

ACCOUNTABILITY REVIEW IN TANZANIA

Fahamu, Ongea Sikilizwa (Informed, Speaking and Heard) project

Effectiveness Review Series 2014/15



ADLG, one of Oxfam's previous partners in Mbogwe District, Bulagala Village. Photo: Kisuma Mapunda/Oxfam.

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ACRONYMS

AR	Accountability Review
CA	Constitutional Assembly
FGDs	Focus Group Discussions
GB	Great Britain
GJ	Gender Justice
KIIs	Key Informant Interviews
LHRC	Legal and Human Rights Centre
MEAL	Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning
MPLC	Morogoro Para Legal Centre
RD	Restless Development
VSO	Voluntary Services Overseas

1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

For any organisation to perform well, accountability is taken into account as one of the important aspects in ensuring good performance. This enables an organisation to assess its performance and make some improvements where there is a gap. In order to ascertain the degree of accountability in the 'Fahamu, Ongea Sikilizwa / Informed, Speaking and Heard' Project, Oxfam decided to conduct an Accountability Review. This review was conducted at different levels: examining Oxfam's accountability to partners and Oxfam and partners' accountability to communities. In order to achieve this, the consultation team used a participatory approach, which involved a number of data-collection methods. Data were collected in Morogoro, Kagera and Mbeya regions of Tanzania. The methods used were a document review, a workshop, staff interviews, focus group discussions, key informant interviews and, to some extent, observation. The Accountability Review focused on Oxfam's accountability to partners and Oxfam and partners' accountability to communities. The team used Oxfam's programme standards in the review process. The first assessment was **Oxfam's accountability to partners** as shown in Table 1.1.

Table 1.1: Oxfam's score for accountability to partners – from 1 (low) to 4 (v high)

Accountability Indicator	(Average) Oxfam score	(Average) Partner score	Review Team score
Transparency	2	3	2
Feedback	2	3	2
Participation	3	4	3
Average Total:	2	3	2

The reviewers scored Oxfam 2 (medium) for Transparency, reflecting the fact that detailed information about Oxfam and the project was mainly shared with partners during the inception of the project and at learning events. Information sharing during the implementation was affected by Feedback, which scored 2 (medium) because feedback mechanisms, such as a complaints policy, meetings and minutes have been put in place. The review team gave a score of 3 (high) for Participation because partners are highly involved in writing project proposals and developing the budget

The review team also assessed **Oxfam and partners' accountability to communities** as shown in Table 1.2.

Table 1.2: Oxfam and partner accountability to communities – from 1 (low) to 4 (v high)

Accountability Indicator	(Average) Oxfam/Partner score	(Average) Community score	Review Team score
Transparency	1	2	1
Feedback	2	2	2
Participation	1	2	2
Average Total:	1	2	2

The same dimensions were used and here Transparency scored 1 (low) because few communities' members have access to project information and it has not been easy for communities to communicate with the partners about the project and its activities. On Feedback, the score was 2 (medium) because there was no effective feedback mechanism in place where it could be easily

determined whether the communities' views had been taken into account. However, scores were influenced by the responses from those who had participated directly in training provided by the partners, that is, the influential people. Participation scored 2 (medium) because the communities had limited opportunities to participate in making decisions.

The review team came up with some **recommendations for improvement** including:

1. Utilisation of community structures for wider coverage and impact, especially on awareness-raising interventions.
2. Involving locally based implementing partners as they interact daily with community members.
3. Strong involvement of the local government.
4. Allowing communities to decide on their own needs.
5. Close supervision, or rather monitoring, by Oxfam to ensure responsibility of each partner working in the communities.
6. Improvement of cross learning among consortium members.
7. Making sure that the available feedback mechanisms, such as online networks, are properly used.
8. Oxfam should make sure that different documents are made available and being used by its staff members.

2 INTRODUCTION

Accountability plays a significant role in the work and performance of any organisation. It establishes the premise and sets the obligation to deliver specific results. It demands results and sets the expectation and the role of each actor within an organisation *vis a vis* the many other actors. Accountability gives space and flexibility for the actors and makes them think what is best for the organisation. All this happens at several levels, but importantly within and across projects implemented within an organisation and also at the level of organisation comparable with another organisation or other partners. Often it goes with transparency. Indeed, these have been core concepts that the post-independence government in Tanzania has been agonising over in order to address key development problems facing its population. Recent national commitment to reduce poverty calls for, among other things, close cooperation between many actors in both public and private sectors. This cooperation underlies the whole idea of being accountable and transparent to those in both social and physical environments, in other words to those we serve.

Some actors, such as Oxfam, whose programmes are rooted in the rights-based approach, favour accountability being understood as a core value. In targeting marginalised communities, an inclusive and empowerment approach is recommended, having a development process that addresses the critical issues of the underserved communities. Actors should be committed and respond in a balanced manner to the needs of their partners. This approach ensures credibility, legitimacy and strong governance structures that are focused on yielding better results. As such, Oxfam has a responsibility to be accountable to the partners with whom it works and to people living in poverty. Oxfam defines accountability as ‘the process through which an organisation balances the needs of stakeholders in its decision-making and activities, and delivers against this commitment’. Oxfam sees accountability as having a number of dimensions: transparency, having good feedback mechanisms, a high degree of participation and partnership, and alliances that are grounded in shared principles.

Having implemented the ‘Fahamu, Ongea Sikilizwa Project’, which addresses the constitutional review process, Oxfam Tanzania engaged an independent consultant to conduct this Accountability Review. Although the project focused primarily on all Tanzanian citizens engaging in the constitutional review, a particular emphasis was made on women and youth, as often being voiceless groups in society. This project was implemented through a constitutional consortium with three other partners: Voluntary Service Overseas, Restless Development and Legal and Human Rights Centre. The project was implemented in 14 regions of the Tanzanian mainland between March 2013 and July 2014. The main purposes of this Accountability Review were to see whether there has been transparency in the relationship between and among different partners involved in the project, if feedback mechanisms exist and if they have helped improve the performance of the project, to see if the implementation of the project ensured a degree of participation and finally to see whether the engagement in partnerships and alliances is grounded in core partnership principles. Generally, it is expected that the Accountability Review process will capture evidence and perceptions about whether the Fahamu, Ongea Sikilizwa Project has met Oxfam’s accountability standards. Thus, the assignment examined performance against these standards.

3 SHORT PROJECT SUMMARY

Tanzania has been in the process of developing a new constitution since 2013. The Fahamu Ongea Sikilizwa (Informed, Speaking, and Heard) was developed to respond to community awareness needs and participation in the constitution review processes. Oxfam has been coordinating a consortium, which has been working to encourage citizens to become informed, to speak up, and to be heard regarding issues around the constitution-making process. The consortium consists of four partners: Oxfam, VSO, RD and LHRC.

The **goal of this project** is to ensure that the issues being voiced by Tanzanians, especially marginalised groups, are incorporated into the constitutional review process and are ultimately reflected in the new Tanzanian constitution. The project had two main objectives:

1. To ensure that marginalised women and youth in Tanzania are **informed** about the constitution and the review process, **speak** about their opinions, and are **heard** by the duty bearers in the constitution review process.
2. That after the review process and the referendum, citizens are empowered to hold their leaders accountable and ensure that their rights are protected.

Note: Objective 2 could not be achieved as the constitution-making process was terminated in October 2014. At the time of this review the new constitution was due to be made available in 2015, after a general election.

The project was implemented to enable citizens to engage with the constitution-review process in order to shape the underlying principles, virtues and values, leading to a constitution that will enhance good governance, transparency and accountability. It is recognised that the constitution-review process is just one element of civic participation, and that to this end, this project will be an initial 'stepping stone', providing the mechanisms and platforms to engage women and young people in future governance matters. This project worked towards creating a vibrant discourse around the review process and citizen engagement throughout the process and beyond.

The timeline envisaged for the project was between January 2013 and June 2014, which could allow the consortium to support citizens and civil society to engage in various key moments and spaces during the review process as well as utilise the designated time after the enactment of the new constitution (or reverting back to the 1977 constitution) for awareness-raising on the constitution.

The actual project start date was therefore March 2013 and it ended in July 2014. The implementation approach was more or less the same, varying in only a few cases. While Restless Development and VSO implemented through volunteers and youth networks, LHRC implemented through volunteer paralegals based in the districts and Oxfam worked with local NGOs. The main overall interventions included a live televised Constitution Big Bang campaign (meetings, movies and songs), materials distribution (brochures, hard copies of the constitution, CD and flash disk copies and booklets), formation of a special committee of experts to monitor, document and shape the constitution-making process, an SMS campaign, radio campaigns, TV programmes/sessions, dialogues, public meetings and debates, meetings with local authority leaders and youth to discuss their engagement in the process and provision of the required support, monthly youth network meetings with a representative from LGA, supporting women to submit their views through civil society constitutional forums, speaking through media channels, advocating directly with members of the CA, advocacy meetings with duty bearers, and newspaper media coverage.

4 METHODOLOGY

In order to have a common understanding in undertaking the Accountability Review, both Oxfam and the consulting team had several rounds of discussions. These discussions centred on approach and methodology to be used during the review, but importantly also in ensuring a high degree of transparency and feedback during the review process so that the review itself was carried out in an accountable fashion. Thus, a participatory approach was employed where the consulting team and Oxfam discussed a predetermined tool, which was later refined to suit the Tanzanian context. Using a predetermined tool was of particular interest to Oxfam to ensure consistency with the Accountability Reviews it carries out in other parts of the world.

As a result, the data were collected using different methods: review of documents, interviews with staff and influential leaders, a workshop with consortium members, focus group discussions, and observations. Supporting research documents and data are available upon request.

Assessment of leadership/management of project-level accountability

Document review:

Several documents were made available to the consulting team and reviewed before the actual fieldwork commenced. This was to make sure that the team had a better understanding of the project and it went hand in hand with close consultation with the Oxfam team, especially on issues that were not clear in some documents. The main aim of the review was to examine whether all the documents stipulated in Oxfam's working guidelines were available and being used – particularly those with reference to accountability to partners and communities. A specific checklist was used to review these documents.

Staff interviews:

Interviews were conducted with Oxfam staff at the management level. The aim of using this method was to assess the leadership/management of project-level accountability. Importantly, these interviews established the status quo of the project within Oxfam before assessing other partners. At least two face-to-face interviews were conducted and one was conducted via the telephone.

Assessment of Oxfam's accountability to partners and communities

Workshop:

A workshop was held to examine (a) Oxfam's accountability to partners and (b) Oxfam and partners' joint accountability to communities. Oxfam's accountability to partners was examined using a questionnaire provided by Oxfam. Oxfam staff answered from their point of view and partners likewise. All participants were encouraged to give Oxfam scores for transparency, listening to feedback, and enabling participation. In addition they were prompted to provide evidence or their reasoning for the score they gave. At the end of the scoring exercise participants were encouraged to examine the scores and to look for and discuss similarities and differences.

The second half of the workshop examined Oxfam and partners' accountability to communities/project beneficiaries using an Oxfam-provided matrix that describes accountability in projects. Oxfam and partner staff worked together to use the matrix to agree what degree of accountability they believed members of the communities affected by the project were experiencing. The consultants then facilitated a discussion where the participants were asked to provide reasons for their scores. The information was recorded using a digital voice recorder. All information was transcribed and translated into English for easy analysis.

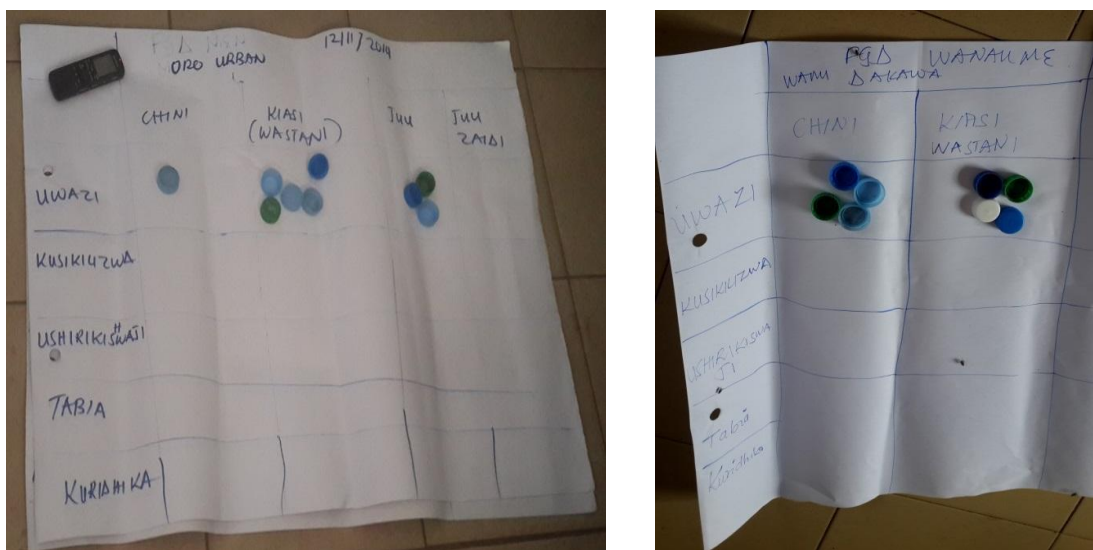
Assessment of accountability experienced by key stakeholders¹:

Focus Group Discussion (FGD):

A total of six focus group discussions were conducted to assess Oxfam and partner's accountability to communities. The participants were purposefully identified by implanting partners from a ward that was randomly selected by the consulting team. At some points it was difficult to limit the participants to the selected ward as beneficiaries (such as influential people) who received training directly from Oxfam's partners, were part of the discussion. Thus, they had to come from neighbouring wards. The members of the discussions had different backgrounds: those who were trained to become trainers, those who directly implemented the project, the representatives of the communities, opinion leaders, religious leaders, and influential and knowledgeable people in the communities. This mixture enabled the team to capture a diverse picture of the accountability, and the composition meant that at least some of the participants in the discussion had engaged with the project in one way or the other.

The consulting team utilised the ten seeds technique to gather quality information, especially on how they were engaged with the project in terms of transparency, information, budget, contact persons, feedback, being listened to, participation, and staff attitudes. The technique particularly opened up room for more discussion and negotiation on the scores as well as laughter and, most importantly, on the reasons for the scores given. Artwork was also used, but this it was not useful because the design could not capture peoples' views and attention. Additionally, scenario case studies were used to stimulate thinking and participation during the FGDs.

Figure 4.1: Ten seeds technique



Key Informant Interviews (KII):

Key informants were also used to capture comprehensive and quality information on accountability related issues. The key informants were purposively selected from the community members and in particular by virtue of their positions and engagement with the project. As a result, those who received training, consortium members, leaders of the implementing partners, influential people, and government and religious leaders were all included. A pre-determined and refined interview guide was used to gather information from this important category. At the end of the interview, the key informants were given an opportunity to rank different dimensions of accountability. It is particularly interesting to see how diverse their responses were depending on their engagement with the project.

See Appendix 1 for a description of the AER participants method.

5 HOW ACCOUNTABLE IS OGB TO PARTNERS IN THIS PROJECT?

Findings from the workshop outlined in Section 4 are as follows:

Table 5.1: Oxfam’s accountability to partners – from 1 (low) to 4 (v high)

Accountability Indicator	(Average) Oxfam score	(Average) Partner score	Review Team score
Transparency	2	3	2
Feedback	2	3	2
Participation	3	4	3
Average Total:	2	3	2
Partnership practices	3	2	2

5.1 TRANSPARENCY

Transparency focused on assessing Oxfam’s level of information-sharing with partners and its accessibility. The feedback from Oxfam and partners indicated that detailed information about Oxfam and project was shared with partners mainly during project inception and learning events. Such information included project agreements (which come with a pack of information about Oxfam), sharing how Oxfam works during project inception meetings and proposals, budgets, and activities. There are other platforms that Oxfam uses to share information, such as monthly consortium meetings. One partner mentioned having received updates on finance and programme changes via email and appreciated the monthly consortium meetings, which gave an opportunity to negotiate changes on the quality of the delivery of projects. The document review and staff interviews also confirmed the practice of information-sharing between Oxfam and partners. Meeting minutes were made available during the document review. The review team gave a score of 2 (medium) for Transparency given the fact that combined narrative and financial reports were not shared with partners and no reports (annual, monitoring reports, etc.) were available in the appropriate local language (Swahili). Sharing the final report serves as one way of learning and building up a team spirit among the consortium members. Furthermore, there is an online platform for consortium members, but responses indicated that there were challenges in its utilisation and accessibility by communities. In order to score 3 (high) reports would need to be made available in the local language, information be regularly updated, and a public annual report of Oxfam’s work in country made available.

‘At some point sharing of information across the consortium members has been a challenge since some of the information is shared at a particular level and mainly senior management level something which isolates other members.’ (Participant during the workshop)

5.2 FEEDBACK

The review team gave score of 3 (high) for Feedback because feedback mechanisms and a complaints policy are in place. Furthermore, the performance reviews and end-of-year reviews include soliciting feedback from partners, encouraging a culture of providing feedback. Partners pointed out how effective the monthly meetings were in both exchanging information and providing feedback on project matters. Some improvements related to the quality of implementation of the project were made based on feedback from partners. For example, during staff interviews and the document review it was explained that documents were not easily accessible. However, it was found that Oxfam had created a Google account where relevant documents have been posted. The problem is that partners do not make use of the account. Although the system is in place the practice requires improvements. For example, the findings indicated that the complaints policy was shared, but only once during the inception of the project and staff who were later assigned a role as direct contacts for the projects were not made aware of the policy. Non-consistency of feedback loops and hierarchy was pointed out as a barrier to achieving a high level of feedback. Similarly, findings indicated a delay in feedback from Oxfam to partners in some instances, thus creating a gap. To be able to reach the highest score of 4 (very high) the feedback and complaints systems would need to be designed with stakeholders building on respected local ways of giving feedback and encouraging the most marginalised groups to raise issues. Since most of the participants were not conversant with the complaints policy it was difficult to raise issues through the established mechanism.

'The problem is that the consortium members delay to provide feedback although the Google account has been created. They sometimes claim to be busy with other activities thus making it difficult to receive feedback timely.' (Key informant – Oxfam staff)

'I must appreciate that at least through monthly consortium meetings we receive feedback on issues related to programme, finances and others. We also receive emails if there is anything new or some changes have been made. Some few times there are delays but I cannot say it is a problem.' (Participant during workshop in Dar es Salaam)

5.3 PARTICIPATION

This assessment looked at the level of Oxfam and partners' participation in decision-making, implementation, and MEAL processes. Generally, the scores from Oxfam and partners ranged between 3 and 4. The review team gave a score of 3 (high) for Participation based on evidence provided from discussions and the document review. The level of participation was proved to be high because partners are highly involved in writing project proposals and developing the budget. Decisions that require the presence of all members are made during joint consortium meetings, although participation is low. The learning events allow partners to sit together to discuss changes in the programme, but again participation was identified as a weak area. Consultations are made to consortium members on decision-making-related project planning, implementation and any change of plans and budgets. This is usually done through meetings or emails and was solidly confirmed during staff interviews and the document review. It was also pointed out that extraordinary meetings were sometimes called for urgent issues that needed collective decision-making. The main areas requiring improvements are related to participation of members in sessions, minimising representation by junior staff during decision-making sessions and enhancing participatory monitoring. There are only a few gaps to reaching the highest score of 4 (very high) where stakeholders participate and contribute equally in making key decisions throughout the entire cycle.

The main aspect that takes the scores back to 3 (high) is lack of joint field monitoring between partners and Oxfam to make it more participatory.

'As Oxfam we make sure that the partners are involved from the time of writing proposals, budgeting and also making decisions on important matters. We also give them an opportunity to provide feedback during learning events and other meetings.' (Key informant Oxfam).

This information coincided with the information collected during workshop with partners that 'Oxfam has been working with partners in a participatory manner. Partners are always involved during planning, proposal write-up, determining the budget and in providing feedback.' (Workshop participant, Dar es Salaam).

5.4 PARTNERSHIP PRACTICES

Partnership practices were assessed by looking at relationships and the sharing and utilisation of Oxfam international standards or codes. Relationships scored higher than standards. By combining the two, the overall score falls beneath 2 (medium). Some of the factors giving high credits to relationships include: politeness, respect and patience of staff; learning events and monthly consortium meetings, which were found to be useful in providing a space for dialogue between staff and partners; flexibility and accommodating environment to partner's ideas; and project staff working together to develop new actions during monthly meetings. However, findings indicate a lack of joint field visits between consortium partners and Oxfam, a lack of exit plans and a lack of regular reviews of roles and responsibilities. With regard to standards, Oxfam confirmed sharing the staff code of conduct and complaint policy, which forms part of the agreement, and that the documents were also discussed during the project inception meeting. However, the consortium members who participated in the workshop were not aware of these documents, indicating an information gap at the partner officers. Moreover, the staff interviews confirmed a low awareness of Oxfam international standards or codes. Oxfam staff members appreciated the availability of policies and guidelines, but acknowledged that there is a challenge in reading and referencing from the documents by the staff and partners, as was explained in one of the interviews. To reach a score of 3 (high) staff must aim to help people to analyse and tackle their own issues in their own ways, Relevant Oxfam standards or codes of conduct must be signed up to and clearly referenced in project activities with a clear process to measure performance against these standards.

'The documents and guidelines are available but staff members do not have the culture of reading them. Most of the times they are only read when they are needed, for example during signing of the contracts.' (Key informant, Oxfam).

'For sure it is for the first time I am hearing about the staff code of conduct and complaint policy. Maybe they were shared with our bosses and never reached the project focal people.' (Consortium member during workshop in Dar es Salaam)

6 HOW ACCOUNTABLE ARE OGB AND PARTNERS TO COMMUNITIES IN THIS PROJECT?

The data gathered during this review and our observations revealed that the implementation of the project in the regions covered by the report is mixed. While we were interested in finding out how the consortium members were accountable to the community, the real picture on the ground became complex. The interventions done by the partners seem to be overlapping. Generally, implying that the outcome were due to consortium members activities alone proved challenging. Parallel interventions were conducted by other organisations, government and civil societies. This information came from all three regions, especially the FGDs, as narrated below:

'It is not very clear to us when you say that human rights monitor had provided civic education on constitutional review. The village chairperson and ward executive officers had also participated.' (Male, 52yrs. Mbeya)

'This is the first time I am hearing about Fahamu, Ongea and Sikilizwa Project. I have heard about Katiba from the government especially during open public meetings. You better talk of Katiba project than Fahamu.' (Male, 28yrs. Morogoro)

'The Katiba project is everywhere, the radio stations, televisions, government offices, even when we were waiting for our colleagues we were talking about Katiba. Everyone talk about Katiba. We didn't know that Restless are remotely engineering it.' (Female, 43yrs. Kagera)

'We have heard about Katiba from paralegals, human rights monitors and they had an open discussion in the village centre where we discussed our role in the process.' (Female, 25yrs. Kagera)

Our general observation is that the scores on accountability are influenced by the level of contact between the community and the partners. In all regions the communities seemed not to be aware of the project or the consortium members. Only those who were trained and participated in the implementation of the project are aware of the project and consortium members. As a result only those who were trained or had participated in the implementation of the project were able to score the accountability of the partners. However, in the focus group discussions it became clear that there were some who were completely unaware of the consortium members and the project itself, as illustrated in the above quotes. Thus their score was 1 (low). This mix made the exercise of ten

seeds somewhat challenging. In this situation we made the group vote twice, once for themselves on how they evaluate the accountability of partners to themselves, and once for the partners' accountability to the community. They were asked to vote as representatives of the communities so that the picture they give in terms of scores will represent how the partners have been accountable to the entire community and not the individuals who attended seminars, trainings and workshops. It becomes interesting and obvious that while in the first instance the scores were relatively high (3) in the second the scores dropped. In these situations we then looked for an average score from each group. While this is true for FGDs, the KIIs revealed a different picture. Since the individuals who participated in the KII also participated in the project activities, their scores were stable and relatively high (3). These individuals, as described in the methodology, are the people who had attended project activities organised by consortium members or implementing partners.

The above picture is not a surprise because during the partners' workshop, the scores of Oxfam and other consortium members were either 1 (low) or 2 (medium). The members were very honest during the scoring process. Our observations confirm the two pictures above. Having got the pictures of the consortium members and the community, we were convinced that the medium score captures the reality. One observation that we would like to emphasise here is that while the four consortium members participated during the workshop and scoring exercise, in the communities the composition of partners was slight different. For instance, in Morogoro the consortium worked through partners, such as Morogoro Paralegal Centre.

Table 6.1: Oxfam and partner accountability to communities – from 1 (low) to 4 (v high)

Accountability Indicator	(Average) Oxfam/Partner score	(Average) Community score	Review Team score
Transparency	1	2	1
Feedback	2	2	2
Participation	1	2	2
Average Total:	1	2	2
Staff attitudes	n/a	2	2
Satisfaction	n/a	1	1

6.1 TRANSPARENCY

The analysis shows that the general score for Transparency for partners from the community is 2 (medium). When we asked the community members both in focus group discussions and individual interviews their responses were:

'Some of us don't even know the project and the partners, so it is for sure a nightmare talking about transparency. We were hardly engaged thus we cannot give 3 (high) scores, what do you think members?' (Male, 62yrs. Mbeya)

'Oxfam and Morogoro paralegals were here and I had an opportunity to be informed about their budget, activities, plans. When we come here they always tell us about their projects and they give us an update but also tells us that we have received an interest from Oxfam on Gender Based Violence and that we will be having a project that is about million shillings. The only concern for me is not getting the deep information and for this I give them 2 (medium) as a fair score' (Female, 59yrs. Morogoro)

'We once had a meeting with volunteers of VSO and Restless and they told us about the Katiba project. They didn't go into details on the budget but at least there were several trainings after they launched a project and I benefited from those trainings. I would say 2 (medium) score is good so that they can have some improvements in the future as they represent our interests' (Male, 28yrs. Kagera)

Our own observations during the workshop discussions and reviewed documents convinced us that a 2 (medium) score is fair and captures the reality as far as transparency is concerned. A thorough look at the numbers from the three regions shows some disparities on scores. These disparities are a direct result of the different ways of working of the different implementing partners.

Almost half of the participants who took part in the Accountability Review knew something about the NGOs, such as their objectives, target groups and key contact persons. Most of these were participants who had been trained or invited for training and some who were asked to support the implementation process. The other half is mixed. There are some who had received or had heard about the project's activities and the partners through awareness interventions, especially when they visited partner's offices for other reasons. Similarly they were also reached by the supporting implementers. There are also others who participated who didn't know anything about the NGOs and confirmed having heard of the interventions through radio. Almost no participants knew about the budget of NGOs, not even for the FOS interventions. Only in one female FGD did some women confirm being aware of the budget for the district implementing NGO. However when they were asked to mention the amount, none of them could identify even a rough figure. Generally, women were more knowledgeable on aspects of transparency than men, although at the beginning it was difficult for them to speak out the reality until a thorough discussion had taken place. By contrast, men were fast and straight to the point. This is demonstrated in some focus group discussions:

'We have limited understanding of the NGOs and other partners. But we are informed about the constitutional review process and if you want let us discuss about the constitution.' (Male, 31yrs. Mbeya)

'It is not that the partners are not doing anything, no. There are a lot going on in the community. Sorting who is who is confusing and for us what is important is a message and not so much on who is delivering that message. For this, we have a lot of evidence that we are informed by the partners, but not much about their transparency in terms of budget, T-shirts or print out. If they wanted they could have shared, but it is also not interesting for many of us.' (Female, 40yrs. Morogoro)

However, some participants raised the concern that when people were trained the information did not trickle down to the community members as they were not facilitated to conduct the public awareness meetings. They only managed to participate in few meetings and in those the key messages reflected the constitution and not the project. Participants were highly conversant on the constitution as opposed to knowing about the NGOs and the project.

6.2 FEEDBACK

Just like scores for Transparency, the Feedback score of the community to Oxfam and partners was also 2 (medium). When we asked the community if they are being listened to, their responses indicate that there was not a satisfactory mechanism to get feedback from the partners. In fact a score of 2 (medium) is influenced by the key informants who have received training and thus were able to negotiate and ask for a space to express their concerns and ideas. The picture is particularly alarming for Mbeya and Morogoro regions where the score was 1 (low). At least some space for feedback in the Kagera region was provided. The participants in Mbeya and Morogoro were concerned that although they became engaged at some point in the project implementation, usually when the project was introduced, the partners did not go back to the same community to provide any progress or status report on the project. What is a particularly interesting finding from Mbeya and Morogoro is that even in those activities where the community got engaged, such as public meetings, messages in bus stops, bajaj speakers, and motorcycle speakers (boda boda), there was little room for discussion. It was simply a one-way process where those who invited them delivered the messages and 'vanished'. A few participants said they sometimes participated in meetings and most of their issues received attention from the partner.

However, most participants were not happy about the level of feedback as most of their views were not taken into consideration and they did not receive feedback. For instance, the community requested a revised mechanism to ensure the wider community was sensitised on the constitution, but in the end, only a few community members were trained and provided with fliers, from which the community benefited little as most of the adults could not read. Reading is not part of Tanzania's culture. At the same time, people who were trained were not supported financially to move around, and they mentioned less supervision from above. On this aspect there was no significant variation between male and female participants. The summary from a few participants is presented here:

'Some of us were interested in the project activities. We were particularly touched the way for taxi drivers, commuters, motorcycles and bajaj drivers too this issue is serious. The whole town was about katiba-katiba. They had such a strong message. Unfortunately we never had a chance to meet those who came and brought the CDs, memory sticks, printed materials. It would have been nice discussing with them.' (Male, 52yrs. Mbeya)

'We attended a public meeting organised by a monitor in the city, we were so touched by the message but we never had time to ask questions or discuss with them. It is like we were given half dose. For most of us this is the second time we are meeting and discussing about issues related to Katiba.' (Male, 52yrs. Morogoro)

6.3 PARTICIPATION

A score of 2 (medium) for Participation indicates that the community's participation in project-related activities was not convincing. When we asked how much they had participated in decision-making, their response was unanimous that they hardly had an opportunity to participate in making decisions. Similarly, they had limited chances to implement the project activities. A score of 1 (low) was recorded in Mbeya and Morogoro, while Kagera region gave a score of 2 (medium) in both focus group discussions and key informants interviews. Indeed, the key informant interviews influenced the scores as most of them had an opportunity to engage with the project either by attending training organised by members of the consortium, organising and mobilising youth networks, or through women's dialogues, to mention but a few. All in all, the general observation during the focus group discussions and key informant interviews is that participation is minimal. Even the more positive key informants revealed that most of the decisions were taken at higher levels, thus the communities were only informed on what to do. The discussions and key informant interviews revealed that when it comes to how the resources are used they were barely aware. They suggested a mechanism of ensuring that during the initial planning of the project, at least the representatives from the community should be invited. This would mean the community being informed and being made aware of what is going on in their areas. This model is closely related to how they solve their problems, where the representatives are normally engaged in planning, decision-making and finally updating and engaging the community.

6.4 STAFF ATTITUDE

Staff Attitude was measured by asking the study participants 'How comfortable do you feel discussing your issues with the organisation's staff?' The average score of 2 (medium) seems to be fair taking into account the fact that consortium members, such as LHRC, have been helping people with various issues that were of great concern to them. For instance, the representatives of LHRC in Mbeya and Morogoro paralegals are highly active in listening and supporting the communities in solving their concerns. Our own observations also revealed the same in that we saw individuals and groups that were in their offices waiting to be seen. Indeed, the participants reaffirmed the fact that when the project started, the level of interaction with staff was high but over time and towards the end of the project, the gap increased. The score of 2 (medium) seems to be fair because there have been no major issues on staff attitudes. For instance, some members appreciated how supportive the staff for one partner organisation had been as they were even ready to receive calls at night and they have connected them with legal officers.

6.5 SATISFACTION

The assessment of Satisfaction was somewhat challenging. When we asked the participants how useful the project was to the people, responses were very mixed. Some members believed that the project did not reach the community, thus its usefulness is difficult to observe. Others said that at least some individuals and groups were reached and thus a fair score would be 'low'. However, a unanimous picture comes from all the focus group discussions and key informant interviews, that it is impossible to comment on how the project's money was used as they were not engaged in, or

informed about, the actual budget and unit costs of the activities. The key informant interviews revealed that the project definitely reached those who were active and outspoken or activists in the communities. Some who participated in the study also revealed that they had been invited and trained. Others study participants strongly believed that there was little that those who were trained had done in the community. They did not have the budget to organise and sensitise the community about their participation in the project activities. The average score of 1 (low) is also fair from our own observations and engagement with the general public and the few representatives that we have spoken to during the evaluation.

7 OVERALL MAIN STRENGTHS

- Working with some of the partners who have strong presence in the community. This increases credibility and trust in the community as even when the project ends, the partner is there for continuity through other interventions. The 3 (high) score on Staff Attitude came mainly from the areas where implementing partners are locally based.
- The systems are in place, such as complaints procedures built into project agreements, and the introduction to partners is done during the early stages of project start up. This also includes sharing of roles and responsibilities among partners to ensure the smooth running of the projects.
- Presence of feedback mechanisms, such as monthly meetings and the Google group account created by Oxfam. Consortium members highly appreciate the usefulness of monthly meetings as an avenue where actions are put forward and collective agreement can be obtained.
- The involvement of community members in implementation itself is empowering and ensures the availability of support and service close to fellow community members. This is one way of ensuring ownership and sustainability. Although the community said only a few were empowered, at least the system and practice is there. This will require some improvements for wider coverage and to make sure they also participate in decision-making.
- There is strength in working in a consortium and the ability to coordinate the consortium is also present.

8 OVERALL MAIN WEAKNESSES

- Transparency on the budget is weak at all levels. This was evident throughout all discussions from national level during the workshop to community level. The budget is mainly made available to consortium members, while beneficiaries are unaware of how much is allocated to be spent on their behalf.
- Monitoring of project activities and implementation by Oxfam at the beneficiaries' level is weak. This was confirmed during discussions at national and community level. One of the actions to address this was for implementing partners to integrate Oxfam in their field-monitoring schedule.
- The project reached few community members. According to feedback from the communities, a few community representatives received training with a view to them implementing the interventions in their communities. Unfortunately they claimed lack of financial support to take the interventions down to the community.
- The involvement of local government was found to be weak. This was evident in some of the regions where the local government authorities were not in support of interventions and where representatives were denied permission to conduct public meetings.
- Little has been done to ensure community participation during decision-making and implementation. This was confirmed during the workshop, community FGDs, and interviews. For ownership and sustainability to be evident, this has to be rectified.

9 PROGRAMME LEARNING CONSIDERATIONS

- Utilisation of community structures for wider coverage and impact, especially on awareness-raising interventions. During discussions the community members identified structures like Mbuyu 'baobab' meetings for the Maasai tribe as a highly respected and effective avenue for gathering where participation is almost 100 per cent.
- As part of assessing accountability, the community provided responses on their knowledge about the NGO, the contact person, and how easy it was for community members to get access to such information. This portrays a positive picture when the implementing NGO is either based in the district or the implementing partner is working with a locally based NGO. After identifying a local partner it is recommended that a capacity assessment is undertaken before the start of the project to ensure a smooth partnership and implementation.
- Harmonious ways of working with government have to be reflected during planning and this could be captured by risk assessment in advance to allow the development of mitigation strategies. This refers to the example of Mbeya, where the government did not cooperate in providing a permit for public meetings as a means for raising awareness and seeking people's participation on constitution-making processes. Other issues might be sensitive, but importantly the relationship with the authorities has to be strengthened to ensure the desired changes and results are obtained for the wellbeing of the community.
- Consider having the communities decide on their needs and suitable approaches as this creates a sense of ownership. They gave the example of community projects engineered by the community itself that turn out successfully and even when it involves monetary or in-kind contributions people contribute happily in contrast with invented projects, which usually face challenges in implementation. For instance with special cases such as awareness and participation in constitution-making, partners can have broad major plans but allow the community, through grassroots structures, to do the micro planning as they know their environment well.
- Discussions with the communities indicated the importance of supervision or monitoring as a way of adding value to what they are doing and contributing to an increased sense of responsibility by implementers within the community. The level of supervision and monitoring is currently weak. This therefore calls for joint monitoring between Oxfam and partners.
- There is cross learning among consortium members, but this needs improvement. The consortium approach calls for knowledge-sharing and learning. The learning and sharing through monthly meetings and learning events could effectively be taken to the grassroots, especially when there is more than one consortium partner working in the same district.
- The use of online sharing through social networks and a Google account is useful for sharing documents but usage was not very interactive. With the growth of technology a balance is required to ensure whatever mechanism is used for sharing and learning is more interactive and accessible to the majority.
- Oxfam has a number of policies and guidelines on accountability that are less known and utilised. There is a need to ensure that people have access to different documents, that they are used, and that they provide avenues for people's suggestions for policy and guideline amendments. This can be included as an agenda in quarterly meetings and other sessions.

10 COMMITMENTS FOR/TO CHANGE

Commitments for change were discussed during the feedback workshop, which was comprised of Oxfam, consortium members, and beneficiaries. Participants appreciated the findings as they portray reality on the ground. Recommendations provided by the review team were discussed, and most of them were included in the actions that were agreed by participants during plenary discussions.

The participants were divided into two groups having a mix of Oxfam staff, consortium members and beneficiaries. Table 10.1 and the following explanation summarises where Oxfam and partners want to get as far as achieving best practice on accountability is concerned. A more detailed action table is provided at Appendix 2. The participants reached a consensus that most of the activities will not require additional funds as they are covered in the activity plans. Before going into groupwork, it was made clear and agreed that the suggestions for improvement cut across the Oxfam Tanzania programmes, and hence were not limited to the Fahamu Ongea Sikilizwa Project.

Table 10.1: The ideal accountability situation that Oxfam, partners and beneficiaries desire to achieve by December 2015

Accountability to Partners			Accountability to Communities		
Accountability indicator	Reviewer score	Desired score (Average)	Accountability indicator	Reviewer score	Desired score (Average)
Transparency	2	4	Transparency	1	3
Feedback	2	4	Feedback	2	3
Participation	3	4	Participation	2	3
Partnership practices	2	3	Staff attitudes	2	3
			Satisfaction	1	3

Table 10.2: The main key action points as agreed by participants

Oxfam accountability to partners	Oxfam and partners accountability to communities
<p>Transparency</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partnership agreement to be explicitly made available for staff and partners from the start of the project Stakeholder meetings with involvement of Oxfam and community members to be done before start of the project and frequently during implementation. This to be established <p>Feedback</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Timely communication and feedback through use of fast communication channels, such as mobile phones, development of forms and establishment of hotline for feedback questionnaires <p>Participation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Oxfam and partners to develop a joint field monitoring plan and intensify working together with communities in identifying needs and capturing their interests. <p>Partnership</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review of contracts to ensure there is clear elaboration on the relationship between partners and communities and include risks associated with the project, capacity building to partners and beneficiaries to take lead in analysing their issues. Moreover exit plans to be prepared by partners and Oxfam 	<p>Transparency</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have quarterly, bi-annual and annual reports from Oxfam and partners in local language (Swahili) for sharing with beneficiaries. Information such as budget, the project itself, monitoring and evaluation results should be shared through local leaders <p>Feedback</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To open a free line for communities to provide feedback (either good or bad) and actions to be take on time <p>Participation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consultative meetings between partners, women’s and men’s groups through village meetings, religious sessions, traditional gatherings and market places as a way of gathering information and views <p>Staff attitudes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide information to communities on office location and contact numbers, for easy access to information and to provide feedback on progress <p>Satisfaction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure participation of communities in project design, implementation, monitoring and evaluations of projects in an addition to creating CSOs/CBOs for both female & male database in the project area and seek involvement of community groups and voiceless groups and individuals

11 EVALUATOR'S VIEW ON VALIDITY OF PROCESS, FINDINGS AND RESULTS

- Although accountability stands as an obligation for an organisation to account for its activities and accept responsibility for them as well as disclose the results in a transparent manner both internally and with other partners, its review is often subsumed in the general final evaluation of projects. As a result, it accounts for a small part of the general evaluation when other issues, such as impact, efficiency, effectiveness, sustainability, and governance are all included. The review team commend Oxfam's effort in breaking away from this tradition and giving the Accountability Review its deserved weight. Treating accountability separately helped the review team to gain a more in-depth understanding of the project and partners and importantly in capturing a real picture of the status quo of the project within different levels of implementation.
- It is particularly interesting seeing lower scores from the consortium members on issues such as transparency, feedback, participation, staff attitude and satisfaction. Similarly, the community discussions, which were captured through six focus group discussions, pointed to the same result of lower scores. The interviews with key informants, such as local authorities, religious and influential leaders in the communities, and other representatives who took part in the evaluation process, gave medium scores to accountability-related issues. The team believes that these scores represent a true picture and the reasons were clear that the consortium members and their implementing partners did not do enough to share their objectives and budgets, in particular for the FOS project. The key informants have participated once and a very few participated more than three times in project activities. It is interesting that even those with triple participation didn't know about the actual budget and activities, and there was no feedback, especially after the activities were undertaken.
- The evidence discussions after voting provided a huge opportunity for validating the findings. At the beginning, it took a lot of time for participants to appreciate the aim and importance of being open and frank. The scores given were high during the individual ranking, but after discussions on the evidence for the scores given, members shifted their position, especially during FGDs.

APPENDIX: DESCRIPTION OF ACCOUNTABILITY REVIEW PARTICIPANTS

Method	Regions	Numbers	Category of participants	Total
Key informants	Morogoro	1 female; 3 males	Religious leader, village leaders and community organisation leaders	4
	Mbeya	2 females; 3 males	Influential leaders	5
	Kagera	1 female; 4 males	Religious leaders and village leaders	5
	Dar es Salaam	3	Oxfam staff	3
FDGs	Morogoro	17 females; 16 males	Members of community groups, members of art groups, community members, community leaders	4
	Mbeya	18 females; 20 males	Members of community groups, members of art groups, community members, community leaders	4
	Kagera	20 females; 20 males	Members of community groups, members of art groups, community members, community leaders	4
Initial workshop	Dar es Salaam	11	Staff from Oxfam, Restless Development, VSO, LHRC	1
Feedback workshop	Dar es Salaam	11	Staff from Oxfam, Restless Development, VSO, LHRC and beneficiaries	1

NOTES

1 The methodology and guidance for this were originally created and used by Concern and Mango as part of their Listen First activities.

Oxfam Effectiveness Reviews

For more information, or to comment on this report, email opalenquiries@oxfam.org.uk

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