

Management Response

Oxfam Management response to the review of *Urban WASH Governance in Pakistan: Evaluation of the ‘Improving Urban WASH Governance and Accountability’ (IUWGA) project (Effectiveness Review Series 2017/18)*

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What is the purpose of an evaluation management response (MR)?

A management response enables us to document the key learning generated from the project evaluations whilst also ensuring that the report is given careful consideration by relevant stakeholders.

The management response should:

- 1) Include a summary of the reflections of your team and program/project stakeholders in relation to the evaluation’s findings, conclusions and recommendations;
- 2) Detail actions that will be taken to respond to the evaluation findings;
- 3) Offer an opportunity for all relevant project stakeholder to comment on the utility of the evaluation process and final report.

A: Context, background and findings

1. The context and background of the review, i.e. the purpose and scope of the evaluation.

The “*Improving Urban WASH Governance and Accountability*” (IUWGA) project in Pakistan was selected in 2017 to be evaluated on the effectiveness and likely sustainability of its participatory governance model relative to ‘equitable and sustainable access to water’.

The project aimed at developing and pilot-testing a local urban governance model that builds on a concept of collaborative rights and accountability relations as the basis for developing a new social contract between local authorities and citizens in new urban settlements. According to the UNDP Water Governance Facility and UNICEF (2015) as well as the Stockholm International Water Institute (Jiménez et al, 2018), working on rights and accountability is necessary for making WASH investments effective and sustainable. As increasingly more investments are needed to meet the growing needs and demands in the fast-expanding urban areas, changing the urban governance system is an essential contribution towards achieving equitable and sustainable access to WASH.

The model developed by Oxfam consists of: (a) Effective Citizen Groups (ECGs) at the local Mohallah and Union Council levels that organise communities around their citizen rights and responsibilities; (b) a community-driven prioritisation and resource mobilisation process that enables local authorities to be more responsive to people’s needs; and (c) a Participatory Monitoring & Evaluation Group (PMEG) at the District level that promotes social accountability for WASH investments and reinforce existing transparency and accountability laws and regulations.

The model was piloted over a period of two years (April 2015 - March 2017) in two Union Councils in the City of Dadu (Sindh Province) and two Union Councils in the City of Muzafargarh (Punjab Province) with a total budget of £ 320,000.

Objectives and Approach

The objectives were:

- (a) to report on the effectiveness of the governance model in terms of WASH delivery and its contributions towards ‘equitable and sustainable access to water’;
- (b) to draw lessons for making improvements; and
- (c) to provide useful inputs to developing a rights and empowerment centred framework for assessing impact in the new global ‘sustainable water’ thematic area.

To meet these objectives, an approach called **PIALA (Participatory Impact Assessment and Learning Approach)** was used that makes it possible to rigorously assess the impact of system change and engage stakeholders in its processes. PIALA offers a model for mixing different designs and methodologies to meet different learning needs, optimise the value of an impact evaluation alongside its value chain, and enable comparison at scale across contexts and even countries.

In this particular evaluation, the scale was relatively small, consisting of just four project Union Councils requiring a small-n design. PIALA’s Configurational Analysis methodology therefore was reduced to its Contribution Tracing component for the within-case analysis, while its configurational cross-case analysis method was replaced with a systemic counterfactual comparison. This essentially boiled down to a multi-case study comparing the WASH governance processes and outcomes in the four project Union Councils with two comparison Union Councils in adjacent districts in the same provinces.

The WASH governance processes and outcomes were investigated by using PIALA’s systemic Theory of Change and participatory mixed/combined-methods approach. This implied the selection and use of a standard set of mixed or combined methods at an equal basis and with multiple sources, in order to investigate the different causal relations in the ToC in a way that enables a systematic crosschecking of both the methods and the different perspectives of the actors in the system.

An essential PIALA element that was still missing at the time of the writing of this report is the Participatory Sense-Making. This involves the collective sense-making and cross-validation of the evidence together with all the stakeholders, which usually happens *before* turning to the final analysis and reporting. Participatory Sense-Making helps to close the learning loop while creating a space for dialogue between citizens and power holders, making an evaluation more democratic. Due to the limitations encountered by this evaluation, however, the Participatory Sense-Making had not yet taken place at the time of the writing of this report. It is hoped that Oxfam will still consider organizing a Participatory Sense-Making event as a first important step in the uptake of the evaluation findings and recommendations for improving and sustaining the positive results of the IUWGA project and the governance model it developed.

2. Summary main findings and recommendations

Oxfam’s work on participatory urban governance has taken place in the context of Pakistan’s recent local government reforms. The ECGs were formed and the relationships between communities and local authorities built in the period when a battle was raging for local power: Pakistan’s first local democratic elections were completed in the project area in the last year of implementation. People are more empowered to vote, speak, and discuss what does or does not work.

With the local government reforms and elections now coming to an end, there is a window of opportunity to consolidate the IUWGA project’s achievements and further improve and develop its urban governance model in order to enable it to go to scale. As a rights-based organization that owes its fame and reputation to its transformative “poverty-to-power” work¹, Oxfam cannot walk away after investing merely two years in building and testing a new promising model without seeing it through. We therefore recommend the following actions:

¹ Cf. the Oxfam Program Framework (OPF), pp. 15-16.

- A. Continue providing limited support to the Effective Citizen Groups (ECGs) in Muzaffargarh and Dadu,** focused on organising the groups and further building their relationship with the new local government authorities responsible for WASH;
- B. Make improvements to the urban WASH governance model in Lahore by:**
- **strengthening its gender strategy²** by working on both the formal and informal gender aspects and integrating the four powers (“power to”, “power with”, “power within”, and “power over”) and working on both the formal and informal gender aspects (Cf. Hillenbrand, Karim, Wu, & Mohanraj, 2015: pp. 10-11);
 - **investing more in building the capacity of the Participatory M&E Group (PMEG)** to engage the ECGs and local authorities in the monitoring and documentation of its activities and results;
 - **adding an economic empowerment component** that is centred on WASH but creates clear economic benefits of being organised in order to render the ECGs more sustainable;
- C. Expand the project with:**
- **an accountability & transparency component** that could help to build planning and budgeting capacity of the Municipal/Town Committees and Union Councils and provide them with tools for annual participatory development planning and reporting; and
 - **a technical capacity building component** that provides tools for ongoing mapping of urban expansion (e.g. Community-Led Mapping: <https://www.iied.org/urban-development-too-complicated-for-us>) and for making WASH plans and budgets accessible to the communities via online portal already developed by the project;
- D. Build a powerful coalition** with international partners³ and donors⁴ that can help with these new components by providing the necessary expertise or even leading on these new components and mobilizing the necessary resources;
- E. Test the improved and expanded model in different contexts⁵** to learn how it can be implemented and sustained under different circumstances and thus develop a robust and improved ‘proof of concept’;
- F. Build a movement that can further promote and support the adoption of the model in other cities,** through:
- **building a critical mass of ECGs** as strong, sustainable, elected urban grassroots community organisations at the Mohallah and UC levels centred around WASH but with clear social and economic benefits of organisation on a sustainable basis (thus combining social with economic empowerment);

² We recommend that Oxfam develops a gender-specific strategy for this project with the support of its global and local gender experts, assign clear responsibilities for its implementation and management, and establish a MEL framework that can help to create greater visibility and attract more funding. Given the challenges regarding gender equality in Pakistan, extra effort and support is needed from Oxfam GB and Oxfam International. For Oxfam GB’s sustainable water team, the project offers an unique opportunity to further pilot a gender transformative model that not only creates more frequent and intensive opportunities for women to organise and meet and advocate for their water rights, but also engages the men in a dialogue to redefine their gender roles and relations in the new urban context in a way that is culturally appropriate yet also transformative, bringing real gender justice while making their communities more resilient.

³ For instance, IIED could be a strong partner. IIED’s work on urban new settlements has a strong international reputation (cf. <https://www.iied.org/urban>). The director for urban settlements is David Dodman.

⁴ E.g. DFID, USAID, SIDA, UN-Habitat, and (for developing measurement and mapping tools) the BMGF.

⁵ This would require putting in place a robust impact assessment and learning framework for tracking and comparing the different configurations of “context, mechanisms and outcomes” of the model to learn how it works best in different circumstances.

- *linking the ECGs of the different urban areas into a network* and building its ECG leadership capacity to sustain the urban grassroots movement.⁶

B: Oxfam’s response to the validity and relevance of the review findings, conclusions and recommendations.

3. Overall, do the findings of the review meet with you own expectations or assessment of the project’s effectiveness? Was anything identified which was surprising?

The overall findings of the review are in line with our own assessment of project’s effectiveness. However, our expectation was that the report will leverage in making this model sellable to other donors, stakeholders that has not come to that realization yet.

4. Any conclusions/recommendations which the country team does not agree with or will not act upon and why

Agreed on conclusions/ recommendations of this review.

5. Main follow-up actions (This should be a summary of the detailed action plan, focussing on the key actions and timeframes, stated in table B. Information on actions should be specific and timebound. The detailed action plan is for internal use only and will not be published, so please do not “refer to the detailed action plan” in your response)

- Continue providing support to Effective Citizen Groups in Muzaffargarh focused on organising the groups and further building their relationship with the new local government authorities responsible for WASH
- Refresher trainings provided to ECGs for sustainability and productivity
- Refresher trainings provided to Participatory Monitoring & Evaluation Group for sustainability and productivity.
- Economic Empowerment component has been added to WASH Governance Model in Lahore.
- Linking the ECGs of the different areas into a network.

6. How do you plan to use the evidence which is generated from this review? Please be as specific as possible.

We have planned to use the evidence which was generated from review as follows:

- Recommendations have been incorporated in implementation of WASH Governance Model in Lahore to the extent resources permitted.
- Factor in findings in scale up and design of new projects.
- For further fund raising.

⁶ Examples are: Slum Dwellers International which is entirely built off urban grassroots organizations in multiple countries in South Asia and SS-Africa (cf. <http://sdinet.org/>); the “Labour Qaumi Movement” of powerless workers in Pakistan, which started in Faisalabad in 2003 and has spread to adjacent districts in Punjab and KP; the RSPN in Pakistan (cf. <http://www.rspn.org/>), which takes a non-confrontational and evolutionary approach to movement building and is focused on rural areas.

7. How do you plan to apply the learning from this review to relevant or new projects in the future?

Please be as specific as possible and provide context where relevant, naming projects in full where learning from the review will be applied.

- We will integrate all the findings in designing and implementation of projects so that maximum findings could be gathered. As for as IPH-Lahore project is concerned, it was closed in August 2019.
- Limited support was provided to ECGs of Muzaffargarh for building their relationships with the new local government authorities responsible for WASH.
- Training sessions provided to PM&E Groups so that they can understand the dynamics of resource utilizations in their target area.
- The learning of this review will be shared in Programme Review meetings for information and learning of all programmes.

8. Is there any support your team would require in order to maximise the use of the evidence generated from this review?

We will need further resources for scale up of project so that maximum output can be generated from the project. In addition to that we also need to have an opportunity to understand and learn from other Country Offices and Regions on what worked and what did not. Additional resources are required to implement recommendations C, D and E mentioned in section 2 above,

9. Additional reflections that have emerged from the review process but were not the subject of the evaluation.

For us in Pakistan the additional reflections were around how to make this intervention attractive for the Private Sector. With the changes in the civic landscape in the country, the onus for us to be innovative in our approaches and diversify our partnerships is perhaps something we would like to further reflect upon.