



## Support to Coffee Farmers in Northern Haiti Effectiveness Review – Summary Report



Oxfam GB  
Livelihoods Support Global Outcome Indicator

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Acknowledgments: We would like to thank the staff of RECOCARNO and Oxfam Haiti team for their excellent supportive during the exercise. Particular thanks are due to Jean-Luc Bonheur, Hadson Kargbo, Alix Percinthe and Délile Louis. Photo credit: Toby Adamson

## Executive Summary

Under Oxfam Great Britain's (OGB) Global Performance Framework (GPF), mature projects are being randomly selected each year for a rigorous assessment of their effectiveness. In the 2011/12 financial year the project in support of diversification for coffee farmers in northern Haiti (HAIC15) was selected for evaluation against OGB's global indicator for livelihoods:

- **Percentage of households demonstrating greater income, as measured by daily household expenditure per capita.**

This project is implemented by RECOCARNO, a network of eight coffee producers' cooperatives. This network was established with OGB support in 2001, and it has continued to be an OGB partner since then. RECOCARNO has Fairtrade certification, which enables it to purchase coffee produced by its members and then sell it to buyers abroad at above-market prices. It also provides its members with training and technical support in production techniques for coffee and other crops, as well as in non-agricultural income-generating activities.

In November 2011, an external consultant and a team of enumerators carried out a household survey with 493 randomly-selected coffee producers in the North and North East departments of Haiti. Survey respondents were selected from among the membership of four RECOCARNO cooperatives and the membership of three cooperatives outside the RECOCARNO network, which were considered to be suitable as a comparison group. The survey was designed to capture data relevant to OGB's global indicator for livelihoods, as well as other intended outcomes, including those related to income diversification and attitudes towards women's economic roles. At the analysis stage, the statistical tools of propensity score matching and multivariable regression were used to control for observable differences between the intervention and comparison respondents.

Overall, the results provide evidence of a slight positive effect from RECOCARNO membership on household income. However, this overall effect masks a large difference between the two regions. Specifically, there is evidence of a substantial positive effect for members of the RECOCARNO cooperatives in the North East but none at all for those in Dondon. The higher level of consumption in the North East appears to be driven by the higher prices that these producers are being paid for their coffee. However, there is no evidence that these particular members are diversifying their sources of income. In fact, they are actually more focussed on coffee and sell fewer other crops than members of the comparison cooperatives. In Dondon, while there is no clear advantage to RECOCARNO membership in terms of the price received for coffee, members of the RECOCARNO cooperatives are bringing a wider range of crops to market, thereby, providing evidence that the effort made to promote income diversification was successful in this region.

Moreover, in the North East, there is little evidence that the higher levels of coffee related income has resulted in long-term improvements in wellbeing, as measured by household asset ownership and other wealth indicators. Nonetheless, there is some evidence that the member producers from this region are investing more in the education of their children. In terms of men's attitudes towards women's economic roles, there is strong evidence of impact in Dondon but not in the North East.

Considerations to enable the programme team to learn from this review include:

- Further investigate the reasons for lack of clear long-term impact in the North East, in spite of the apparent benefit from RECOCARNO membership.
- Review what can be learned from the comparison cooperative in Dondon in terms of bringing benefits to members.

## 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, as well as enhance learning across the organisation. As part of this framework, modest samples of sufficiently-mature projects are being randomly selected each year and rigorously evaluated. One key focus is on the extent to which they have promoted change in relation to relevant OGB global outcome indicators. For projects focusing on strengthening livelihoods, the global outcome indicator is the proportion of households with income greater than that of a typical comparable household, as determined by daily per capita consumption.

In the 2011/12 financial year, the project “Support to Diversification of Income Sources for Coffee Farmers in Northern Haiti” (HAIC15) was one of those randomly selected for an effectiveness review. This project is implemented through RECOCARNO, a Fairtrade-certified network of coffee producer’ cooperatives operating in the North and North East departments of Haiti. Oxfam GB’s support to these cooperatives began in 1997, and it was instrumental in establishing RECOCARNO in 2001. RECOCARNO has overcome a number of challenges –including hurricanes and droughts, as well as the disruption caused by the major earthquake in southern Haiti in January 2010 – to support eight member cooperatives, with a combined membership of more than 6,500 coffee producers.

One of the key purposes of the project effectiveness review was to assess the extent to which members of these supported groups are better off in relation to the global livelihood indicator than had they never been supported. To this end, the effectiveness review is an assessment not just of the impact of the individual project HAIC15, but also of the previous support to RECOCARNO – dating back to 2004, which we use as the baseline for this review. At the same time, the effectiveness review also examined other outcomes which the project is intending to bring about, including income diversification and improved attitudes towards women.

## Evaluation Approach

Oxfam GB’s work with RECOCARNO aims to improve the livelihoods of thousands of coffee producers at the grassroots level. The best way to evaluate such an intervention would have been to restrict its implementation to randomly selected geographical areas, leaving other sites for comparative purposes, i.e. as controls. This impact evaluation design is known as a cluster randomised control trial. Such a design would ensure that the producers in the intervention and control groups were comparable in every way, so that the impact of the project could be assessed by directly comparing the data on outcomes between the two groups.

However, there was no random element that determined RECOCARNO membership. Rather, the eight cooperatives were purposively chosen to become members of RECOCARNO. Consequently, an alternative impact assessment design was pursued. This design is referred to as a quasi-experiment because it attempts to “mimic” what a randomised control trial does by statistically controlling for measured differences between the intervention and comparison groups.

To implement the design, considerable effort was put into identifying coffee-producers’ cooperatives in RECOCARNO’s area of operations which are *not* members of RECOCARNO, and which have received little external support. Three cooperatives were identified (two in the North East department and one in the Municipality of Dondon in the North department) which were considered to be comparable to the four RECOCARNO cooperatives in those areas. The remaining four RECOCARNO cooperatives (located in Bourgne and Plaisance municipalities of the North department) could not be included in the effectiveness review, because no suitable cooperatives could be identified for comparison purposes. A questionnaire was designed and administered to 493 coffee producers,

selected at random from among the four RECOCARNO cooperatives and the three comparison cooperatives. At the analysis stage, propensity score matching (PSM) and multi-variable regression (MVR) were used to control for observable differences between the women and men that were interviewed.






## Outcomes Evaluated





The intended outcomes of the Support to Coffee Farmers project that were assessed as part of the effectiveness review included:

- Outcome 1:** Increased household income
- Outcome 2:** Diversification of household income
- Outcome 3:** Accumulation of asset wealth
- Outcome 4:** Improved attitudes to gender roles

### Impact Assessment Summary Table

The following summary table provides a snapshot of the key findings of the effectiveness review. A short narrative description related to each outcome then provides further information on each key finding. A separate technical report is also available, which provides a more detailed description of the evaluation design, process, and results. The table below summarises the extent to which 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 shows what the traffic lights represent.

	Evidence supporting large impact
	Evidence supporting more modest impact
	Evidence of large impact, but constrained to specific sub-groups
	Evidence of modest impact, but constrained to specific sub-groups
	No evidence of impact

Outcome/Impact	Rating	Short Commentary
<b>Outcome 1</b> – Increased household income		Strong evidence of a positive impact in the North East department. No evidence of impact in Dondon.
<b>Outcome 2</b> – Diversification of household income		Some evidence of diversification of crop types brought to market by producers in Dondon. No evidence of impact in the North East.
<b>Outcome 3</b> – Accumulation of asset wealth		Little evidence that increased household income has lead to long-term accumulation of assets.
<b>Outcome 4</b> – Improved attitudes to gender roles		Evidence of improved attitudes to women’s roles among male respondents, though not among female respondents themselves.

## Impact Assessment Findings

### Outcome 1 – Increased household income

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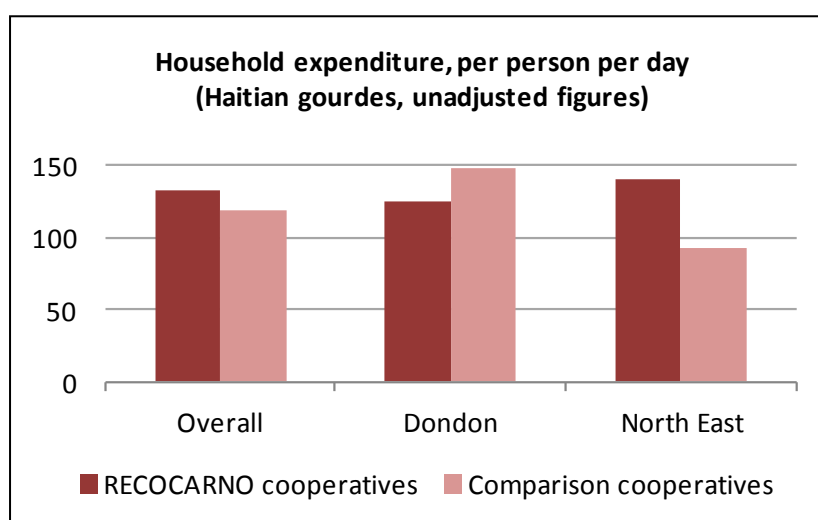
Each household's economic situation was evaluated by asking respondents for details of their recent expenditure, including:

- The value of all food which had been consumed in the household in the previous seven days.
- The amount spent on most common types of regular expenditure (including transport, communications and cooking fuel) in the month prior to the survey.
- The amount spent on less-common expenditure types, such as health costs, school costs and clothing, in the 12 months prior to the survey.

This information was aggregated and divided by the number of household members (with adjustments made for children and some allowance for economies of scale) in order to calculate per-person per-day expenditure for the household.

The household expenditure figures were then compared between the members of the RECOCARNO cooperatives and those of comparison cooperatives. Household expenditure was found to be significantly higher among members of RECOCARNO cooperatives in the North East, than in the relevant comparison cooperatives. However, there was no evidence of impact among members of RECOCARNO cooperatives in Dondon. In fact, there is some evidence that members of the RECOCARNO cooperatives in Dondon have lower income on average than their comparators.

Other data collected in the survey corroborated these findings: In the North East (but not in Dondon) significantly more members of RECOCARNO cooperatives reported being able to meet their day-to-day needs from their household income. Members of RECOCARNO cooperatives in the North East also appear to spend more on education per child than those in comparison cooperatives. The estimates of the effect on food security are also positive in the North East but negative in Dondon – but the results for food security are not statistically significant, so conclusions cannot be drawn with confidence.

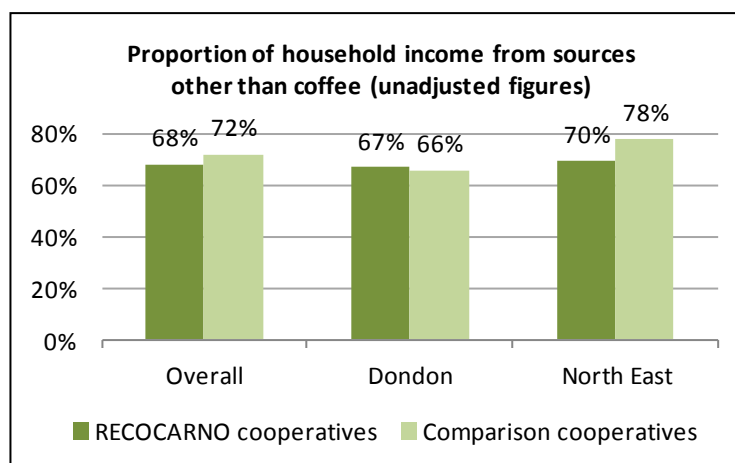


## Outcome 2 – Diversification of household income



Encouraging diversification away from coffee production has been the main emphasis of Oxfam GB's support to RECOCARNO in recent years. In the survey, data were collected not only on households' coffee production but also on production and sales of other crops, and other sources of household income.

While members of RECOCARNO cooperatives were found to have been cultivating approximately the same number of crops as members of the comparison cooperatives, RECOCARNO members in Dondon were bringing a significantly wider range of crop types to market. Total agricultural income (including coffee and other crops) is approximately equal for members of the RECOCARNO cooperatives and members of the comparison cooperatives, so it is possible that the greater diversification among RECOCARNO members has compensated for slightly lower income from coffee.



In the North East, members of RECOCARNO cooperatives were actually farming and selling a *smaller* range of crop types than in the comparison cooperatives. This is perhaps a natural consequence of the much higher returns to coffee which are available in the RECOCARNO cooperatives – the strong prices for coffee may be encouraging farmers to invest more of their resources in coffee and less in other crops. This indicates that there may be a tension between trying to encourage further diversification in this area while, at the same time, paying above-market prices for purchases of coffee.

Part of Oxfam and RECOCARNO's work has been to support members to engage in household businesses and other income-generating activities. However, no detectable difference was found between the RECOCARNO cooperatives and the comparison cooperatives in terms of the proportion of household members engaged in household businesses or the contribution of these businesses to household income.

## Outcome 3 – Accumulation of asset wealth



RECOCARNO has, with Oxfam GB's support, been providing services to its member cooperatives over several years. It is of interest to know whether RECOCARNO not only has had an impact on current household expenditure but also whether there is any evidence of sustained, long-term change. To this end, survey respondents were also asked about the durable assets which they possess, including the characteristics of their homes, their farming equipment, their furniture, vehicles (if any), and household goods such as electronics. Details on possession of these assets were collected both for 2004 and for the date of the survey, which enables comparison of the relative changes in household wealth since 2004. A statistical technique known as principle component analysis was used to generate an indexed score for the change in wealth indicators of each household since 2004.

While the raw data shows a relative increase in the asset wealth of members of RECOCARNO cooperatives since 2004 compared to members of the comparison cooperatives, these differences disappear once statistical techniques are used to control for differences between the groups. Overall, there is no statistically significant evidence for impact on asset wealth of membership of a RECOCARNO cooperative, in either Dondon or the North East.

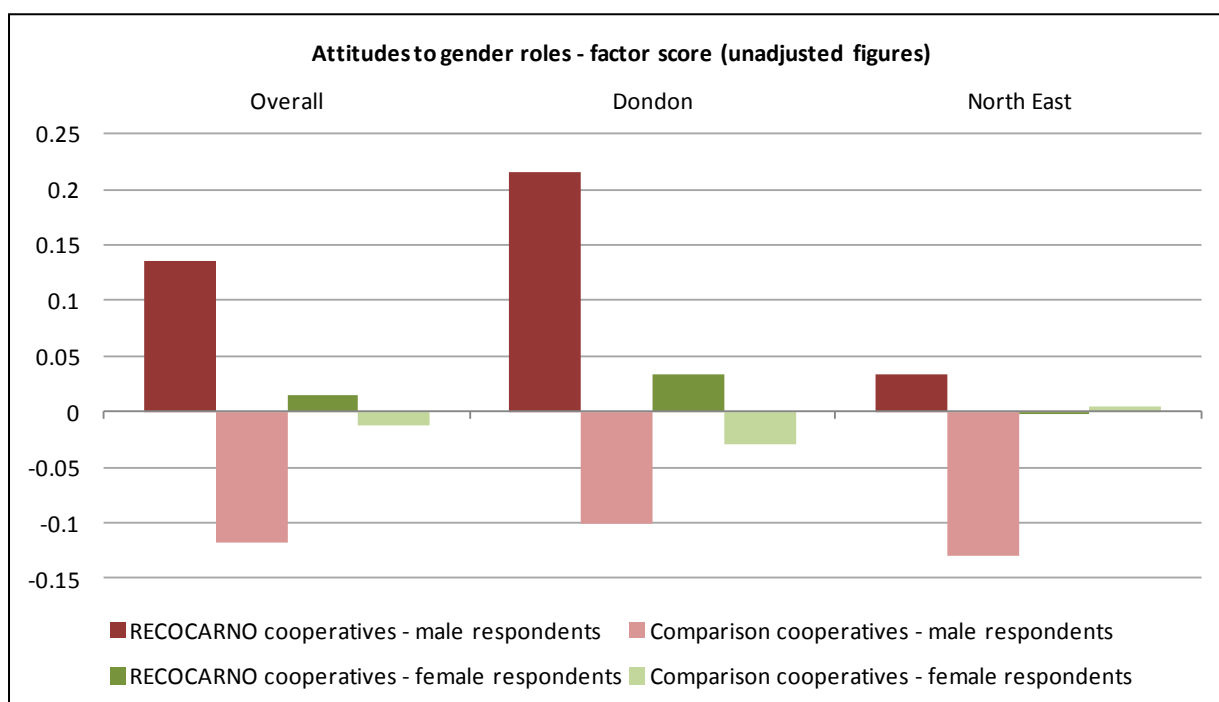
## Outcome 4 – Improved attitudes towards gender roles



At the end of the survey, all respondents were asked about the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with 15 statements about the roles and contribution of women to economic activities. These results were aggregated using principle factor analysis, a technique which reduces some of the statistical “noise” and produces an aggregate score for gender attitudes. In the chart below, zero represents the attitudes to gender roles expressed by the median or “typical” respondent in each area.

The results show a clear positive difference in the attitudes to gender roles expressed by male respondents among the RECOCARNO cooperatives in Dondon. The difference in attitudes among male respondents in the North East is not statistically significant. Nor is there any detectable effect on the attitudes of female respondents in either area. However, not surprisingly, female respondents in general reported more positive attitudes towards women’s economic roles than male respondents did.

It does appear that, at least in Dondon, the efforts which Oxfam and RECOCARNO have made to encourage women’s participation in the cooperatives, and to improve income-generating opportunities for women, has had some effect in generating more positive gender attitudes among male cooperative members.



## Programme Learning Considerations

- **Further investigate the reasons for lack of clear long-term impact in the North East, in spite of the apparent benefit from RECOCARNO membership.**

This effectiveness review has revealed some important conclusions about the effect of this long-term programme in support of coffee producers. However, some important questions remain. Most importantly, why does the longstanding premium to Fairtrade production appear not to have resulted in sustained increases in the wealth of producers? As a first step, it will be important to understand how growth in membership of the RECOCARNO network has affected the coffee price being received by existing members. If increases in membership have dissipated the Fairtrade premium by splitting it between ever larger numbers of cooperative members, then RECOCARNO may wish to consider how to balance growth and capacity in the future. This may require restricting increases in membership to match increases in its ability to market coffee at Fairtrade prices. For example, it may call for RECOCARNO to reconsider its strategy of expanding its network to four additional cooperatives in the near future. However, if the price premium which producers have been receiving has been sustained over several years, further research should be undertaken with these producers, to understand why this extra income has resulted in few significant improvements in wealth indicators.

- **Review what can be learned from the comparison cooperative in Dondon in terms of bringing benefits to members.**

As described in Section 4.3, COOPAVCOD, the cooperative selected as a comparator for the RECOCARNO cooperatives in Dondon is one which did not join RECOCARNO at its inception in 2001, and has consequently received little external support. This comparison cooperative has specialised in the supply of organic coffee, which – although clearly commanding higher prices – is also said to involve higher costs of production, particularly at the certification stage. In spite of this, COOPAVCOD members appear to have benefited just as much from their participation in that cooperative as have members of the two RECOCARNO cooperatives in Dondon. Although total agricultural revenue appears to be approximately the same for members of the RECOCARNO cooperatives as for comparable members of COOPAVCOD, recent net household income may even be slightly higher among COOPAVCOD members.

It is not clear from the results of this review by what route the apparent benefit to membership of COOPAVCOD is being achieved. We suggest that Oxfam and RECOCARNO seek to understand whether anything can be learned from COOPAVCOD's approach. If the benefit which COOPAVCOD brings to its members arises primarily from the organic certification, this may be a market opportunity which RECOCARNO should seek to pursue.

- **Consider how best to promote diversification of income sources while simultaneously providing price incentives for investing in the production of coffee.**

The results of this effectiveness review suggest that attempts to encourage diversification among coffee producers were not effective in the North East, where RECOCARNO membership brings a clear incentive to invest in coffee. It is conceivable that this project has been successful in equipping producers in the North East to further diversify their crop portfolio (as seems to have happened to a modest degree in Dondon), but that they have chosen not to do so because they are currently benefiting from a greater emphasis on coffee production. However, it is still possible that these producers are excessively vulnerable to poor coffee harvests. The programme team and RECOCARNO should carefully investigate how coffee producers in the North East are making decisions on the mix of crops they are



producing, whether they have taken full account of the project's messages about diversification, and whether these messages should be reinforced in the future.

- **Understand why improvements in attitudes towards women's economic roles have been much greater in Dondon than in the North East.**

The improvement in attitudes towards women's economic roles is clear and reasonably large in magnitude in Dondon. However, there has been only a small non-significant effect among members of RECOCARNO cooperatives in the North East. The programme team should seek to understand how RECOCARNO's implementation has varied in the two areas, what the successful mechanisms of change have been in Dondon, and whether these lessons can be applied in the North East and elsewhere.