Question 4: Major Challenge

Prove the development case: a sized local challenge, a real contribution tied to your course, and an honest answer to why you.

200	3	2	Free
WORD LIMIT	PARTS TO ANSWER	WORKED EXAMPLES	TO READ & DOWNLOAD

ABOUT THE EXAMPLES.
All names, organisations and figures below are invented, to show technique. Yours must be real and defensible at interview.

01 SECTION 1

What this question actually asks

The question. "Describe a major challenge facing your country or community and outline how you are going to contribute to addressing it. What motivates you to do so?" In no more than 200 words.

This is the development-impact question in the Statement, and it does the heaviest lifting against WHT's first selection criterion, motivation and purpose. It has three parts, and the third is the one applicants most often skip: not just what the challenge is and what you will do, but **why it is you who is motivated to do it.**

The three parts

PART	WHAT IT ANSWERS
The challenge	A real, sized problem in your country or community, not a global issue with no local specificity
Your contribution	What you will actually do about it, connected to your course and the Leadership Programme

PART	WHAT IT ANSWERS
Your motivation	Why this challenge, and why you, specifically, rather than a general statement of care

Word plan at 200 words. The challenge, sized and local, around 70 words. Your contribution, around 90 words. Your motivation, around 40 words.

02 SECTION 2

Writing it, beat by beat

The challenge, around 70 words

Name a problem specific enough that another applicant from your country would plausibly have written about something different. "Poverty" or "climate change" is not a challenge; it is a category. Give it a number, a place and a reason it persists, in the space of two or three sentences.

Your contribution, around 90 words

Say what you will actually do, not what you hope "will change". The strongest answers name an institution, a first step, and a link to the skills your course and the Leadership Programme will give you. This is where the enterprise challenge or ethical leadership training can do real work if you tie it in specifically, rather than leaving this answer purely academic.

> ***Weak:*** *"I want to help solve this problem by raising awareness and working with stakeholders after my studies."*
> ***Strong:*** *"I will return to the regional health authority I left to study, where I will use the health economics methods from my course to build the costed case for community health workers that budget committees have twice rejected for lacking evidence."*

Your motivation, around 40 words

Answer "why you" specifically, not "why this matters in general." A short, concrete reason, something you witnessed, a stake you hold personally, a failure you have already tried to fix once, reads as more credible than a statement of general concern.

03 SECTION 3

Two worked examples

All names, organisations and figures are invented, to show technique.

Example A: rural health financing

> *In my province, community health worker programmes have been piloted three times in a decade and defunded each time once donor funding ended, because no one has built the costed case that would let the regional budget committee argue for them on their own terms. The result is a province with proven methods and no durable funding for them.*
> *I will return to the regional health authority I left to study, where I will use the health economics and policy-costing methods from my course to build the evidence base the committee has twice said it lacks, and work with the enterprise challenge skills from the Leadership Programme to design a financing model that does not depend on donor cycles.*
> *I am motivated by having watched a programme I helped run end not because it failed, but because no one had made the financial case durable. I do not want to build a fourth pilot that meets the same fate.*

Example B: informal recycling and regulation

> *In my city, roughly 40,000 informal waste collectors recover the majority of recyclable material, yet a new municipal ordinance threatens to criminalise their work entirely in the name of formalising the sector, without a registration route that is actually accessible to them.*
> *I will work with the cooperative I already co-founded to build a registration and certification model that the municipality can adopt instead of a ban, using the regulatory-economics methods from my course and the negotiation skills from the Leadership Programme's enterprise challenge to present it credibly to the committee drafting the ordinance.*
> *I am motivated because I have sat in the room where this ordinance was drafted, and watched it written by people who had never met the workers it would criminalise. I want to be in that room with an alternative they can actually adopt.*

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04 SECTION 4

Dos and don'ts

Do

- Name a specific, sized, local challenge, not a global category
- Say what you will actually do, with an institution and a first step
- Link your contribution to your course and, where genuine, the Leadership Programme
- Answer "why you" with something concrete and personal

Don't

- Open with a global statistic with no local counterpart
- Write "I want to raise awareness" as your contribution
- Skip the motivation clause or reduce it to "I care deeply about this"
- Describe a plan that needs resources or authority you will not plausibly have

05 SECTION 5

Common mistakes, and the fix

MISTAKE	WHY IT COSTS MARKS	THE FIX
Challenge is a global category, not a local problem	No evidence you understand the specific context	Give a number, a place and a reason it persists
"I will raise awareness and work with stakeholders"	Not a plan, a placeholder for one	Name an institution and a first concrete step
No answer to "what motivates you"	Misses a third of the question	Give one concrete, personal reason, in 40 words
No link to the course or Programme	Reads as disconnected from why Oxford matters	Name the specific skill or element your contribution uses

06 SECTION 6

Checklist

- The challenge is specific, sized and local, not a global category
- Your contribution names an institution and a first step
- Your contribution is linked to your course or the Leadership Programme
- "What motivates you" is answered with something concrete and personal
- Nothing here repeats your five-year career plan word for word
- Under 200 words