

PROJECT EFFECTIVENESS REVIEWS

'enhancing effectiveness through evidence-based learning'



Raising Her Voice Campaign: Liberia 2011/12

"A governance project for the poor and marginalised... To strengthen women to be motivated and activists, to speak for themselves, to be fully involved in the development process"
acting president of WOLPNET

The 'Raising Poor and Marginalised Women's Voices in Liberia' project is part Oxfam's global Raising Her Voice (RHV) programme, which seeks to promote the rights and capacity of poor women to engage effectively in governance at all levels through increased voice and influence and more effective institutional accountability.

Oxfam Liberia, with two local partners, Women of Liberia Peace Network (WOLPNET) and Women NGO Secretariat of Liberia (WONGOSOL), has been working to support the establishment of a vibrant coalition for poor and marginalised women in eight counties and encourage more responsive governance through greater compliance with the African Women's Rights Protocol. Project activities can be grouped into four clusters:

- Networking, lobbying and advocacy with poor women activists
- Working with public institutions and decision-making forums including traditional structures
- Empowering and building the capacity of Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) to achieve rights of poor women citizens through campaigns and policy work
- Learning lessons and disseminating best practices through innovative media and communications work.

Figure 1 shows the overarching RHV programme theory of change and how transformational change for women requires positive change in three spheres

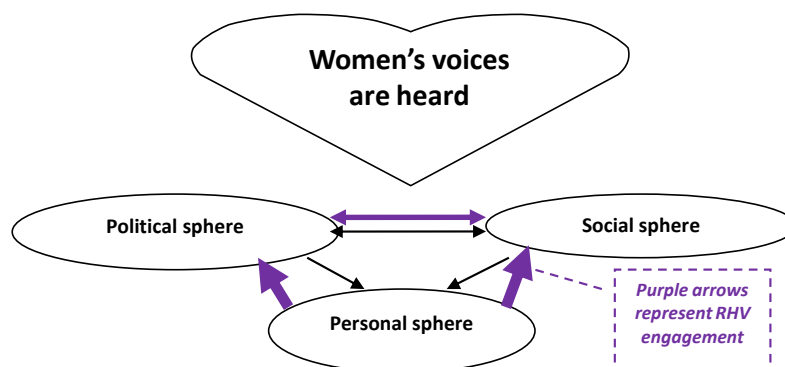


Photo credit: Oxfam

Evaluation Method

Under Oxfam GB's Global Performance Framework, the Raising Her Voice project in Liberia was one of twenty six mature and closing projects randomly selected in 2011-2012 for "Project Effectiveness Reviews," impact assessments managed by Oxfam GB's Programme Performance and Accountability Team.

External evaluator Gwendolyn Heaner was selected to apply a pre-defined research protocol to rigorously assess the project's contribution to select key outcomes (as below). 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

Results

The evaluator documented a group of women who mobilized and advocated to the Ministry of Gender and the President, and found evidence that the Raising Her Voice project had a "specific role" in confidence-building, technical training and financial resources for the mobilization. However, the evaluator noted that the women lacked the requisite technical and procedural skills to ensure that the government did more than listen, and also acknowledged and acted upon their demands.

The evaluation also found a perceived decrease in the incidence of gender based violence (GBV) and rape in communities where the project was implemented. The evaluation used interviews with project stakeholders, local government, NGO representatives and community members to undertake this assessment, then documented various cases where informants provided as examples of "changes" in practices or norms of GBV in their communities. These include:

- In Buchanan, Kakata and Tubmanburg, the evidence supported other causal explanations that underlie the (perceived) decrease in gender based violence.
- Interventions by other NGOs, the Ministry of Gender and the police were seen to have been greater contributors in these areas.
- In Compound 3 Area B, the project was seen to have made a more substantial contribution to the change in attitudes/practices

Outcome	Rating	Commentary	Other evidenced explanations and extent of their contribution (high, medium, low)
Outcome 1: Women's complaint heard by government (Monrovia)	4/5	High level of change realised, Medium project contribution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Past incidents of women's mobilisation (medium) • Existing grievances among women's groups prior to mobilisation (high)
Outcome 2: Perceived decrease in GBV and rape in community (Buchanan, Kakata, Tubmanburg)	2/5	High level of change realised, Low project contribution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other NGO advocacy (High) • Ministry of Gender advocacy (High) • Police activity (High)
Outcome 3: Perceived decrease in GBV and rape in community (Compound 3 Area B)	4/5	Medium level of change realised, High project contribution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other NGO Advocacy (Medium) • Ministry of Gender advocacy (low) • Police activity (Low)

Going forward

Lessons from this evaluation will feed into the second phase of the Raising Her Voice Liberia project. In particular:

- The evaluation highlighted the importance of building advocacy capacities, moving beyond awareness raising on women's rights and support women to effectively influence government policy and practice.
- The suggestion to invest further in monitoring and evaluation has already been acted upon to enable greater clarity on the project's theory of change and capitalise on opportunities for learning. The project has developed a comprehensive change theory for the project to guide implementation, and put in place an operational framework in place to guide the monitoring and evaluation process