



Copperbelt Livelihoods Project Effectiveness Review - Summary Report

Women's Empowerment and Livelihood Support



Oxfam GB Women's Empowerment Global Outcome Indicator:

% of supported women meaningfully involved in household decision-making and influencing affairs at community level

January 2012

Acknowledgments

We would like to thank the Oxfam and SAP teams in Zambia for their support in administering this evaluation. Particular thanks to Bwendo Kabanda and Mutinta Nketani. Thanks also to Malekano Mwanza for managing the field work and data entry. Photo: Emma Walsh

Executive Summary

As part of Oxfam Great Britain's (OGB) Global Performance Framework (GPF), mature projects are randomly selected each year and their effectiveness rigorously assessed. Zambia's Copperbelt Livelihoods Project was selected in this way under the women's empowerment thematic area. One of the key areas assessed through this process was the extent it has promoted change in relation to OGB's global indicator for women's empowerment:

- % of supported women meaningfully involved in household decision making and influencing affairs at community level

The reviewed project was implemented by a local partner, the Sustainable Agriculture Programme (SAP), where it 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.

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 indicator 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.

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.

While there is evidence that the project has brought about positive change, there are a number of ways in which it can be strengthened. These include:

- Review options for making women's empowerment interventions more explicit and tangible in the project's design.
- Consider increasing efforts to further bolster agricultural production and support the marketing of agricultural commodities.
- Explore options to increase the effectiveness and impact of the project further by accompanying direct implementation with an advocacy strategy to make relevant policy and institutional changes
- Follow up on some of the specific findings from this report with further qualitative research

Introduction and Purpose

Oxfam GB has put in place a [Global Performance Framework](#) (GPF) as part of its effort to better understand and communicate its effectiveness and enhance learning across the organisation. This framework requires programme/project teams to annually report generic output data across six thematic indicator areas. In addition, modest samples of sufficiently mature projects associated with each thematic indicator area are randomly selected each year and rigorously evaluated. The key focus of these 'Effectiveness Reviews' is on the extent they have promoted change in relation to relevant OGB global outcome indicators. The following global outcome indicator was endorsed for the women's empowerment thematic area: ***'% of supported women meaningfully involved in household decision making and influencing affairs at community level'***.

The Copperbelt Livelihoods Project in Zambia was selected for an effectiveness review in relation to this indicator. The dimension of the project being reviewed for this exercise was its provision of women's empowerment and livelihood-related support to 10 communities in Kitwe district in Zambia's Copperbelt Province. At the time of the data collection in October 2011, the total number of people being supported in the 10 communities was approximately 1,000 (60% of whom were women).

One of the key purposes of the evaluation exercise was to assess the extent to which the supported women in these communities are more empowered in relation to the global women's empowerment indicator than if they had never been supported. The evaluation also assessed other intended outcomes the project is attempting to bring about, e.g. increased asset ownership and agricultural production.

Evaluation Approach

The core challenge of a social impact evaluation is to credibly estimate the net effect of an intervention or programme on its participants. An intervention's net effect is typically defined as the average gain participants realise in outcome (e.g. income) from their participation. In other words:

Impact = average post-programme outcome of participants – what the average post-programme outcome of these same participants would have been had they never participated

This formula seems straightforward enough. However, *directly* obtaining data on the latter part of the equation is logically impossible. This is because a person, household, community, etc. cannot *simultaneously* both participate and not participate in a programme. The counterfactual state of a programme's participants can therefore never be observed directly, it can only be estimated.

In response to this challenge, the evaluation design used by Oxfam for this exercise involved comparing the OGB-supported women with non-supported women, while statistically controlling for measured differences between them. A household survey was administered to randomly selected women from the 10 Oxfam-supported communities, as well as women from neighbouring communities which had not been supported by Oxfam.

Outcomes Evaluated

The following list shows the intended outcomes of the Copperbelt Livelihoods Project which were assessed as part of this exercise:

Outcome 1 – Women's empowerment (**global outcome indicator**)

Outcome 2 – Female asset ownership

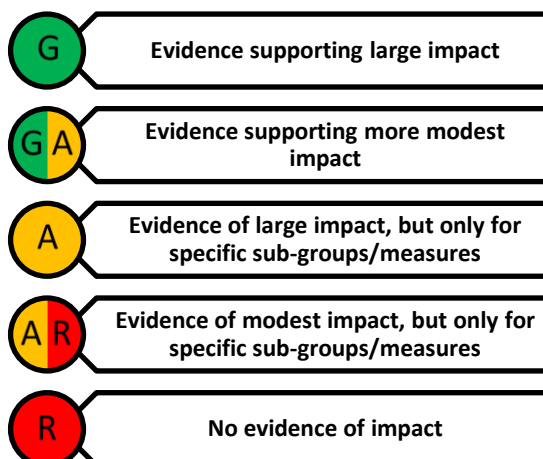
Outcome 3 – Women's self efficacy

Outcome 4 – Increased household wealth

Outcome 5 – Increased agricultural production/income from selling vegetables

Impact Assessment Summary Table

The following summary table provides an overview of the findings from the evaluation. Short analyses relating to each of the outcomes are included after the table, whilst a separate ‘full report’ is also available which provides detailed commentary, statistics and analysis. The full report can be accessed at the Policy and Practice website, or please contact the Programme Performance and Accountability Team (ppat@oxfam.org.uk). The table below lists the 5 outcomes being evaluated, together with a simple 5-point ‘traffic light’ system to indicate the impact evidenced by this study. The key opposite presents the details of the classification used to determine which ‘traffic light’ is attributed to each outcome.



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

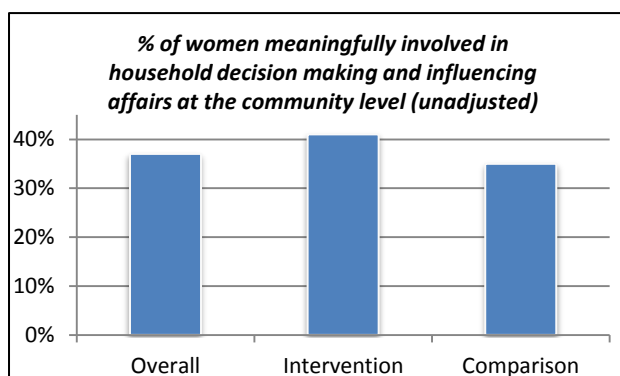
Impact Assessment Findings

Outcome 1 – Women’s Empowerment (global outcome indicator)

A

The women’s empowerment indicator comprises two components or sub-indicators. The first examines both the breadth and depth of women’s involvement in household decision-making. Breadth is defined in terms of the number of decision-making areas in which women are involved, (e.g. decisions around food preparation, personal travel, and family planning). The second component of the indicator examines the extent to which women perceive they are able to influence

the running of affairs at the community level, (e.g. influencing the decisions of community leaders or obtaining leadership positions if they really wanted them). For a woman to score positively on this indicator, she must *both* report being significantly involved in household level decision-making and feel significantly able to influence affairs at the community level.



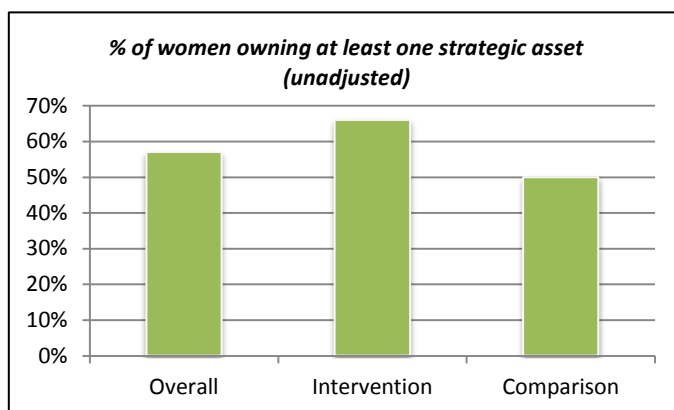
The chart opposite displays the results of the intervention and comparison groups in terms of the OGB global women’s empowerment outcome indicator. As is evident, less than half of the interviewed women scored positively on this indicator. A slightly higher proportion of women in the intervention group scored positively (41%), compared with the comparison group (35%). However, this difference is not statistically significant.

Interestingly, when the sub-component looking at women’s perception of how they are able to influence community affairs is examined in isolation, there is a statistically significant difference in favour of the intervention women. There is evidence, then, the project had some success in empowering women at the community level.

Outcome 2 – Women’s ownership of strategic assets



As part of the questionnaire, the female respondents were asked who owned a range of assets including land, livestock, farming assets etc. For each of these assets the respondents were asked whether they owned fully, owned jointly, or did not own. The chart opposite illustrates that two-thirds of women in the intervention group owned at least one strategic asset, compared to 50% in the comparison group - a difference which remained significant after controlling for observed differences between the groups



There is, therefore, evidence that the project increased women’s ownership of strategic assets. This may be an effect of targeting the various inputs of the project (including seed, fertiliser and tools) at women, which could have resulted in strengthening their control over certain household assets.

Outcome 3 – Women’s self efficacy



The respondents were also asked how they felt they could cope with particular situations as a measure of their self-efficacy. The women, in particular, were read eight statements and asked whether the statement was ‘not at all true’, ‘hardly true’, ‘moderately true’ or ‘exactly true’. A score was then generated from their responses, with a maximum score of 32. The average score for the women in the intervention group was 23.5 compared to 25.8 in the comparison group.

This suggests that the project has not had any impact in improving supported women’s self-efficacy. However doing so may have necessitated a more intensive application of specific support to women in particular skill-set training, related to building confidence in a range of situations.

Outcome 4 – Increased household wealth

G

While the women’s empowerment questionnaire used in this exercise does not include an explicit measure of household income, we are able to analyse the change in household assets as a proxy measure for changes in household wealth status. Households that are wealthier tend to be better off in tangible material possessions or other locally relevant *wealth indicators*, such as livestock, tin roofs (as opposed to grass), bicycles, radios, cemented floors (as opposed to dirt), etc.

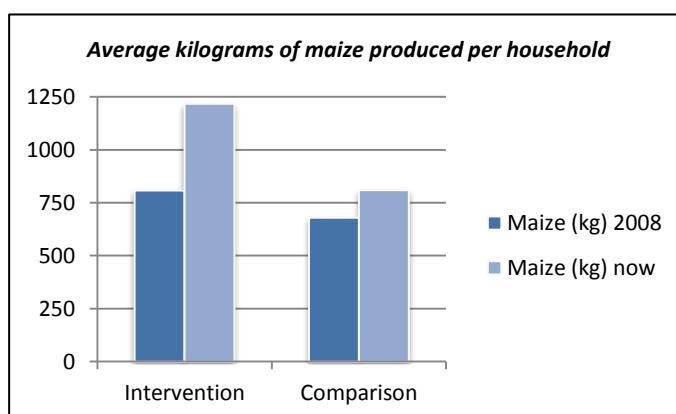
After controlling for observed differences between the intervention and comparison groups, the former indicated more positive change in change in asset ownership over the life-span of the project.

Outcome 5 – Increased agricultural production

A

The results of the effectiveness review are not positive for agricultural production. While maize production has increased by an average of over 400kg per supported household between 2008 and 2011, this is driven in part by large increases in a smaller number of households. This was revealed through an analytical method that controls for outliers in the data (robust regression). There is merit in investigating individual cases of where production has been particularly

successful (or unsuccessful) in order to generate lessons which can be applied to the project beneficiaries as a whole. While there is some evidence that groundnut production has increased to a greater extent in the intervention communities, when non-groundnut growers are excluded from the analysis, the difference is no longer significant.



Programme Learning Considerations

The findings and learning considerations in this report are based on the quantitative research exercise. It would be beneficial to have a deeper qualitative understanding of the context and causal factors underlying the review’s findings. We therefore propose a collaborative process between Oxfam advisers and the programme team to discuss the findings and learning considerations in order to forge a way forward to benefit both this project and future work of this type.

Initial learning considerations emerging from the analyses of the data include:

- **Review options for making women’s empowerment interventions more explicit and tangible in project design.**

The project was selected for review primarily to understand the extent it has contributed to empowering the supported women. However, its primary objective was to improve the livelihoods of the targeted farmers, 60% of whom were women. There is evidence to suggest that it was successful in this regard. This finding would have been more conclusive if data were collected on other measures relating to household income, e.g. household expenditure and food security, as well as a plausible causal explanation for how the change came about, e.g. evidence that the project was successful in bolstering agricultural production.

Despite that women's empowerment was not the primary focus of the project, there is evidence that it positively affected two measures of women's empowerment – women's ability to influence community governance and ownership of strategic assets. At the same time it did not perform well for the two other measures – involvement in household decision making and self-efficacy. Given this, the project would benefit from a more strategic approach to empowering women. The women's economic leadership team in Oxfam have identified four key factors that are believed to influence women's economic empowerment:

- *Women's asset ownership*
- *Women's increased income*
- *Women's skills and knowledge*
- *Attitudes/beliefs – women's and men's perception of women's economic contribution*

We recommend engaging Oxfam's women's economic empowerment/ gender advisers, both in the region and at headquarters, to explore options for including or strengthening specific interventions which target each of these factors in current and future programming of this type.

- **Consider increasing efforts to further bolster agricultural production and support the marketing of agricultural commodities.**

There is no evidence that the project significantly bolstered agricultural production or income for the majority of the targeted farmers. This is an area for further qualitative research to explore differences in household production and perhaps improve the targeting of resources and training accordingly. It is also recommended that a more strategic approach be considered to increase production and add value to the produce, promote collective action, and improve the marketing of crop products. This should be informed by an agri-business feasibility study which examines the comparative production advantage of the supported women and their families and market demand for the identified crops. One of the key issues may be in linking the agricultural produce with markets, especially as the supported communities are far from the main district centre and road. Discussion with Oxfam's economic advisers may assist in highlighting specific market linkage interventions which would benefit this project.

This may also support the empowerment of women as well. The livelihoods advisory team in Oxfam, for instance, has found that programmes are most successful in achieving women's economic leadership when there is the 'driver' of a market opportunity that helps convince producer, organisations, buyers and other actors to work to overcome barriers that women face. It is therefore recommended that any market feasibility study fully incorporates a gendered market selection and mapping exercise in order to strengthen the opportunities for women's economic empowerment.

- **Explore options to increase the effectiveness and impact of the project further by accompanying direct implementation with an advocacy strategy to make relevant policy and institutional changes.**

Making strides forward in improving women's empowerment at a household and community level, while influencing policy at a national or sub-national level has the potential to drive more rapid change in how the role of women is viewed and enshrined in policy/legal frameworks. There is also

scope to affect the enabling environment around economic development which could assist in driving greater economic growth for women producers.

Consideration and analysis of a range of institutional factors appropriate to the local context is recommended, and Oxfam's advocacy advisers may be able to assist in focusing effective action relating to:

- Land and property rights
 - Gender roles and behaviours
 - Social norms and informal networks
 - Governance, commercial law and enforcement
 - Trade rules and competition policy
 - Economic infrastructure
 - Natural environment and resources
 - Consumer trends
 - Quality standards and regulations
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- **Follow up on some of the specific findings from this report with further qualitative research.** Focused qualitative research may help to explain why the supported women appear to be more empowered to influence affairs at a community level, but seemingly less empowered at a household level. It would also be interesting to investigate why the significant increase in asset ownership between 2008 and 2011 in the intervention group is not mirrored by large changes in agricultural production.