

PROJECT EFFECTIVENESS REVIEWS

'enhancing effectiveness through evidence-based learning'



Civil society development and access to health care: Georgia 2011/12

Since 2006, the government of Georgia has been moving towards total privatisation of all levels of health care provision. As a consequence, monopolies have been created in the sector at the provider level, which effectively deny the right to health care for thousands of poor people that cannot afford costly services. There has been little civil society engagement in this process, and the voices of those potentially affected have not been heard.

Oxfam GB and its local partners – the Welfare Foundation, Grassroots Support Centre, and Step Forward – implemented the “Effective Civil Society Development and Improved Access to Quality Healthcare for Poor People in Georgia” project to build the organisational and operational capacity of a coalition of local NGOs, “Future without Poverty”. The project aimed at both broadening and strengthening this coalition to act as an effective vehicle for identifying, conveying and arguing for the needs and priorities of poor people before the government and policy makers.

Evaluation method

Under Oxfam GB’s Global Performance Framework, the “Effective Civil Society Development and Improved Access to Quality Healthcare for Poor People in Georgia” project was randomly selected in 2011/12 for a project effectiveness review.

An external evaluator, Jan Vorisek, was selected to apply a pre-defined research protocol to rigorously assess the project’s contribution to key outcomes. Drawing on theory-based evaluation approaches, Oxfam has defined a robust qualitative research protocol, ‘process tracing’, to enable assessment of a) the extent to which intended objectives, or interim outcomes that signal progress towards these objectives, were successfully achieved and b) the extent to which the intervention contributed to these changes. (Re) constructing the campaign’s theory of change with key stakeholders, the approach identifies the interim and final outcomes the campaign sought to achieve. The evaluator then seeks evidence for the extent to which these outcomes have materialised; identifies plausible causal explanations for those outcomes (including but not limited to the campaign itself); and assesses the extent to which each of the explanations are, or are not, supported by the available evidence.

Photo credit: Caroline Berger



Results

The evaluation focused on two clusters of the project's objectives related to a) strengthening and broadening the coalition "Future without Poverty" and b) raising awareness of the negative consequences of privatising the healthcare system and making pro-poor health policy recommendations. With respect to the former, the evaluation found reasonable evidence of a direct and an indirect causal link between the project and increased knowledge and cooperation among many coalition partners. However, there was limited evidence that it served to increase the coalition's functionality. With respect to efforts to influence decision-makers, the evaluation found that the project succeeded in its efforts to widen health insurance and change the law regulating pharmaceutical companies' behaviour. In addition, one of the partners, the Welfare Foundation, successfully influenced Ministry of Health, Labour and Social Affairs to develop a national strategic plan for health, and its survey data was explicitly cited by the Public Defender Office in its annual report, which is presented and discussed in the parliament.

Outcome	Rating	Commentary	Other evidenced explanations and extent of their contribution (high, medium, low)
Outcome 1: Increased organizational, operational capacity of (up to 50) targeted NGOs	3/5	Medium level of change realised, Medium project contribution	More advanced coalition members also contributed – low
Outcome 2: Functional coalition able to undertake networking, campaigning, public health research, and policy advocacy.	2/5	Low level of change realised, Medium project contribution	advocacy at national level undertaken by Welfare Foundation on its own - medium
Outcome 3: Recommendations for improved insurance coverage disseminated to key targets	3/5	Medium level of change realised, Medium project contribution	
Outcome 4: Increased knowledge of health staff on the use of clinical guidelines	1/5	Low level of change realised, Low project contribution	
Outcome 5: Government better informed about implementation of health care reform and aware of recommendations to mitigate possible negative consequences	2/5	Low level of change realised, Medium project contribution	
Outcome 6: National health care strategic plan developed	3/5	Medium level of change realised, Medium project contribution	Health plan developed on instruction of government officials - High
Outcome 7: Increased trust between government and NGOs	3/5	Low level of change realised, High project contribution	
Outcome 8: Public Defender Office uses findings of the project	4/5	Medium level of change realised, High project contribution	
Outcome 9: law on pharmaceutical company advertising amended	2/5	Low level of change realised, High project contribution	

Going forward

While the project is not continuing in its current form, the work on coalition capacity building and in monitoring activities of health care reforms will continue, in recognition that there is still work needed to increase the functionality and cooperation of the coalition and ensure that its work at grassroots level continues to enable the delivery of accurate and timely information to the government on the effects of privatisation of the health sector. Finally, the project will continue to promote cooperation of the Welfare Foundation with Public Defender Office.