

Management Response to Project Effectiveness Review

South Africa Climate Change Advocacy Programme

Country Team:	South Africa
Name Review Carried Out:	RSA Climate Advocacy
Date of Review:	April-May 2012
Participants in the Management Response:	RSA Team

Findings and Recommendations from Review Summary of Contribution Scores (from Evaluation Report)

Targeted outcome	Extent observed (high, medium, low, none)	Extent of project/campaign contribution (high, medium, low, none)	Specific contribution score /5
The South African government steps out as a global leader on national pro-poor adaptation with a powerful adaptation plan as part of a poverty reduction strategy backed with domestic and global resources.	Medium	Medium	3
South African government runs an inclusive, legitimate Congress of the Parties (COP) that contributes to a fair, ambitious, and legally binding deal, taking particular leadership with progressive voices (particularly with the Africa Group, Mexico and the European Union [EU]) on finance issues.	Low	Low	1
Individuals and civil society in South Africa are mobilised on three levels: to influence the domestic agenda; to influence international decision making; raised public awareness and action through movements focussed on the COP this year and food in coming years.	Medium	Medium	3
African organisations and people speak for themselves, particularly around women's leadership, representation and participation in processes up to and at COP17, both inside and outside the negotiations.	Medium	Medium	3

Recommendations:

1. It is recommended that outcomes of advocacy programmes are written to take into account the likely scale of impact Oxfam can have in the context of efforts by numerous other parties.
2. It is recommended that outcomes for advocacy programmes are written more simply and focus on single concepts. In addition as per a previous recommendation, outcomes should be at the scale of likely impact of the advocacy programme.
3. Organisations with years of support tend to be more administratively and financially accountable for their funds. Therefore it is recommended that when Oxfam considers funding organisations for large-scale one-off events, it considers the maturity of organisation and how much support it has given it over the years.
4. It is recommended that Oxfam consider more timeous grant payment by improving its internal appraisal processes and lowers expectations of programme staff engaging in fund-raising for their work.
5. In addition, if Oxfam wants to engage in global events, funding for it should be commensurate.
6. It is recommended that for single country programmes Oxfam consider alternatives to engaging in the multilateral process of COP.
7. It is recommended that Oxfam look to fund knowledge sharing events that actively engage people and communities in sharing their local solutions to their climate change challenges. This should NOT be a 'best practice' exercise, but a genuine exchange of information, strategies, reasons, hopes, and results of experimenting. Best practice is not useful here because it offers blanket solutions which are not delicate enough for different contexts.
8. It is recommended that longer lead times should be included in Oxfam project planning for large events.

Management Response

Response to Findings

1. Did the final results of the review identify areas that were particularly strong in the project or response? If so, please comment briefly on why you think this was so. This will be useful to other country teams.

The reviewers acknowledged that the impact of the project was good but that the questions and approach of the review did not lend itself to evaluating an advocacy project. It is an ongoing process to develop advocacy outcomes that will be measurable over the long term, especially when there are multiple organisations working towards the same goal. Attribution towards outcomes are complex and usually only visible by inference. These problems are exacerbated when short term advocacy actions are evaluated.

2. Did the final results of the review identify areas that were weak or very weak? If so, please comment on why you think this was so.

Many of the recommendations revolve around internal practices and policies of Oxfam that did not work that well from the perspective of South African CSOs. This was in part due to a learning process for Oxfam in South Africa in how to collaborate on such large events. Early on it was decided to pool all the resources and distribute from there to different partners. However, when it came to implementation different processes of the different affiliates led to some bottlenecks in disbursing the funds.

Learning and Future Action

3. Is the reviewed project or programme continuing? If yes, what changes if any are planned in response to the weak areas identified in question 1?

Project ended

4. If the project/response is ending or has already closed, is there any learning from the review that you can you apply to new projects?

Most of the recommendations made by the reviewers are relevant to the design of new projects. We will be paying specific attention to recommendation 2 with respect to the specificity of advocacy outcomes, and linking these, where possible, to specific concepts in an advocacy campaign. Attention will also be paid to the suggestion of knowledge sharing events and how these will be able to disseminate information and policy implications.

5. Are there review findings that you would recommend for action by the RMC and/or HD?

Mainly findings around funding for advocacy work needs more attention. There is an expectation that staff members should also be responsible for raising funding. However, given the nature of advocacy and programming work, the ability of staff to also raise funding is quite limited.

In addition, should the confederation have high expectations with respect to an event, in this case the COP, high levels of resources must be made available to advocacy and programme staff to be able to contribute to these expectations. Before planning for the COP started, and during the first few months, various individuals within the confederation bemoaned the importance of South Africa, its role in influencing the COP discussions and the vital role South African civil society organisations must play in the process. However, once actions by Oxfam staff and partners started to become reality, funding was nearly impossible to attain. As a confederation we must critically look inward and realise that as Oxfam, a globally known and respected organisation, we can raise expectations significantly. If we do not have the resources to support our views, it is better not to air them at all.

6. Are you planning to use the review for other learning purposes (such as other reviews/evaluations/other internal or external learning mechanisms?)

Yes, the recommendations will be shared with all programme and advocacy staff for them to keep in mind when designing programmes and campaigns.

Process-related comments

As mentioned before, we will really have to reflect in greater depth how we intend to review and evaluate advocacy projects and programmes. It seems that our existing tools do not lend themselves to this. From a country programme perspective, the level of advocacy work done before and during the COP was brilliant. It raised the profile and credibility of Oxfam significantly within the civil society sector in South Africa. Gains made by smaller partner organisations in their ability to articulate their positions, presenting these to policy makers and raising their profiles was very valuable.

Objectives stated for advocacy projects and programmes will always be grand and optimistic. It has to be, otherwise our ambitions and ability to influence national and global policies will be questioned. However, within these larger aims and objectives, much value is added to partners, Oxfam and the lives of people living in poverty. Our review processes need to take cognisance of this.

Public Release

The reports, along with a copy of this management response, will be published by Oxfam. If you have objections to this, please say so and explain why.