

## Oxfam GB Project Effectiveness Review Management Response






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**Name of Project reviewed:** Ruti Irrigation Scheme Project

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*Feedback incorporated from monitoring reviews and discussions held with Department of Irrigation, AGRITEX, Ministry of Womens Affairs, Gender and Community development, Ministry of Health and Child Welfare as well Ruti Irrigation Management Committee members, Ruti Marketing Committee members, local leaders, district authorities and project beneficiaries.*

Outcome/Impact	Rating	Short Commentary
<b>Outcome 1</b> – Greater household income ( <b>global outcome indicator</b> )		Some evidence of modest increases in consumption and expenditure in intervention households.
<b>Outcome 2</b> – Increased household asset ownership		Strong evidence of impact in household asset change since the start of the project.
<b>Outcome 3</b> – Improved food security		Some evidence to suggest households in the intervention group are more food secure than comparison households.
<b>Outcome 4</b> – Increased agricultural production		Strong evidence of significant increase in intervention household maize production.
<b>Outcome 5</b> – Improved water and sanitation behaviour		Evidence of very small impact in relation to changing the type of water and sanitation facility used by the household.

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

After the programme review an internal meeting was held in which key findings were discussed and key actions agreed upon. A decision was made to lobby for additional funds to conduct a follow up project to build on elements linked to marketing of agricultural produce at Ruti Irrigation Scheme. We successfully fundraised and were granted £50,000 for work on market linkages. In addition the effectiveness review findings were shared at the Ruti Irrigation Scheme monitoring review workshop held with key stakeholders, beneficiaries and project partners in March 2012.

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

Yes the findings are in line with the information our Monitoring and Evaluation Department has uncovered on project progress, outcomes and impact. Monitoring and evaluation findings have showed significant increases in maize yields. Additional findings have showed that households have not only improved maize yields but have been able to grow crops which they could not grow before such as wheat, potatoes and sugar beans all of which have been grown at the scheme in the time since the review. In the last rainfall season at a time when the wider community was experiencing crop failures and low yields due to a poor rainfall season, irrigation scheme beneficiaries were harvesting enough to feed their families for the year based on Zimbabwe Vulnerability Capacity Assessment per capita annual food requirements in grain equivalent. While there may be little change in the type of water and sanitation facility used by the community there has been a reduction in open defecation which has come about as a result of health and hygiene education as well as the construction of pit latrines in and around the irrigation scheme. Additionally the drilling of boreholes at each phase of the irrigation scheme means that both beneficiary members and the wider community has improved access to safe potable water for domestic use and drinking when working at the irrigation scheme. Consumption and expenditure among beneficiaries will continue to increase as food security levels increase and yields increase with improved agronomy practice while sales will also increase with improved access to input and output markets. Already monitoring and evaluation findings have found slight increase in average maize yield among phase 2 farmers compared to Phase 1 farmers who were the intervention group at the time of the effectiveness review.

**3. Did the final results of the Effectiveness Review identify areas that were particularly strong in the project (ie large impact)? If so, please comment briefly on why you think this was so.**

Yes the Effectiveness Review identified outcome 4 on increased agricultural production as being particularly strong with intervention households experiencing a 240% increase in maize yields in the period from 2009 to 2011. The other main area of impact was on outcome 2 on increased household asset ownership which was higher among the intervention group.

The main reason the impact was high here was due to the fact that this was the main aim of the project and given the highly variable climate in the target community an appropriate investment in irrigation and capacity building was bound to ensure a significant increase in yields among beneficiary households. It is expected that yields are to continue to increase as the farmers get better at agronomy practices for irrigated agriculture.

In terms of asset ownership it was found through further community engagements that many of the beneficiaries are now food secure and hence are able to sell excess produce and spend the income generated on items such as purchase of assets and payment of school fees and health care. Purchase of productive assets was a particular area that community members placed importance and hence the purchase of such items as agricultural implements, bicycles, building of granaries and fowl runs. In another community discussion it was noted that community members would like to improve their agricultural yields and sales so that they get to a point where they can buy assets such as televisions, DVD players and other luxury items.

4. Did the final results of the Effectiveness Review identify areas that were weak or very weak (ie no or very little impact)? If so, please comment on why you think this was so.

Areas of weakness were identified particularly outcome 5 on improved water and sanitation behaviour.

A number of reasons could be attributed to this as follows:

- Both beneficiaries and the wider community have benefitted from the health and hygiene intervention thus there is no significant difference between the two groups
- The project has not necessarily drastically changed the type of water and sanitation facility utilised but has definitely improved access to improved water and sanitation facilities in the community

It should be noted that the outcome was weak at the time of the effectiveness review however since then the time of the review large improvements have been made in this area. A number of trainings on health and hygiene have been conducted along with the continued construction of latrines and boreholes at Phase 3 of the irrigation scheme. More qualitative observations and methodologies specifically designed for monitoring and measuring impact of health and hygiene interventions in addition to the methodology utilised in the effectiveness review would have enabled the more better determination of health and hygiene status in the community (e.g. PHHE index)

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 construction phase of the reviewed project has officially ended in March 2012 after the development of 60 ha of agricultural land to support 240 smallholder farmers and their families in the Ruti community. However, Oxfam's support to the irrigation scheme is ongoing with market linkage support being provided to the direct beneficiaries to enable them to grow more, grow better as well as market and sell their produce in a manner that attracts the best prices and contributes to the sustainability of the scheme as well as to the incomes and sustainable livelihoods of the beneficiary households. Towards the end of the project implementation period a concerted effort was made to step up on the health and hygiene component with additional trainings and awareness sessions on this subject being conducted. Additionally the onset of a new renewable energy project being funded by the European Union and partly by Oxfam Supporter Marketing funds has allowed for the project team to build up on the successes and weakness by integrating a component of renewable energy for productive use. This includes supporting the beneficiaries to construct a solar powered agribusiness centre for collective storage, inputs and tools as well as collective sales of produce. The project will also support 2 clinics in the community with solar energy for water pumping, vaccine refrigeration and lighting and thus strengthen the health and hygiene component of the project for both the project beneficiaries and the wider community.

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

The programme learning considerations and the follow up actions are listed as follows:

- Consider increasing efforts to organise the producers and support the marketing of the agricultural commodities in order to maximise the benefit gained from increased production

We have secured £50,000 to support market linkages in the Ruti community through the value chain methodology for the 2012/13 financial year.

We have also secured funds from the European Union and Oxfam's Supporter Marketing for a renewable energy intervention which has a component on the construction and equipping of solar powered agribusiness centre at the scheme to support collective storage and marketing of produce.

We are also in the process of fundraising additional funds from Gendered Enterprise and Markets (GEM) for more long term work in market linkages support to the Ruti Irrigation Scheme.

- Review options to strengthen the health and hygiene interventions and training components of the project

The health and hygiene component of the project was stepped up in the months after the effectiveness review. This included trainings and awareness sessions for village health workers, peer educators & drama groups which were done in conjunction with Environmental Health Technicians from The Ministry of Health and Child Welfare. A refresher training was also held with those who had been previously trained to ensure they were getting the message and passing it along to others in the community. One additional borehole and 6 latrines have also since been constructed at the scheme. Hand washing tippy taps and pot racks are now a common site in the community. Two clinics in the target communities are also to be supported with solar systems for water pumping, vaccine refrigeration and lighting as part of the renewable energy intervention being funded by the European Union and Oxfam's Supporter Marketing as a way of strengthening the health and hygiene in the community.

- Consider further research to assess the food security impact of the project on the wider community

Research on the food security impact on the wider community as a whole was done during regular monitoring and evaluation activities as well as during project outcome monitoring. This was done through market surveys in the community to assess food availability at business centres around the irrigation scheme as well as undertaking household questionnaires for non beneficiary households who live in villages that are at a far distance from the irrigation scheme. Calculations were also made based on collected post harvest surveys from the scheme in order to determine current and potential annual production at the scheme and the possible impact this would have on food availability in the wider community based on the total human population of the two target wards of the project. Continued monitoring

of production at the scheme and the impact on the wider community is to be done.

- Follow up on some of the specific findings from this report with further qualitative research

This has been done mainly through beneficiary interviews, requesting of beneficiary testimonies at the project review and key informant interviews. Some areas of qualitative research included the impact of the project on women, the impact on those not in the scheme and the impact on grain availability in the wider community as well as the main markets for produce from the scheme and priorities for the use of the grain. In terms of the use of produce from the scheme it was found that for many the first priority was food for the home and hence storage of grain, excess was given to family members and neighbours. Those that sold mostly sold from person to person within the community rather than selling at main markets. Only a small percentage was sold through formal markets with some maize and wheat sold to the national Grain Marketing Board. Case studies were developed to illustrate some of these qualitative findings as well as inclusion in the project monitoring review report and outcome monitoring report. It was also found that grain was more commonly exchanged for other goods and services rather than being sold for cash.

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?

The main learning considerations are as follows:

- Consider market linkages right from the beginning of such projects as the problem that comes with increased agricultural production is where and how to sell the excess

The Regional Centre and Oxford can continue to support in terms of availing resources, support and advisers in project design, monitoring and evaluation.

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

No objections to the reports being published.