



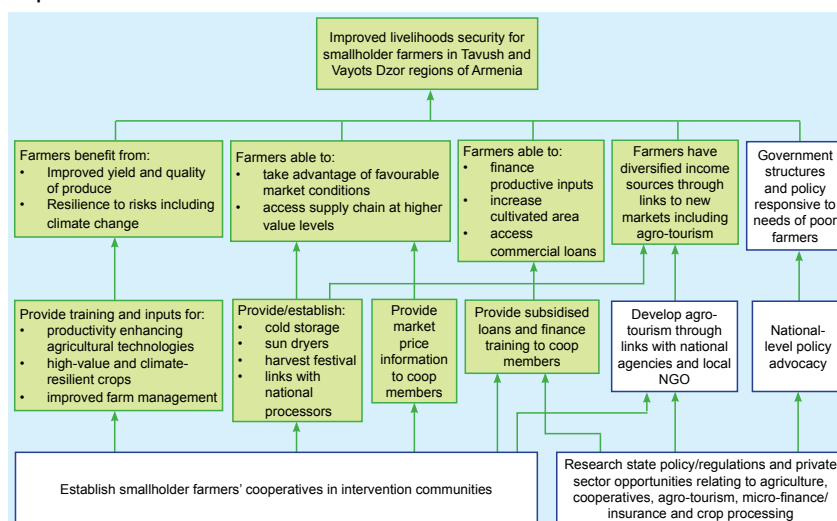
Armenia

Livelihoods

2013/14

New economic opportunities for small scale farmers in rural areas

The project was implemented in 19 agriculture-dependent villages in two regions of Armenia, Tavush and Vayots Dzor, by Oxfam GB in Armenia in conjunction with local partners Union of Agricultural Cooperatives, Work and Motherland NGO, Horizon Fund and Scientific Center of Vegetable & Industrial Crops. The overarching objective of the project was to support smallholder farmers to secure sustainable livelihoods through increasing access to economic opportunities in agricultural value chains and increasing resilience to natural disasters related to climate change. Farmers' cooperatives were established in the targeted communities. These cooperatives provided a platform through which most other project activities were implemented at community and household level. Eight villages, four each in Tavush and Vayots Dzor regions, were targeted in the first year of the project with more added to implementation in subsequent years. The focus of the evaluation was on the impact of the project on participating households in these eight villages, in which implementation had started earliest.



This diagram presents how the project was expected to achieve change, through project activities and outcomes that were expected to contribute to the overall goal of the project.

Project date: April 2010 - November 2012

Evaluation: April 2014

Publication: March 2015

Evaluation Method

The review sought to evaluate the project's impact among the population of villages where the project was implemented. A 'quasi-experimental' evaluation design was used whereby data from interviews with households from villages where the project had been implemented and with households of neighbouring non-project villages were analysed using propensity-score matching and multivariate regression. See the 'How are effectiveness reviews carried out?' document for more information on evaluation design. Details about specific evaluation design used in this case are contained in the full report of the Effectiveness Review.

Results

Project outcome	Evidence of positive impact		Commentary
	Tavush	Vayots Dzor	
Agricultural livelihoods activities and migration	Mixed	Mixed	There is no evidence suggesting less household migration or reliance on migrant labour; however, there is some evidence to suggest a greater likelihood of increased income from agricultural activities.
Technological adoption and agricultural inputs	YES	YES	There is evidence suggesting greater use of pesticides, sun-dryers, cold storage/collection centres and greenhouses in both regions.
	Mixed	Mixed	The project appears to have had a significant impact on farmers' use of inorganic fertilisers in Tavush region only and on use of improved seed/seedlings in Vayots Dzor region only.
	YES	NO	In Tavush region only, there is some evidence that there is a positive impact on the amount of land cultivated (measured both as a proportion of total land used and by area).
Agricultural production	YES	YES	There is evidence for greater harvests of several individual fruit and non-fruit crop types in both regions. In particular in Tavush region there is evidence for a substantial (approximately 4-fold) increase in production of traditional vegetable crops.
	NO	NO	There is no evidence of a sustained increase in diversity of agricultural production (measured by number of crops) or sustained production of non-traditional vegetable crops.
	YES	NO	There is evidence suggesting greater yields of both fruit and non-fruit crops, and greater aggregate quantity of fruit harvests in Tavush region only.
Sales and access to markets	YES	NO	In Tavush region beneficiary households are more likely to be selling agricultural products, sell a higher proportion of their produce and receive greater revenue from produce sales.
Access to finance	YES	YES	There is some evidence suggesting that the project has had a small positive impact on perceived access to credit. There is evidence of a positive impact on access to credit from microfinance organisations, particularly in Vayots Dzor.
	YES	NO	In Tavush region beneficiary households were able to access credit at lower interest rates from both microfinance organisations and commercial banks.
Household income	YES	YES	There is some evidence of positive impact of the project on household income. Beneficiary households experienced greater increases in asset wealth over the period of the project.

Going forward

As a result of the evaluation, Oxfam in Armenia will review the approach undertaken for the introduction of non-traditional crops during the pilot project in the two regions of Vayots Dzor and Tavush. The promotion and cultivation of more marketable non-traditional products such as broccoli on a larger scale will also be reinforced. Small farmers' cooperatives within the Oxfam in Armenia Livelihood Programme will continue to be strengthened by diversifying their agricultural business models, providing support to the development of different agricultural value chains in both Vayots Dzor and Tavush, introducing new technologies and practices to increase income, and providing appropriate capacity building training programmes. Between 2015 – 2017, Oxfam in Armenia will also continue to raise funds for new livelihoods projects in the Vayots Dzor region.

Photo credit: Oxfam in Armenia