The National Solidarity Programme III (NSP III) was launched in 2003 by the Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development. Called “the largest people’s project in the history of Afghanistan”, and is funded by diverse international donors, including the World Bank. The main objective of the NSP is “to build, strengthen and maintain community development councils (CDCs) as effective institutions for local governance and socio-economic development”. Fully materialised, this would represent a major change in the way the Afghan rural communities approach their development. The NSP cycle starts with local elections to select CDCs members. Comprehensive training modules are delivered by Facilitating Partners (FPs), designed to build the capacity of CDCs and enable them to define their own developmental priorities, access funds and implement the corresponding projects (mostly infrastructural). Concurrently, local communities are trained to monitor and evaluate projects. Oxfam has been working in Daikundi province as the FP since 2003, and started supporting the implementation of the NSP III (the focus for this evaluation) in June 2010, working with 224 CDCs in five districts of Daikundi.
Evaluation Design

The evaluation focused on two key interim outcomes that the project sought to achieve, and exploited the phased approach to programme implementation in order to mimic counterfactual analysis by comparing governance outcomes in those communities which only recently (2014) entered into the NSP and those who started in 2010 and who have now completed the NSP intervention in order to consider the impact of the project. For details on evaluation design, see the full report.

Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project outcome</th>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Commentary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Final outcome: Community Development Councils are effective institutions for local governance and socio-economic development</td>
<td><img src="icon.png" alt="Rating" /></td>
<td>The sheer scale of the National Solidarity Programme means that it is unrivalled in its contribution to building, strengthening and maintaining the Community Development Councils as the effective institutions for local governance and socio-economic development.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intermediate Outcome 1: Community Development Councils play active role in socio-economic development</td>
<td><img src="icon.png" alt="Rating" /></td>
<td>Summing up, the evaluation found Community Development Councils play the active role in socio-economic development and there is evidence that the National Solidarity Programme intervention made a crucial contribution to achieving this impact (average score out of all contributing factors is equal to 3.7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intermediate Outcome 2: Women and girls empowered socially and economically</td>
<td><img src="icon.png" alt="Rating" /></td>
<td>The evaluation found strong evidences that the National Solidarity Programme set foundation for women's involvement in Community Development Councils. Without the Community Development Councils, women would - most probably - still be out of governing structures. Although National Solidarity Programme documents only vaguely mention the participation of &quot;both men and women&quot;, gender is an important element of the Oxfam Programme.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Rating key:  
- Outcome realised in full; evidence that intervention made a crucial contribution;  
- Outcome realised in part & evidence that intervention made a crucial contribution;  
- Outcome realised in full & evidence that intervention made an important contribution;  
- Outcome realised in part & evidence that intervention made an important contribution;  
- Outcome realised in part & evidence that intervention made some contribution;  
- Outcome realised to a small degree & evidence that intervention made an important contribution;  
- Outcome realised, to any degree, but no evidence that the intervention made any contribution

Going forward

Oxfam Afghanistan has decided to engage with the design of the next phase of the NSP programme. It appears that NSP will now be changed to a new programme called Citizen Charter. The roles and responsibilities of the Facilitating Partner (such as Oxfam) under the new programme are not yet clear. Oxfam will also continue to stress the importance of ensuring genuine participation of women in decision-making at community levels. In response to the findings of the evaluation, Oxfam is committed to collecting additional data – beyond that currently required by the programme – and will integrate lessons learnt from its other programming in this context, in order to influence the design of the new Citizen Charter programme to ensure that women's role in decision-making at community and CDC levels are a critical component of the new programme. In the meantime, the Oxfam Afghanistan team has already planned to conduct more gender training for various CDCs, as per the request from the project’s programme management unit, and as identified in this review.

Photo: Dr Kinga Komorowska

Full version of this report and more information can be found at Oxfam’s Policy and Practice website: [www.oxfam.org.uk/effectiveness](http://www.oxfam.org.uk/effectiveness)  
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