

Oxfam GB Project Effectiveness Review Management Response





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Country Director: Le Kim Dung

Name of Project reviewed: Sustainable Livelihood Development and Ethnic Minority Diversity in Lao Cai Province

Date: 28/12/2012

Participants in the Management Response: Le Kim Dung ACD, Dao Quang Minh PC

Outcome/Impact	Rating	Short Commentary
Outcome 1 – Increased household income		No evidence of project impact in relation to Oxfam GB's global livelihoods indicator or other measures of household wealth/income.
Outcome 2 – Improved household food security		No evidence of positive impact on any of the household food security measures used. Intervention households actually worse off on the food diversity measure.
Outcome 3 – Increased agricultural production & profits		No evidence that the project increased production of rice, maize, or other crops or increased income through their sale.
Outcome 4 – Increased adoption of preferred agricultural practices		Evidence that the project encouraged a small proportion of households in the farmer groups to adopt some promoted agricultural practices.

<p>Outcome 5 – Improved access to services/ information</p>		<p>Farmer group households reported having better access to extension services and, to a lesser extent, disaster preparedness information but not other services.</p>
<p>Outcome 6 – Improved gender attitudes</p>		<p>No evidence that the project has improved gender attitudes in general and attitudes towards violence against women in particular.</p>

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

Summary review report has been translated into Vietnamese and sent to partners via email along with a cover letter requesting them to provide feedback on the review results. Face to face meetings between partners and Oxfam will be organised in forthcoming visits to project site to discuss in-person on the review results and identify lessons for future work.

Meetings have been organised within Livelihoods programme to share findings and discuss implications for future programme/project designing, MEL and management. Another sharing will be carried out within one Oxfam, with Strategic Change Goal 1 (SCG 1) working group to share findings and discuss lessons for OI programming. The review will be shared and discussed at OGB Country Learning Review in June 2013 as a case study for all OGB staff, particularly programme ones.

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

The findings did not fully concur with our own expectation/assessment of the project. Partners have carried out their own evaluation and Oxfam has also hired an independent consultant to evaluate and synthesize partner's own evaluations. These reports, apart from pointing out weaknesses, have concluded clearly that the project was successful in bringing changes in beneficiaries' lives, technical capacity for poor farmers, community attitude and behaviour toward gender equality including violence against women, and policy advocacy. Reasons for different review results perhaps partners review captured views from other stakeholders as well e.g. government partners who involved mainly in policy implementation. From their view, though Oxfam provided small funding (approximately GBP50,000 per year) which would not bring significant change in income and food security but it was very good in creating a good model so the government could learn and replicate. Oxfam is also appreciated for supporting areas where the government's expertise fall short. Another reason might be, partner's review did not go into a detail level as Oxfam's effectiveness review did (e.g. dietary, food diversity change over time etc.)

3. Did the final results of the Effectiveness Review identify areas that were particularly strong in the project (i.e. large impact)?

Yes. The review has identified areas we performed slightly better namely the adoption of preferred agricultural practices, improvement in access to information.

Implication for future work: we will apply similar approach in on-going and future projects to support poor communities to adapt good agricultural practices and improve access to information.

4. Did the final results of the Effectiveness Review identify areas that were weak or very weak (i.e. no or very little impact)?

Yes. The review has identified some areas namely income generation, household food security improvement, increase in production and benefit, gender attitude change.

Implication for future work: concept of food security should be clearly specified since designing phase to make sure that both implementer and reviewer have the same understanding. Lack of common understanding would result in the fact that implementer does one thing while reviewer looks at a different one.

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 reviewed project had been closed before the effectiveness review took place. However another project (RVNA92) has been designed and currently being implemented, which has inherited some partners and locations, as well we built on the results of the reviewed project. This means lessons of this review will be taken into consideration in the implementation and MEL of the new project.

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

Programme Learning Considerations:

- *Present the findings of this review to relevant Oxfam staff/interns, district partners, and the farmer groups to further explore possible reasons why there is no evidence of project impact.*

Yes. Summary review report has been translated into Vietnamese and sent to partners for receiving feedback. Meetings will be organized between partners and Oxfam staff to discuss lessons for future programming and implementation.

- *Check to ensure that programmes and projects are designed to do more than simply support the roll-out of government plans and/or policy.*

We always discuss Oxfam's value added to all projects that Oxfam support, and only go ahead if there is clear justification on why they are chosen.

- *Ensure that dietary diversification considerations are substantively mainstreamed in future food security projects in Sa Pa district and possibly elsewhere.*

Yes. This is a current gap as when we designed this project (and for other projects as well). We focus mainly to analyse level of poverty, its causes and how to support communities overcome poverty rather than looking into their daily dietary. When we aimed to improve food security for poor people, we focused on reduction in time length of food shortage (e.g. having enough rice and basic food) rather than what kind of food they consume and whether it meet food diversity requirement. It would be useful if Oxford or RC provide a guideline on how to incorporate dietary and food diversity into design of livelihoods projects.

The future direction of JCAS in Vietnam will focus more on governance aspects of all programmes including livelihoods programme ('process-oriented') and less on technical aspects of our pilots/models. In areas where we continue to strengthen technical aspects of our livelihoods models, we aim to ensure our models/pilots are technically sound.

- *Explore possibilities for adopting a more comprehensive value chain approach to bolster both household income and food security.*

As mentioned above, another value chained based project (RVNA92) has been designed to bolster income, food security, economic leadership for the poor especially women in Lao Cai province.

Country feedback on the whole review process:

- Though quantitative method was strictly followed and brought good learning, it did not however cover qualitative and policy related aspects. Balancing between quantitative and qualitative would be crucial in future MEL in order to capture sufficient information on impact or effectiveness of a programme.
- Selection of stakeholders/informants to be consulted for the review is also important. Only direct beneficiaries (e.g. poor women and men) were consulted during this review, implicating that other perspectives such as those from policy makers, mass organisations, CBO leaders etc. have been missed when looking at Oxfam's project effectiveness.

- Ensuring consistency and continuity in selecting review sites and methodology would be equally important, to facilitate effective learning and follow up for country team. Last three rounds of DFID PPA saw different study sites and methodologies. This has left unanswered questions about the logic of the review approaches, follow up of findings of previous rounds, as well as confusion for Oxfam staff and partners who directly handled the review. We acknowledge the necessity of improving our methods to best capture project/program effectiveness, but such improvement should be built on from our previous work and learning.

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?

Please see above.

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

We have no objection.