

Oxfam Cymru

A Wales that Cares for People and the Planet



(L) Arlene Cinco is a shop owner and mother to 4 children in the Philippines. She loves to spend time with her kids and watch TV together. She can rarely find such valuable time to do this as she spends all day working to earn money and doing all the care work for her family. Photo credit Jed Regala

(R) Shakina Begum is walking towards her flooded house after cyclone Bulbul. Kolbari, Shamnagar, Bangladesh. Photo credit Fabeha Monir/Oxfam



Care for People: Care for the Planet

Oxfam Cymru key calls for Senedd 2021

A Wellbeing Economy for Wales

6

Put in place a 'social floor' to safeguard basic needs and an 'environmental ceiling' to push resource use in Wales to within planetary boundaries.

Work with the Wellbeing Economy Government Network and international institutions to harmonise 'beyond GDP' accounting frameworks and terminology linked to delivery of the Sustainable Development Goals.

Report on wellbeing and sustainability metrics with higher frequency and timeliness than GDP.

Engage the people of Wales in a national conversation on *How can Wales can be a home to thriving people, in a thriving country whilst respecting the wellbeing of all people and the health of the whole planet?*

A Caring Wales

9

Prioritise investment in the care sector as a low-carbon, gender-just foundation of the wellbeing economy.

Recognise the value of care to our collective social and economic wellbeing through amending the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act to include 'A caring Wales' as a wellbeing goal.

Raise new revenue to significantly boost investment in the care sector to protect paid care workers from poverty, to relieve pressure on unpaid carers and support infrastructure for caring.

Ensure the Ministerial Advisory Group on Carers is focussed on its strategic role in moving carers rights forward and planning support services for unpaid carers on a national basis.

A Climate Just Wales

11

Set science and equity-based national targets to reduce carbon emissions from consumption as well as production and report on these in a timely manner – at least every two years.

Prioritise investment in the care sector as a low-carbon, gender-just foundation of the wellbeing economy.

Develop a plan by 2022 to deliver a Net Zero Food system and implement actions to deliver this by 2035.

A Food System Fit for Future Generations

13

Appoint an independent, cross sector Food System Commission tasked with developing a roadmap to deliver a 'Food System Fit for Future Generations' which prioritises:

Food for all: Wales becomes the first nation to eliminate the need for food banks by 2025.

Food for public health: 75% of Eatwell's recommended vegetable consumption is produced sustainably in Wales for Wales by 2030.

Net zero food system: Develop a plan by 2022 to deliver a Net Zero Food system and implement actions to deliver this by 2035.

Farming for nature and climate: Create a roadmap by 2022 to adopt agro-ecological principles across the whole food system and deliver this by 2030.

Sustainable seafood: Set catch limits which enable fish stocks to be restored and maintained above biomass levels that deliver the Maximum Sustainable Yield.

Sustainable food sector jobs and livelihoods: Everyone who earns their living within the food system receives at least the living wage or a fair return for their work and this work should be free from exploitative practices, varied, engaging and empowering.

A Globally Responsible Wales

15

Increase the Wales and Africa budget and invest in the Disasters Emergency Committee Cymru.

Actively engage with the expertise and knowledge of diaspora communities living in Wales.

Introduce a Wellbeing Indicator and milestone to measure active global citizenship across Wales and commit to provide lifelong learning opportunities in global learning and citizenship.

Set science and equity-based national targets to reduce carbon emissions from consumption as well as production and report on these in timely manner – at least every two years.

Prioritise human rights, equality and environmental impact assessments of existing and emerging investment plans and invest in gender, human rights and safeguarding training.

Revise the Nation of Sanctuary Delivery Plan to include a clear funding strategy, monitoring and evaluation framework.

Commit to an active role in UK Government refugee resettlement schemes including supporting participation in these schemes by Welsh local authorities.

Introduction

Oxfam's vision is of a world without poverty. One where we care for people and the planet and served by a wellbeing economy in which everyone's basic needs are met within safe environmental limits. We were making progress but global extreme poverty is expected to rise in 2020 for the first time in over 20 years as the disruption of the Covid-19 pandemic compounds the forces of conflict and climate change, which were already slowing poverty reduction progress.¹ In the UK, poverty has also risen during Covid-19.²

Around the world, both paid and unpaid care work remain largely undervalued and under-rewarded. This can trap people, the majority of whom are women, in a vicious cycle of income poverty, time poverty, and exclusion from important services and infrastructure that affect them through their lives as well as those they care for. There are deep overlaps between the undervaluing of care and gender and economic inequalities and this inequality is being made worse by Covid-19. Women worldwide earn 23% less than men who in turn have 50% more assets. Women's exclusion from formal labour markets, inequalities in unpaid care, sectoral segregation, an undervaluing of some occupations where women are overrepresented, underpaid and least protected leave women particularly vulnerable in times of crises. When intersected with class, racial, urban and rural inequalities, certain groups of women are even more vulnerable. Valuing and investing in care must be the cornerstone of tackling poverty in Wales and globally. Both paid and unpaid carers are at the forefront of our response to Covid-19, putting themselves at risk to protect and care for us all.

To care for people, we must also care for the planet. Amidst the global health and economic crises, the climate and ecological crises continue to grow. Extreme weather disasters have not stalled during the Covid-19 pandemic – from cyclone Amphan in India and Bangladesh to the wildfires in the USA – serving as a potent reminder that the world stands perilously close to exceeding the 1.5C limit of the Paris Agreement.³ In February 2020, we saw devastating and unprecedented flooding in Welsh communities. Many impacted families and businesses had no chance to recover before the pandemic.

Wales faces a global context of turmoil and rapid change. The pandemic follows a decade during which democracy has been seriously challenged, we've seen a rise in intolerance and hate, and a loss of faith in democratic institutions and leaders. We've faced extreme and growing inequality, complex conflicts, discrimination based on gender and race, and climate and biodiversity crises. The world is being challenged to find answers and Wales must play its part. We are at an historic crossroads and we must grasp this unique opportunity to change course. The next Welsh Government must act boldly to ensure Wales is a nation that cares for people and for the planet. In the pages to come, we set out our calls to action for adoption by all political parties in Wales – the enormous challenges we face require collaborative action that transcends party politics.

To overcome poverty and create a just society for everyone, we need to challenge the concentration of wealth and power in the hands of the few. Economic inequality is out of control. In 2019, the world's billionaires, only 2,153 people, had more wealth than 4.6 billion people.⁴ Covid-19 is worsening the inequality crisis fuelled by an economic model that has allowed some of the world's largest corporations to make excessive profits for its shareholders. It is estimated that 400 million jobs have been lost during the pandemic, with women being over represented in high risk sectors,^{5,6} yet 32 of the world's most profitable companies are expected to make \$109 billion **more** in 2020 than in previous years.⁷ This must change. Governments around the world must act now to build a global wellbeing economy that values what matters to society, rather than fuelling an endless pursuit of profit and wealth. In financial year ending 2020, the income of the richest 20% of people in the UK was over six times higher than the poorest 20%, while the richest 10% received 50% more income than the poorest 40%.⁸ Even before Covid-19, almost

a quarter of people in Wales were in poverty (700,000 people) living precarious and insecure lives. The risk for children was higher with 3 in 10 children living in poverty.⁹ People in Wales have lower pay across every sector compared with people in the rest of the UK. Wales's lowest earners are ten times more likely to have been affected by the Covid-19 shutdown than those on the highest salaries.¹⁰

By the end of 2020, 12,000 people per day could die globally from hunger linked to Covid-19, potentially more than will die from the disease itself.¹¹ The pandemic is the final straw for millions of people already struggling with the impacts of conflict, climate change, inequality and a broken food system that has impoverished millions of food producers and workers.

In Wales, the number of people seeking emergency food aid shows the desperate, daily struggle facing many people, in just being able to put a meal on the table. The long-standing fears that foodbanks would become an institutionalised fixture of Welsh society are a reality. Trussell Trust foodbank data for the first few weeks of Covid-19 lockdown (30 March – 3 May 2020) with the corresponding period last year (1 April – 5 May 2019) show an 89% increase in the number of people fed in Wales and 101% increase in the number of children fed.¹²

As a globally responsible nation, Wales must continue to play its part in international development, leaving no one behind. The United Nations Office for the Co-ordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN OCHA) predicts that 235 million people will need humanitarian assistance and protection in 2021 (a near 40% increase on 2020).¹³ With a shrinking UK Overseas Development Aid budget¹⁴ it is vital that a globally responsible Wales steps up. We must continue to foster and build global citizenship and solidarity among all people. Wales must build on the aspiration to become a Nation of Sanctuary for refugees seeking to rebuild their lives in a place of safety.

Covid-19 has given us all an opportunity to reflect on what is important. This document presents our vision that Wales can be a home to thriving people, in a thriving country whilst respecting the wellbeing of all people and the health of the whole planet.

Our policy calls are based on evidence and experiences gathered through our work in Wales, the expertise of our partners and Oxfam's work globally. The next Welsh Government must act boldly to create a Wales that values, respects and cares for both people and the planet. We cannot fail.

1. A Wellbeing Economy for Wales

We want a Wales where everyone has a decent standard of living within the environmental limits of our planet.

These are heart-breaking times. More than 1.5 million people have died from Covid-19.¹⁵ An estimated 495 million people, and disproportionately women, have lost their jobs.¹⁶ Up to half a billion people could be pushed into poverty by the time the pandemic is over.¹⁷ In Wales we face a post-pandemic jobs crisis, with an estimated 250,000 jobs in 'shutdown sectors' and women disproportionately at risk.¹⁸ Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) women are three times more likely to be in precarious work and more likely to be in low paid jobs and so already struggling financially.¹⁹

We are at a critical juncture. We have a choice between returning to 'business as usual' or learning from this moment to begin again and build a fairer and more sustainable economy. The current crisis has shattered many of our central assumptions. It has illustrated our shared fate; demonstrated how deeply interconnected our economic, mental and physical health truly are; exposed who are the real essential workers; reinforced the need for effective governments at all levels; and highlighted the fragile, narrow and exploitative basis of our economy which all too often works to the disadvantage of women and the BAME community.

'This is an opportunity to confront the broken norms and incentives at the heart of our current model of capitalism and make substantive reforms. If we don't, systemic risks and vulnerabilities will continue to accumulate, making future shocks both more likely and more dangerous.' World Business Council on Sustainable Development, May 2020²⁰

Despite five years passing since the enactment of the pioneering Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act²¹ (WFGAct), ending the Act's first implementation and reporting cycle, our systems are still failing to deliver human and ecological wellbeing. In a wellbeing economy, responses should be person-centred, geared towards environmental protection and regeneration, positive and long-term. The fact that Welsh Government has joined the Wellbeing Economy Government Network (WEGo)²² is a positive step forward. We are proud of the WFGAct and that Wales is the first nation in the world to embed the protection and prevention of harm to future generations in law but more needs to be done to realise the significant potential of the Act, ensure compliance and accountability and encourage local initiatives based on its goals and values. Through WEGo, the next Welsh Government must work with other nations to share knowledge in countering the flawed 'all growth is good' narrative and to harmonise the plethora of 'beyond-GDP' measures of economic success.

Our Welsh Doughnut 2020 report sets out a 'social floor' below which, we believe, no person in Wales should fall.²³ The evidence brought together in the report paints a stark picture. Even before Covid-19, almost one-quarter of households in Wales were living in relative, income-related, poverty, which is also associated with lower levels of life expectancy and educational achievement and a greater proportion of disposable income being spent on housing costs. Whilst other indicators considered within the report do not allow for disaggregation by socio-economic status, inevitably the most disadvantaged parts of Wales' population will experience higher levels of poor connectivity, being victims of crime, fuel poverty, loneliness, hunger, a poor local environment and civic disengagement. These societal failures are intricately linked to the long-term and systemic issue of inequality. Covid-19 and the response to it is widening existing inequalities, by reducing the incomes and increasing risks disproportionately for some groups of people, particularly those already living in poverty, women and people who are Black, Asian or Ethnic minority.²⁴

We need to urgently strengthen our social safety net and provide sustained investment in the social infrastructure upon which our lives depend for example by providing comprehensive adult social care and investing in free and affordable alternatives to private car travel.²⁵

The Doughnut also shines a light upon the degradation of our local and global ecosystems. We live on a fragile planet which is under increasing stress to the extent that we are transgressing planetary boundaries. This cannot continue. Whilst there have been encouraging improvements in the overall level of air quality across Wales (although these are likely to still be above the recommended upper limit in some urban areas) and in ozone depletion, in other environmental domains the picture is far from positive. In two of the planetary boundaries that can be downscaled to a UK or Welsh level – climate change and land-use change – we not only fail but fail spectacularly. In the case of climate change, planetary boundary emission limits in Wales are exceeded by 455% and in land-use change the UK figure is 200%. We are also facing an ecological emergency with one in six species in Wales at risk of extinction.

If the WFGAct is to be effective, then we must push the boundaries of the Act further to create a wellbeing economy for Wales. We all need to play a role in inspiring civil society to step up and challenge government to realise the opportunities the WFGAct holds for rebuilding an economy in Wales that works for people and for the planet. Political leaders in Wales must be brave and empower the people of Wales to take ownership of the WFGAct as a ‘people’s act’ through raising awareness and engaging in a listening conversation. This conversation must learn from the experiences and response to Covid-19, to improve and strengthen the WFGAct and gather the wealth and breadth of experience of people in Wales on how to tackle the multiple challenges we face. *How can Wales can be a home to thriving people, in a thriving country whilst respecting the wellbeing of all people and the health of the whole planet?*²⁶ This will help inform transformative and inclusive action. There is strong public support for building a caring wellbeing economy with 68% of people in the UK saying that wellbeing should be used to measure the success of economic policy.²⁷

Evidenced based programmes and policies aimed at tackling poverty must take into account the reality of life below the poverty line, reflecting seldom heard voices, to deliver policies and services that address the real issues and barriers that people face. Our work with partners across Wales, including the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP)²⁸, has shown that the Sustainable Livelihoods Approach (SLA) working with individuals to help them understand and build their asset base (social, physical, public, human and financial)²⁹ affects transformational changes in their livelihoods, while generating a significant social return on financial investment.³⁰

‘Given that those involved in the delivery of a social security safety net include government, local authorities, and charities, it would be useful that all involved in those ‘frontline’ jobs adopt the SLA approach. In a future iteration of this work, the toolkit should be reviewed to ensure that it suits online/virtual advice sessions which are rapidly becoming the norm during the pandemic.’ DWP Stakeholder

We are encouraged that Welsh Government has committed to using this approach within the devolved benefits system and think it will be a useful tool in helping ‘lift’ people above the social floor of the Doughnut, and we encourage the next Welsh Government to do the same. As well as being a person-centred asset mapping tool, the principles behind the SLA could potentially be used at a community level or even national level to help develop and build the asset base in Wales.

Oxfam Cymru calls on the next Welsh Government to care for people and the planet by:

- Putting in place a 'social floor' to safeguard basic needs ensuring that, as an absolute minimum, every person in Wales has adequate food, shelter and warmth.
- Putting in place an 'environmental ceiling' to push resource use in Wales to within planetary boundaries.
- Working with the Wellbeing Economy Government Network and international institutions to harmonise 'beyond GDP' accounting frameworks and terminology linked to delivery of the Sustainable Development Goals.
- Reporting on wellbeing and sustainability metrics with higher frequency and timeliness than GDP.³¹
- Engaging the people of Wales in a national conversation on *How can Wales can be a home to thriving people, in a thriving country whilst respecting the wellbeing of all people and the health of the whole planet?* to learn the lessons from Covid-19, inform transformative and inclusive action and foster global citizenship.

2. A Caring Wales

We want a Wales that values and invests in care as a low-carbon, gender just foundation of the Wellbeing economy.

Our current global economy accumulates vast wealth into the hands of a rich few, in part by exploiting the unpaid labour of millions. Women and girls carry out 12.5 billion hours of unpaid care every day, worth at least \$10.8 trillion a year to the global economy.³² With little or no time to get an education, earn a decent living or have a say in how our societies are run, carers are too often trapped at the bottom of the economy and often rendered invisible in measures of economic progress.³³

Care is the very glue that holds our society together, it is caring for one another that has enabled us to endure the Covid-19 pandemic. Care is crucial to all of us, providing the foundation for the economy and yet is largely invisible within public policies and economic measures. It is systemically undervalued. It is time this changed and time we recognised that caring in Wales is essential to our wellbeing. Now is the time to look again at the WFGAct ensuring it reflects experiences from Covid-19, recognising the vital importance of paid and unpaid care through the introduction of an additional wellbeing goal – ‘*A caring Wales*’ and measuring progress towards this goal through wellbeing indicators and milestones.

Valuing care and investing in those who provide it must be the foundation of a wellbeing economy in Wales. Both paid and unpaid carers are at the forefront of our response to Covid-19, keeping hospitals, households and care-homes ticking, while putting themselves at risk to protect and care for us all. Yet, if you are a carer in Wales, you are more likely to be living in poverty. It is estimated that 96% of all care in Wales is provided by unpaid carers, many of whom are struggling and in need of further support.³⁴ Polling carried out by YouGov on behalf of Oxfam Cymru also shows that 68% of adults in Wales think that care work is not valued highly enough by the Welsh Government.³⁵

Oxfam believes that care work is essential for social and economic wellbeing, yet it remains under-valued and under-invested in. Social care workers, unpaid carers of disabled, sick and elderly people, childcare workers, and those caring for children all deserve better. We welcome the special payment Welsh Government gave social care workers throughout Wales as a mark of recognition for their tremendous dedication in caring for some of the most vulnerable people in our communities.³⁶ Care is about much more than any financial reward: both paid and unpaid care work is a vital social good. It contributes to developing human capabilities, supports children to thrive and learn, adults to rest and be ready for paid work, and supports people with illness or disability to be healthy and contribute to society and the economy.³⁷

Investment in the caring economy is a key step to meeting our climate change targets by boosting employment in sectors that are already low carbon, such as care services. Investment in care is three times less polluting per job created overall than the equivalent investment in the construction industry.³⁸ Rebalancing the economy towards caring activities is more environmentally sustainable.

Across the world, paid and underpaid care work is disproportionately provided by women and girls, especially those from groups who as well as gender discrimination, experience discrimination based on ethnicity, nationality and age.³⁹ This is because of harmful norms that consider this work to be ‘woman’s work’, to be unskilled, and implicit assumptions that the contributions of women are of less value to the economy than those of men. Women’s work in unpaid care roles means that they have less time to pursue paid work and career progression, making them more likely to have part time or precarious work, earn less, and be more likely to live in poverty as they get older. In the

UK, women retire with on average £100,000 less in their pension than men due to caring responsibilities and the gender pay gap.⁴⁰

'I think two things, that is very often there's a gender aspect to being a carer. I know in my own situation... the person who cared for my mum was myself and my daughters, and I think that was gender related... I do think that there is definitely an expectation on women that they will care.' Unpaid Care Research, woman, Wales⁴¹

Covid-19 has highlighted the importance of care to our society and economy, while also exposing the deep links between gender, care and poverty. Research commissioned by Oxfam⁴² shows that while men have been spending more time looking after their children and doing chores like cooking and cleaning, women have too, and are still doing more overall. Over half of women surveyed in five high and middle-income contexts reported spending more hours on cooking, washing, cleaning and caring for children or family members. Single mothers, women living in poverty, and people from ethnic and racial minorities reported the largest increase. Some 43% of the 3,558 women surveyed reported suffering more anxiety, depression, lack of rest and sleep, and physical illnesses because of the increased care work caused by the pandemic. In the UK, research has shown that working-class women are disproportionately furloughed and at higher risk of redundancy compared to men and other women.⁴³ This poses a significant risk of pushing women, particularly those with caring responsibilities, out of paid, decent work and into poverty.

Oxfam Cymru calls on the next Welsh Government to care for people and for the planet by:

- Prioritising investment in the care sector as a low-carbon, gender-just foundation of the wellbeing economy, placing people with caring responsibilities at the heart of the recovery⁴⁴, whilst ensuring that no carer is left in poverty.⁴⁵ This must include changes to procurement practices and to inspection regimes to ensure all workers in the paid care sector receive the real Living Wage as a minimum.⁴⁶
- Recognising the value of care to our collective social and economic wellbeing through amending the WFGAct to include 'A caring Wales' as a wellbeing goal and monitor progress towards this goal through wellbeing indicators and milestones.
- Raising new revenue, for example, through a Welsh social care levy⁴⁷, and use this to significantly boost investment in the care sector to protect paid care workers from poverty, relieve pressure on unpaid carers and support infrastructure for caring including quality childcare and eldercare.
- Ensuring the Ministerial Advisory Group on Carers is focussed on its strategic role in moving carers rights forward and planning support services for unpaid carers on a national basis.⁴⁸ This should include updating performance measures⁴⁹ to ensure carers wellbeing needs are met and they feel valued.

3. A Climate Just Wales

We want a Wales that puts climate justice at the heart of Covid-19 recovery.

The world's poorest people are the first hit and worst affected by climate change. Right now, climate change is hitting the poorest people on the planet the hardest. Every day poverty is made worse by the devastating effects of extreme weather. Storms and droughts are destroying homes, and wrecking lives and livelihoods. People living in developing countries are 20 times more likely to be affected by climate-related disasters – such as floods, droughts, and hurricanes – than those of us living in the industrialised world.⁵⁰ Amidst the global health and economic crises, the climate crisis continues to grow. Extreme weather disasters have not stalled during the Covid-19 pandemic – from cyclone Amphan in India and Bangladesh to the wildfires in the USA – serving as a potent reminder that the world stands perilously close to exceeding the 1.5C goal of the Paris Agreement.

“Just because the entire world was on lockdown, doesn't mean that climate change or the patriarchy was on lockdown. The patriarchy is not on lockdown. Climate change cannot be contained”, Betty Barkha, climate activist from Latouka in the Fiji Islands⁵¹.

In February 2020, the wettest one on record in Wales, the country saw some of the worst flooding on record from Storms Ciara and Dennis directly impacting more than 1,000 homes and 300 businesses.⁵² There is near universal scientific consensus that climate change is happening – and 93% of National Survey for Wales respondents recognised this.⁵³ In April 2019 the Minister for Environment, Energy and Rural Affairs, Lesley Griffiths MS declared a climate emergency in Wales.⁵⁴

To tackle climate change, we must tackle inequality. From 1990 to 2015, when annual emissions grew by 60% and cumulative emissions doubled, it is estimated that the richest 10% of the world's population (c.630 million people) were responsible for 52% of the cumulative carbon emissions – depleting the global carbon budget by nearly a third (31%) in those 25 years alone. The poorest 50% (c.3.1 billion people) were responsible for just 7% of cumulative emissions and used just 4% of the available carbon budget.⁵⁵ In the UK, lower-income and other disadvantaged groups contribute least to causing climate change but are likely to be most negatively affected by it.⁵⁶ The wealthiest 1% of people in the UK each produce 11 times the amount of carbon emissions as someone in the poorest half of the population.⁵⁷ The over-consumption of a wealthy minority is fuelling the climate crisis yet it is poor communities and young people who are paying the price. Wales' consumption of natural resources is far beyond what its population size can justify; exceeding safe limits for the consumption of CO₂ by 455%.⁵⁸

Investment in the caring economy is a key step to meeting our climate change targets by boosting employment in sectors that are already low carbon, such as care services. Investment in care is three times less polluting per job created overall than the equivalent investment in the construction industry.⁵⁹ Rebalancing the economy towards caring activities is more environmentally sustainable.

Our food system is at risk from a changing climate. It also directly contributes towards climate change, with agriculture contributing around 12% of Wales' total greenhouse gas emissions.⁶⁰ Based on UK data, food manufacture, transport and retail emissions account for another 5.5%.⁶¹ However, our land is our biggest natural defence against climate change. Wales could be at the forefront of the global transition to a climate and nature friendly food system by creating and enacting a net zero plan.

Unless governments across the world, including the next Welsh Government, prioritise action to tackle climate change, future generations will continue to pay the price through greater hunger, greater health risks and climate-related disasters that will result in mass displacement of people. Climate change contributes to a more unstable

world in which millions more people will be displaced and forced to flee from home. As a globally responsible nation, it is vital that Wales takes urgent action on both territorial and consumptive emissions of CO₂.⁶²

Oxfam Cymru calls on the next Welsh Government to care for people and the planet by:

- Setting science and equity-based national targets to reduce carbon emissions from consumption as well as production and reporting on these in a timely manner – at least every 2 years. The Environment (Wales) Act must be amended by regulation to set this pathway into law, with annual reports to the Senedd. This will require reaching net zero well before 2045.
- Prioritising investment in the care sector as a low-carbon, gender-just foundation of the wellbeing economy, placing people with caring responsibilities at the heart of the recovery⁶³
- Developing a plan by 2022 to deliver a net zero food system to ensure swift assessment and implementation of actions for Wales. The target is for Wales to have a Net Zero Food System by 2035.

4. A Food System Fit for Future Generations

We want a Wales with a food system fit for future generations.

Now is a crucial time to build for the future, with the Covid-19 pandemic reinforcing the vulnerabilities that exist in our current food system. It has highlighted how the health of nature and humanity are closely linked on a global scale. Rebuilding a more resilient and sustainable food system is a vital part of preventing future crises and is a key component in our pathway towards a wellbeing economy.

“Poverty is another disease, it is as dangerous as this virus and if people continue staying home this way, a lot of families could die because of hunger,” Afghani woman, Afghanistan⁶⁴.

Food is a basic need and an essential ingredient for a good life - hence its recognition as part of the foundational economy. However, the way we currently produce and consume food contributes to biodiversity decline and climate change, causes diet-related health problems and has led to the institutionalisation of food banks and financial hardship for many farmers.

“This pandemic has shone a light on the difference we can make when we come together - we’ve made huge changes to the way we live, work and support each other. Together, we can end the injustice of people needing food banks. We can build a hunger free future.” Susan Lloyd-Selby, Operations Manager for Wales at Trussell Trust.

As part of Food Policy Alliance Cymru, we believe that everyone in Wales should have dignified access to enough, nutritious food, sustainably produced, all the time. We should also be able to secure fair income for farmers and all food sector workers. Our food system can contribute significantly to Wales’ collective prosperity when shaped through the lens of wellbeing economics and the principles of the circular and foundational economies. A shared vision across ALL Government departments, together with broader food system stakeholders, would ensure that all aspects of the food system are considered and integrated. This is a key aim in the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) of the United Nations definition of Agroecology⁶⁵, which stresses the need for responsible governance at different scales.

Oxfam Cymru calls on the next Welsh Government to care for people and the planet by:

Within their first year of office, appointing an independent, cross sector **Food System Commission** tasked with developing a roadmap to deliver a ‘Food System Fit for Future Generations’. The roadmap should consider the following priorities:

1. **Food for all:** Wales becomes the first nation to eliminate the need for food banks by 2025. Everyone in Wales has access to the food they need in a dignified way, to live a healthy life.
2. **Food for public health:** 75% of Eatwell’s recommended vegetable consumption is produced sustainably in Wales for Wales by 2030.
3. **Net zero food system:** Develop a plan by 2022 to deliver a net zero food system to ensure swift assessment and implementation of actions for Wales. The target is for Wales to have a Net Zero Food System by 2035.

4. **Farming for nature and climate:** Create a roadmap by 2022 to adopt agro-ecological principles across the whole food system, including 100% agro-ecological production by 2030 on all farms to halt and reverse loss of nature and increase climate resilience.
5. **Sustainable seafood:** Setting catch limits (without further delay) which enable fish stocks to be restored and maintained above biomass levels that deliver the Maximum Sustainable Yield.
6. **Sustainable food sector jobs and livelihoods:** Everyone who earns their living within the food system receives, or is enabled to receive, at least the living wage or a fair return for their work. Work, whether on land or sea, is free from exploitative practices, and is varied, engaging and empowering.

5. A Globally Responsible Wales

We want a Wales that makes a positive impact on the world.

Wales is part of a global community. We are encouraged to see Wales' ambition to be a globally responsible nation given priority in Welsh Government's International Strategy for Wales⁶⁶ and Action Plans put in place to help deliver this. Bold words are a start, but we have some way to go in Wales to build understanding of what global responsibility looks like. It is not just about tokenistic gestures but systematically ensuring that actions taken here in Wales do not harm the planet or people anywhere and have positive impacts where possible.

Wales has played a role in international development for many years through the Wales and Africa Programme and has an important role to play in responding to global disasters. However, with no increase in the Wales and Africa programme budget over the last decade, the financial value of Wales' contribution to international development is decreasing over time. An increase in the Wales and Africa budget to enable larger grants to partners, over a three year period would allow for greater sustainability and impact. With the UK Government planning to cut the 0.7% aid budget to 0.5%⁶⁷ at a time when the United Nations Office for the Co-ordination of Humanitarian Affairs predicts that a record 235 million people will need humanitarian assistance and protection in 2021 (a near 40% increase on 2020)⁶⁸, it is vital that a globally responsible Wales steps up. The people of Wales have responded generously to emergency appeals with successive Welsh governments playing an active role by raising awareness and vital funds. Welsh Government support for DEC Cymru to co-ordinate this effort must continue and be strengthened.

Education across the whole life course is key to ensuring that the people of Wales have the knowledge, understanding and values needed to be active global citizens. Creating this sense of ownership, connection, empathy and compassion should not be left to chance, but should be embedded throughout the education system and beyond. This is important to secure a globally responsible outlook and for our economic wellbeing. Global Learning enables people to develop their knowledge and skills to enhance their employability for Wales' workforce in the global market place and to better understand the role Wales can play in tackling global issues such as economic inequality, poverty and climate change.

Higher expectations need to be placed on businesses to be responsible employers, particularly in return for the array of state support that they receive, and in the delivery of public contracts. The Welsh Government needs to drive sustainable and ethical action by businesses that are supported by public bodies in relation to their activities domestically and internationally. For example, we should ensure that, when sourcing supplies and services, companies, including those operating internationally abide by decent work conditions and rates of pay and take action to reduce their impact on the environment. The Economic Contract is a start but more can be done, for example through promotion of Fair Trade products or signing up to Wales becoming a Deforestation Free Nation.⁶⁹

At the end of 2019, there were almost 79.5 million forcibly displaced people (40% of whom were children) including nearly 26 million living as refugees.⁷⁰ For most, the situations they are fleeing are themselves protracted crises offering no quick solutions. Hidden behind these statistics are the 45.7 million people who flee their homes but remain displaced within their own borders (such as the millions in South Sudan and Yemen).

We are incredibly proud of Wales' history of providing sanctuary to those in need, that Welsh Government aspires for Wales to be a Nation of Sanctuary⁷¹ and that every local authority in Wales has welcomed refugees through the UK Government's resettlement schemes. We welcome Wales's positive humanitarian stance towards those seeking sanctuary. It is vital that Wales continues to play its part.

Oxfam Cymru calls on the next Welsh Government to care for people and the planet by:

- Increasing the Wales and Africa budget to secure better futures for the poorest communities globally and investing in DEC Cymru⁷² to better support coordinated responses to disasters and emergencies.
- Actively engaging with the expertise and knowledge of diaspora communities living in Wales to better inform Wales' international development role and build stronger, more equal partnerships overseas.
- Engaging the people of Wales in a national conversation on *How can Wales can be a home to thriving people, in a thriving country whilst respecting the wellbeing of all people and the health of the whole planet?*⁷³ to learn the lessons from Covid-19, inform transformative and inclusive action and foster global citizenship.
- Introducing a Wellbeing Indicator and milestone to measure active global citizenship across Wales and committing to provide lifelong learning opportunities in global learning and citizenship to reach this milestone.
- Setting science and equity-based national targets to reduce carbon emissions from consumption as well as production and reporting on these in timely manner – at least every 2 years.
- Prioritising human rights, equality and environmental impact assessments of existing and emerging investment plans and investing in gender, human rights and safeguarding training for all international staff and participants in Welsh Government overseas delegations.
- Revising the Nation of Sanctuary Delivery Plan to include a clear funding strategy, monitoring and evaluation framework.
- Committing to an active role in UK Government refugee resettlement schemes including supporting participation in these schemes by Welsh local authorities.

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Oxfam Cymru works with others in Wales to find lasting solutions to overcome poverty and suffering. We speak out on the big issues that keep people poor, like inequality, discrimination against women and climate change. We believe it is possible to live together in a fairer world. We won't live with the injustice of poverty.

Oxfam Cymru is a part of Oxfam GB, which is registered as a charity in England and Wales (no. 202918) and in Scotland (SC039042) and is a member of Oxfam International.

The information contained in this document is accurate at the time of publication.