

Oxfam GB Project Effectiveness Review Management Response










Regional Director: Cherian Mathews

Country Director: Paul Joicey

Name of Project reviewed: Improving Socio Economic conditions of Paddy farmers in East Sri Lanka

Date: 01/06/2012

Participants in the Management Response: Roxanne Abdulali, S.Raguraamurty, Paul Joicey, S.Sivarajah (Programme manager, senior programme coordinator, associate country director, EC programme coordinator)

Outcome/Impact	Overall	Ampara	Batti	Short Commentary
Outcome 1 – Adoption of improved production techniques				Rates of adoption of improved production techniques were generally higher among the project participants than among comparison households.
Outcome 2 – Revenue generated from paddy cultivation activities				Considerably greater production and sales of paddy in 2012/13 by project participants compared to comparison households, resulting in significantly greater revenue being generated by the average participant household.
Outcome 3 – Improved household income				Household income is estimated to be approximately eight to 10 per cent higher than it would have been without the project; the boost to income among supported households in Batticaloa is slightly greater.

Outcome 4 – Increased food diversity and security				Evidence of a significant increase in food diversity in Batticaloa, but no increase in rice availability. Evidence of a marginal increase in rice availability in Ampara, but no changes in food diversity.
Outcome 5 – Increased asset wealth				Evidence of a significant increase in asset ownership since 2008 among the supported households in Batticaloa. No corresponding increase among supported households in Ampara district.
Outcome 6 – Increased awareness of how to access legal services				Project participants exhibit significantly greater awareness of how to access services for victims of gender-based violence, as well as legal/referral services related to land and property rights.
Outcome 7 – Improved household hygiene behaviour*				Evidence of significant increases in the proportion of supported households in Batticaloa treating their drinking water, and reporting improved hand-washing behaviour.

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

The findings were presented, analysed and discussed in the ACAP project learning review with Oxfam staff, partner staff and beneficiary representatives.

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

Overall, the management is pleased with the report findings, which are consistent with our own internal monitoring and expectations. There were very few surprises with the findings – one or two only. The review showed a positive impact on people’s lives by the project, with increases in food security, household income and changes in agricultural practices – which it can be argued is the main focus of the ACAP programme. We had hoped for a higher impact on household income, with project indicators of success aiming for 25 to 30% increases in HH income and women’s income, but are still pleased with the average 8 to 10%. In the post-war context, where many barriers to economic development persist, this is a very positive change. The disaster context also needs to be considered here – the project was suspended for three months due to the severity of the 2011 floods which destroyed the livelihoods of 80% of ACAP project beneficiaries in the east and diverted Oxfam resources towards immediate response and livelihoods recovery work.

Findings that puzzled the Oxfam staff in country were the apparent lack of hygiene promotion or change in practice for the last area surveyed on WASH practices. Oxfam had conducted a number of hygiene promotion training activities and supported WUMC capacity building. However, from the project baseline data, it is shown that practices on sanitation in the area were already high and over 80% of households had access to sanitation facilities and water sources. That there was intensive aid provided in Ampara post-tsunami may also have an impact on this result area. This requires further review, to uncover reasoning for the minimal or lack of change here in Ampara.

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

The impact of increases in food security through rice production, the increases in household income and adoption of improved production techniques seem particularly strong from the review findings.

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

There were no weaknesses in the results, other than the limitations on the methodology in which there was no qualitative analysis through KII or FGD. Additionally the review only looks at HH level. Much of the project interventions and impacts on collective engagement.

There is also limited analysis specifically relating to gender and the WEL strategies adopted in the the project and impacts on women's access to services etc.

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 project closed in July 2013. In future planning and project design the recommendations of the report will be used as a reference

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

The management in country finds the recommendations reasonable and relevant. Budget allowing we will endeavor to act on each recommendation.

- ***Investigate the reasons for the differences in impact on several measures between supported households in Ampara and Batticaloa districts.***

Oxfam is commissioning a final evaluation of its whole project. We expect that findings from this will highlight factors such as type of intervention, type of partners and strategies etc from engagement with producer organisations to established farmer organisations. This will provide learning on approaches and the impacts per district. Already noted is the strength of the partners in Batticaloa district, their relationship with the community, consistent presence and the capacity of the staff and organisation is markedly high in relation to other partners in the North and East. Yet it is also worth noting innovation on livelihoods approaches in Ampara district has been high and show some positive outcomes.

- ***Follow up with supported rice-producers in Ampara to identify where greater successes in increasing rice production have been realised.***

Again, we hope that the final evaluation will also highlight some of the analysis suggested in the above recommendation. Oxfam staff in country can collect some case studies with farmers looking at changes in approaches to increase the rice production. Questions related to agronomic practices, seed type, water access and access to machinery and new technology or extension service support can be asked.

- ***Consider exploring in more detail how the project has affected supported households in relation to gender-based violence and legal rights (e.g. property and land rights)***

As the objectives and logical framework indicators ask what % of recipients of information on GBV and legal rights seek support, and what percentage are retrieving legal documents following Oxfam and partner interventions. The final evaluation will highlight progress towards achieving objectives and the indicators. This has been incorporated into the final evaluation field and desk research design.

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?

With the end of ACAP the challenge is to find new ways to support the continual development of emerging rural enterprises and women entrepreneurs. The review has confirmed that there is potential for small-scale rice producers, particularly women, to engage in the value chain and increase household income through rice value addition. With the developments in supportive infrastructure being seen in the post-war context, and the integration of DRR thinking and approaches, the increase is expected to continue.

The reflection that floods is one of the probable reasons why household income did not increase as much as expected gives increasing emphasis on supporting resilience – particularly from a risk reduction and adaptation angle.

The review emphasises the need to continue with successful practices, as well as to share learning with others for replication and scale-up – particularly government and other development agencies. Some approaches are already incorporated into district development plans, and an advocacy strategy must be developed to look at taking learning forward further.

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

No objections