

In summary

Social development



Oxford Policy
Management

**About Oxford
Policy Management's
*In summary series***

Our *In summary* publications aim to give an introduction to a key area of our expertise and the capabilities we offer in supporting governments, funders, practitioners, and partners in achieving lasting, positive change through policy reform.

Cover image:
Participatory social mapping,
Zambia | Terry Roopnaraine

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Social development

Poverty is much more than a simple lack of income and productive resources – and tackling poverty requires more than just economic growth. To be meaningful and sustainable, poverty reduction strategies must be rooted in a contextualised understanding of issues around:

- inclusion and equity in access to resources, services, and opportunities; and
- the relationships between people and the formal and informal institutions they interact with.

Our Social Development team and internationally renowned associates develop contextually-appropriate programmatic and policy solutions to achieve sustained positive change in the lives of poor, marginalised, and/or vulnerable groups. We work across developmental sectors and throughout the policy cycle, bringing a deep understanding of transformative methods and processes to increase social inclusion and equity, empower different groups of people in their relationships with political, economic, and social institutions, and disrupt harmful social norms. All our services and solutions are underpinned by a strong recognition of social difference, local context, and the multidimensionality of poverty.



Areas we work in

We work across three key thematic areas, using a range of analytical approaches and participatory processes.

Gender, inclusion, and equity

- Gender mainstreaming
- Violence against women and girls
- Women's economic empowerment
- Working with men and boys
- Social exclusion/inclusion
- Poverty reduction and equity


Voice, accountability, and responsiveness

- Social accountability
- Transparency and responsiveness
- Citizen-state relationships
- Civil society
- Empowerment and participation
- Local governance
- Community development

Social norms and behaviour change

- Norms, attitudes, and behaviours around key sectoral issues (at household and community levels and in policy spaces)
- Power relationships and dynamics
- Social transformation
- Community programming





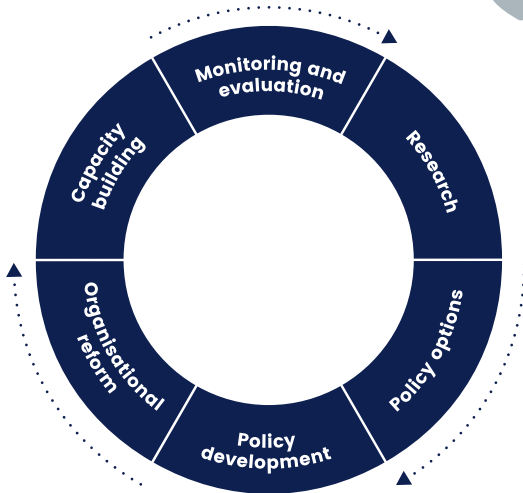
Across the policy cycle – from formative research to inform policy design, to policy and programme implementation to evaluation of policy impact – we use a range of analytical approaches to increase understanding of thematic issues, including:

- Gender analysis
- Political economy analysis (PEA)
- Social analysis
- Institutional analysis
- Political analysis
- Poverty and social impact analysis (PSIA)

We use participatory processes and methods throughout our work, and have particular expertise in *participatory monitoring and evaluation* and *participatory statistics*.



We work globally across the policy cycle



Above: The OPM policy cycle. Our approach is firmly rooted in the policy cycle, from researching the key drivers of a problem through to implementing the chosen policy, and monitoring and evaluating progress.



● OPM

■ Selection of countries we have worked in

Map above is based on a Gall-Peters projection




Gender, inclusion, and equity

Particular groups of people and individuals remain excluded from the resources, services, and opportunities which could help them move out of poverty.

Our work addresses inequity in development outcomes by understanding how and why particular people and groups are excluded and developing contextually-appropriate policy and programmatic solutions.

We **mainstream gender, inclusion, and equity in the design and implementation of large multi-year programmes** across a range of sectors, such as in Action on Climate Today in south Asia, Ghana Oil and Gas for Inclusive Growth, and the Kenya Extractives Programme.

A woman farmer in a field of young plants under a blue sky with clouds. The woman is wearing a black sleeveless top and a long orange and black patterned skirt. She is standing in a field of young green plants, looking towards the right. The sky is blue with scattered white clouds.

We work on gender, inclusion, and equity across the policy cycle, including:

- implementing DFID's MUVA programme in Mozambique to increase the capacity and agency of adolescent girls and young women to access and benefit from decent economic opportunities;
- strengthening the capacity of sub-national governments in Brazil to design, implement, and evaluate policies to increase women's economic empowerment and agency, and prevent VAWG; and
- developing a framework to capture the results of DFID's global portfolio of VAWG projects, including a theory of change for VAWG policy advocacy.




Voice, empowerment, and accountability

Voice, empowerment, and accountability are instrumental in building the resources, assets, and capabilities that enable poor and marginalised people to hold decision makers to account, and to benefit equitably from broader development outcomes.

Our work increases citizen capacities and opportunities to participate in decision making and exercise greater control over their own development, and strengthens accountability mechanisms to hold decision makers to account.

Examples include:

- using PEA to inform the design of DFID's Vietnam Empowerment and Accountability Programme, and designing an M&E approach to capture complex, intangible outcomes;

- 
- implementing DFID's Sub-National Governance Programme which improved public services in Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa provinces by increasing the capacity of sub-national authorities to identify and respond to citizen's identified needs; and
 - evaluating DFID's Citizen Engagement Programme in Mozambique, which aimed to improve the quality of health and education services by supporting citizens to monitor services and engage with service providers to address identified problems.



Social norms and behaviour change

Social norms are shared beliefs and expectations that influence and regulate the behaviours considered appropriate or inappropriate for individuals within particular social contexts and social reference groups.

Our work focuses on understanding what social norms exist, how they function, and how they can be transformed, abandoned, or created to achieve the desired change. Examples include:

- using operational research to determine the barriers and enablers for behavioural change related to breastfeeding and complementary feeding practices in northern Nigeria and Pakistan;



- evaluating DFID's Stamping Out and Preventing Gender Based Violence Programme in Zambia, and assessing whether and how social norms, attitudes, and behaviours towards violence have changed; and
- evaluating the Buffalo City HIV Prevention Programme to understand risk perceptions, knowledge, attitudes, and practices regarding risky sexual behaviour in some of South Africa's poorest townships, through analysing social norms and structures that guide what it means to be a young woman in the townships, both from the perspective of young women themselves and others.

About Oxford Policy Management

Oxford Policy Management is committed to helping low- and middle-income countries achieve growth and reduce poverty and disadvantage through public policy reform. We seek to bring about lasting positive change using analytical and practical policy expertise. Through our global network of offices, we work in partnership with national decision makers to research, design, implement, and evaluate impactful public policy. We work in all areas of social and economic policy and governance, including health, finance, education, climate change, and public sector management. We draw on our local and international sector experts to provide the very best evidence-based support.

Contact us

If you would like to discuss our work on public sector social development, please contact **Simon Brook**
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For further information on OPM, visit our website www.opml.co.uk

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 **Oxford Policy Management**

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