



# Evaluation of Sustainable Livelihoods Recovery Project in the Lakes State, Sudan

Executive Summary

Oxfam GB Programme Evaluation

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The evaluation team determined that the Oxfam GB DCI funded Sustainable Livelihoods Project implemented through local SINGOs/CBOs in Lakes State Southern Sudan was successfully implemented, by far and large meeting its aim (*to promote sustainable livelihoods by enabling communities (residents and returnees) to identify their own livelihood needs, and develop projects that address those needs; to develop the capacity of local SINGOs/CBOs so that they can develop, implement, monitor and evaluate quality community based livelihood programmes*) and is perceived by beneficiaries and stakeholders as having set the basic foundation needed for moving from an emergency to a recovery development approach for sustainable impact.

The Oxfam Programme team were highly commended by the implementing partners (SINGO/CBOs), SSRRC, LGA Commissioners, Ministry of Agriculture & Forestry and UNFAO representatives interviewed, for their unprecedented level of effectiveness. Apart from delivering sustainable livelihood activities within a short time frame, the team managed to facilitate the organisation and capacity building of viable local community based institutions even in an emerging governance and was also able to roll out virtually all the identified activities during the intervening period.

The sustainability of the gains made by the programme is a matter of great concern to all stakeholders that were consulted during the evaluation, and is reiterated by the evaluation team. The local SINGO/CBOs established and strengthened to promote sustainable livelihoods will need enhanced and sustained technical support including strategic guidance; functions and capacities which are presently either lacking or are very nascent within the government structure.

*Key programme achievements made are presented below:*

- The projects implemented by beneficiary groups have improved the livelihoods of the direct beneficiaries, and livelihood prospects of indirect beneficiaries. There is room for augmenting the gains.
- The SINGO and CBO partners were able to identify their livelihood needs and plan for the implementation of the same. Generally, communities participated in the project in terms of needs identification, implementation and monitoring progress. In the case of kinship based CBO groups, this participation was limited within the wider family structure while in the CBO and SINGO groups there was evidence of greater participation in decision making and collective responsibility and needs were representative of the wider community.
- Oxfam effectively participated in local and national livelihoods fora over the project lifetime. The organisation is regarded highly as a source of reference at both State and National levels due to the long institutional memory and work undertaken in the Lakes region.
- Oxfam formulated and piloted methodologies of working with illiterate and innumerate beneficiaries. However, this needs to be carried forward with a greater focus on appropriate development and documentation in order to benefit the wider spectrum of actors/beneficiaries.
- The report for the partnership assessment carried out in Upper Nile should be concluded, shared and used. Consideration could also be given to extending such effort to other regions such as in Equatoria. In so doing, Oxfam will be establishing an effective strategy for partnership and in the process responding to the emerging trend towards partnership development in Southern Sudan.

- The programme was not able to conclusively conduct a capacity analysis for local government structures (Ministry of Agriculture & Forestry and the Ministry of Animal Resources & Fisheries) mainly due to the short project time-frame and the either lack of or very nascent state of the structures. For that matter, plans for development of the same were not formulated. Close monitoring on the development of such structures as well as implementation of the plan should be given consideration in future work.
- Oxfam successfully spearheaded the development of an interagency code of conduct and rolled it out as planned within the capacity building forum. The rolling out effort is yet to be finalised with Oxfam staff.
- Collaboration with Oxfam Livelihood team and Gender, inclusion and application of cross cutting approaches such as gender and conflict sensitivity in programming was demonstrated. There is however, the need to support the sustainability of the partners work and gradually wean them off Oxfam's direct funding.
- The low level of development of the participating local partners compared to other established INGOs has also meant that realities remain separate with regard to resource capacities and abilities .Participation and contribution of SINGOs/CBOs in inter-agency and government livelihood or capacity building forums therefore remains a longer term imperative.
- Limitations encountered included the short time frame and the attendant logistical hiccups associated with accessing key resources (material and equipment) from Nairobi. This resulted to some planned outputs and related verifiable indicators not being adequately achieved.

All the findings shared above are detailed in the main body of this report and should be read in the context of this highly regarded sustainable livelihood project partnership action. Based on the key lessons identified through the evaluation process, the team has made suggestions with regard to the possible way forward. These are in relation to different programming and institutional levels, and capture diverse lessons which through a Learning Process Approach can improve results and lead to more sustainable impacts.

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