Evaluation Report

Fostering Community Change in the OPT - Capacity Building for Non-state Actors

Project Locations in OPT:

Fasayel, Jiftlik, Zbedat, Al-Oujah - the Jordan Valley

Al-Walajeh - East Beth-Lehem

Project Duration: 30 month 1/4/2010 - 30/9/2012

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Acknowledgement

I thank Oxfam GB- Jerusalem office for this opportunity.

Special gratitude goes to Ms. Nivine Sandouka Sharraf from Oxfam's Community Development Program, for providing information, documents and logistical support.

I thank Mr. Amer Daraghmeh, project coordinator of Pal-Vision for facilitating access and mobility to the project area, especially the remote communities in the Jordan Valley. I deeply appreciate his input and his commitment to making this evaluation possible.

I am grateful to all those who received me in their offices, homes, fields and communities. I salute them for their interest, devotion and for their wisdom and tolerance of the hardship and injustice that engulfs their daily lives. I am confident that this is a non-lasting hardship and hope it will soon come to an end.

Yours;

Samar Zidani Baidoun

Evaluation Consultant
December 2012

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List of Abbreviations

AIDCO	Europe Aid Co-operation Office
AR	Awareness Raising
CC	Community Committee
CBO	Community Based Organization
CSO	Civil Society Organizations
DAC	Development Aid Committee
EU	European Union
EC	European Commission
GNI	Gross National Income
GNP	Gross National Product
LA	Local Authorities
LGU	Local Government Units
M	Million
MAS	Multi-Actors System
MFI	Micro Finance
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
NSA	Non-State Actor
OPT	Occupied Palestinian Territory
OGB	Oxfam Great Britain
PA	Palestinian Authority
PCBS	Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics
PME	Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation
WSC	Women Study Center

Introduction

With this project pilot, Oxfam GB is keen to draw on lessons from project implementation to inform future programming and project identification that will support work aimed at community organizing, raising awareness of civil rights, and mobilizing non-state actors (NSAs) to advocate and seek fairer relations and communication between marginalized communities and policy-makers. The ultimate aim is to engage NSAs in processes of social change as means to increase fairness and social justice.

The project "Fostering Community Change in the OPT" was the outcome of discussions, activities and shared experiences of OGB and a number of its partners. This pilot project was launched with the participation of targeted communities in the Jordan Valley and Al-Walajeh. The broad orientation of the project was to organize, strengthen and mobilize NSAs in the OPT so that they could effectively engage in social change. The beneficiaries were encouraged and assisted to independently define their own needs, formulate an advocacy agenda, and engage in active dialogue with Local Governmental Units (LGUs), governmental offices (ministries) and donor agencies concerning their collective needs, service delivery and good governance.

The overall objective as defined in the original proposal was to strengthen the capacity of Palestinian Community Based Organizations(CBOs) as a pre-condition for a more equitable, open and democratic society, with the focus on youth and women in the targeted communities. Therefore, the project strove to see that government (in this case the PA) and the different LGUs became increasingly responsive to the needs of the grassroots population in the project area.

Four intended outcomes (objectives) were pre-defined as follows:

1. Community members, particularly women and youth, should have increased awareness and confidence to demand their rights and access services.

2. CBOs in target communities should have increased capacity and transparency to address community needs and engage proactively with government actors and other stakeholders.

3. Local government should have enhanced awareness, capacity and transparency in responding to identified community needs and priorities.

4. Increased coordination and networking should allow for more effective allocation of services and resources to target communities.

The project was designed and implemented by <u>four local Palestinian NGOs</u> in close partnership, cooperation and coordination with OGB. The four NGOs were:

•   Ansar Children's Centre – A CBO in Al-Walajeh.

•   Palestinian Vision- a national NGO working with youth.

•   The Women Study Center – Ramallah.

•   The Palestinian Initiative for the Promotion of Global Dialogue and Democracy (MIFTAH) – in Ramallah.

OGB's role was to establish the partnership between the four NGOs, produce a multi-actors engagement mechanism, develop and apply a project monitoring scheme, facilitate and support project implementation and the management of the different partners' roles and responsibilities, assist with financial management, and communicate with, and report to, the European Commission (EC) as the primary co-donor.

Purpose of the evaluation

The purpose of this evaluation was to determine to what extent the NSA project had reached its objectives, and to provide answers to a set of specific questions as outlined in the Terms of Reference and as defined in the DAC Criteria (www.oecd.org) applied by the EU. These questions steered the assessment to look into aspects related to relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability.

In this report, each thematic area is broken down into a number of questions that were investigated during the evaluation process (annex 1 ToR).

Evaluation questions

Relevance:

- How relevant was the design and selection of the activities to the community's needs?

- Which beneficiaries were addressed?

- Who was not reached?

- To what extent would the project objectives remain valid for a future project phase?

Effectiveness:

- How effective was the original planning in meeting project objectives?

- How many people were reached – ideally with separate figures for men and women

- What factors could be identified as contributed to enhancing or hindering project implementation?

Efficiency:

- How efficiently had the activities been managed and implemented?

- Was there a PME mechanism in place?

- Were there monitoring tools? What were they?

- To what extent did the use of funds seem appropriate in view of the results/effects achieved?

Impact:

- To what extent, and how did the activities implemented by this project influence the life quality of the beneficiaries?

Sustainability:

- How long lasting were the results/effects likely to be?

- What factors were already there that could increase sustainability?

- What needed to be done in the future to enhance sustainability?

Evaluation methodology

The methodology utilized in this assessment ensured the application of quantitative and qualitative techniques, taking into account the validity and reliability associated with social research.

Site visits:

- 5 villages were visited at least once during the evaluation: Jiftlik, Al-Ouja, Zbedat, Fasayel and Al-Walajeh.

- The office of Oxfam in East Jerusalem.

- The headquarters of each partner were visited including: Ansar in Al-Walajeh, MIFTAH in Ramallah, WSC in Jerusalem and Pal-vision in both Beth-Lehem and Jerusalem

Data Collection:

- Individual in-depth interviews included:

- Project team, i.e. 4 project coordinators from the 4 partnering organizations.

- Project manager from Miftah.

- Director of Pal-vision

- Finance officer of Pal-vision

- Director of Ansar center in Walajeh

- 2 mobilizers from Zbedat (1 male 1 female)

- Kindergarten teacher in Jiftlik

- Kindergarten teacher in Zbedat

- 2 mobilizers from Jiftlik (1 male 1 female)

- NSA project coordinator from Oxfam Italy – Jerusalem

- Governor of Bethlehem Governorate

- Oxfam GB – Jerusalem , NSA project manager

- Oxfam GB – Jerusalem, deputy director & brief exchange with financial officer.

Focus groups included:

- Al WalajehCommunity Committee members

- Al Walajeh youth mobilizers group

- Al Walajeh board members of Ansar Center

- Jiftlik Community Committee members

- Jiftlik youth mobilizers group

- Al-Ouja Community Committee members

- Fasayel Community Committee members

Desk review included:

- Project proposal.

- EU concept paper on NSA model.

- Project reports covering the whole project period 1/4/2010 -30/9/2012.

- Oxfam GB's publication "On the Brink 2010" on the Jordan Valley.

- Studies of UN Office of Coordinating Humanitarian Affairs – OCHA on Area C.

- EU-midterm monitoring report on the project from 2011.

- Set of correspondence and minutes of meetings.

- Publications produced by the project, "Citizens Rights" and "Voices".

- Strategies produced by the Community Committees.

- Project budget including revised budgets and financial reports.

All individuals and groups who were interviewed had the purpose and process of the evaluation explained to them orally and, in some cases, also in writing. They were assured that their contributions were confidential to the evaluator and that their input would remain anonymous and unidentifiable, both in the evaluation report and any other related document.

Context - The Project Area

The Oslo Agreements divided the West Bank into three zones as part of a framework to support the partial autonomy of the Palestinian Authority (PA).   Area C, which is under full Israeli control, comprises 62% of the West Bank and is home to approximately 150,000 Palestinians and some 340,000 Israeli settlers. Since the Oslo Agreements, Israel has used a complex legal and bureaucratic apparatus to seizecontrol of hundreds of thousands of dunams of Palestinian land, much of it privately owned and outside the existing boundaries of settlements and outposts.A number of legal and practical rationales are used by the state of Israel to justify and enable land seizure, including military purposes, public use, or the declaration of state lands. These are coupled with the independent seizure of privately-owned Palestinian land by settlers.

In spite of the fact that Israeli settlements in the West Bank are one of the most discussed and best documented final-status issues, there are still large information gaps regarding the means by which the Israeli authorities, often with the close assistance of settler groups, control large blocks of land around and between settlements in Area C. Israeli land policies, planning systems and other settlement-related practices frequently result in the expropriation of private Palestinian land, infringing on the fundamental rights provided by international law forboth individuals and the community.

Although such activities are clearly categorized as illegal both under Israeli domestic law and international law, settlers receive almost total and unconditional support from the Israeli authorities whether active or implicit. As a result, the number and size of outposts and settlements has continued to increase; it is estimated that 34% of the total territory occupied by settlements in Area C was privately-owned Palestinian land. In total, around 40% of Area C has been designated and actually confiscated either for establishing settlements or for Israeli Army (IDF) usage, and in many times for both, effectively prohibiting Palestinian construction in these areas. The Israeli authorities have systematically failed to enforce the law or to provide Palestinians with any effective remedy.

Most of the project was implemented in the Jordan Valley. The Jordan Valley covers around 30% of the West Bank, and is home to nearly 60,000 Palestinians. 87% of the land is designated as Area C, virtually all of which is prohibited for Palestinian use, earmarked instead for the use of the Israeli military or under the jurisdiction of Israeli settlements. An additional 7% is formally part of Area B, but is unavailable for development, as it was designated a nature reserve under the 1998 Wye River Memorandum. Around one quarter of Palestinians in the area reside in Area C, including some 7,900 Bedouin and herders. Some 3,400 people reside partially or fully in closed military zones and face a high risk of forced eviction.There are 37 Israeli settlements, with a population of 9,500, established across the area, in contravention of international law.

Israeli land policy and settlement-related practices have therefore infringedon the fundamental human rights of the Palestinian population. This population, which exceeds 150,000, includes those in the Jordan Valley, which,as well as being classified as area C, has since the 1967 Six-Day War also been declared a 'Closed Military Area'. As a result, construction of buildings for Palestinians is almost totally prohibited. Construction here does not refer only to houses but also to schools, clinics, and any other public facility. Meanwhile 37 illegal Israeli settlements have been built in the area, with a population of approximately 9000 Israeli settlers.

By the time of compiling this report, the right-wing Israeli government of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has issued the go-ahead for the construction of 3,000 new housing units in occupied East Jerusalem and the West Bank and is putting 1,000 more on a fast track for permits.

The Palestinian villages, small towns and many small herding communities who are among the most vulnerable people in the West Bank suffer of being abandoned by both the PA and the Israeli government. Being in area C, they receive no services, no clinics; no proper schools no policing services, no social services and so on…

Greenhouses of settlements next to 'Ein al-Bida, in the Jordan Valley. Photo: Eyal Hareuveni, B'Tselem, 23 March 2011.

The Palestinian population in the project area experiences daily hardship, not knowing whom and how to approach in their efforts to obtain their rights. According to the Oslo agreement, services are supposed to be provided by the PA but, paradoxically, their provision, especially those that are seen as infrastructure, requires the approval of the Israeli Military Administration. The latter claims that area C is a military zone where provision of services is not permitted. The people approach the PA with requests for the provision of basic services; the PA expresses willingness, but can do nothing because it has no power… And so a whole population is becoming more and more lost in a historical political paradox. Large marginalized communities living under occupation and facing dispossession, displacement and isolation, the Palestinian residents in Area C are forced to contend with egregious violations of their basic human rights.

Oxfam GB has worked in area C before, and has implemented previous projects focusing on people's livelihoods. Based on accumulated experience, therefore, it was decided to implement the current NSA project in the following communities/villages:

Fasayel

This is a Palestinian village located about 23 Kilometers north of the city of Jericho. The built-up area of the village is 194 dunum and its population is 1,132 (PCBS 2010). The village is surrounded by a set of illegal Israeli settlements which have limited the urban expansion of the village over the years and prevented villagers from carrying on their normal lives. It is bordered by the Israeli settlements of Yafit and Pezael to the North, the settlements of Gilgal, Tomer and NetivHegdud to the South, and the Israeli bypass road (an Israeli-controlled road that links the illegal Israeli settlements in the north with others in the south).

Fasayel is facing systematic Israeli pressure which aims to eradicate the population from their own lands by demolishing their properties, tightening and restricting their movement, and depriving them of most of the basic necessities of a decent life.

Fasayil al-Fauqa - from www.jordanvalleysolidarity.org

Jiftlik

Jiftlik is a town in the Jordan Valley several kilometers from the Jordanian border. In the aftermath of Israel's victory in the 1967 war, over 800 homes in the town were razed by the Israeli army and its 6,000 inhabitants were ordered to leave. Many of the inhabitants returned, however, and today it is home to over 5,500 people. Designated as "Area C",Jiftlik is subject to Israeli military administration and its expansion is blocked by the Israeli settlements of Massua, Hamra and Argaman.

Like several other communities in the Jordan Valley area, the town continues to face Israeli restrictions on construction and movement, which blocks development and the provision of basic services. It also lacks electricity infrastructure. It has a primary school managed by the UNRWA.

Al Ouja:

Al Ouja is a village in the Governorate of Jericho. It is located 12 kilometers north east of the City of Jericho. Its population is about 4,135. Throughout history its residents worked in farming,helped by the presence of a number of water wells in the area. About 3,000 dunums were once used for agricultural purposes but, during the past ten years, the Israeli Water Authority took control of the wells, changed their direction and confiscated most of the agricultural land. The land was used for the establishment of settlements and for a number of military bases, since it is so close to the Jordanian border. As such, more than 20,000 dunums of land were declared a "Military Zone" and, hence, no Palestinian access was allowed.

In 1976, the Israeli settlement of Nutaf was established on the village's lands, followed, in1977, by the settlement of Nura'an and, in 1979,by the settlement of Na'omi. The settlements of Tomer and Natif Jiddad came later, while military towers have surrounded the village from all directions.

Zbedat

Zbedat was classified Area B during the Oslo accords, technically meaning that there is joint Israeli and Palestinian control. In reality, although the village is better off than the other project villages in area C, the classification stunts the natural growth of the village by placing a rigid border on the built up area.

The residents of Zbedat, about 5000 people, suffer from chronic water shortages and, since the seizures of 1968, lack of agricultural land. It is forbidden for the residents of Zbedat to drill wells or construct water reservoirs. Building restrictions in Zbedat are often enforced through house demolitions.

Vegetable stall selling Palestinian fruit and vegetables on Route 90, close to Zbedat, is the only market many Palestinian farmers can access. Many of these stalls have been demolished by the IDF in recent years

Those farmers who do have land to farm around Zbedat are often unable to access local markets for their food due to Israeli closures. As a result many farmers sell their goods from makeshift shacks at the side of Route 90. These shacks have been subject to demolitions by the IDF.

The settlement of Argaman encounters none of these problems. Settlers living in Argaman are offered government loans, free houses, subsidised and plentiful water and electricity. Argaman grows roses, herbs and grapes for export.

Al Walajeh

Al-Walajeh village rises 750 meters above sea level, 8.5 kilometers to the southwest of Jerusalem city and about four kilometers to the northwest of Bethlehem city. It has a population of 1,644 people. 75% of Al-Walajeh's land was confiscated by Israel to establish the Gilo settlement in the east (1971), and HarGilo settlement in the southeast (1972).

Half of al-Walajeh is actually under the jurisdiction of the Jerusalem municipality (although none of the residents themselves have Jerusalem IDs). At the moment it is in the process of being fully surrounded by the Israeli separation wall, and the plan is to create what will in effect be a ghetto in Jerusalem. The only entrance/exit to the village will be through an Israeli controlled gate through HarGilo terminal. Al Walajeh residents will be isolated from nearby villages and cities, cut off from the main urban services (clinics, hospitals, schools),and from their agricultural lands located north and west of the separation wall.

Wall in Al-Walajeh, West Bank

Evaluation Questions, Analysis & Findings

Relevance

How relevant was the design and selection of the activities to the needs of the communities?

Considering the general socio-political context in the Jordan Valley and Al-Walajeh, both of them in area C (and partly area B), the project was an essential and relevant <u>developmental intervention</u>. It was rated of high relevance because it did not work only on the capacity-building of local people, but also provided them with the resources they needed to practice and materialize their potential to organize and improve their own communities, for which neither the Israeli nor the Palestinian governments were providing services. Consultations with the communities and local CBOs showed that the project's aims were relevant to their visions and missions as well as being particularly suitable for their social and intellectual needs.

<u>The design</u> of the project was relevant to the needs of the communities. It was developed in participation and cooperation with some of the partners. The communities were not active participants in the planning and design, but they have taken an active role throughout the implementation process. The planning of the project was based on a broad assessment of needs of the target population which varied according to the different locations.

While there are clear indicators that three out of four intended results (objectives) were relevant (detailed analysis will follow), the fourth intended result was overly ambitious because of the project area. The politics of area C, entailing severe restrictions on developmental initiatives, especially those related to infrastructure, made it impossible to achieve the fourth intended result within the given project duration. The project partners who were involved in project implementation were confronted with a major constraint related to the intended result: <u>"Increased coordination and networking allows for more effective allocation of services and resources into target communities"</u>, that became a challenge because in order to achieve this result, the status of area C will need to be modified. The distinction between means and ends regarding this objective become complicated as increasing coordination and networking with policy makers did not allow for more effective allocation of services simply because the Palestinian policy makers, even if they were interested, they were not able to deliver in area C. They have no power to contribute to the desired change in area C. Thus, this intended result was not within the capacity domain of the project to achieve within the timetable defined for the project.

As for the content and activities, they were relevant and based on actual need, because civil rights awareness, conceptual understanding and knowledge about citizenship and social responsibility are currently lacking in the socio-political context of OPT.

In providing <u>capacity building and </u>training, both the content and the approach were clearly empowering. In referring to a training in log-frame, a member of the CC in Jiftlik indicated that: *"… I learned and was introduced to many ideas that help me even now in organizing my thoughts and the way I think…".* Thus, the content and activities were relevant and based on actual needs.

The training activities were provided through a sequence of capacity-building activities, training, coaching and ongoing consultation provided by the partnering organizations and the coordinators to the CCs and the Mobilizers.

The partnership model of different actors coming together around an agreed-upon mission makes it a multi-actors engagement model in which each partner allocates part of her capacities to engage with others for a defined period of time, and to collectively synergize as a way of accomplishing agreed-upon objectives. In that sense, the selection of the partners was based on a sequence of historical events. OGB had worked with some of the project partners before, namely The Palestinian Vision and Ansar Center. Knowing them from the past, and working with them in the field was the main motive to continue with them in this project. As for Miftah, it was selected because it is well known in Palestine for its expertise in curriculum and training in themes related to citizenship-building and good governance. WSC was selected because of its experience in gender training and research. Despite the design of the project not having a clear selection criteriafor partners, other than historical relationships, the partners who participated in were directly relevant to the content which the project intended to deliver.

Which beneficiaries were addressed?

The following beneficiary groups were identified based on the various project outputs.

- The four (above) civil society organizations (partners),who became actively engaged in a multi-actor community development project, giving complementary support to each other, sharing and learning through jointly agreed upon strategy and objectives.

- Members of the Local Government Units through training and awareness-raising project activities.

- Professionals of local councils and municipalities through participation in project training sessions.

- CBOs in the local targeted communities and other organized local groups (farmers, women, sport, youth, and more).

- Women at large who interacted with the project directly and indirectly, in organized groups and individually.

- OGB by coordinating a multi-actor model of community development, and in facilitating processes of implementation.

- Local Community Committees (CC) that were formed and activated through project activities.

- Community mobilizers, made up of groups of youths who promoted social change,by being introduced to concept-related social justice and social change and by being encouraged to take a role of social responsibility and become agents of social change.

- The wider general public in the OPT (and other areas) through project awareness campaigns that made them aware of the existence of the communities, and the political riddle of the Jordan Valley and areas classified as "C".

The total targeted number of direct beneficiaries as presented in the proposal was the 13,270 Palestinians residing in the selected 6 communities in the West Bank. That figure included the 1,220 people of Jaba', a village which was taken out of the project, leaving 12,050. Looking at the total number of inhabitants in the project locations, approximately 19,120, and considering that the project influenced everyone's life to some extent, the number of actual beneficiaries was 58.7% more than the target, which is a high positive deviation. Although reports produced on the project consisted of a systematic comparative between planned and actually implemented activities, the analysis of this positive deviation and its implications for the project's capacities and resources was not available in project documents.

Who was not reached?

Palestinian policy makers were partially introduced to the context and the situation of the population in area C. They did not become sufficiently engaged in the project, and their input was insignificant because according to the Oslo agreement, Palestinian policy makers do not have power over area C. Although the population of area C is Palestinian, still the Palestinian Authority is not allowed to provide services, or to set policies related to services without the permission of the Israeli Military Administration which is usually rejected. This reality decreases the potential of change coming directly from Palestinian policy makers, and thus requires an approach that is based on developing a well-coordinated advocacy strategy that utilizes LGUs, and the population to pressure the Palestinian policy makers (the PA), and mobilize the latter to pressure the Israeli Military Administration and the Israeli government to allow for services to reach the people in area C.

Also, Palestinian national government officials were reached partially, and their involvement in the process remained at a public relations level. Their input consisted of attending awareness campaigns, open days and visits, which did not produce the intended outputs.

The private sector as a potential partner in the sustainability of the project was not involved in either the planning or the implementation of the project.

No national NGOs (other than the partners) capable of lobbying and advocacy concerning area C and the violation of human rights in the project area were reached.

To what extent are the project objectives still valid for a future project phase?

The context of the project area continues to be politically complex and the communities there continue to suffer hardship, discrimination and violation of their civil and human rights at all levels. As long as Israel imposes restrictions on area C, any developmental and livelihood intervention support is crucial and relevant especially those that apply rights-based approaches and integrate awareness raising concerning citizenship, good governance and accountability.

Furthermore, the socio-economic status of women in these communities is a matter of proper concern because the communities are highly conservative; tribally oriented and have a culture of refusing to recognize the role women play. Thus, raising awareness of and promoting the role of women continues to be an area that needs further support.

The project objectives are thus still highly valid, especially if the adjustments recommended in this evaluation are taken into consideration and integrated in future design.

Effectiveness:

How effective was the original planning in meeting project objectives?

All informants expressed high motivation to continue their roles in community development. The sense of ownership is very high and most of them declared that they intend to continue their activities regardless of the continuation of the project. This is not an indicator of sustainability, but it shows that the project stimulated the dynamic of community engagement in collective common cause and needs.

Throughout the evaluation, all CCs showed a high level of ownership and expressed an intention to continue working with their communities. Within their limited capacities, both the CCs and the mobilizers demonstrated a serious willingness to fulfill the objectives of the strategies they produced as part of the project outputs. Everyone interviewed confirmed that the training they received was very useful and highly beneficial to them as individuals and as groups. Project activities were implemented on time and according to the plan. For the CCs and the partners,the project was generally effective, excluding some periods when change was taking place within OGB which required all stakeholders to adjust to new personnel and sometimes to new orientation.

As for the intended results (objectives), the evaluation assessed achievements against planned objectives.The evaluation analysis demonstrates that the project carried with it elements of effectiveness. It developed and strengthened relationships within and between the different actors in the project and it stimulated communities' awareness and interest in the role of social capital and its relationship to social policy, as presented in the following pages of this report.

It also increased the knowledge base and the capacity of the targeted communities which contributed to the validity of the project and to its effectiveness.

The following is an assessment of the extent to which results were achieved against what wasintended

Intended Result 1: Community members, particularly women and youth, have an increased awareness and confidence to demand their rights and access services…

A number of outputs were produced in the process of achieving this objective.

The partnership between the four local NGOs and OGB was formed through a number of meetings, clarifications of expectations, review of the implementation activities, division of roles and responsibilities, and formal agreements including allocation of finances.

Furthermore, OGB took responsibility for providing the needed training in EU compliance in narrative and financial reporting to all the partners. An operational annual plan was developed including aquarterly reporting system, with formats in Arabic and English to facilitate communication and reporting.

The partners' collective effort in developing a monitoring scheme for the implementation of project activities was evident and the quality of that scheme was excellent. Yet, the partners fell short when it came to thinking about a monitoring mechanism for the management of the project. The absence of a steering committee, or some other mechanism to take responsibility for management and leadership, detracted from the effectiveness of partnership management.

An additional output was the development of training curricula based on the results of needs assessment conducted prior to launching the project.

As for the field operation, communities in the five villages were organized and the people of each village were introduced to the rationale behind the project through a public event whichtook place in each village.

In each village, one Community Committee (CC) was formed of representatives from the local CBOs, LGU, Youth groups, Women and local NGOs.The number of members in each CC varied depending on the number of local entities which were represented in the CC.

Furthermore, the total number of members in each CC changed from the start to the end of the project and it was different from one location to another. In Al-Walajeh, for example, the CC

started with 9 members but, as the project progressed, women in the village became interested and wanted to join, resulting in a final number of 12.

The evaluation identified Fasayel as the most challenging community because it was not only the most tribal, but that the community constitutes about seven different tribes living in the village not always in peace. Family ties are very strong and are reinforced by intermarriage within the tribe. Each of them has a strong sense of collective loyalty to its own unit which it defends against all other groups, including those who live in the same village. They village of Fasayel is the least developed amongst the other project villages. It speared over a large lot of sand land which makes agriculture impossible. The social fabric combined with the physical conditions was not in harmony with the project objective of organizing the whole community around common issues.

To overcome these constraints, both the coordinator of the project and OGB had successfully applied the required culturally sensitive and empowering approach throughout the whole project.

In Fasayel, the project coordinator had to identify key figures from the community itself and to start his communication with them. Due to the high diversity of tribes in the village, key figures were representative of each different tribe. It was not easy for the coordinator to convince those to come together and consider dealing with common issues. It required more time than the other locations, more understanding of the slower process, and the outputs were not always as wished for.

All in all the culturally sensitive approach applied in the Jordan Valley reflects knowledge of the local culture which was one of the reasons for choosing to have a coordinator who is from outside the four communities because had the coordinator been one of them, many problems would have been stimulated by local tension and tribal competition.   The skills, personal communication abilities and knowledge of the specific local context of each village contributed significantly to the success of the project.

The following Community Committees were formed:

Community Committees				
Location	Population	CC members men	CC member women	Total CC members
Al-Walajeh	2410	5	7	12
Zbedat	5500	7	4	11
Al-Ouja	4135	4	11	15
Fasayel	1132	6	3	9
Jiftlik	5943	9	6	15

In each village one group of young Mobilizers was established. Each group had a total of 6 members, local young activists and young men and women who had enough interest and motivation to become active citizens. All the Mobilizer groups were trained, coached and given a small monthly allowance as a financial incentive for the activities they implemented. The main role of the Mobilizers was to ensure that all the village inhabitants were aware of the processes their village was undergoing. In addition to raising awareness, they also assisted with and facilitated the implementation needs of the CCs in their respective locations.

It is noticeable that the number of members in each CC was not connected to the size of the population. The original plan as presented in the project proposal did not link the size of the population in each location to the size of CCs. The evaluation did not look into the implication of the absence of such matching, but, it only identified this element and a point that requires attention in future planning.

In the project planning, and implementation, reference made to the four villages in the Jordan Valley was consistently collective and they were called "the communities". Similarly, one project coordinator was hired to work in the four villages in the Jordan Valley, (population total 16,710) while one coordinator was hired to work in Al-Walajeh (population total 1644). This disproportionate division of human resources hampered the efficiency of the project as will be elaborated on later in this report. One of the coordinators stated that:

"if I am asked to repeat the planning for the project, I would make sure to highlight the significance and the characteristics of each single village before starting…".

Another coordinator indicated:

"…all the time we referred to the four villages by The Valley, as if it is one place; working with the communities in their respective locations made it clear that it was not a one place.They were so different…" .

To achieve the same above listed objective (intended result 1), groups of local young Mobilizers were formed. The original plan was to restrict the size of Mobilizer Groups to 6, which was important for financial reasons, particularly in respect of the monthly incentive.In the CC of Al-Walajeh, the Mobilizer group started with 6 but one member then traveled abroad and was replaced. Later, the traveling member returned and was allowed to rejoin.Thus there were 7 Mobilizers in Walaje. The Mobilizer groups were as follows:

Mobilizers Groups				
Location	Population	members men	member women	Total
Al-Walajeh	2410	5	2	7
Zbedat	5500	4	2	6
Al-Ouja	4135	2	4	6
Fasayel	1132	3	3	6
Jiftlik	5943	3	3	6

All the people interviewed knew about the CCs and the Mobilizers, they were also able to refer to their activities and successes, and confirmed that the CCs in all locations worked toward the good of the whole village. In Jiftlik, a CC member referring to the CC as a model said:

"…our village had many initiatives in the past, but none of them was able to produce a new body structure that collects all of us together…" .

Furthermore, the planned training activities were all conducted according to plan and were provided to all the direct beneficiaries, e.g. CCs, Mobilizers, local CBOs, members of LGUs, and other entities in each village. Training covered a wide spectrum of content and themes related to civil rights, citizenship, community mobilization, conflict, advocacy and more, resulting in the production a three year strategy document that was designed by the locals themselves.

Everyone interviewed confirmed that the training they received was very useful and highly beneficial to them as individuals and as groups. Project activities were implemented on time, and according to the plan. For the CCs and the partners, the project was generally effective, with the exclusion of some periods when change was taking place within OGB which required all stakeholders to adjust to new personnel and sometimes new orientation.

Concerning gender awareness and gender mainstreaming, the CCs through training and coaching of the project partners and the coordinators developed a gender criteria that required that at least 50% of the members should be women. The gender component was not equal however. In Al-Ouja, the CC started with 19 members, of whom 12 were women. There was a dropout of members throughout the project but women remained in the majority.

In Fasayel and Zbedat the participation of women was less than 50%, thus their issues and concerns were hardly raised. The village of Zbedat remained behind in this regard due not only to its very difficult social setting, but also because the mayor's wife had her own local CBO. She saw this project as competition and therefore encouraged her network of women to boycott its activities, which hampered the participation of more women in the village. In Al-Walajeh the CC comprised four women and five men. Women have taken the lead in many activities and projects and continue to manage the Ansar Center even after the ending of the project. A women member of Al-Walajeh's CC revealed:

"I lived here all my life, but never knew about issues that are going on in my village. I heard about the CC, got interested to see what that was all about…Today, I am so glad that I became a member…"

Gender participation was to be monitored by the WSC throughout the project. Due to limited human resources, and the absence of a Gender Monitoring Scheme in the proposal, the WSC had to develop monitoring tools that could be utilized with minimal presence in the field.

During the evaluation, the presence of women was quite strong. Their voice and input was direct, expressive and supported by others who attended meetings and focus group discussions. In the Al-Ouja focus group, when asked about the reason that there were more women than men in the CC, one woman replied:"we are men-women…" In other words, women who are as good as men…Women who have the characteristics of men !

Lastly, taking into account that community development is a long term approach to building active and sustainable communities, and that it involves building trust, raising self-esteem and confidence, as well as overcoming barriers to participation and conflict, the extent of effectiveness in achieving the intended first result of the project was high.

Intended Result 2: CBOs in target communities have increased capacity and transparency to address community needs and engage proactively with government actors and other stakeholders.

While the CCs were deciding their structural form, developing their bylaws, procedures, and subcommittees and participating in the additional training provided by the project, 16 CBOs were identified and integrated into the project in the five locations. Each CC had an open public meeting in its respective location where public interests issues were introduced and discussed, the needs of the community were identified and addressed, and a list of necessary interventions was developed by each CC.

Interestingly, when the CCs formulated their three-year strategies, they did not refer to policy issues, but infrastructural needs. It was mainly in Jiftlik that advocacy appeared on the list of strategic priorities where there is still more agriculture than in the other villages. In Jifftlik the list included needs to advocate for housing permits, permits for water-tanks, and tax exemption of fuel used for agriculture.

Interestingly, and rightfully, the evaluation found that the lists of needed interventions in all the villages were very similar in that they were service-oriented. Excluding what has been mentioned earlier about Jiftlik, the CCs all referred primarily to infrastructural needs such as kindergartens, computer labs, playgrounds, sport equipment, transportation, rehabilitation of the streets, replacement of damaged irrigation water pipes, spraying motors for agriculture pesticide, and

more. The reason for this clear expression of infrastructural needs is because those needs were the actual, critical and immediate ones for them. It is not realistic to expect these remote, isolated, neglected communities to come up with lists of non-physical policy oriented needs. For them, building a school, having water, rehabilitating roads was perceived as an infrastructural processes rather than rights-related issues.

Furthermore, it is clear that the absence of these infrastructures, i.e., schools, roads etc… negatively influences their daily living…their ability to see beyond their immediate needs is thus very minute.   This is where the project's input was significant. After the CC developed their strategies, and after realizing that they are needs-oriented, the project provided awareness raising activities and was able to a high extent to raise the awareness of the beneficiaries to the connection between having a school as a physical building and having a school as a right. The project had also succeeded in building the capacity of these communities in knowing about their rights as citizens, including the right for education. This example illustrates one of the major effects of the project in that it helped the beneficiaries to understand that being a citizen is two sided, one side is the rights and the other is the responsibility. They understood that in order to attain their rights as citizens, they would have to take responsibility and become engaged in community development, lobbying and advocacy. Although the project had come to its end before they were able to embark on major effective advocacy campaigns, still, an initial level of awareness of having to do so was clearly inserted.

These lists of needs were developed further into the villages' strategies. The achievement in that the villagers developed a three-year strategy based on collective thinking and vision is not to be underestimated. At the same time, the tendency of the locals to focus on the symptoms should not be overlooked. The tendency to focus on the fundamental aspects of apparent problems is human and understandable. However, in linking the objective with actual implementation, the element of advocacy goes missing. The balance between the necessity to put out fires, and advocating for doing something about the cause of fire, was not found during the evaluation.

Moreover, 16 local CBOs were identified through a survey which was conducted in the Jordan Valley and in Al-Walajeh. CBOs were integrated in the project to work together with the CCs. All CBOs were trained by the project partners and by Oxfam's Program Adviser on themes related to good and participatory governance, risks and mitigation strategies, as well as technical and organization capacity building for all CBOs in the project area. CBOs were also trained in financial budgeting, which was helpful for them in enhancing their abilities to deal with community governance and in developing ways of presenting specific needs and costs.

CBOs were trained and introduced to the theory and practice of Citizenship and Good Governance which they rated positively. Some informants found some of the training offered was too general and not sufficient for them. An example was the training that was provided to the CCs in budgeting and financial management. Most of the CCs members found that particular training relevant but not sufficient. The number of hours provided for that training, combined with the highly diversified participants (participants from the CCs came from different professional levels and backgrounds) naturally produced gaps in the expectations of the participants.   The evaluation suggests that only those with relevant background and capacity participate in financial management training which may increase the benefit and decrease the gaps of expectations from such training.

Most of the people interviewed appreciated the training provided and the mentoring in their respective locations. Some as in Fasayel and Zbedat expectedly complained about the gender training being irrelevant to their communities, which reflects of course that gender is still not a priority that such communities would like to deal with. This was however expected by the project and it is for that reason that the WSC in coordination with OGB and the other partners had chosen

to use some tools for gender monitoring from a distance to ensure that it is not imposing the issue of gender too much on these communities. As for the other three communities (Jiftlik, Al-Ouja and Al-Walajeh), they said that they did not mind the gender training.

As for the learning trip to Egypt, all informants referred to that learning visit very positively and expressed clearly that it had left a strong impression on them on many levels. The details of that learning visit were well described in OGB report to the EC.

Many successes were registered as a result of the training and mentoring, for example, in Al-Ouja, one of the CBOs (Rural Dev. Committee) developed a project plan for an income-generating project targeting women in the Jordan Valley.

In Al-Walajeh, the local CBO had coordinated with the YMCA Palestine to provide psychosocial counseling to support women in the village.

Small grants were provided by the project to support the implementation of the pilot projects in the villages. The CBOs were also provided with ongoing mentoring in budgeting, planning and implementation of projects, transparency, accountability and good governance. They were also coached until the project was finished.

In all the project villages, CBOs and the CCs developed and implemented pilot projects some of these were:

- Rehabilitation of a playground in Fasayel

- Creation of a soccer court in Al-Ouja

- Rehabilitation of the kindergarten in Zbedat

- Rehabilitation of the road that leads to the girls school in Zbedat

- Provision of sports equipment for the sport center in Al-Walajeh

- Provision of electricity to light the main road of the village in Al-Walaje

- Purchase of a pesticide spraying machine in Jiftlik

Prior to approval of the projects, the partners together with OGB developed a scheme of checks and balances and worked out the roles and responsibilities of the various stakeholders including the CBOs, the CCS, and the partners. Here again Pal-Vision was given a larger responsibility that constituted of administering all aspects related to local pilot projects' implementation, mentoring, supervision, and all fiscal aspects related to implementation in the four villages in the Jordan Valley while Ansar Center was given the responsibility for the same functions only in Al-Walajeh.

Finally, on the way to achieving the above intended result a number of soft and tangible outputs were produced. CBOs took an active role with the CCs in promoting issues and needs relating to their respective communities, which reflectedthe strong culture of cooperation and participation developed during the project. Young people took a high level of ownership of the decisions that affected them and their families and communities. Also, the willingness to experiment and take advantage of opportunities was highly visible and this is not to be taken for granted in such communities. Belief and expectation of self help was built up amongst the beneficiaries and their desire to improve the situation of the unemployed, ill, poor and deprived, or to improve social support services in their villages, was boosted.

It is worth emphasizing that In this particular project, OGB and its partners have noticed this risk (of the CCs service delivery tendency, yet, the duration of the project did not allow sufficient time to steer the process into more advocacy. Thus, in the future more attention needs to be given to the

fact that community development and community mobilization are not service delivery and they are not a social welfare program, which means that even if the beneficiaries are not able to resist asking for support in service delivery, the project should make sure that activities are steered in the direction of advocacy more than service delivery!

As for the "proactive engagement with government actors", this was identified as a fragile segment of the project. Engagement with government actors had taken place at the local level, i.e. the local municipalities, councils and the regional Governorate. They were found to be receptive to hearing people's needs but, given the reality of the OPT's lack of a properly functioning government, those local government actors found themselves as helpless as the grassroots are. In Jiftlik, the CC together with the local council submitted a request to the Israeli Military Administration for the pavement of the road that enters the village. The Israeli Military Administration approved the request, which had to be co-funded by the local municipality.The local municipality however did not have the funds!

As one of the local men in Zbedat put it: *"…a governmental official who did not receive his own salary for several months, what level of interest and commitment would be expected from him?..."*

Intended Result 3: Local government has enhanced awareness, capacity and transparency in responding to identified community needs and priorities.

Various forms of capacity-building activities and support were provided to LGU members in particular local councils and to CC members to strengthen their capacities and enable them to provide services in a more useful way.

Raising awareness of citizen's rights was provided in the form of training and in the production of a printed guide which was launched to the media and the public.

LGUs expressed their appreciation of the training emphasizing that, although they were elected to serve their communities, they were not necessarily equipped with the necessary knowledge and skills.The training offered by this project wasparticularly relevant and crucial for the improvement of professionalism in the public sector in Palestine, which has a significant historical background of many officials in the public sector being hired as a reward for their resistance activism in the past, or for family connections, or other power-related factors. The lack of availability of such training locally was exacerbated by the fact that most of the officials were not allowed to leave their respective locations to travel abroad because the Israeli Military Administration usually rejected such requests for "security reasons". Providing training on site was therefore the most useful and practical solution.

As for the commitment and motivation of LGU members to become more engaged, that also seemed to be a challenge. An LGU member in Al-Ouja emphasized: *"…with the history of our country, we shift from being activists in the resistance, to becoming responsible for actual needs of our people. No one had prepared me for this role…I was never before introduced to concepts related to conflict, citizenship, management, and other…I simply found myself in this position and not always sure how to go about it…"!*

The project organized an event to raise awareness of the dreadful living conditions in Area C which high ranking officials attended, it also visited sites, listened to the CCs' demands, received their strategy papers, gave promises to the communities and departed. The event gave high visibility to area C, specifically the Jordan Valley, thanks to the several media outlets that covered it and published information, photos, interviews and more in different languages. That visibility and awareness-raising event left its marks on the minds of the people. Yet, most people interviewed for this evaluation including OGB staff and the coordinators of the project expressed their disappointments for not getting the outputs they expected compared to the resources and

input that they invested. The high ranking officials left after the event but did not really fulfill any of their promises to the people. For the beneficiaries it was the day when: *"…our strategy papers become lists of false promises …",* said one man from Jiftlik.

Embedded in the project design was an overly ambitious aspiration to develop and strengthen relationships within and between the different levels of policy makers and the communities. Although within the project communities, employees of LGUs are viewed as community members, their capacity to fulfill their key roles remains under the present circumstances,a challenge.In this respect, the evaluation suggests a cross-sectoral approach which could be integrated with the capacity-building efforts, and would enable more effective use of existing resources.Considering the constraints imposed on area C, the evaluation found that it is more viable in the context of this project to build coalitions to implement specific strategies by bringing together different political interests in a temporary alliance. The evaluation is aware that this proposition is in opposition to the affirmation of the EC preliminary project monitoring report, yet, it encourages future projects to organize the communities as collective force while focusing on achieving sectoral objectives. Attempts to deal comprehensively with the needs of the Palestinian communities in these areas within such short project duration could impede effective change because they would produce high expectations that none of the CCs couldfulfill within the project timeframe.

Furthermore, in order to foster development in these remote villages, and to facilitate the efforts of the communities to effect some change,LGU members could take an additional role indeveloping check and balance mechanisms relating to the performance and good governance of the PA in area C. One option can be a model of a watchdog function…

The project did succeed in providing information about the need for central policy change concerning Area C, both through the different lines of communication and the use of the media. Having accomplished that within the short duration of the project was indeed impressive. It is clear that that will probably not change the situation and the anguish of the people because change involves an additional powerful factor (the Israeli Military Authority) which was not directly influenced by the project because advocacy did not come out strongly enough in this first phase, and, even if it did, the desired change would have required more time. Time periods of 10-15 years have been suggested in the international development literature. Hence, the project in its thirty months duration is considered a trigger. Triggering projects are those that come into the life of people and trigger a certain conceptual understanding, or trigger a certain process, or implement seeds of awareness and thoughts and they end before it is possible to point at their impact. Triggering projects are thus legitimate and crucial interventions and they are as important as any other developmental interventions. The difference is that in triggering projects it is not always possible to define and measure impact right at the end of the project. In triggering projects, it is clear that impact seeds were planted, but, for those to blossom, more time is needed.

In that regard, it is clear that the project was able to overcome a complex set of challenges, and to make its way into these communities. Within the available timeframe that is considered highly effective. It was able to stimulate local simple and genuine debates over many public interest issues, and it was able to trigger awareness of the target communities of the importance of their role in socio-political change. It also triggered a number of responses amongst these under-represented grassroots communities which in itself was an important aim. More detailed analysis is provided in section "Impact".

Lastly, the participation of women in this component of the project was significantly low (there were no LGU women members). Leadership training was provided to local women groups and committees in the different project locations.

In the short time frame involved, the project's wide-ranging campaigns and the use of the media generated a good initial level of interest as shown in the available data and the above analysis. It brought forward one of the major issues in the Palestinian Israeli conflict that cannot take more postponing. Despite the efforts and resources invested in raising public awareness to the reality of area C, the project was not able to achieve the above objective because in order to achieve it, a modification in the agreement between Israel and Palestine concerning area C is a pre-condition.

Throughout their engagement in project activities, the CCs and the Mobilizers learned by doing, but achieving the intended result:"Increased coordination and networking allows for more effective allocation of services and resources into target communities" was a challenge for them and for OGB and its partners because the linkage between means and ends became somewhat complicated. It was not clear to project stakeholders how "increased coordination and networking", as the means will ensure "allocation of services to the population in area C", especially when considering that in order to link those two inputs together, the reality/classification of the area has to be changed. This intended result was thus not within the capacity domain of the project to achieve.

The project contributed to increasing the awareness and the capacities of the local communities, successfully organized and mobilized youth and women, trained LGU members and local CBOs and, within a short time, enhanced the social capital in the targeted areas significantly. But, that enhanced capital was not able to move forward into achieving the above objective because, even if coordination between national and local governments was improved, effective allocation of services is under the control of Israeli military policies. Hence, attaining this result depends on a significant power that lies outside the control of the project. Hence, a different strategy may be more effective in the future. One of the strategies proposed by this evaluation is to focus on empowering the LGUs and to organize them as a collective force to advocate the national government (the PA) for change in the classification and status of area C.

In that same regard, the strategy documents produced by the CCs are a reflection of expectations. Starting too big or expecting things to happen too quickly makes it easy for expectations to build beyond the capability of the community to deliver. Feasibility questions and influence testing are important to avoid this – is it feasible and can it be implemented? what can and can't the community influence? and "of all the things we could do, what are the few that we cannot?" Such interactive analysis, according to informants, did not take place.

It was clear to the communities involved that achieving this objective was conditioned by a change in the political climate and restrictions imposed on the project area, (ending occupation, restrictions on area C, settlements...).Consequently, this predetermined result became a source of irritation to those who were involved in the implementation of the project due to the feelings of powerlessness of both the project partners and the CCs, to whom it was clear that achieving this objective within the duration of the pilot was neither viable nor realistic!

What factors can be identified as contributing to enhancing, or hindering project implementation?

Enhancing factors:

- The <u>project team</u> played a significant role in the successes of the project. The coordinators' commitment; skills and involvement in the various levels of the implementation were noticeable.

- <u>OGB's management</u> of the project was characterized by the evaluation as being result-oriented, with focus on outcomes. This orientation helped to keep everyone on the right track, on time, in order and with a concentration on the original plan.

- The collective <u>accumulated experiences</u> of the partnering organizations were an enriching input into the project. They came with their experience and capacities and professionalism to work together on an agreed-upon strategy.

- The <u>reputation</u> of the partners and OGB in the field was highly appreciated and a great asset. In such a remote, conservative, tribal culture the entrance of someone new into the details of the communities' daily life is not usually smooth. The reputation of the partners and OGB made that entrance easier.

- The communities were <u>receptive</u> to learning, interacting and experimenting with new ideas.

- The <u>small grants</u> that were provided to the local projects contributed to making it successful in the eyes of the locals because it provided them with an opportunity to put theory into practice and to experience successful community development action.

- The <u>knowledge</u> about the targeted communities and the culturally sensitive approaches applied by the team were very important in trust building and overcoming local tension and conflicts.

Hindering factors:

One of the most difficult challenges faced by any development initiatives in the project area is its classification as area C. In its briefing paper from 5th July 2012, OGB indicated that: "The Jordan Valley, in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, has the potential to be the breadbasket of any future Palestinian state. However, the persistent expansion of Israeli settlements and other restrictions on Palestinian development have made life extremely difficult for Palestinian communities. New plans to increase the land, water, and infrastructure available to Israeli settlements will further aggravate this already serious situation. Unless the international community takes action to reverse Israeli government policies and practices, the prospects for the future establishment of a viable Palestinian state, living side by side with Israel in peace and security, look dangerously remote."   Hence, as indicated above, in order to maximize the impact of developmental efforts and investments in area C, the classification of it must be modified in a way that allows for provision of services of basic needs. As known, it is idealistic to expect that communities that are deprived of their basic needs can be mobilized to engage in social change within thirty months period.

The absence of a post-project scheme: long term sustainability of the project's community development activities would have been better facilitated by the establishment of a follow-up mechanism that could serve as a vehicle for obtaining sustainable support from national and international organizations. Although the communities were informed by OGB that the project will end, and that they will have to continue on their own, still their expectations that OGB will find a way to proceed was very high.   Also the fact that some of the partners maintained their presence in the areas of the projects as part of their ongoing engagement in the area through activities that are not related to OGB, confuses the expectations of the beneficiaries. For example, in

Al-Walajeh, Ansaer Center continues to operate its activities, and the coordinators continues to work as Ansar's coordinator which makes the community think that maybe she is still with OGB project. The same goes for Pal-Vision who has many activities in the Jordan Valley where the same coordinators still visit the same communities of the OGB project. This overlap contributed to increasing the expectation of the community that the project ending was just temporary and it had put the CCs on a "waiting mode" until the project returns to them with ideas how to proceed.

Although there was a unanimous expression of commitment and interest to continue as CCs, yet, when asked about operational specifications, it was obvious that they did not have any idea. Hence, the commitment was there, but CCs were not able to put their commitment into specific action plan. The weakness of the project design not having post-project activities hadnegative repercussions on project sustainability, since it was not clear how most of the activities could be sustained after the project ended.Long-term sustainability needed to be embodied in the project design; it should have been clear to beneficiaries from the start of the project how project activities could be sustained by them.If further support was foreseen after project end, it should have been limited to a bridging period, which was supposed to happen. A clear exist strategy was lacking.

Insufficient leadership: as indicated before, in implementing the project OGB was highly efficient and professional in producing a proper mechanism for the monitoring and reporting on project activities at all levels. In that sense, the management of the project was just right. But, at the same time, there was no mechanism for the monitoring of the quality of partnership management. The function of leadership was neglected by the partners, which produced some gaps and a number of unresolved issues that were carried forward from one year to another. OGB did a great job in channeling information and in administering the project, including taking responsibility for financial arrangements between the partners; this was highly important and appreciated for its effect on the execution of project-related tasks. Nonetheless, the function of dealing with issues that came out of diverse partners who formed a multi-actor body was missing. For example, OGB made sure that all the agreed-upon methods of work and implementation of activities were clear to all, hence, all partners know what to do and when to do… the implementation of tasks executed by the partners was monitored by OGB. But, in that regard, all partners assured that it was not always clear to them who were responsible for the monitoring of the quality of performance of OGB's management. Furthermore, it was clear to the partners that they were accountable to OGB when it comes to progress in project implementation, yet, it was not clear to them to whom was OGB project manager accounted for especially when considering the turnover of staff within OGB in the project duration. In many testimonies partners were not clear who was accountable to whom which produced some communication gaps between the partners and OGB and between the partners themselves. In that regard the evaluation reminds here that functions, the function of leadership and that of management are crucial for enhancing effectiveness. The shortage of one of them lessens the affectivity.

Making a memorandum of understanding available for the partners would have helped in overcoming communication gaps. MoU as an agreed upon statement of clear expectations and conditions of partnership management would have provided a clearer base of how to steer the project. Similarly, a steering committee would have been useful in solving situations that arose between the partners. For example, when the performance of one of the partners was not satisfactory to the others, it was not clear what to do and who was responsible for dealing with it. OGB in many cases tried to avoid the unpleasantness produced by materializing its authority. Instead, it chosen to focus on achieving project objectives while carrying forward unresolved issues between the partners. An unintentional positive result that was produced by this dynamic was that in order to help each other to deal jointly with real-life challenges, partners developed the necessary capacities to overcome their disagreements and to improve relations between themselves, including dealing with trust issues and blame-games.This in itself was a positive.

Accountability vs. equality: in the process of developing the partnership for this project, OGB emphasized equality as a value between all partners including it. This in itself is an outstanding approach and it deserves appreciation but in reality it also contributed to some confusion of OGB's role. The project operated in a cultural context where the understanding of equality may differ from that of OGB. During the evaluation it became clear that there was a disparity between all the partners including OGB in what was meant by "equal partners". None of the four partners perceives OGB as an equal partner. OGB had a larger responsibility in the project and for that reason partners perceived it as the owner of the project together with the EC. OGB's role was to monitor and supervise by virtue of its being the contractor for the EU. While wanting to be equal to the other partners reflected a good and genuine organizational culture, still, it was misleading to the partners who expressed a need for a leader more than an equal partner. In the equality climate that prevailed, OGB had to share the pressure, the challenges, and the demands it had to deal with in its responsibility to the EU…Partners did not understand the purpose of that sharing and did not know if something was expected from them. Many of them expressed that it made them feel helpless. As one of the partners said: "I am not the signing party with the EU…why did I need to know about all the difficulties in complying with the EU, when I can do nothing about it? Why did we the partners needed to worry about all this, when it was not our responsibility? It was OGB's responsibility to comply with the EU… "

Furthermore, the obligation of OGB to monitor the project, manage finances and report to the EC gave extra responsibility to OGB, thus also made the partnership de-facto not equal. Wishing to be an equal partner had put pressure on OGB because it found itself lacking authority to "deal" with the unsatisfactory performance of some of the partners.

Politics of project area: The complexity of Area C is that it is characterized by restrictions on permits and physical development, which severely hamper development projects. Add to that the encroachment of illegal Israeli settlements and increased competition for and unjust distribution of natural resources, as well as the conservative attitudes and behaviors of the Palestinian population. All these factors need a lot of work and energy to be addressed in projects in these areas.

Turnover within Oxfam: the project team found itself having to adjust to several changes in OGB senior staff and field staff, as did the target communities. The changes in personnel within OGB caused delays in some of the activities because one of the most important cornerstones for the success of any development project in remote areas is relationship and trust building. These communities are not used to having people come into their lives in their respective locations. To develop functional relationship with the communities, a project holder must consider consistency and continuity as a major factor. Turnover of staff within project duration, and having to re-build relationships does in many times hamper the achievements of project effectiveness.

No exit-strategy: the project's original design did not include an exit-strategy. Exiting the project was done through what was called a "closing-event". The absence of an exit strategy impeded sustainability. Most people interviewed expressed high hopes and expectations that the project would continue and did not internalize that the project support had ended and it was their role to proceed with the activities.

Project Results:

Positive results:

- This was a good project with a well balanced set of inputs and remarkable results including:

- OGB's formation and management of a multi-actor engagement model which was a productive and enriching experience for the partners, for OGB and for the beneficiaries.

- Ownership of the project by the beneficiaries was clear and active throughout the project.

- Local municipalities and local councils got closer to the people and joined efforts.

- National urban NGOs experienced working in the field with the grassroots in their respective locations.

- The formation of the CCs, the Mobilizer groups, Local Women groups and other groups and their organization and trainingas part of the project's activities.

- Beneficiaries gained knowledge from the training.

- LGUs received training and were introduced to content related to good governance and more.

- Empowered and stronger women in all the communities served.   For further illustration of women empowerment produced by the project please see the WSC's report on "Voices from the Communities" which was one of the publications produced by the project's gender monitoring activities and assessment.

- Communities interacted with each other around issues of collective interest.

- More men recognized and supported the role of women in social mobilization and socio-political change.

- A number of publications relating to good governance, citizens' rights and gender.

- More awareness about the living conditions and the violations of human rights in area C.

- A number of physical infrastructural projects including a rehabilitated playground, soccer court, kindergarten, health facility, road lightening and more…

- Community income generating projects including revolving sheep project, equipment for events, food processing and date packaging, and more.

Negative results

The evaluation did not identify results that were defined as negative.

Unintended results

- The project operated in communities where <u>culture is tribal</u>; hence, the loyalty of each member of the community is dedicated fully to his or her tribe.During the project, the different communities (different villages), met with each other, and showed interest and willingness to cooperate, exchange and form a larger community in the area.

- This may contribute to a future effort in organizing a cluster of villages in area C into a larger collective force.

- <u>Misconception of small grants and cash injection</u>: the beneficiaries expressed unanimous appreciation of the financial support provided by the project for their local pilot projects.

- Small grants were used as to empower the poor communities, and to provide them with a valuable tool that could help in their economic development process. However, parallel to giving grants in cash, there was a need to ensure that concepts and mechanisms for a sustainable income-generating project were clear to the beneficiaries. The project provided small seed-funds to the communities to implement projects they defined as priority; yet, methods and means to sustain these projects were not introduced from the beginning.

- Most of the people interviewed from the communities expressed clearly that they are waiting for additional support to be able to sustain their projects… Some had clearly indicated that they are hoping for additional funding from OGB…. One of the coordinators shared that, in her observation, she noticed that beneficiaries might not be receiving the right message from the project. She said:"we consistently introduced the project to the beneficiaries as a pilot. Pilot in our culture means a smaller example of something bigger that will be coming in the future… This might have influenced their expectations…"

- An additional example was given in relation to the adjustment made regarding removing the village of Jaba' from the project. The funds allocated originally to activities in Jaba' became an available surplus which was reallocated (distributed) to fund activities amongst the villages. Although OGB's wish to be fully transparent is highly appreciated, yet, considering that the beneficiaries were poor, marginalized and lacked experience, such a transparent exercise carried with it a high potential for over-expectation, optimism and overestimation of the project's financial capacities and power.

- During the evaluation it became clear that the injection of cash into the communities had motivated their participation. Some may have participated in the activities and showed commitment because they thought that the better their performance was, the higher the potential to receive more money from the project. The evaluation identified a need for greater understanding and clarity amongst the beneficiaries and the partnering organizations of the links between small-grants, sustainability, poverty alleviation and democracy…

Efficiency:

How efficiently have the activities been managed and implemented?

The division of human resources was not perceived by all partners as fair. The position of project coordinator, for example, had many different versions. In the case of Ansar, it was a local position working from an office in the local community of Al-Walajeh.   Elsewhere, the project coordinator from Pal-Vision was responsible for four locations in the Jordan Valley, involving intensive traveling in the field, a much larger number of beneficiaries, and a more complex set of responsibilities.

Furthermore, when OGB approached the WSC with an offer of partnership, the offer constituted a list of activities that the WSC was expected to implement. 25% post was offered for human resources to accomplish the implementation of gender monitoring, gender training, and documentation and gender assessment. The ratio between the expected results and available resources was unrealistic. WSC decided to accept because:"the partnership with OGB was important and meaningful for us…". The intension was positive, but in reality insufficient resources hampered the quality of WSC's performance and its ability to produce results on time.

Similarlythe management of the multi-actor partnership reflected the organizational culture of OGB, wanting to be an actively engaged equal partner. That wish was sometimes found to be confusing to some of the partners, which obstructed communication. Local NGOs saw OGB as the donor, in this case accountable to the EU, and therefore not an equal partner because its responsibility was different and larger. OGB is advised to reconsider this aspect of its role for future partnerships. It should also consider whether total financial transparency and full equality are always preconditions for success.

Throughout discussions with informants and stakeholders it became evident that there was a need for a Project Monitoring Committee to show clear vision and leadership to all. Such a committee could work on resolving issues arising between the partners, examining group composition, and reminding members of their duties and responsibilities.

Finally, although most of the partners expressed dissatisfaction related to resources allocation, particularly human resources, still, indicators reflect that all in all, the coordination between all partners, including OGB was highly efficient.

Was there a Monitoring and Evaluation mechanism in place?

Yes. From the beginning of the project, OGB developed a range of efficient mechanisms that it made available, including a friendly and simplified reporting system which was designed by OGB in compliance with EU reporting standards.

All partners were trained in how to use the reporting formats and OGB ensured that they understood and were able to work with concepts related to monitoring and reporting based on measurements of success and clear indicators. Efficiency was increased by OGB's providing the formats in the partners' own language (Arabic), which facilitated the whole process of documentation and timely reporting at all levels of project activities.

The CCs met regularly once a week to carry out tasks related to their strategy implementation. Meetings were minuted, and internal regulations for control of members' attendance were developed and applied. In general there was a clear supportive monitoring system for the implementation stages of the project.

Were there monitoring tools? What did they comprise?

Monitoring tools constituted weekly and monthly meetings between the partners, questionnaires for feedback on training and field visits.

Also, indicators were developed and applied during self reviews conducted by the partners, as well as, periodically, with OGB. The extent of achieved objectives was monitored closely and communicated through reports and discussions.

To what extent did the use of funds seem appropriate in view of the results/effects achieved?

On the level of financial management, the budget shows that a number of adjustments had taken place during the project. These adjustments were efficiently made based on actual implementation and actual expenditures, and the total approved amount of project support remained the same. This shows that the essential flexibility and the ability to monitor and manage finances were efficient.

Nonetheless, there was space for improvement that was connected to the high deviations from the original allocation of expenditure items. In analyzing the budgetary changes, a disparity in planned vs. actual cost per unit and, in some items, a disproportion in the ratio of allocated human resources against expected results, were identified.

For example, the allocation of 25% of a post for WSC, compared to the set of activities that were to be delivered, (gender monitoring, gender training, documentation, analysis, evaluation and more) was disproportionate and this influenced the quality of performance on WSC. While the overall budget was managed efficiently, the original planning, including estimation of costs in some items, was far from being realistic. Some of examples are underestimation included cost of transport, allocation of human resources vs. expected results (WSC), cost of financial management within the partners, and more….

The evaluation conducted a rapid cost-benefit analysis on the basis of the budget data provided by OGB for the purposes of the evaluation. From examination of the project's expenses it became clear that the project operation costs were underestimated, which required adjustments of the budget more than three times in the project duration.

The direct cost of project operation and implementation (about 59%) was spent on activities in the field, including the financing of the small projects in of the CCs. About 30% was spent on personnel (excluding field staff). The remaining was spent on overheads, financial management and logistics.

A sizable portion of the expenditure was spent on establishing the CCs, training, incentives for the mobilizers, and on the purchase of essential equipment for the CC's projects. OGB and its partners hosted the project, and provided adequate materials, tools and equipment as needed. This aspect of providing a base for the project was much appreciated and valued by the partners because it reflected positively on their partnership and cooperation with each other.

Additional amounts were spent on transportation costs for the provision of technical assistance and follow-up capacity development work, including meetings and workshops which were carried out mostly by the project's field staff, particularly the coordinator from Pal-Vision who worked with the four communities in the Jordan Valley.

The overall management of the budget reflects that resources were used efficiently, and that OGB was able to sustain work and activities on a least-cost basis, without jeopardizing the quality of implemented activities.

During the second and third year, the project placed emphasis on advocacy and awareness-raising of issues particular to Area C, namely the Jordan Valley. In that regard the project succeeded in creating awareness among Palestinian politicians and the public through the organization of open days and media campaigns. The efforts of the OGB and its partners were evident in what was published nationwide in newspapers, as well as in the testimonies of the informants.   Many of the informants from the project villages referred to these days as: *"…an important day in my life as I had a chance to meet an high ranking official and to speak to them directly…"* .

Another man from Al-Ouja indicated that: *"we have been totally forgotten for over twenty years… Never before were we visited by such important people…"*

A woman in Zbedat shared that : *"those days made me feel optimistic again and I felt that there is still a glimpse of hope that our reality will change…".*

In Al-Walajeh a member of the CC expressed his gratitude to OGB's efforts that *"…gave us a chance to express ourselves directly to important people…".*

There were justifiable expenditures by the project on the training of LGUs, CBOs, CCs, mobilizers and others, who received appropriate training, technical support and mentoring, including on processes of strategic planning and the development of a collective clear vision in each community. However, the absence of an exit strategy, and the weak ability of the CCs to raise funds on their own had greatly limited their potential to benefit fully from their training and the experiences they gained during the project. They identified the lack of funds as a factor limiting their aspiration to continue after the project ends. They have not yet acquired sufficient experience and networking to lobby for funds from international agencies and they do not know how to proceed without being offered small grants, as they have experienced with OGB project.

As for women, who made up half of the targeted population, the project's ability to deal with their under-representation in all its processes and activities shows that the strategies took gender fully into account. The project gender strategy was efficient in applying methodologies that led to economic development opportunities for women, and it was effective because women's needs, abilities and concerns were addressed consistently from the beginning.

The project instigated a remarkably positive change in people's attitudes towards women.It also created a general awareness among both men and women in project area about their roles in the development of their community. More detailed reflections on gender is in WSC publication where it illustrate in details how the project affected the lives of men and women by using their own testimonies.

Impact:

To what extent have activities implemented by this project influenced the life quality of the beneficiaries?

There was unanimous agreement amongst villagers in all the targeted communities, and their leadership that the project was very beneficial. They mentioned learning, awareness, morale, and the role of women but the evaluation found it challenging to point to specific changes in behaviors which could be attributed to the project.

That a Palestinian grasps the concept for citizenship, in terms of rights and responsibilities, and expresses interest in getting actively engaged in social responsibility, is a great success. Citizenship cannot be understood naturally in Palestine because of the disconnections within the state, and between the state and its people. Throughout history the people changed, and the form of authority changed, which hindered the development of loyalty, commitment and interest in the common good. Thus, training in good governance, and stimulating public interest in the areas that are considered the poorest of the poor, is a success even if it is not measurable.

Community aspirations have grown substantially because of the awareness and enlightenment that resulted from the project activities, especially among women, and that is a source of motivation for them to become more engaged in the development of their communities.

When asked to compare their lives before and after the project, the beneficiaries (including ordinary members, community leaders, youth and key informants) cited significant social, cultural and economic impacts, which became evident during the evaluation through the following statements given by the beneficiaries:

> *"...Before the project no one visited us or knew about us, now we are in the newspapers and TV..."* (Zbedat).
>
> *"...Before I did not know anything about citizenship or influencing policies, now I know that if we are a collective force, we can..."* (Jiftlik)
>
> *"...Before I never left my house to be in a public gathering, now I do not want to miss a meeting..."* (Jiftlik).
>
> *"...Before I did not believe I am capable of having a good future, after we visited Egypt and saw their situation, I saw my potentials..."* (Al-Ouja)
>
> *"...Before, we had to beg the settlers to rent us their pesticide machine, now we have the top technology in the country, thanks to the project..."* (Jiftlik)
>
> *"...Before, whoever had a social activity or an emergency in the evening had to worry about coming back at night because of the darkness, now the entrance to our village has lights..."* (Al-Walajeh)
>
> *"...I have lived in this village all my life, never before were we like this, one forum that contains representatives of all the different interests groups..."* (Al-Ouja)
>
> *"...We were in continual conflict and semi war here… today, we meet to discuss issues related to our village and we try to protect ourselves collectively from the Israeli army..."* (Fasayel)

How did the project influence the lives of beneficiaries?

A non-quantifiable impact was a significant change in the perspectives of the beneficiaries concerning the importance of non-state actor alliances, and a fundamental shift in the prevailing attitudes of the villagers from isolation and sense of helplessness to an enthusiasm for new ideas and engagement is social change. They all now have a modest local common project run by the local CCs.

Interviewees referred to conflict reduction as a result of the project. The tension and conflicts which were recurrent among the different tribes had diminished among the project's beneficiaries due to the increased awareness and training in conflict.

The model's participatory investment approach of providing small grants for projects initiated and managed by the target communities to improve their socio-economic conditionshad not only contributed to opening opportunities for generating small amounts of income for the communities, but also boosted the self confidence of individuals and groups.

Furthermore, the project provided participants with a chance to discover their potential to become active citizens.In describing the impact of the project, one of the female young mobilizers shared her experience by enthusiastically saying:"…through this project I realized how capable I am.I learned that if we are freed of being classified as area C, we have all the needed capacities to develop our community and make our village look like New York…"

The impact on the partners varied depending on the nature of each organization. They all recognized that they were in a partnership and the relationship between them was characterized by mutual respect and commitment. The project was built upon their identified strengths, and it invested in increasing the capacity of them all.

Although there were clear signals of dissatisfaction caused by the basis used for the allocation of project resources among them (as indicated before), they were still all clear that the project had left some impact on them.   Miftah coordinator indicated that the project had provided their organization with an invaluable opportunity:"we have never been down on the ground until this project came, it gave us a chance to connect theory with practice, and it took us to the grassroots in their respective locations."

In addition, OGB was enriched by the lessons learnt in managing the project and in being responsible for a multi-actor model. OGB realized that necessary community mobilization requires intensive work within limited resources, and that often the real causes of underdevelopment in the case of OPT are not caused by projects but by other complicated contextual factors as indicated in the analysis of this report.

OGB was also enriched by identifying its strength in being responsible for a "triggering" project. Triggering is where seeds are planted in the conceptual understanding and sense of ownership of the served communities, primarily the young generation, where the conditions for these seeds to flourish are not yet ripe. The success of triggering projects is measured by the responsiveness of the people and their interaction with the project. Even if not all the results can be cultivated immediately at the closing of the project, still, in triggering projects it is clear that some seeds were left behind to blossom in the future.

The provision of small grants to support small local projects usually gives people more control over their lives.   The impact and effectiveness of   the funds injected into the fabric of the target communities is hard to determine by this evaluation because the sustainability of these funded projects is not yet assured.

As for women, the project had integrated gender into the design, implementation and ownership of the small-grants activities from the beginning, but the provision of funds was not the sole driving factor that motivated women to get engaged in the project. Rather, it was part of a combination of factors, including that the project promoted women's issues amongst the whole community and exposed women to training and empowerment, all of which contributed to strengthening their involvement in the project.

The impact on women was not equal in all the communities. In Al-Walajeh, for example, women were highly empowered and they acquired a range of skills by being engaged in the project, whereas, in Fasayel, women were less involved due to geographical and cultural constraints. The setting and context between both villages is different which had implications on the scope and size of the involvement of women in the project. Al-Walajeh is one community comprises of no more than two main families. When women come to activities and actively participate, they feel that they are in their own town and that they are contributing to the good of their own families. Contrary to that in Fasayel, where the village constitutes about seven families, the negative competition prevails even in relation to women participation. Furthermore, when a woman from Fasayel actively participates in project activities, it is not straight forward that her contribution is for her community, because what interests her is actually her tribe. So, her motivation is hindered if she is introduced to concepts and activities related to collective good and not tribal good. Also, in many cases it is highly likely that she will be blamed by others for her participation. Such cultural factors influence the role of women not only in society but also in projects.

The impact of the project on the morale of the communities was high. It clearly boosted people's readiness and interest to be mobilize for a common cause, as was indicated by women, men and youth who were engaged in a way that promoted their ownership of decision-making, and built their knowledge and skills to carry out those decisions. Yet, there are not sufficient indicators to determine that this sense of social responsibility and ownership built by the project will be a lasting one. For example, the livestock Sheppard project in Al-Oujah might become a successful business after a few years, but that cannot be demonstrated immediately as an impact, and would require a later post-program observation to truly measure the results.

The project was an example of how basic community organizing and mobilization can trigger livelihood improvements and good governance, but the absence of a post-project scheme, and the difficulty in measuring the project's impact on attitudes and behaviors was a weakness. Hence, the project is a good exampleof the tendency of developmental initiatives to focus on measuring achievements against a pre-determined set of results while, although that in reality, in many cases, those predetermined results cannot be measured within the duration of the project. It is essential to have milestones, a path that directs projects and steers them in a certain direction, but the focus should be on the importance of process just as much as the importance of results. Process in this project was as important as its results.

Within its short time scale the project had the capacity to trigger a light in people's lives that may at some point in the future become the source of a burning motivation to change. The difficulty is not in determining whether a trigger was set, but rather in predicting when it will start burning and become an engine for social change. It is like planting seeds. If they are given sufficient time, and proper conditions, they will certainly blossom.

The project obviously planted many seeds in the minds and awareness of the young males and females in the villages. When the seeds will grow, what kind of flowers they will produce, and the colors of those flowers, are factors that cannot be determined within the duration of the project. It is the planting of the seeds that is the mere success. If a project wants to see the flowers, it has to have a built-in post-project scheme of follow up and monitoring activities.

Triggering in itself is not only an important aim in community development projects supported by international aid, it is also a more realistic approach when considering the short duration of these interventions around the world.   In Behavioral Change projects, processes of implementation can be under control, but the results belong to the future!

Sustainability:

How long lasting are the results/effectslikely to be?

Community mobilization is the process of engaging communities to identify their own priorities, resources, needs, and solutions in such a way as to promote representative participation, good governance, accountability, and positive social change. Sustained mobilization however, takes place when communities remain active and empowered after the ending of the project. In that regard, a post-project plan should have been embodied in the project proposal in order to increase potential sustainability.

The absence of a post-project scheme in the project design had negative repercussions in respect to project sustainability since it was not clear how most of the activities could be sustained after the project ended. Long-term sustainability should have been embodied in the project design; it should have been clear from the start how project activities could be sustained by their intended beneficiaries. If there is to be further support after the end of a project, it should be limited to a bridging period.   For that matter one option could be for OGB to consider allocating a few hours for one of the coordinators to keep an eye on the community committees, and visit them occasionally. It is true that most people interviewed expressed their commitment to continue working on the strategies they had developed but, looking deeper into what they said, it is clear that they have good intentions but insufficient operational knowledge to ensure success. In other words, they are not clear how to proceed. The strategies they developed and designed and put into documents do not include breakdowns of operational steps. They are used as pamphlets which they hand to visitors when they come and used more as "begging lists".   During a bridge period, it is possible to help the CCs transform those strategy documents into clear and simplified step-by-step operational plans that are time-bound and that provide a clear follow-up mechanism for the beneficiaries.

Furthermore, the original project design did not include an exit-strategy. Exiting the project was done through an event that was called a "closing-event". The absence of exit strategy hampered sustainability. Most people interviewed expressed high hopes and expectations that the project would continue and did not internalize that the project support had ended and that it was their role to proceed with the activities.

A handing-over mechanism between OGB and the existing CCs, mobilizers,community at large, LGUs, higher level government, and private sector was not identified by the evaluation.If handover steps had been designed as part of the project, and taken into account throughout the project's implementation, the potential for sustainability would have been higher.

It was hard for the evaluation to determine how long-lastingthe project's effects were likely to be because it was completed immediately after the project ended. In that regard, the long term sustainability of the project's community development activities would be better facilitated by the establishment of a follow up mechanism that could serve as a vehicle for obtaining sustainable support from national and international organizations. OGB, as a mother organization, could play a crucial facilitative role in developing an adoption model as means for augmenting the sustainability of the CCs. An elaborated description of the model will follow in this report.

What factors are already there that can increase sustainability?

- The multi-actors engagement structure.

- The CCs and the momentum.

- OGB's willingness and commitment to looking into ways of increasing sustainability.

- Well experienced teams.

- Mobilizers in the field.

- General public awareness of area C.

- Women who are empowered and interested.

- Physical outputs that are already available as a base

- The strategies that were developed by the CCs

- LGUs' awareness and motivation to engage with the people on the ground.

What needs to be done in the future to enhance sustainability?

An adoption model is based on mutual social responsibility between the larger national NGOs (in this case the partners) and the local CCs. The project design should include a matching mechanism between those on the ground (the grassroots) and those who are sitting in the big cities and lobbying for their interests from a distance. At a certain phase of the project, each CC should be adopted by a partner NGO for a period that is agreed upon by the engaging parties.

During the period, the partner NGO should provide the needed mentoring, advice, reference information, and legal and formal infrastructure (facilitate the operation of bank accounts, financial activities etc…) to the CC. In that period, the assumption would be that the CC would be sufficiently empowered and well connected to separate off and become its own entity.

An adoption model in Palestine has great potential because of the nature and the history of the oPT.The geography is small, which makes the model feasible in terms of access, mobility and communication.The history provides many examples of the stronger supporting the less strong (during the Intifada NGOs were the main service providers to the poor), and the present situation particularly in area C requires for stronger, more influential NGOs take their share in social responsibility for the poor.

Furthermore, the model provides an opportunity for the larger NGOs to advocate together with the grassroots, rather than on their behalf.In that sense, one of the partners indicated: *"we have always advocated for social justice for the grassroots, but we have never been there, on the ground with them…"*.

Gender

The general orientation of the project as observed in documents and in implementation had given sufficient attention and adopted suitable methods to mainstream gender needs in the project.

The impacts of mainstreaming the gender component in the design and implementation of the project were observed in the evaluation as follows:

- The ability of women involved with the evaluation to speak for themselves.
- Time freed up for project and other activities.
- Improved skills in decision-making and in managing resources.

In the discussion with men informants in three out of the five locations (Zbedat, Jiftlik and Al-Ouja), there was acceptance that women should play an important role in the activation and the management of the CC including decision making. This acceptance and understanding could be enhanced through an ongoing support strategy for gender mainstreaming.

The WSC played a significant role in assessing the extent of gender mainstreaming at the end of the project and produced a publication at the end of the project, in both Arabic and English that gave voicetothe women involved .

During the evaluation the presence of women was strongly visible and many of them took an active and influential role within their CCs and the Mobilizers groups.There were no women in the LGUs working in the project area.There was sufficient evidence in the assessment conducted by the WSC that participatory approaches were combined with gender sensitivityand contributed to considerable success in integrating, empowering and ensuring that the voices of women were actually heard.

When CCs and the Mobilizers were asked about their perspective on gender mainstreaming, the answers showed acceptance and readiness to incorporate what was needed in the projectto ensure that women were represented.

OGB had from the beginning solicited the support of WSC in developing a gender monitoring scheme which ensured that a gender expert would be aware of each project activity in advance of implementation in order to assure gender equal involvement and effect. During the evaluation, WSC was able to provide details and descriptions about gender dynamic and challenges faced in the project.

Monitoring tools were made available and data was collected and reflected in the assessment of the WSC.

Recommendations

Recommendations for the present time:

1. With the existing locations; to preserve the momentum, a bridge mentoring support is recommended to be provided to the CCs without delay, to assist in operationalzing their strategic documents. This could be done by staff members of other programs in OGB Jerusalem or, if resources allowed, it could be done by a few hours of outsourcing to allow someone to meet with each CC and assist in the breakdown of clear operational activities into simple steps, sector-focused (health, education, etc…) and a timetable that would give them some direction for the near future.

2. With the existing CCs, it is recommended that the above bridge plans constitute of a component of sector-based advocacy activities (modest and specific). Just to focus on one of the needs that are outlined in the strategy documents, and to develop advocacy plan on one particular need.

3. A meeting for all stakeholders, including the CCs, should be arranged to introduce the results of the evaluation, discuss lessons learnt, and try to assist in giving operational meaning to their commitment to continue.It is recommended that this should be done by involving other OGB programs and assessing the extent to which components of the CCs' strategies are relevant for linking with existing programs in OGB-OPt.

4. The link between the partners and the CCs should be strengthened by arranging a meeting and coordinating a mechanism that will ensure that partners, if they are approached by the CCs, will assist them as needed. This does not imply that financial assistance will be made available, only that a backup of at least a defined 6-9 months will be provided.

5. To monitor the impact, consideration should be given to allocating a few hours for someone to visit each village once a month for between 12 and 18 months andmeet with the community committees and the mobilizers, simply to follow up, provide advice, and observe the post-project dynamic.Oneway of doing this might be to have an internship for a volunteer, or for a member of one of the partner organizations, a student, etc…. Such observation could provide very rich material to inform Oxfam'sfuture strategies.

6. OGB should revisit its approaches to participation and define its participation method in a way that it is more consistent. Participation can take a number of forms ranging from"passive participation", in which community members participate by being informed about something that is going to happen, to "self-mobilization", when communities organize and take initiatives independent of any external actors. OGB should define a relevant participatory approach for each of the project's implementation phases and communicate that to the partners.

7. OGB should clarify its role prior to becoming involved in partnerships and should make sure its role is consistent, including making sure there are adequate mechanisms for accountability from all directions. A clear mechanism to whom the partners are accountable, and to whom OGB manager is accountable …

8. OGB in coordination with other actors in the OPT should continue advocating for area C by utilizing not only the Palestinian media but also the Israeli media to try to influence the Israeli policy together with other actors in the area.

9. The partners (organizations) should consider integrating the Jordan Valley project communities in their ongoing work in respect of follow up and sustainability. This work should include keeping in contact with them, providing them with consultation when they need it etc…

Recommendations for the future:

1. It is recommended that OGB replicates this pilot and continue in its approach to social development in area C as follows:

   - With the existing CCs: future work should include a set of post-project objectives that focus on sustainability and advocacy;
   - As for new locations: to develop a new comprehensive plan for new locations based on this evaluation. A new plan should constitute of scaling up activities meaning to begin with comprehensive strategies of the CCs, and to narrow those down to prioritized sectors for action.
   - An exit strategy, clear hand-over activities, and a post-project monitoring scheme must be embodied in all future planning.

2. For future projects, it is recommended that OGB considers more strengthening of the LGUs by training them and making them a vehicle for responsiveness of the national government (the PA) , and by empowering their role to perform as a watchdog for good governance.

3. In the future, it is recommended to cluster the CCs within the project duration into one larger collective force that and to get engaged in a clear advocacy strategy.

4. In future project design to consider having a project steering committee whose role is to ensure the quality of partnership management.

5. In future design, more attention should be given to the strategies developed by the CCs, to make sure that they constitute a balance between infrastructural needs and advocacy for policy change.

6. In any future activity, the advocacy component should be increased, and there should be more engagementwith advocacy organizationsable to coordinate closely with the advocacy program at OGB.

7. Future developmental projects in area C should work with the national government counterpart from the beginning; the usefulness and methods of engaging with governmental counterparts from the beginning and transforming them into partners, should be part of the project design.

8. Future similar interventions should include and implement a media strategy, including media advocacy and advocacy activities to influence the Israeli policy concerning the living conditions in area C. It should be noted that the local press, both Palestinian and Israeli are a very useful medium for reaching the public and it helps in ensuring steady interest.

9. Having done so well, the OGB should give serious consideration to developing the triggering "Multi-actor engagement model" further, integrating the Adoption Model in the design. The combination of both has great potential to trigger social change and to sustain its components. It is a good model of how basic community organizing and mobilization can trigger livelihood improvements and awareness of citizenship and good governance while connecting the small with the big actors in Palestine as a means of sustainability.

10. OGB should develop a Jordan Valley Platform that comprises OGB and other actors in the Jordan Valley area, to ensure the coordination and effectiveness of local and international lobbying efforts for change in the situation of area C and improvements in living conditions.

11. OGB should consider outsourcing some of the needed services, especially training. For example, training related to good governance and gender mainstreaming could be outsourced while were invested in field presence and in providing a chance for new partners to come on board.

12. OGB should continue with its existing methods and approachesin respect to gender inclusion at all project levels since its approach to gender mainstreaming has proved to be very instrumental and constructive.

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