

Oxfam GB Project Effectiveness Review Management Response

Regional Director: Olga Ghazaryan

Country Director: Colette Fearon

Name of Project reviewed: Safe Age of Marriage and Women's Economic Empowerment

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Summary of contribution scores below

	Access to credit	Households in project districts have better access to credit than those in comparison districts, particularly in Hadramout Governorate.
	Increased women's economic activity	Some evidence that women in project districts were engaging in productive activities than in comparison districts – but no change in their degree of contribution to household income.
	Improved material wellbeing	Evidence of greater dietary diversity among households in the project district in Hodeidah Governorate, and of increased ownership of household goods in Hadramout. Some indication of higher school attendance in both districts, though this less clear.
	Overall index of women's empowerment	Women in the project districts in Hadramout on average display significantly more positive characteristics of empowerment than do those in comparison districts. In Hodeidah, this is true only of characteristics directly linked to the project activities (access to credit and participation in community groups).

Dimension	Characteristic	Hodeidah Governorate		Hadramout Governorate	
		Proportion of women in project communities above benchmark	Evidence of impact	Proportion of women in project communities above benchmark	Evidence of impact
Ability to make and influence decisions A	Involvement in decisions on productive activities	43%	No	30%	No
	Involvement in household spending decisions	49%	No	61%	Not clear
	Involvement in other household decisions	38%	No	48%	No
	Influence in community decision-making	46%	No	31%	No
Self-perception A	Attitude to women's economic roles	8%	No	27%	Yes
	Attitude to women's domestic roles	9%	No	17%	Yes
	Opinions on women's rights	51%	No	54%	No
	Self-efficacy	21%	No	37%	Yes
	Psycho-social wellbeing	14%	Not clear	48%	No
Personal freedom R	Personal autonomy	6%	No	3%	No
	Attitude to violence against women	69%	No	87%	No
	Experience of violence	74%	No	79%	No
Access to and control over resources A	Access to credit	66%	Yes	55%	Yes
	Independent income	58%	No	36%	Yes
	Role in cash management	46%	No	69%	Not clear
	Savings	23%	No	45%	No
	Control over assets	76%	No	60%	No
Support from social networks G	Social connectivity	47%	No	62%	No
	Group participation	74%	Yes	35%	Yes

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

Internally the report has been shared with project staff and feedback has been given to the PM, a circulation list has been agreed for the Yemen team and Oxfam GB as well as Oxfam Novib. There has been a management discussion between the PM and CD only due to a number of senior posts being vacant at this time. The review will be shared with and discussed with CLT.

A workshop is planned with partners and stakeholders and the review will feed into a broader analysis of recent studies which will involve Oxfam, Care, UNICEF, UNFPA and local partners.

The concept note for the next phase of the programme will take into consideration the findings of the review.

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

In general they do however the issue of VAW needs to be studied further and whilst it is considered probable that incidents are being reported more openly in the view of the country team, this assumption needs to be tested as the implications of this not being the case are very concerning for all agencies working on micro-finance projects with women.

The different contexts of the two governorates and the different issues evident in each are clearly emerging in the report and therefore this reinforces the need for stronger baseline data and more evidence based monitoring which we were aware were needed to really be able to demonstrate contextual differences. It is unsurprising to the team that evidence is stronger in Hadramout, as the position of women in society there is more restrictive and challenging than for women in Al Hodeidah but this was not established in an evidenced based way at the outset.

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

The increase in confidence and voice is clear and the purpose of the loans to empower women seems clear.

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

Impact indicators were weak and lack of baseline was a significant omission at the beginning of the project which was not subsequently addressed.

Partners could have been supported better to be more responsive to impact needs and to expand good practice into other areas.

5. a) Is the reviewed project continuing? If yes, what actions are being taken in response to the weak areas identified in question 4?

There is no funding currently for this project continuation beyond March 2014 although a concept note has been developed and shared with donors. There will be a more robust programme design and better structure of the organisation as well as significantly increased resourcing of MEAL and programme quality resources to support better use of monitoring tools and opportunities.

In terms of the micro-finance component of the programme it is accepted that both Oxfam and the partners were weak and did not manage or monitor this programme to good effect and therefore the intention is to link women and communities with micro-finance institutions which specialise in this area of work rather than implement it ourselves. Instead we will increase the advocacy activities in our programme to promote greater access to loans and economic and community decision making for women.

We will also take this learning into other programmes and more strongly advocate on mobility and economic empowerment of women in our governance and resilience building work.

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

Programme Learning Considerations:

- ***Consider whether disbursing loans in kind undermines women's ability to take ownership and control of those loans.***

We will no longer be engaging in this component of the programme directly. We will create women's groups to link with micro-financing services as the loans did play a role in empowering women. Investigate how to influence the micro-lending services to expand into rural areas to give greater access to poor women and make loans more accessible. With limited mobility for women in Hadramout where the loans in kind were distributed, encourage women to participate in the negotiations of preference for in-kind or direct cash loans with finance institutes.

- ***Carefully monitor the potential for women's economic empowerment activities to increase the incidence of violence against women.***

This needs discussion and exploration with other organisations working in this way and research needs to be commissioned to investigate this further as the implications if this is demonstrated to be true, are far reaching for the international community and LNGOs. It will therefore be critical that gaining ownership of this concern will be preferable at an early stage across stakeholders.

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?

The loans will come to an end but the Safe Age of Marriage component will be continued.
Oxfam GB can support us in sharing global learning from other countries and potentially link us to other programmes and affiliates who are working particularly on creative ways of accessing finance for women and advocating on this.
Learning on the impact of mobility on women's economic empowerment and to have greater mobility and access would be helpful.
Potentially developing ToRs for a study on the correlation between WEE and GBV possibly if other agencies working on this issue do not have contrary evidence and in conjunction with other agencies.
Supporting through review of the concept note and proposal for the next phase of Safe Age of Marriage to prompt us on any learning globally or any learning from the review that we have overlooked, and to broaden our thinking in this area.

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

No we do not; we found the report very helpful and think others will also find it useful. We intend to share it in Yemen.