

PROJECT EFFECTIVENESS REVIEWS

'enhancing effectiveness through evidence-based learning'



Copperbelt Livelihoods Project : Zambia 2011/12

The Copperbelt Livelihoods Project which was implemented by a local partner, the Sustainable Agriculture Programme (SAP), targeted 1,000 small-scale farmers (of whom 60% are women) living in ten villages in Kitwe district of Zambia's Copperbelt Province. In addition to empowering women, the project sought to bolster household income and food security, and reduce vulnerability through the provision of agricultural inputs and increasing market access.

The project's specific activities included:

- Provision of quality seeds and fertilisers
- Support Agricultural Extension Officers to provide advice and technical support
- Support the training and construction of improved grain storage facilities
- Support the development of market gardens during the dry season, including provision of inputs and training
- Training in gender issues, such as greater recognition of women's roles in the household/community, and encouraging leadership opportunities for women in communities
- Training in health and HIV/AIDS issues
- Training in advocacy and lobbying

The context in which the project was implemented is plagued by chronic poverty, poor agricultural production, low market access, climatic related shocks, and a high prevalence of HIV and AIDS.

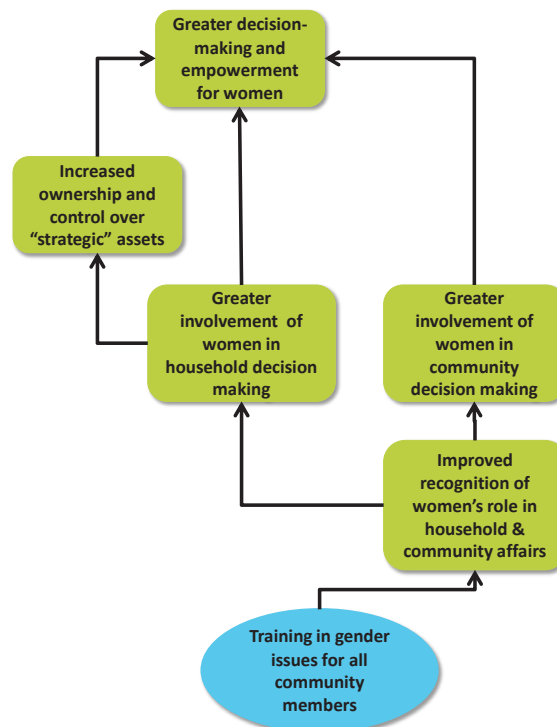


Figure 1: Theory of change for one of the project's key women's empowerment interventions:

Photo credit: Emma Walsh/Oxfam



Evaluation Method

In October 2011, with the support of an external consultant, a household survey was administered to 173 randomly selected women from the 10 intervention villages, as well as 248 comparison women from neighbouring communities. The survey comprised of questions not only relevant to the global women's empowerment indicator – '% of supported women meaningfully involved in household decision making and influencing affairs at community level', but also the project's other intended outcomes. In order to compare 'like with like', statistical analysis of the resulting data was undertaken using propensity score matching (PSM) and multivariable regression (MVR) to control for observable differences between the intervention and comparison women.

Rating key: ● - Evidence supporting large impact; ● - Evidence supporting more modest impact; ● - Evidence of large impact, but only for specific sub-groups/measures; ● - Evidence of modest impact, but only for specific sub-groups/measures; ● - No evidence of impact

Results

Overall, no statistically significant difference was identified between the intervention and comparison women for the global women's empowerment indicator. However, when the two constituent dimensions of this indicator are decomposed, a different picture is revealed. In particular, a statistically significant difference exists in favour of the intervention women in relation to their perceived ability to influence how their communities are governed, but with no such difference for their reported involvement in household level decision-making. A mixed picture also emerges for other aspects of women's empowerment. In particular, the women supported by the project are more likely to own one or more 'strategic' asset but, at the same time, demonstrate less self-efficacy. Given that the reviewed project was also focused on bolstering household income and food security, it is also of interest to explore whether it successfully did so. Towards this end, data were collected on household asset ownership and crop production and sales. A statistically significant difference in favour of the intervention women was only consistently identified for the former measure.

Outcome	Rating	Commentary
Outcome 1 – Women's empowerment (global outcome indicator)	●	No impact overall, but evidence of significant impact in influencing affairs at the community level.
Outcome 2 – Female asset ownership	●	Women in the intervention village were found more likely to own at least one strategic asset.
Outcome 3 – Women's self efficacy	●	No evidence to suggest that the supported women have greater confidence in dealing with a range of difficult situations.
Outcome 4 – Increased household wealth	●	Strong evidence of significant impact in household asset change since the start of the project.
Outcome 5 – Increased agricultural production	●	Some evidence of impact in relation to maize and groundnut production in the intervention community overall.

Going forward

The project team commented that effective participation of women in decision making at household and community levels still faces major cultural and traditional challenges. More progress can be seen at community level where women are leaders in groups and development structures, and less at household level where they still remain under patriarchal power.

The findings from the report are being used to review Oxfam's programme strategies in Zambia to ensure more specific and tangible women's empowerment interventions are integrated at the design stage. One such specific intervention will involve training women in skills to enable greater assertiveness and confidence. Additionally, measures are being put in place to enable better monitoring and evaluation of indicators relating to women's empowerment.