

# North Karamoja Development Project Effectiveness Review Summary Report

*Livelihood Support to Women's Groups*

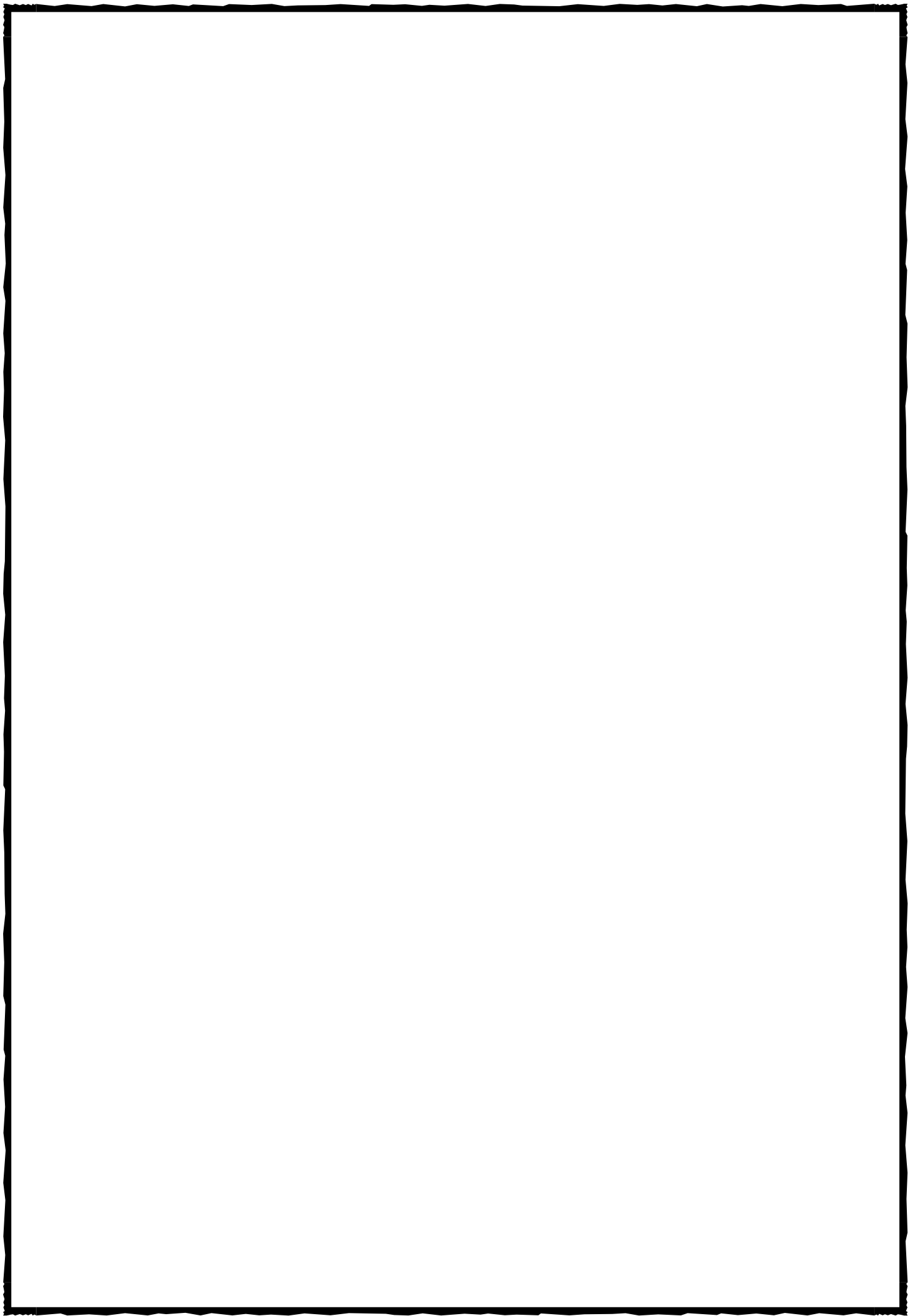


Oxfam GB  
Livelihoods Global Outcome Indicator

December 2011

## Acknowledgments

We would like to thank the Oxfam Kotido team for their support in administering this evaluation. Thanks also to Kenneth Okital for managing the field work and data entry.  
Photo credits: Crispin Hughes and Caroline Gluck



## Executive Summary

As per Oxfam Great Britain's (OGB) Global Performance Framework (GPF), sufficiently mature projects are being randomly selected each year and their effectiveness rigorously assessed. Uganda's Livelihood Diversification and Support Project was originally selected in this way under the livelihood strengthening thematic area. However, it was realised that this project was too immature to be subjected to an "effectiveness review". Fortunately, it was identified as being connected to another project that is sufficiently mature, namely, the North Karamoja Development Project. Thus, a decision was taken to assess its effectiveness, including the extent to which it has promoted change in relation to OGB's global livelihood outcome indicator:

- **% of targeted households living on more than £1.00 per day per capita**

Through the North Karamoja Development Project and other complementary initiatives, OGB has been directly supporting 10 women's groups, made up of over 400 members, in Kotido and Kaabong districts of Uganda's Karamoja sub-region since 2007. This support primarily involved the construction and equipping of grain storage and milling facilities for each of the 10 groups and the provision of agricultural inputs and tools to their members. The women were also targeted with animal husbandry training, where they, among other things, were encouraged to utilise the services of animal health workers. Communal dams were also constructed to increase access to water for livestock owned by the members of the groups and the wider community.

In August 2011, with the support of an external consultant, a household survey was administered to 188 randomly selected women from the groups, as well as 239 women from non-OGB supported groups in neighbouring communities. The survey comprised of questions not only relevant to the above indicator but also a number of other measures associated with the support'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 measured differences between the intervention and comparison women.

Overall, no statistically significant difference was found between the two categories of women in relation to OGB's global livelihood indicator, indicating that the support has not raised household income. Moreover and unfortunately, no overall differences between the intervention and comparison groups were identified for the other outcome measures as well. The picture is different, however, when the data are disaggregated by district. Positive and statistically significant differences were identified for the OGB supported women in Kotido district in the areas of food security and self-reported agricultural production and profits. In addition, the women of Kaabong district reported less livestock loss over time than their comparators.

While there is little evidence to demonstrate that the support provided to the women has brought about any significant positive change, it is fully appreciated that the Karamoja sub-region is an exceptionally challenging development context. It is hoped that reflecting on the following programme learning considerations will enable the Oxfam Karamoja team to strengthen the Karamoja programme in general and the support that is being provided to the targeted women in particular:

- Assess whether Oxfam's advocacy strategy for Karamoja is sufficiently relevant
- Review intervention implementation and uptake in both Kotido and Kaabong to identify why there are reported differences in impact between the two districts
- Review the portfolio of support being provided to the women's groups and consider undertaking qualitative research to identify more focused support that is more likely to leverage substantive, sustainable change
- Explore the potential of investing more in agricultural production and commodity marketing
- Explore possibilities of supporting greater numbers of people with less resources

## 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 being randomly selected each year and rigorously evaluated. One key focus 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 livelihoods strengthening thematic area: ***'% of targeted households living on more than £1.00 per day per capita'***.

The North Karamoja Development project in Uganda was selected for evaluation in relation to this indicator. The dimension of the project being analysed for this exercise was its provision of livelihood related support to 10 women's groups in Kotido and Kaabong districts. At the time of the data collection in August 2011, the total number of women being supported in the 10 groups was 419.

One of the key purposes of the evaluation exercise was to assess the extent to which members of supported groups are better off in relation to the global livelihood indicator than had they never been supported. However, attempts were further made to assess the impacts of the support on several of the other intended outcomes it is attempting to bring about, such as improved household food security and the empowerment of women.

## 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 or community 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 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 women's groups, as well as women from other groups in neighbouring communities who had not been supported by Oxfam.

## Outcomes Evaluated

The following list shows the intended outcomes of the North Karamoja Development Project which were assessed as part of this exercise:

**Outcome 1** – Greater household income (**global outcome indicator**)

**Outcome 2** – Improved food security

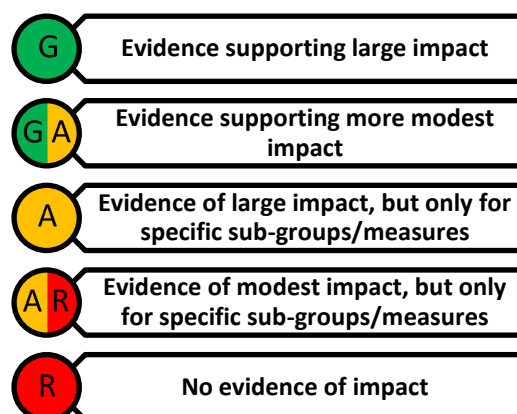
**Outcome 3** – Women’s empowerment

**Outcome 4** – Increased agricultural production/income

**Outcome 5** – Improved livestock health

### Impact Assessment Summary Table

The following summary table provides a snapshot of the effectiveness review’s key findings . A short narrative description related to each outcome then follows. A separate, more technical report is also available. This report provides a more detailed and technical description of the evaluation design, process, and results. The table below summarises the extent there is evidence that the project realised its targeted outcomes in the form of a simple five-point ‘traffic light’ system. The key to the right presents what the various traffic lights represent.



While the information contained in the following table appears quite negative, the reader should be fully aware that the context in which the North Karamoja Development Project was implemented is an exceptionally challenging one, particularly from a community development perspective. The Karamoja sub-region has been plagued by chronic food insecurity for many decades, with food aid being distributed regularly and extensively throughout the sub-region since the 1960s. This has undermined many traditional coping mechanisms and fostered a culture of dependency. More recently, the implications of armed cattle raiding and disarmament initiatives have resulted in considerable livestock loss for many households, a fact supported by the data collected during the assessment exercise.

Outcome/Impact	Rating	Short Commentary
<b>Outcome 1</b> – Greater household income ( <b>global outcome indicator</b> )	<b>R</b>	No evidence for impact on global indicator or complementary measures.
<b>Outcome 2</b> – Improved food security	<b>AR</b>	Modest evidence of impact in Kotido district, but none for Kaabong district.
<b>Outcome 3</b> – Women’s empowerment	<b>R</b>	No evidence to suggest that the supported women have greater involvement in household decision-making.
<b>Outcome 4</b> – Increased agricultural production/income	<b>A</b>	Evidence of impact in Kotido district (self-reported), but none for Kaabong district.
<b>Outcome 5</b> – Improved livestock health	<b>R</b>	No positive difference between the intervention and comparison groups in relation to numbers of livestock lost to disease.

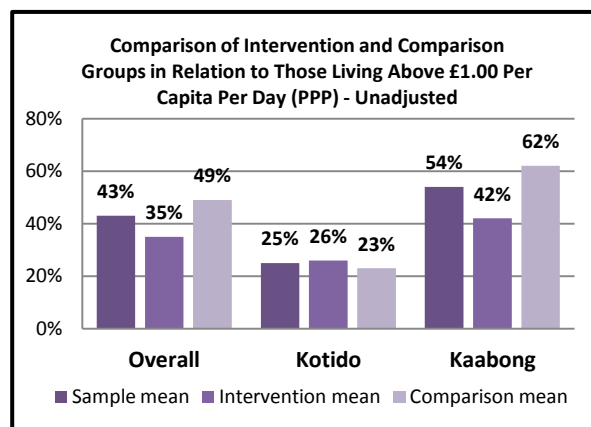
## Effectiveness Review Findings

### Outcome 1 – Greater household income (global outcome indicator)



OGB’s global livelihoods indicator is informed by consumption and expenditure data, given that most of the people Oxfam supports are not formally employed. Household respondents are asked to recall the types and quantities of food consumed during the previous week, as well as how much they spent on various non-food items.

The chart opposite displays the results of the intervention and comparison groups in terms of the OGB global livelihood outcome indicator – % of households living above £1.00 per capita per day – adjusted for purchase power parity (PPP). As is evident, there is an overall difference between the intervention and comparison groups, with a 14 percent difference in favour of the latter. Disaggregating these figures by district reveals an interesting picture, however: The difference is minimal for Kotido district and quite large (20 percent) in Kaabong district.

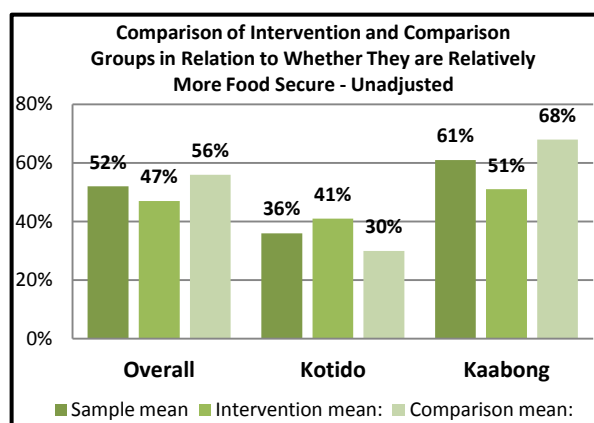


However, the adjusted results, which control for observable differences between the groups, water down this difference. Whilst the overall differences is still large, (estimated at between eight to 10 percent) and in a negative direction, it is no longer statistically significant. Nevertheless, the adjusted result for Kaabong district remains strong, negative, and statistically significant.

### Outcome 2 – Improved food security



Household food security was measured using the Household Food Insecurity Access Scale (HFIAS) developed by USAID’s Food and Nutrition Technical Assistance (FANTA) Programme.<sup>1</sup> Respondents are asked to describe behaviours and attitudes that relate to various aspects of the food insecurity experience. For example, questions are asked relating to whether anyone in the household had to eat less than normal or went to bed hungry because there was not enough food.



The results reveal that overall, women of the intervention group are not more food secure than those of the comparison group. However, intervention women in Kotido district exhibited greater food security than their comparators – a difference that is statistically significant. In terms of quantity and diversity of food, women of both the intervention and comparison groups were found to have eaten about the same number of times and the same varieties of foods during the previous day.

<sup>1</sup> [http://www.fantaproject.org/publications/hfias\\_intro.shtml](http://www.fantaproject.org/publications/hfias_intro.shtml)

### Outcome 3 – Women’s empowerment



One aspect of women’s empowerment was measured by asking the women respondents about their involvement in household decision-making. The survey covered 10 decision making areas thought most relevant for the Karamoja context, e.g. purchase of livelihood assets, involvement in savings activities, giving relatives money, and participation in community initiatives. For each of these areas, the woman was asked the extent of her involvement, ranging from no involvement to exclusive involvement. The responses were then converted to a score for each respondent.

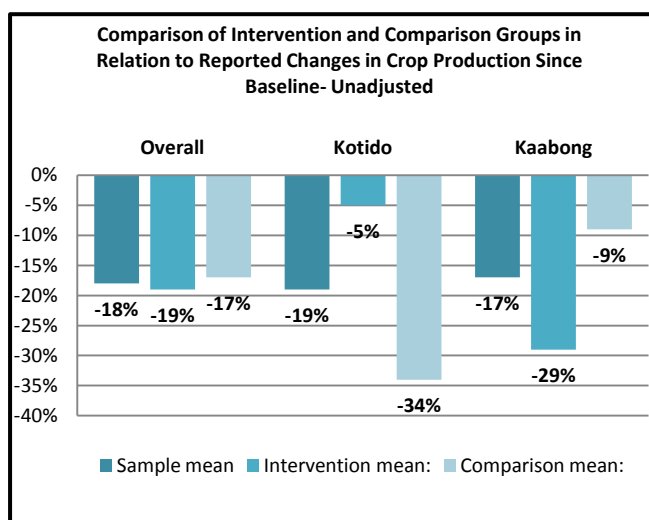
The results showed that overall, women scored fairly highly, with an average score of 65 percent of the total maximum score. There is a small difference between the intervention and comparison groups, but this was not statistically significant following the statistical adjustment procedures. However, this is not the case when Kaabong district is examined in isolation. Four of the five adjusted estimates are statistically significant and show that women in the intervention group are less involved in household decision-making than the women in the comparison group.

### Outcome 4 – Increased agricultural production/income



Respondents were asked whether their households’ production of crops and income earned from both the sale of crops and livestock products had changed since the baseline period, i.e. whether there had been no change, an increase, or a decrease.

Anecdotally, it became clear to the research team that the livelihoods of the people in both Kotido and Kaabong districts had been in a state of significant decline for several years preceding the data collection exercise. Consistent with this, the respondents overall, reported an average reduction in crop production of 18 percent. And there is little difference between the intervention and comparison groups. However, again, disaggregating the data by district reveals a different picture. The respondents from the Kotido intervention group, for instance, reported only a five percent drop in production, compared with 34 percent among members of the comparison group. The situation is the reverse in Kaabong, with the women from the intervention group reporting greater loss than their comparators. However, the statistical significance holds for only one of the statistical estimation procedures that was implemented.



The respondents were also asked about changes in their income from the sale of crops since the baseline period. The results are similar to the case of crop production. Overall, the respondents reported a decrease of about 19 percent in income earned from the sale of crops. However, again, the Kotido intervention group reported less loss than their comparators, while the Kaabong intervention group reported greater loss. These results are statistically significant for most of the adjusted estimates. A similar picture emerges for self-reported changes in income earned through the sale of livestock and livestock products.



## Outcome 5 – Improved livestock health



Efforts were additionally made to assess the health of livestock. This was done by directly asking the respondents the numbers of different types of livestock they have lost specifically *due to disease* in the last two years. If the animal health and related support made a difference, it is assumed that women from the intervention group should report having lost less livestock due to disease. However, the analysis shows this is not the case. On average, the women reported losing about 10 heads of livestock since baseline, and there is no significant difference between the districts or between the intervention and comparison groups.

### Programme Learning Considerations

The Karamoja context is an exceptionally challenging one from a development facilitation point of view. As such, there are no obvious or simple solutions to the development challenges faced by the local population in general and the OGB supported women groups and their families in particular. The effectiveness review focused on assessing the impact of the support provided to the women's groups, primarily through quantitative means, rather than attempting to explore how the support can be strengthened. However, there are several issues emerging from the analyses of the data and work undertaken that the Karamoja team can reflect on to strengthen their work. These include:

- **Assess whether Oxfam's advocacy strategy for Karamoja is sufficiently relevant**

As the data clearly show, relatively recent historical events in the Karamoja sub-region have considerably degraded the livelihoods of the Karamojong in general and the Jie and Dodoth clans that live in Kotido and Kaabong districts in particular. In many ways, an enabling environment for development to take place does not exist. Policies and actions taken by various external stakeholders, including NGOs themselves, appear far from ideal. As such, the policy work being pursued by OGB is potentially of critical importance, and perhaps should even be intensified and strengthened. The Uganda and Karamoja team may want to consider whether it is worth investing resources and expertise in carrying out substantive qualitative research in the two districts and possibly other locations to identify more appropriate, but still workable, policies and actions that can be taken by the government and other actors. If the enabling environment is not improved, there is a risk that all future local level development gains made will simply be wiped out or overshadowed, regardless of the effectiveness of the interventions in question.

- **Review intervention implementation and uptake in both Kotido and Kaabong to identify why there are reported differences in impact between the two districts**

As mentioned above, the supported women of Kaabong district reported being more intensively exposed to the OGB supported interventions but the women of Kotido district appear to have benefited more. What is the reason for this? Is it solely down to context, or are there differences in the way the interventions have been implemented in the two districts? If there are differences in implementation, a short-term measure to improve the support is to harmonise the implementation processes between the two districts. If, on the other hand, it is related to contextual factors, action should be taken to adapt the nature of the support to take these into account.

- **Review the portfolio of support being provided to the women's groups and consider undertaking qualitative research to identify more focused support that is more likely to leverage substantive, sustainable change**

During the review, it became clear that OGB is attempting to implement a number of diverse interventions, and there is little evidence to suggest that these are effective. It may be better to



concentrate effort and resources on fewer interventions that will more likely bring about more significant change, rather than a larger number that may only bring about more insignificant changes. The Karamoja team can seek to engage in qualitative (e.g. ethnographic) research to identify possible interventions that are appropriate for the local context but have a better chance of more substantively improving the lives of the supported women.

- **Explore the potential of investing more in agricultural production and commodity marketing**

The data clearly reveal that agriculture has taken a significant turn for the worse for the women and their families of both the intervention and comparison groups. Crop yields and income earned from the sale of crops were reported to have declined considerably. However, while work is being undertaken to improve the policy environment, the findings of the effectiveness review revealed that crop cultivation does have potential to improve the livelihoods of the local population in general and the supported women and their families in particular. This particularly in light of the fact that, as presented in Subsection 7.3.5, the women of Kotido district who were supported with agricultural inputs on more than one occasion benefited to much greater extent than those who did not. However, rather than just providing the women's groups with inputs, a more strategic approach could be considered to both increase production and the marketing of crop products. This could be informed by an agri-business feasibility study that examines the comparative production advantage of the supported women and their families and market demand for the identified crops. The grain storage facilities could possibly also serve as collection points for potential buyers.

- **Explore Possibilities for Benefiting More People with Less Resources**

While cost-effectiveness analysis was not undertaken, including costing of all the support provided to the women's groups, it is clear that a considerable amount of resources have been channelled to the supported women, yet they are just over 400 in number. Strategically narrowing in on specific interventions that are more likely to leverage big changes for larger numbers of people is something that the Karamoja team may want to take into consideration for the future.