Now it is for us to continue

Summary of the study into the effectiveness and sustainability of Oxfam’s community gender and protection programme in the Central African Republic
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INTRODUCTION

This report is a summary of the results and recommendations of the ‘study into the effectiveness and the sustainability of Oxfam’s community gender protection programme in the Central African Republic’.

The community protection approach put into place by Oxfam aims to reduce the exposure civilians have to the security risks identified in each intervention zone. This approach is based on two elements: support for local advocacy to target threats, and local dialogue on mitigation measures. The establishment of the Community Protection Committees (CPC) is at the heart of this approach. These committees are made up of ten volunteers, male and female, of varying social classes and ages. The CPC lead the analysis on local risks to protection, the advocacy and the awareness-raising measures to reduce them. Lastly, they refer individuals to care services if needed.

This report summing up the study revisits the intervention context in which Oxfam’s protection work is done in the Central African Republic. It then presents a report of the results obtained throughout the evaluation, before examining the recommendations it creates.

1. BACKGROUND AND OXFAM’S INTERVENTION

1.1 The Central African context and protection

After a series of coups and years of instability following independence in 1960, the Central African Republic (CAR) experienced a closing period of violence ending in 2012; when a coalition of rebel movements formed to oppose President François Bozizé’s regime. The coalition took the name of Séléka. The rebels took Bangui in March 2013, removing President Bozizé and putting Michel Djotodia in his place. In the face of the inability of Central African security forces to defend the capital, self-defence groups came together; the Anti-balaka. From that point on, the conflict took on an ethno-religious shape. One side is predominantly Muslim Séléka rebels, railing against the weapons of the Anti-balaka, most of whom are Christians. Faced with the risk of genocide, the UN authorized the deployment of African Union (MISCA) troops, backed by French troops. At a later stage, MISCA had reinforcements and took on the name MINUSCA in April 2014.

In January 2014, Michel Djotodia was forced to step down. An interim President was provided in the form of the former mayor of Bangui, Catherine Samba-Panza. In January 2016, Faustin Archange Touadéra was elected President with his primary duty being to restore peace to the country. Although peace agreements were signed with different rebel groups, it is thought that there are today more than 600,000 displaced people in CAR and more than 50% of the population are in need of humanitarian aid for survival.

This backdrop of chronic insecurity exposes civilian populations to the threats of violence, extortion and deprivation. The high level of unemployment pushes young men to banditry. As a result, the introduction of barriers, forced taxation and the abduction of young women constitute the main threats with which people are confronted daily. Note that the violence suffered is of a markedly gender-based nature. Men are more exposed to arbitrary killings, arrests, and extortion, whereas women are the main targets for abduction, sexual violence and accusations of witchcraft that can lead to the death penalty. Lastly, Oxfam’s research through discussions led by focus groups, brought to light significant corruption in law enforcement agencies, and their levels of violence against civilians.

1.2 Oxfam’s protection programme in the CAR

From 2014, Oxfam decided to integrate protection aspects into its programmes (notably in WASH), and from April 2015 onwards, the community protection approach was developed in ten of Bangui’s neighbourhoods. Since then, this approach has been developed in a more overarching manner. In September 2017, 54 Community Protection Committees (CPC) were directly set up by Oxfam’s teams in Bangui, Bria, Paoua and Batangafo. The protection programme draws on the following theory of change:

• If motivated individuals have the necessary space to convene (CPCs), if they know their rights, if they develop competency in advocacy and carry out awareness-raising measures they will then be able to conduct an analysis of the threats to protection and the measures that can be taken to alleviate them.
• Work carried out by the CPC will not only bring about local discussion of people’s rights but also of the measures to be taken to mitigate threats.
• In time, this work will allow the most vulnerable people to be less exposed.

Oxfam’s teams help local communities with the establishment of CPCs through preliminary meetings explaining the programme to local authorities, identifying future members who meet the set criteria, and by supporting the daily operation of the CPC.

Common criteria for the selection of CPC members

• Have good ethics
• Participate in community meetings
• Live in the neighbourhood
• Be available for work
• Agree to work as a volunteer
• Have a basic literacy level
2. RESULTS OF THE ASSESSMENT

2.1 Methodology used

The assessment draws on qualitative data taken from Oxfam’s internal literature and public literature. This documentary study was completed with over 3 weeks of data collection in the field. Lastly, Oxfam’s operational teams in the CAR participated in a day workshop led by an external reviewer.

The assessment specifically focussed on the community protection aspect included in the humanitarian programme. Based on discussions that took place between the reviewer and Oxfam’s team, the following assessment questions were identified:

1) What community protection approach did Oxfam’s teams execute, and what are the desired changes with this approach?
2) What are the impacts (both positive and negative) in the short and medium terms of Oxfam’s community protection approach?
3) What elements may have and may still contribute to the sustainability of this approach?

Based on these discussions, the assessment sought to measure the level of functionality of the CPC as well as the degree of change brought about by their work.

2.2 The work of the Community Protection Committees

2.2.1 To what extent do the CPC members still have meetings?

Among the 12 CPCs that were assessed, 9 had not been financially supported by Oxfam for 9 months or more. However, in all of the CPCs members have meetings and carry out work. In 5 of the CPCs meetings continue to be organized on a regular basis (either weekly or twice a month). In the other 4 CPCs meetings are held when there is a matter requiring the presence of its members. In these 4 CPCs it appears that meetings are organized in order to discuss specific threats to protection, according to the need. In Foulbe (PK5, Bangui), the president calls meetings when a member of the CPC has heard about a threat to protection.

Lastly, other meeting initiatives of the CPCs remain in place. In Fondo, in other meetings, the CPCs review problems linked to stagnant water. Likewise, in Bria, the Coordination Committee makes up of CPC representatives continues to come together every month.

2.2.2 What proportion of CPC members are still active?

The number of active members in each CPC can be between 4 (Cité de la Paix à Bimbo site) and 9 (in Yambassa, for example). As a whole, CPC members see their role in a similar way. For them, it’s about ‘bringing back peace to the neighbourhood’ and ‘fighting against threats to protection’. In the field, this translates into awareness-raising measures, mediation at times (in Fondo, for example) as well as referring people according to their specific needs.

Note that advocacy work was not mentioned by members of the Yambassa committee when describing their roles.

2.2.3 What work are the CPCs still carrying out?

- Raising awareness

With the exception of Foulbe’s CPC (PK5 neighbourhood in Bangui), all committees still carry out work to raise awareness. However, the CPCs have neglected certain work (community events, mass or notably group awareness-raising) to focus on door-to-door work, which is more suited to their environment. Nevertheless it seems that little door-to-door work has been carried out in Fondo since the projects ended, in contrast to Bria and Paoua, where the CPCs are supported by Oxfam. The choice of topics for raising awareness and the ways to do this are discussed during a meeting with all the CPC members concerned, or as part of regular meetings or sporadic meetings. For the CPCs that have more regular meetings, the choice of topic depends on observations shared by CPC members in the previous meeting.

‘As a CPC member, my job is to go to armed groups and to build awareness in order to change their behaviour, and also to go from door-to-door to change bad attitudes [in neighbourhoods].
Female member of the CPC in Fondo, PK5, Bangui.'
During door-to-door work, CPC members do not seem to highlight information sharing relating to care services but they wait for community members to put forward an application so they can refer them. For many CPC members, raising awareness through door-to-door work is a chance to ‘offer advice’ notably in domestic violence cases or violence against young girls.

• Advocacy
The prevalence of advocacy work does not correlate with the prevalence of meetings or the amount of awareness-raising work carried out. Advocacy is done in response to specific threats (more often these are individual abuse cases) and not as part of a prepared plan of action. In general, all CPC members are involved in decision making; the CPC president, supported by the most active members, pursues advocacy work. In all cases, work is carried out together with neighbourhood leaders. All advocacy work reported concerns mediation with armed groups. The method used highlights non-adversarial persuasion. Work like this can ensure roadblocks are removed, as was the case in Yambassa (Bangui).

• Referral
In all neighbourhoods, CPCs still carry out referral activities by providing information and advice on services available locally. Today, CPCs are one of the main focal points when it comes to accessing services. Many factors explain this. First, CPC members think that their role is important in facilitating referral. Furthermore, they still systematically use referral forms, which means there is a hope that transport fees to be taken charge of. Lastly, they can physically intervene to support certain cases. Referrals are not exclusively carried out by committee focal points. CPC presidents or members can also intervene, and residents seem to be more prone to searching for these people. This means more listening, but also that more people know about the cases. The concept of confidentiality is not often understood or implemented.

The majority of the cases referenced concern domestic violence. CPC members can be brought in to intervene by stopping an act of violence, by mediating between couples, or by having separate discussions with the husband and wife. If there is a case in which a CPC member blames the victim (notably in Foulbe), generally speaking CPCs are known to promote dialogue within households.

2.2.4 To what extent do the female members of the CPCs participate in work and decision making?
In focussed discussions, women have emphasized that they feel at ease when participating in CPC discussions and work. They feel free to discuss and debate with their male colleagues. Nevertheless, discussions are dominated by men in general and women can speak more easily when they are separated from men. They have recommended that Oxfam’s teams create separate groups. It should be noted that specific training for women was a trigger in executing their own work. In that regard, they expressed a wish to be trained on new topics.

2.2.5 To what extent and in what way do the CPCs work alongside authorities and local leaders?
CPCs are organized by neighbourhoods and villages. They work directly with leaders from the neighbourhood or rural villages. Since the crisis, law enforcement agencies are not always represented, so it is up to MINUSCA to play a part.

Relationships with neighbourhood leaders are built around the exchange of information (notably plans for raising awareness), support with advocacy, and dialogue about specific cases of abuse. With regard to individual abuse cases, neighbourhood leaders seem to direct people asking for help to the CPC if the case needs referral. Thus, in Foulbe for example, the neighbourhood leader explains that the CPC directs survivors of sexual violence to hospital, but that he will then help the CPC to follow up legal claims.

Discussion and collaboration with other local authorities (group leaders or MINUSCA police) are very limited. Group leaders to which the CPC were presented at the start of the project do not know about or do not completely understand the role of CPC. As regards religious leaders, they know about the majority of the CPCs’ work, and work with them or wish to do so quickly for newcomers. Unfortunately, training religious leaders is difficult, due to the frequent rotation of newcomers.

As with relationships with religious leaders, those with local associations are not formalized and depend on the goodwill of the people involved. However, in the majority of neighbourhoods, CPCs explain that they made contact with local associations to explain their role to them and invite them to participate in awareness-raising work.

‘There was a barrier on the road, they made you pay something to pass. One day, I was going home and when I came to the barrier, they asked me to pay. I explained that we had all suffered during the crisis and it was bad to make the community continue to suffer – we spoke for a long time. Finally, they said that they would lift the barrier and now we could move freely’. CPC president, Fondo, PK5, Bangui.

‘If there is marital dispute, or children are involved, we intervene case-by-case. However, if it’s a sexual violence case, we first of all come together as a group, then we refer the case to a welfare centre, then to a medical centre.’ CPC member, Arabe 3, Paoua.
Lastly, stolen or destroyed materials cannot be replaced, due to lack of sufficient funding. This directly affects the work and the motivation level of CPC members.

### 2.3.4 The role of individuals

LCPCs depend heavily on particular members. In general, presidents fill important positions in their neighbourhoods, such as adviser to the Chef de Quartier. This intertwining of roles means that the CPC can remain involved in community affairs. Furthermore, certain members play an important role in engaging other members by going to visit them if they have been absent from meetings.

### 2.3.5 Collaboration with local leaders

There is a clear link between the positive attitude of Chefs de Quartier and the sustainability of CPC work. Conversely, a lack of collaboration with Chefs de Quartier means that CPCs cannot commit to a joint analysis of the environment or the implementation of a response to protection threats. Local leaders are then identified as focal points for work vested in CPC (advocacy work, awareness-raising measures or referral). The fact that neighbourhood leaders themselves direct victims of abuse towards CPCs prolongs the referral process and threatens confidentiality.

### 2.3.6 Risks for CPC members and implications for individuals

CPC members receive threats from armed groups. This can lead to the disengagement of one or more CPC members or even to them stopping work altogether. Indirectly, in cases of domestic violence, threats can also be directed towards survivors.

The high number of individual cases in which there is this kind of involvement heightens pressure and the long-term reduction in numbers of CPC members. In addition, this prevents them from carrying out a larger analysis of protection needs.

### 2.3.7 Support period provided by Oxfam

Although the support period might not seem to influence the CPC’s active work, it does however affect the quality of work and the sustainability of results. Longer implementation periods allow CPC competencies to be reinforced through training, coaching and the implementation of work.

### 2.3.8 Awareness and understanding of the role of the CPC

The majority of the members of the community who were interviewed are familiar with CPCs and the work they do. This is due in particular to mass awareness and transparency. However, there may have been confusion about the role of CPCs when people returned to neighbourhoods recently.

### 2.4 The impact of the programme

#### 2.4.1 Changes reported by the individual members of the CPCs

The members of CPCs jointly believed that there was a change in the way in which they were perceived by the community and the way in which they saw themselves. They believe that they have a social role to play, which has influenced their behaviour within their community. For many members, the changes they underwent are because of the skills they developed through training. Female CPC members have reportedly benefited from the training on rights in their marriages, notably on communication with their husbands.

For their part, male CPC members have taken behavioural changes in their stride, which they have adopted towards women (better sharing of housework and making meals). Both men and
women believe that their behaviour has changed towards children following their training. According to them, they are now more attentive and less violent with young children. In general, CPC members, both men and women, described that they can now better manage anger and how they have become less aggressive after the training. For women, managing anger and conflictive relationships with their husbands has improved even though their husbands did not have access to that training.

2.4.2 Changes reported by the community

- Verified changes
Throughout the evaluation, many changes were accounted for. Most of these results were classed as ‘stories about change’ because it was hard to verify them. However, it was possible to document and verify some of the changes raised. Advocacy work meant that three roadblocks could be lifted: in Yambassa (Bangui), and twice on the Cité de la Paix (Bangui) site. The CPCs intervened several times in the resolution of the roadblock situations with armed groups. In Yambassa (PK5 Bangui), the CPC mediated between local armed groups to allow people to move freely. Today, residents say that they are more secure and can move freely in their neighbourhoods. Similarly, the CPC in Guitangola V (Bimbo 2, Bangui) intervened by mediating between the neighbourhood leader and the group leader to settle an interpersonal dispute which had existed for several years.

- Perceived changes
These results could not be formally verified through the evaluation, however many stories about change were noted. For example, the CPC in Cité de la Paix (Bimbo 3, Bangui) took action to protect a woman who was accused of witchcraft. The CPC of Cité Lycée (Paoua) intervened, alongside MINUSCA, to free young women held hostage. In several neighbourhoods, residents believe there are fewer theft cases and break-ins. It is hard to assess the extent of change (due to a lack of official data in particular), but people have said they feel more secure. For example, in Fondo (PK5, Bangui), women can go to the market in complete safety. Thanks to the work that the CPC did to remove roadblocks, women can resume business. CPC members directly settle disputes, but during the evaluation it was also noted that the work of CPCs also creates change. Furthermore, the presence of CPCs is considered to be a deterrent in some neighbourhoods (Cité de la Paix, in Bangui); people who took part in the evaluation reported that the number of attacks and assaults between members of the community decreased as a result of the CPC presence. Greater awareness has meant that attitudes have changed, notably with regard to gender-based violence and domestic violence. Members of the community who were interviewed said that there was a decrease in sexual violence cases in Bangui (Cité de la Paix) and in Bria (Bomou), and more specifically in abuse against minors.

Consequently, in the neighbourhoods of Yambassa, Foulo and Fondo (PK5, Bangui), community members, local authorities and CPC members were in agreement that the work they carried out allowed for better social cohesion between Muslims and Christians.

5 NOW IT IS FOR US TO CONTINUE

‘Because of all the training sessions, I am capable of speaking in front of people; before I was ashamed, I was scared, but now I truly feel strong’

A female CPC member, Guitangola V, Bimbo 2, Bangui

In these neighbourhoods where several religions co-exist, the CPC carried out many awareness-raising measures (notably door-to-door) to allow Muslims and Christians to return to their neighbourhoods.

‘It’s thanks to the CPC’s work. Before there was sexual violence within marriages; a husband could hit his wife, men thought they were the heads of the house, and that a wife had no place in it, but a huge change took place in households’. Chef de Quartier, Cité de la Paix, Bimbo 3, Bangui.
3. RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE ASSESSMENT

3.1 Overall recommendations

Lesson 1: To recognize the changes to which the CPC has contributed and the potential in the approach

A significant proportion of CPC members have expressed a strong motivation to continue their work, and have done so, even without the support of Oxfam and for a long duration.

Recommendation:

▶ To continue to introduce a protection strategy based on the community as part of the humanitarian response in CAR.

Lesson 2: To refocus on an analysis of trends in protection risks

Many of the CPCs tend to act in individual protection cases and to structure their work around them by neglecting the assessment of threats which people in the neighbourhoods are confronted with. When the projects backed by Oxfam are finished, the CPCs’ action plans are not up to date. This is exacerbated by the fact that the action plans created during the project contain budgets. In the absence of funding, the relevance of these budgets as a tool for the CPC is called into question.

Recommendation:

▶ Support CPCs by regularly assessing action plans. In order not to exclusively focus on individual cases of abuse, CPCs could be assisted in regular updates and the use of action plans. CPCs should be encouraged to discuss the updates of plans during the exit strategy process.

Lesson 3: To reinforce collaboration with local leaders and authorities

CPCs maintain a good relationship with neighbourhood leaders, who, however, did not participate in discussions on action plans. Examples of relationships with religious leaders have proven that they could strengthen the impact of CPC work. However, the extent to which they collaborate varies from one neighbourhood to another.

Recommendations:

▶ Support regular meetings with authorities and local leaders and support their participation in assessing action plans. These plans could be presented to local authorities. This would need the support of Oxfam teams, notably at the beginning of the process, so that discussions are constructive and commitments made.

▶ Encourage cooperation with religious leaders. It would be beneficial if religious leaders took part in the process, so that discussions are constructive and commitments made.

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Lesson 4: To engage with CPCs about the role they played in the mediation of domestic violence cases and the risks that brought it.

The results of the assessment suggest that CPC members, in many neighbourhoods, involved themselves in individual cases of marital violence by playing an informal mediator role. Although promoting discussion about relations is a good thing, domestic violence is distinctive from marital conflict in the sense that it is characterized by repetitive abuse and underpinned by a power imbalance. This makes mediation difficult, because mediation is based on a situation in which both parties have equal power and want to compromise, whereas in domestic violence cases, the only result should be putting an end to the use of violence. Testimonies taken from a recent comprehensive review of the use of alternative dispute resolution measures in cases of intimate partner violence (IPV), entitled ‘Alternative Dispute Resolution’ (ADR), suggests that such measures tend to ‘take care of keeping families together’, independent of the victim’s wishes.

This is an extremely tough issue. Historically, mediation was conducted in the CAR by Chefs de Quartier through a process in which a woman could ask a neighbourhood leader to meet with her husband in order to present her point of view, and options were discussed. It is unlikely that this system will come to an end in the near future. Conclusions taken from the comprehensive review suggest that instead of ignoring or trying to stop traditional approaches, people involved should actively give priority to the words and actions of victims.

With reference to Oxfam’s programme, it is clear that the role of CPC members should not be to initiate or involve themselves in mediation, because that constitutes a risk for them and for the victim. Therefore, the recommendations are the following:

Recommendations:

▶ Engage programme staff in discussion about IPV and mediation. It is important that staff understand the dynamics of IPV because they are a point of contact with CPCs. This will allow for discussion about alternative dispute resolution measures and mediation challenges in situations of IPV.

▶ Create a specific training module on IPV for CPCs and local leaders. This will create a basis for discussion on the different risks involved with mediation. In view of their involvement with mediation (primarily informal), political and religious leaders should benefit from training.

▶ Actively organize discussions with CPC and if possible with leaders, to reinforce their knowledge of the guiding principles of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC). The guiding principles should be at the heart of messages put out by Oxfam’s staff. They could be presented during initial training on GBV, but they should be reinforced during review and supervision meetings and by Oxfam staff. Discussions with CPC members should allow them to reflect on the 3
would act in such situations in order to communicate about available services. The goal was to ensure that victims would have access to services without having been formally referred.

**Lesson 6: To reinforce the awareness and advocacy skills of the CPCs.**

During discussions with CPC members it was noted that there is often confusion between advocacy work, awareness-raising work and referral. Advocacy is badly understood in particular, even among CPCs who received training on this topic. Mass awareness-raising measures are likely to be stopped when financing ends; however, CPC awareness-raising skills could be reinforced during a project’s lifespan.

**Recommendations:**

- **Reinforce understanding about advocacy among CPCs by sharing successful past experiences.** By taking care to anonymize data, the examples of past experiences could be used in training and coaching sessions with CPCs. This would allow for the explanation of basic advocacy concepts and different approaches. These could include analysing power and risks, as well as different persuasion and mobilization techniques.

- **Develop a training module that covers basic principles and techniques relating to awareness-raising, and help CPCs to diversify the methods they use.** This module should have a solid basis in terms of skills and would support sustainability beyond the project’s lifespan. This module could include topics such as the selection of targets, integrating awareness-raising measures throughout one day, and even reassessing situations recipients have experienced. Lastly, during a project’s lifespan, CPCs could be more supported in the use of methods that do not require funds (using playing cards, for example).

- **Provide specific assistance to each CPC in terms of raising awareness around GBV.** Encourage dialogue within communities about GBV and other topics relating to gender. Those having this dialogue should hold the perpetrator responsible, highlighting that the victims are not held to account. Discussions must also allow individuals concerned to see the advantages of non-violence. There are resources to support community work, in particular the SASA! Activism Kit. Exercises ‘Judge vs. Enable’ and ‘Speak of the advantages of non-violence’ could be integrated into training on awareness-raising measures and reinforced in coaching sessions.

**Lesson 7: To support the involvement of women.**

Training session attendances and putting awareness-raising and advocacy measures into practice have boosted female participation. However, many CPC female members have asked that Oxfam backs the creation of separate groups for women: groups in which they can more freely debate and lead their own work.

**Recommendations:**

- **Consider creating groups for women parallel to CPCs.** These groups could allow women to carry out specific work, in particular to do with more sensitive subjects. By drawing on women’s forums set up by Oxfam, many women could be members both of a CPC and of a specific committee. However, this approach would need careful monitoring to make sure that the group was not considered to be secondary in terms of status, and that protection threats that primarily affect women and girls are not seen as the women’s group’s responsibility or mandate.

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**Way they integrate these principles into their work.**

**Discuss common-ground scenarios with CPCs during initial training sessions about IPV and follow-up sessions.** Using scenarios and role-play exercises in training and coaching sessions could help CPCs to think about the way in which they would act in such situations in order to apply guiding principles and guarantee their own safety.

**Put CPCs in contact with structures and services which ensure the care of GBV cases to allow them to refer recipients to these services.** The goal is to refer victims to the services where they would act in such situations in order to apply guiding principles and guarantee their own safety.

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**Lesson 5: To clarify and simplify referencing approaches as well as the role of the CPC.**

Although CPCs play an important role in supporting access to services, referral pathways might not be clear or effective. It seems that neighbourhood leaders in particular direct all victims to CPCs instead of to available services where possible. This approach makes the process of giving the correct service to recipients longer and increases the number of intermediaries.

**Recommendations:**

- **Clarify the referral pathways with CPCs and local leaders.** Check that CPC members and local leaders understand the aims of referral work. Insist that neighbourhood leaders direct victims to the correct services. Secure the understanding and implementation of the confidentiality principle.

- **Increase the dissemination of information about available services.** Once referral pathways are refined, CPCs should be supported in their awareness-raising work in order to transmit key messages about referral. These messages should include the following: in the 72 hours following the act, victims of sexual violence must first and foremost have access to medical treatment; victims are not obliged to go through CPCs even if they can come and obtain additional information; lastly, CPCs provide information on other available services.
Recommendations:

- Create a map of women’s associations and local groups in each site for potential collaboration. If collaboration existed between associations, regardless of their size, they would be strongly dependent on the goodwill of participants (both male and female). Collaboration could be developed to bolster the scope and impact of awareness-raising and advocacy work. Collaboration with women’s associations could allow for information about access to services to be better shared. This could all be achieved by inviting representatives to dedicated training sessions or by asking them for support with awareness-raising and advocacy work.

**Lesson 8: Integrating exit-planning into projects from the start.**

The level of CPC members’ motivation and the work that they are doing many months after project support has stopped is very encouraging. Nevertheless, sustainability could be strengthened by integrating an exit-planning strategy into sustainability. Doing this should be adapted to each project in accordance with time needs and available resources. Oxfam should be transparent with CPCs on the subject of the exit process, and facilitate discussion in particular about voluntaries and female participation would mean that more dynamic and motivated individuals could be included.

**Recommendations:**

- Develop clear exit-planning for each project. A checklist could be used to guide the creation of an exit plan. This must include a list of key measures that groups have to take at each stage of the project to promote sustainability. Doing this should be adapted to each project in accordance with time needs and available resources. Oxfam should be transparent with CPCs on the subject of the exit process, and facilitate discussion in particular about volunteering for CPCs in the long term.

- Increase the number of members in each CPC. In order to offset the departure of members, it would be a good idea to increase the initial number of members to 15, for example.

- Actively support the sharing of responsibilities among CPC members. It should be expected that certain members will become the driving force after the project ends. To avoid dependence on those members, it is recommended that Oxfam teams discuss opportunities for different people to assume responsibility for certain work. Furthermore, removing literacy as criteria for becoming a CPC member and supporting female participation would mean that more dynamic and motivated individuals could be included.

**Lesson 9: Strengthening M&E approaches.**

Although the evaluation brought positive changes to light, it did not include a review of Oxfam’s monitoring and evaluation (M&E) tools. However, there was little proof of these changes in the project documentation.

**Recommendations:**

- **Within the M&E system, integrate a way to monitor changes to which CPCs have contributed.** Tools such as the ‘outcome harvesting’ approach could be used. This could easily be integrated into monthly and quarterly meetings with CPCs. This approach could also give an overview of protection threats that CPCs do and do not focus on, challenges they have met, and the way in which they have been resolved.

- **Within the M&E system, integrate a way to monitor changes to which CPCs have contributed.** Tools such as the ‘outcome harvesting’ approach could be used. This could easily be integrated into monthly and quarterly meetings with CPCs. This approach could also give an overview of protection threats that CPCs do and do not focus on, challenges they have met, and the way in which they have been resolved.

3.2 Recommendations for specific intervention sites

3.2.1 Bangui

**Recommendation**

Operate formal planning with PK5 CPC, for which there is no support for future projects currently envisaged. This could extend to the CPCs in Bimbo 2 and 3 if there is not another project provided in these areas. Exit planning could take place over a period of six months in order to maximize sustainability opportunities in the long term. Funding to support exit planning could be included in specific budgeting for other projects in Bangui.

Key steps to consider in exit planning:

1. Clearly explain the exit-planning process to CPCs and local leaders, to ensure that expectations are realistic.
2. Organize community events about the role of CPC.
3. Support CPCs in identifying members who wish to carry on, those who wish to be replaced, and new members.
4. Help CPCs to update action plans and to direct the revision of these plans with local leaders.
5. For each CPC, run assessments on specific requirements for equipment, training and support.
6. Plan refresher courses on basic protection topics.
7. Propose additional training sessions on the IPV module and other topics identified as paramount by CPCs.
8. Support CPCs in the diversification of methods, in particular those which have turned out to be a little expensive.
9. Carry out scenario design with CPCs to examine potential challenges.
10. Update the mapping of care services and support CPCs in order to identify potential sources for support and partnership.

3.2.1 Bria

**Recommendations:**

- Support the CPC on the PK3 IDP site to carry out a power analysis. This would aim to identify advocacy targets, methods of intervention, and people specifically supporting a project. Furthermore, this would reinforce CPC skills and abilities in analysing risk.
Facilitate monthly meetings with local leaders identified in the power analysis. Meetings could be used to revisit action plans. The majority of protection threats are transversal and require a coordinated approach. Therefore, it would be appropriate to invite key leaders and camp coordinators to these meetings.

Align awareness-raising messages and the work approach for GBV with IMC on the PK3 site. IMC has put anti-GBV committees in place to carry out awareness-raising work. Oxfam should support the CPC by discussing key messages shared through awareness-raising to ensure that they are aligned. It is also recommended to identify collaboration opportunities, notably via the GBV sub-cluster and the social affairs division.

Closely monitor CPC member motivation on the PK3 site. Limited economic opportunities, because of the restrictions on movement and the presence of committees put in place by the IMC which provide financial reimbursement, will probably have an impact on the motivation and the voluntary nature of CPC members over time. The implementation of IGA on site could be a possible solution.

Strengthen collaboration with local religious leaders in neighbourhoods. Although religious leaders were trained during the project, new leaders who do not know about the presence of the CPC have arrived. These new leaders should be involved in training and in deliberations over action plans. However, in light of the conflict’s religious aspects and the control armed groups have over neighbourhoods, risk analysis should be carried out beforehand.

Study the consolidation of collaboration with the Association des Femmes Leaders. This association was supported by Oxfam teams as part of the programme for gender protection and adult literacy. Drawing on this association’s work could allow the CPC to stretch the reach of its awareness-raising and support advocacy work.

### 3.2.3. Paoua

Project funding in Paoua continued until March 2018. The following are recommendations for actions to be taken, where possible, over the project’s lifespan.

#### Recommendations

- **Enable the development of action plans.** These have not yet been developed. CPCs are reacting to individual cases of abuse on a random basis, without an action plan.
- **Support the CPCs to present action plans to local leaders and authorities and carry out monthly reviews.** Presenting plans to local authorities is a key step in the community accountability process. This would mean that more significant support could be obtained through specific work. Oxfam should check that women are actively participating in presenting plans. Local religious leaders should be invited to these meetings, keeping in mind the influence they have in neighbourhoods.
- **Prioritize CPC training on advocacy techniques** – notably in order to avoid focussing their work on individual abuse cases.
- **Include religious leaders in all training sessions** so that they can acquire the same basic understanding that the CPCs have. This will allow for better collaboration with CPCs on awareness-raising and advocacy work.
- **Carry out advocacy to revise referral pathways with the Danish Refugee Council (DRC) Centre d’Écoute.** The Centre d’Écoute opening hours and the required step before receiving care in a public hospital are huge obstacles to having speedy access to services. It would be interesting to benefit from the current renewal of the partnership between the UNHCR and the DRC to highlight difficulties.

- **Clarity referral pathways with all local actors.** Currently, survivors of sexual violence are first referred to the Centre d’Écoute before being referred to the local hospital for medical care. This delays access to care for survivors, and increases the number of steps they must take and the number of people they must disclose the violence to. MSF provides free medical care to survivors of sexual violence. The referral pathway should be shortened, simplified and clarified with all local actors (CPC, local leaders, and service providers).

- **Support local awareness-raising on access to services.** This should include messages such as the fact that survivors of sexual violence can go to the Centre d’Écoute to obtain information on their services and that they can directly contact MSF to get free care in the event of sexual violence. With regard to CPC, messages shall inform survivors that they can find information on the different types of abuse there, but they are not obliged to go there.

- **Consider putting in place a Coordination Committee in Paoua town.** Drawing on the CPC initiative in Bria, Paoua’s CPC could put in place a Coordination Committee to fine tune the evaluation on threats to protection in different neighbourhoods, and also to coordinate work (notably advocacy work concerning lack of security in the town’s surrounding areas). In Paoua, the presence of authorities such as the police and the Chef de Groupement, with a mandate in the affected neighbourhoods, is an asset when bringing advocacy work up to their level.
NOW IT IS FOR US TO CONTINUE

ANNEX

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NOTES

1. OCHA Central African Republic Overview – October 2017. PDF
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