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# IMPROVING REGIONAL FOOD SECURITY IN THE SOUTH CAUCASUS THROUGH NATIONAL STRATEGIES AND SMALLHOLDER PRODUCTION

## Project Final Evaluation Summary

*The opinions reflected here are Oxfam's. They draw on the independent Project Final Evaluation report but also learning gathered throughout the project's lifetime.*

The European Union-funded project *Improving Regional Food Security in the South Caucasus through National Strategies and Smallholder Production* launched in September 2013 with the overall objective of contributing to the improvement of food security and nutrition (FSN) in the South Caucasus. It aimed to achieve this through smallholder farmers' representation in governance processes, and by encouraging gender-sensitive FSN strategies in order to change attitudes around FSN and improve agricultural production practices, including marketing and increasing demand for healthy and locally produced food. The project generated a wide range of evidence on FSN and stimulated a public discussion on the gaps and challenges in policy and practice.

The final evaluation of the project aimed to assess the overall impact of the intervention, including its relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, sustainability and impact.

# 1 INTRODUCTION

The four-year, European Union-funded project Improving Regional Food Security in the South Caucasus through National Strategies and Smallholder Production (IRFS or ‘the project’) had the overall objective of contributing to improved food security and nutrition (FSN) in the South Caucasus, focusing on increasing the representation of smallholder farmers in policy decision making processes. The specific objective of the project was to contribute to the design and implementation of effective FSN strategies in the South Caucasus (Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan) through the active participation of smallholder farmers’ representative bodies. Three results were envisaged:

1. Inclusive and gender-sensitive FSN strategies would be developed in the three countries.
2. Enacted FSN legislation would support local food production and consumption.
3. There would be increased representation of civil society through participation of alliances and working groups in FSN strategy and policy decision making processes.



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The final evaluation of the project assessed the overall impact within the four-year timeframe by looking at: 1) relevance of the design; 2) efficiency of implementation; 3) effectiveness and achievement of outputs; and 4) sustainability of impact. This project has been a high priority for Oxfam Great Britain, hence much importance has been placed on sustainable impact and its contribution to learning beyond the project.

## 2 METHODOLOGY

For the final evaluation, information was collected from key informants and stakeholders, including representatives of project implementation teams, partners and ministries in Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia. The evaluation applied OECD-DAC principles<sup>1</sup> and used participatory methods for the collection of information and analysis including:

1. A desk review of baseline and mid-term evaluation, as well as monitoring assessments conducted by experts and multiple research studies.
2. Monitoring and evaluation (M&E) workshop with the project team, partners, alliance members, and the organizations OxYGen and Bridge.
3. Face-to-face interviews using semi-structured interview guides.
4. The organization of a regional learning workshop in Armenia for further input and validation of collected data.

### 3 KEY FINDINGS

As a result of the project, when the national governments of Armenia and Georgia develop policy related to food security and agriculture they automatically consult the Agricultural Alliance Armenia (AA), the Georgian Agricultural Alliance for Rural Development (GAARD) and Oxfam spin-offs (OxYGen and BRIDGE), in recognition of their role as representatives of smallholder farmers. This was not the case before the project.

Oxfam initiated the project in close collaboration with strategic partners in three countries; mobilized stakeholders; commissioned research; conducted public campaigns; engaged with the media; formed FSN working groups bringing together civil society organizations (CSOs), governments, and international organizations; ensured representation of smallholder farmers in policy advocacy; and established national alliances as platforms for civic dialogue.



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The project's relevance was highly satisfactory from inception to completion, and even beyond. The project's objectives were relevant to national policies, EU priorities, Oxfam, CSOs, Armenian and Georgian communities, smallholder farmers and vulnerable groups.

The multi-stakeholder alliances in Armenia and Georgia successfully created general awareness on food security issues and policies in the South Caucasus. Alliance members jointly lobbied and influenced government on policy and strategy improvement. Alliances proved to be the best platform to debate the FSN agenda, agriculture and topics related to food security. The project campaigns were well received by the public, decision makers, the media, CSOs and smallholder farmers. From its inception, gender mainstreaming has been a high priority for the project. Women participated in research studies and a gender analysis was carried out during project design. National competitions engaged youth in FSN issues and the education sector was brought on board through its association with research on nutrition commissioned by the project



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While all activities were implemented as planned, the project team's expectations exceeded actual achievements. Implementation of the M&E framework was considered as moderately satisfactory.

Smallholder farmers participated in the alliances as members of multiple organizations. During the project's lifespan, alliance members harmonized their activities; collaboration replaced competition; information flowed better between organizations; and activities complemented, rather than duplicated, each other. Collaboration also increased through participation in task force groups, working towards common objectives. Innovative ways to communicate with farmers were also highly effective. Cooperation with implementing partners was rated as moderate; cooperation with stakeholders (partners, members of alliances) was rated as satisfactory, and cooperation with state agencies and entities as satisfactory.

The project successfully gave voice to the FSN agenda at the national level and influenced food security strategies at the highest policy levels. There was a positive change in political discourse favouring inclusive growth and pro-poor policies in the target countries. Due to the long-term nature of policy work, overall sustainability of the project can be considered as moderately satisfactory and follow-ups are likely to be carried out by partners, alliances and stakeholders.

## 4 RELEVANCE

According to research undertaken by the project, food insecurity in the region is linked to patterns of food consumption (utilization) impacting on the nutritional status of individuals. Lack of food stability is the major driver of risk of deterioration of nutritional status rather than access to food.

National governments have been trying to tackle these issues and the timing of the project was opportune. The FSN project began just as all three target countries were beginning to develop strategies on agricultural development. FSN became an important part of those strategies. This was a unique opportunity for the project to engage with national governments. FSN soon became a high-profile topic (both in Armenia and Georgia) in the media and among CSOs.

At the beginning of 2015, the project initiated discussions with the Ministry of Health (MoH) in Armenia and agreed a joint-cooperation framework. A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed between the MoH and Mother & Child Health Alliance (MCHA) on joint healthcare/nutrition policy development and implementation and monitoring, followed by the launch of a pilot project monitoring the status of nutrition in schools. In Georgia, the project commissioned national research on nutrition and facilitated the active engagement of the MoH and its subsidiary body, the National Center for Disease Control (NCDC), in elaborating relevant policy recommendations with regards to nutrition strategy development.

*'Food security [FS] is an important part of national security, and this project significantly contributed to the development of the FS concept in Armenia. **Currently, the Ministry even references this project and its components in its strategic operations.** Implementation of such a project was hugely important in terms of raising awareness about the issue.*

*Prior to this project, very few people in Armenia knew what 'food security' meant and most stakeholders limited their definition to food safety. However, we know today that FS is much broader in scope, and needs to be factored into the most senior level strategy development.'*

Mr Armen Harutyunyan, Deputy Minister of Agriculture of Armenia

*'The project is of high relevance, since the main objective is to improve regional food security, which includes better management of the availability, access and nutritional content of food, better legislation, and stronger representation of women and men smallholder farmers in food security policy and strategy development processes. All these directly respond to the practical and strategic needs of the beneficiaries.'*

Ms Tamar Toria, Director of the Georgian Farmers' Association

## 5 EFFECTIVENES

Almost all project objectives were achieved to a greater or lesser extent depending on what stage policy development processes had reached in the individual countries. In Georgia, for example, the Food Security Bill submitted to parliament is currently under review. The project review identified seven positive changes (see below) primarily attributable to the project:

1. Increased public awareness of FSN: CSOs and the media became involved in awareness-raising processes; the FSN agenda was popularized in the mass media and FSN issue-based pressure groups were formed.
2. Inclusion of smallholder farmers in policy debates and formation of advocacy platforms; regional meetings in Armenia, Farmers' Congress, and involvement of farmers' associations in Georgia.
3. Sensitization of policy makers on FSN issues to move FSN up the decision makers' agenda. Nutrition became a key theme for discussion in the context of food security.
4. Government and stakeholder promotion of related themes such as agricultural insurance and co-operative legislation.
5. The project team and together with Alliance members conducted research and public presentations on FSN issues; identification and stock-taking of problems; engagement of regulatory bodies (e.g. Food Safety Agency in Ministry of Agriculture and Health).
6. Formation of multi-stakeholder platforms and development of stronger and better relationships among alliance members through Social Network Analysis (SNA) research.
7. Delegation of FSN agenda to the spin-off organizations in support of the project exit strategy.

*'The project implementation (as well as implementers, including the AG [Action Global]) started from absolute zero, blank list. Today, the stored knowledge and experience is huge, a lot of work has been done. Advocacy should not be assumed as achievement of objectives "written in stone". It is a continuing process, and intermediate objectives change all the time. Among the major achievements (specifically on the side of awareness raising), the following can be mentioned:*

1. *Research and studies conducted.*
2. *Participatory study-tours organized for stakeholders.*
3. *Very successfully implemented awareness-raising campaigns.*
4. *Highly productive conferences.*
5. *Positive change of country's reputation in international fora.'*

Ms Maia Chitaia, Country Director at Action Global Communications

*'Uniting agricultural and MCH [mother and child health] advocacy alliances around key nutrition, food safety and security issues is one of the important achievements of the project. This is an essential step in advocacy, using the power of networks and raising the voice of key stakeholders. Multiple advocacy platforms have been created for Alliance members to lobby for better food security, and to promote balanced nutrition, especially addressing such priority areas as school nutrition.'*

Ms Naira Gharakhanyan, Member of Mother & Child Health Alliance (MCHA)

## 6 EFFICIENCY

Project implementation teams collaborated with partners efficiently. Several organizations joined the project network for little cost. For example, in Georgia, alliance membership grew from 19 at the beginning to 30 by the end of the project.

Some of the cost-effective approaches adopted by the project include:

- Newsletters for sharing information circulated through partners and alliances.
- Regular meetings and updates with partners and all stakeholders.
- Working groups, a low-cost instrument for cooperation and interaction with government agencies.
- A Farmers' Congress to share information/challenges with farmers at large.
- Meetings with alliances and the media.
- The application of monitoring tools to measure satisfaction levels of farmers.
- An accountability workbook to report on project information.
- Annual reports, research studies, publications and website for internal and external communication.
- The members of alliances exchanged information, complementing rather than duplicating each other's activities.

The stakeholders and implementers of the project specified multiple tangible achievements and results that can be defined as *unintended positive results* of the project and increased project efficiency:

- The inclusion of nutrition monitoring in Armenia was commended. Initially, the project did not expect this to progress beyond a research study. However, it led to effective cooperation with the Armenian Ministry of Health, and the Mother & Child Alliance.
- In Georgia, the private sector expressed interest in replicating the project-organized farmers' markets. Healthy lifestyle campaigns were launched, and more organizations came on board to develop initiatives focusing on the needs and interests of smallholder farmers.

*'The FSN project has made an important contribution to raising general levels of awareness around food security and to improving food security policies in Georgia. As a result of the project's awareness raising and public engagement work, plus its advocacy and influencing approach, the general public and decision makers have a better understanding of what the FAO means by 'food security' and this better understanding has led to changes in national legislation and strategy.*

*ELKANA, the Biological Farming Association, has been working at multiple levels related to food security policy, notably promoting stronger participation of smallholder farmers and women in food security decision making processes, and raising awareness around food security and nutrition among the wider public. To this end, ELKANA organized three national Farmers' Congresses (March 2014, June 2016, June 2017); facilitated the input of farmers into discussions on the draft MoA strategy; participated in the National Nutrition Survey; organized three Farmers' Fairs (December 2014, 2015 and 2016); launched the Nutrition and Healthy Diet campaign; and led the Agriculture Related Private Sector Survey (2014).'*

Ms Elene Shatberashvili, ELKANA NGO, Georgia

# 7 IMPACT

The project faced various challenges, including frequent changes in government; the impact of the Eurasian Economic Union on Armenia, as well as the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area (DCFTA) agreement<sup>2</sup> in Georgia; armed conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan; the closure of project activities in Azerbaijan; parliamentary elections in Armenia; and the devaluation of the Russian currency, which affected remittances to Armenia and Georgia from Russia.

Despite these disruptions, the following results were achieved.

## NATIONAL INFLUENCING

- **Multi-stakeholder networks:** Both in Armenia and Georgia, a number of well-known and influential organizations became active in influencing food security policies that regularly involved grassroots level organizations for information sharing on food security. The alliance members gathered and disseminated up-to-date information on agriculture, FSN and related themes. Alliance members gave voice to the opinions and needs of smallholder farmers, representing them in policy making fora at the national level.
- **Farmers' Congresses:** This platform created a space where smallholder farmers and high level officials (the Ministers of Agriculture and cabinets) could communicate directly, albeit informally. Many of the issues raised during these meetings subsequently featured on high level strategic political agendas.
- **Committee on World Food Security (CSM):** The project engaged with two interrelated organizations -- the Committee on World Food Security (CFS),<sup>3</sup> and the Civil Society Mechanism for the Committee on World Food Security (CSM)<sup>4</sup> to address FSN issues at the global and regional level. The CSM presented an opportunity to magnify the impact of the project by sharing its experiences and lessons learned. The CFS has been a unique and inclusive global platform to support FSN policy initiatives.
- **International Conference on FSN:** In June 2016, the International Conference on FSN<sup>5</sup> was held in Tbilisi, Georgia within the timeframe of the project. The event brought together policy makers, civil society organizations, key stakeholders and international experts from the region and across Europe to discuss the current situation, challenges and best practices in FSN policy development to support local food production. European country representatives showcased international models for developing inclusive policies and programmes for smallholder farmers. International and local experts presented comprehensive, gender-sensitive approaches to develop healthy food and nutrition systems. Taking a food systems approach, in four panel discussions the conference focused on the four priorities, within the system that pose the major challenges for FSN, namely:
  - Healthy food systems: innovations that support smallholder farming and local food production.
  - Healthy nutrition systems.
  - Effective policy implementation and monitoring systems.
  - Empowering women in FSN: case studies and best practices.

# GENDER MAINSTREAMING

*'Not only is there now a conversation about FSN in Georgia and Armenia, but about gender and food security.'*

– Anna Palonka, Oxfam in Georgia

The project implementation team comprehended the importance of involving women from the very beginning. Gender mainstreaming has been conducted by all possible means, and the power of women proved important in implementing the FSN agenda. All informants agreed that the Alliances and working groups significantly increased the extent of women's representation and engagement in all project activities. The Alliances attracted new organizations specializing in gender mainstreaming and protection of women's rights. This approach was also used in the formation of special working groups. Importantly, all aspects of gender mainstreaming were reflected in the strategies of both countries.

The project has campaigned and made numerous advocacy efforts to promote gender mainstreaming in FSN policy making and to promote women's involvement in decision making. These efforts included:

- Supporting dialogue between smallholder farmers and policy makers during the Farmers' Congress (the event was held three times and approximately 35–40 percent of the smallholder farmer representatives were women).
- Inviting women organizations to join the alliances, boosting support around the gender component of national agricultural policy development.
- Hiring gender experts to conduct gender analysis and follow recommendations.
- Conducting research studies on the framework of the project, with a special emphasis on gender (one example is nutrition research which specifically identified women as a separate target group to assess their nutritional needs and to study their food consumption habits).
- Conducting several studies using focus group discussions to identify gender barriers in agriculture.
- Organizing various conferences to promote discussion of gender in FSN.

## IMPACT IN ARMENIA

In Armenia, all ideas and activities incorporated into the proposed strategy have been gender mainstreamed, and specifically targeted the smallholder farmers. Oxfam specified that women should represent at least 30 percent of the AA. The NGO Pro-Media led the process of better involvement of women and ensuring gender equality. Finally, a 'women and healthy nutrition' campaign was conducted, which was enthusiastically adopted by the public, and videos from that campaign appear on the project website and the Oxfam in Armenia Facebook page.<sup>6</sup> All this means that similar campaigns are in high demand and should be organized more often.

Examples of impact in Armenia include the following:

- FSN has become an issue of national importance for decision makers and the public, popularized by the media and national campaigns, with people now, for example, looking at the expiry date of food products with growing attention towards food safety and healthy eating.
- In the Tavush region of Armenia, a gender 'toolkit' developed by the AA has been used in regional planning, meaning that for the first time ever the region's Development Plan was gender mainstreamed.

- This gender ‘toolkit’ is now a mandatory part of the planning process in all regions, having been adopted by the government following the success in the Tavush region, a great example of scaling up.
- In the Tavush region, the project connected to the resilience platform created by Oxfam/OxYGen, which for the first time is bringing together multiple FSN projects and actors (disaster risk reduction, Austrian Development Agency-funded livelihoods work, ministerial working groups and representatives from communities and smallholder farmer groups) from the regional and national level to coordinate efforts, creating a fora and role model for discussion and policy which could be replicated elsewhere.
- AA has contributed to the drafting of new policy and regulations of direct relevance to smallholder farmers, such as the law on agri-co-operatives, which took on many AA suggestions:
  - The AA sought to promote gender justice in its own work, developing and implementing specific events for women, such as Female Food Hero; providing tailored support for the formation and development of women’s groups and cooperatives; developing and running women specific campaigns and forums.
- Experimenting with Social Network Analysis as an approach that identifies the dynamics and relationships within a network, the AA was able to identify many of the blockers, neutral operators and gaps within the Alliance and take action to strengthen the network.

## IMPACT IN GEORGIA

In Georgia, GAARD became a link between smallholder farmers and other members of the Alliance. Associations of farmers participated in the work of GAARD, and it attracted four new member organizations who are primarily engaged in women’s rights, protection and gender equality.

Some of the changes catalyzed by the project in Georgia include the following:

**The project facilitated an almost two-fold increase in women’s participation in policy discussions and debates.**

- FSN has become a popular topic and high priority for stakeholders (government and civil society).
- A new Food Security Bill (currently under review by government) was introduced by GAARD, who have become known as the champions of the FSN agenda.
- A new Agricultural Development Strategy, with food security identified as a strategic priority, has been adopted.
- The media have increased their coverage of FSN as a ‘story’, raising public awareness of FSN issues.
- Women have increased their participation and leadership in co-operatives, smallholder farmers’ representative bodies and alliances. More than 30 percent of Farmers’ Congress delegates were women, and this will increase to 50 percent in the new Farmers’ Councils; there were equal numbers of men and women farmers participating in regional meetings; and GAARD designed and supported multiple women-focused events, including campaigns and Ted Talks.

## IMPACT IN AZERBAIJAN

In Azerbaijan, the project was phased out after two years due to the closure of the Oxfam office on 11 September 2015. Funds were reallocated in view of needs and overall project objectives. The Azerbaijan project team completed, monitored and reported on their work for the period.

The food security situation and challenges in Azerbaijan are similar to those of other countries in the region. However, the socio-political context and economic model in Azerbaijan presented unique opportunities and challenges for the project. Some research and thematic events were undertaken during the period, but the focus of the team's work was on building relationships, including:

- Consultation meetings with stakeholders including local government and CSOs.
- The creation of a positive and cooperative relationship with key government institutions.
- The formation of an alliance called Food Security of Azerbaijan.
- The establishment of links with complementary and supportive projects and international organizations.
- The formation of a network of resource organizations – sub-working groups with improved cooperation.

*The Project Implementation Team comprehended the importance of involving women from the very beginning. Gender mainstreaming has been conducted by all possible means, wherever and whenever possible. The power of women is very strong and that power should be used for the elaboration of the FSN agenda and not vice versa. The stronger role of women is reflected in the large documentary base, including photo stories, films, and blogs.*

Maia Chitaia, Country Director at Action Global Communications



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## 8 SUSTAINABILITY

The project team invested intensely in supporting the capacity development of the national Alliances and spin-off organizations so that they could continue to support the involvement of the Alliances and the wider MSN networks in FSN policy making. Prior to Oxfam's country office closure, the team undertook technical capacity building, including regional and international study trips and exposure visits, in order to leave in place strategies for communications and fundraising as well as land management, public procurement policies, public policy monitoring, proposal writing and monitoring, evaluation and accountability (MEAL) capacity.

Coordination and support for the continuation of the work lies with Bridge and OxYGen, who will be totally independent from Oxfam support after March 2018. The large EU-funded ENPARD programme in Georgia supporting the co-operative sector is providing some financial support, and the Armenia OxYGen team have the technical capacity and relationships to develop funding proposals.

Significantly, Alliance members have also endorsed the principle of supporting their own operational costs, and this has become a commitment on paper for GAARD.

Further enablers of sustainability include: effective coordination mechanisms, the continued interest of alliance members and the capacity of spin-off organizations. An enabling policy environment and sensitized public and media are key enabling factors for the sustainability of the project. The project has successfully managed risks in the past, such as those posed by frequent changes in government and shifting political priorities. The likelihood of the sustainability of project results is promising.

In future, the project plans to follow exit strategy recommendations and continue to cooperate with stakeholders (e.g. new ministries, new alliances, CSOs), to promote the FSN agenda in Armenia and Georgia. There is sufficient knowledge, institutional memory, professional skill and the political will of the members to carry the work forward. The AA in Armenia has gone one step further and developed a set of impact assessment instruments for use in some FSN fields. These are currently under review and will hopefully be ready to roll out for monitoring purposes soon.

Nevertheless, there is still room for improvement in terms of outstanding capacity building needs, and financial sustainability has yet to be fully resolved.

## 9 LESSONS LEARNED AND CONCLUSIONS

1. Alliances have proved to be an ideal platform for catalyzing discussions and influencing policy around FSN, agriculture related issues and many other topics. The growth of the Alliances helps to increase the capacity for policy influencing, boosting social capital and technical expertise, including in the areas of national policy making, rural development, education, agri-lending and gender. Intensive advocacy and lobbying towards the adoption, elaboration and implementation of FSN strategies should continue under Bridge and OxYGen coordination.
2. Communication with farmers through regional meetings, Farmers' Congresses and Farmers' Fairs was highly effective and an efficient way to achieve immediate results. This strategy should be replicated.
3. The FSN agenda is popular with the Georgian and Armenian public and provides a good opportunity to jointly explore solutions to FSN-related problems. Providing training to the media, for example on the different dimensions of food security, paid large dividends.  
**'Training the media so that they knew what they were writing about really helped promote understanding of FSN.'**  
– Anna Palonka, Oxfam Georgia
4. Investment in an enabling environment and continuous dialogue with state agencies helped to promote ownership of project objectives by stakeholders. Cooperative relationships with state agencies need to be developed further. Sensitization and cooperation with the media increased pressure on decision making agencies and should be continued.
5. The capacity of spin-off organizations (OxYGen and BRIDGE) is crucial to maintaining the sustainability of the benefits of the project. These organizations should follow on with the action plan and strategies developed to continue coordination of policy advocacy efforts.
6. The project developed exit strategies and a MEAL framework that helped support continuous learning, project management, monitoring of results and risk mitigation. Developing effective monitoring systems and feedback loops is crucial for programme design and risk management.

7. It is not a pre-requisite for networks and alliances developed by the project to attain sustainability beyond the project's lifetime, unless they hold a governance function. As a strategy, it is useful to gradually reduce the alliances' dependency on the project and encourage members to assume ownership.
8. Effective partnerships, good communication and an investment in continuous learning are crucial in a policy advocacy project. Implementing partners and implementing agencies should be accountable for expected results. The roles and responsibilities of all involved should be clearly identified according to their skills.

## 10 CASE STUDIES<sup>7</sup>

### ARMENIA

**Nairi Insurance** (AA member), in its capacity as independent expert, participated in the national working group tasked with preparing the section on Agricultural Risk Reduction in the draft 2015–2025 Agricultural Sustainable Development Strategy. Nairi Insurance helped to organize the first ever coming-together of key agri-insurance actors such as KfW and the Central Bank under the umbrella of the AA. Nairi Insurance provided training and capacity building support to fellow AA members on a range of Armenian insurance-related issues, including different types of agricultural insurance schemes around the world, implementation gaps in agri-insurance and different approaches for monitoring and impact assessment. The AA has developed a policy monitoring tool for the 'monitoring and impact assessment' of different agricultural insurance projects. In the revised MOU between the AA and the Ministry of Agriculture, reference will be made to AA's agri-insurance policy monitoring role.

Selected by the AA for its expertise in agricultural cooperatives, **ICARE** participated in the National Working Group for the development of the draft 2015–2025 Agricultural Strategy. ICARE actively engaged in many FSN campaigns to advocate for the adoption of the new agricultural strategy. Reflecting on the AA's major achievements, ICARE cites AA's role in amending the Law on Agricultural Co-operatives and the Law on Consumer Credit, which increases transparency of interest rates for agricultural loans, in addition to AA's role in developing the 2015–2025 Strategy for Sustainable Agricultural Development and the Co-operative Audit Framework for the Co-operative Movement. Key challenges for the future as seen by ICARE are AA's financial sustainability and the need for greater visibility. Overall, looking back at the Alliance's work over the past four years, ICARE attests that the evidence shows that working together and pooling expertise has made it possible for the Alliance's voice to be heard and recognized, propelling the Alliance forward to make a real impact.

### GEORGIA

**Elkana** (GAARD member) has been an essential link with smallholder farmers and cooperatives, who are the priority group for the FSN project. Elkana has supported FSN research to inform working groups on FSN. Elkana also developed relationships with the private sector, food processors and distributors to encourage them to buy from small-scale farmers. Elkana has encouraged farmers to participate in Farmers' Congresses, and organized New Year's Farmers' Food Fairs, which are opportunities for farmers to come face to face with decision makers and buyers. At a higher level, ELKANA has actively represented the interests of smallholder farmers with FAO, IFAD, WHO and other international stakeholders, and lobbied with GAARD for their inclusion

and representation in international and national food security fora, alongside women's groups, public councils and regional governments. ELKANA has played a key role within GAARD, coordinating advocacy campaigns on specific FSN-related issues. Looking back, for ELKANA, GAARD's main achievement has been its role in influencing the content and adoption of the 2015–2025 Agricultural Development Strategy, which gives prominence to food security as a strategic priority going forwards.

**Georgian Economists Association (GEA):** For individual members of the GEA, joining GAARD has meant supporting FSN research and the dissemination of findings through the organization of seminars and conferences to raise awareness of FSN issues. GEA participated in two Alliance working groups (food security and land) and organized intersectoral conferences and public discussions, such as 'Current Challenges of Food Security Policy of Georgia' and participation in national television debates, to advocate for the adoption of the draft Food Security Law. Reflecting on GAARD's achievements, GEA highlights the importance of 'power in unity': GAARD is an effective network to share information, and to collectively lobby; it makes the most of alliance members' social capital and geographical areas of intervention to increase national coverage.

# NOTES

- 1 DAC Criteria for Evaluating Development Assistance includes analysis of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability of results. More information can be found at: The DAC Principles for the Evaluation of Development Assistance, OECD (1991), Glossary of Terms Used in Evaluation, in 'Methods and Procedures in Aid Evaluation', OECD (1986), and the Glossary of Evaluation and Results Based Management (RBM) Terms, OECD (2000). <http://www.oecd.org/dac/evaluation/50584880.pdf>
- 2 For more information on the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area agreement with Georgia, visit European Commission Trade Helpdesk, Georgia: <http://trade.ec.europa.eu/tradehelp/georgia>.
- 3 The UN forum for reviewing and enacting policies concerning world food security.
- 4 International mechanism of CSOs seeking to influence agriculture, FSN policies and actions, nationally, regionally and globally.
- 5 *Communique: International Conference on Food Security and Nutrition*. Tbilisi, Georgia, 15–16 June 2016. See <http://foodsecuritysc.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/communique.pdf>
- 6 For more on the project, visit <http://foodsecuritysc.com/>. To view Oxfam in Armenia's Facebook page, visit <https://www.facebook.com/OxfaminArmenia/>.
- 7 The FSN teams from both countries met in Tsaghkadzor for two days in July 2017 to share information on the FSN project outcomes and impact with key stakeholders. The event was an opportunity for the team and stakeholders to review the achievements, challenges, lessons learned and define actions going forward after the programme closure in September 2017.



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