






Oxfam GB Project Effectiveness Review Management Response

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Name of Project	Enhancing Access and Control to Sustainable Livelihood Assets of the Manobo Tribe through Improved and Strengthened Self-Governance of the Ancestral Territory (PHLB40)
Date	06 September 2012

Outcome/Impact	Rating	Short Commentary
Outcome 1 – Oxfam GB’s global indicator for women’s empowerment		Evidence of impact on increased women’s involvement in influencing affairs at community level. Inconclusive results of impact on household-level decision-making.
Outcome 2 – Increased women’s self-efficacy		Strong evidence of impact; women in project sites demonstrate greater self-efficacy than those in non-project sites.
Outcome 3 – Improved attitudes about the economic roles of women		Evidence of impact on attitudes of men but not women; attitudes of men in project sites still poor, however.
Outcome 4 – Improved Household Food Security		No evidence of impact for most food security indicators; some evidence of impact on diets of men in project s, however.
Outcome 5 – Increased Agricultural Production		No evidence of impact on most production measures; however, more households in project sites reported increases in both production and income.

1. What follow-up to the review have you undertaken or planned (if any) e.g. discussion, analysis, workshop?

PHLB40 was considered for an effectiveness review (ER) under the women's empowerment thematic area. Being so, upon receipt of the ER report, the Oxfam Mindanao Program (OMP) team took up with the Program Effectiveness (PE) team in Oxford the findings related to the five outcomes assessed. On the whole, OMP team concurred with the findings of the review except for that on Outcome 3 (Improved attitudes about the economic roles of women), particularly the observation that "on average, the women in the project villages were actually found to have slightly poorer attitudes than those in the comparison villages." Although it was written in the report that "the difference is small and would not be statistically significant," OMP raised the point that culture might have significantly affected the way the responses were given. Specifically, indigenous women in the project sites are known to defer to their husbands. In addition, since the IP women belong to organised groups, they have set higher ideals on what women empowerment constitutes compared to other rural women in non-project sites. When the project started also, the intent of the partner (*Paglilingkod Batas Pangkapatiran* Foundation or PBPF) in terms of achieving gender equity was more towards getting women to influence community affairs. The need to look into household-level relations between men and women only came to be regarded as equally important to achieve gender justice very recently, with the introduction of women's economic leadership (WEL) concepts and approaches. The PE team noted these observations and it was agreed that there is a need to revisit the methodology and to elicit qualitative information that shall better capture the realities on the ground.

Further, OMP took up with the PE team the findings related to Outcome 4 (Improved Household Food Security) and 5 (Increased Agricultural Production), particularly its reservations on how the desired outcomes could be realised under the project period (see further comments below).

In response to recommended programme learning considerations, OMP has set aside a significant allocation to PBPF under a new project funded by AusAID (called BINDS or Building Resilient and Adaptive Communities and Institutions in Mindanao) to allow a more speedy expansion of areas planted and increased spending on post-harvest facilities and marketing. These actions are expected to see improvements on agricultural production and income in subsequent reviews. As to the two other recommendations that are related to gender, PBPF has been active in OMP's gender learning cluster – not simply to learn from others but to contribute to a growing community of practice that seeks ways to increase women's agency at the household level.

Finally, it is acknowledged that OMP sees as important having scientific rigour in measuring impacts from participating in the ER. The ER design became the basis for the baseline study that OMP is undertaking under the BINDS project as well as for the implementation of its commitments under Oxfam International's Measure of Success #2 (MOS#2).

2. Overall, do the findings concur with your own expectations or assessment of the project/programme's effectiveness?

Partially yes.

The project was intended to bring change into the lives of indigenous men and women in a specific ancestral domain. Even if the project was expanded to include other communities, it was still within the same ancestral domain, thus, it was expected that the impact was not going to far-reaching. The ambition around gender was also kept minimal because under the project's context, the cultural beliefs, attitudes and norms around women and men's roles were very well-entrenched, thus, would be more difficult to challenge.

Yet:

- OMP expected higher scores on food security and agricultural productivity because these have been the primary objectives under this partnership with PBPF. Under the context of indigenous peoples in Mindanao, there is primacy of food sufficiency over surplus production. The strategies adopted included joint farm planning, the adoption of diversified agricultural practices and food banking. The project specifically prioritised strengthening the *yuha-te-banua* (food banking) as an innovative way to address the problem of food shortages during lean months and this has been confirmed in OMP's own monitoring efforts. Having said this, OMP shall encourage PBPF to conduct ground-truthing as to the area planted. We suspect that direct validation on the ground rather than survey method shall present a more accurate picture of the reality. Moreover, we are also hopeful that the increased investment of PBPF under the BINDS project shall eventually lead to increased agricultural productivity and food security.
- OMP feels the assessment on attitudes about the economic roles of women requires further analysis. The report said that there are more men in the project sites whose attitudes have changed about women's role. OMP looks at this as positive because changing attitudes and beliefs takes time to accomplish, not to mention difficult to achieve more so in this project that targeted indigenous men and women. Adopting the food bank as strategy is viewed by OMP as contributory to this result or finding. Because of the success of the food bank, women's economic role became highlighted. Just the same, OMP concurs with the ER recommendation to seek other ways to achieve this, including soliciting the opinion of women members in the community on ways and means to amplify their voices in household and village decision-making.

3. Did the final results of the Effectiveness Review identify areas that were particularly strong in the project (ie large impact)?

Yes. OMP believes that the ER process captured the outcomes we envisaged on women's empowerment and efficacy but more understanding of cultural context and history would have been more helpful in interpreting the data results. Indigenous women in the project site have collectively influenced not only the *formal* governance system – i.e., municipal government – in their community, but also the *informal* governance system – i.e., along their ancestral domain (Outcome 1). Also, greater self-confidence demonstrated by women in the project site can be attributed to project's strong gender lens application (Outcome 2).

Initially, OMP was convinced that PBPF was doing well in the aspects of food security and agricultural productivity. One area where we feel the particular project is strong on but was not explored sufficiently is the effort to integrate climate change adaptation and risk reduction measures in the farmers' livelihoods (Outcomes 4 & 5). The food bank allows women to have effective control over very precious resources that would be

used during times of disasters. This in effect is expected to reduce women's burden when disasters strike. Nevertheless, OMP shall take the findings of the ER forward by including these in good partnership conversations with PBPF.

4. Did the final results of the Effectiveness Review identify areas that were weak or very weak (ie no or very little impact)?

Yes, the lowest scores were on food security and agricultural production (Outcomes 4 & 5), where the ER said there was modest impact or evidence of benefits to specific sub-groups. If there had been further assessment of the project, it would be noted that during the 4-year period, partner PBPF shifted its livelihood strategy midway – from focusing on staple crops (rice and corn) to cash crops (abaca) after unusually heavy rains affected rice and corn production in the project sites. The challenge is not just to identify ways to increase agricultural productivity but to help develop appropriate adaptation strategies in response to climate change.

5. a) Is the reviewed project continuing? If yes, what actions are being taken in response to the weak areas identified in question 4?

The initial project (from 2008 to 2010) has been followed by a second phase project (2010-2012) and under BINDS, additional funds are being provided until December 2014. Under BINDS, women's economic leadership has been included by PBPF as an important goal, along with developing capacities of local governments and community groups in the area of resilience. The community planning processes that are an integral part of BINDS are expected to result in livelihood options in agriculture and fisheries that are informed by climate-related data generated from scientific sources and indigenous knowledge.

b) What actions are you planning in response to the Programme Learning Considerations?

OMP shall be engaging PBPF on its project investment choices, keeping an eye on whether its interventions promote sustainable agriculture and increased incomes at the same time. Similarly, OMP shall help PBPF think through how best to realise its WEL ambition. The rigor that the conduct of the ER demonstrated compels OMP to work jointly with partner PBPF in gathering more evidence on whether the project objectives are being realised. OMP hopes to continue engaging the PE team in the use of the methodology so that the results of its use shall paint a more fair assessment of what the project's 'effectiveness.'

6. If the project/humanitarian response is ending or has already ended, what learning from the review will you apply to relevant new projects in the future? How can the Regional Centre and Oxford support these plans?

Not applicable.

7. The reports will be published by Oxfam. If you have objections to this, please say so and explain why.

Oxfam in the Philippines and PBPF have no objection as to the publication of its findings. However, we considers it very desirable if the rich discussion it had with the PE team shall somehow be included in the final report (as footnotes, for example) so as to better capture the realities on the ground.