

PROJECT EFFECTIVENESS REVIEWS

'enhancing effectiveness through evidence-based learning'



Value Chain Development Alliance : Guatemala 2011/12

This effectiveness review assesses the impact of the support provided to members of four producer associations in the Department of Sololá between August 2010 and February 2012. This support was carried out under three related projects, implemented in partnership with the Asociación de Desarrollo Agrícola y Microempresarial (ADAM), and in alliance with Sysco, Superior Foods and Alimentos Sumar, the purchasers of the produce of the four associations. The primary objectives of these projects have been to improve household food security and strengthen agricultural livelihoods. Activities have included providing agricultural extension support, distribution of fertiliser, training on the cultivation of kitchen gardens, provision of productive infrastructure to associations, and support in establishing linkages to private-sector vegetable exporters. At the same time, the activities are seeking to strengthen the position of women within the associations and within their households, with many of the activities carried out specifically with female members of the associations.

During 2011, the project partners invested in constructing physical infrastructure for the four producer associations, including composting plants, collection and storage centres for produce, and seedling banks. This construction work had only recently been completed at the time of the survey, so the impact of these facilities on members' productive activities could not be assessed as part of this effectiveness review.



Map showing the department of Sololá in red (from http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Solola_in_Guatemala.svg?uselang=en-gb)

Photo: Annie Bungeroth/Oxfam

Evaluation Method

To assess the effectiveness of the programme on reducing risk and promoting adaptive capacity, a quasi-experimental impact evaluation was implemented. This involved carrying out surveys with 383 members of producers' associations and producers' groups in the Department of Sololá. As well as members of the supported associations, enumerators interviewed members of comparable associations and groups that had not received similar external support. The survey was designed to allow evaluation of the projects against their intended outcomes and against the global indicator for women's empowerment. At the analysis stage, the statistical tools of propensity-score matching and multivariable regression were used to control for measured differences between the supported and comparison households.

Rating key: ● - Evidence supporting large impact; ● - Evidence supporting more modest impact; ● - Evidence of large impact, but only for specific sub-groups/measures; ● - Evidence of modest impact, but only for specific sub-groups/measures; ● - No evidence of impact

Applicability: These results apply to the households which directly participated in the various project activities carried out in 2010 and 2011 in the four producer associations. The infrastructure investments made during 2011 were not yet operational at the time of the survey, so their impact could not be assessed.

Results

The effectiveness review found evidence of positive impact on the ability of women to influence decisions in producer associations, as well as on attitudes to women's economic roles among women themselves. These effects are mostly concentrated on those women who were not directly members of the producer associations themselves, but who are wives or partners of male association members. To some extent, this may be because many of the women who are direct beneficiaries are members of women-only associations, and, consequently, there is less potential for their influence in their associations to change, as compared to women in mixed associations. There is no evidence to date that the projects have impacted women's influence in household level decision-making; the extent of women's involvement in such decision-making was found to be approximately the same among the supported and comparison households.

Analysis of the data on agricultural activities showed that the projects appear to have been highly successful in encouraging the adoption of some improved agricultural techniques, and in encouraging the cultivation of broccoli and other vegetables. However, there was no indication that this had led to higher returns to producer households, or to improvements in food security or other measures of wellbeing.

Outcome	Rating	Commentary
Outcome 1 – Greater women's involvement in household decision-making	●	No evidence of an increased level of involvement for women in household decision-making.
Outcome 2 – Greater influence for women in community-level associations	●	Evidence of positive change, not among women direct beneficiaries, but among the wives and partners of male beneficiaries.
Outcome 3 – Attitudes to women's economic roles	●	Evidence of improved attitudes among the female household members of male beneficiaries, but no indication of attitude change among female beneficiaries themselves.
Outcome 4 – Women's self-efficacy	●	Evidence of increased self-efficacy among women direct beneficiaries and among female household members of male beneficiaries.
Outcome 5 – Increased household income	●	No evidence of improvement in indicators of household income or wellbeing.

Going forward

The effectiveness review was carried out at an early stage of implementation of the Guatemala Highlands Value-Chain Development Alliance, and some revisions have since been made to the programme's structure with the aim of improving outcomes for participants. In particular, analysis is also being done on how to capitalise on the gains made in terms of gender outcomes, and how to further the use of women's economic leadership (WEL) methodology to involve women more in household decision-making. A negotiation committee has been formed, involving the producer associations and Alimentos Sumar, to enable producers to gain more favourable contract terms. Importantly, since the time of the effectiveness review, the infrastructure investments made by the project have come into operation, and the associations are now producing their own organic compost and seeds – activities which are managed by women members of each association. Monitoring data after the first harvest suggests that both crop productivity and women's incomes have subsequently increased.