

Management Response

Oxfam Management response to the review of *Resilience in Iraq. Impact evaluation of the ‘Safe access to resilient livelihoods opportunities for vulnerable conflict-affected women in Kirkuk’ project* (Effectiveness Review Series 2019/20)

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Date:	01/02/2022	Country/Region/Campaign:	Iraq

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:

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

1. The context and background of the review.

Kirkuk governorate is situated in the North of Iraq and its control has been disputed between the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI) and the federal Iraqi authorities since the early 2000s, alongside other areas in the North. Inhabitants of the governorate have faced several years of conflicts, which has led to internal displacement. In particular, they have been affected by the Iraq war, the 2006-2009 civil war, as well as the rise of ISIS and its advance into central parts of Iraq in 2014, followed by the fight against ISIS, which took place in part in Kirkuk. More recently, the Iraqi Kurdistan referendum in September 2017 led to the battle of Kirkuk (15-20 October 2017) and further displacement. Finally, even though ISIS was defeated in March 2019, there was a resurgence of its activities throughout 2020.

In this context, Oxfam in Iraq and the Iraqi Al Amal Association (IAA) collaborated on a project at the intersection of women’s rights and economic justice. The ‘Safe access to resilient livelihoods opportunities for vulnerable conflict-affected women in Kirkuk’ project took place between May 2016 and March 2018, and was funded by UN Women. It was the first collaboration between Oxfam and IAA. IAA is a women’s rights organization, and in Kirkuk it focuses on violence against women and support to survivors.

Gender norms constrain women’s mobility outside the house and their access to paid work, particularly among women in vulnerable positions and in rural environments.

The project consisted of creating casual daily work opportunities for women, for tasks that would serve the community (‘cash for work’ for activities such as school rehabilitation and painting), and support to their income-generating activities (starting an activity or supporting an existing one).

The project aimed to reach women who had been displaced, were returnees at the time, or members of the communities to which displaced people had moved (host communities).



The Effectiveness Review, commissioned in 2019-2020 but delayed for various reasons detailed in the report, focuses on investigating the impact of support to income-generating activities on the women who received this support. Note that the project also took place in Diyala governorate, in collaboration with Wand al-Khair Human Organization, but the review focuses on activities in Kirkuk. This Effectiveness Review is one of a series of impact evaluations which feed into Oxfam GB's Strategic Evidence Framework, as part of the organization's efforts to better understand and communicate its effectiveness, and enhance learning across the organization. This evaluation investigates the following questions:

- What was the impact of the project on the sustainability of business and income-generating activities *(before and after the first wave of COVID-19)*?
- What was the impact of the project on women's resilience capacities?
- What were the factors that enabled or blocked the project's impact?

The evaluation investigates impact 2.5 to 3.5 years after support was received.

Evaluation approach

The evaluation used a mixed methods design. Interviews were carried out with 44 women who took part in the initial vulnerability assessment, some of whom participated in the project under review. Bringing an intersectional lens to this evaluation meant acknowledging that different women face different barriers and may have benefitted differently from the project. In particular, in the context of women in a position of vulnerability in Kirkuk governorate, a few key characteristics were identified as being critical in shaping women's experience of gender norms and their access to paid work, such as whether or not they were displaced, whether they had returned to their initial place of residence, and whether they lived in an urban or rural environment. Women's education level, marital status, household structure and age were also considered key. This intersectional lens shaped the evaluation in the choice of both the sampling strategy and the analysis.

Configurational analysis was used to explore project impact, alongside different types of qualitative analyses and descriptive statistics. A configurational analysis recognizes that an outcome can arise from multiple different combinations of causes, which is a likely reality in Kirkuk.

Please see executive summary of the full evaluation for key findings.

2. Overall, does the country team agree with the review findings? Are there any conclusions and/or recommendations which the country team does not agree with or will not act upon and why?

We do agree with the review findings.

3. How do you plan to use the evidence which is generated from this review?

- Deliver more technical trainings to BNFs.
- Integrate more protection interventions with livelihood one (e.g.CFP to support BNFs) to mitigate immediate needs)
- Encourage to increase more involvement of females among targeted groups/BNFs.
- Conduct Market gender assessments and focus on market business needs.
- Conduct sessions on shifting Gender norms, and the importance of works women can do.
- Awareness sessions on women unpaid works among the households (Gender Balance tree).
- Advocacy campaigns on improving and strengthening public care services (Health, education. etc)
- Focus and train BNF on stronger feasibility studies, so he/she can be able to select more sustainable business accordingly.

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

We propose to shape the findings into parameters and share recommendations in a simple way as tips.

5. Any additional reflections that have emerged from the review process.

- The evaluation started properly, but unfortunately it faced many challenges, security issues at the rural part of Daquq, BNFs. closed/changed their contact addresses.
- The COVID19-pandemic elongated the duration of completion of the report.
- The process went in an excellent way, as lot group discussions was conducted by program and researcher sides, a regular consultation, explanations', perspectives were respected in professional manner,
- The only one comment is the sample size was relatively small.
- The importance of training the enumerators used by the researcher on the applied tools and check their input via piloting exercises.