 49-50.
[176] Oxfam GB in Uganda Employee (2005) Interview.
[177] Oxfam GB in Uganda (1996) *Oxfam Uganda Strategic Plan 1996-2000* pp. 20-21.
[178] Oxfam GB in Uganda Employee (2005) Interview.

country's strategic focus.[179] As a consequence of this redefinition, disability as either a specific target issue or as a mainstreamed category was removed from Oxfam's Ugandan programme. This implemented the decision taken at head office not to add any value onto the area of disability in Oxfam's work,[180] even though Oxfam did not officially or explicitly pursue an organisational policy of excluding disabled people.

The above reasons are the organisational explanations for the phase-out of the disability programme in Uganda. These have been drawn out through the investigation of two levels of Oxfam using the OLOC model. However, these reasons only account for half of the influences which led to the final termination of the Oxfam-NUDIPU relationship. The next set of reasons are related to events occurring at the local level; none of these were given as official reasons for withdrawal, but mentioned by employees as having influenced the decision, or hinted at in reports.

The earliest reason given for the withdrawal, in a strategic plan written in 1996 by Oxfam's Uganda office, was that the disability "sector is strong (probably the strongest NGO sector in Uganda, and with political representation in parliament)".[181] Over the next few years, as Oxfam started to withdraw and several DPOs closed or had to reduce their activities, this reason was not given again by Oxfam. However, it was one of the primary reasons given by NUDIPU employees in interviews, although this perception was based on the belief that Oxfam preferred to work with smaller organisations.[182] The preference for working with small organisations was never stated by Oxfam, and contradicted Oxfam's defined strategy for working with strong, independent organisations capable of engaging in a "true partnership" with Oxfam.[183]

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[179] Burden, Allison (2002) Internal Memo.
[180] Whitbread, Jasmine (2006) Interview.
[181] Oxfam GB in Uganda (1996) Strategic Plan 1996-2000 p. 27
[182] Kamya, Julius (2005) Interview
[183] Oxfam GB in Uganda (2004) *Capacity Building for Empowerment Review, Kotido, Uganda* (Unpublished Report) p. 33.

The Oxfam employee who had worked closely with NUDIPU in its political campaigning work left the Uganda country office before the funding relationship was finally terminated. Although none of the interviewees mentioned this as a reason for the end of the relationship, previous support to the disability movement had been attributed to the specific interests of employees;[184] one of the problems DPOs had highlighted about their relationship with Oxfam was staff turnover;[185] and an Oxfam employee mentioned that if the support had been there, they could have found ways to continue funding NUDIPU.[186]

The remaining reasons which have been identified were: the way in which NUDIPU approached the political side of its activities; questions over whether it was sticking to its mandate; and the impact that was being felt at the grass roots. These will all be discussed in more detail in the ideational elements section: how these issues were used as justifications for withdrawal is the focus of this section. These three reasons were all voiced by employees in the Oxfam office; however, as will be discussed later in this chapter, these issues were not communicated to NUDIPU.[187]

In all, eleven reasons were identified to explain Oxfam's withdrawal from its partnership with NUDIPU. The first six reasons can be seen to be the result of the trends set in motion by Oxfam's organisational-wide policies, and the final five reflect local circumstances, NUDIPU's work, and the nature of the partnership bond.

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[184] Traboulsi, Omar (2000) *Oxfam GB in Uganda: Report on Review of Disability Programme* p. 19.
[185] Traboulsi, Omar (2000) *Oxfam GB in Uganda: Report on Review of Disability Programme* p. 21.
[186] Oxfam GB in Uganda Employee (2005) Interview.
[187] NUDIPU employees (2005) Interview.

1. The introduction of the SCOs
2. The rhetorical mainstreaming of disability
3. The reduction of funding at the country office
4. The choice to reduce the number of partners Oxfam works with
5. The authority of central definitions of the SCOs over local interpretations
6. The decision that no value would be added to disability work

7. The size and strength of NUDIPU and the disability movement in Uganda
8. The departure of the pro-disability employee from the Uganda office
9. NUDIPU's approach to the political side of its activities
10. Definitions of NUDIPU's mandate, and perception of its work
11. The lack of impact at the grassroots

As discussed in chapter two, at the end of a relationship, an interaction which can be called a genuine partnership will involve a level of commitment and responsibility for the future, not just filing of the reports to show a completed programme. Once the decision to withdraw from the disability sector had been made, how Oxfam communicated this to the partners, the phase-out strategies it implemented, and the consequences of its withdrawal, revealed the Uganda office's concern for the future of its long-term partners in the disability movement. The following discussion reveals that the phase-out of both the disability movement and NUDIPU undermined both the nature of the partnership and the Ugandan disability movement itself.

A year before Oxfam's disability phase-out began, its partners were informed of Oxfam's intentions.[188] The first stakeholder meeting after the phase-out had been announced was described by Oxfam's disability review as follows:

> "The event... provided counterparts and other stakeholders with a golden opportunity to express concerns vis-à-vis the seemingly radical shift in Oxfam GB's Uganda programme. Very early on there was a general feeling of "betrayal" among participants. Participants had difficulties in coming to term with the fact that after so many years of involvement, Oxfam GB was "no longer interested" in PWDs."[189]

[188] Traboulsi, Omar (2000) *Oxfam GB in Uganda: Report on Review of Disability Programme* p. 49.
[189] Traboulsi, Omar (2000) *Oxfam GB in Uganda: Report on Review of Disability Programme* p. 9.

During the course of Oxfam's partnership with the DPOs, little attention had been given to sustainability of these organisations.[190] As the plans drawn up for Oxfam's involvement with the disability sector did not focus on "time-bound" projects and programmes,[191] and because of Oxfam's long history of involvement with the disability sector, many partners were "ill prepared" for Oxfam's change in direction.[192] This was due to poor definition of Oxfam's aims and long-term plans, poor communication with partners, lack of alternatives to western donor funding, and the sudden change introduced by regionalisation and the SCOs.

Oxfam's widespread involvement with a number of DPOs, and the high level of dependency which had been allowed to develop, meant that the withdrawal had a significant impact in the Ugandan disability sector. Oxfam was one of the few donors to support core costs and salaries;[193] combined with the restricted donor base discussed earlier in this chapter, this meant Oxfam was a very difficult donor to replace. Former partners highlighted that the phase-out time was not sufficient for them to find new donors,[194] and as a direct result of the withdrawal, a wide variety of DPO activities such as orthopaedic workshops, micro-financing and campaigning work either ceased or continued in a significantly reduced capacity.[195] The closure of a couple of DPOs was even directly attributed to Oxfam's withdrawal by senior DPO workers in Uganda.[196]

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[190] Neeteson, Annemarie (1998) *Support to the National Union of Disabled Persons of Uganda* p. 10; and Traboulsi, Omar (2000) *Oxfam GB in Uganda: Report on Review of Disability Programme* p. 47.
[191] Traboulsi, Omar (2000) *Oxfam GB in Uganda: Report on Review of Disability Programme* p. 20.
[192] Traboulsi, Omar (2000) *Oxfam GB in Uganda: Report on Review of Disability Programme* p. 20.
[193] Traboulsi, Omar (2000) *Oxfam GB in Uganda: Report on Review of Disability Programme* p. 46; and Whitbread, Jasmine (2006) Interview.
[194] COMBRA in Traboulsi, Omar (2000) *Oxfam GB in Uganda: Report on Review of Disability Programme* p. 43.
[195] ADD employee, Uganda (2006) Interview; Asamo, Hellen Grace (2006) Interview; and Traboulsi, Omar (2000) *Oxfam GB in Uganda: Report on Review of Disability Programme.*
[196] Senior DPO workers (2006) Interview.

The lack of a comprehensive phase-out strategy for these DPOs, coupled with the abrupt decision to withdraw,[197] negatively affected the disability sector in Uganda. To replace the support given to this sector, there was the perception in Oxfam's Uganda office that disability issues were to be mainstreamed throughout all of Oxfam's work.[198] NUDIPU was also initially kept on as the umbrella organisation, and employees in the Oxfam office described this as their conduit to supporting other DPOs in Uganda.[199] However, their support was earmarked for the development of NUDIPU's policy unit and the advocacy campaign, therefore, only the umbrella received funds.

As was discussed in chapter five, section 5.3.3, the implementation of the mainstreaming of disability in Oxfam's work in Uganda remained at the level of rhetoric; the support to NUDIPU was also highlighted as a problematic way to support the wider disability sector in Oxfam's Disability Review in 2000. With "the demise of a number of grassroots DPOs as a result of the withdrawal",[200] this report pointed out that supporting the national umbrella "runs the risk of widening the gulf between the PWD leaders and the grassroots".[201] As will be discussed further in the working practices section of this chapter, one of the reasons given by Oxfam employees for the end of the support given to NUDIPU was the top-heavy nature of the organisation, and the lack of impact it was having at the grassroots.[202] By the very way in which Oxfam withdrew from this sector, it can be seen to have contributed to this developing rift, and yet gave this imbalance as one reason why it was ending the relationship.

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[197] Traboulsi, Omar (2000) *Oxfam GB in Uganda: Report on Review of Disability Programme* p. 21 and p. 50.
[198] Oxfam GB in Uganda Employee (2005) Interview; and Traboulsi, Omar (2000) *Oxfam GB in Uganda: Report on Review of Disability Programme* p. 18.
[199] Oxfam GB in Uganda Employee (2005) Interview.
[200] Traboulsi, Omar (2000) *Oxfam GB in Uganda: Report on Review of Disability Programme* p. 50.
[201] Traboulsi, Omar (2000) *Oxfam GB in Uganda: Report on Review of Disability Programme* p. 50.
[202] Oxfam GB in Uganda Employee (2005) Interview.

This section has provided the final assessment of the linkages between the levels involved between Oxfam's head office and the PWDs of Uganda. It has shown how the relationship between Oxfam and NUDIPU was not an ideal partnership, and how the way it phased out its disability programme had a negative effect on the disability sector. The next section will look in more detail at how the ideational elements within both Oxfam and NUDIPU affected their relationship and the evolution of the 'partnership'.

6.3
IDEATIONAL ELEMENTS

"NUDIPU runs different programmes, which are designed to address specific needs at various times and to match donor preferences"[203]

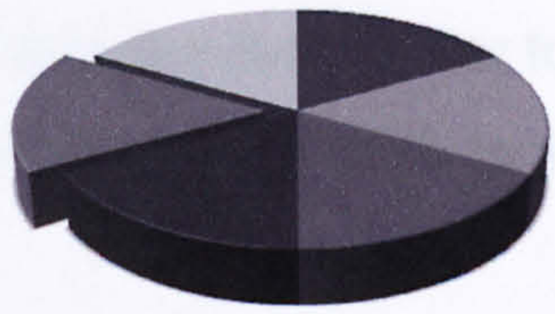
The activities being conducted by NUDIPU and the other DPOs supported by Oxfam were part of the 'development' which Oxfam was selling to its supporters. The previous section looked at how the structural elements affected the nature of the partnership between Oxfam and NUDIPU; this section will look how Oxfam's ideational elements affected the conception and conduct of activities in the Ugandan disability sector.

The ideational elements within Oxfam were concerned with creating organisational consistency throughout its global apparatus. However, chapters four and five showed how the behavioural chains in this area resulted in a complex and not always predictable decision-making terrain which affected the Uganda office's approach to its partners. This section looks at how NUDIPU and the other DPOs which Oxfam supported were affected by the decisions taken by Oxfam and their other donors, and how these decisions affected the DPO's activities and self-determination.

The DPOs of Uganda had their own organisational ideational elements which interfaced with those of their donors. This section will look at two main categories, working practices, and aims and objectives, to show how the implementation of activities and the evolution of programmes were tied up with a number of influencing factors, some originating from the donors, some from the DPOs and some from the wider environment.

[203] Nilsson, Annika; Balayo, Seezi; Mwesigye, James; Petersen, Poul Erik; and Kokhauge, Bengt (2002) *Mid Term Review Report DSI/NUDIPU Programme* p. 10.

6.3.1 WORKING PRACTICES



② Working Practices

The Ugandan SCO4 team's strategic plan set out certain obligations for the partners they supported. This included the responsibility to "uphold" the Ugandan office's interpretation of Oxfam's culture: "accountability, transparency, collaboration and cost-effectiveness".[204] NUDIPU as one of these partners was expected to model those values as part of the funding agreement with Oxfam. As discussed in chapter two, section 2.3.1, each level within an INGO, including the under-level, relates to such working practices in three ways: under the scrutiny of higher levels; using the procedures as a guide when conducting work; and as the conduit of these standards to lower levels.

In the course of its relationship with Oxfam, NUDIPU submitted both financial and narrative reports to Oxfam.[205] Oxfam paid for a professional audit to be conducted of NUDIPU's work,[206] and NUDIPU and other supported DPOs were subjected to external reviews.[207] There was a heavy emphasis on using these defined working practices as a framework for scrutiny in the Oxfam-NUDIPU relationship. However, NUDIPU saw these values as more than a donor imposition, with prominent figures in the disability movement highlighting the need to model such values and encourage their uptake by other organisations in the disability movement. For example, the former chairperson of NUDIPU, Ndeezi, clearly stated that upper echelons of NUDIPU, as the leaders of the disability movement in Uganda, should make every effort to model values such

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[204] Oxfam GB in Uganda (2004) *Oxfam: Support to the Right to be Heard Programme in Uganda* p. 19.
[205] NUDIPU (2005) *Annual Progress Report on Advocacy and Lobbying* p. 1 and p. 11.
[206] NUDIPU (2004) *Financial Report to Oxfam* (Unpublished Report) p. 4.
[207] Traboulsi, Omar (2000) *Oxfam GB in Uganda: Report on Review of Disability Programme.*

as transparency, accountability and responsibility.[208] This shows how NUDIPU was both adopting ideas on ideal conduct similar to Oxfam's 'culture' and saw its role, as the leader of the disability movement, to set an example to the DPOs it represented.

This section will be looking at how issues of accountability and having an impact were interpreted by NUDIPU and other DPOs, and how the scrutiny of the DPO's working practices by donors affected their behaviour and orientation. Through this analysis it will be shown that many different elements of the donor-DPO interaction contributed to a weakening of the ties between the grassroots DPOs and redirected attention and effort towards donors and national-level activities.

ACCOUNTABILITY

Accountability can be defined in two ways: firstly, upwards accountability focuses on making sure the donor's money, time and effort is used responsibly and in the manner they wish; and secondly, downwards accountability is concerned with making sure development activities are welcome at the grassroots, responsive to the recipient's input, and seen by the targets of the programme to be affecting their lives for the better. The beneficiaries of Oxfam GB in Uganda's disability programme were the PWDs of Uganda and the DPOs were used as a conduit to reach them.

In Kamuli, many of the PWDs interviewed expressed the view that they did not feel the INGOs supporting the DPOs in Uganda were monitoring their work closely enough. They said they wished the INGO's would pay more attention to the programmes they were funding for several reasons: firstly, to make sure the money reached its destination; that the impact was felt by those it should affect; to stop organisations taking on the money for bad projects; and finally, for INGOs to analyse why projects failed so they could learn and adapt their policies

[208] Ndeezi, Alex (2004) *The Disability Movement in Uganda* p. 39.

accordingly. Several of the interviewees claimed that, in these areas, the existing monitoring to check that DPOs were being accountable to the grassroots was insufficient.[209]

The reasons for the poor monitoring of the DPO's programmes by the INGOs included limited budgets,[210] the dominance of interpreting accountability to mean accountability to the donors,[211] and the emphasis which was placed on satisfying this aspect of the INGO-partner relationship. For example, the Chief Executive of NUWODU described accountability as follows:

> "To me accountability is 'taking stock of your actions' according to agreed arrangements and regulations. And then you are expected to meet them at the right time, follow the guidance format, show complete finance, complete human resource for the programme at any time, especially they look at finance and accountability"[212]

Such interpretations of accountability orientated the efforts of the DPOs who received support from Oxfam towards surviving the scrutiny of their donor's working practices. There are good reasons why accountability is important in these partnerships: it builds trust that funds are not been used in corrupt ways; and makes sure the funds are being used for the beneficiaries in the ways the donor intended. When there is evidence of previous misappropriation of funds or donated goods in a sector, the partner has more to prove in terms of upwards accountability.[213] In 1997, some of NUDIPU's funding was handled poorly,[214] and later some vehicles donated by Oxfam were misused;[215] in this situation, upwards accountability could be taken for granted. Similar occurrences in the past have led to donors withdrawing funding from NUDIPU.[216]

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[209] Baligema Women with Disabilities Kumumwa (2006) Group Interview (Trans from Lusoga).
[210] Oxfam GB in Uganda (1996) *Strategic Plan 1996-2000* p. 3.
[211] Katumba, George (2006) Programme Coordinator for NUWODU, Interview.
[212] Katumba, George (2006) Programme Coordinator for NUWODU, Interview.
[213] Goddard, Andrew and Assad, Mussa Juma (2006) 'Accounting and navigating legitimacy in Tanzanian NGOs' p. 391.
[214] McCloskey, Tony (1999) *The Norwegian Association of the Disabled – Report* p. 5.
[215] Traboulsi, Omar (2000) *Oxfam GB in Uganda: Report on Review of Disability Programme* p. 21.
[216] McCloskey, Tony (1999) *The Norwegian Association of the Disabled – Report* p. 5.

The increased emphasis on the generation of reports and accounts was part of the attempts to ensure that NUDIPU was accountable to its donors. The burden this reporting process brought upon NUDIPU was discussed earlier; the production of reports orientated definitions of accountability towards the donors, and more time was spent on these reporting requirements at the expense of devoting time to the other activities the DPOs were running.[217] This was not just affecting the Ugandan national DPOs; ADD, a UK based INGO with a country office in Uganda which received funding as part of Oxfam's disability programme, also found that the attention demanded by reporting requirements harmed the relationship with the DPOs it was supporting:

> "increasing amounts of time are spent on improving documentation planning and monitoring, with less time spent actually carrying out the work and working directly with disabled people's organisations. This works against the development of partnerships when it appears that we are making heavy demands on a group and, perhaps, not fulfilling our obligation."[218]

NUDIPU was criticised for its top-heavy focus;[219] the previous section discussed how Oxfam's withdrawal from funding local DPOs and subsequent focus on the national umbrella alone risked widening the gulf between NUDIPU and those it represented.[220] The increased obligation for NUDIPU to submit reports and accounts to Oxfam, and its other donors, meant more attention was being diverted towards donors, and time spent fulfilling its funding agreements with them.[221] Elements in the Oxfam-NUDIPU relationship, such as the emphasis on producing reports and other documentation, Oxfam's withdrawing from its previous support to several of the DPOs NUDIPU represented, and the involvement in supporting its political advocacy campaign, can be seen to have contributed to an undermining of downwards accountability and an increasing dominance of accountability to Oxfam and other donors.

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[217] NUWODU (2006) Group Interview.
[218] Frost, Barbara (1999) 'Action on Disability and development' p. 48.
[219] Oxfam GB in Uganda Employee (2005) Interview.
[220] Traboulsi, Omar (2000) *Oxfam GB in Uganda: Report on Review of Disability Programme* p. 50.
[221] NUDIPU (2003) *Six Months Progress Report on Advocacy and Lobbying* p. 10.

IMPACT

The need to show that the activities Oxfam ran or provided support for were generating evidence of tangible impact was a central concern for all levels of Oxfam. Where Oxfam used partners as a means to reach the beneficiaries and conduct development work, the onus to produce the proof of what difference had been made with the funding provided fell on the partners and became an intrinsic part of the relationship. The programme coordinator for NUWODU described the centrality of 'impact' to the DPO-donor relationship: the donors provide the funds, and in return "they want impact".[222]

The previous two chapters discussed how the need to show Oxfam was making a difference had changed the type of activities Oxfam was supporting, and how those activities were reported. For NUDIPU and the DPOs it represented, how they conducted their work and how they related with donors was significantly affected by this donor imperative. Donors were keen to act as the conduit to pass on the skills needed to successfully generate and report impact, providing training in "result-oriented management", and guidance for producing "output and performance based work appraisals".[223] This orientated many activities conducted by the DPOs towards producing evidence of results, or showing what results the disability movement in Uganda had achieved.

Activities focused on advocacy and the empowerment of an oppressed group do not always lead to results which can be used as proof of impact.[224] As the outcome of advocacy is also hard to attribute to one group, it is difficult for one organisation to claim the credit for any specific successes. The Ugandan disability movement was able to point to many changes in Ugandan politics and society as evidence of successful campaigns undertaken, the most obvious example being the result of the lobbying to make sure the 1995 constitution

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[222] Katumba, George (2006) Programme Coordinator for NUWODU, Interview.
[223] DSI (2007) *DSI Mini-programme Country Strategy Paper Uganda* p. 44.
[224] Mawdsley, Emma; Townsend, Janet G.; and Porter, Gina (2005) 'Trust, accountability, and face-to-face interaction in North-South NGO relations' *Development in Practice* Vol. 15, No. 1, p. 80.

included pro-disability clauses, which secured places reserved for disabled people at all levels of government. This example of impact was used by Oxfam in its 2000/2001 Annual Review to highlight the work it was doing with the disability movement in Uganda.[225]

Other legal provisions which were secured by the lobbying work of NUDIPU include the official recognition of sign language,[226] the right of disabled people to hold a drivers licence,[227] the protection of disabled persons' right to land,[228] the responsibility of the state, community and families to ensure that disabled children get an education,[229] and "affirmative action" for the encouragement of disabled people in higher education.[230]

Some of these legal provisions led to concrete changes, as George Katumba observed: "One of the tangible effects you can see is that there has been an increase in the number of disabled people accessing education in higher institutions – and that is the result of advocacy."[231] Increased admissions were coupled with, as Cissy Nalusiba noted: "Ramps, they are there in Makerere University, so at least the rooms are accessible, so that is tangible effects of advocacy."[232] A 600% increase in the enrolment of disabled children in primary education was also seen as evidence of progress having been made.[233]

Improvement in attitudes towards disabled people, their access to education, health facilities and other services has been noted at all levels of Ugandan

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[225] Oxfam GB (2001) *Oxfam Annual Review 2000/2001* p. 13.
[226] DAA (1995) 'Disability Law and Policy Around the World' *Disability Awareness in Action Newsletter* No. 33; and Government of Uganda (1995) *Constitution of the Republic of Uganda, 1995* p.24.
[227] Ndeezi, Alex (2004) *The Disability Movement in Uganda* p. 59.
[228] Ndeezi, Alex (2004) *The Disability Movement in Uganda* p. 56.
[229] Ndaziboneye, Benon (2001) 'a unified voice for people with disabilities' in World Vision (Ed.) *All Things Being Equal: Perspectives on Disability and Development* p. 19.
[230] Ndeezi, Alex (2004) *The Disability Movement in Uganda* p. 65.
[231] Katumba, George (2006) Programme Coordinator for NUWODU, Interview.
[232] Nalusiba, Cissy (2006) Information Officer for NUWODU, Interview.
[233] Ndaziboneye, Benon (2001) 'a unified voice for people with disabilities' p. 19.

society.[234] However, the disparity between the achievements made at the political level and the impact felt on the ground has been questioned.[235] Towards the end of the NUDIPU-Oxfam relationship, the grassroots came under Oxfam's spotlight of critique; it claimed impact was not being felt there.[236] Research has shown that a lack of resources, negative attitudes, absence of training and awareness obstructed the national political achievements realising fruition at the local level.[237]

The PWDs in Kamuli interviewed during this research had differing views on the 'impact' they had experienced. Some were in receipt of assistance from the district branches of NUDIPU and NUWODU, such as training, sewing machines, stock for shops, animals for husbandry, loan management advice and opportunities to engage in card-making activities. They were also aware and appreciative of their local council representation. However, not all of the PWDs interviewed had even heard of the national umbrella,[238] and some of the PWDs interviewed had not been reached by the activities conducted by the national umbrellas, had never participated in any group activity, had no education, and did not leave home.[239] It should also be noted that this research was conducted in a 'model district' where the national DPOs were seen to have a good regional presence.[240]

This research uncovered a conflict over the definition of the objectives for the advocacy campaign run by NUDIPU and funded predominantly by Oxfam. By the time funding was withdrawn, some of Oxfam's employees in Uganda were claiming that impact was not being felt at the grassroots and they did not agree

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[234] Disabled People in Kamuli (2006) Interviews; KAWIDA (2005) Group Interview; Millward, H., Ojwang, V.P., Carter, J.A., and Hartley, S. (2005) 'International guidelines and the inclusion of disabled people. The Ugandan Story' *Disability and Society* Vol. 20, No. 2, p. 161.
[235] Oxfam GB in Uganda Employee (2005) Interview.
[236] Oxfam GB in Uganda Employee (2005) Interview.
[237] Millward, H., Ojwang, V.P., Carter, J.A., and Hartley, S. (2005) 'International guidelines and the inclusion of disabled people' p. 160.
[238] Baligema Women with Disabilities Kumumwa (2006) Group Interview (Trans from Lusoga); and NUWODU (2006) Group Interview.
[239] Disabled People in Kamuli (2005) Interviews.
[240] Nalusiba, Cissy (2005) Information Officer for NUWODU, Interview.

with NUDIPU's focus on changing legislation.[241] This was not a new direction for NUDIPU; its advocacy campaign had always had a political element, as Whitbread described:

> "you couldn't really be doing any kind of poverty work in Uganda at the time without being political, because you know Museveni has just come into power, the constitution was up for rewriting, that was how you were going to try and redress poverty and rights.[242]

In the early 1990s, an Oxfam employee was personally involved in this political campaign.[243] Oxfam sent the message out that a national focus was needed when it stopped working with DPOs at the local level whilst continuing to support NUDIPU's advocacy campaign.[244] NUDIPU saw that it was necessary to secure the political definition of the rights of PWDs as a fundamental basis for their campaign to empower the PWDs of Uganda, so that was where it aimed to have an impact.[245]

One Oxfam employee in Uganda commented that NUDIPU was becoming too political;[246] another employee mentioned that it was not sticking to its mandate, nor was it having any impact at the grassroots.[247] These were expressed openly to an external researcher, but there was no evidence these concerns were communicated to NUDIPU who still emphasised targeting the government as the first step to change at the grassroots.[248] It was also interesting that one NUDIPU worker mentioned in an interview that Oxfam's work had affected their ability to communicate to the grassroots because they had lost a Ugandan TV programme.[249] Poorer PWDs in rural areas would not have access to this medium, which does imply NUDIPU's focus was not directed at the poorest

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[241] Oxfam GB in Uganda Employee (2005) Interview.
[242] Whitbread, Jasmine (2006) Interview.
[243] Sayer, Geoff (2000) "'Ten years ago we couldn't talk in public".
[244] Traboulsi, Omar (2000) *Oxfam GB in Uganda: Report on Review of Disability Programme* p. 50.
[245] NUDIPU employees (2005) Interview.
[246] Oxfam GB in Uganda employee (2005) Interview.
[247] Oxfam GB in Uganda employee (2005) Interview.
[248] Asamo, Hellen Grace (2005) Interview.
[249] NUDIPU worker (2006) Interview.

elements of their constituencies. However they also had radio programmes, but several interviewees in Kamuli complained these were in English, so inaccessible to most PWDs in rural areas.[250]

Mulindwa-Matovu sums up the common perception in Uganda about where NUDIPU did have an impact:

> "It depends on what area one is considering in terms of impact. Generally, NUDIPU has had real impact at the grassroots level in terms of structures. NUDIPU's organisational structure is well entrenched in the current local government structure from the village to the National level. However, its impact as is that of many of its member organizations, partners and the disability movement in general in influencing the provision of services and the full inclusion of the disabled people in ongoing programmes have had limited impact."[251]

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The next section will look in more detail at the aims and objectives at the root of the debate over where the impact should be felt. By looking at how donors affected the agenda-setting and the justification of the political focus, it will be shown that, although NUDIPU's approach was not above criticism, the donors, especially Oxfam, contributed to the evolution of the political focus and the erosion of communications between the national umbrella and the PWDs it represented.

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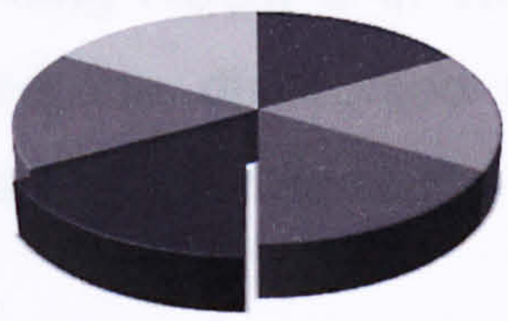
[250] Disabled People in Kamuli (2006) Interviews.
[251] Mulindwa-Matovu, Christine (2005) Personal Communication.

6.3.2 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES



Aims and Objectives

Most of the issues which will be analysed in this section have already been raised in the course of the investigation so far: issues such as the way Oxfam related to NUDIPU; how NUDIPU related to all of its donors; and how NUDIPU's involvement with Ugandan politics affected the structural elements and the working practices involved in the Oxfam-NUDIPU relationship. This section will show how these elements influenced the evolution of NUDIPU's aims and objectives, by looking at issues of donor agenda-setting in the Ugandan DPO sector, and the definition, justifications and criticisms of NUDIPU's political focus.

DONORS AND AGENDA-SETTING

The first thing to establish is the link between NUDIPU's funding and the programmes it was able to run. This section will look at how the disability sector's flexibility was curtailed by its dependence on what donors would fund and how, during the course of the Oxfam-NUDIPU relationship, Oxfam initially had a more flexible approach to funding, but with the move towards SCOs, began to focus its funding on specific activities. By looking at these factors, it will be revealed whose agenda was most influential in shaping the activities NUDIPU was able to pursue, and the implications of this agenda.

In the early days, during which NUDIPU was finding its feet and defining what its role should be, it was driven by its committed leadership, the vision of creating a unified voice to tackle the oppression of PWDs in Uganda, the influence of the

international disability movement and the help of its donors, ADD and Oxfam.[252] NAD and CAFOD started funding NUDIPU in 1992 and DSI in 1996.[253] All of these organisations supported the discourses of the international disability movement, including the social model of disability.

NUDIPU was created to tackle, in the words of its founding leader, Mazima: "the bondage which reduced [PWDs] to sub humans."[254] It had its primary mission, but the way it was to approach the multitude of barriers PWDs needed to overcome depended a great deal on the influence of donors. As McCloskey describes, in the early years, although programmes were partially designed according to the needs of NUDIPU's membership, "during this early period, the ideas of the donors, who held the purse strings often were readily accepted without too much scrutiny."[255]

Oxfam was unusual for a donor during this period, as it supported core costs such as salaries, rent and transport.[256] Most donors preferred to support specific sectors and activities, so this support was considered vital to NUDIPU's growth in the early days and allowed NUDIPU some room to develop its own focus.[257] However, funding was restricted to research and advocacy from the late 1990s,[258] and the overall donor environment created difficulties for NUDIPU's self-determination[259] and grassroots-led agenda-setting.[260] After this research finished, NUDIPU managed to secure a basket funding agreement with its remaining donors,[261] but during the Oxfam-NUDIPU relationship, different

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[252] McCloskey, Tony (1999) *The Norwegian Association of the Disabled – Report* pp. 2-3.
[253] Ndeezi, Alex (2004) *The Disability Movement in Uganda* p. 38.
[254] Mazima, Eliphaz, quoted in McCloskey, Tony (1999) *The Norwegian Association of the Disabled – Report* p. 3.
[255] McCloskey, Tony (1999) *The Norwegian Association of the Disabled – Report* p. 4.
[256] Traboulsi, Omar (2000) *Oxfam GB in Uganda: Report on Review of Disability Programme* p. 21 and p. 47.
[257] Whitbread, Jasmine (2006) Interview.
[258] Kamya, Julius (2005) Interview.
[259] Nilsson, Annika; Balayo, Seezi; Mwesigye, James; Petersen, Poul Erik; and Kokhauge, Bengt (2002) *Mid Term Review Report DSI/NUDIPU Programme* p. 11.
[260] Yeo, Rebecca (2005) *Disability, Poverty and the 'New' Development Agenda* p. 13.
[261] Kruse, Stein-Erik; Kayonga, Santa V.I.; Mathisen, Trine Rønning; and Roslyng-Jensen, Kristine (2003) *Norwegian Support to Civil Society in Uganda* pp. 51-52.

activities were funded by different donors, depending on what the donors wished to fund.[262]

NUDIPU's activities evolved in an environment where the type of activities it could pursue were dictated by what its limited pool of donors wished to fund. This affected activities in two main ways. Firstly, it meant the evolution of NUDIPU's activities was piecemeal and not led by a coherent strategy;[263] this reduced flexibility and encouraged NUDIPU to take on funding for what donors were offering.[264] Secondly, the donor environment meant that the options were chosen by external agencies, undermining local initiative, and the need to collaborate with its constituents to formulate policy.[265] This weakened communication with the grassroots, encouraged an increased emphasis on results-orientated activities and redirected a lot of energies to chasing donors and fulfilling reporting requirements.[266]

NUDIPU expressed the view that it did not have enough funding to conduct all the activities it wished to:[267] its preferred agenda was wider than its operational scope. Having to secure donor interest in a particular activity before it could be pursued occupied time, and limited NUDIPU's flexibility to be able to define its own aims and objectives.[268] On the other hand, in the nineties, much money was provided to run a wide range of activities. This included the development of NUDIPU's decentralised structure, the creation of a gender desk, and the

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[262] Nilsson, Annika; Balayo, Seezi; Mwesigye, James; Petersen, Poul Erik; and Kokhauge, Bengt (2002) *Mid Term Review Report DSI/NUDIPU Programme* p. 10.
[263] Nilsson, Annika; Balayo, Seezi; Mwesigye, James; Petersen, Poul Erik; and Kokhauge, Bengt (2002) *Mid Term Review Report DSI/NUDIPU Programme* ; and Traboulsi, Omar (2000) *Oxfam GB in Uganda: Report on Review of Disability Programme* p. 30.
[264] Traboulsi, Omar (2000) *Oxfam GB in Uganda: Report on Review of Disability Programme* p. 46.
[265] Walugembe, Joseph with Peckett, Julia (2005) 'Power struggle: Uganda has an impressive array of people with disabilities involved in politics'.
[266] Katumba, George (2006) Programme Coordinator for NUWODU, Interview.
[267] Asamo, Hellen Grace (2006) Interview; and Traboulsi, Omar (2000) *Oxfam GB in Uganda: Report on Review of Disability Programme* p. 30.
[268] Nilsson, Annika; Balayo, Seezi; Mwesigye, James; Petersen, Poul Erik; and Kokhauge, Bengt (2002) *Mid Term Review Report DSI/NUDIPU Programme* p. 11.

extensive parliamentary lobbying campaign. All of these were made possible because a donor was supportive of the initiative.

At the turn of the century, despite NUDIPU's perception that it was not running all the programmes believed necessary to fulfil its mandate, donors were criticising the disability movement for overextending itself, both in terms of geographical coverage and in the scope of programmes it was running.[269] The history of the donor-driven and not a donor-fuelled evolution of NUDIPU's policies had led to an unsustainable programme,[270] and a programme which had been heavily influenced by INGOs as opposed to the PWDs of Uganda.

The main problem was, as highlighted in a meeting with several major Ugandan DPOs in 2005, was that "what [the DPOs] identify as programs are not those the donor community want to fund."[271] Where the donors were providing funds for what they believed good programmes, it created no opportunity for the PWDs at the grassroots to influence the direction of the organisation. Donors do not like to give non-earmarked funding;[272] therefore, despite the facilitation of NUDIPU's decentralisation process, the regions were not given an opportunity to have an input into policy, or have a greater say in the agenda-setting of the umbrella organisation. The fact that the programmes that were run were the ones which could attract donor funding was actually weakening NUDIPU's communications with the district branches and the PWDs at the grassroots.[273]

Although donor support was provided for initiatives targeting regional levels, often the regional levels questioned the suitability of the programme, but had no say over the design, choice or implementation of the programme.[274] In Kamuli, stories of inappropriate programmes were described, including providing the

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[269] Traboulsi, Omar (2000) Oxfam GB in Uganda: Report on Review of Disability Programme p. 46.
[270] Ndeezi, Alex (2002) 'Disability and Development: A Success Story from Uganda' p. 35.
[271] Yeo, Rebecca (2005) *Disability Poverty and the 'New' Development Agenda* p.13.
[272] Nalusiba, Cissy (2006) Information Officer for NUWODU, Interview.
[273] Walugembe, Joseph with Peckett, Julia (2005) 'Power struggle: Uganda has an impressive array of people with disabilities involved in politics'.
[274] Chair Person of KAMUDIPU (2006) Interview.

distribution of poultry without adequate training on how to keep them (meaning they all died), or training in how to use sewing machines to make garments to sell without providing sewing machines, material or start-up capital.[275] The donors did not usually monitor the implementation of their programmes, so were not aware of the weak implementation of programmes at the grassroots level.[276]

The nature of donor funding undermined NUDIPU's collaborative activities with the grassroots. It also increased the demands on national-level representative organisations to produce reports, attend meetings, or to fulfil other documentary requirements. As Twimukye, former Executive Secretary for NUDIPU, described: "Our life revolves around the decisions they make... We have very high demands on our time from other organisations."[277] Such obligations and time-constraints limited the time in which NUDIPU was able to pursue other activities defined by the movement and not by donors.

The proposal-writing process also monopolised a great deal of the time and effort of the employees of the DPOs;[278] this was yet another characteristics of the donor-DPO relationship which directed attentions towards the donors as opposed towards their constituents. Oxfam's interaction with NUWODU, showed how all the behavioural chains discussed throughout the previous two chapters resulted in a highly frustrating engagement for the partner when courting an INGO.

There was a history of personal connections between NUWODU's executive secretary and the Oxfam employee who had been involved in NUDIPU's political campaigns.[279] NUWODU was advised to submit a proposal for joint funding, and discussions commenced.[280] However, with the introduction of the SCOs, the

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[275] Disabled People in Kamuli (2006) Interviews.
[276] Nalusiba, Cissy (2006) Information Officer for NUWODU, Interview.
[277] Twimukye, Macline in Sayer, Geoff (1999) '"NUDIPU's role should be to advocate..."'.
[278] Katumba, George (2006) Programme Coordinator for NUWODU, Interview.
[279] Katumba, George (2006) Programme Coordinator for NUWODU, Interview.
[280] Katumba, George (2006) Programme Coordinator for NUWODU, Interview.

Uganda office's approach to disability was changing.[281] As Katumba of NUWODU described: "later on it was discovered that the proposal had areas in which Oxfam was not working".[282] This indicates the country office's lack of clarity over its objectives at this period of time, and how it led to efforts of DPOs being wasted on proposal-writing and meetings without securing any form of support. However, despite the phase-out of the disability programme, NUWODU was advised to write yet another proposal for the Kotido region where Oxfam was running a pastoral programme, again without any success to show for its efforts.[283]

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The elements discussed so far in this chapter have shown how many different aspects of NUDIPU's relationship with its donors, including Oxfam, undermined its relationship with the grassroots PWDs. This section has discussed how NUDIPU's aims and objectives were shaped by what donors were willing to fund, and for a large part of its history, Oxfam not only supported NUDIPU's advocacy campaign, but employees were personally involved in the campaign focused at the government. Also, once Oxfam's phase-out of its disability programmes commenced, it retained support for only two aspects of NUDIPU's work: advocacy and policy research. Combined with its withdrawal being linked to the weakening of several local-level DPOs, the merits of NUDIPU's political campaign became essential to understanding the last few years of the Oxfam-NUDIPU relationship.

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[281] Oxfam GB in Uganda Employee (2005) Interview.
[282] Katumba, George (2006) Programme Coordinator for NUWODU, Interview.
[283] Katumba, George (2006) Programme Coordinator for NUWODU, Interview.

POLITICS, ADVOCACY AND NUDIPU'S MANDATE

The question of NUDIPU's involvement with politics has already been raised in every section so far, because it was an issue central to Oxfam's involvement with NUDIPU. For many years, Oxfam supported, encouraged and funded NUDIPU's advocacy campaign; however, during interviews with employees of Oxfam Uganda, it was mentioned several times that NUDIPU had become too political, with one employee commenting that NUDIPU's problem was that it wished it were a political party.[284] This political focus was one of the main informal reasons given for the lack of support present in the Oxfam Uganda office when higher levels decided the partnership should be ended because of strategic focusing.[285]

NUDIPU's connection with the political system, in terms of mobilisation structures, electoral colleges for local disabled representative councillors,[286] many previous leaders leaving to become MPs, and the advocacy campaign with objectives shaped around securing changes in legislation and consultation with government, has been established. This section will look at NUDIPU's justification of this campaign and how it has been criticised.

McCloskey clearly summed up NUDIPU's dilemma regarding its political focus in its early days:

> "Whether NUDIPU should be **political or non-political** has been a hot debate ever since the first offer of representation in parliament. For the time being, the organisation is, according to its constitution, a non-political NGO, but, of course, it has strong political connections."[287]

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[284] Oxfam GB in Uganda Employee (2005) Interview.
[285] Oxfam GB in Uganda Employee (2005) Interview.
[286] Ahikire, Josephine (2002) *Decentralisation in Uganda Today* p. 8; and McCloskey, Tony (1999) *The Norwegian Association of the Disabled – Report* p. 5.
[287] McCloskey, Tony (1999) *The Norwegian Association of the Disabled – Report* p. 10 (emphasis in original).

NUDIPU's successes in the political realm cannot be denied; Uganda has the best political representation for disabled people globally and this achievement, and subsequent legislation which was passed on account of NUDIPU's lobbying, has provided NUDIPU with a global reputation.[288] NUDIPU's donors have mentioned these political achievements in their annual reviews,[289] and have actively supported the ongoing campaign.

During interviews with NUDIPU employees, there was a heavy focus on political activities. This included listing the legislative successes they had achieved; how their work currently involved meetings with parliament on topical issues; the need to influence the ministry of finance, because without money, you couldn't do anything;[290] and how problems with implementing the laws which have been passed were partly to do with the government not taking the issue seriously enough as of yet.[291] Part of this seemed to be due to a perception that, in the West, the disabled people's representatives were automatically consulted on all government decisions, and there was a wish to attain those rights in Uganda.[292]

In his history of the disability movement published by NUDIPU with DSI funding,[293] one of NUDIPU's former leaders, Ndeezi, raised and refuted the question of whether the political goal had hijacked NUDIPU's original mission;[294] the author was one of the leaders who had left NUDIPU to become an MP in 1997. In Ndeezi's assessment of NUDIPU's involvement in politics, he states that "NUDIPU is not a political party or organisation, but in order to play its human rights and advocacy roles, NUDIPU must relate to the political

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[288] Frost, Barbara (1999) 'Action for Disability and Development' p. 52; and Harris, Alison with Enfield, Sue (2003) *Disability, Equality and Human Rights* p. 25.
[289] ADD (2003) *Action for Disability and Development: Annual Review 2003* p. 11; and Oxfam GB (2001) *Oxfam Annual Review 2000/2001* p. 13.
[290] Asamo, Hellen Grace (2005) Interview; and Kamya, Julius (2005) Interview.
[291] Asamo, Hellen Grace (2006) Interview.
[292] Asamo, Hellen Grace (2006) Interview.
[293] Ndeezi, Alex (2004) *The Disability Movement in Uganda* p. 1.
[294] Ndeezi, Alex (2004) *The Disability Movement in Uganda* pp. 28-30.

environment, since disability issues do not exist in isolation of the political environment."[295]

However, by 2005, NUDIPU's political focus was causing problems and attracting criticism, mainly because the impressive collection of legislative achievements had not translated into any impact at the grassroots.[296] The obstacles which were preventing translating the impact to the grassroots included the "high costs of specialised services and facilities e.g. sign language interpreters for the deaf, Braille material for the visually impaired and equipment."[297] The publicity campaigns employed by NUDIPU were not able to reach all PWDs, especially those with sensory impairments in the rural areas.[298] Other reasons that have been given include negative attitudes and a lack of awareness and training at the local level.[299] Donors who were initially supportive of NUDIPU's campaign, including Oxfam and DSI, came to believe that NUDIPU was implementing its district programmes poorly, devoting too much attention to the national political scene.[300]

The problems of NUDIPU directing its attention at the government has raised two concerns: firstly, that it was being driven by the government's agenda and not by its PWD constituents;[301] and secondly, that it was undermining its credentials as a civil society organisation and becoming entangled with the NRM government.[302]

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[295] Ndeezi, Alex (2004) *The Disability Movement in Uganda* p. 30.
[296] DSI (2007) *DSI Mini-programme Country Strategy Paper Uganda* p. 43; Etengu, Nathan (2005) 'Disabled Lose Funds'; and Oxfam GB in Uganda Employee (2005) Interview.
[297] NUWODU (2004) *Audited Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31st December 2004* (Unpublished Report) p. 3.
[298] Nalusiba, Cissy (2005) 'Women's Movement: Empowered Women with Disabilities are a Key to Turning the Tide' in NUWODU *The Voice of Women with Disabilities: Newsletter of the National Union of Women with Disabilities of Uganda* (Kampala: NUWODU) p. 7.
[299] Millward, H., Ojwang, V.P., Carter, J.A., and Hartley, S. (2005) 'International guidelines and the inclusion of disabled people' p. 160.
[300] Etengu, Nathan (2005) 'Disabled Lose Funds'; and Oxfam GB in Uganda Employee (2005) Interview.
[301] Nilsson, Annika; Balayo, Seezi; Mwesigye, James; Petersen, Poul Erik; and Kokhauge, Bengt (2002) *Mid Term Review Report DSI/NUDIPU Programme* p. 8.
[302] DSI (2007) *DSI Mini-programme Country Strategy Paper Uganda* p. 23.

This chapter has established a number of forces which contributed to a weakening of the ties between NUDIPU and the grassroots. Despite the implementation of the decentralised structure, communication problems,[303] lack of training in leadership skills at the local level,[304] an upward focus generated by documentation and donor demands,[305] and the praise NUDIPU had received for its political successes, all contributed to a situation where issues from the grassroots were not the ones shaping NUDIPU's aims and objectives.[306]

As Kruse et al describe: "NUDIPU consider[ed the] government one of its biggest partners".[307] A good working relationship with government was considered necessary to achieve "active involvement in decision-making and influence" at the highest level,[308] but as Ndeezi makes clear, this should not be tied to party politics.[309] However, when one of the MPs representing PWDs in parliament urges PWDs to join the ruling Movement party;[310] when the local NUDIPU branch in Kamuli has election posters for the Movement candidate, the local representatives are wearing the yellow baseball caps showing their support to Museveni;[311] and when there is an "overt political alliance of the disability fraternity with the ruling party NRM",[312] NUDIPU's activities become more controversial to donors.[313]

This concern was increased during the introduction of multi-party politics.[314] Not only were donors concerned about NUDIPU's engagement in political activities, but also that the political stance was undermining the achievements NUDIPU

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[303] Regional Representative for National DPOs (2006) Group Interview.
[304] DSI (2007) *DSI Mini-programme Country Strategy Paper* p. 25.
[305] NUDIPU (2003) *Six Months Progress Report on Advocacy and Lobbying* p. 10.
[306] Nilsson, Annika; Balayo, Seezi; Mwesigye, James; Petersen, Poul Erik; and Kokhauge, Bengt (2002) *Mid Term Review Report DSI/NUDIPU Programme* p. 8.
[307] Kruse, Stein-Erik; Kayonga, Santa V.I.; Mathisen, Trine Rønning; and Roslyng-Jensen, Kristine (2003) *Norwegian Support to Civil Society in Uganda* p. 52.
[308] Ndeezi, Alex (2004) *The Disability Movement in Uganda* p. 30.
[309] Ndeezi, Alex (2004) *The Disability Movement in Uganda* p. 30.
[310] Natukunda, Carol (2004) 'Join Movt, PWDs urged' *New Vision* November 8th.
[311] Field work observations, 2006.
[312] DSI (2007) *DSI Mini-programme Country Strategy Paper* p. 39.
[313] Oxfam GB in Uganda Employee (2005) Interview.
[314] DSI (2007) *DSI Mini-programme Country Strategy Paper* p. 23.

had made. One donor highlighted that within the disability movement there was a "growing intolerance of support for any other party other than the [NRM]",[315] and this was putting at risk the unity at the heart of NUDIPU's mission.[316] As discussed in the introduction to this chapter, from the very beginning there had been a strong emphasis within NUDIPU on the unity between individuals with different impairments.[317] The increasing dominance of NRM support within NUDIPU and the wider disability movement, was starting to concern donors that new divisions along party lines were infiltrating NUDIPU's structures,[318] and introducing new influences over the definition of NUDIPU's aims and objectives.

In 2003, the government established a National Disability Council which, it was hoped, would clarify the political focus of the disability movement and the non-political activities of NUDIPU; the plans for this council included the establishment of regional branches to communicate between PWDs and the government. However, due to poor clarification of the roles of the different organisations, combined with the slow creation of these councils, this measure had not diffused the debate over NUDIPU's political focus.[319]

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This section has shown how NUDIPU's aims and objectives were shaped by several different forces, from the impetus of the original mission, through donor demands, to the political environment of the country. NUDIPU's main activities have, with inadvertent donor encouragement, often focused its attentions away from communicating with the grassroots, local programmes and consultation and towards national level advocacy campaigns and consultations with parliament. However, this strategy was becoming increasingly contentious with the introduction of multiparty politics and NUDIPU's alignment with the

[315] DSI (2007) *DSI Mini-programme Country Strategy Paper* p. 39.
[316] DSI (2007) *DSI Mini-programme Country Strategy Paper* p. 39.
[317] McCloskey, Tony (1999) *The Norwegian Association of the Disabled – Report* p. 3.
[318] DSI (2007) *DSI Mini-programme Country Strategy Paper* p. 39.
[319] DSI (2007) *DSI Mini-programme Country Strategy Paper* p. 39.

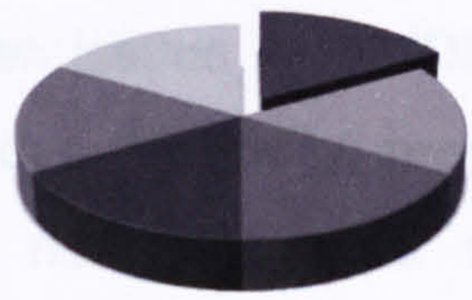
Movement government who had proved so helpful throughout the disability movement's nascent history.[320]

The final section of this chapter will look at how NUDIPU perceived its role in Oxfam's learning structure and how the sharing of knowledge shaped this relationship.

[320] Ndeezi, Alex (2004) *The Disability Movement in Uganda* (NUDIPU: Kampala) pp. 17-18,

6.4
ORGANISATIONAL LEARNING

"they are widespread so it is possible for them to gather information… then they can give that information to Oxfam"[321]



6 Learning as an Organisation

The previous chapter discussed Oxfam's relationship with the information and knowledge originating from its partners; this section will discuss the ways in which Oxfam directly and indirectly affected NUDIPU's approach to knowledge-management and organisational learning; the impact of these interventions; problems with NUDIPU's experience of knowledge-management; and the obstacles to NUDIPU's sharing of its knowledge with Oxfam, donors and other stakeholders.

As it was an external body, NUDIPU's influence over Oxfam's organisational focus was not as great as the head office or the Oxfam GB in Uganda office; therefore, unlike chapters four and five, this section will not go through each of the four fronts of learning. What will be highlighted through this section is how the support Oxfam gave to NUDIPU did not emphasise or encourage communication with the grassroots; how lessons from Uganda's disability sector were not communicated efficiently; and with the phase-out of Oxfam's Uganda disability programme, Oxfam's future learning from the disability sector looked unlikely.

Oxfam's involvement with NUDIPU's knowledge-management and learning included providing researchers to help devise the lobbying campaign in the run-

[321] Oxfam GB in Uganda Employee (2005) Interview.

up to the rewriting of the 1995 constitution;[322] Oxfam employees speaking at conferences held by NUDIPU;[323] inviting NUDIPU to Oxfam's partner conferences;[324] the sharing of work plans between organisations;[325] and support to specific initiatives, such as the initial funding to the gender desk, set up to research and highlight gender issues in NUDIPU's work.[326] After the main phase-out of Oxfam's Ugandan disability programme, Oxfam's support to NUDIPU was retained, but narrowed to a focus on advocacy and the establishment of a policy unit.[327] This policy unit was to help NUDIPU gather information about what was happening in Uganda, and to act as a depository of information stored in text books and other forms of training material to see what was being conducted in disability movements elsewhere in the world.[328] The plans for the dissemination of knowledge generated were aimed at NUDIPU's constituents, the government and wider society.[329]

In the late nineties, when this joint venture between Oxfam and NUDIPU began,[330] the knowledge-management system within the Ugandan disability movement was considered weak. Communication between NUDIPU, regional branches and other DPOs was poor and policy dominated by donors and national politics. The impact of Oxfam's support to NUDIPU's Policy Unit, in terms of improving grassroots involvement in policy and sector wide coordination, was minimal.[331] In 2007, DSI found the problems with NUDIPU's knowledge-management system still there: DPOs did not often share information with each other; all levels of the disability sector were described as

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[322] Kamya, Julius (2005) Interview.
[323] Whitbread, Jasmine (2006) Interview.
[324] Kamya, Julius (2005) Interview.
[325] Asamo, Hellen Grace (2005) Interview.
[326] Twimukye in Sayer, Geoff (1999) "NUDIPU's role should be to advocate...".
[327] Kamya, Julius (2005) Interview.
[328] Twimukye in Sayer, Geoff (1999) "NUDIPU's role should be to advocate...".
[329] NUDIPU (2005) *Annual Progress Report on Advocacy and Lobbying* p. 1.
[330] Twimukye in Sayer, Geoff (1999) "NUDIPU's role should be to advocate...".
[331] DSI (2007) *DSI Mini-programme Country Strategy Paper Uganda* p. 41 and p. 45.

"poor" when it came to recording and disseminating information; and accessing credible information on which to formulate policies was difficult.[332]

Many decisions within the disability movement were taken based on insufficient knowledge from the grassroots.[333] This contributed to the poor design of programmes which were implemented at the grassroots as discussed earlier in this chapter.[334] It also further undermined the national representative's ties with its constituents, and redirected attentions to areas where knowledge was considered sufficient: national advocacy campaigns and programmes favoured and supported by donors.

The other glaring fault with NUDIPU's knowledge-management system was the way it was stored; traditional documents, written accounts or sharing of information orally meant some information was not accessible to many workers in the disability movement.[335] As with Oxfam, NUDIPU also had a problem of keeping employees with tacit knowledge. The nineties "brain drain", when many left NUDIPU to become MPs,[336] and other causes of staff turnover (changing jobs or unexpected death),[337] meant that many of the disability movement's leaders, individuals with extensive knowledge of NUDIPU's activities, relationship with donors, and history, were lost.

Learning between partners requires good communication; interviewees from both organisations claimed the interaction between the two was facilitative to the exchange of information: highlighting face-to-face interaction, collaboration and the sharing of information.[338] However, as many of the examples in this chapter

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[332] DSI (2007) *DSI Mini-programme Country Strategy Paper Uganda* p. 41 and p. 45.
[333] DSI (2007) *DSI Mini-programme Country Strategy Paper Uganda* p. 45.
[334] Disabled People in Kamuli (2006) Interviews.
[335] DSI (2007) *DSI Mini-programme Country Strategy Paper Uganda* p. 45.
[336] Danida (2004) *Supporting the establishment of district based disability organisations in Uganda* p. 2.
[337] Ncubedis, Jabulani M. (1997) 'Eliphaz Mazima Remembered'; and Komuhnagi, Jane (2005) 'Gone but not Forgotten' in NUWODU The Voice of Women with Disabilities: Newsletter of the National Union of Women with Disabilities of Uganda (Kampala: NUWODU) p. 24.
[338] Asamo, Hellen Grace (2005) Interview; Kamya, Julius (2005) Interview; and Oxfam GB in Uganda Employee (2005) Interview.

have highlighted, communication channels were not always clear or entirely open. For example, when it came to the reason for the end of the relationship, there was a gulf between NUDIPU's perception of Oxfam's reasons and the accounts provided by Oxfam employees. NUDIPU described how the end of funding came because it had grown too large and Oxfam preferred to work with smaller organisations.[339] The strength of the disability movement was mentioned in Oxfam Uganda's 1996-2000 Strategic Plan,[340] which noted the disability sector was probably the strongest sector in Uganda; however, it was never mentioned by Oxfam explicitly as reasons for the final withdrawal from NUDIPU. Many of the informal reasons raised by Oxfam employees appear to have never been conveyed to the former partner.

In interviews, NUDIPU workers expressed the view that their decentralised structure put them in an advantaged position when it came to researching development needs for Oxfam. Although one Oxfam employee acknowledged the potential benefits of NUDIPU's widespread structure,[341] and the previous investment by Oxfam in NUDIPU's policy unit, as the disability focus had been removed from the Ugandan office's strategic focus, doubts were expressed by employees in the Oxfam Uganda office of the use of this research network to their work in the future.[342]

This attitude that NUDIPU's research was unlikely to be useful to Oxfam GB in Uganda's future work revealed how issues of disability had been removed from the agenda. As discussed in chapter two, section 2.4, organisational learning can emphasis single loop learning (how to achieve the organisation's existing aims and objectives more effectively), or double loop learning (the questioning of organisational aims and objectives). Chapter three, section 3.4.4, discussed how for an issue such as gender or disability to be mainstreamed in the work of an INGO, there need to be mechanisms in place to highlight the issues of the

[339] Kamya, Julius (2005) Interview.
[340] Oxfam GB in Uganda (1996) *Strategic Plan 1996-2000* p. 27.
[341] Oxfam GB in Uganda Employee (2005) Interview.
[342] Oxfam GB in Uganda Employee (2005) Interview.

specific minority group in order to modify the organisation's approach to that area.

With the end of Oxfam GB in Uganda's work with disabled people, the attitude towards the value of information specifically targeting disabled people reflected the compartmentalism of programme work which had been introduced with the SCOs.[343] As disability issues were no longer considered to be included in Oxfam's aims and objectives for the Uganda office, the research and information NUDIPU had to offer was considered peripheral to the knowledge requirements of the organisation. This illustrates the emphasis of single loop learning over double loop learning, and indicates that Oxfam's Uganda office was unlikely to be considering disability issues in its learning activities; therefore, the existing poor mainstreaming of disabled people in Oxfam's work in Uganda[344] is likely to continue.

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This chapter has discussed several indications that Oxfam, NUDIPU and other DPOs were not always efficient, open, honest or clear in their communications. The relationship between Oxfam and the DPOs was described to have been formal and distant;[345] the articulation of Oxfam's wider policies was poor before the SCOs due to the weak definition of those aims and objectives, and poor during the introduction of the SCOs because the future of the disability programme was in a state of flux. All of the reasons which led to the end of the partnership were not communicated to NUDIPU, and a major opportunity for learning was lost.

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[343] Palmer, Robin (2007) 'Working on Land Rights for Oxfam, 1997-2007: Or Last Rites for Land Rites' p. 3.
[344] Morton, John (2006) *A Review of Oxfam GB's Horn/East Africa Regional Pastoral Programme* p. 12.
[345] Traboulsi, Omar (2000) Oxfam GB in Uganda: Report on Review of Disability Programme p. 21.

6.5
CONCLUSION

"For us to have penetrated the government system is the biggest achievement"[346]

This chapter has examined the partner caught up in the wake of the behavioural chains which worked throughout Oxfam's organisational levels, affecting decisions and shaping policy. By looking closely at the partner's experiences of its interaction with Oxfam, the full dimension of the Oxfam-NUDIPU relationship has been examined and the final piece of the OLOC model has fallen into place. The above discussion shows that aspects of NUDIPU's structure, working practices, aims and objectives, and knowledge-management were both the targets of donor intervention and the focus of donor criticism. The analysis also shows how the very elements which were criticised had often been intentionally or inadvertently encouraged by donor activities. Different policies and approaches to the support of the DPOs of Uganda were shown to both encourage the dominant focus on political lobbying and to chip away at the communication ties between the grassroots and the national representative body. Both of these aspects of NUDIPU were later described as undesirable by Oxfam,[347] showing how even at the under-level, behavioural chains within Oxfam's decision-making terrain were producing unintended consequences, and influences against the original purpose of the support.

A look at the organisational structure of NUDIPU provided the first indication that it was unclear where the line was to be drawn between NUDIPU and the politics of government. The structures which were set up with the help of DSI to represent NUDIPU at the regional level also acted as electoral colleges;[348] there was also evidence that they became more active around election times.[349] This was seen as an invaluable way in which NUDIPU could help empower local

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[346] Twimukye in Sayer, Geoff (1999) "'NUDIPU's role should be to advocate...'".
[347] Oxfam GB in Uganda Employee (2005) Interview.
[348] Ahikire, Josephine (2002) *Decentralisation in Uganda Today* p. 8; and McCloskey, Tony (1999) *The Norwegian Association of the Disabled – Report* p. 5.
[349] DSI (2007) *DSI Mini-programme Country Strategy Paper* p. 25.

PWDs and help them participate in local politics,[350] but the regional branches provided a weak balance to NUDIPU's urban and increasingly politicised agenda.

This system helped elect 50,000 disabled local councillors to represent disabled people at the local level,[351] but it has come under criticism for a number of reasons. Firstly, in terms of facilitating communication between the grassroots and the national representative organisation, the structure proved inadequate; local leadership skills were not developed, meaning the national agenda dominated the local level;[352] and funds were perceived to "get stuck in the middle",[353] absorbed by NUDIPU's national staff and activities. This led to donors criticising NUDIPU for not having enough impact at the grassroots. However, as the rest of the chapter discussed, many donor policies inadvertently contributed to the rift between the national and the local structures and activities of NUDIPU.

Exploring how NUDIPU and the disability movement related to Oxfam and other donors revealed how the sector was highly dependent on a small number of donors,[354] and therefore vulnerable to changes in policy or strategic focus of each of these donors. Such dependency was linked to an acquiescent attitude towards the donor's choice of projects,[355] and a failure to confront INGOs when their policies and behaviour were seen by the DPO as harming their work. For example, when abrupt changes of Oxfam's policy were considered detrimental to NUDIPU's work with gender, NUDIPU "didn't take action".[356] As one of NUDIPU's donors observed, the DPOs in Uganda all too easily accepted the

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[350] Ndeezi, Alex (2004) *The Disability Movement in Uganda* p. 30.
[351] Ndeezi, Alex (2004) *The Disability Movement in Uganda* p. 23.
[352] DSI (2007) *DSI Mini-programme Country Strategy Paper* p. 25.
[353] Baligema Women with Disabilities Kumumwa (2006) Group Interview.
[354] NUDIPU (2005) *Annual Progress Report on Advocacy and Lobbying* p. 13.
[355] McCloskey, Tony (1999) *The Norwegian Association of the Disabled – Report* p. 4.
[356] Twimukye in Sayer, Geoff (1999) "'NUDIPU's role should be to advocate...'".

INGO's place as donor, undermining both the establishment of a genuine partnership,[357] and the ability of the disability movement to set its own agenda.

The existence of personal networking between organisations sometimes helped bring funding and other forms of assistance to DPOs; however, the increased move to the strategic planning approach to development meant that as the old personal ties ended, through staff relocation or death, the former partners were told: "we cannot say we are funding [you] because of that person, because of that relationship you enjoyed".[358] The departure of one key member of Oxfam's Ugandan staff was shown to have been influential in allowing the other behavioural chains and organisational influences within Oxfam to remove disability from Oxfam's Ugandan decision-making table.

In terms of the 'clout' NUDIPU was able to exercise in its relationship with Oxfam, and other donors, NUDIPU had an international reputation for having secured the best political representation for PWDs globally,[359] and had produced tangible evidence of impact in the form of legislation. These successes were used by Oxfam and other donors to communicate to their supporters the effects of the work they were doing.[360] However, during the heyday of support to the disability movement in Uganda, little attention was given to capacity building in terms of long-term sustainability and preparation for donor withdrawal.[361]

Several factors sought to undermine NUDIPU's clout, including the death of its charismatic founding leader;[362] the "brain drain"[363] it suffered when its leadership

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[357] DSI (2007) *DSI Mini-programme Country Strategy Paper* p. 41.
[358] Katumba, George (2006) Programme Coordinator for NUWODU, Interview.
[359] Frost, Barbara (1999) 'Action for Disability and Development' p. 52; and Harris, Alison with Enfield, Sue (2003) *Disability, Equality and Human Rights* p. 25.
[360] ADD (2003) *Action for Disability and Development: Annual Review 2003* p. 11; and Oxfam GB (2001) *Oxfam Annual Review 2000/2001* p. 13.
[361] Traboulsi, Omar (2000) *Oxfam GB in Uganda: Report on Review of Disability Programme* p. 47.
[362] Ncubedis, Jabulani M. (1997) 'Eliphaz Mazima Remembered'.
[363] Danida (2004) *Supporting the establishment of district based disability organisations in Uganda* p. 2.

left en masse to take up political careers;[364] and minor incidences of mismanagement of funds[365] and donated vehicles.[366] However, when Oxfam decided to phase-out its support to the disability movement, the NUDIPU relationship was retained for a long time because of personal relationships, its historic involvement with Oxfam, and so that Oxfam could say it was still supporting the disability movement in Uganda.[367]

Throughout the relationship between Oxfam and NUDIPU, several areas revealed that communications were not entirely clear between the two 'partners'. This was most explicitly illustrated by NUDIPU's perception of why Oxfam withdrew, compared to the reasons given by Oxfam employees to an external researcher. The problems with communication involved Oxfam's Uganda office's own lack of clarity regarding the future of the disability programme, due to the state of interpretative flux which accompanied the introduction of the SCOs; however, failing to communicate the full reasons for withdrawal undermined Oxfam's eighteen year involvement with this partner.

The analysis of the ideational elements at this level revealed that the emphasis on accountability towards donors resulted in much time and effort being devoted to producing reports, proposals and accounts.[368] This attention towards the needs of donors undermined notions of accountability to the grassroots.[369] This combined with many other elements which were undermining downward accountability, including the donor's influence over agenda-setting;[370] Oxfam's withdrawal of support from local DPOs;[371] previous support and publicity of

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[364] McCloskey, Tony (1999) *The Norwegian Association of the Disabled – Report* p. 5.
[365] McCloskey, Tony (1999) *The Norwegian Association of the Disabled – Report* p. 5.
[366] Traboulsi, Omar (2000) *Oxfam GB in Uganda: Report on Review of Disability Programme* p. 21.
[367] Oxfam GB in Uganda Employee (2005) Interview.
[368] NUDIPU (2005) *Annual Progress Report on Advocacy and Lobbying* p. 1 and p. 11.
[369] Katumba, George (2006) Programme Coordinator for NUWODU, Interview.
[370] McCloskey, Tony (1999) *The Norwegian Association of the Disabled – Report* p. 4.
[371] Traboulsi, Omar (2000) *Oxfam GB in Uganda: Report on Review of Disability Programme* p. 50.

national achievements by donors;[372] and poor investment in programmes aimed at fostering leadership at the grassroots.[373] By 2005, the top-heavy nature of the disability movement in Uganda prompted both DSI and Oxfam to take the decision to either end, or cut back, the funding relationship.[374]

At the time of Oxfam's withdrawal, NUDIPU's involvement in politics was starting to become an issue with donors.[375] This was partly the result of its history of political advocacy, and partly because the introduction of multi-party politics in Uganda altered the way NUDIPU related to the government. When the NRM came to power, it had been supportive of the disability movement[376] and a number of prominent leaders from the disability movement had secured political careers because of the provisions the NRM had made in the constitution for PWD representation.[377] The encouragement the NRM provided to the disability movement meant that there was a strong current of support within NUDIPU for the Movement party and this was starting to show signs of being divisive to the unity which had been a central part of NUDIPU's original mission.[378]

The discussion of NUDIPU's knowledge-management again revealed the top-heavy dimension of the disability movement. As information from the regions was scarce and unreliable, many programmes were run without being fully aware of local circumstances, preferences or the suitability of the programmes.[379] The involvement of Oxfam in the area of knowledge-management, which included providing researchers, training, and funding for a

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[372] ADD (2003) *Action for Disability and Development: Annual Review 2003* p. 11; and Oxfam GB (2001) *Oxfam Annual Review 2000/2001* p. 13.
[373] DSI (2007) *DSI Mini-programme Country Strategy Paper* p. 25.
[374] Etengu, Nathan (2005) 'Disabled Lose Funds'; and Oxfam GB in Uganda Employee (2005) Interview.
[375] DSI (2007) *DSI Mini-programme Country Strategy Paper Uganda 2007 – 2011* p. 39; and Oxfam GB in Uganda Employee (2005) Interview.
[376] Ndeezi, Alex (2004) *The Disability Movement in Uganda* pp. 17-18.
[377] Ndeezi, Alex (2004) *The Disability Movement in Uganda* p. 22.
[378] DSI (2007) *DSI Mini-programme Country Strategy Paper* p. 39.
[379] DSI (2007) *DSI Mini-programme Country Strategy Paper* p. 41 and p. 45.

policy unit[380] all focused on national-level initiatives, as opposed to improving the capacity of the lower levels to contribute to NUDIPU's learning processes.

NUDIPU believed it still could play a role in Oxfam's programme work by providing Oxfam with research and knowledge. When asked about the future role of NUDIPU as a source of knowledge, Oxfam employees in Uganda did not share the same perception. There were no plans to look in any great depth at disability issues in Oxfam's work in Uganda, and NUDIPU was not a valuable source of knowledge for Oxfam's current core strategic focus points. This is indicative of the removal of disability from Oxfam's agenda; the compartmentalisation of Oxfam's programmes excluding cross-cutting issues; and the attitude that once the relationship was over, the INGO had little to learn from their former partner.

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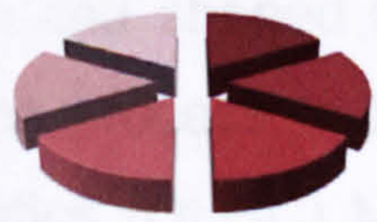
This chapter has completed the analysis of the relationship between Oxfam and NUDIPU, and showed how a number of different organisational characteristics present in Oxfam's vast institutional system affected this partnership in both straightforward ways and in ways not immediately obvious when the main organisational justifications were examined.



[380] Kamya, Julius (2005) Interview; and Twimukye in Sayer, Geoff (1999) '"NUDIPU's role should be to advocate..."'.

Chapter Seven: Conclusion

Assessing the Organisational Levels and Organisational Characteristics Model

7.1 Returning to the Rationale

I set out with the intention of demystifying International Non-Governmental Organisations (INGOs): specifically, the decisions, events and managerial tiers which came between the top levels of the INGO and the 'beneficiary'. I took three stages of one relationship, consisting of Oxfam GB's corporate centre, Oxfam GB in Uganda, and the National Union of Disabled Persons in Uganda (NUDIPU), and sought to uncover what affected the nature of this relationship, focusing on how the upper echelons monitored, controlled and influenced the lower levels.

The research process was framed within a layered model, which influenced the initial targeting of research and shaped the early analysis. This model was revised during the research process to form the Organisational Levels and Organisational Characteristics (OLOC) Model; this model was used to organise, analyse and present the investigation into Oxfam's relationship with the disability movement in Uganda.

From the early stages of the research, it was clear that three areas were going to dominate this analysis: development, management, and disability studies. The theoretical basis of these three disciplines combined with the details coming from the research to help define which organisational characteristics would be chosen to form the basis of the three case study chapters.

7.2
What the OLOC Model was designed to do

The purpose of this research was to design a model to investigate how the head office of an INGO interacted with a country office, which in turn interacted with a partner NGO. As disability became a central concern to this project at an early stage of the formation of the model, the OLOC model was deliberately designed to highlight how a minority issue fared in the decision-making terrains of the INGO, how other organisational characteristics could lead to exclusionary practices, and how the omission of disabled people from development work was invisible to external observers and employees within the INGO.

This research took as its starting point the notion that the internal operations of a modern day INGO were growing increasingly complex. Oxfam is one of the world's "super-INGOs":[1] multifaceted global organisations who were emulating the managerial styles of the corporate world[2] and who had semi-autonomous offices throughout the world. As a large corporate INGO, running development, relief, and campaign programmes in over 75 countries worldwide,[3] unpicking the trends, decisions and influencing forces which affected one partnership was not a simple task.

The OLOC model was devised to uncover all the forces which affected the Oxfam-NUDIPU relationship, especially elements which are often ignored in INGO analysis, such as an INGO's approach to disability and organisational learning. By seeking out weaker organisational characteristics, and putting them in the same analytical space as more prominent and obvious influences on the INGO-partner relationship, it was revealed how patterns of behaviour, organisational policy, guidelines, training, prejudice, personal interests and

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[1] Ramia, Gaby (2003) 'Global Social Policy, INGOs and Strategic Management: An Emerging Research Agenda' *Global Social Policy* Vol. 3, No. 1, p. 80.
[2] Minogue, Martin (2000) 'Should Flawed Models of Public Management be Exported?' Issues and Practices' *Public Policy and Management Working Paper Series* (IDPM) Working Paper No. 15, p. 5.
[3] Oxfam GB (2002) *Oxfam Annual Report and Accounts 2001/2002* p. 5.

other behavioural chains all interacted in the INGO's decision-making terrain, bolstering certain options and obstructing others.

Rather than treating the INGO as a homogenous whole, a well-oiled machine where all the different institutional imperatives and behavioural influences work seamlessly towards a clearly-defined goal, this approach acknowledges that there are contradictions in the INGO's institutional and ideological structures. Tied into the same organisational system, there are different forces, or organisational characteristics, working towards different goals and the interaction between these organisational characteristics shape which options are likely to prevail in the decision-making terrains throughout the INGO. As some organisational characteristics are more dominant than others, the terrain is shaped, intentionally or unintentionally, to favour certain element of policy over others. This can lead to some discrepancy between the actual activities of an INGO and the ways it portrays its policies and activities. By examining the passage of a weak behavioural chain such as disability, analysis undertaken using the OLOC model aims to reveal, and understand, why INGO policy and the representation of its work is not always a direct reflection of its activities.

The introduction to disability in development provided by chapter three established that disability was a justifiable target for this analysis because it has been sidelined as an issue in the development arena,[4] despite the close link between disability and poverty[5] and evidence that disabled people were often excluded from development programmes.[6] In recent years, INGOs have shown an increased interest in disability: they have commissioned research into disability in development;[7] produced 'policy' documents[8] and

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[4] Yeo, Rebecca and Moore, Karen (2003) 'Including Disabled People in Poverty Reduction Work: "Nothing About Us, Without Us"' *World Development* Vol. 31, No. 3, p. 572.

[5] DFID (2000) *Disability, Poverty and Development*; and Lwanga-Ntale, Charles (2003) *Chronic Poverty and Disability in Uganda.*

[6] Frost, Barbara (2000) *Disability and Development: an overview and ideas on best practice* p. 14; Hossain, ASM Mosharraf (2001) 'the participation of people with disabilities through self-help organisations' in World Vision (Ed.) (2001) *All Things Being Equal: Perspectives on Disability and Development* p. 29; and Yeo, Rebecca (2002) *Chronic Poverty and Disability* p. 21.

[7] Albert, Bill (2004) *Is disability really on the development agenda? A review of official disability policies of the major governmental and international development agencies*; and Coleridge, Peter (1993) *Disability, Liberation and Development* (Oxford: Oxfam UK and I).

hand books,[9] specifically detailing how disabled people should be included in development work; and in policy statements and rhetoric, claimed they are inclusive of disabled people in their work.[10]

Despite this increased interest by INGOs in disability and the presentation of their activities as being pro-disability,[11] research has revealed that this often remained at the level of rhetoric.[12] The OLOC model provides a means of pulling apart the INGO, to examine why disability falls off the decision-making tables in the INGO, and identify the organisational characteristics which are responsible for thwarting the actualisation of pro-disability decisions. By identifying the obstacles to the inclusion of disability studies in development work and revealing how the exclusionary practices are often obfuscated by the complexity of the INGO, this model, and the research presented in this thesis, can contribute to the disability movement's campaign to remove the barriers to disabled people's participation in development work.

7.3
What the OLOC Model did

What did the OLOC model offer to the analysis of this specific case study? The comprehensive exploration of organisational characteristics at Oxfam's 'corporate centre';[13] Oxfam GB in Uganda; and the disability movement in Uganda, headed by NUDIPU, provided a detailed account of Oxfam's internal workings, helping to 'demystify' what happened between decisions taken at head office and policies implemented at the grassroots. Six categories were drawn from the research findings and these were used to shape the analysis

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[8] DFID (2000) *Disability, Poverty and Development.*
[9] Harris, Alison with Enfield, Sue (2003) *Disability, Equality and Human Rights: A Training Manual for Development and Humanitarian Organisations* (Oxford: Oxfam GB).
[10] Yeo, Rebecca (2002) *Chronic Poverty and Disability* p. 21.
[11] Albert, Bill; Dube, A.K.; and Riis-Hansen, Trine Cecilie (2005) *Has Disability Been Mainstreamed into Development Cooperation?* p. 17; Thomas, Philippa (2005) *Disability, Poverty and the Millennium Development Goals: Relevance, Challenges and Opportunities for DFID* pp. 11-12; and Yeo, Rebecca (2002) *Chronic Poverty and Disability* p. 21.
[12] Yeo, Rebecca and Moore, Karen (2003) 'Including Disabled People in Poverty Reduction Work' p. 580.
[13] Oxfam GB (1998) *Setting the Course for the Twenty-First Century: Oxfam Strategic Review* (Unpublished Report) p. 151.

of Oxfam's internal workings, and four of these sections to evaluate the effects on the disability movement in Uganda.

The first organisational characteristic to be examined in chapters four, five and six was Oxfam's managerial structure; this analysis located each office and Oxfam's partners in the Ugandan disability movement on the organisational map. The discussion of the intentions behind the shape of this structure and the way it operated revealed the first set of contradictions present in Oxfam's operations.

Oxfam introduced a series of major reforms in the late 1990s; these changes included a substantial shake-up of its managerial hierarchy and this redistribution of power set in motion a number of organisational characteristics which did not always complement each other. The rationale for the redistribution of power during Oxfam's move to a regional structure included clarifying the roles and responsibilities of the different managerial hubs located throughout Oxfam;[14] moving decision-making powers closer to the site of implementation;[15] and reducing the number of partners which were worked with in order to foster better quality partnerships.[16]

Each of these reasons for regionalisation was shown throughout the analysis to have been undermined by other forces at work within Oxfam. The motivation behind the redistribution of power was affected by development notions of moving the decision closer to the grassroots,[17] managerial concerns of maintaining centralised control,[18] and the marketing need to cultivate a coherent Oxfam-brand.[19] These influences assigned different tasks and responsibilities to entities within the new system, and the resultant forces often contradicted each other. This led to a great deal of confusion

[14] Oxfam GB (1998) *Setting the Course for the Twenty-First Century* p. 151.
[15] Oxfam GB (1998) *Setting the Course for the Twenty-First Century* p. 151.
[16] Oxfam GB (1998) *Setting the Course for the Twenty-First Century* p. 11.
[17] Joel Joffe in Oxfam GB (2001) *Oxfam Annual Report and Accounts 2000/01* pp. 4-5.
[18] Oxfam GB (2003) *DfID - Oxfam GB Partnership Programme Agreement Second Review Report 2002/2003* p. 3.
[19] Offenheiser, Raymond; Holcombe, Susan; and Hopkins, Nancy (1999) 'Grappling with Globalisation, Partnership and Learning: A look inside Oxfam America' *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly* Vol. 28, suppl. 1, p. 127.

over the roles and responsibilities of the different offices, rather than providing clarification.[20]

The overriding decision-making powers remained in Oxford; some responsibilities for coordinating the centrally defined policy were handed out to the regional level,[21] but country level autonomy over policy actually reduced.[22] This saw power moving away from the site of implementation, and the ability to pursue programmes chosen by employees at the local level depended on whether they were able to define those programmes in terms of the Strategic Change Objectives (SCOs) and win support for the project from the higher levels. This required time and effort, which was already stretched in the Uganda office.[23] For programmes which fell out of Oxfam's strategic focus, for example, the disability programme in Uganda, there needed to be a strong support base within the country office to maintain that programme. This was eroded by employees supportive of the programme relocating to different country offices within Oxfam and the constant emphasis on Oxfam's key focus points in country level SCO teams, documentation and data bases. This led to in local histories and Ugandan interpretations of Oxfam's roles being replaced with corporate centre projections.

Finally, the analysis of *the way* Oxfam withdrew from its existing partnerships in the Ugandan disability movement revealed how Oxfam's policies in the period between the Strategic Review and the termination of the Oxfam-NUDIPU partnership were undermining the notion of partnership. Oxfam was reducing the number of partners it worked with to focus on better quality partnerships; however, the discussions surrounding the Oxfam-NUDIPU partnership in chapter six, section 6.2.2, revealed how Oxfam's move to create better partnerships came at the cost of existing partners. Several examples were provided to illustrate how Oxfam's phase-out of its disability programme showed a poor approach to partnership: officially justifying the

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[20] Oxfam GB Head Office Employee (2005) Interview.
[21] Oxfam GB (2003) *DfID - Oxfam GB Partnership Programme Agreement Second Review Report 2002/2003* p. 3.
[22] Oxfam GB (2003) *DfID - Oxfam GB Partnership Programme Agreement Second Review Report 2002/2003* p. 3.
[23] Oxfam GB in Uganda (1996) *Strategic Plan 1996-2000* p. 20.

phase-out on the grounds of "internal reasons"[24] rather than a problem with the relationship; unclear communications about the partnership and Oxfam's wider focus, both throughout the relationship, and during the process of phasing out; the responsibility Oxfam had to a partner it had been involved with for eighteen years, yet it failed to pay attention to sustainability or retain an interest in the partner once the relationship ended;[25] and finally many Disabled Persons' Organisations (DPOs) in Uganda had developed a high level of dependency on Oxfam meaning the withdrawal had a sector-wide impact.

Chapter six discussed several ways in which donors' interactions with NUDIPU encouraged a focus on lobbying government for pro-disability legislation and other forms of national or urban activities. The leaders of the DPOs in the disability movement were very clear in their perception that, in return for the funding given to the DPOs, the INGO's wanted impact.[26] This impact was viewed by both DPOs and INGOs as results which could be shown: ramps at universities,[27] increased enrolment of disabled children in primary education,[28] legislation, and representation in parliament and on local councils. The legislative achievements NUDIPU had secured through its lobbying campaign were used by Oxfam, and other donors, as evidence of their support leading to 'impact'.[29] This sent out the message to NUDIPU that its advocacy and lobbying campaign was thoroughly supported by Oxfam. This perception was further bolstered when, during the phase-out, Oxfam kept funding NUDIPU's advocacy campaign and Policy Unit.

As well as encouraging a national focus for the advocacy campaign, a number of Oxfam GB in Uganda's policies and approaches to its partnership with NUDIPU and other DPOs undermined the ties between the grassroots

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[24] Traboulsi, Omar (2000) *Oxfam GB in Uganda: Report on Review of Disability Programme* (Unpublished Report) p. 49.
[25] Traboulsi, Omar (2000) *Oxfam GB in Uganda: Report on Review of Disability Programme* p. 49.
[26] Katumba, George (2006) Programme Coordinator for NUWODU, Interview.
[27] Nalusiba, Cissy (2006) Information Officer for NUWODU, Interview.
[28] Ndaziboneye, Benon (2001) 'a unified voice for people with disabilities' in World Vision (Ed.) *All Things Being Equal: Perspectives on Disability and Development* pp. 19-22.
[29] ADD (2003) *Action for Disability and Development: Annual Review 2003* p. 11; and Oxfam GB (2001) *Oxfam Annual Review 2000/2001* p. 13.

and the national representative organisation. This included the donor's dominant role in the agenda setting of the disability movement;[30] poor monitoring at the grassroots;[31] an increased emphasis on producing documents;[32] annual programme cycles;[33] Oxfam's cessation of funding to local and regional DPOs adversely affecting local capacities;[34] involvement of Oxfam employees in the political lobbying campaign;[35] and the continued focus on an advocacy campaign and policy unit.[36]

The decisions and activities of Oxfam's country office were influential in the evolution of the eighteen year Oxfam-NUDIPU partnership, but organisation-wide policies introduced by the 1998 Strategic Review proved most decisive in the final years of the relationship. The SCOs were the main reason given by Oxfam for the decision to end the NUDIPU partnership. To understand the exact nature of the influence, the SCOs were examined in extensive detail throughout this thesis. This analysis revealed how the SCOs conflicted with a number of other organisational characteristics within the Oxfam system, such as attempts to make Oxfam's programme work "more able to respond to national and regional demands";[37] the promotion of innovation as part of Oxfam's 'culture';[38] and the emphasis on learning.[39] Programmes were conceived and carried out within thematic categories, activities became increasingly focused on key areas, and not comprehensive implementation of multi-dimensional inter-linked projects; learning was restricted to concerns about how to generate more impact within the preconceived SCO mould; and monitoring was shown to reflect the SCOs as much as the country level

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[30] McCloskey, Tony (1999) *The Norwegian Association of the Disabled – Report: NUDIPU – An Overview* p. 4.
[31] Nalusiba, Cissy (2006) Information Officer for NUWODU, Interview.
[32] NUDIPU (2003) *Six Months Progress Report on Advocacy and Lobbying May to October 2002* (Unpublished Report) p. 10.
[33] NUDIPU (2003) *Six Months Progress Report on Advocacy and Lobbying* p. 10.
[34] Traboulsi, Omar (2000) *Oxfam GB in Uganda: Report on Review of Disability Programme* p. 50.
[35] Sayer, Geoff (2000) '"Ten years ago we couldn't talk in public. No one would listen to us..."' Internal Communications on Oxfam Words and Picture Library.
[36] Sayer, Geoff (1999) '"NUDIPU's role should be to advocate..."' Internal Communications on Oxfam Words and Picture Library.
[37] Joel Joffe in Oxfam GB (2001) *Oxfam Annual Report and Accounts 2000/01* pp. 4-5.
[38] Oxfam GB (1998) *Setting the Course for the Twenty-First Century* p. 134.
[39] Porter, Fenella and Smyth, Ines (1998) 'Gender training for development practitioners: only a partial solution' *Gender and Development* Vol. 6, No. 2, p. 60.

experience. In this environment, disability was pushed out of Oxfam GB in Uganda's operational focus.

7.4
Disability in the Decision-Making Terrain

As discussed in chapter four, section 4.3.2, Oxfam's 1998 Strategic Review saw the SCOs as a way of improving the quality of its programmes by focusing on fewer areas,[40] and targeting issues where Oxfam had a "critical mass of expertise... had the potential to remain the leader... and had the opportunities to bring about the greatest amount of change."[41] However, the better quality product Oxfam's organisational blue-prints were set up to deliver did not include plans for disability mainstreaming and in light of the discussions of why disability is an issue central to development in chapter three, this can be seen as a major flaw. Not only were no efforts to mainstream disability implemented, the analysis of this case study revealed how Oxfam's organisational characteristics produced a hostile terrain for disability issues. This was not down to a specific blue-print implemented within an organisation, but a policy 'hole' for disability to slip through, and many obstacles, presented by dominant behavioural chains, which country level employees needed to negotiate should they wish to pursue a programme with a disability focus.

In the 1990s Oxfam was showing evidence of embracing disability issues at a corporate level. It commissioned research on, and published four books specifically on the issue of disability.[42] It also had a good reputation among disability activists for its approach to mainstreaming disability.[43] However, during the Strategic Review a conscious decision was made not to add any

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[40] Oxfam GB (1998) *Setting the Course for the Twenty-First Century* p. 10.
[41] Whitbread, Jasmine (2006) Interview.
[42] Abu-Habib. Lina (1997) *Gender and Disability: Women's Experiences in the Middle East* (Oxford: Oxfam UK and I); and Coleridge, Peter (1993) *Disability, Liberation and Development*; Harris, Alison with Enfield, Sue (2003) *Disability, Equality and Human Rights*; and Hastie, Rachel (1997) *Disabled Children in a Society at War* (Oxford: Oxfam UK and Ireland).
[43] Yeo, Rebecca (2002) *Chronic Poverty and Disability* p. 21.

value on to the issue of disability.[44] The lack of leadership in the upper echelons of Oxfam's management provided the first obstacle to disability issues in Oxfam's work.

Chapter three discussed how mainstreaming a minority issue required investment of time and resources combined with a committed leadership. During the Strategic Review, the notion of disability mainstreaming was voiced;[45] however, the decision was taken not to invest in this area. The fact that the idea of mainstreaming had been raised gave Oxfam's Uganda office the impression that disability was a mainstreamed category, despite the lack of specific resources devoted to the area. The employees of the Uganda office believed that an "awareness" was sufficient to included disabled people in Oxfam's development programmes and the phase-out of disability focused activities were defended because this 'mainstreaming' meant disabled people were included elsewhere.[46] In practice, disabled people were found to be absent from Oxfam's programmes run in Uganda.[47]

The head office's introduction of the SCOs removed disability as a justifiable target for Oxfam's programmes. With the increased emphasis on cultivating a coherent organisational image,[48] and the increased emphasis on all branches of Oxfam to contribute to the creation of this unified identify, whether they were country offices or one of the twelve Oxfam chapters united under Oxfam international,[49] the SCOs became dominant and non-central programmes (including disability focused work) were phased-out.

Other organisational characteristics made it difficult for country offices to pursue programmes which worked with national disability movements; for example, the onus of producing impact, when advocacy programmes are a

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[44] Whitbread, Jasmine (2006) Interview.
[45] Traboulsi, Omar (2000) *Oxfam GB in Uganda: Report on Review of Disability Programme* p. 18.
[46] Oxfam GB in Uganda Employee (2005) Interview.
[47] Morton, John (2006) *A Review of Oxfam GB's Horn/East Africa Regional Pastoral Programme* p. 12.
[48] Oxfam GB (1998) *Setting the Course for the Twenty-First Century* p. 70; Oxfam GB (2002) *Oxfam-DFID Participatory Programme Agreement 2002* p. 6.
[49] Offenheiser, Raymond; Holcombe, Susan; and Hopkins, Nancy (1999) 'Grappling with Globalisation, Partnership and Learning' p. 127.

long term endeavour. The decline in non-earmarked funds also made it difficult for a country office to choose to run a disability focused programme. Because the country office did not have the funds spare to run programmes outside of its specific country focus, higher levels had to approve special grants for non-thematic programmes. This required the employees of the country office to be willing to invest the time and effort to secure support. During this investigation two examples of proposals being submitted to head office were discussed, one for NUDIPU and the other to expand the Rwenzori programme. Neither of these proposals was successful.[50] This made it difficult for local country offices to continue with disability programmes; however, there was no explicit policy prohibiting work with disabled people, so the interplay of forces at the country level became important in deciding the precise fate of disability issues.

With many organisational characteristics within Oxfam presenting obstacles to work focusing on disability, the country level would have to have employees committed to the relationship with the partner and the partner's track record would have to be excellent for the partnership to continue in Oxfam's strategic era. High staff turnover in Oxfam's country offices meant partners lost former contacts and supporters; it also meant the tacit knowledge of the office's previous involvement with these partners left the office and the emphasis on the learning of new employees did not involve a focus on disability issues. In this way, disability focused programmes were removed from the agenda. Mainstreaming did not fare any better.

At an organisational level, there was no support for the implementation of a comprehensive mainstreaming strategy for disability and no resources were made available to pursue mainstreaming activities at a local level. Employees at the country office were working with shrinking budgets, high documentary requirements, heavy workloads, and a strong emphasis on the mainstreaming of women. In effect, Oxfam had removed disability from its work. This can be seen in the closing of disability focused programmes in

[50] Oxfam GB in Uganda Employee (2005) Interview.

Albania[51] Southern Africa, Uganda[52] and elsewhere. The main forces driving this abandonment[53] of disabled people in Oxfam's work, was not an overt institutional prejudice, but the drive to professionalise and become more business-like allowing aversive disablism to knock disability issues off the agenda.

Oxfam prominently placed its work with NUDIPU in its 2000/2001 *Annual Review* giving the impression it had a continuing involvement with disability in its work. This was shortly before the end of the NUDIPU partnership and after Oxfam had made the decision not to add any value onto disability issues. Oxfam's Diversity Strategy states that "we will seek to positively include... disabled as well as able bodied";[54] but later in the document, it is explained that this approach to disability equality only applies to Oxfam's UK employees.[55] Oxfam has also maintained its good reputation for disability activism fuelled by its previous publications. However, this research has shown that the organisational characteristics introduced with the 1998 Strategic Review and Oxfam's drive to strategise and professionalise are hostile to disability focused programmes and disability mainstreaming.

7.5
Future Research and Applications of the OLOC Model

The OLOC model has enabled this analytical dissection of Oxfam to reveal a number of incompatible organisational characteristics which resulted in activities which thwarted certain stated policies and intentions of the organisation. In the course of this investigation, the minority issue of disability was highlighted to reveal how strategising had driven disability programmes off Oxfam's agenda, leaving disabled people phased-out but not mainstreamed into other programme work.

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[51] Albanian Disability Rights Foundation (2006) *Capacity Building: Organization Capacity ISPO/USAID/WHO consensus conference on wheelchairs for developing countries.*
[52] Palmer, Robin (2007) Palmer, Robin (2007) *Working on Land Rights for Oxfam, 1997-2007: Or Last Rites for Land Rites* p. 3.
[53] Palmer, Robin (2007) *Working on Land Rights for Oxfam* p. 3; and Traboulsi, Omar (2000) *Oxfam GB in Uganda: Report on Review of Disability Programme* p. 21.
[54] Oxfam GB (2000) *The Difference Starts with You: Oxfam's Diversity Strategy* p. 2.
[55] Oxfam GB (2000) *The Difference Starts with You* p. 3.

This research has uncovered that an INGO with a good reputation for its work with disabled people can, in a drive to professionalise and promote its brand name, create an internal environment which is hostile to disability focused programmes and disability mainstreaming. In an INGO environment where the drive to strategise is becoming more dominant, such trends warrant further study.

This case study has shown how the framework for analysis provided by the OLOC Model can uncover organisational trends which are not obvious when compiling research on a large multi-faceted INGO. Its simple formula means it can be applied to other organisations and minority issues, revealing what aspects of INGO policy and practice is inhibitive to the inclusivity and respect for minority groups many recognise as important to their work.

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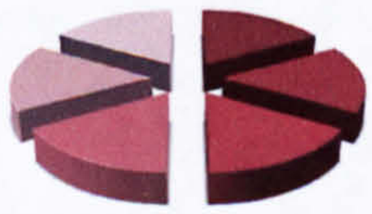
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