



Evaluation of the ReGender Project in the UK

Full Report

Oxfam GB Programme Evaluation

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Summary of key findings

- 2.1. The key findings from the evaluation of the Oxfam ReGender project are as follows:
- The Oxfam ReGender project has **made a big difference** to individuals and organisations who have been involved in the project.
 - Individuals who participated in the ReGender training programme said that it had helped to build their **awareness and understanding** of gender and regeneration; provided them with a **peer support network**; and **inspired them** to drive this agenda forward in their own organisations and local areas.
 - Many of the participants were able to give examples of where they had passed on what they learnt to other colleagues and **made changes to areas of work** that they were responsible for, which included providing more activities for young women in Mossdale; introducing community walkabouts in urban design in Sheffield; and greater efforts to recruit female drivers at a community transport organisation in Rotherham.
 - Organisations involved in the advocacy work found **Oxfam's reputation, experience and contacts very beneficial** and valued the role the Oxfam ReGender team played as a **critical friend**. The project also provided **a useful platform** for partner organisations and allies to disseminate research findings and new ways of working.
 - Organisations targeted through the advocacy work were also able to provide examples of **positive differences to working practices**, and it is clear that Oxfam's experience in this area has been recognised by those involved.
 - The materials and resources produced as part of the project have played a key role in the success of the project and were valued as **useful practical resources** for practitioners and officers.
 - The ReGender project has therefore achieved a lot within the resources available and has made a considerable impact on individuals involved. But many **challenges in achieving wider organisational change still exist**, and it is important that we understand and learn from these challenges so that future work can build on the progress made by the ReGender project.
 - A significant challenge is that **equalities is still viewed as an 'add-on'** to people's work and not as a legal duty or intrinsic to what they do.

- In addition to this, **women in senior positions find it difficult to 'speak up'** even when they are committed to equality and diversity, because they don't want to be the one who always brings up gender issues.
- Many people often perceive a distinct **hierarchy of equality and diversity priorities**, with race and disability receiving more attention and resources than gender, which is coupled with a perception that 'the gender problem' has been solved and is not an issue anymore.
- Public sector organisations are **resistant to change**, which means that it can take a long time to see positive results through projects like this.
- There is also a **need to target different levels** of public sector organisations using different methods to achieve real longer term change – from senior leaders, through middle managers and front line staff.
- The ReGender project aimed to address this by joining up direct training of practitioners with advocacy work with senior decision-makers, but **more work to marry these up in practice** would be useful in future.
- Given these challenges, it is important to be **realistic about what is achievable within the resources** and to **manage expectations** of those involved so they understand the type and scale of support they can expect to received.
- An important learning point for this has been to **link this work up with current priorities**; for example the gender equality duty has been an important hook for this work, so using other levers will be beneficial in future.
- **Sustaining support and momentum** that has been built up by the Oxfam ReGender project is a key issue – this is needed to ensure long term change. More work needs to be done at an early stage of project development to ensure that there are structures in place for this and there are resources there to support them.
- There is also an issue about **how to attract individuals who are not already 'converted'** – many of those involved were already interested in or committed to gender equality, so future projects would need to consider how best to attract those who don't understand the value of looking at regeneration (or other areas of public service) through a gender lens.
- This links to the challenge around how to attract more men to attend training courses like this; **a more neutral stance that emphasised the fact that gender is about women and men** might have made the course more attractive and inclusive to men.
- **Reflecting on and sharing learning** about what approaches work and don't work is incredibly important, and Oxfam might want to consider how best to include **more evaluative activities** that consider this throughout the project's lifetime.

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